



*Submission on Freedom Camping Proposed legislative restrictions from Barbara Tucker – Distribution Manager for Storm Bay Books (environmentally themed literature for Children and Young Persons)*

**A) HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE THAT CERTAIN TYPES OF VEHICLE BASED FREEDOM CAMPING IS A PROBLEM?**

1: Strongly agree    2: Agree    3: Neutral    4: Disagree    5: **Strongly disagree**

**WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON FREEDOM CAMPING IN VEHICLES?**

**Improves contact with many diverse groups of visitors, gives Kiwis and international visitors a wider range of opportunities to enjoy non-urban locations.**

- › Is vehicle based freedom camping an issue in your area? **NO**
- › Have you observed any specific issues? **No – it is day picnic sites which are the most littered, not freedom camping locations**
- › Are there specific behaviours which impact on your use of local amenities/infrastructure? **No, not from campers.**
- › What benefits does vehicle based freedom camping provide for your region? **More local spending, supports small businesses owned by locals in Northland**

**B) HOW MUCH DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL TO MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR VEHICLE BASED FREEDOM CAMPERS TO USE A CERTIFIED SELF-CONTAINED VEHICLE?**

1: Strongly agree    2: Agree    3: Neutral    4: Disagree    5: **Strongly disagree**

Do you support this proposal? **NO**

Do you consider this option will improve camper behaviour? **No – education, backed by a responsible camping test/certificate, relating to each individual prospective camper, is the key. Anecdotal evidence shows that even well-equipped RV users are often reluctant to use the installed toilets. As responsible New Zealanders, we need to make our expectations understood, including not littering or cutting live trees.**

- › Will this option support or improve tourism outcomes in your region? **No**
- › Will this option decrease pressure on the environment and local government infrastructure? **No – it is obvious from the littered picnic sites that the majority of environmental impacts are caused by day visitors. This is borne out by the continued littering and soiling during 2020 while borders prevented international freedom campers visiting.**
- › Are there impacts of this proposal that you are concerned about? **Yes definitely .**

How might this proposal impact you? **We have camped for years in a multi-purpose vehicle with a removable toilet and kitchen, that meets current self-contained requirements. We have always used this responsibly. It appears that proposals will make it more difficult to use our van for our alternative uses if these must be fixed permanently in the vehicle.**

- › Will this proposal increase or decrease the likelihood of you camping? **It will change our way of camping as we will consider an off-road vehicle that can be driven into more isolated areas. This is an undesirable option as it will impact the environment more than our current practices.**

› Will this proposal have a direct financial impact on you or your business? **Commercial Information**  
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› Will this option increase or decrease the attractiveness of visiting other regions in New Zealand? **It is likely to reduce our visits to regions which do not encourage responsible camping initiatives, like Queenstown and Marlborough.**

What things should the Government consider to implement this option? **It is an ill-considered option, as it does not take into consideration alternative options such as responsible camper education, responsible camper certification, and the variety of portable sanitary devices which are able to be used in smaller vehicles.**

› What exceptions should the Government allow under this proposal? **N.A.**

› Do you have any ideas about how this proposal could be implemented? **I do not agree that it should be implemented.**

› Should this option be considered alongside other options proposed in this discussion document? **It should not be considered as an option at all.**

**C) HOW MUCH DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL TO MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR FREEDOM CAMPERS TO STAY IN VEHICLES WHICH ARE CERTIFIED SELF-CONTAINED, UNLESS THEY ARE STAYING AT A SITE WITH TOILET FACILITIES (EXCLUDING PUBLIC CONSERVATION LANDS AND REGIONAL PARKS)?**

1: Strongly support 2: Support 3: Neutral 4: Oppose 5: Strongly oppose

DO YOU CONSIDER THIS OPTION WILL IMPROVE CAMPER BEHAVIOUR?

**No – education will be the key, not vehicle certification. Many small vehicles are able to utilise portable facilities, and there are large numbers of responsible campers in adequately self-contained but uncertified vehicles.**

› Will this option support or improve tourism outcomes in your region? **No – from our observations, freedom campers in this area are using responsible options for disposal of rubbish and portable toilet waste**

› Will this option decrease pressure on the environment and local government infrastructure? **No – the main infrastructure issues don't relate to freedom campers, and the environmental pressure comes from poor education and lack of expectations.**

› Are there impacts of this proposal that you are concerned about? **Many responsible campers like ourselves (who pick up rubbish from roadsides and picnic areas) choose and/or need vehicles which will likely be excluded under proposed new vehicle certification criteria. Instead there is likely to be higher environmental impact from a proliferation of large fuel-hungry motor-homes, with no guarantees that they will be discharging their black-water and grey water in appropriate facilities. (Anecdotally there have been a number of cases of certified vehicles/motorhomes emptying holding tanks onto the roadside.)**

HOW MIGHT THIS PROPOSAL IMPACT YOU?

› Will this proposal increase or decrease the likelihood of you camping in New Zealand? **No as we will change the way we camp if our vehicle cannot be certified under new regulations. Unfortunately this will impact the environment more than our current low-impact practices)**

› Will this proposal have a direct financial impact on you or your business?

Commercial Information

Commercial Information

› Will this option increase or decrease the attractiveness of visiting other regions in New Zealand? **We are less likely to visit the South Island.**

WHAT THINGS SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER TO IMPLEMENT THIS OPTION?

- › What do you think is required to achieve this option? **We strongly feel that *responsibility* education is far more important than any new legislation. This option is shamefully simplistic.**
- › What exceptions should the Government allow under this proposal? **The proposal is flawed and should not be implemented.**
- › How far from toilet facilities should a person be able to freedom camp if not in a vehicle with a toilet. **Many uncertified vehicles have their own portable toilets. Responsible campers will locate themselves at a distance which they are capable of accessing a toilet, or use their own portable facility. Again, education is the key.**
- › Should this option be considered alongside other options proposed in this discussion document? **No – education is vital for all outdoor recreational activities – eg bike trails.**

**D) HOW MUCH DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE REGULATORY TOOLS FOR GOVERNMENT LAND MANAGERS?**

1: Strongly support   2: Support   3: Neutral   4: Oppose   5: **Strongly oppose**

DO YOU SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL?

- › Are there any specific parts of this proposal you support or oppose? **We oppose increased fines and oppose night-time inspections and harassment and confiscations, especially as many freedom campers have limited resources and alternative options – including poverty and homelessness.**
- › Do you consider this option will improve camper behaviour? **No – education regarding expectations will make a far greater difference.**
- › Will this option support or improve tourism outcomes in your region? **Northland region needs the young tourists who will be most impacted by threat of fines.**
- › Will this option decrease pressure on the environment and local government infrastructure? **No it is likely to increase the expense of policing and enforcing these fines. It is also likely to drive desperate freedom campers into locations which will impact more on the environment. It will also create more stress-related social issues. Family campers will be particularly impacted.**
- › Are there impacts of this proposal that you are concerned about? **Yes – all of the above. It is an ill-conceived and simplistic populist proposal based on very limited real facts. In our own experiences, camping amongst many young overseas tourists in recent years, there have been extremely few incidents or observations which support the basic premise of this proposal.**

HOW MIGHT THIS PROPOSAL IMPACT YOU?

- › Will this proposal increase or decrease the likelihood of you camping in New Zealand? **It will decrease our enjoyment of travelling in New Zealand and may cause us to consider overseas camping instead.**
- › Will this proposal have a direct financial impact on you or your business? **Commercial Information**
- › If yes, please indicate if this is a personal or business expense, and quantify how much you estimate it would impact you. **Commercial Information**
- › Will this option increase or decrease the attractiveness of visiting other regions in New Zealand? **Definitely decrease our enjoyment - we are less likely to travel recreationally as widely in NZ and will consider overseas holidays instead.**

WHAT THINGS SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER TO IMPLEMENT THIS OPTION?

- › What would you like to see in practice? **Replace the proposed legislation with an education policy such as the Responsible Camper's Certificate. Also require the hire companies to ensure that their clients understand NZ's environmentally sensitive culture through a tangible system such as a responsible camper test.**
- › Should this option be considered alongside other options proposed in this discussion document? **No**
- › Should non-compliant vehicles be confiscated? If so, under what conditions? **Definitely not.**
- › If vehicles are confiscated, what conditions should be placed on returning the vehicle? **They should NOT be confiscated.**
- › Should fines be similar to those for not holding a valid Warrant of Fitness for a motor vehicle? **No – there is no relevance between vehicle safety and toilet legislation.**
- › What levels should fines be set at? **Not applicable**
- › Who should collect a fine? **Not applicable**

**E) DO YOU THINK THAT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SELF-CONTAINMENT SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED?**

1: Yes                      2: Neutral                      3: **No**

**IS THE CURRENT STANDARD FIT FOR PURPOSE?**

- › Should there be a requirement that self-contained vehicles have fixed toilets? **No – there are many portable options available – eg Wee bottles and Poo tubes. This the ideal topic for education about NZ camping expectations.**
- › Should there be specific reference to the types of vehicles that can be self-contained? **No. There are multiple self-containment options for small environmentally friendly vehicles. Again educating about our responsibilities as campers is far more important than restricting vehicle types to inevitably high impact gas-guzzling motorhomes.**

**WHO SHOULD CERTIFY TO THE STANDARD?**

- › Should any plumber registered under the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 be able to certify to the Standard, or should certifiers be separately recognised and licensed? **No – not plumbers. There are already plenty of adequate certifiers capable of understanding basic requirements under the current certification schemes.**
- › Once a vehicle has passed its initial certification, should other entities be able to re-certify it? **Not Applicable**

**WHAT TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE IN PLACE?**

- › How long should the Government give people to upgrade or dispose of their vehicles? **The government should turn its back on this ill-conceived set of proposals.**
- › Should currently certified self-contained vehicles be exempt from any new rules? **Not applicable, as there is no justification for changes in regulations**
- › Are there any other transition arrangements we should consider? **No transition needed, for the above reasons**

**HOW COULD THE GOVERNMENT ENSURE VULNERABLE GROUPS ARE NOT FURTHER DISADVANTAGED?**

- › Could the Government make homelessness exempt from any new regulatory system? **The government's well-being ethos MUST recognise the impact of these proposals on poorly resourced and highly stressed individuals and families. There is no justification for a new regulatory system at all.**