Department for Internal Affairs Freedom Camping
Work Programme 2016/17

Increase in reporting of freedom camping harms and councils responding by increasing regulation of freedom camping

Number of international and domestic visitors freedom camping is increasing and number of freedom camping sites are reducing

- Shortage of available freedom camping areas by councils and increasing demand from international, domestic visitors and the displaced concentrates campers in a few locations
- Shortage of available freedom camping areas increasing rates of non-compliance with freedom camping bylaws
- Over reporting the frequency and scale of incidents undermining goodwill towards freedom campers
- Multiple regimes and multiple regulators complicating the regulation of camping
- Inconsistent messages about where to go and how to behave
- Information gaps on freedom camping and freedom campers limit the opportunities and approaches to manage freedom camping
- International visitors and rental hirers can easily avoid infringements

What does success look like?

- Reduced harms to a publicly acceptable level
- Improved visitor experience
- Increased accommodation options in regions
- Improved compliance
- Improved goodwill towards freedom campers
- Improved camping etiquette
- Evidence based decisions
- Improves the deterrent effect of infringements

Short term work streams – Summer season 2016/17

Guidance document for councils on freedom camping management

Guidance developed by council officers and the Department to support councils implementing the Freedom Camping Act 2011:
- Good practice in freedom camping regulatory design
- Integrating freedom camping management with tourism strategies
- Graduated enforcement and exercising discretion
- Assessing local, regional and national benefits
- Mitigating harms through infrastructure and service support for camping

National freedom camping regulation geospatial dataset

A dataset of coordinates and restriction types for all camping regulations in New Zealand:
- Building the one source of truth about camping regulations
- Allows a visual representation of all camping restrictions on Department of Conservation and council land
- Creates the building blocks to support national collation of local surveys to monitor freedom camping
- Reused by digital developers and websites to combine with other value-add material for campers (e.g. amenities, points of interest, route planning)

Communication messages targeted at visitors

Working with the Responsible Camping Forum to provide consistent messaging to highest risk freedom campers, for example:
- Responsible camping etiquette (New Zealand’s environment is pristine plan your trip to keep it that way)
- Get out into the wilds of New Zealand, but do it with respect
- Always have a backup plan, freedom camping is like other accommodation it gets full during the peak season. In the busiest places plan to stay at a campsite

Supporting work from other organisations includes:

- Medium Sized Facilities Fund – Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Responsible Camping Forum work streams (Information, Insights, Infringements and Infrastructure)
- Review of the Self-Containment Standard – Standards NZ

Long term work stream – Summer season 2017/18

- Carry out further analysis to determine if amendments to the Freedom Camping Act 2011 are required

Prepared in response to the situational analysis delivered by the Freedom Camping Working Group

11 November 2016