

OIR: 2425/1154

23 October 2024

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s7(2)(a) ,

**Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)**

Thank you for your email of **9 October 2024** requesting the following information:

- 1. Send me any available documentation from stage one or two of the Council's Freedom camping policy review, especially information regarding any proposed changes to the current freedom camping policy and / or bylaws.**

Stage 1 - Early engagement, evidence gathering & analysis; report back on issues

Through this link [Presentations to Council - Kāpiti Coast District Council \(kapiticoast.govt.nz\)](https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz) you will find copies of presentations about the review process and evidence gathering and analysis:

- **Review of the Freedom Camping Policy 2012:** Open briefing presentation to Councillors – 20 February 2024.
- **Freedom Camping Policy Review Update:** Presentation to Paraparaumu Community Board – 7 May 2024 (repeated to all other community boards during May 2024).
- **Identifying and understanding drivers, pressures and issues, and opportunities for freedom camping in Kāpiti:** Workshop-style briefing with presentation and accompanying A3 pages (attached with this letter) - 25 June 2024.

Stage 2 – Bylaw analysis; developing draft options for consultation

A recent briefing to Council on 15 October 2024 entitled **Freedom Camping Policy Review - Issues and Options and need for Bylaw** includes a presentation which will be available via the above link and primarily focussed on analysis relating to a potential bylaw.

A further briefing to Council on issues and options is scheduled for 26 November 2024.

**2. And can also please let me know the dates and submission information in respect of the public consultation as part of KCDC's freedom camping policy review.**

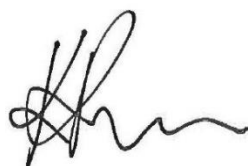
We recently reviewed the progressing the freedom camping policy review, to enable further analysis to be progressed. Unfortunately, the dates currently on our website are yet to be changed but will be updated shortly.

I can confirm that we are scheduled to go to Council for 'Approval to consult' on 16 February 2025. Consultation material including a Statement of Proposal and proposed changes will be available as part of the agenda the Friday before this meeting at:

<https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/council/meetings/council-meetings/meetings-and-agendas/>

Subject to Council's decision, consultation will occur soon after. Consultation will run for a month and invite submissions on the proposed changes.

Ngā mihi,



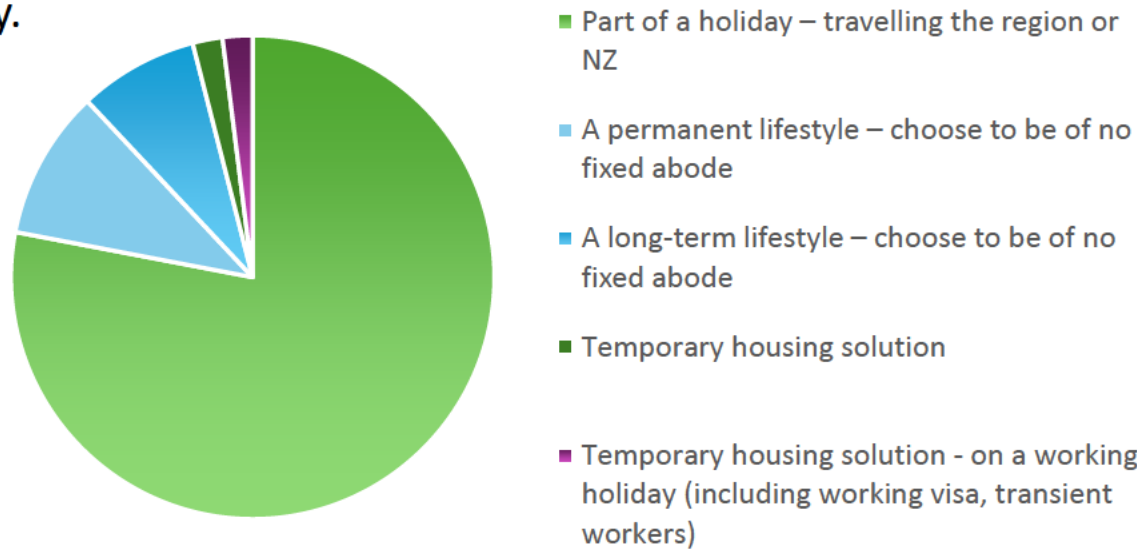
**Kris Pervan**

Group Manager Strategy and Growth  
Te Kaihautū Rautaki me te Tupu

# TOURISM - KEY DRIVER

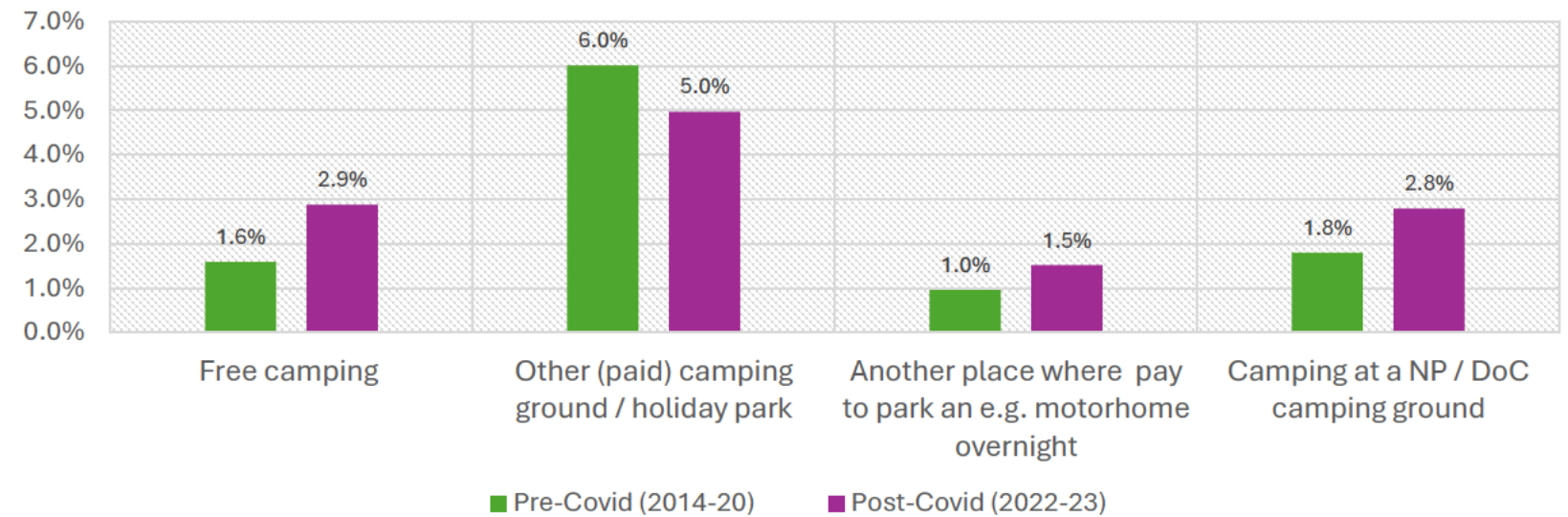
## VISITOR TRENDS

- International visitor arrivals sitting at 80% of pre-Covid levels.
- 2.5% pre- & 2.4% post-covid of international visitors use a rental campervan or motorhome as their main form of transport.
- International visitor study (2017-18) showed FCers stayed average of 46 days [3x longer than avg] & visited twice as many regions.
- Anecdotally more kiwis are taking to the roads.
- There is an increase in transient living in a vehicle as a lifestyle choice (different to homelessness where there is no choice).
- Our FC visitor survey showed most travelled for the purposes of a holiday.



## VISITOR CAMPING PREFERENCES

- There is an increase from pre-Covid for international visitors camping at locations other than a commercial campground.

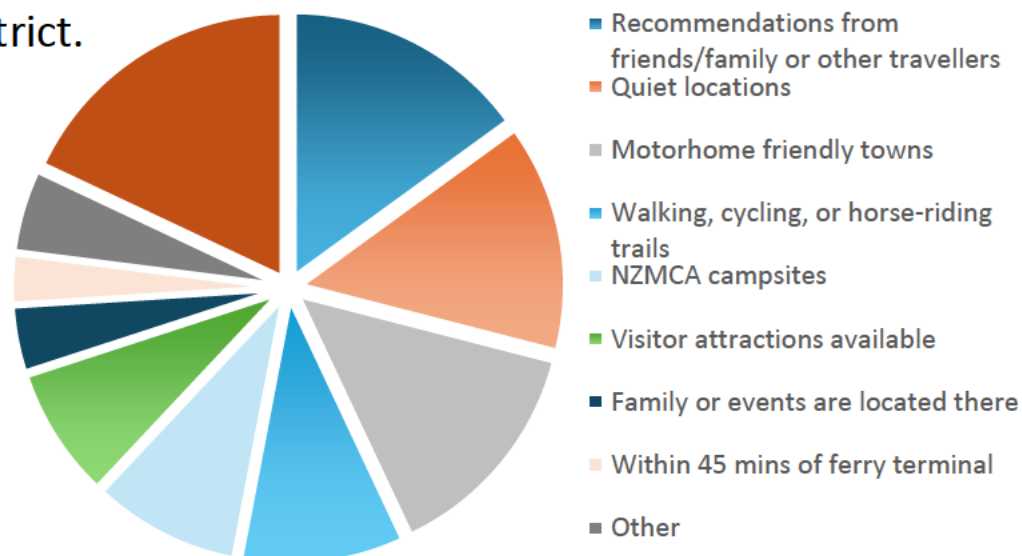


- Our FC visitor survey showed most people stayed at one of the designated Council FC sites.



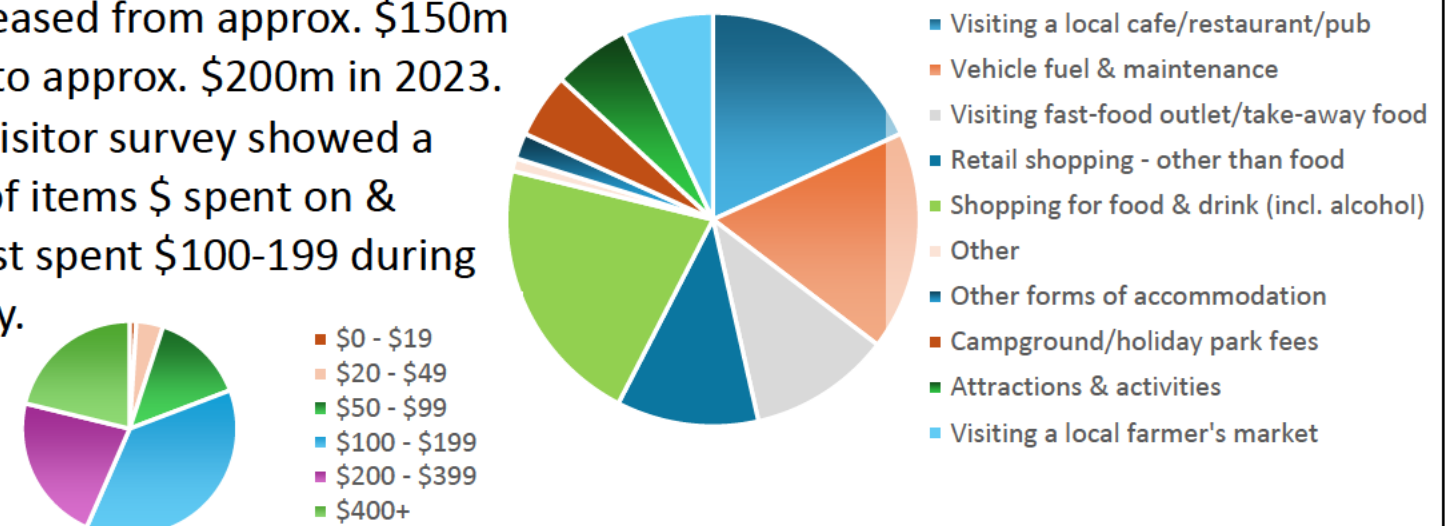
## DECIDING TO VISIT THE KĀPITI COAST

- Our FC visitor survey showed a variety of reasons for deciding to visit the district.



## ALL VISITOR SPEND IN THE KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT

- Estimated tourism spend in the district has increased from approx. \$150m in 2019 to approx. \$200m in 2023.
- Our FC visitor survey showed a variety of items \$ spent on & that most spent \$100-199 during their stay.





# TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

*While not part of the policy (or bylaw), how we might provide for freedom camping is a key input for promoting tourism more broadly*

## ATTRACTING FREEDOM CAMPERS TO THE KC

- Kāpiti Destination Management Plan objective to increase visitor nos.
- Could be achieved through:
  - hosting visitors longer (especially off-peak) &/or more sites
  - sites close to tourism attractions, CWB, eateries etc. to encourage \$
  - some sites at quieter locations
  - enabling non-self-contained FC
  - facilities & amenities (incl. third party providers)
  - gain “Motorhome Friendly” town status (NZMCA initiative)
  - further supporting infrastructure e.g. dump stations etc.
  - good user info available on websites & apps on local services, amenities, attractions & events.

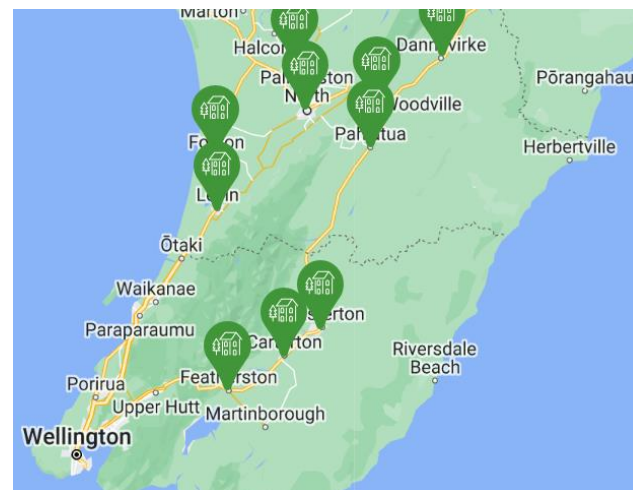
## CAMPGROUND INITIATIVES

- FC tourism can be supported by:
  - more commercial campgrounds (currently only 2)
  - Mana whenua – potential for private or joint initiatives
  - NZMCA – have interest in purchasing/leasing land for member-only use, such as at Plimmerton



## BECOME A MOTORHOME FRIENDLY (MHF) TOWN

- Currently 58 other towns have this designation.
- To meet definition of NZMCA MFH town, must have:
  - legally compliant Freedom Camping bylaw
  - a public dump station
  - access to potable water & refuse & recycling
  - access to medical facilities
  - vicinity to shops & service areas



## USER PAYS SUPPORT AMENITIES

- Potential to invest in supporting infrastructure & charge for its use to recover costs over the longer term e.g. though KiwiCamp/Kiwicash or to simply charge for parking in prime locations.

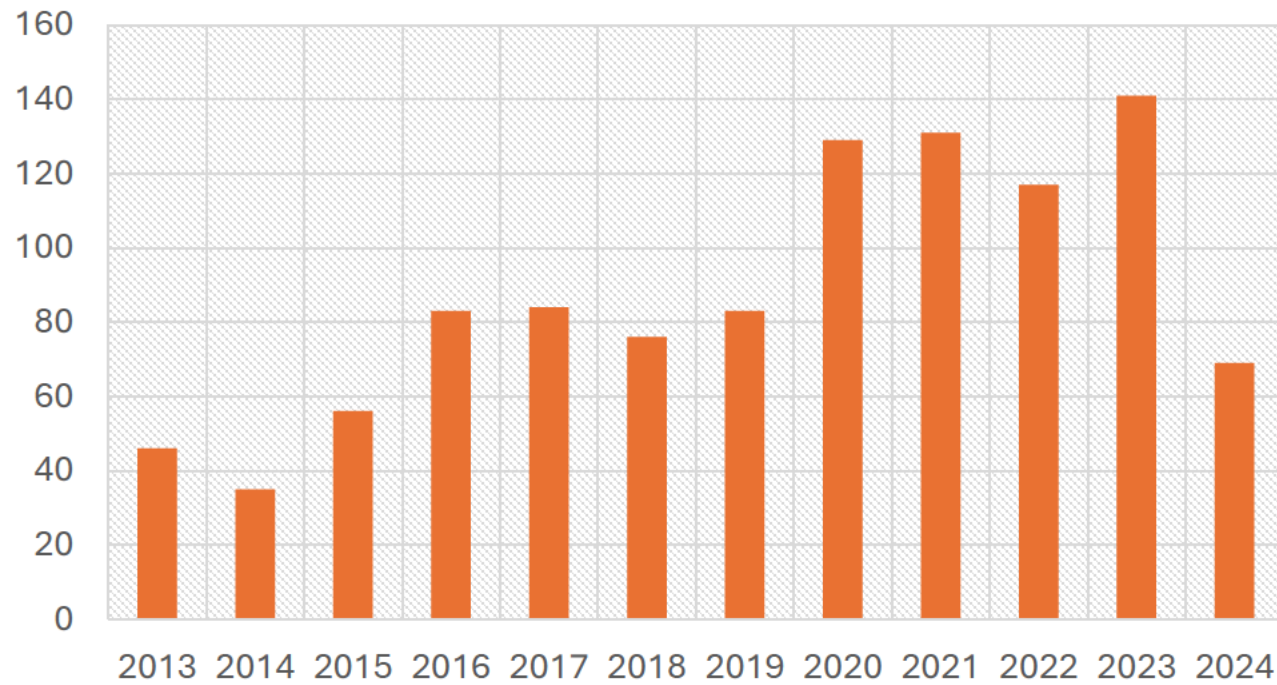


**Question: To what extent do we want to support freedom camping in our district?**

# COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT - ISSUES

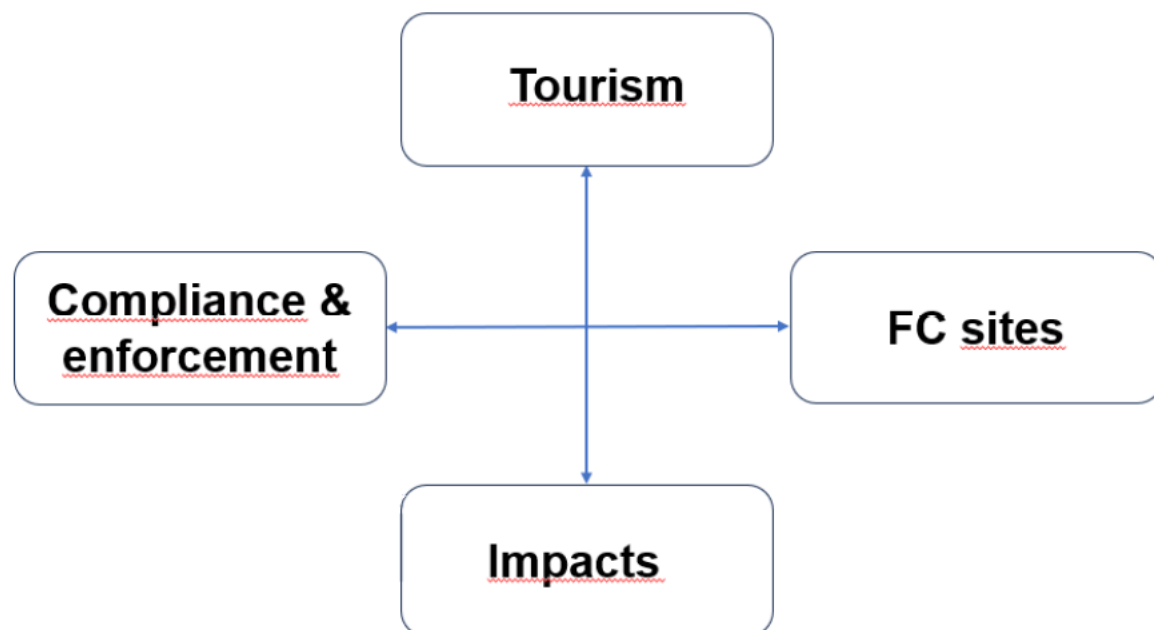
## INCREASE IN FC-RELATED SERVICE REQUESTS

Majority are complaints from local community



## FC-RELATED SERVICE REQUEST THEMES (2018-2024)

FC vehicle parked at non-designated site	224
Vehicle/tent has been at site (any) for longer than a week (includes those noted to move from site to site)	110
Too many vehicles at designated site (overflow from permitted nos.)	97
Vehicle/tent linked to homelessness/rough sleeping/temporary housing solution (suspected or actual)	80
Tent set up (not permitted)	65
Observation of littering or rubbish dumping	48
Vehicle has been parked at designated site for more than permitted time period (but less than a week)	37
Concern re toileting activity/disposal of human waste	26
Breach of Covid-19 lockdown rules	18
Fires have been lit	17
Miscellaneous/other e.g. request for permission to stay longer at designated site; dog issues; KCDC not enforcing; crime/antisocial behaviour, locals competing for parks etc.	136



## SUMMARY OF ISSUES RELATING TO COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

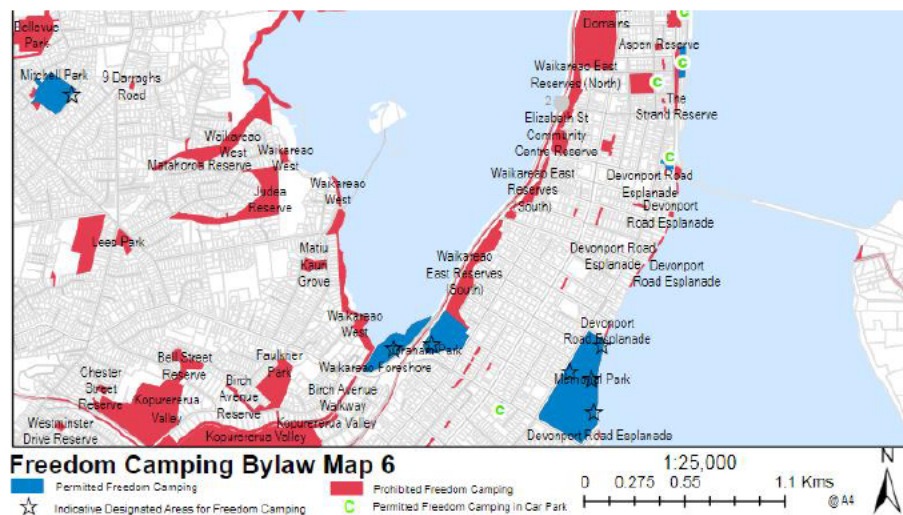
- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Campers defying requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking at undesigned sites</li> <li>• Not showing a self-contained certificate, no current certificate (or in a non-self-contained vehicle/tent)</li> <li>• Staying at site already full or longer than specified</li> <li>• Responsible camping advice ignored e.g. fires, littering, noise, dogs off lead</li> </ul> |
| Enforcement                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FC Ambassadors have education role only</li> <li>• Campers learn from others we don't enforce so flout rules</li> <li>• Community backlash around management/enforcement</li> <li>• Data gathered to help inform future (+ve)</li> </ul>  |
| Camper diversity             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with sovereign citizens, aggressive/conflict-driven, mental health affected, dishonest about status i.e. say homeless to stay longer</li> </ul>   |



# COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT – OPPORTUNITIES

## MAKE A FC BYLAW UNDER THE FREEDOM CAMPING ACT 2011

- (1) A local authority may make bylaws—
  - (a) defining the local authority areas in its district or region where freedom camping is restricted and the restrictions that apply to freedom camping in those areas;
  - (b) defining the local authority areas in its district or region where freedom camping is prohibited.
- (2) A local authority may make a bylaw under subsection (1) only if it is satisfied that—
  - (a) the bylaw is necessary for 1 or more of the following purposes:
    - (i) to protect the area;
    - (ii) to protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area;
    - (iii) to protect access to the area; and
  - (b) the bylaw is the most appropriate and proportionate way of addressing the perceived problem in relation to that area; and
  - (c) the bylaw is not inconsistent with the [New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#).



## USE OF MAPS IN BYLAW SCHEDULES

- Would clearly show prohibited & restricted sites such as this example from Tauranga City Council

## WORKING WITH LAND AUTHORITIES IN DISTRICT

LINZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage untitled land e.g. coastline areas</li> <li>• FC not permitted on LINZ land under FCA (unless by “notice”)</li> </ul>
NZTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage state highway roadsides</li> <li>• No identified FC issues in our district so not managed</li> </ul>
DOC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage conservation land</li> <li>• No major FC issues at Whareroa Farm identified (defer management to “Whareroa Guardians”)</li> <li>• Have network of own paid campgrounds</li> <li>• No plans to encourage FC on their land in our district</li> </ul>
GWRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FC is a “managed activity” in their parks through their Parks, Forests &amp; Reserves Bylaw, Regional Parks Management Plan (and Reserves Act and Trespass Act).</li> <li>• No plans to implement designated FC sites at QEP (currently not permitted).</li> <li>• Ōtaki River area not currently monitored by GWRC from a recreational perspective.</li> </ul>

## POTENTIAL TO WORK WITH MANA WHENUA TO DEVELOP KAITIAKI ROLE(S)

- To meet aspirations of our iwi partners

## ENFORCEMENT POWERS UNDER THE FCA/FC BYLAW

- Currently we have no powers under our FC policy. We use other acts to manage issues and associated impacts e.g. Public Places Bylaw, Litter Act, Reserves Act etc.
- Unlocking the additional infringement offences allowed under a bylaw will enhance effective compliance.
- Bylaw will provide clarity of rules to those wanting to comply
- Practicably being able to be carry out bylaw provisions by Council’s compliance team will help ensure public confidence in our ability to manage FC going forward.

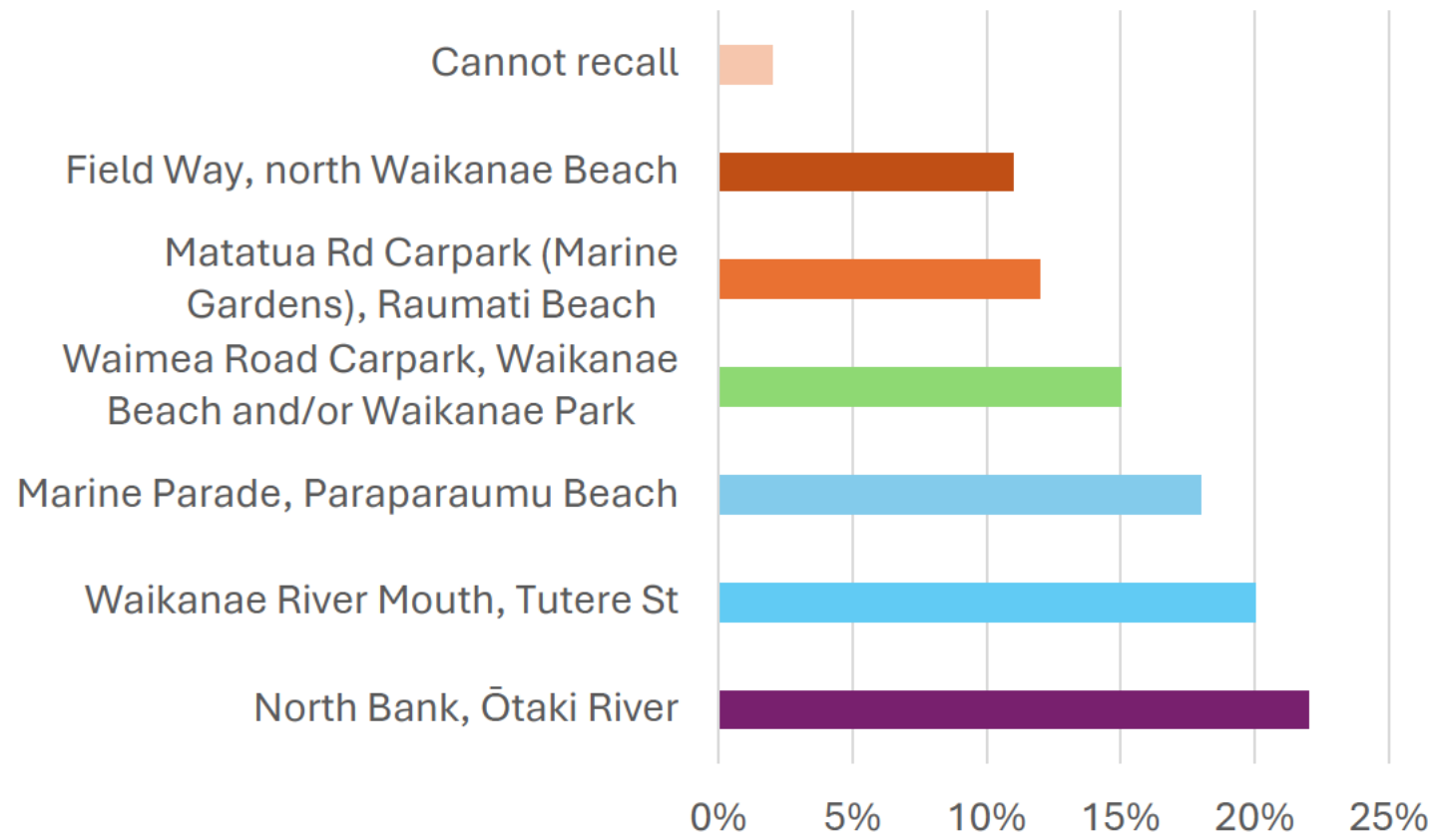
## WHAT OTHER COUNCILS ARE DOING

- Where FC has created issues in a district the preference has been for a FC Bylaw to enable enforcement powers. Alternatives include using FCA, Reserves Act or other bylaws.
- Examples of how FC is managed in surrounding areas:
  - South Wairarapa DC use a FC bylaw
  - Wellington City Council uses Public Places Bylaw
  - Masterton DC other enactments like Reserves Act, FCA

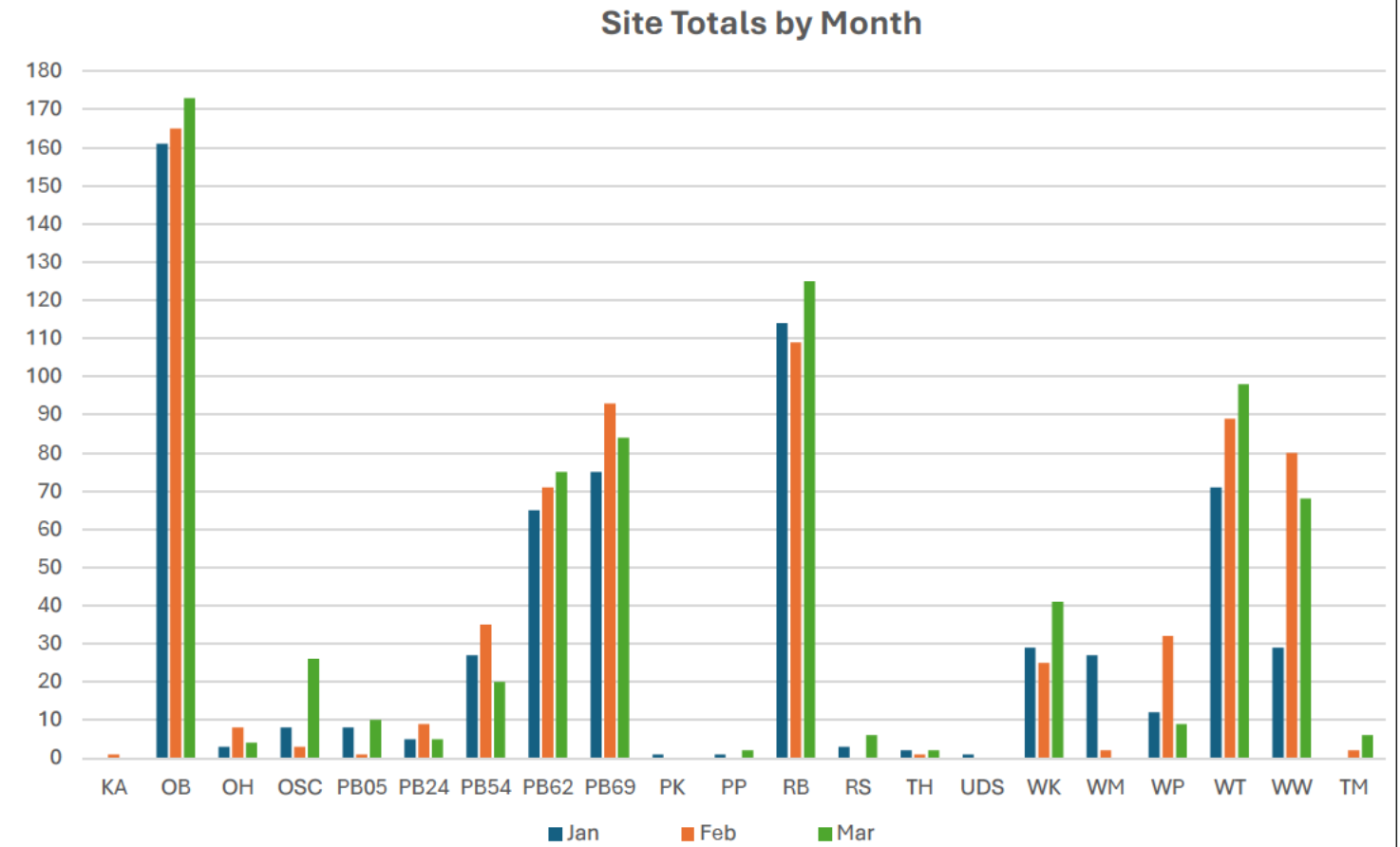
**Question: Would additional bylaw powers help manage freedom camping?**

# WHERE PEOPLE FREEDOM CAMP - ISSUES

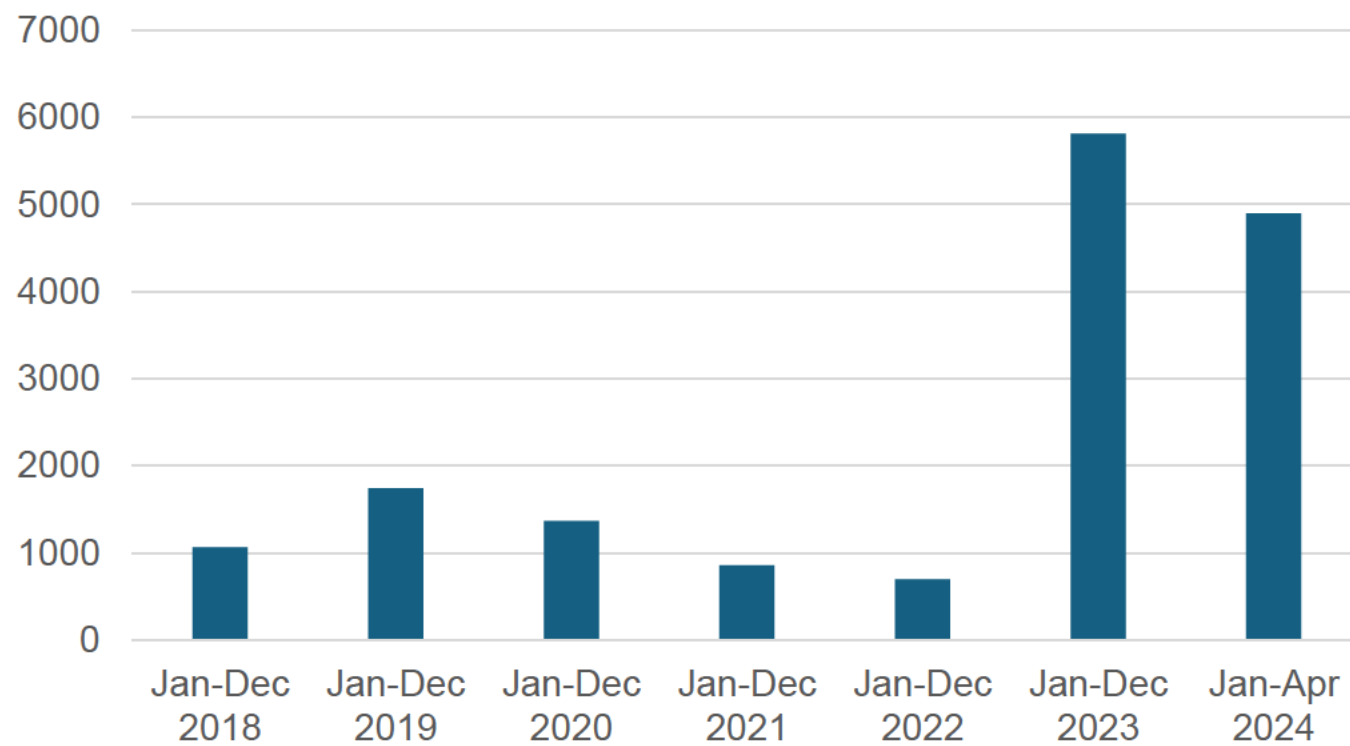
## FROM KCDC CAMPING VISITOR SURVEY JAN-JUN 2023



## FROM MONITORING STATISTICS JAN-MAR 2023



## NO. VEHICLES RECORDED ACROSS ALL LOCATIONS



## SITE PREFERENCES

- Beach front sites are popular but this can lead to competition with locals (day trippers and overnight stayers) for space.
- Beach front sites may be more prone to storm events and not always available or sustainable in the long term.
- Some camping visitors prefer locations in quiet, sheltered places.





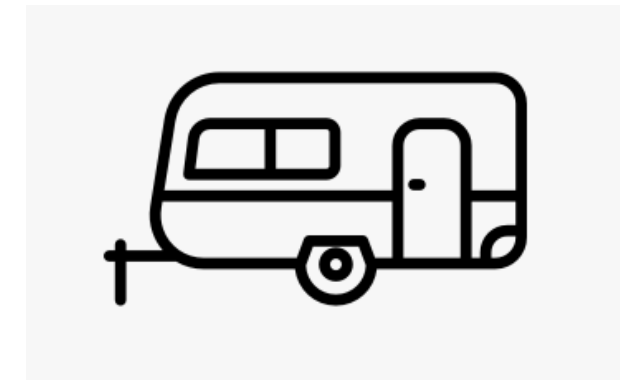
# WHERE PEOPLE FREEDOM CAMP - OPPORTUNITIES

## STOCK TAKE OF KCDC LAND WITH A FREEDOM CAMPING LENS

- Policy is not consistent with legislation as FCA permits FC *anywhere* (as per its definition) unless it is restricted or prohibited through a bylaw.
  - need to relook at Council land with a FC lens and determine what is appropriate.
- Sites can only be restricted or prohibited to:
  - **protect the area**
  - **protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area**
  - **protect access to the area**
- Following an initial stock take using the above FCA criteria, further assessment is being undertaken with iwi partners for cultural/iwi/hapu perspectives and an internal working group for pragmatic and existing issue awareness perspectives, and future thinking around e.g. climate impacts.



## NON-SELF-CONTAINED FC SITE OPPORTUNITIES

- Through site assessment process, sites that may be suitable for non-self-contained vehicle FC will also be identified i.e. where suitable amenities already exist or where there is potential for amenity development in future.



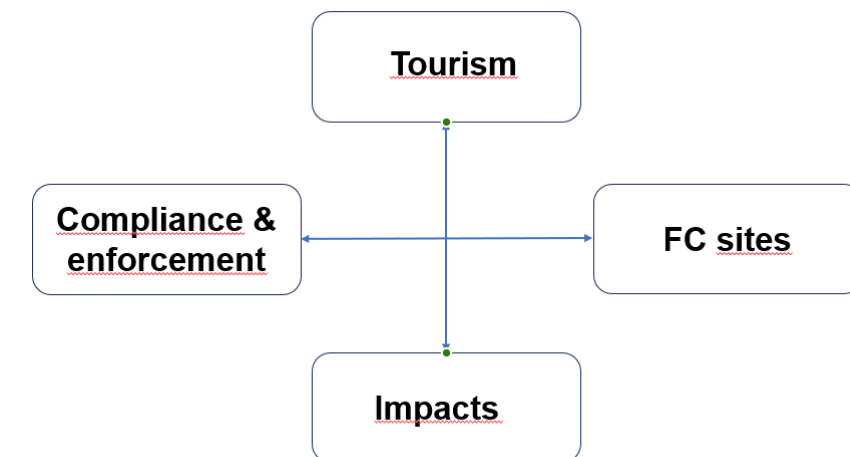
## EXAMPLE OF SITE ASSESSMENT IN INITIAL STOCKTAKE REPORT

Matthews Park (2)

Site Description	Scoring Matrix and Recommendations	Photos								
The site is two of two sites located on this reserve. This is a large carpark, mainly to provide additional parking for code sports using the adjacent sports fields. The site is located at the end of a residential street and is surrounded by residential housing.	<p>Site not suitable for Freedom Camping.</p> <p>F/C would be an annoyance to the residents visually and acoustically. It would be obtrusive mutually awkward for all parties.</p> <p>Upon assessment there was one large bus that is a 'resident', homeless person.</p>	 								
	<div style="border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <span style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">• Prohibit •</span> </div>									
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>H&amp;S</th> <th>Access</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Area	H&S	Access	Total	1	2	1	4	
Area	H&S	Access	Total							
1	2	1	4							

## LINK TO RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLANS

- Council's RMPs are being reviewed alongside the FC policy review/bylaw development for consistency of site permissions around camping.



Question: What other practical considerations are important for assessing FC sites?



# COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL & SITE SPECIFICS - ISSUES



## FEEDBACK ON FC ACROSS DISTRICT

- Nos. of freedom campers are increasing - need to enforce rules around length of stay and no. of designated parks.
- Protect dunes/beaches/foreshore – restrict camping and enforce.
- The Paraparaumu Beach hotel development will put more pressure on parking in this area – need to set limits on parking, including for campervans (no overnight parking on waterfront).
- Freedom camping at Ōtaki Awa needs to be strictly monitored.
- Reopen the Ōtaki Gorge Road to enable access to campground.
- Repurpose the old Ōtaki Health Camp as a motorhome and campground.
- Campers at Ōtaki Awa are lighting fires which leaves a mess and burns precious driftwood.
- We need more motor camps/campgrounds.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Oversubscribing/overstaying results in disregard for surrounding natural environment e.g.:

- Grey water discharge onto ground/beach
- Lighting of fires on beach using driftwood
- Defecating in surround bushes etc. where no public toilets
- Off lead dogs defecating in surrounds
- Littering where bins overflowing or disregard
- Damage to grass/dune/surface where not parking in designated spot
- Noise pollution for neighbouring properties and other campers

## OTHER PRESSURES & ISSUES FACING COMMUNITY AT DESIGNATED SITES

- Over-subscribing i.e. vehicles exceed no. of allocated spaces**
- Used for event parking – high volume of vehicles e.g. Extravaganza Fair participants at Ōtaki River
  - Unhappy neighbours e.g. impacts on aesthetics, noise etc
  - Unhappy community e.g. site impacts, competition for space
  - Tension between campers e.g. who arrived first (if unmarked)

- Overstaying**
- Unhappy neighbours & community
  - Unhappy other campers e.g. overstayer taking a space
  - Homeless or permanent transient living campers (may need support – processes in place)
  - Private camper chats share info i.e. “Council don’t enforce, stay as long as you want”

## VISITOR EXPERIENCE – “WORST THING ABOUT STAY”



# COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL & SITE SPECIFICS - OPPORTUNITIES

## IMPROVE AMENITIES & BASIC FACILITIES

- Upgrade dump station facilities
- Provide potable water
- Waste minimisation - better/more convenient recycling and rubbish disposal
- Upgrade toilets and increase servicing at peak times



Ōtaki Dump Station

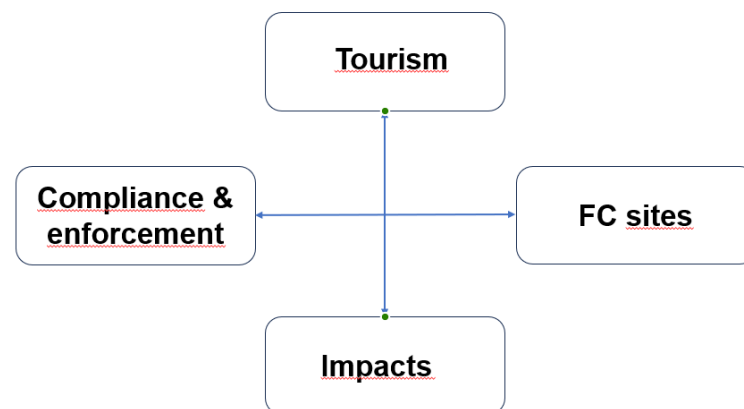
## CREATE A MORE USER FRIENDLY CAMPING SITE

- Line-mark designated sites
- Mark out wider/longer designated parking spaces for larger vehicles
- Improve signage and content of information about:
  - dump stations and public amenities
  - local attractions and events
  - water quality and swimming safety guidelines



## OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE CONNECTIONS

- Connections to the local environment e.g. NZMCA greenfund opportunities – supporting local restoration groups
- Supporting local



## OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE LOCAL'S EXPERIENCE

- Permit system
  - Nohoanga – mahinga kai (seasonal harvesting)
  - Seasonal camping only at some sites i.e. for peak period
  - Free but need to register for site
  - Online system e.g. Horowhenua DC – can book up to 4 weeks in advance
- Gisborne District Council has restricted seasonal camping areas set in their Freedom Camping bylaw.

**Question: Are there any other opportunities to consider?**