

# “Freedom” camping

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# Freedom Camping Act 2011

- Camping is a generally permitted activity
- Restrict to protect natural environment, access, cultural sites
- Local bylaws and policies (Councils and DOC)

The Act defines freedom camping as camping other than at a camping ground, within 200 m of a motor vehicle accessible area or the mean low-water springs line of any sea or harbour, or on or within 200 m of a formed road or a Great Walks Track, using one or more of:

- a tent or other temporary structure;
- a caravan;
- a car, campervan, house truck, or other motor vehicle.

Freedom camping does not include the following activities:

- temporary and short-term parking of a motor vehicle:
- recreational activities commonly known as day-trip excursions:
- resting or sleeping at the roadside in a caravan or motor vehicle to avoid driver fatigue.

# Who are these visitors?

- International
- Domestic
- 'Grey nomads' - baby boomers
- 'Van packers'
- Locals - a Kiwi tradition
- Seasonal workers
- Homeless people

- 0.4% total international visitors mainly freedom camped and 2% freedom camped at some point in their stay (StatsNZ IVS, 2015)
- 60,000 of 3.3 million in 2015 and peaked in 2011 for RWC
- On average, travelers who freedom camp during their stay remain longer in New Zealand than other international visitors
- Almost half of international freedom camping visitors are under 30
- Estimate freedom campers were spending \$4,880 per visit to NZ, double the average for other international visitors (MBIE, 2016)
- Most campers will, for the majority of their stay, park in approved sites and pay for facilities
- Domestic travelers renting a caravan are less likely than international travelers to stay at paid locations, 75% as against 89% (Coker, 2012)

- May, 2016 there were 38,8207 motor caravans registered with NZTA
- Bulk of caravans in NZ owned by individuals for private use.
- In 2012, 5,500 caravans were estimated to be owned by 60 local rental operator (Coker, 2012)
- Majority of freedom campers are New Zealanders aged 50 to 60 who are more likely to own their own vehicle or rent a high-end self contained vehicle
- The biggest group is the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association with 62.850 members
- NZMCA members spent an average of 75 days traveling per year alternating between DOC sites, NZMCA sites, commercial campsites and freedom camping spots (member surveys 2007, 2011)

# What is the problem?

- Hostile local response and media
- ‘Wicked Campers’ – objectionable signs
- July 2016 LGNZ Conference remit passed 96% in favour

“That the Govt be asked to establish a working party to review that Freedom of Camping Act to develop a consistent approach across land administered by DOC and Councils to ensure an excellent visitor experience and the protection of New Zealand environment”

- Demand for instant fines tagged to the vehicle – focus on enforcement



# National Situational Analysis 2016

## Loss of local amenity

- displacement – locals and day trippers are displaced from using and enjoying public places
- emanations – sounds and smells
- views blocked
- loss of privacy.

# National Situational Analysis 2016

- Nuisance – concentration in designated areas
- Overcrowding – more dispersal needed
- Litter and toileting – more facilities
- Enforcement – variable and heavy handed
- Information – target social media and apps

“There is an emerging trend for councils to increase the restrictions on freedom campers with fewer areas available. As the supply of available areas decreases, the concentration of campers in the remaining places increases and the harms experienced in those places, like litter, may reach unacceptable levels.”

“There is an increasingly pervasive perception that freedom campers are responsible for litter, human waste and anti-social behaviour. This is demonstrated in media reporting on freedom camping and submissions to council bylaw making processes. There is little evidence to support this proposition. These expressions of public concern are driving greater local restrictions on freedom camping.”

“Freedom camping regulations can also unintentionally impact the homeless and seasonal workers who are captured by the rules.”

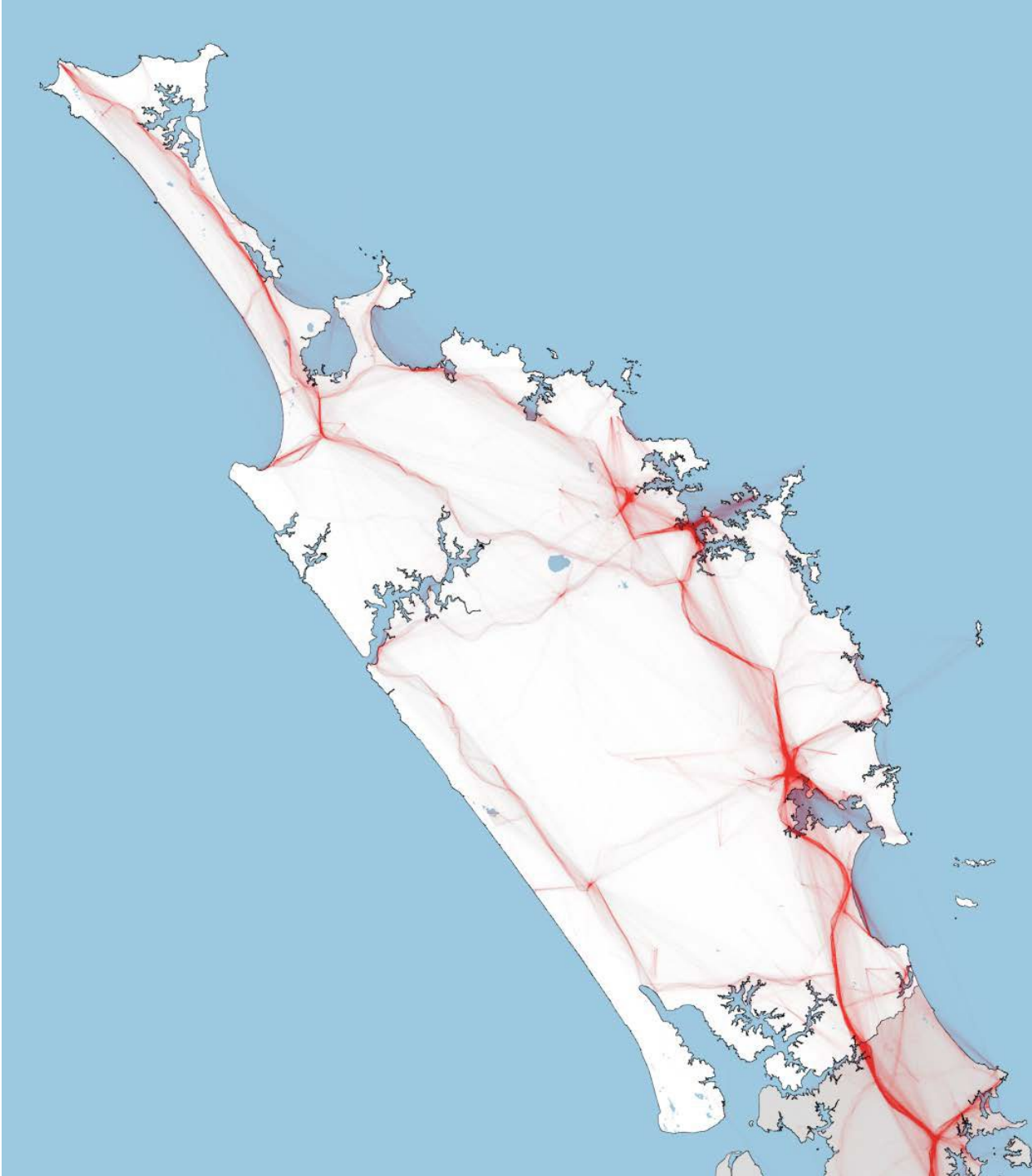
“Increasing restrictions on freedom camping impacts the ability of kiwis and international visitors to enjoy the New Zealand outdoors. Whether it is a surfer asleep in their car waiting for a swell or trampers waiting for dawn, freedom camping has cultural significance in New Zealand.”

“Prior to the adoption of the Act, freedom camping was not a term widely used in relation to the regulation of camping. Whilst freedom camping is an activity enjoyed by a variety of people including domestic and international visitors, freedom camping has recently been defined in the media as one undertaken by undesirable people.”

# The Far North District

- Te Haumi, Paihia and Waitangi
- Lack of paid accommodation
- Problems with water infrastructure
- Highly seasonal
- Cruise ships
- Wasn't benefiting from the national tourism boom
- Community response
- Tourism Infrastructure Fund





# Kaikohe

- On 10 - 13 April 2009, NZMCA national rally in Kaikohe and collated expenditure figures from members
- On average each of the 642 registered attendees spent \$1,050 in the district