



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

**TOURISM BRANCH,
LABOUR, SCIENCE
AND ENTERPRISE**



Summary of submissions

**Supporting sustainable freedom camping in Aotearoa
New Zealand**

24 August 2021

Executive summary

From 9 April 2021 to 16 May 2021, the Government publicly consulted on four proposed changes to support sustainable freedom camping in Aotearoa New Zealand.

These proposed changes sought feedback on a range of freedom camping proposals, including whether the Government should:

- introduce a new rule for how and where people can freedom camp in vehicles (Proposal 1 or Proposal 2)
- introduce a regulatory system for self-contained vehicles (Proposal 3)
- strengthen the infringement regime (Proposal 3)
- strengthen the minimum requirements for self-contained vehicles (Proposal 4).

5,136 submissions were received in total.

Around 60 percent of submitters agreed that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping was an issue in their community. The key issues identified by submitters include staying in uncertified vehicles, litter, waste and overcrowding.

There was also broad support for the introduction of a new rule for freedom camping in vehicles. This was from both the public and most key stakeholders, with around 60 percent of individual submitters supporting Proposal 1 and 55 percent of submitters supporting Proposal 2. The exception to this was from camping organisations (organisations which represent people who camp), who were opposed to Proposal 1 and did not support Proposal 2.

There was support for the introduction of a regulatory system for self-contained vehicles across all submissions, with just under 50 percent of submitters supporting Proposal 3. However, within this Proposal there was less support for a stronger infringement regime. While many submitters considered that maximum fines should be higher and that rental companies should be held liable for fines incurred by visitors; there was little support to broadening the grounds for vehicle confiscation.

There was mixed support for strengthening the requirements for self-contained vehicles. There was little to no support for requiring a fixed toilet and fixed black water tank, with just over 20 percent of submitters considering that these should be a minimum requirement for self-contained vehicles. However, this percentage is likely to be higher if the minimum sanitary requirements allow for cassette toilets (which are fixed, but have a removable black water tank).

Many submitters agree there should be a transition period if new rules and requirements are introduced. In particular, over 50 percent of submitters consider that existing self-containment warrants (known as 'blue stickers') should be able to see out the period of their certification. There was also variance with regards to the application of rules to those experiencing homelessness. Many submitters want those experiencing homelessness to not be disadvantaged by any changes, but note that an exception may be unworkable and disadvantage those experiencing homelessness.

On 30 November 2021, the Minister of Tourism, Hon Stuart Nash, announced the final policy changes the Government had agreed to, including the timeframe for change, and his intention for the Government to introduce and pass legislation in 2022 giving effect to the Government's decisions.

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) would like to thank everyone who took the time to consider and submit their views on the public consultation document. This includes those people who took time to collate and submit the views of their organisation or members, and those members of the public who attended a public meeting.

MBIE would also like to thank the Responsible Camping Working Group for both the ongoing role it has had in supporting the Government with technical advice and stakeholder insight since 2018, and for providing informal feedback on the freedom camping proposals.

MBIE would lastly like to thank the following local authorities and council-controlled organisations who supported us to host public meetings, and whose elected officials and staff made time to share with us their views and experiences on freedom camping and the freedom camping proposals:

- Auckland Council
- Christchurch City Council
- Christchurch NZ
- Environment Canterbury
- Gisborne District Council
- Kaikōura District Council
- Kaipara District Council
- Northland Regional Council
- MacKenzie District Council
- Marlborough District Council
- Nelson City Council
- Otago District Council
- Queenstown Lakes District Council
- Taupō District Council
- Tauranga City Council
- Thames-Coromandel District Council
- Tourism Bay of Plenty
- Tasman District Council
- Upper Hutt City Council
- Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Wellington City Council
- Western Bay of Plenty District Council
- Westland District Council
- Westport District Council
- Whangārei District Council

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Background

From 9 April 2021 to 16 May 2021, the Government consulted publicly on four proposed changes to support sustainable freedom camping in Aotearoa New Zealand. A [discussion document](#) set out the Government's concerns about the impact on our communities, our environment and on our international tourism brand, of freedom campers who stay in vehicles that are not self-contained and who do not camp responsibly.

This public consultation presented four proposals for consideration:

1. Make it mandatory for freedom camping in a vehicle to be done in a certified self-contained vehicle.
2. Make it mandatory for freedom campers to stay in a vehicle that is certified self-contained, unless they are staying at a site with toilet facilities (excluding public conservation lands and regional parks).
3. Improve the regulatory tools for government land managers.
4. Strengthen the requirements for self-contained vehicles.

The Government also sought feedback on:

- The types of arrangements that would be needed to transition the voluntary approach for self-contained vehicles to a new regulated system.
- How to ensure people experiencing homelessness are not disadvantaged by the proposals, while supporting the effective implementation of any proposals that are introduced.

Purpose

What this document includes

This paper summarises the feedback received on the Government's four proposals to support sustainable freedom camping in Aotearoa New Zealand. It also summarises the feedback we received on the costs of the proposals, transition arrangements, homelessness, enforcement and funding, and the new ideas that submitters thought should be explored further.

Where possible, feedback is segmented by the following stakeholder categories:

- **Individual submissions.** This refers to the general public submissions, and constitutes all individual written submissions and those submissions received through the online survey.
- **Key stakeholders.** This refers to the organisations that provided written submissions, and includes local authorities, industry and camping organisations.
- **Local authorities.** This refers to written submissions from district, city and regional councils, elected representatives, local government peak bodies, and community boards.
- **Industry.** This refers to those submissions from rental vehicle companies, accommodation providers and tourism businesses. It also includes submissions from peak sector bodies.
- **Camping organisations.** This refers to written submissions from camping organisations and camping peak bodies, such as Federated Mountain Clubs, that represent people who camp in vehicles.

Quotes from submissions have also been included in this document. This document attributes names to organisations' submissions where they have been included. Individual submitters' names have not been published where part of their submissions has been included, and permission to publish individual submissions has been sought where required. Some quotes have been edited to improve brevity and/or public understanding of the submission.

This document also includes deeper analysis of the submissions, including limited text analytics, at the back of the report.

What this document does not include

This document does not cover any perspectives or stories that did not commonly occur in the submissions we received. This is because the purpose of this document is to highlight the common themes and views which were shared with us.

Names of individuals that submitted have not been published in this document.

Next steps

On 30 November 2021, the Minister of Tourism, Hon Stuart Nash, announced the final policy changes Cabinet has agreed to. These changes are:

- Establish a regulated system for the certification and registration of self-contained vehicles.
- Vehicles will need to have a fixed toilet to be certified self-contained.
- Require vehicle-based freedom campers to use a certified self-contained vehicle when they stay on council land. This is unless the council designates the site as suitable for non-self-contained vehicles.
- Strengthen the infringement system (for example, through the introduction of a tiered infringement framework and 14 day infringement notice and reminder period).
- The provisions of the Freedom Camping Act 2011 can apply to land managed by Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency and Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand.

The Government is seeking to introduce and pass Legislation in 2022 giving effect to the above changes, with changes to be phased in two years after that. Further information on the changes can be found at www.mbie.govt.nz/freedomcampingchanges.

The consultation period

MBIE used multiple communication channels during the five week consultation period from Friday 9 April 2021 to 16 May 2021 to support public engagement and understanding of the proposed changes. These methods included:

- publishing freedom camping research used to inform the proposals
- providing a submission template for writing submissions
- providing an online survey
- holding public meetings across New Zealand in locations that host high numbers of freedom campers
- holding online meetings for those who could not attend in-person
- holding meetings with industry, Māori, and local government stakeholders.

MBIE officials held 43 meetings during the consultation period:

- 16 public meetings
- 3 meetings with and for Iwi, Hapū and Māori
- 4 online webinars
- 20 targeted meetings with local authorities, Department of Conservation (DOC) staff, industry and camping organisations.

A DOC official was also seconded to MBIE during this period to assist with the gathering and analysis of feedback, and gain insight into some of the issues presented by freedom camping.

Feedback from meetings was used to support an interim findings paper

An interim findings paper was provided to the Minister of Tourism on 30 April 2021. This paper drew on the high-level findings from 3200 survey submissions, and what we heard in the public and targeted meetings we had to 26 April 2021. The findings in this paper are consistent with those set out in this summary of submissions.

The information collected and recorded at public meetings does not replace the written submissions. This is because the primary purpose of these meetings was to support public understanding of the proposals – and attendees at these meetings were encouraged to provide a written submission.

Engagement with Māori

We alerted iwi and hapū about the Government’s proposals and invited them to let us know if they wished to discuss the proposals with officials. As a result, we met with representatives from three iwi from different parts of the community. We also took a closer look at the 10 survey responses where the respondents note they are Māori, or are submitting on behalf of an Iwi or Māori organisation.

Due to the small number of responses, these have been included as a part of the ‘public’ sentiment. These 10 submissions moderately supported the proposals for change.

Number of submissions

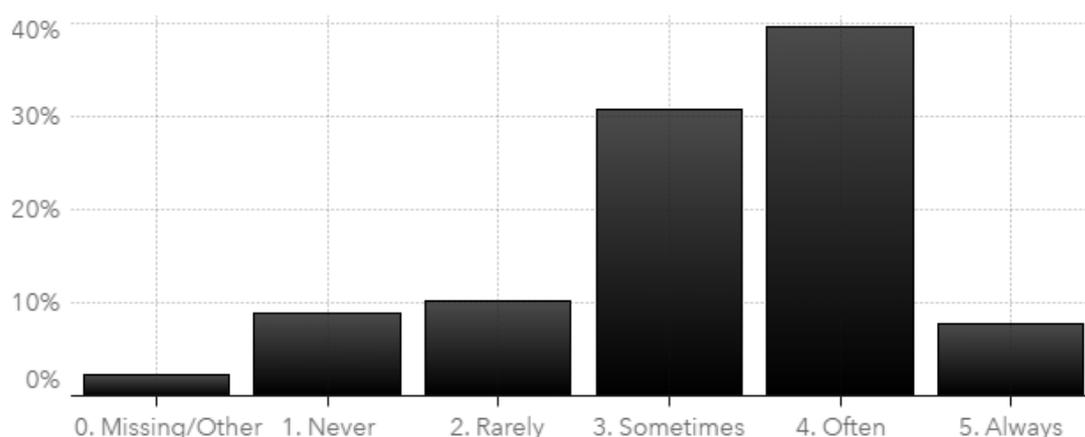
In total, we received 5,136 submissions:

- 5,051 are classed as **individual submissions**. These include:
 - 4,815 submissions received online through Survey Monkey.
 - 142 free text submissions. These were submissions that ranged from a few sentences to longer, detailed submissions.
 - 87 individual submissions that used the structured form provided by MBIE.
 - 6 mailed submissions.
 - 1 faxed submission.
- 85 submissions from **key stakeholders**. These were emailed or mailed submissions which did not use the online survey, and who represent local authorities, peak bodies, camping organisations, industry, political parties and community boards.

Profile of submitters

Approximately 20 percent of submitters never or rarely freedom camped. This contrasted with around half of submitters who often or always freedom camped.

Figure 1: segmentation of individual submitters by frequency of freedom camping



Just under 93 percent of submitters identified as a New Zealand citizen or resident. This contrasts with just under five percent of submitters who noted they were a visa holder in New Zealand. Less than one percent of submitters advised that they lived overseas.

Geographically speaking, the regions with the highest proportion of submissions came from:

- Auckland (15 percent)
- Canterbury (14 percent)

- Bay of Plenty (10 percent)
- Waikato (10 percent)
- Wellington (9 percent).

Conversely, the regions with the lowest proportion of submissions came from:

- Gisborne (1 percent)
- West Coast (2 percent)
- Southland (2 percent)
- Taranaki (2 percent)
- Nelson (2 percent).

When looking at submissions designated as ‘individual submissions’:

- 92 percent came from individuals.
- 3 percent worked in industry. This included accommodation providers, rental vehicle businesses, and tourism and non-tourism businesses.
- 2 percent came from other groups. This included clubs or club representatives, iwi, hapū or Maori organisations, not-for-profit organisations, those that identified as ‘other’ and those that preferred not to say.
- 2 percent did not complete the section stating who they were submitting on behalf of.

Note: due to rounding the above figure comes to 99 percent.

Methodology

All 5,051 individual submissions were grouped together and analysed through SAS and Python programming, and presented through the SAS VIYA platform. This included use of the SAS Visual Text analytics software.

- 145 individual free text submissions (in that they did not use the standard template provided) were included in text analytics, but do not count towards quantifiable figures used in this report.
- 91 structured submissions (which includes 3 mailed and 1 faxed submission) were fully analysed and count towards the quantifiable figures used in this report.

The text from all individual submissions was grouped together for the purpose of discerning stakeholders perspectives on freedom camping. This includes text from survey answers which include ‘other’.

The 85 written submissions from key stakeholders – which included local authorities,¹ industry² and camping organisations³ – were manually assessed by MBIE staff separate to the individual submissions. These did not include any survey submissions.

How to read the graphs

Some graphs that present individual submissions include a missing/other statistic. This means that the submitter either skipped the question, or provided a text answer that did not directly correspond to the question.

Graphs from key stakeholders can include ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘mixed’ and ‘blank’ answers. ‘Yes’ indicates that submissions mentioned the stated issue and agreed or supported it. ‘Mixed’ or ‘no’ indicate that the submission mentioned but did not hold a clear position about the stated issue, or disagreed with the criteria it was assessed against, respectively.

¹ Local authorities refers to those submissions from elected representatives, councils, community boards and council peak bodies.

² Industry refers to accommodation providers, rental vehicle companies and industry peak bodies.

³ Camping organisations refers to camping and camping-adjacent organisations such as the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association.

Overview of what we heard

Below is a summary of the support for the four proposals. It breaks this support down by stakeholder group: local authorities, industry, camping organisations and the public.

Figure 2: summary views on the freedom camping proposals

Proposals		Support			
		Local authorities	Industry	Camping organisations	Individual submissions
Problem definition: vehicle-based freedom camping is a problem		✓	✓	??	✓
1.	Make it mandatory for freedom camping in a vehicle to be done in a certified self-contained vehicle	✓	✓	XX	✓
2.	Make it mandatory for freedom campers to stay in a vehicle that is certified self-contained, unless they are staying at a site with toilet facilities	✓	✓	??	✓
3.	Improve the regulatory tools for government land managers	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
3a	regulatory regime for self-contained vehicles, including a national register	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
3b	higher fines	✓	✓	??	??
3c	require rental vehicle companies to collect customers' fines	✓✓	X	✓	✓
3d	broader grounds for vehicle confiscation	X	X	X	X
4.	Strengthen the requirements for self-contained vehicles	✓	??	X	??
4a	Require permanent toilets	✓	??	??	??
4b	Require permanent black water tanks	??	X	XX	XX
	Review Freedom Camping Act	✓	NA	✓	NA
	More infrastructure/funding	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

Key					
XX – Strong oppose	X – Moderate oppose	?? – Mixed	✓ - Moderate support	✓✓ - Strong support	NA – No view stated

The freedom camping issues

What we consulted on

In the discussion document we noted that, in recent years, the increasing number of freedom campers has raised concern from some communities around freedom campers' cumulative impact on the environment, and the cost to host them. In particular, this concern has focused on the subset of freedom campers who stay in cars, or vans with sleeping platforms, that are not self-contained. This form of freedom camping is reducing the social licence for tourism, and putting at risk New Zealand's reputation as a destination that delivers a sustainable, high quality visitor experience.

What we asked

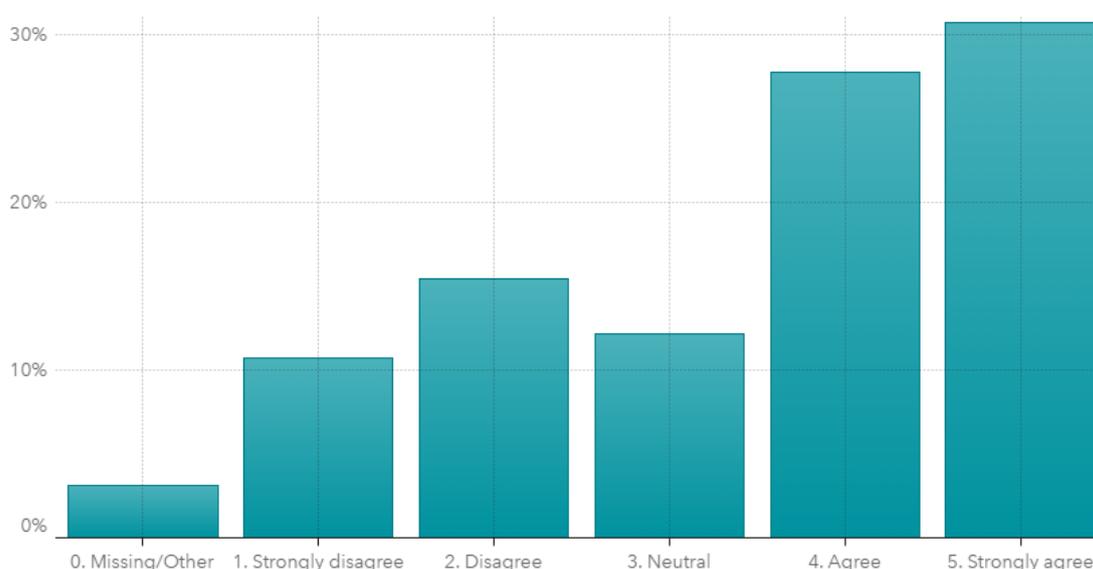
The discussion document and online survey both asked if people agree that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping is a problem.

We also asked people to provide us with some of the reasons why they consider freedom camping is a problem.

What you told us

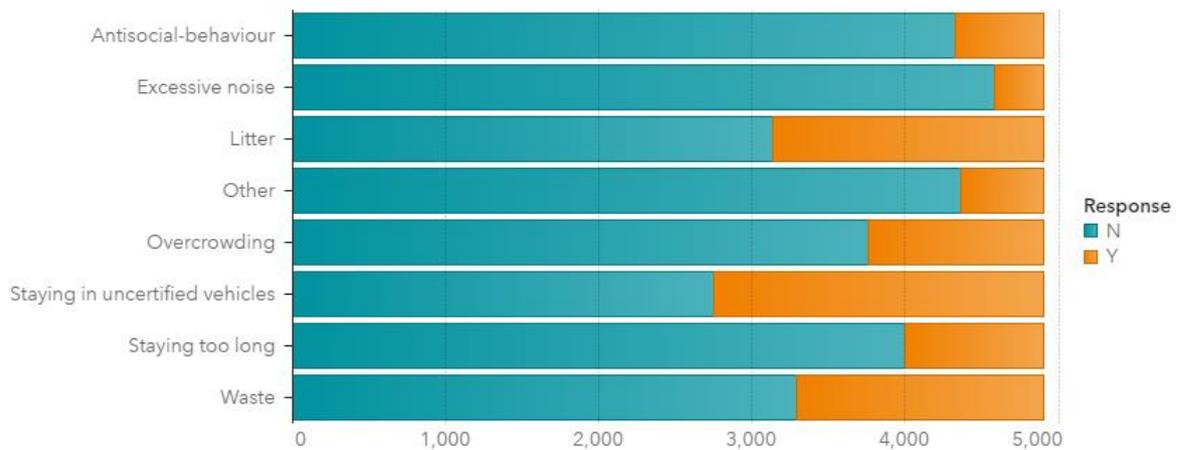
Just under 60 percent of individual submitters agree or strongly agree that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping is a problem.

Figure 3: individual submitters' views on whether they agree that certain type of vehicle based freedom camping is a problem



For many individual submitters, the main issues that concern them about freedom camping relate to campers staying in uncertified vehicles, litter and human waste. However, individual submitters also consider overcrowding, staying too long and antisocial behaviour as issues as well.

Figure 4: individual submitters' views on the issues present at freedom camping sites



The submissions indicate that not all issues at freedom camping sites are caused by freedom campers

Some of the individual submissions indicate that:

- *There are not enough facilities* (mentioned in just over 26 percent, or 1,283 individual submissions).
- *The types of vehicle allowed or used at freedom camping sites may be the problem.* 52.4 percent of individual submissions, or 2645 submissions, mentioned station wagons, small cars or hatchbacks. Similarly, 20.2 percent, or 1022 submissions, talked about slider vans or small vans.
- *Local residents or community members are the ones causing litter and/or waste problems.* 16.5 percent of individual submissions, or 834 submissions, mentioned local residents, local communities or New Zealanders in their submissions.

Quotes from individual submissions

“The public toilets at our local park are locked at night so vehicles that are not self-contained may have a problem” – individual submission

“In our area it is the locals putting their household rubbish in the bins that means there is no space for visitors’ rubbish” – individual submission

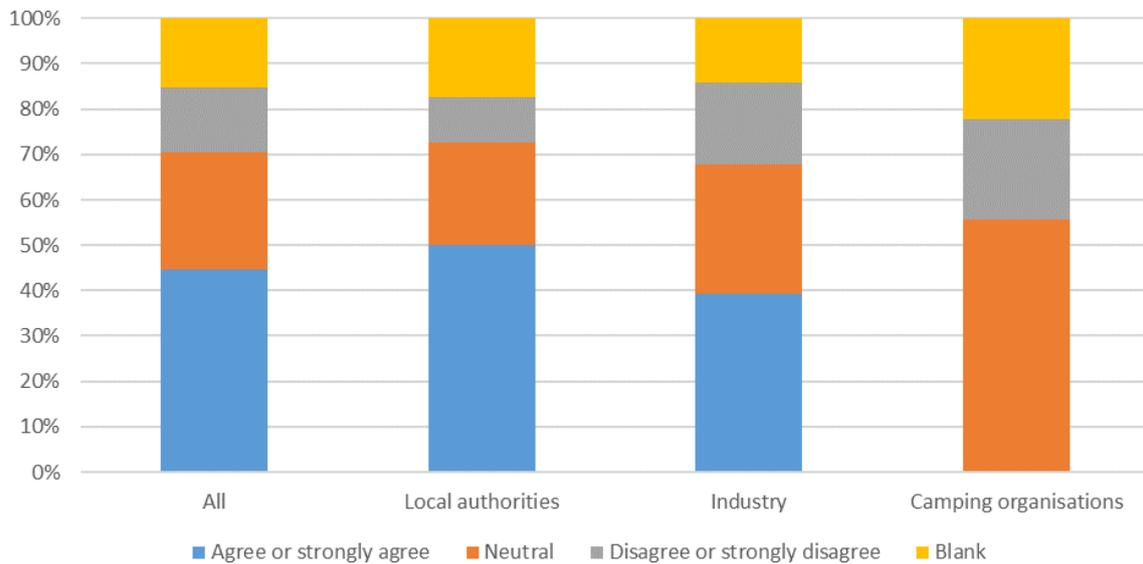
“I have observed that waste disposal issues are unrelated to whether they have self-containment [...] I have also observed more waste disposal issues with day trippers – picnickers and people stopping at remote rest areas with no toilets” – individual submission

“As a motorhome owner covering over 80,000 km over the last 12 years we have never seen the so called littering and fouling by freedom campers. We have however seen evidence of this committed by “locals”(day trippers), including illegal rubbish dumping.” – individual submission

Issues raised by all key submitters

There are similar levels of agreement that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping is a problem from each of the key stakeholder groups. The exception to this is from camping organisations.

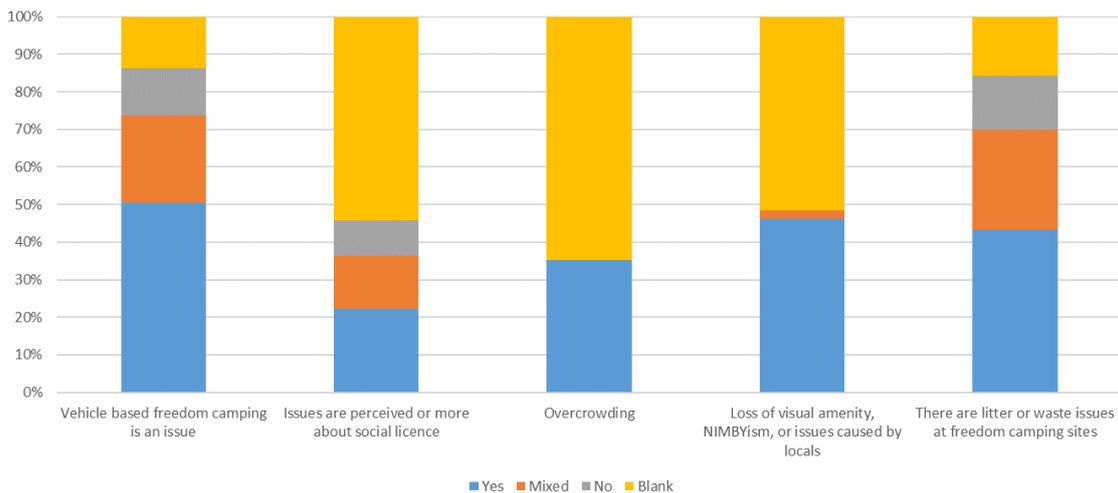
Figure 5: key stakeholder views on whether they agree that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping is an issue



Note: 'Blank' indicates that this issue was not mentioned or raised by the key stakeholder in its submission.

Key stakeholders also noted that there are a range of issues presented at freedom camping sites, and not all of these relate to waste.

Figure 6: key stakeholder views on what issues are present at freedom camping sites

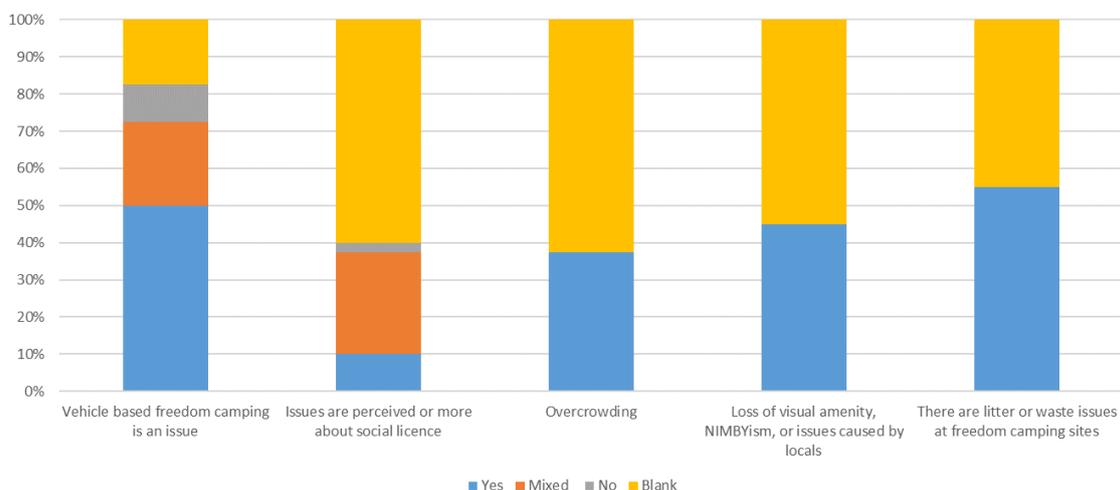


Note: 'Blank' indicates that this issue was not mentioned or raised by the stakeholder in its submission. 'No' or 'mixed' means that the stakeholder mentioned it in the submission, but disagrees it is an issue or does not hold a clear position on this issue, respectively.

Key submissions – the main issues identified by local authorities

Many local authorities noted that there are issues with freedom camping in their area – though just under half also noted that some of the issues present in their area relates to locals: either through locals’ loss of visual amenity, NIMBY-ism (not in my backyard), or that waste or litter issues at freedom camping sites were also caused by locals.

Figure 7: local authority views on the key issues present at freedom camping sites



Key submissions – the main issues identified by industry

A range of views were expressed by industry. Accommodation providers were more likely to agree that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping pose issues, compared to rental vehicle companies. The views of industry can be summarised into two camps:

- Rental vehicle companies consider there to be more issues with privately owned vehicles than rental vehicles.
- Accommodation providers consider freedom camping as an issue and that ratepayers are subsidising freedom campers. Many feel they are competing with the freedom camping system.

Quotes from industry

“These proposed changes are impacting the entire industry when the reality is the majority of problems and negative public perception comes from the private sector (privately traded and certified vehicles, often older and catering to the low quality traveller).” – Mad Campers

“TIA each year has held a series of summer monitoring calls with members of the Responsible Camping Forum. Many councils reported low numbers of freedom campers and few if any negative impacts on the community or environment. It supports our view that freedom camping is a numbers game. The vast majority of people freedom camping want to do the right thing and the negative perceptions of freedom campers are often caused by lack of effective local management such as inadequate information and infrastructure, and on occasion the poor behaviour of a few.” – Tourism Industry Aotearoa

“It’s very hard to compete with free. In the words of that philosophical giant, Homer Simpson, “free stuff is the most motivating force in the universe.” – Timaru Top 10 Holiday Park.

Key submissions – the main issues identified by camping groups

None of the camping organisations who submitted considered there is an issue with certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping. The key views of camping organisations are that:

- The problems at freedom camping sites are caused by more than just freedom campers.
- The proposed changes are disproportionate to the problem.
- The proposed changes do not address the actual issues (infrastructure and overcrowding).

Quotes from camping organisations

“Many responsible campers often report cleaning up rubbish left by others, particularly those identified as locals. Our own survey identified those littering as locals in 67% of cases.” – Responsible Campers Association Incorporated

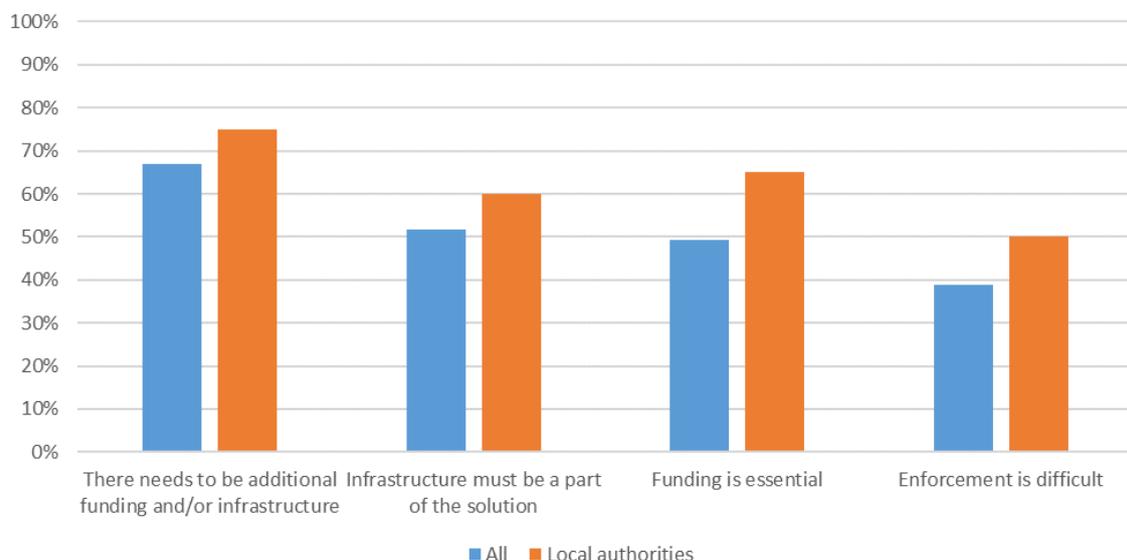
“Regulating the vehicle-type will not reduce the bulk of public complaints associated with freedom camping. In our experience, most complaints are triggered by overcrowded areas and the subsequent loss of amenity. Where waste disposal has become a problem, it is usually a result of overcrowding and loss of access to basic infrastructure, e.g. rubbish bins and public toilets. The government can minimise public complaints by enabling legislation that incentivises and promotes greater dispersal, while investing in more public infrastructure.” – New Zealand Motor Caravan Association

“It is beyond the scope of this discussion, but it is not just overnight campers who can engage in inappropriate toileting and other environmentally harmful activities. A broader scope for future consideration would be best directed to understanding and addressing roadside needs for all visitors - the first thing a high proportion of distance travellers will want is a toilet.” – Federated Mountain Clubs

Issues raised by groups beyond camping

While beyond the remit of the proposed changes, many submissions from key stakeholders, in particular local authorities, noted that infrastructure (such as toilets) and/or funding are essential to supporting sustainable freedom camping in New Zealand.

Figure 8: key stakeholder and local authority views on infrastructure or funding being an issue for the management of freedom camping



Submissions from 27 key stakeholders, including 16 local authority representatives, noted that broader changes to the legislative environment for freedom camping should be considered.

Table 1: key stakeholders' views on the legislative changes that should occur

Legislative issue	Number of key submissions
There is a lack of clarity around definitions in the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (including area, homelessness)	4
The bylaw-making process is too onerous	5
The Freedom Camping Act 2011 should be flipped – so that freedom camping would be prohibited unless a bylaw permits it (as opposed to the current process in which freedom camping is allowed unless a bylaw restricts or prohibits it)	8
There needs to be greater national consistency in the freedom camping rules across regions	4
The Camping-Grounds Regulations 1985 should be reviewed	8 – but 3 submitters did not think they should be reviewed

Quotes on other issues related to freedom camping

“The Freedom Camping Act does not list as an offence people washing themselves in our rivers and streams, washing their clothes and dishes in our rivers and streams, washing their dishes and underwear in the basins of our public amenities or cleaning their teeth and spitting their toothpaste out into the natural environment - bushes at freedom camping sites are often white from this activity.” – Forest and Bird Golden Bay

“Due to the definition of freedom camping in the Act, Council currently has limited ability to restrict freedom camping to self-contained vehicles across the whole district.” – Nelson City Council

What we heard about Proposals 1 and 2

What we consulted on

The discussion document asked for feedback on two new national requirements for vehicle-based freedom camping:

- Proposal 1: Make it mandatory for freedom camping in a vehicle to be done in a certified self-contained vehicle.
- Proposal 2: Make it mandatory for freedom campers to stay in a vehicle that is certified self-contained, unless they are staying at a site with toilet facilities (excluding public conservation lands and regional parks).

What we asked

The discussion document and online survey asked people to note:

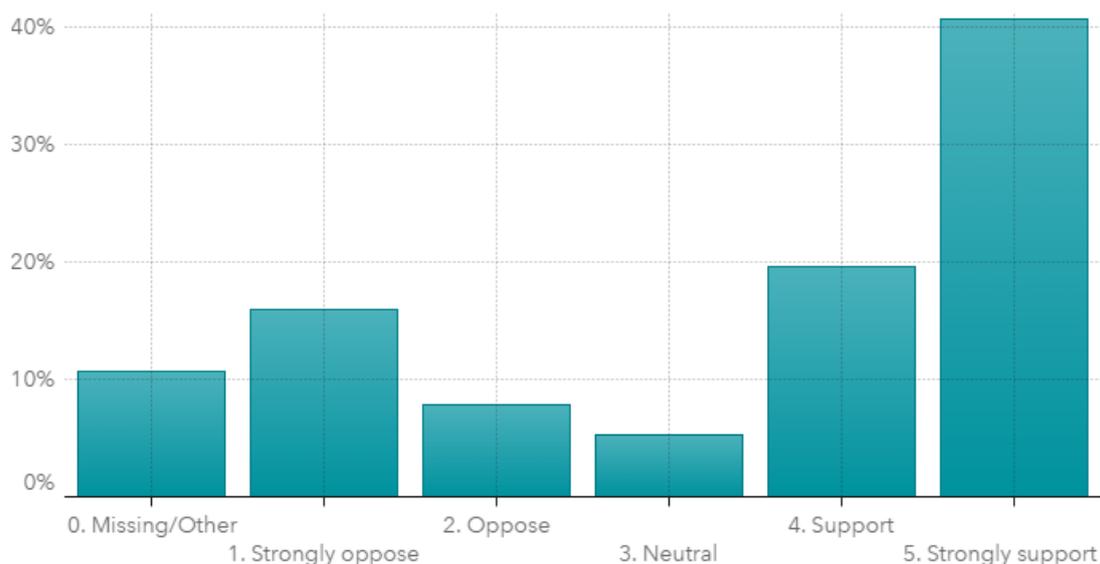
- Any potential impacts of both proposed options, including on:
 - the environment
 - people’s willingness to camp
 - camper behaviour
 - tourism outcomes.
- The cost of both or either proposal.
- Any other things the Government needs to consider when implementing the proposals, including potential exemptions.

What you told us

There is support for Proposal 1 and Proposal 2

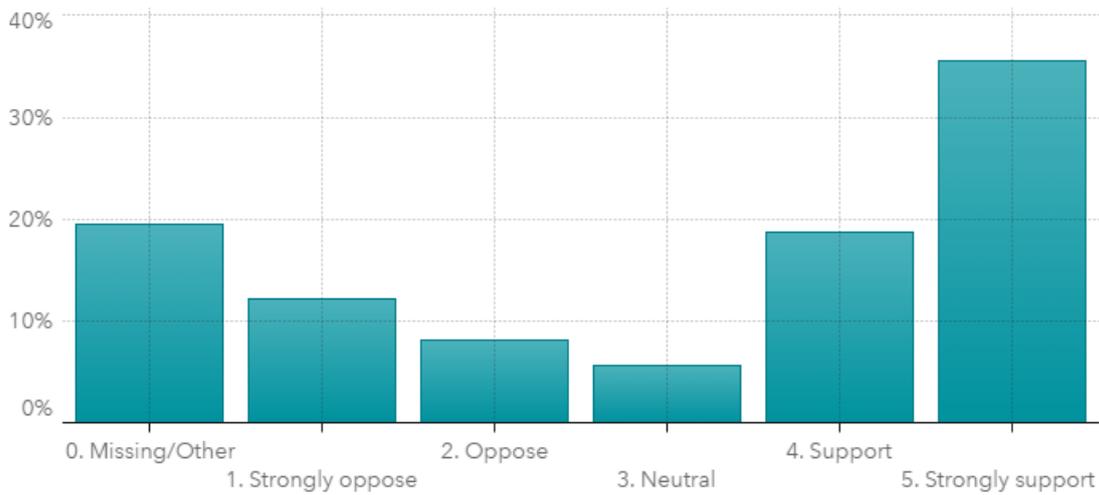
Around 60 percent of individual submitters support Proposal 1.

Figure 9: individual submitters’ support for on Proposal 1



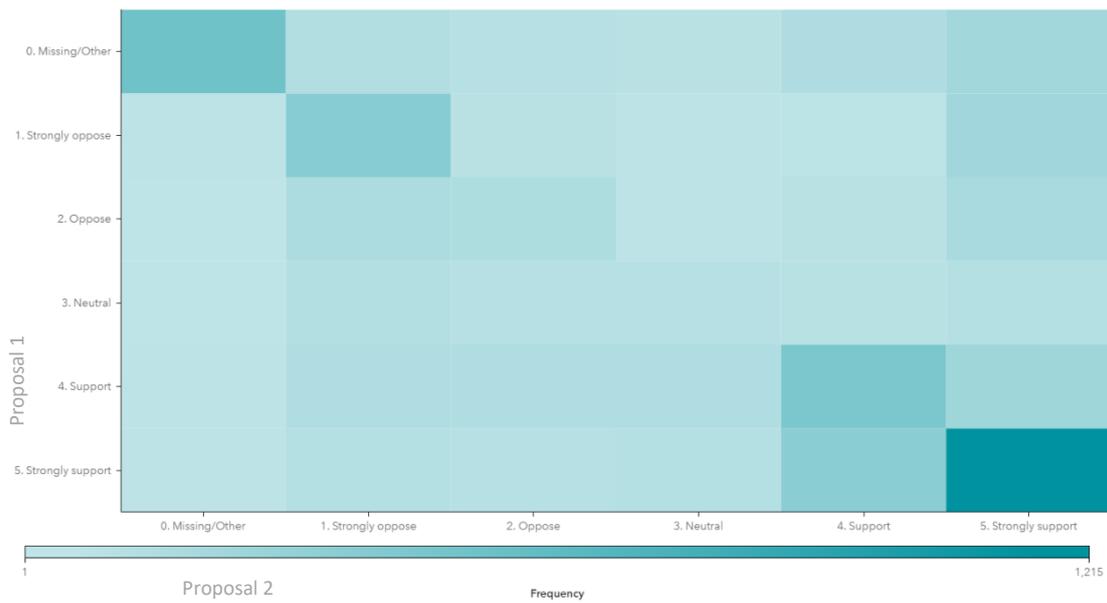
There is slightly more support for Proposal 1 than Proposal 2. Around 55 percent of individual submitters support Proposal 2.

Figure 10: individual submitters' support for Proposal 2



It is clear that more people than not support the need for a new rule for vehicle-based freedom camping – regardless of what this new rule looks like. This is because most individual submitters who support Proposal 1 also support Proposal 2. Conversely, those people who oppose Proposal 1 also oppose Proposal 2.

Figure 11: individual submitters' support for Proposal 1 and/or Proposal 2

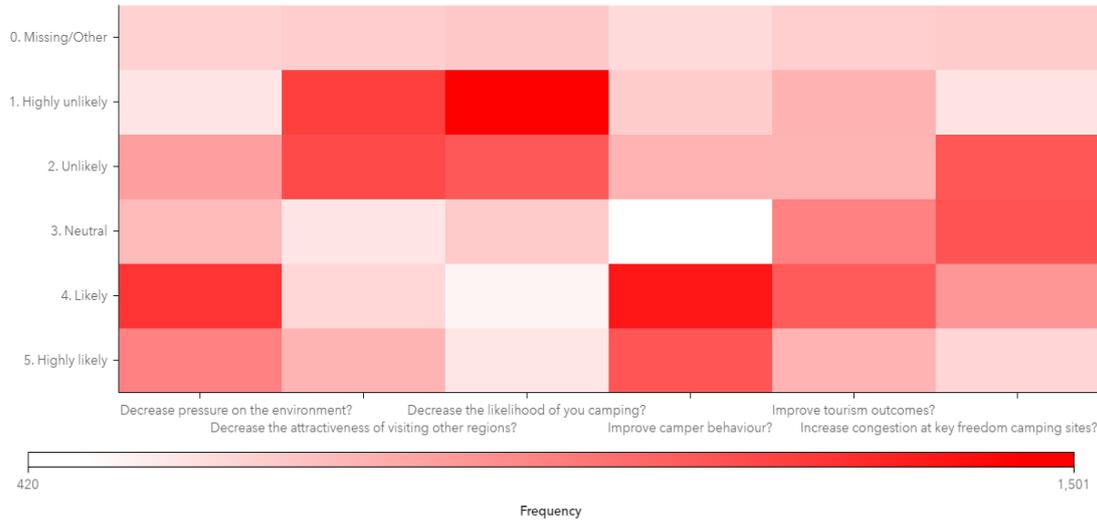


Note: The darker the segment in the table, the more submissions there are that aligns with that view.

Key outcomes from Proposal 1

Most submitters thought that there would be positive outcomes resulting from Proposal 1.

Figure 12: individual submitters' expected outcomes for Proposal 1



Note: The darker the segment in the table, the more submissions there are that aligns with that view.

These outcomes were similar to the outcomes from Proposal 2, where:

- Most people thought it would improve camper behaviour.
- People thought it was more likely to increase congestion than they did Proposal 1.
- People thought it would have a similar impact as they did Proposal 1 on the:
 - environment
 - attractiveness of visiting other regions
 - likelihood of camping
 - improvement of tourism outcomes.

Note: a similar graph has not been produced for Proposal 2 as 20 percent of the responses were missing, which skews how the data is presented.

Feedback from key stakeholders

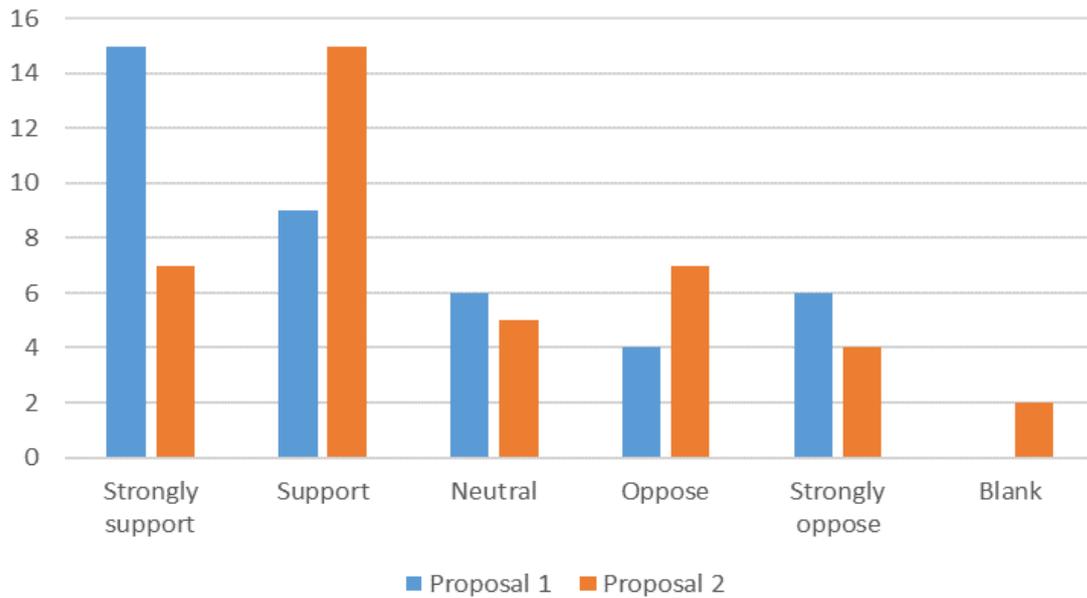
Local authorities

As seen in the graph below, most councils were supportive of either Proposal 1 and/or Proposal 2. Many councils also noted that they wished to retain the ability to make local decisions about where and how people freedom camped.

Local authority quotes

“Any changes should not dilute a territorial authority’s ability to control freedom camping within its district and/or diminish existing freedom camping bylaws and notices.” - Western Bay of Plenty Council

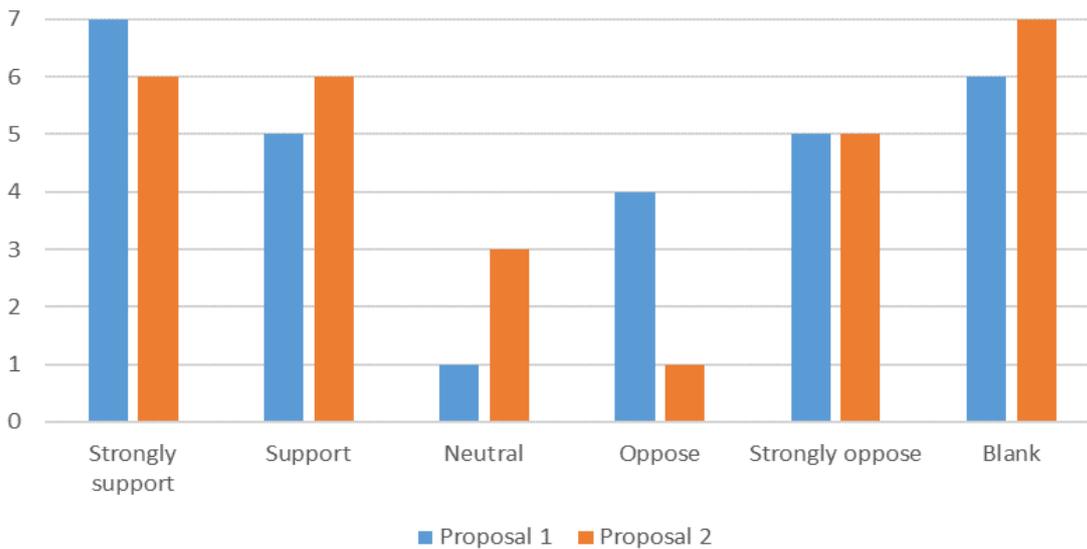
Figure 13: local authority views on Proposal 1 and Proposal 2



Industry

There were mixed levels of support from industry for Proposal 1 or 2.

Figure 14: industry views on Proposal 1 and 2



However, these results are different to those received through the online survey, which a large number of accommodation providers submitted through. Just under 75 percent of industry survey submitters supported Proposal 1, compared to 50 percent for Proposal 2.⁴

There are two distinct views emerging from industry submissions:

- Accommodation providers, including camping ground owners, tend to dislike freedom campers accessing their facilities for free, so support stronger freedom camping requirements. More often than not, accommodation providers prefer Proposal 1 over

⁴ The reason this one result has been reported here (and not on other issues) is that the level of support shown through the survey submissions significantly differs to that expressed in the written submissions we received from industry.

Proposal 2, as it is seen as introducing comparatively tighter requirements for those camping in vehicles than Proposal 1.

- Rental hire companies tended to prefer Proposal 2.

Industry quotes

As a business owner I accept the fact that we sell a service and that there are people who do not want to buy it, however that does not mean that Councils and Government should be expected to or prepared to provide the same services for free. – Top 10 Timaru

“We believe Proposal One is too restrictive and likely to create a high level of non-compliance. A blanket rule that any type of freedom camping must be in a certified self-contained vehicle (CSCV) assumes that people will always use the on-board toilet or else stay in alternative accommodation with toilet facilities. We do not have confidence this will occur and it is likely campers will find non-compliant locations. Proposal Two at least acknowledges that access to external toilets is an important part of managing freedom camping. It creates the ability for local bodies to manage the issues through the provision of suitable infrastructure.” – Tourism Industry Aotearoa

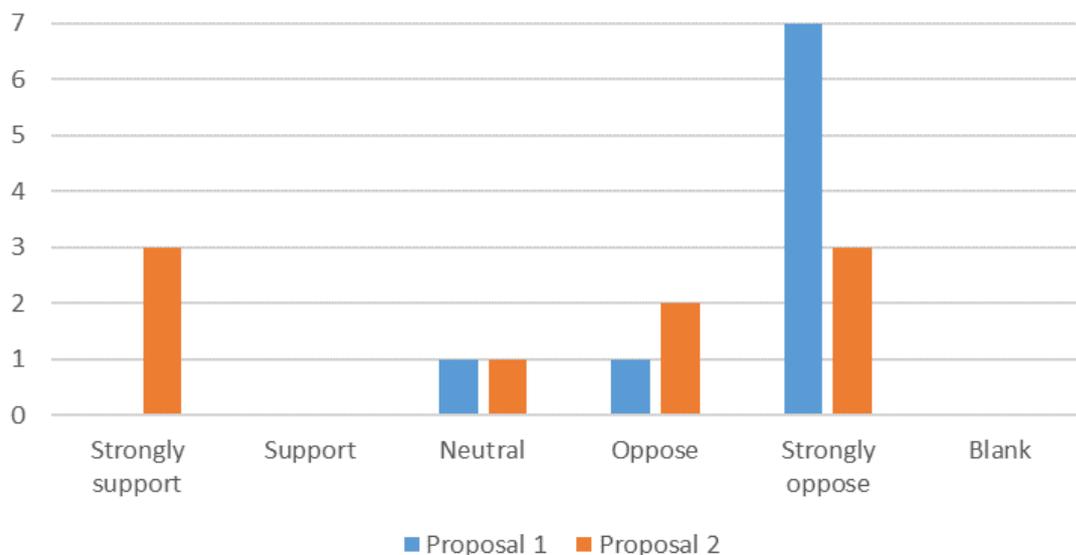
“What is needed is more consistency in how freedom camping is regulated around the country. Current settings do not make for a good visitor experience when each territorial authority has their own way of managing campers. We believe these measures go some way to rectify the existing inconsistency, as well as providing more tools for dealing with environmental impact and inconsiderate campers – all of which improves the visitor experience.” – Hospitality New Zealand

Camping organisations’ views

As seen in the graph below, camping organisations do not support either Proposal 1 or Proposal 2. However, camping organisations prefer Proposal 2 if either are to be introduced.

Camping organisations are also concerned that the proposed changes go too far and focus too much on the vehicle, rather than the behaviour. There is also some concern about the definition of a tent with regards to Proposal 1.

Figure 15: camping organisations’ views on Proposal 1 and 2



Camping organisation quotes

“Under this proposal [Proposal 1] people with tents would be allowed to freedom camp ‘without a toilet’ where a council bylaw permitted it however a fisherman with a portable toilet sleeping in his ute would not. This proposal creates considerable anomalies as an awning is considered to be a tent and some camping vehicles are unable to be technically certified for self-containment. People using some teardrop campers would be unable to freedom camp in their vehicle but would be able to in a tent without a toilet and cars with roof top tents would be able camp as they use a tent by definition.” – NZ Lifestyle Camping

“[Proposal 2] provides scope to better manage freedom camping, but also places the onus on local authorities and DOC to provide suitable facilities at well frequented locations. It is to be noted that quite often the attraction for being there is on adjacent public conservation land administered by DOC, but the road location itself is managed by a local authority. In that scenario it is important that DOC still contributes to the provision and maintenance of suitable roadside facilities.” – Federated Mountain Clubs

“The NZMCA would agree with Proposal 2 over 1 as it offers more opportunities for responsible campers that do not travel in certified self-contained vehicles and does not apply to conservation estate or regional parks.” – New Zealand Motor Caravan Association

Other groups

Other groups, such as community or ratepayers associations, and non-governmental organisations, are generally in support of a new rule for freedom camping in a vehicle. These groups tend to support Proposal 1 over Proposal 2.

Quotes from other groups

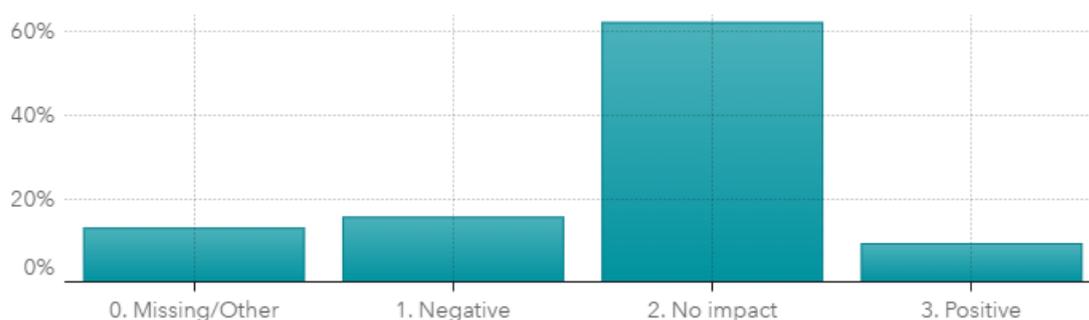
“No exceptions, if vehicles aren’t fully self-contained they should be in the local camping ground” – Westshore Residents and Development Association

“We believe that all vehicles need to be certified and that cars are excluded as being a self-contained vehicle. It is too small to be used as a camper or place to live.” – Golden Bay Promotion Association

Expected costs

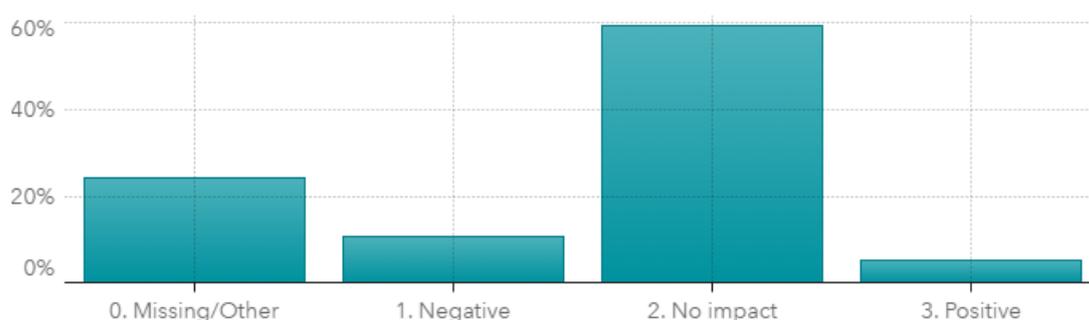
62 percent of individual submitters do not consider that Proposal 1 would have an impact on them. Many individual submitters note they do not own a business, or that they have a vehicle that is already self-contained. Of the 16 percent that expected that Proposal 1 would have a negative financial impact on them, this was mostly due to needing to upgrade their vehicles to be certified as self-contained. 9 percent of individual submitters thought there would be a positive financial impact as a result of Proposal 1, and 13 percent either did not answer the question or provided an alternate answer.

Figure 16: individual submitters' views on the expected financial impact of Proposal 1



These findings on the cost are similar to those for Proposal 2.

Figure 17: individual submitters' views on the expected financial impact of Proposal 2



However, many individual submitters noted that if Proposal 4 was adopted, then Proposal 1 and/or Proposal 2 would have a negative cost impact on them.

The full financial cost implications of the Government proposals, as provided to us through the public consultation process, are set out on page 36 in this summary of submissions.

Key stakeholders views differ slightly to the public

Key stakeholders held slightly different views than the public when it came to the costs of Proposal 1 and 2:

- 73 percent of key stakeholders that discussed it are concerned that Proposal 1 would significantly increase the costs of freedom camping (15 discussed in total).
- 29 of the 85 key stakeholders are concerned that Proposal 2 would place further pressure on existing infrastructure, or require more infrastructure to be built.

Quotes on costs

"This proposal will have a direct financial impact on our business. We have nearly 700 vehicles in our fleet and 120 of those campers are not self-contained campervans. The impact will be increased further if there is a requirement to have plumbed in toilets and not accept portable toilets which comply with the present legislation. The financial cost estimate to our business could be in the vicinity of \$10 million." – a tourism business

"Proposal 1 relies heavily on compliance and infringement to deliver the proposed reduction in waste and is quite narrow in scope. For this approach to work, there needs to be an emphasis on the regulatory system and the mechanisms to effectively manage compliance and infringements. We support Proposal 2, as it is broader than Proposal 1. It could also reduce the non-compliance risk associated with Proposal 1, by incentivising the staying at sites with appropriate facilities. For this proposal to work, we support additional investment in short-

term and permanent solutions to ensure the management of any additional congestion at these sites.” – Rental Vehicle Association New Zealand

“We also note that if Proposal 1 is enacted, it will likely create a need for a significant uplift in enforcement activity. To the degree that the costs are not recovered through infringements, the cost for this will be borne by the ratepayer unless it is subsidised. Proposal 1 would need to be supported alongside a stronger infringement regime, a regulatory system for registering self-contained vehicles and strengthening the requirements for self-contained vehicles.” – Local Government New Zealand

What you told us the exceptions should be

There were mixed views from the public with regards to proposed exceptions to Proposal 1 or 2. Some submissions expressed the view that no exceptions should be permitted. Other submissions expressed support for exceptions to the rules under the two proposals for:

- Those with an on-board toilet.
- Those that need to sleep on the side of the road (which is currently allowed for in the Act).
- Those with access to toilet facilities (either on the vehicle or at place).
- Specific groups, including:
 - People experiencing homelessness.
 - Recreational campers, such as people whose primary activity is hunting, fishing, or surfing.

There were also mixed views on the treatment of tents under Proposal 1. Some submissions considered that there should be no tent exception for Proposal 1. Others considered that tents should be kept separate for Proposal 1.

Quotes on exemptions

“The Council would like MBIE to consider other exceptions to the rules of freedom camping such as hunting, fishing, and surfing if it adopts option 1” – South Taranaki District Council

“Councils could identify sites that they are happy to exclude where it is ok to freedom camp if there are appropriate toilets available” – individual submission

What we heard about Proposal 3

What we consulted on

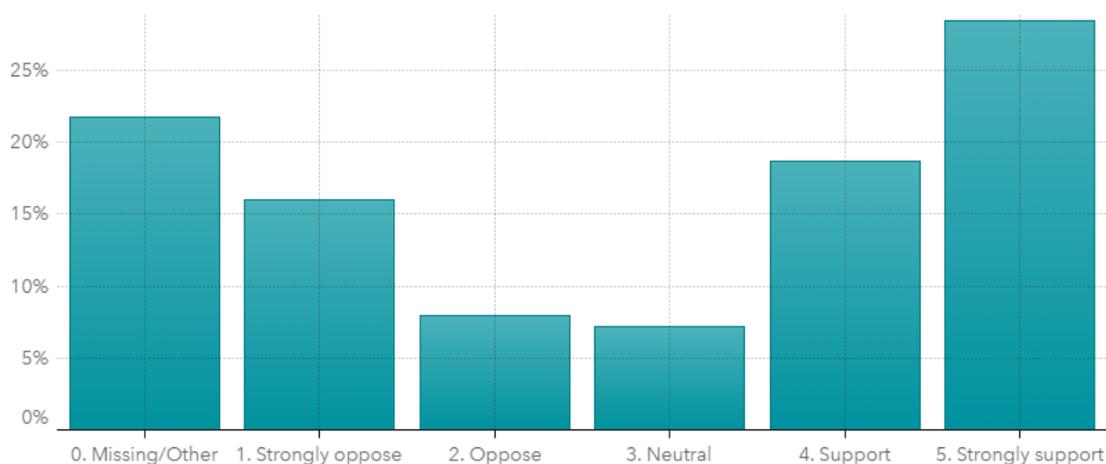
The discussion document and online survey asked for feedback on:

- Whether a regulatory regime should be established for self-contained vehicles, including:
 - Who the regulator should be
 - Whether a national register for self-contained vehicles should be established.
- Whether the infringement regime for freedom camping should be strengthened, including:
 - Whether higher penalties should be introduced
 - Whether new offences should be introduced
 - Whether the grounds for vehicle confiscation should be broadened
 - Whether rental vehicle companies should be required to pass on fines to those who hire vehicles.
- Whether local authorities and/or DOC should be able to enforce the rules on other government-managed land.

What you told us

Just under half of individual submitters support Proposal 3. We consider the likely reason Proposal 3 received less support than Proposal 1 and Proposal 2 is because this proposal included a range of different components, some of which are not well received (for example, broadening the grounds of vehicle confiscation). This can be seen in the high proportion of submitters who fit in the “missing/other” category. There is also a slight connection to the requirement for rental companies to collect fines from campers.

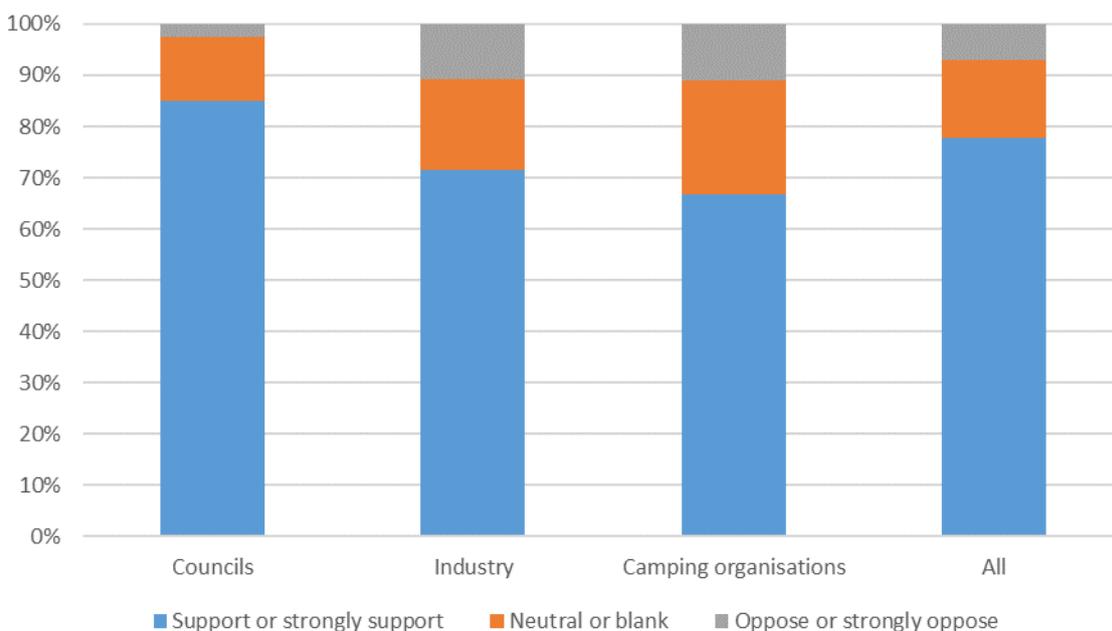
Figure 18: individual submitters’ views on Proposal 3



The views of key stakeholders

There is clear support for the introduction of a regulatory regime across all key stakeholder groups – including local authorities, industry, camping organisations and community groups.

Figure 19: key stakeholder views on Proposal 3

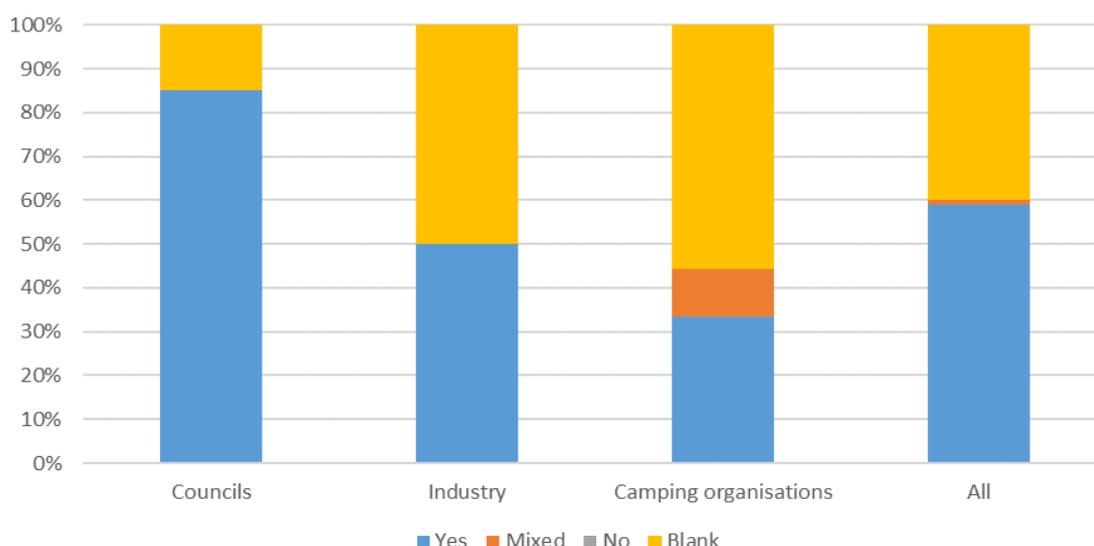


Only 12 submissions from key stakeholders mentioned who the regulator should be. These include:

- 7 for Waka Kotahi as the regulator.
- 3 for the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. This was the option proposed in the Regulatory Impact Statement which was published alongside the discussion document.
- 2 for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
- 1 which stated it should be industry led, and 2 for Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ).

Many key submitters, including most local authorities, stated support for a national register of self-contained vehicles.

Figure 20: key stakeholder views on introducing a national register for self-contained vehicles



While not mentioned in all key stakeholder submissions, having a national register of self-contained vehicles was seen as one of the most significant changes the Government could introduce at most of the public and targeted meetings held by MBIE during April and May 2021. This was because a self-contained vehicle register could:

- Allow enforcement officers to accurately assess whether a vehicle is self-contained or not, without entering the vehicle.
- Close the loophole which allows vehicle owners to falsely claim their vehicle is self-contained.
- Allow prospective vehicle buyers to check whether a vehicle is self-contained or not.
- Improve public trust in the certification of a vehicle as self-contained.

Quotes on a national self-contained vehicle register

“Fraudulent claims of self-certification be infringeable and to be enforced by use of a central register, rather than have officers enter the vehicle to check the fittings” – Taituarā – Local Government Professionals Aotearoa

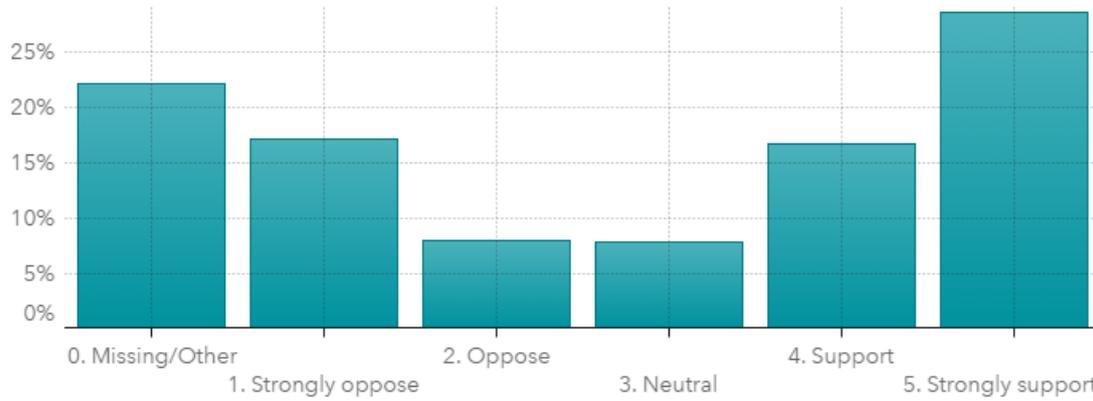
“At present officers have no rights of entry into a vehicle to assess toilets or plumbing and we support having a certification system which allows a vehicle to be assessed from the outside.” – Greater Wellington Regional Council

“The assessment for self-contained certification is already sufficiently rigorous. The issue lies with vehicles bypassing this assessment and fraudulently claiming to be certified self-contained” – Ashburton District Council

Support for a stronger infringement regime

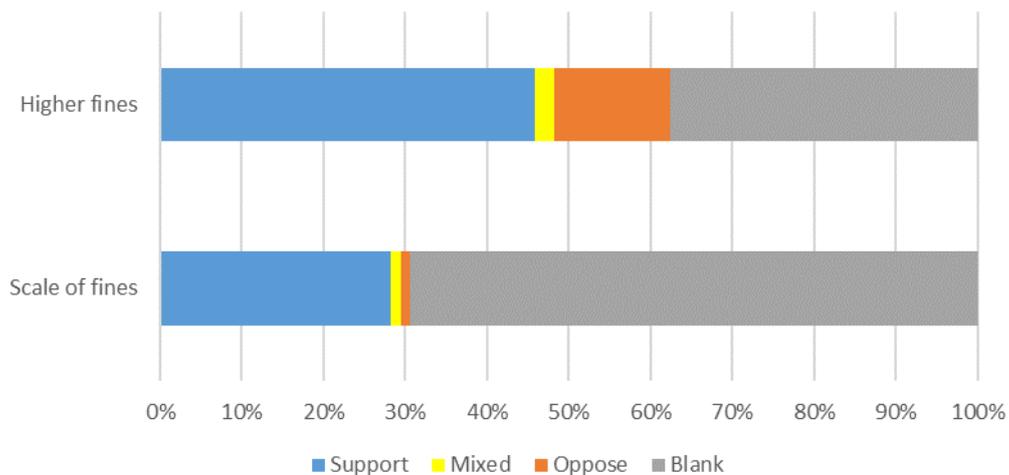
Just under half of individual submitters support or strongly support strengthening the infringement regime for freedom camping (of which the default infringement fee is set at \$200).

Figure 21: individual submitters' views on strengthening the infringement regime



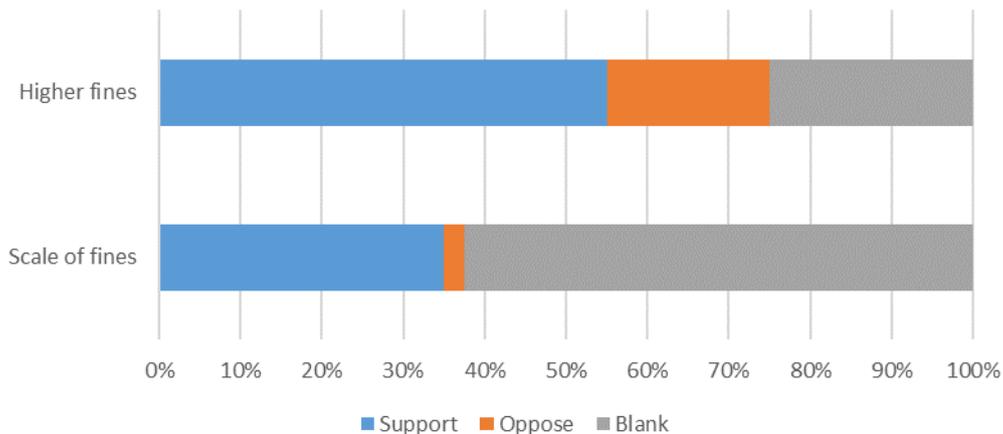
Key stakeholders were much more in favour of higher fines than the general public. Of the 57 submissions from key stakeholders that discussed infringements, most were in favour of higher infringements and/or scalable infringements and offences (also known as a tiered approach to infringements).

Figure 22: key stakeholder views on higher fines



Most opposition for increased infringements came from local authorities, though a majority of this group still supported increased fines and a scale of fines (where their submission mentioned it).

Figure 23: local authority views on higher fines



Increased level of infringement

There was no consensus with regards to what the new maximum fine should be for freedom camping infringements. A range of views were expressed by individual submitters, including:

- There should be no fines for people who freedom camp in breach of the rules (including those in bylaws or notices).
- Keeping the maximum fine at \$200.
- Increasing the fine to align with other infringement regimes set out in legislation (for example, the Reserves Act 1977).
- Increasing the fine to \$500.
- Increasing the fine to \$1000. This is the maximum infringement currently allowed for under the Freedom Camping Act 2011.
- Increasing the fine to \$5000-10,000.

Some public submissions also supported introducing a scale of offences.

Quotes on a national self-contained vehicle register

“Tourists visiting will be left with a very sour taste if they receive a \$1000 fine for being in the wrong location, having a nap because they were tired or making breakfast. Our rules are so complicated and simply not practical. This will impact local business, international relationships with travel agents and ultimately brand NZ.” – Spaceships

“A robust and effective fine collection system will positively alter some campers’ behaviours. The message must be clear that if you are willing to breach our rules, there will be tangible consequences.” – Buller District Council

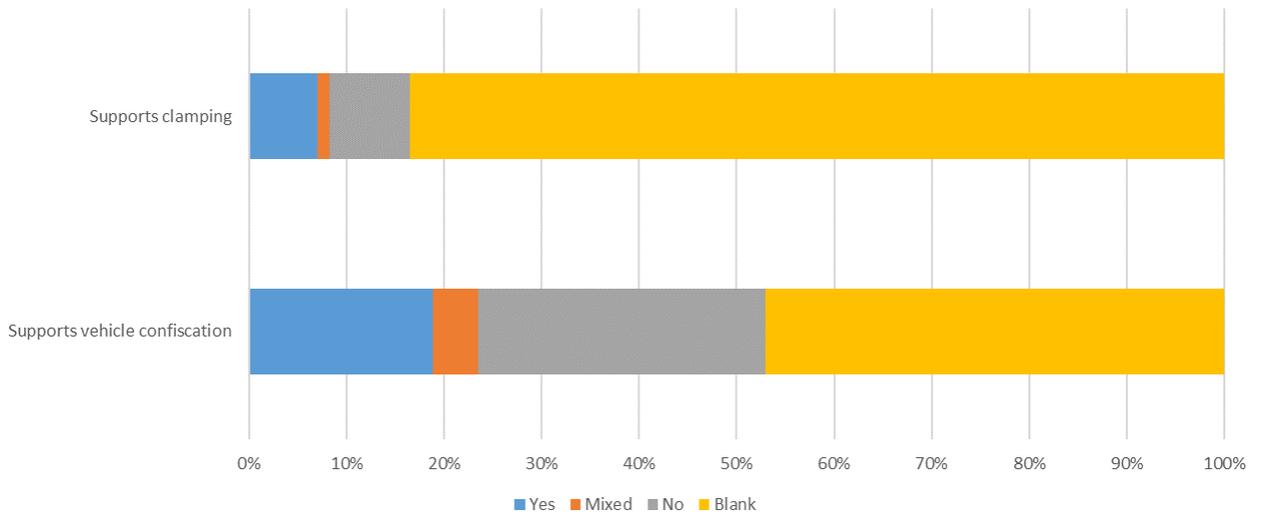
“LGNZ supports an increase in the fine as increased fines are good for deterrence. Currently, the infringements are not enough to cover some districts in their entirety; A fine of \$500 would make it very clear that non-compliance is not tolerated, whilst covering costs of enforcement appropriately.” – Local Government NZ

Confiscation

Individual submitters did not support broadening the conditions for vehicle confiscation. However, a small proportion thought repeat offenders should have their vehicles confiscated.

Some key stakeholders also discussed vehicle clamping as well as vehicle confiscation in their submission. Just over 40 percent of the key submitters who discussed expanded grounds for vehicle clamping supported it, and 35 percent for expanded grounds for clamping.

Figure 24: key stakeholder views on vehicle clamping and confiscation



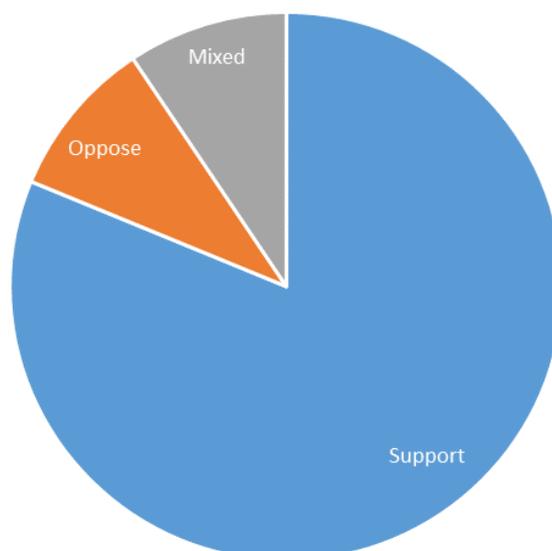
This reinforces what we heard in our public meetings and targeted meetings with local authorities, where many people did not think it was proportionate to have expanded grounds for vehicle confiscations, and councils noted that it would be expensive to confiscate vehicles, as they would be responsible for storing and securing them.

Some councils also noted that vehicle clamping was not an effective mechanism for freedom campers, as this would “reward non-compliance at place” – in that it would inadvertently allow someone to overstay.

Enforceability on other Government land

Of the 32 key stakeholders that discussed it, 26 agreed that local government should have the ability to enforce freedom camping rules on other Crown land (such as that administered by Waka Kotahi). Those councils that did not support this part of the proposal were concerned about the additional costs on council to enforce rules on land which is not currently managed by councils.

Figure 25: key stakeholder views on whether local authorities should have the ability to enforce freedom camping rules on other Crown land



Quotes on enforceability on other Crown land

“The ability to infringe freedom campers on other government-owned land would be an advantage. Agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Waka Kotahi are typically under-resourced locally to deal with these matters. Given illegal freedom camping affects a community regardless of who owns the land, it would be an advantage for Council, who are resourced and deal with such matters, to monitor and be able to enforce the rules on other land.” – Napier City Council

“The current situation, whereby the Freedom Camping Act 2011 only covers local authority areas and the conservation estate and not all government-owned or managed land, means there can be a lack of consistency in approach to managing freedom camping in a local authority area.” Kaikōura District Council

“Council has partnered with these agencies [LINZ, Waka Kotahi, DOC and Contact Energy] with success in recent years on managing camping in the region, however there are not always processes or funding mechanisms in place to allow for a coordinated approach.” – Central Otago District Council

“Council would not support, however, any proposal to require councils to [...] enforce rules on any other government owned land. ‘Enabling’ this to occur is acceptable, and leaves room for local councils to consider this option, but ‘requiring’ it without considering Council’s capacity and/or providing funding is not acceptable.” – Kāpiti District Council

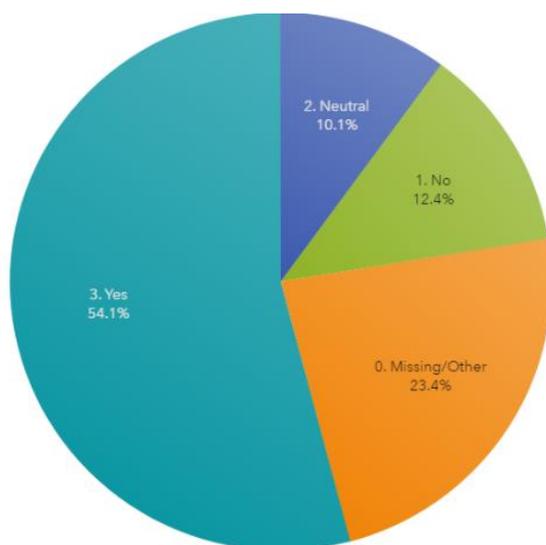
Faster infringements

Only 15 of 85 key stakeholders noted that infringement notifications should be faster than the current period.

View on rental companies passing on fines or being held responsible for payment of fine

Individual submitters mostly support requiring rental companies to pass on any fines to vehicle hirers.

Figure 26: individual submitters’ views on fines being passed to vehicle hirers



Of those 85 key submissions we looked at in further detail:

- All of the submissions from local government that discussed liability for infringements (28) thought that rental companies should be required to pass on infringements to hirers, or that the rental company should be responsible for payment of the infringement.

- No industry submissions considered that industry should be held responsible for payment of infringements incurred by hirers. Only two submissions from industry thought that industry should be required to pass on infringements to visitors.

Quotes on infringements/fines

“It would not be appropriate to penalise rental companies in that situation even when they have been co-operative and taken reasonable steps to enforce the recovery of the infringement, as ultimately the conduct of the customer is beyond the control of the rental company.” – Tourism Holding Limited

“Councils need support / tools in place to address the low collection rate of infringement fines issued to international visitors.” – New Plymouth District Council

“Council supports initiatives to strengthen the infringement scheme and pass on infringement notices. Council note a bond system or similar may lessen the burden on these companies” – Central Otago District Council

“Liability of the fine cannot ultimately sit with the rental company if a customer cancels their credit card or their bank overrides the charge.” – Spaceships

“Where fines are issued to the operator, these come by mail long after the hire is completed and the customer has potentially left the country, making it incredibly difficult to recoup these debts.” – MadCampers

What we heard about Proposal 4

What we consulted on

The discussion document asked for public feedback on whether the requirements for self-contained vehicles needed to be strengthened.

This includes looking at:

- The minimum sanitary requirements for self-contained vehicles. For example, whether particular types of toilet should or should not be allowed.
- Other requirements for self-contained vehicles. For example, the number of days a vehicle can support self-containment (for example, three days).
- The process for certifying self-contained vehicles.

We clarified our language on Proposal 4 mid-consultation

During the early stages of consultation we received feedback that the different language used about toilets in proposal 4 – including "permanently plumbed toilet" and "fixed toilet" – was ambiguous and unclear. We were told that this made it difficult for submitters to determine what they were providing feedback on, as a permanently plumbed toilet has no legal definition and could refer to both the toilet and the black water tank, whereas a fixed toilet only refers to the toilet. We clarified that when we used the term permanently plumbed, we were referring to a permanent (fixed) toilet (as defined in the NZS Standard), and apologised for the confusion.

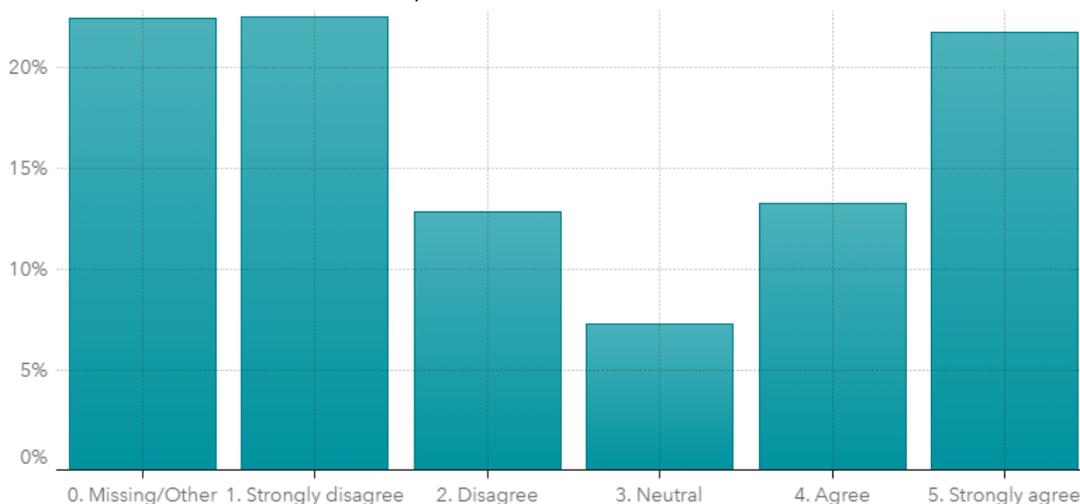
We also noted that as a part of consulting on Proposal 4, we wanted feedback on whether self-contained vehicles should be required to have both permanent toilets and permanent black water tanks (as opposed to those toilets with removable black water tanks).

The feedback reported in this section reflects all feedback we received on this proposal. This included feedback received both before and after the clarification.

What you told us

Support for strengthening the requirements for a vehicle to be certified as self-contained was split between individual submitters. Around 35 percent of respondents supported the proposal and 35 percent of respondents opposed the proposal.

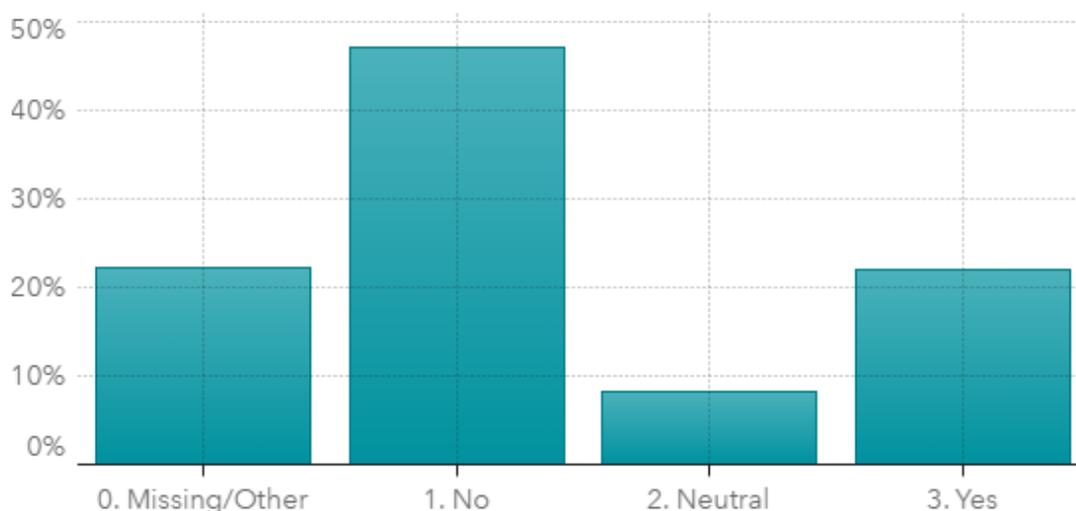
Figure 27: individual submitters' views on Proposal 4



Minimum sanitary requirements

The level of support for Proposal 4 is likely driven by the low level of support to require all self-contained vehicles to have a permanently plumbed toilet (which we made clear refers to a vehicle with a permanently fixed toilet but not plumbed black water tank). 22 percent of individual submitters thought that this requirement should be in place, compared to 47 percent who thought it should not.

Figure 28: individual submitters' views on whether a permanent toilet should be the minimum sanitary requirement for self-contained vehicles

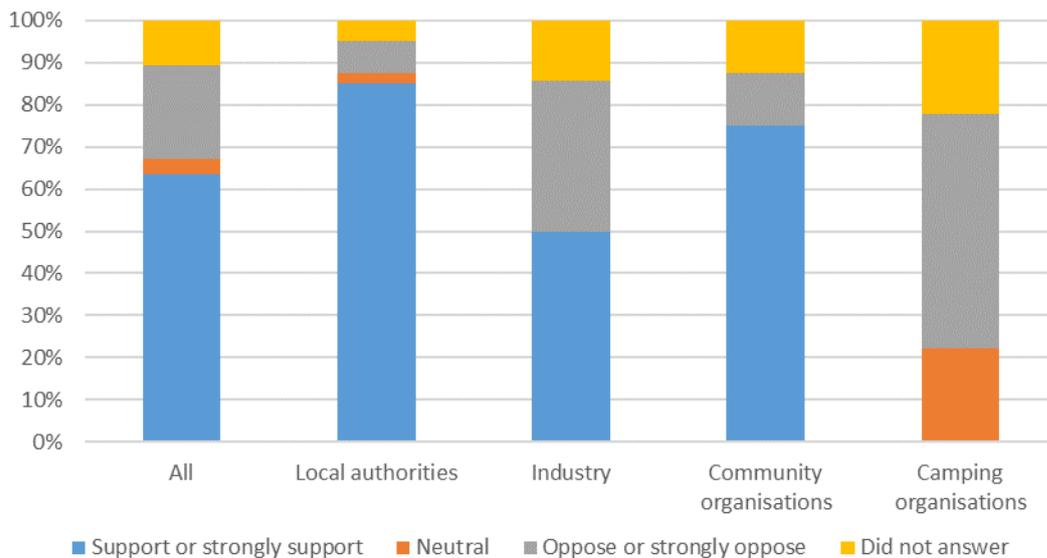


Some individual submitters also thought there are alternate or additional aspects to focus on when setting minimum sanitary requirements. These focused on requiring toilets to be separate or concealed from the rest of the vehicle, or having a minimum number of people a vehicle could be certified for.

Views of key stakeholders on Proposal 4 and minimum sanitary requirements

Submissions from key stakeholders, however, indicated greater support for stronger requirements for self-contained vehicles. Just over 60 percent of the submissions from key stakeholders supported stronger requirements for self-contained vehicles. Support from local authorities and community organisations was the strongest, whereas camping organisations considered that the current requirements for self-contained vehicles were either about right, or too restrictive.

Figure 29: key stakeholder views on Proposal 4



Of this, 27 key stakeholders considered that permanent toilets should be required, and 19 considered that portable toilets are acceptable. Local authorities were most likely to suggest that permanent toilets should be required, with industry and camping organisations more opposed to requiring permanent toilets.

The reasons key stakeholders supported strengthened self-contained vehicle requirements include:

- The current minimum requirements are not sanitary – they allow people to eat, sleep and deal with their waste in the same space.
- Some self-contained vehicles are not certified for the right number of people – for example, three people can hire and sleep in a vehicle that is certified for two.
- The requirement for a toilet to be used while a bed is made up is subjective.
- It will remove those freedom campers in small self-contained cars or vans, which are considered by local authorities to be the most problematic freedom campers. Some local authorities consider raising the standard to be pivotal in implementing Proposal 1 or 2.

The reasons key stakeholders opposed stronger self-contained vehicle requirements include:

- The current requirements are sufficient, and issues are coming from those who are more often than not staying in vehicles that are not certified self-contained (for example, those experiencing homelessness), or that are not compliant with the current standard.
- Even if people have access to a plumbed toilet in a private room, people will still choose to use public facilities or go in nature.
- The free market should be left to decide what vehicles should be used.
- It will reduce access to freedom camping sites for those with less money and older vehicles.
- People should be able to use toilet tents (not currently allowed under the voluntary standard).

Quotes on minimum sanitary requirements

“Hygiene considerations mean a toilet should only be used if sealed off from food storage and cooking areas.” – Individual submission

“Yes I really think that a separate room for toilets is the only way that effectively they are actually used. I don’t think that regardless of plumbing people use toilets unless they offer privacy.” – Individual submission

“Your first problem seems to be people complying with the existing standard. If they can’t practically use the toilet when the bed is made up then it’s not compliant [...] So they’re already non-compliant... A permanently plumbed toilet adds a significant amount of weight to the vehicle and anyone doing this properly will need to spend a fortune in installation and making sure their vehicle/weight is compliant. Even large motor homes don’t use plumbed toilets – they are expensive and messy to empty compared to cassette toilets.” – Individual submission

“We should not accept or create a regulatory environment that enables cooking, sleeping and toileting in the same small space.” – Christchurch City Council

“One way forward, as noted in the discussion document, is to amend the standard so that fixed, plumbed toilets are the only acceptable toilets for self-contained vehicles to gain certification. However, we consider further work is still needed to determine whether this is the best option. It may be that strengthening the standard to remove the least effective and/or least likely to be used toilets (such as portable and cassette toilets, for example), would result in the same improved outcomes as requiring permanent, plumbed toilets. Furthermore, there are practical privacy concerns, hygiene considerations, and odour and ventilation issues when considering what constitutes a toilet and where it should go in a vehicle. The new requirements should reflect an appropriately high standard to address these matters.” – Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Other vehicle requirements

Views of individual submitters

A number of individual submitters also noted other requirements that government should consider. These included:

- Health and safety considerations. These sometimes focused on fire safety, but also the safety of those that use features of the vehicles (for example, having the ability to dispose of black water without endangering the camper or others due to the size and weight of the removable tank).
- Introducing specific or minimum space requirements for self-contained vehicles.
- Specifying what types of vehicles which can (or cannot) be certified as self-contained.
- Removing the ‘blue sticker’ warrant.⁵
- Removing the ability of rental companies to financially penalise people for using toilets in hired vehicles. These related to a common concern that some rental companies charge a penalty or deposit to encourage those hiring vehicles not to use toilets in the vans.

⁵ The blue sticker is the sticker a vehicle receives which signifies it is certified self-contained under the voluntary Standard NZS 5465:2001. It goes on the back of a vehicle that is certified self-contained. It is separate from the blue warrant card on the front of the vehicle, though some people use them interchangeably.

Quotes on other vehicle requirements

“All living functions eg. cooking and ablutions should be able to be carried out within the confines of a vehicle.” – Individual submission

“For personal H&S considering the weight of water (fresh or grey) all CSC vehicles should have on-board tanks. Lifting roll-away tanks/carts (eg. 37/38-70 litres) is not appropriate for anyone of any age or gender.” – Individual submission

“I think a fire extinguisher and some kind of window covering for all windows should be required. Potentially carbon monoxide detectors too.” – Individual submission

“I would suggest a minimal of X m² of space in a van. Like in the Netherlands you need to have at least 1m² of space to work safely in. I think some vehicles are just way too small to camp in short term or some even live in them. Just unhealthy. So a minimum space should be defined for vehicles suitable for camping long or short term.” – Individual submission

“The requirements around the use of the toilet needs minimum requirements like that for the amount of water and grey waste capacity. A minimum requirement of head room of 1m above the toilet and a floor area of say 700x700mm for a portable toilet. This will take away any interpretation inconsistencies.” – Individual submission

“Everything is perfectly adequate it’s the slider vans with fake SC stickers that are the problem, so make them illegal and most of the rubbish at camp and picnic sites comes from day trippers the young ones.” – Individual submission

Views from local authorities, peak bodies and industry

Other minimum vehicle requirements suggested by the key stakeholders include:

- A shower, bathroom sink and basin. The current voluntary standard requires vehicles to have a bathroom sink and basin, but not a shower.
- A minimum height requirement for self-contained vehicles.
- A maximum tonnage weight for self-contained vehicles.
- Designating appropriate classes of vehicle.

Key stakeholders held mixed views on who should be able to certify self-contained vehicles:

- 12 key stakeholders thought that it should be a plumber.
- 8 key stakeholders thought it should be a skilled person.
- 4 key stakeholders thought anyone should be able to certify a vehicle as self-contained.

Costs of the proposed changes

As highlighted on page 22:

- Around 60 percent of individual submitters thought Proposal 1 or 2 would not have a financial impact on them.
- Around 7 percent of individual submitters thought Proposal 1 or 2 would have a positive financial impact on them.
- Around 13 percent of individual submitters thought Proposal 1 or 2 would have a negative financial impact on them.
- Many individual submitters noted that there could be higher costs to them if the standard for self-contained vehicles was strengthened (e.g. to require permanent toilets or black water tanks).

Upgrading a vehicle to meet the current voluntary standard – NZS 5465:2001

In our discussion document we stated that we thought it would cost \$500 to \$800 to upgrade a non-compliant vehicle to meet the voluntary NZ Standard for self-contained vehicles. Individual submissions that provided feedback on this topic are close to the figure we provided:

- When excluding those cost estimates of \$3000 or more; it would cost individual submitters \$929 on average to upgrade a vehicle to meet the current voluntary standard. Higher costs were excluded from this estimate as it is out of the accepted cost range provided to us by camping organisations.
- When including those cost estimates of \$3000 or more, it would cost individual submitters \$1097 on average to upgrade their vehicle to the current voluntary standard.

One camping organisation, the Responsible Camping Association incorporated (RCAi), suggests that it would cost \$800 to \$1500 to convert a vehicle to meet the current voluntary NZ Standard.

Upgrading a vehicle to have a cassette (fixed) toilet

Some individual submissions specified the cost of upgrading a vehicle to have a fixed cassette toilet. Submitters noted that it would, on average, cost just over \$1600 to install a fixed cassette toilet in a vehicle, including vehicle modification and labour). However submitters noted that for some vehicle types this may cost more.

Upgrading a vehicle to meet the requirement of a plumbed toilet and permanent black water tank

In our discussion document we stated that a higher standard of toilet would likely result in greater costs – and sought public feedback on roughly how much this could cost. The New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA) estimated that:

- Upgrading a portable toilet to a plumbed-in toilet would cost \$6,690
- Upgrading a cassette toilet to a plumbed-in toilet would cost \$3,790.

NZMCA also noted that more complex vehicle conversions may incur higher costs.

Individual submitters provided slightly higher cost estimates:

- When excluding those cost estimates of \$15,000 or more; it would cost \$5362 on average to upgrade a vehicle to have a plumbed toilet and permanent black water tank.
- When including those cost estimates of \$15,000 or more; it would cost \$8817 on average to upgrade a vehicle to have a plumbed toilet and permanent black water tank.

Vehicle no longer able to be certified self-contained

Total vehicle loss

Some individual submitters noted that it would not be possible for them to upgrade their vehicle to have a plumbed toilet and permanent black water tank. The most common reason for this is that the vehicle could not be upgraded as it would place it over the maximum weight allowed for its class.

On average, these submitters noted that the total vehicle loss for them would be \$48,864. These figures ranged from \$5,000 to \$300,000.

Alternative accommodation

Some individual submitters noted that they would no longer be able to freedom camp, and would be required to seek alternative accommodation, including at commercial campgrounds. In the figures that were provided to us, this averaged to:

- \$59.4 per night.
- \$6506 per year. This figure is likely more relevant to those who freedom camp for substantial parts of the year.

Some submitters also noted that it may not be straightforward for families or individuals to freedom camp at commercial campgrounds, noting that in some areas many commercial camping grounds are used to temporarily house people experiencing homelessness.

Alternative accommodation quotes

"In Auckland especially, commercial campgrounds are now little more than overcrowded homeless caravan sites. [They are] totally unsuited to families on holiday. It's almost impossible to find somewhere suitable to camp in Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington, or any of the major cities." – individual submission

Conversely, some accommodation providers noted that Proposal 1 or 2 would have a positive financial impact on them. These accommodation providers estimated that it would result in \$40,000 more coming into their business, on average. This ranged from \$12,500 to \$100,000. Other accommodation providers noted that they would see an increase of 30 to 40 percent more revenue.

Local authority costs

Key stakeholders, in particular local authorities, identified that there would be additional costs on local government (and by extension the Department of Conservation) as a result of the proposals:

- 28 key stakeholders, including 17 local authorities, noted that there would need to be additional funding to support enforcement efforts, in particular for Proposal 1.
- 29 key stakeholders identified that Proposal 2 would require additional infrastructure, in particular toilets, to be built.

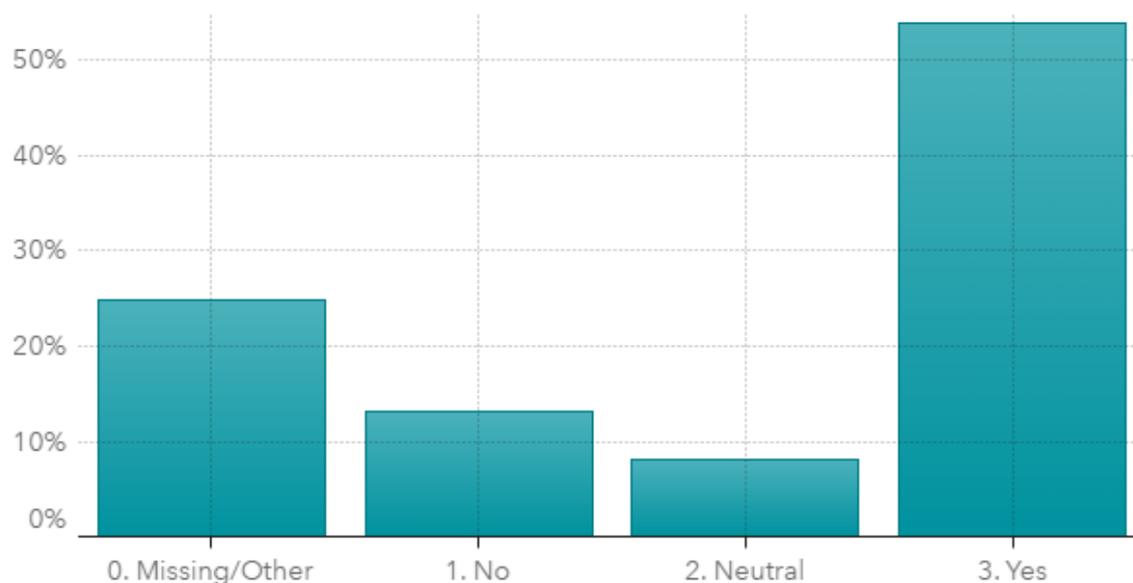
Local authority cost quotes

"If this proposal [Proposal 2] were to be adopted, financial support to local authorities from the Government for the upgrade of toilet facilities would no doubt be appreciated. It is likely that other local authorities have freedom camping areas in locations without toilet facilities or with limited facilities that would require upgrading under this proposal." – Napier City Council

What we heard about transition arrangements

54 percent of individual submitters considered current self-containment certificates should remain valid until expiry, if new certification requirements are introduced.

Figure 30: individual submitters' views on whether existing self-containment warrants should remain valid until they expire



Other transition arrangements

A range of views were expressed by individual submitters with regards to the transition arrangements that should be in place. These included:

- No transition period.
- A time specific period, ranging from six months to three years.
- A staggered or targeted transition period for different types of vehicles.
- Different transition periods for privately owned vehicles as opposed to commercially owned vehicles.
- Allowing some vehicles that are certified and can be currently verified on a database to see out their certification.
- Waiting until vehicle ownership changes.
- Waiting to implement changes until the international border restrictions are relaxed to enable the return of international visitors.

Submitters also recommended a variety of considerations for determining how to manage the transition period, including:

- Modelling the transition period based on other regulatory regimes (e.g. alcohol licencing).
- Ensuring there are sufficient resources and capacity for vehicles to be recertified at the same time.
- Ensuring that people are well educated on any new rules and vehicle requirements that are put in place.

30 of 85 key stakeholders considered that there should be some form of transition arrangement in place.

Table 2: key stakeholders' views on what the transition period should look like

Transition period	Number of key submitters
One year transition period	9
See out existing voluntary certification	4
18 month transition period	4
Time specific (not specified)	4
Two year transition period	3
6 month transition period	2
Different transition periods for privately-owned and commercially-owned vehicles	1
12 month transition period, but see out certification for existing vehicles	1
Three year transition period	1
Five year transition period	1
No transition period	1

Five local authorities also requested that there be transition arrangements for those councils which have bylaws in place. They considered that any legislative changes would require them to update their bylaw where it referenced the current voluntary standard. One of these submissions noted that a minimum 12 month period would be required.

Quotes on transition period

"All vehicles under a certain length (maybe 6M) should be first. That would target the problem vehicles first then all others within a time period 1-2yrs? Sticker colour should change to eliminate the faked ones." – individual submission

"I think a distinction should be drawn between privately owned vehicles and vehicles used for hire. Vehicle privately owned and certified by one of the bodies that records the information in a database searchable by enforcement officers could retain their eligibility [...] No other vehicle can confidently be assumed to be suitable for freedom camping and thus should be barred until it has been appropriately certified." – individual submission

"With no international arrivals in the near future we have an ideal opportunity to get the changes in place we have a perfect transition period available." – individual submission

"Three years to get a new certification as this was the time for alcohol licences. It took the Auckland Council 3 years to get its local alcohol laws certified!" – individual submission

If there are more stringent requirements put in place there needs to be the availability of supplies in order for people to comply and sufficient people to carry out certification in all areas at a nominal cost otherwise the Government will find people not complying and there still will be problems and maybe even more issues.” – individual submission

“Suitable infrastructure including training of professional inspectors will take time so this needs to be allowed for.” – individual submission

“It is important that the transition towards the increased regulation occurs in a sustainable manner that does not unduly disadvantage freedom campers and does not put significant pressure on Council to deliver additional infrastructure that may not be currently budgeted for. Therefore, Council supports a transition of one year for uncertified vehicles to become certified, but where vehicles which are currently certified to the SCVS, enabling them to continue to be used for as long as the certification is valid (noting this could be up to 4 years)” – Rangitikei District Council

Considering costs of transition to vehicle owners

Some individual submissions indicated that the Government should take into account the cost of complying to the new standard when vehicle owners had already certified their vehicle. The main suggestions focused on:

- Making the first recertification for an existing certified vehicle be free of charge, or free of charge if done before the expiration date of the voluntary standard.
- Providing grants to upgrade or certify vehicles for those on low incomes.

What we heard about those experiencing homelessness

Individual submitter views

Many individual submitters strongly believed that any changes to the freedom camping system should include safeguards so that people experiencing homelessness are not disproportionately affected or marginalised by new legislation.

Common themes from individual submissions are:

- The proposals in the discussion document would marginalise or disproportionately affect the homeless community.
- There was no clear definition on what it meant to be homeless. Some submitters discussed how being homeless by choice is different to being homeless through circumstance.
- The dignity of people experiencing homelessness should not be affected by any freedom camping legalisation, rather, it needs to be upheld. As such, people who are experiencing homelessness, and are living in vehicles, should not have to worry about receiving fines.
- The people most likely to be experiencing homelessness are those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Māori and women. These submitters noted that any policy change needs to consider what the unintended consequences might be.
- Homelessness is best solved not through freedom camping, but in building more homes. This includes through building more tiny homes or making this easier to do.

Many individual submitters highlighted that a large number of people in New Zealand are forced to rely on their cars as a place to live, and that this should not be a freedom camping issue. Some suggested that providing more places to freedom camp could be beneficial to all, including people experiencing homelessness.

Key stakeholder views on those experiencing homelessness

Of the key stakeholders (37 of 85) and local authorities (32 of 40) that discussed it, most considered that local authorities were best placed to exercise their discretion when it came to people who are experiencing homeless, as opposed to making it exempt in legislation. Key stakeholders views on those experiencing homelessness were complex, and noted:

- The circumstances behind why someone was experiencing homelessness vary – and there should be different treatment for those who are experiencing homelessness compared to those that choose to live in their vehicle. Of the ten local authorities that discussed it, eight considered that those people who were experiencing homelessness should be treated differently from those who live in their vehicle.

- Maintenance of the law

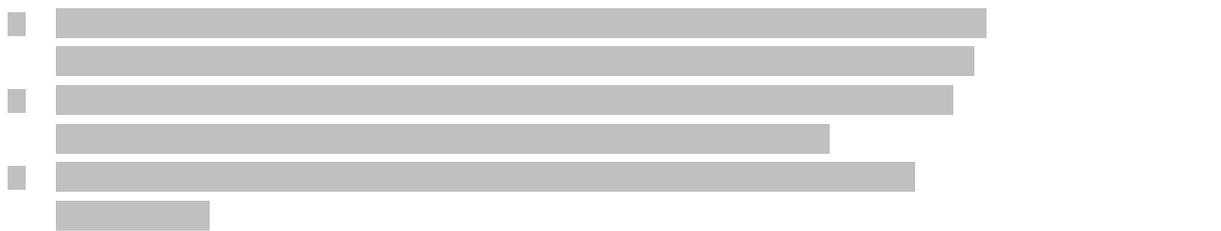
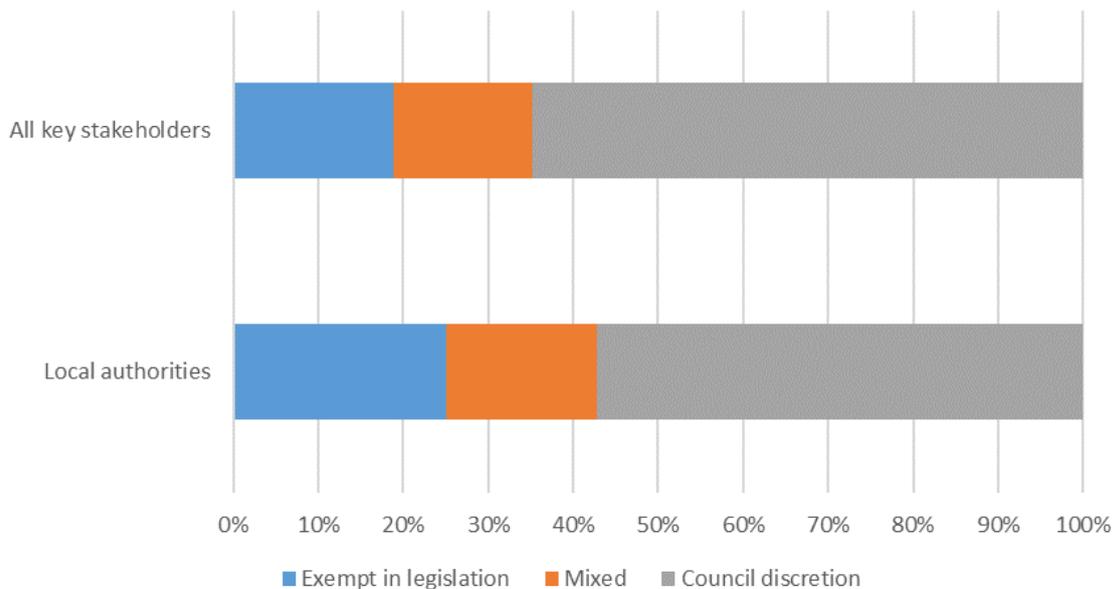


Figure 31: key submitters views on how homelessness should be treated in relation to freedom camping



Quotes on homelessness

“These new rules could negatively impact the homeless who live in their cars and do not have the financial ability to upgrade to being self-contained. Doing this would push them to having to live in unsafe and unhealthy environments.” – individual submitter

“I am deeply concerned about it being mandatory to be certified self-contained. There are many folk out there who have no choice but to live out of cars; there are women escaping domestic violence situations, folk who have had bad luck and are unemployed, and those with mental health issues who have nowhere to go. To impose this proposal makes already vulnerable people more exposed.” – individual submitter

“How do you define homelessness? I have no house by choice but do not consider myself homeless as my home is my van.” – individual submitter

"Campers "by choice" and homeless "not by choice" are polar opposites." – individual submitter

"I live full time in my vehicle, I work [and] am not on a benefit. I am certified self contained I follow all the current rules and regulations." – individual submitter

"I choose this lifestyle because I can't afford to live at today's current rent prices." – individual submitter

"Some of us live in our cars because we can't afford the costs of living in NZ. And some of us prefer to live this way. Let us be. We can't afford all the fancy stickers." – individual submitter

"Don't make the new rules impossible for us to pay for. In a car is better than no roof." – Individual submitter

"These proposals must help local authorities to manage this situation and not make matters worse for the people concerned for whom freedom camping may be their only affordable accommodation option. We recommend that, in these circumstances, rather than prosecution action being taken, a referral pathway be provided so they may be offered suitable local alternatives to freedom camping and access to other forms of assistance." – Waipa District Council

"Although behavioural issues and nuisance is often caused by rough sleepers, and not legitimate freedom campers, making them exempt would result in no one managing their behaviour or movements (falling through the gaps)." – Napier City Council

"There is an unavoidable interface between genuine freedom camping, people choosing to sleep in their cars [...] and homelessness. In light of this, LGNZ recommends that freedom camping is defined as an activity conducted by people visiting the district for recreational purposes only for a temporary period. Workers living in their vehicles and homelessness should be addressed as socio-economic matters via other channels, regulatory mechanisms, support systems and legislation." – Local Government New Zealand

"To avoid further disadvantage to vulnerable groups and in particular those who are homeless and living in vehicles, the ability for enforcement officers to exercise discretion must be maintained. This would enable judgements to be made on a case by case basis and lead to the most equitable outcome." – Western Bay of Plenty Council

"Maintenance of the law

[REDACTED]

" – Whanganui District Council

"Homelessness is a complex and multifaceted issue that needs a comprehensive Government led approach. The question of whether or not homeless people should be exempt from a new regulatory system for freedom camping is one minor consideration in a large issue." – Golden Bay Community Board

Alternative proposals

What we consulted on

The discussion document asked for public feedback on alternative ideas they think could better support more sustainable freedom camping in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What you told us... at a glance

A range of alternative proposals were submitted to MBIE, including:

- Amending or reviewing the legislative environment for freedom camping. This mostly focused on the Freedom Camping Act 2011, but some submissions also called for the Camping-Grounds Regulations 1985 to be reviewed.
- Provide additional funding for infrastructure, education and enforcement. This included proposals such as “build more toilets”, funding more ‘KiwiCamp’ facilities, and providing more funding to the Department of Conservation and Local Authorities. It also included making it easier for local authorities to charge for certain freedom camping facilities.
- Introduce a freedom camping pass. This proposed requiring all freedom campers to have and display a pass in order to freedom camp. The fee collected to get a freedom camping pass would then pay for infrastructure.
- Improve the education available to freedom campers. This primarily focused on funding or building more signage about where people can and cannot freedom camp.
- Require all freedom camping to be done in self-contained vehicles.
- Only allow New Zealand driver licence holders to own a self-contained vehicle. This also included some submissions where people suggested that only New Zealanders should be able to freedom camp in a vehicle.
- Support more technological innovation in freedom camping (such as geofencing zones, introducing technology to redirect people away from highly frequented sites, or funding CCTV at freedom camping sites).

The table below sets out the degree of support for different interventions from the 85 key stakeholders.

Table 3: Alternative solutions proposed by key stakeholders

Idea	Percentage of key submitters that support this (from 85 total)	Percentage of local authority submissions that support this (from 40 total)
Review the legislative environment	35%	43%
Increase funding/infrastructure available, including through central Government funding, freedom camping pass, KiwiCamp	52%	60%
Improve education	28%	28%
Require all freedom camping to be done in self-contained vehicles	2%	3%
Freedom camping for New Zealanders only	1%	0%
Support more technological innovation	6%	5%

**Note: Three of the local authority submissions that want to reform the Freedom Camping Act 2011 do not support reviewing the Camping-Grounds Regulations 1985.*

Quotes on alternative solutions

“We recommend that [...] there be central Government funding to increase the number of dump stations to prevent illegal dumping of human waste – Greater Wellington Regional Council

“Further refinement and clarity are needed for regulatory approaches to freedom camping at location in close proximity to registered campgrounds. Relationships with campground operators are of high importance to Whangārei communities and came up as a major theme during consultation on our amended freedom camping bylaw in 2020. However, location and availability of commercial camping grounds is not currently one of the criteria under the Freedom Camping Act that Council can use to regulate freedom camping. WDC is seeking central government to provide guidance on how to manage this issue.” – Whangārei District Council

“[On CCTV:] Any new system put in place should include support and funding to territorial authorities for the installation and monitoring of freedom camping sites.” – Western Bay of Plenty District Council

“The Responsible Camping Fund has been the single most successful intervention in the Central Otago area. Continuation of these initiatives are vital to the continued success in managing responsible camping.” – Central Otago District Council

“The government needs to work with territorial authorities to ensure there is resourcing for the required education and infrastructure to increase rates of compliance, rather than relying on territorial authorities to be able to enforce any changes.” – Central Otago District Council

“We would like to see a strengthened definition of ‘freedom camping’ in the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to clearly define the act of “camping” and to further define what ‘freedom camping’ isn’t, being long term stays/residing.” – South Waikato District Council

“Review the Camping-grounds Regulations 1985 and the camping-related provisions within the Reserves Act 1977. This approach will

- a) Enable local authorities to establish clearer bylaws and management plans that discourage the concentration of freedom campers in a handful of areas, and promote greater dispersal to reduce complaints around overcrowding and amenity effects, and*
 - b) Encourage private landowners (in particular businesses with surplus land) to create small scale, low-cost campsites to help further reduce overcrowding in public areas.”*
- New Zealand Motor Caravan Association*

Deeper data analysis across the summary of submissions

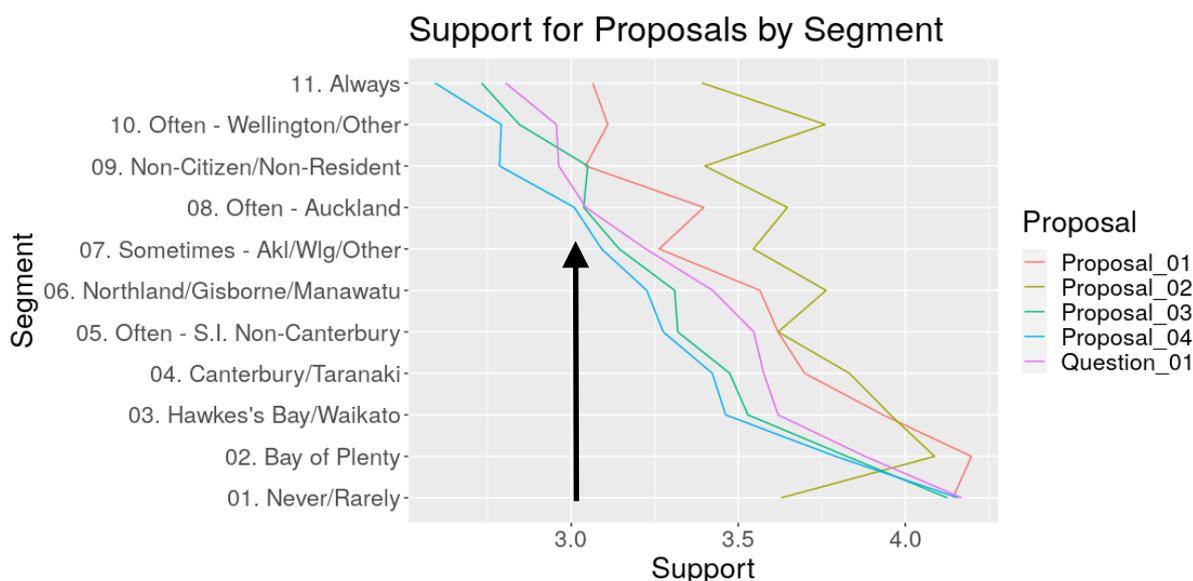
We also used data analytics (using both Python and SAS VIYA) to see if there were any key themes or findings emerging across submitters' demographics.

The characteristics of those who support or oppose the proposed changes

When segmenting the data we found that:

- Support is very strong for all proposals from those who never or rarely go freedom camping, or those who live in the Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay or Waikato.
- Conversely, there is less or no support for any of the proposals from those who:
 - always freedom camp
 - freedom camp often and live in Wellington, Auckland or other areas (overseas)
 - are neither citizens nor permanent residents.
- There is generally stronger support for Proposal 2 than for Proposal 1, except from those who never or rarely freedom camp. Based on some of the text analytics from these groups, a large proportion of those who never or rarely go freedom camping appear also to want to ban freedom camping entirely. The views of this group result in slightly higher support for Proposal 1 than Proposal 2.
- It is possible that the strong bias towards support for the proposals is a function of the self-selected nature of the respondents. This can be similarly seen with the [petition to stop the proposed freedom camping changes and invest in infrastructure](#) which, as of 14 July 2021, had 8,440 signatures.⁶

Figure 32: data segmentation on individual submitter characteristics and their support for the 4 Proposals



Note: the Support scores are numeric values derived from the Likert scale for the responses: "5. Strongly support", "4. Support", "3. Neutral", "2. Oppose", "1. Strongly oppose", "0. Missing/Other". The heavy arrow highlights the line Support="3. Neutral".

Note2: Question 1 refers to the question regarding whether a submitter agrees or disagrees that certain types of vehicle-based freedom camping is a problem.

⁶ See https://www.change.org/p/no-nz-freedom-camping-policy-changes-focus-on-facilities-and-infrastructure-instead?signed=true&fbclid=IwAR1nwrntDyjlDzgnZMx6-pd_3LbOTLehq1vigwyp1cxXtC77FDHEemobJ4

Key words and phrases emerging through the submissions

We also used advanced and largely automated text analysis, which combines issues and frequently occurring terms to reveal broad topics across the whole collection of submissions. This is not necessarily clear-cut, because a submission may cover multiple topics, but it does give a broad overview of the concerns expressed in the submissions.

This allows us to identify that:

- More facilities should be provided.
- Campers should pay to stay in campgrounds and/or use facilities.
- Cassette toilets are ok.

The table below highlights all key combinations of words and phrases that were identified through text analytics.

Table 4: text analytics – key combinations of words

Topic	Mentions	Keywords
Provide_more_facilities	1,283	None, facility, provide,toilet, general_waste
Paying_for_campgrounds_and_facilities	1,271	Camping_ground, pay, area, facility, stay
Already_self_contained	1,215	Self_contain, already, car_vehicle, freedom_camping
New_Zealanders_and_traveling	1,061	People, new_zealander, go, never, small_van
Cassette_toilets_are_ok?	635	Cassette_toilet, cassette, motor_home, +allow, human_waste
Retired_motorhome_owners	200	+retire, motor_home, non_compliance, new_zealander, travel

We also looked at shorter text phrases to understand some of the key issues for individual submitters.⁷ Through this process MBIE has drawn the following conclusions:

- Many individual submitters may be concerned about small cars or station wagons used for freedom camping. Similarly, a smaller proportion of submitters may be concerned about small vans, commonly referred to as ‘sliders’.
- Almost twice as many individual submitters are concerned with general waste (23 percent) compared to human waste (13 percent).
- Some individual submitters are worried about the blue sticker, which is commonly used to identify whether a vehicle is certified as self-contained.
- Slightly more submissions mention international visitors compared to New Zealanders.
- Some individual submitters are worried about those who are non-compliant – under either the existing regime or proposed regime.

⁷ We are unable to conclusively draw positive or negative sentiment against words, except where a phrase is commonly associated with an issue. For example, the “blue sticker” (which helps identify if a vehicle is certified self-contained or not) is a known issue so we can infer a negative view. However, “local authority” is less informative. This is because many submissions had double negatives – for example, noting that they really disliked that their local authority was not being left to manage freedom camping.

- A small minority (approximately 10 percent) of submissions mentioned banning or limiting freedom camping.

The table below highlights the most common words identified in people’s submissions, which set out the issues of importance for the commentary provided by submitters. Each of the words includes synonyms – for example, a submission which discusses ‘sliders’ counts towards ‘small van’.

Table 5: text analytics – key words

Issue	Frequency	Distinct Submissions	% Distinct Submissions
freedom_camping	10247	2811	55.65
Small_car	8679	2645	52.37
portable_toilet	1693	1254	24.83
general_waste	2048	1165	23.06
blue_sticker	2228	1083	21.44
motor_home	1908	1059	20.97
small_van	1955	1022	20.23
tourist_visitor	1900	1007	19.94
camping_ground	1583	927	18.35
homeless_people	1502	908	17.98
new_zealander	1529	834	16.51
non_compliance	1007	818	16.19
local_authority	1221	695	13.76
human_waste	955	656	12.99
local_business	870	585	11.58
ban_or_limit	780	532	10.53
permanent_toilet	660	488	9.66
public_toilet	680	437	8.65
rental_company	573	415	8.22
cassette_toilet	560	408	8.08
low_income	328	272	5.39
grey_water	258	201	3.98
minister_nash	132	82	1.62
other_toilet	101	75	1.48

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