



The Future of Camping

Camping is a popular and traditional pastime throughout New Zealand, and is one of our favourite holiday options, particularly over the summer months. Our look at camping across Central Hawke's Bay will include locations, facilities, and local government frameworks and legislation.

We need to review our entire portfolio of campgrounds with leases and resource consents coming to an end, investment required in the near future, and changes to bylaws required to be fit for purpose and meet legislative requirements.

Why is camping important?

Camping is in our DNA. Central Hawke's Bay is the gateway to nearly 40 kilometres of the Ruahine Forest Park ranges, features a network of fresh waterways and has over 70 kilometres of rugged and diverse coastline, all with a range of camping and recreation opportunities. The district is also home to a wealth of Māori and colonial history.

Many of us camp in our own backyard, and have done so for generations: heading to the beach for summer or making the most of the Ruahine Ranges. Making sure we continue to have access to these places in ways that protect our environment is critical. Tourism is one of several important economic focus areas for the district moving forward. COVID-19 provides an opportune time to review tourism in Central Hawke's Bay and offer 'something different'. Central Hawke's Bay may increasingly become a prime destination to Kiwis who now, more than ever, are looking for destinations where they have never been before with spectacular natural landscapes and scenery, and opportunities to relax and refresh at the top of their lists.

Why are we having this conversation?

Increased visitation will put additional pressure on our facilities, environment and on our communities which are already facing several district-wide and location specific issues. This document looks to discuss a way forward to unlock several key barriers to make it easier for visitors and locals to access and explore our backyard.

Some of our biggest challenges are:

- The capacity and quality of our aging existing infrastructure and facilities.
- Several location specific issues, including expiring leases and consents, water supply issues, climate resilience, anti-social behaviour, and equitable access.
- The lack of clear, concise, and accessible information on camping in the district.
- Determining how to pay for camping investment - should everyone contribute or should more focus be put on users?

Tourism New Zealand's '[Domestic Travel View Report April 2021](#)' has found that domestic tourism remains steady with 66% of New Zealanders currently planning a domestic holiday within the next twelve months. Many of these people are looking for camping experiences well off the beaten tourist track. With our many scenic rural areas and remote beaches this makes Central Hawke's Bay a prime destination. This influx of campers puts additional pressure on our environment and on our communities.

We have created this discussion document to start the conversation of the future of camping within our district. This conversation will take many forms over the following months, and we hope that together we can all create a shared vision for camping within the district that will guide our community investment in the future.

How camping contributes to our Project Thrive outcomes

A Prosperous District	Camping facilities in the right places promote visitation to the district’s natural, cultural, and historical sites. Increased visitation and duration of these visits leads to a direct positive impact to the district economy.
Strong Communities	Through fit for purpose camping facilities, the community can promote and share the unique opportunities of the district, creating income to further strengthen these experiences.
A Proud District	Camp facilities are a part of the wider marketing CHBD campaign showcasing and promoting the geography, climate, community, and opportunities of the district to visitors as a place everyone wants to live.
Durable Infrastructure	Fit-for-purpose, quality and enduring infrastructure that will meet the needs of the camping and local communities, promoting responsible camping practices and having minimal impact on the surrounding environment.
Nature Friendly	Responsible camping is sustainable and environmentally friendly with either a positive impact or no impact on the surrounding environment, while promoting visitation and access to the district’s natural attractions and experiences.

Our Camping Facilities now

There are a number of existing campsites and camping facilities across the district. Council owns and leases a number of campgrounds and also manages a number of freedom camping sites on our coasts. In addition to this, there are the privately owned campsites and two Department of Conservation (DOC) owned and administered freedom camping sites.

There are broadly three types of camping carried out in New Zealand. Freedom camping (tent or self-contained), camping in designated areas for ‘freedom camping’ (this may be self-contained only), and camping within a defined camping ground.

For the purpose of this discussion, we have adopted the following camping definitions, the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment’s (MBIE) definition of freedom camping:

Freedom camping *“is when you camp on public land that isn’t a recognised camping ground or holiday park. It includes camping in a tent, caravan or motor vehicle.”* [Reference](#)

Self-contained camping refers to camping in a vehicle that meets the [“New Zealand Standard. NZS 5465: 2001 Self-containment of motor caravans and caravans”](#). The MBIE describes self-contained camping as *“a fully self-contained vehicle which must be able to support a given number of people for 3 days without needing additional water supplies or dumping waste”*.

A camping ground *“means any area of land used, or designed or intended to be used, for rent, hire, donation, or otherwise for reward, for the purposes of placing or erecting on the land temporary living places for occupation, by 2 or more families or parties (whether consisting of 1 or more persons) living independently of each other, whether or not such families or parties enjoy the use in common of entrances, water supplies, cookhouses, sanitary fixtures, or other premises and equipment; and includes any area of land used as a camping ground immediately before the commencement of these regulations”* as defined by the Camping-Grounds Regulations 1985. There are provisions for Territorial Authorities to make exemptions to the regulations, as have been [investigated and defined](#) by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ).

Some trends around the future of camping include:

There is a long history of camping in New Zealand with many Kiwis considering it a birth right. Freedom camping is a trend that continues to build momentum as it enables travellers to traverse off the well-known tourist tracks to find isolated scenery and destinations less known. However, it can put strain on some communities, predominantly from campers choosing not to stay at an established camp site and those that are not self-contained and creating environmental impacts.

A MBIE survey in 2019 found that 91,000 New Zealanders freedom camp with this number expected to be much higher since the closure of the border and increased domestic tourism. Many of these freedom campers utilise the full spectrum of camping options during their trip from holiday parks to allocated self-contained sites to freedom camping.

Responsible freedom camping, in particular, camping utilising self-contained vehicles, will continue to grow in New Zealand. MBIE are currently working through consultation and legislation to make freedom camping in New Zealand more responsible, but we also need to think about how we do this locally.

To encourage and empower visitors to camp responsibly, these campers require access to potable water and dump stations. Central Hawke's Bay's recent investment in a dump station at the Waipukurau Holiday Park will attract campers and encourage an increase in duration of stay.

In 2020 Council completed a [Central Hawke's Bay Destination Plan and Need Assessment](#). The plan picks on the opportunities of camping.

As pressure comes on from visitors to our district, there is also a rising feeling of the need to protect certain areas, particularly our beach camping sites, for locals. We will need to discuss what this could look like in the future including possible management approaches and also potentially extending and diversifying our camping network.

Other issues we need to consider across our camping network include global climate change and the impact of rising sea levels. Coastal erosion is a growing risk requiring discussion to seek solutions to future-proof sustainable and environmentally friendly camping within the district.

What does success look like?

- Allow for and promote camping in a way that protects, respects, sustains, and enhances our natural environments. Promote the 'Tiaki Promise'.
- Camping solutions need to be fit for purpose and reflect the values of each community to promote visitation and meet community needs.
- Have a Freedom Camping Policy to guide where and how people can freedom camp across the district.
- Provide quality and diverse camping experiences that reflect the pride we have in our district, its places, and its stories.
- Ensure easily accessible, clear, and consistent information on camping facilities within the district.



TIAKI MEANS TO CARE FOR PEOPLE AND PLACE. THE TIAKI PROMISE IS A COMMITMENT TO CARE FOR NEW ZEALAND, FOR NOW AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

NEW ZEALAND IS PRECIOUS, AND EVERYONE WHO LIVES AND TRAVELS HERE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO LOOK AFTER IT.

BY FOLLOWING THE TIAKI PROMISE, YOU ARE MAKING A COMMITMENT TO NEW ZEALAND. TO ACT AS A GUARDIAN, PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR HOME.

NAU MAI, HAERE MAI KI AOTEAROA, WELCOME TO NEW ZEALAND.

HOW TO CARE FOR
NEW ZEALAND



PROTECT
NATURE



KEEP NZ
CLEAN



DRIVE
CAREFULLY



BE
PREPARED



SHOW
RESPECT

TIAKI PROMISE

WHILE TRAVELLING
IN NEW ZEALAND I WILL

CARE FOR LAND, SEA AND NATURE,
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RESPECT CULTURE, TRAVELLING
WITH AN OPEN HEART AND MIND

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The opportunities we have identified so far include:

- Further develop and refine both Tiaki Promise and into one CHB specific concept - 'The Tamatea Way'.
- Diversification of camping opportunities throughout the district to relieve pressure on current sites and promote visitation to the district's destination attractions.
- Develop a district specific camping framework that enables and promotes responsible camping throughout the district.
- Engage with third party stakeholders to provide tourists with accurate camping information and promote visitation to the district.
- Carry out an access and infrastructure assessment of the current camping and camping related facilities within the district on a location specific basis.

The challenges we have identified so far include:

- Inconsistent provision of facilities across our camping areas.
- Increasing visitor numbers over the peak holiday periods reduces accessibility to facilities for local and regular facility users.
- Social licence in some communities could be a barrier to successful site establishment or existing site development.
- Information regarding CHB camping facilities and opportunities is not currently easily accessible, nor promoted by key tourism industry stakeholders.
- There are a number of location specific issues at particular camp sites related to lease renewals, land ownership, boundary encroachments, land zoning issues, water take and wastewater consents expiring, seasonal impacts, and coastal erosion/climate resilience that need to be resolved and/or improved to provide certainty in camping opportunities into the future and fair accessibility of these sites for all campers.

Let us know your ideas?

We're still in the early phases of this work, however we are keen to hear your ideas to support camping in Tamatea - Central Hawke's Bay. You can do this by completing our online survey at www.chbdc.govt.nz/thriving-places-and-spaces or emailing us on thrivingplacesandspaces@chbdc.govt.nz

These are the current camping experiences that we know about:

Camp Sites	Facility Management	Facilities	Availability and use	Type
Camp Wakarara	Private owner/manager	School/youth group camping facilities, including dorms, activity areas, kitchens, bathrooms etc.	Available year round for bookings by youth groups and schools.	Youth Campground
Elsthorpe Scenic Reserve Carpark	DOC owned	Nil	Restricted to Self-Contained vehicles only the duration of a stay may be no more than 4 nights in any single calendar month	Self-Contained
Kairakau Beach Freedom Camping	CHBDC managed	Public Toilet (caters to approximately 23 caravans/motor homes)	Freedom - Fully certified self-contained only - Side of the road / Beach side. No more than 3 nights stay	Self-Contained
Kairakau Campground <i>Located on Road Reserve</i>	Managed by the Kairakau Development Society	Powered sites and communal kitchen and bathroom facilities. 26 sites total.	Open 29th Sep to the end of April. All sites are bookable.	Commercial Campground
Waipawa Rivers Edge Holiday Park	Private owner/manager	Full holiday park facilities, including a range of cabins, powered and non-powered sites and communal kitchen, bathroom, and laundry facilities.	Year-round availability for all campers	Commercial Campground
River Park Event Centre	Private owner/manager	13 toilets (including a wheelchair accessible toilet & shower) 10 showers. Large fully commercial kitchen & a separate small kitchen that may be used. Fully licenced - 2 bars. 2 Cabins available with queen beds. Facilities to cater for up to 500 people.	Year-round availability. Bookings are essential.	Event Centre & Commercial Campground
Monckton Scenic Reserve	DOC owned	Public Toilets	4-night max stay, Large Vehicle accessible, No dogs	Self-Contained
Waipukurau Holiday Park <i>Public Recreation Ground</i>	CHBDC owned. Leased to operator	Full holiday park facilities, including a range of cabins, powered and non-powered sites and communal kitchen, bathroom, and laundry facilities.	Year-round availability for all campers	Commercial Campground
Punawaitai <i>Pourerere Beach</i>	Private owner/manager	Holiday Accommodation can sleep up to 22 persons. 1 queen bed, 2 double beds, 16 single beds are provided (with mattresses). Tents and camping are encouraged.	Year-round availability. Bookings are essential.	Event Venue and Accommodation
Pourerere Beach Road <i>Located on Road Reserve</i>	CHBDC owned.	Public Toilets	Freedom Camping (tent, or self-contained). Permit Required for 14 Dec - 8 Feb on a ballot system. \$35 admin fee and pre-reg required for periods of up to 14 days. Applications open October.	Freedom
Pourerere Beach Campground <i>Recreation Reserve</i>	CHBDC owned. Campsite is to operator.	Small communal kitchen and gathering room, bathroom and laundry facilities, workshop and guest room. 3 bookable sites	By phone booking. A large number of long-term leased sites with semi-permanent structures located.	Commercial Campground

Camp Sites	Facility Management	Facilities	Availability and use	Type
Aramoana Freedom Camping <i>Council carpark adjacent to Local Purpose Reserve</i>	CHBDC owned.	Public Toilets	Freedom - Fully certified self-contained only - Side of the road/carpark location. 3 marked carparks on a first come first served basis. - No more than 3 nights stay	Self-Contained
Blackhead Campground <i>Recreation Reserve</i>	CHBDC owned. Campsite is leased to operator.	3 bookable powered sites, some tent sites, communal kitchen, laundry facilities, toilets are also available to public day trippers (agreement with Council)	By phone booking. A large number of long-term leased sites with semi-permanent structures located.	Commercial Campground
Wazz Mac's Camp	Private owner/manager	Leasehold semi-permanent caravans and annexes that form part of a private campground, with amenities including ablution block.	Private site occupation. No general camping.	Private Campground
Pōrangahau Beach Road Holiday Park	Private owner/manager	Powered and non-powered sites and communal kitchen, bathroom, and laundry facilities.	Year-round availability for all campers. There are also some permanent sites with semi-permanent structures.	Commercial Campground
Pōrangahau: Te Paerahi Beach Freedom Camping <i>Adjacent to Recreation Reserve</i>	CHBDC owned.	New Public Toilets, Potable water via drinking fountain, Dog water dish and outdoor shower	Freedom Camping (any freedom or self-contained). No ballot system in place and is first come first served	Freedom

The map below is indicative of key experiences and identified camping locations within the district.

