

**Marlborough District
Council**

**Review of MDC
Responsible Camping
Bylaw 2022**

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Submitter details

1. Nelson Marlborough Health (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) (NMH) is a key organisation involved in the health and wellbeing of the people within Te Tau Ihu. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on the Review of MDC Freedom Camping Bylaw 2012.
2. NMH makes this submission in recognition of its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956.
3. This submission sets out particular matters of interest and concern to NMH, particularly in relation to sewage, litter disposal and the location of safe drinking water.

Specific Comments

4. NMH supports Council's revision to its Responsible Camping Bylaw.
5. NMH notes that there is no specific mention within the Bylaw of discharges of sewage, toilet waste or grey water nor mention of litter disposal. In order to ensure proper sewage disposal practices are followed, it is important that self-contained campers know where they are able to safely dispose of their sewage.
Recommendation 1: that there are specific rules around discharges in the Bylaw. Consideration could be given to using similar wording to that used in Tasman's Responsible Camping Bylaw¹: "*Discharges are prohibited: Discharges of sewage or toilet waste or grey water are prohibited other than into a Council approved dump point. Leaving or depositing litter is prohibited. Solid waste must be appropriately disposed of in an approved refuse bin or dropped off in an appropriate bag at Council Resource Recovery Station*". In addition the list of self-contained vehicle waste dumping locations is included in the Bylaw's schedules.
6. NMH also recommends that Council reviews the frequency in which litter receptacles are emptied in light of the proposed amendments to the bylaw.
7. Information about safe drinking water should also be communicated to freedom campers to reduce the risk of waterborne illnesses. Council should ensure that other water sources which are not suitable for drinking, e.g. from taps in public

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<https://www.tasman.govt.nz/document/serve/Freedom%20Camping%20Bylaw%202017%20Amended%20December%202020.pdf?DocID=30502>

toilet facilities, are clearly signposted to warn campers that the water is not of drinking quality and should be boiled before use.

Recommendation 2: that Council ensures freedom campers know where they can refill potable water

8. Some people who freedom camp do not do so out of choice but because they are homeless. It is important that Council gives careful consideration to the possible effects the proposed amendments may have on homeless people. It is unlikely that homeless people will have access to fully self-contained campers and they may therefore be in breach of the bylaw if they camp in non self-contained vehicles. Given the significant stigma around homelessness, Council needs to ensure enforcement of the proposed amendments to the bylaw does not contribute to this stigma and further shame or financially penalise these already vulnerable people.

Recommendation 3: that Council allows a grace period for homeless freedom campers and links those people with local services that can offer assistance with housing issues.

Conclusion

9. NMH thanks the Marlborough District Council for the opportunity to comment on the Responsible Camping Bylaw 2022.
10. NMH believes that the recommendations contained in this submission will go towards reducing any actual and potential environmental effects associated with camping.
11. NMH **does not wish to be heard** in support of its submission.

Yours sincerely



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