

# **Tasman District Council Responsible Camping Strategy 2019**

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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 Tasman District Council's Responsible Camping Strategy 2019.
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 the introduction of a Responsible Camping Strategy that will create a framework to manage freedom camping through regulations, facilitates and visitor information, and as a result reduce any associated actual or potential negative environmental impacts. NMH supports measures that signage, education and working with camping grounds and accommodation providers that will support this strategy.
5. NMH supports the purpose, scope and the principles in the proposed Strategy.
6. NMH notes that the Nelson City Council does not have a Responsible Camping Strategy, and recommends that Tasman District Council (TDC) work closely with Nelson to ensure any requirements and other measures such as signage and education are consistent given that visitors may be unlikely to recognise the local authority administration boundaries, leading to unnecessary confusion.
7. The draft document shows that rubbish and waste have been cited as an issue in regards to freedom camping. NMH reminds Council of its responsibility to ensure proper litter disposal and removal from all freedom camping sites. Section 9(5) of the Litter Act 1979 states "Every public authority shall also make appropriate provision for the emptying of the contents of litter receptacles situated within public places under its control or in its district and for the removal and disposal of those contents. The work shall be executed promptly, efficiently, and at regular and prescribed intervals to the satisfaction of the Medical Officer of Health appointed for the health district in which the public place is situated."
8. Waste has been included into the secondary criteria and states that "*Can waste be adequately managed at the location?*" However the term "adequately managed"

has not been defined within the document. Given that freedom camping is becoming increasingly popular, waste levels at sites should be continually monitored to ensure that sites remain clean.

9. The Strategy does not include details on communicating key information to campers. It is important that information, especially relating to the location of toilet facilities, sewage disposal, litter disposal and drinking water, is effectively relayed to campers in a manner that is easily understood as English is a second language for many campers.
10. There is no mention of drinking water within the section on provision of sites and facilities (pg. 28). Information about safe drinking water should 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 toilet facilities, are clearly signposted to warn campers that the water is not of drinking quality and should be boiled before use. Information about where campers can refill potable water should be provided.
11. 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 Freedom Camping bylaw if they camp in non self-contained vehicles. Given the significant stigma around homelessness, Council needs to ensure any bylaws or strategies do not contribute to this stigma and further shame or financially penalise these already vulnerable people. Consideration could be given to linking those people with local services that can offer assistance with housing issues.

## **Conclusion**

12. NMH thanks the Tasman District Council for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Responsible Camping Strategy 2019.

Yours sincerely



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