



**KAIKOURA
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

***Tourism & Development Committee
Agenda***



8 February 2006

**TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 1.00 PM ON WEDNESDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2006
IN ENCOUNTER KAIKOURA BRIEFING ROOM,
96 ESPLANDE, KAIKOURA.**

Agenda

1. *Apologies*
2. *Matters to be raised as Urgent Business*
3. *Matters Arising from Report of 14/12/2005* *page 1*
4. *Minutes Action List*

| <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Whose Action</i> | <i>Progress</i> |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| 14 SEPTEMBER 2005 | | |
| Revisit sculptures at the north and south entrances to the town following Seafest | Tourism Officer | In Progress |
| Orly Productions – Quote for filming (hourly) | Tourism Officer | In Progress |
| 14 DECEMBER 2005 | | |
| Investigate “branding” and report back to February meeting | Tourism Officer | Item No. 8 Page 12 |
| Write to M Solomon and C Copplestone thanking them for their committee representation | Councillor Thomas | Sent 18/01/06 |
| Investigate community ownership of KITI sunrise image (letterhead) if purchased by KITI | Tourism Officer | In Progress |
| Tourism Monitoring – gather information from Statistics NZ, Chamber of Commerce and figures from winter season 2005. | Tourism Officer/ Councillor Thomas | In Progress |
| Write a freedom camping factual report on issues and solutions for discussion | Tourism Officer/ Environmental Development Officer/ P McGahan/ Councillor Thomas | Item No. 9 Page 16 |
| Hold a workshop to progress freedom camping educational flyer for current summer season. | Councillor Thomas | In Progress |

5. *Correspondence*
 - *Kaikoura District Council* *page 8*
6. *Tourism & Development Statement of Accounts* *page 9*
7. *Tourism & Economic Development Officer’s report* *page 10*
8. *Brand & Image Development Report* *page 12*
9. *Freedom Camping Report* *page 16*
10. *Urgent Business*

Tourism & Development Committee Budget

For the period ended 31 January 2006

| | Tourism & Development |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | \$ |
| Balance Brought Forward | 57,871.03 |
| INCOME | |
| Allocation from Council (2006) | 100,000 |
| Total Funds Available | <u>157,871.03</u> |
| EXPENDITURE | |
| <u>Marketing</u> | |
| Membership Contribution CCM | 5,000.00 |
| Lloyds Graphic Design (Advert) | 718.00 |
| The Press Advertising | 1,794.24 |
| Joint Venture Hurunui District | 1,178.97 |
| TCANZ John Macphail conference | 976.36 |
| | <u>9,667.57</u> |
| <u>Green Globe</u> | |
| Green Globe Membership | 1,333.33 |
| Green Globe Audit Assessment | 1,007.67 |
| | <u>2,341.00</u> |
| <u>KITI</u> | |
| Seafest Media Release | 1,200.00 |
| TRENT Road Show | 9,987.02 |
| Oz Road Show | 5,000.00 |
| | <u>16,187.02</u> |
| <u>Other Expenditure</u> | |
| Tourism & Development Officer Ad | 1,843.54 |
| Crippled Crays 18x48 Hrs Books | - |
| | <u>1,843.54</u> |
| Total Expenditure | <u>30,039.13</u> |
| Funds Remaining | <u>\$127,831.90</u> |

PLEASE NOTE: the above figures do not include wages paid to the Tourism & Development Officer, or other personnel expenses.

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Meetings attended:

- Economic Development Agency meetings (Dec. & Jan)
- Joanne Small from Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing – new marketing manager for Australia & New Zealand – Claire Fraser (CCM) and Mandy Fissenden also attended (20th Dec 2005)
- Chris Griffin -General Marketing Manager CCM (16th January 2006)
- Jo Naish – Tourism & Economic Development Officer Banks Peninsula (16th January 2006)
- Rachel Burgess (Christchurch) & Peter Hall(Nelson) from Department of Labour – Madeleine Burdon (Community Development Officer) also attended (25th January)

Projects in progress

- Development of Tourism Trade Manual – have begun work on this with Mandy Fissenden. This will be a collaborative project involving Tourism & Economic Development Officer, Mandy Fissenden and K.I.T.I
- Business and tourism business surveys have been sent out and response rate has been slow but steady.
- Winter initiatives
- Tourism monitoring

Andris Apse (Sunrise image – ownership)

Unlimited advertising and promotional use. Non-Exclusive.

Term - One year. \$ 1,200-00

Term - Three years. \$ 2,500-00

Term - Five years. \$ 3,500-00

Outright non-exclusive purchase - \$5,000-00

All prices plus GST.

If purchased, this would be licensed to Kaikoura Information and Tourism for their tourism promotion use. Any other use such as commercial product promotion or on-selling the image for commercial use would not be covered. The copyright of the image would remain with Andris Apse.

Branding investigation – refer to Brand and Image Development Report

Freedom Camping – refer to Freedom Camping Report - this report has been written by Tourism & Economic Development Officer and Environmental Development Officer

Brand & Image Development

The Tourism and Economic Development Officer's report of December 2005 outlined the main projects in progress and identified those for future attention. In the process of compiling that report, the current marketing approach for the tourism industry in Kaikoura was studied. The Tourism and Economic Development Officer concluded that there were aspects of this approach which required renewed focus, in particular the elements involved with projecting Kaikoura as a brand.

The purpose of this brief report is to examine particular elements which make up the Kaikoura brand and their importance in relation to the above projects and with reference to the Tourism Strategy and K.I.T.I marketing strategy and tourism industry strategies.

Definition and historical overview

Generally speaking, marketing is the term which covers all the activities required for the planning and the delivery of products/services from the supplier to the customer which will satisfy the needs of the identified customer and meet the objectives of the producer. Branding a product or service is the process used to differentiate that product or service from its competitors. There are several elements which make up a brand

- Brand image – set of beliefs customers hold about a particular brand
- Brand name
- Brand identity – this is the sum of all the components of the brand including styles used in stationery/websites/promotional literature, colours, icons, imagery, sounds, slogan

A strong brand is instantly recognisable, reflects the promise of and the advantages of that particular brand. A brand is developed and maintained through consistency in its look, style, theme which is common to advertising, to the website and to all other marketing elements. A brand must be consistent and must meet the customers' perception of how the product or service will "behave", what it actually promises and how that promise is delivered.

What is the product in Kaikoura? As identified through research and subsequently stated in the Tourism Strategy, Kaikoura offers the core attraction of marine mammals and marine life. Furthermore, as stated in Tourism Strategy (section 3.4) "The conservation of the marine life, natural scenic beauty, unique geomorphic features and excellent local climatic features are secondary attributes, which provide the superb ambience for a true natural resource based tourism product"

Historically, whale watching was the beginning of tourism in Kaikoura and will continue to be the main attraction here and thus forms the focus of brand identity. Accompanying this, the slogans of "Close to nature" and "Where the mountains meet the sea" developed in the mid/early 1990s. Workshop sessions in 2002 surrounding the Green Globe benchmarking process, revealed that the key components of the Kaikoura brand were marine mammals, small coastal village character, quality environment, service excellence and clean green image. These form the brand identity and the slogans currently used in the marketing initiatives.

Current position

The purpose and relevance of a strong brand in relation to the marketing activities surrounding a product or service and the emergence of Kaikoura as a brand have been highlighted. At the moment, both the above slogans are used. On i-site website and supporting material used for trade and media purposes, the "close to nature" slogan is given prominence with the accompanying striking image of the coastline at sunset. The information leaflet uses "close to nature" on the cover page with "where the mountain meets the sea" used inside this leaflet.

The leaflet produced by the “Naturally Kaikoura” group use “where the mountains meet the sea” as their preferred tagline. Images used in i-site information feature predominantly sea-related images – whale tail, seals, crayfish, seabirds. Clearly these approaches have been incredibly successful.

Particularly in the early days of Whale Watch, much if not most of the marketing of Kaikoura was via Whalewatch activities. As mentioned above, marine mammals and marine life will continue to be the core of the tourism product and as such, feature heavily in the visual imagery used. This is reflected in the approach taken by Tourism New Zealand and by Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing.

But to maintain the success of the tourism industry in Kaikoura and to develop tourism for the future (in line Kaikoura Tourism Strategy, K.I.T.I Marketing Strategy and industry initiatives) renewed focus on the brand and on the marketing approach must be made.

Kaikoura Tourism Strategy

- Product Development – (Section 3.4.1) – broaden the tourism attraction range while retaining the central nature-based ethos, with emphasis on quality
- Product Development – (Section 3.4.1) – investigate and develop an events portfolio blending marine mammal and environmental themes and Kaikoura character
- Image & Brand Development (Section 3.4.2) – develop the Kaikoura Quality Image

Tourism & Economic Development Officer suggests that in relation to the visual imagery used currently, adjusting this to include non-sea based attractions e.g. Maori, cultural & historical attractions as well as land based activities such as bush walks & tramping options would link in with broadening tourism base.

K.I.T.I Marketing Strategy

- Introduce Kaikoura as a desirable destination to key international markets
- Co-ordinate a managed approach that encourages members to market Kaikoura as a destination rather than just marketing individual businesses
- Increase participation in joint ventures with CCM
- Maximise benefits from trade relationships

All of the above (K.I.T.I marketing strategy) require a consistent approach incorporating the adjustments as outlined in the Kaikoura Tourism Strategy section.

A brief look at the offshore marketing (from National Tourism Strategy 2010)

Tourism New Zealand is the organisation responsible for marketing New Zealand internationally. “The Interactive Traveller” has been identified as the target market. This visitor is characterised by the desire to interact with the landscape and the culture and to undertake a broad range of activities including high levels of nature/adventure based products. In addition, interactive travellers respect the environment, culture and values of others, prefer authentic products and experiences, are sociable and like to learn and have high levels of disposable income. The more attractions and activities that are consumed by the traveller, the higher the levels of satisfaction.

The market is clearly defined and it can be seen that Kaikoura is an ideal destination for the interactive traveller. In order to reach this market, it is necessary to have consistency and clarity in the approach taken whether it is by K.I.T.I, Tourism & Economic Development officer, individual operators or Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing.

Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing

Working closely with Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing is vital to the continued success of tourism in Kaikoura. Excellent relationships exist already between K.I.T.I, i-site and individual operators. The Tourism & Economic Development officer is working to develop new relationships

with CCM staff. Following a recent meeting with Chris Griffin (Marketing Manager at CCM) to discuss branding and marketing issues, certain areas were highlighted

- The use of the whale tail image sells Kaikoura
- Slight move away from focusing/over-emphasising the importance of slogans but useful to measure the popularity of the current slogans amongst local tourism operators in Kaikoura.
- Revisiting the visual components of the Kaikoura brand would be a useful exercise. Imagery and subtlety within promotional messages often have a stronger effect than the written or verbal message
- Building existing relationships and developing new relationships with trade and media is vital

A survey has gone out to all tourism operators in the district to determine their opinions on the slogans used in Kaikoura and to establish the clearest way of summing up what Kaikoura represents in terms of a tourism destination

Conclusions

- A summary of the opinions of the tourism operators in the district will be determined by the survey and will be the focus for future action
- Product development and destination marketing (areas already identified in the above strategies) will link in with reassessing images
- Adjusting the visual imagery used in the Kaikoura brand will result in a strong brand encompassing a broader attraction base. This will be used in the Trade manual, in all trade and media literature, in all marketing activities which will encapsulate the range of activities and attractions which make up the tourism product
- This review of the brand imagery would be reflected in any future DVD production
- Issue of a Quality Image and logo (as stated in the Tourism Strategy) needs to be addressed
- Since the Tourism Strategy was written, the major change which directly involves this discussion is the Green Globe certification. Raising the profile of Green Globe is vital
- Further discussion with K.I.T.I – tourism sub-committee

FREEDOM CAMPING

This report provides detail and direction for Council to formulate an official position relating to freedom camping by:

- examining freedom camping as an aspect of tourism in New Zealand,
- highlighting the main aspects of freedom camping specifically in Kaikoura,
- summarising some approaches taken by other councils,
- considering both the potential positive and negative aspects and
- including recommendations to council.

Freedom camping and NZ tourism

Unlike other accommodation users, the numbers of freedom campers are difficult to measure. But the general picture in New Zealand is that freedom camping is popular with both domestic and international travellers. As with other forms of tourism activity, freedom camping takes place throughout the year and experiences the same peaks and troughs.

A range of age groups and professional backgrounds are represented by freedom campers including retired people and those referred to as “empty nesters”. These latter categories are part of the classification known as F.I.T – Free Independent Travellers – F.I.T is one of the markets identified as a strong growth market in New Zealand.

Freedom Camping in Kaikoura

Within the Kaikoura District there are sites where freedom camping takes place frequently. A wide range of owners and managers take legal and voluntary responsibility for many of these sites – private owners, K.D.C, Transit New Zealand, Ngai Tahu, D.O.C and E-Can, and groups such as the Marine & Coastal Protection Society and the Kaikoura Coastal Guardians (Kaitiaki).

In addition, strategies such as the Coastal Management Strategy and District Plan exist to ensure careful management of the natural and social environment that is unique to Kaikoura. Furthermore, as a Green Globe community striving towards Zero Waste, environmental protection should always be at the very core of Council and community actions and policies.

There are designated areas within the district where camping is prohibited and this is governed by a bylaw.¹ It is for Council to decide if or how such regulations should be enforced. Action has been taken by Council in South Bay where improvements to the toilets have been made and a dump station is also planned. Clearly the South Bay improvements have been carried out for the benefits of all users, whether local people or visitors to the district.

Concern over waste issues at Mangamaunu have been expressed at a recent Environmental Committee meeting. These concerns have been addressed by Council through the formation of a working group. This group has representatives from Council Mangamaunu Marae, DOC, E-Can and other stakeholders. The outcomes of this workshop will be extremely relevant to other areas of the coastline.

¹ KAIKOURA DISTRICT (TRAFFIC CONTROL) BYLAW 1995.

2.1 Reserves

2.1.1 No person shall on any reserve:

(b) Camp in an area not set aside for that purpose. In this context camping shall include the use of any vehicle whether or not it is specially fitted out for sleeping;

- 2.1.4 It shall not be a defence to any charge that an offence has been committed against this part of the Bylaw (other than where compliance with a sign, notice or road marking is an ingredient of the offence) if no sign, notice or road marking was in place at the time such offence was alleged to have been committed

The possibility of constructing additional public toilets to the north of the town is also being investigated.

It is important to remember that many of the areas popular with freedom campers are also used by surfers, fishermen, walkers, car & truck drivers and so on. This is a particularly important point to be aware of when discussing the freedom camping issue.

Interested parties

Camp site owners - Gerald Nolan and his colleagues met with Mayor Heays, Nicole Sherriff and Ann Paterson (12th January 2006) Main issues raised by this group

- Provision of toilets and bins by Council at various sites did not help to improve the condition of the environment.
- Freedom campers use and abuse free facilities resulting in litter, waste and general spoiling of the environment.
- Considerable investment has been, and continues to be made by the campsite operators to upgrade and maintain facilities and to meet council regulations.
- Freedom campers are free-loaders making no financial contribution to the upkeep of this environment and making very little contribution to the local economy.
- Suggested solution is to have a complete ban on freedom camping in Kaikoura District.
(Summary of this meeting in Appendix 1)

East Coast Community Organisation (E.C.C.O) – representatives of ECCO. met with Mayor Heays, Nicole Sherriff and Ann Paterson. Main issues raised by ECCO concerned the Black Millar site which was dominated by one large group of freedom campers for 3 weeks

- Significant noise pollution and visual impact issue
- Waste and litter issues
- Obstructed access to beach – for both residents and visitors
- Occasional abusive and insulting behaviour by some freedom campers towards residents.
- Over-fishing concerns
- ECCO have no objection to overnight campers but believe the group at Black Millar (transit land) abused the privilege of being able to freedom camp in the District
(Summary of ECCO concerns in Appendix 2 & 3)

Kevin Genet (South Bay resident) – letter to Kaikoura Star

- Support for freedom camping with appropriate facilities
(Refer to Appendix 4)

Paul McGahan – Secretary of KM&CPS

Summary of a report sent to Mayor Heays 18th January 2006 (report appears in full in Appendix 5)

- Calls for an immediate management response regarding freedom campers with no self-contained human waste disposal facilities – achievable through use of “patrols” and enforcement of signage
- Employ a “ranger” for an educational and rule enforcement role
- Development of a low cost information strategy
- Introduce a bylaw relating to freedom camping as soon as possible
- Medium term measures – camping policy and strategy

Researched Outcomes

- Measures taken by other Councils:

Gisborne District Council - G.D.C allow freedom camping in designated freedom camping areas between Labour weekend and Easter. Campers must have permits to use these areas and permits are available from G.D.C office and from several shops and the i-site. This season, a charge of \$25 was introduced which covers the cost of 8 rubbish bags which are given out with each permit. Inspectors check the camps every day. There are various rules governing “approved structures” - importantly, each van/tent/caravan must have its own chemical toilet. (www.gdc.govt.nz)

Central Hawke’s Bay Council – freedom camping is permitted in designated areas. There are fewer rules than Gisborne. Campers are required to notify the Council’s Bylaw Officer where they are intending to camp and for how long - payment is not required. (www.chbdc.govt.nz)

Marlborough District Council – no camping is permitted in any M.D.C reserve area unless permission has been granted by Council. Permission usually only granted in relation to specific groups for an organized event. Currently an agenda item is being worked on which will introduce a new policy on camping allowing camping for limited stays (2days) in areas designated for self-contained campervans and caravans. (www.marlborough.govt.nz)

Tasman District Council – T.D.C owns several camping grounds (run under lease by private operators) and there are a number of reserves on which camping is allowed. These reserves have an honesty box or a caretaker who collects fees. T.D.C has a policy for allowing camping by self-contained motorhomes only. In addition, there are areas where camping is expressly prohibited. (www.tdc.govt.nz)

- Transit

A site inspection by Transit of the long term camp at Black Miller in January 2006 -revealed there were no health, safety or environmental concerns. The campers had toilet facilities, recycling containers and were conscientious of the welfare of the site they returned to each year. Discussions with Transit New Zealand have revealed that there is no bylaw/policy regarding camping on road reserves managed by Transit. As a safety precaution Transit do actively encourage drivers to pull over and rest on road verges.

- Food and Health

The environmental health officer inspected the Black Miller camp site and acknowledged there were no concerns with this site. The Health inspector also stated that faecal contamination of the coastal area where campers were frequenting was a potential concern dependant on the amount of contamination taking place.

- Survey results

For a 10 day period in mid January 2006 surveys were conducted at both Mangamanu and South Bay in order to gather an accurate figure of freedom campers using each area.

| South Bay | Kiwa Road | |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| 12 | 19 | People per night |
| 8% | 9% | cars |
| 57% | 18% | motor homes |
| 34% | 33% | vans |
| 0 | 40% | tents |

Summary

- One of the crucial aspects highlighted by this report is the fact that freedom camping is a passionate topic – not unique to Kaikoura - many issues and many stakeholders are involved nationally and locally.

- Council must be careful to consider the varied issues and stakeholders not in isolation, as a successful outcome will only be achieved by considering the whole picture and not just one aspect of it.
- Clearly there are many potential positive and negative, real and perceived aspects associated with freedom camping.

Potential positive aspects include:

- Allowing visitors to experience New Zealand in a truly independent way – “getting away from it all”
- Enabling visitors to stay in an area even when all camping grounds are fully booked – e.g. at Christmas time
- By saving money on accommodation costs, campers contribute significantly to the local economy through participating in the activities and attractions of a particular area and by using local shops, restaurants and bars.

Potential negative aspects include:

- Environmental impacts involving a range of issues such as litter, sewage and damage to the natural environment
- Reduced opportunities for local businesses to receive economic gain from overnight visitors
- Fire safety, road safety and access issues

Recommendations

Given the fact that Kaikoura District Council has recorded concerns regarding freedom camping since 2004, Council needs to resolve the debate relating to freedom camping in the District.

Possible directions for Council

| Recommended action | Role of Council | Consequence |
|---|---|--|
| Specific sites and limited stay allowed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate appropriate sites to allow freedom camping • Determine an appropriate length of stay. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits for all stakeholders (including freedom campers), • Achievable management of environmental issues. |
| <i>Overlap between limited stay & total ban</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agreement of management of freedom camping on lands owned by Transit, DOC, Ngahi Tahu and KDC needs to be reached in combination with agreement as to how such management will take place.</i> • <i>Enforcement, signage, awareness need to be developed.</i> | |
| Total ban | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement needs would be greater. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased income of holiday parks, • Potential decrease in income for other local businesses, • Is the active enforcement achievable? • Reduction in environmental impacts. |

| | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| Take no action | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ignoring stakeholders concerns• Increasing impacts associated with this increasing sector of visitors. |
|----------------|--|---|

REFERENCES

Kaikoura District Plan, 2005

Coastal Management Strategy, 1998

Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand

Ministry of the Environment

Numerous councils throughout New Zealand (refer to websites included)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Camp site owners - Gerald Nolan and his colleagues met with Mayor Heays, Nicole Sherriff and Ann Paterson (12th January 2006) Main issues raised by this group

- Provision of toilets and bins by Council at various sites throughout the district did not help to improve the condition of the environment, instead additional problems arose e.g. excess rubbish is now dumped alongside the bins.
- The camp owners felt that freedom campers use and abuse free facilities resulting in litter, waste and general spoiling of the environment. Nothing is done to prevent freedom camping when, in fact, official camp sites invest 100 000s dollars to upgrade their facilities and improve the services they offer but struggle to maintain high occupancy.
- The camp owners have spent time and money on their own businesses, as well as their contributions in the form of rates, to ensure that their business operations run in such a way as to preserve the natural environment and to meet the criteria required by a Green Globe community. As a result, they regard the freedom campers as free-loaders given the fact they make no financial contribution to the upkeep of this environment and make very little contribution to the local economy
- In their opinion the solution is to have a complete ban on freedom camping in Kaikoura District

Appendix 2

E.C.C.O concerns

Freedom Camping Kaikoura Coast.

Report to Kaikoura District Council 27th January 2006-01-30

Thank you Annie for your email. We appreciated meeting with you and clarified some issues I hope. (Informal meeting held Edgecomb Friday 20th January 2006 with Mayor Kevin Heayes, Annie Patterson and Nicole from KDC and Sim and Maryanne Bell, Chris Lidguard and Jane Millton).

In summary.

On behalf of ECCO (East Coast Community Organisation) I once again (Refer my letter 28.5.04) bring to the attention of the Kaikoura District Council the frustrations and concerns we as a community have with the lack of action against the coastal campers. We have previously referred to these campers as Freedom Campers but a more appropriate term is Destination Campers. These are campers who have set up camp for more than the allowed overnight freedom camp.

I refer particularly to a group of campers who set up camp for over three weeks near the Black Miller stream.

However our concerns cover the entire coastline as I know there were other smaller “settlements” further north and south.

We require the Kaikoura District Council to explore all avenues to adopt a by-law which would enable the coastal strip along SH1 to be “policed” against long term campers. This is a beautiful local coastline for all to share.

The KDC must adopt a policy to prevent groups and often large groups, many tents, vehicles, boats setting up camp, preventing others access to the beach, disturbing local ratepayers with noise, travellers visually and soiling the area with rubbish, rotting fish and excrement. On one occasion a

large amount of paua and other fish was seen in the sun wasting while wet suited divers went out to catch more. What does this greed do for future generations?
This is our coastline to share but not to be depleted by groups who take it over for weeks preventing any one else access.

We ask that the Kaikoura District Council to identify ownership of the coastal area and adopt management of this area.

We ask the Kaikoura District Council to approach Transit for further “sturdy” No Camping signs to be erected along the Coast.

We ask you to note our concerns in the report to the District Council.
Lets not forget that Kaikoura has the achievement of being first to be certified Green Globe 21, claiming environment protection and resource protection for future generations.

We look forward to positive action.

Jane Millton
Chairman ECCO

Appendix 3

Chris Lidgard

Appendix 4

Kevin Genet

Appendix 5

Paul McGahan – Secretary K.M&CPS

**Kaikoura Marine & Coastal Protection Society
8 Lower Ward St
Kaikoura**

18 January 2005

Kevin Heays
Mayor
Kaikoura District Council
34 Esplanade
Kaikoura

Dear Kevin

Coastal Camping and Pollution Issues

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2006 expressing concerns about articles on coastal pollution in the Kaikoura Star and the Christchurch Press.

Firstly let me say that the article in “The Press” that prompted you to write to the Society was picked up by them following the Kaikoura Star article and received no further input from us except for the photographs. All that we subsequently did was to advise them who the photographer was when they contacted me. Any information that varied from the original article in the Kaikoura Star was as a result of “The Press” reporter seeking information from people like yourself.

The Society considers it is necessary to respond to a number of the points that you raise in your letter.

Before I do that, I will outline the objectives the Kaikoura Marine & Coastal Protection Society Incorporated (KMCPS) was established for:

- To protect and promote the sustainability and protection of our marine resources
- To work with the community and authorities in order to achieve our objectives
- To foster environmental courtesy to flora and fauna
- To obey and observe the customary rights of the local Iwi and to assist in the implementation and management of Taipure and Maitatai
- To observe the Treaty of Waitangi and how this relates to marine resources
- To focus on increasing the number of local participants
- To strengthen the links between the people and the marine environment

Thank you for recognising that the Society and its members have made a significant contribution to protecting and assisting in the management and maintenance of the coastline and marine areas. This has included:

- Being instrumental in the establishment of a “Rahui” Temporary Closure Area under Section 186B of the Fisheries Act.
- Assisting Ministry of Fisheries Honorary Fisheries Officers with a vehicle for patrolling the Kaikoura coastline by Honorary Fisheries Officers
- Providing education and interpretation on the marine environment
- The initiation of coastal clean-up’s
- Deputations to Ministers, and the Kaikoura District Council (KDC) advocating for the betterment of the marine and coastal environment

The KMCPS is aware of and does not doubt the commitment that your Council has for the environment with respect to the various programmes and strategies that it has formulated. Where we may differ is in how some of those strategies are or are not implemented on the ground. You have identified several of the initiatives that Council has initiated or is involved with in demonstrating that commitment. I would however comment on some of those points as follows:

- *“The establishment and commitment to the successful outcomes of the Kaikoura Coastal Guardians ‘Kaitiaki’ workgroup.....”*

It is understood that the Council is one of the stakeholders but was not involved in the establishment of the group nor attended the inaugural meeting but the Society does not doubt your commitment to a positive outcome of that group.

- *“Specifically related to freedom camping.....”*

The Society is aware that the Tourism Development Officer in conjunction with the Environmental Officer has prepared an initial report on Freedom Camping. It makes some useful comments and analysis which is a good starting point.

- *“The continuing council & staff support and involvement with regular coastal clean-ups...”*

The Society initiated volunteer coastal clean-up's several years ago and as you know a number of dedicated individuals such as Bev Eliot do an outstanding job on an ongoing basis. The latest volunteer coastal clean-up was started by Paul McGahan who subsequently asked Kaikoura District Council to take the responsibility for advertising and organising the logistics of the task. This has been much appreciated.

- *“Our Environmental Officer’s ongoing search for methods, legislation and strategies successfully administered throughout New Zealand to manage rubbish dumping, which we can learn from and possibly adopt.”*

Although it is useful to obtain best practice examples (methods and strategies) from elsewhere, the existing legislative framework is established and provides the basis for resolving the immediate issues the Council and district are facing. In other words all of the elements are already in place to enable this matter to be resolved with local knowledge, experience and skills from Council representatives and other stakeholders.

- *“Responding to our community’s desire to set up coastal recycling depots, more appropriate public waste receptacles and enhance our ‘clean green imaging’. All at a large administrative and financial cost”.*

The Society acknowledges that there has been a significant improvement with the recent installation of new rubbish receptacles. New bins in the Westend have tidied the centre of town and the new stainless steel containers look smart and are appropriate in an urban setting. However, there is some concern regarding the practicality of those receptacles in more rural recreation zones and their siting in proximity to recycling bins. It is understood that one has been stolen from Armers Beach. Considering their cost, perhaps Council could have considered a neighbouring district’s approach used in Cheviot where a low cost, practical rubbish disposal remedy has been implemented by painting 44 gallon drums and fitting lids. These are tidy, functional and a fraction of the cost of branded rubbish bins. There is also some local concern about the recycling “Tilley” bins in relation to their cost and functionality. Perhaps a more pragmatic approach, thus reducing the high administrative and financial costs you allude to could have enabled the redirection of some of those funds toward a seasonal paid position that assisted in litter control etc.

Your letter raises the point that conferences and planning strategies are an essential part of a sustainable environmental approach. The KMCPS does not oppose such conferences as they provide a forum to exchange information. Our issue is that the financial cost of running them should not be at the expense of not dealing with basic environmental deficiencies such as toilet waste left in recreational open space and coastal amenity areas, which still continues. In the near future I will be sending to a CD-ROM with a series of photos taken over the summer holiday period that irrefutably show the problem of rubbish and human waste deposition occurring along the length of the Kaikoura coastline.

If the KMCPS had not highlighted this issue, I really wonder when how much longer this issue would have been left for. Despite some action on beginning to investigate Freedom Camping, the issue is in fact still continuing.

You refer to Council having been the catalyst in the removal of tons of waste from the District. Quite frankly this is a legislative requirement of Councils in terms of the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 1974, your responsibilities under the Litter Act 1979, probably the Health Act and various other enactments. Council then incorporates legislative requirements into its plans, policies and strategies acknowledging the responsibility it has for such matters including rubbish and human waste disposal. I refer to your Environmental Policy Statement that clearly identifies the specific actions it will take to create a sustainable community which amongst others refers to: *Preventing pollution; protecting and enhancing open space.*

You mention that sometimes the waste Council removes is not on its land. If that is the case, perhaps a solution may be found through a combination of passing on the costs (user pays), and

by entering into partnership arrangements with other land management agencies to share compliance costs to deal with it. It is apparent there is a need to increase efforts to remedy the situation you suggest the Council is burdened with. Perhaps any working party you establish to deal with the rubbish and toilet waste issues needs to have wider stakeholder involvement. The reality for Council is that this problem is not going to go away and potentially will increase as Kaikoura expands and tourism grows. The impression I have is that the Council feels unfairly burdened and yet it is obvious legislation requires that Council take responsibility for rubbish and waste problems.

Considering the responsibility Council has for waste, strong, effective Council leadership and decisive action is required by the principal authority overseeing the District. If strong positive leadership is demonstrated, the Society considers the majority of stakeholders and the community will wholeheartedly support you.

You refer to initiatives and commitments Council and staff, and the community are undertaking, aimed at a sustainable living environment. You also mention Green Globe in particular as an environmental model to take the community forward and that it is a motivator to ensure we improve and reduce environmental impacts. The Society does not object to Green Globe as such, but considers it runs the risk of being little more than a poorly understood marketing brand if the residents and the wider cannot see any tangible benefits. Practical and meaningful action is required if Council really wants its residents to embrace Green Globe.

The Society fully agrees with your point that everybody has a stake in taking personal and/or group responsibility to assist Council in its aim to reduce impacts and create a sustainable environment and our Society have been at the forefront of doing so. You then mention that you do not believe loading any blame onto any party is helpful or productive as some of the Society's statements seem to have read. I am sorry if you have arrived at that conclusion. That was never intended and in my opinion there was no 'loading of blame' onto any particular group. You will have noted in the article in the Kaikoura Star that there was reference to other authorities as having a responsibility. However, the Society believes the KDC must take the initiative as the lead agency with administrative and management responsibility for the District. Your criticism raises the question of Council taking ownership and showing leadership for a pollution problem that is a reality that cannot be overlooked any longer. Coastal pollution issues have been raised previously on several occasions by groups over the past three years including: 'Coastal Race Against Pollution'; 'KMCPs' previously; and by a number of concerned individuals including myself (March 2005) in a private capacity. Some of these groups and individuals following having written or made representations to Council have ended up feeling ignored as a result of perceived inaction regarding their concerns, or through lack of communication from never receiving responses to written requests. These comments do not take away from the many positive environmental initiatives that Council has instigated but a fundamental problem remains regarding freedom camping and coastal pollution that will not disappear without decisive action.

You mention that the whole community has struggled for years with forming a successful strategy to address concerns and you then mention that for some species and areas, time is running out. It is unclear as to why it has struggled to do so but I do agree that the adverse environmental threats posed to some areas and/or species is of significant concern. It is for these sorts of reasons that the Society has highlighted the coastal pollution we refer to as being a significant problem that needs addressing now, not in three, six months or 12 months time.

It is unclear to me why your comment as to the speed with which some problems can escalate is a hindrance to finding a solution. The problems the Society identified in its press release have been evident for sometime but are escalating due to increased visitor pressure. It is vital that resource managers and administering agencies find solutions that align with the stated aims and commitment to sustainability that they eschew.

You also comment that you believe ‘knee-jerk’ and ‘from the hip’ reactions need to be avoided. I am unclear as to quite what this refers to but if it relates to rushed or poor quality decision making to develop solutions, the Society suggests both short and medium term solutions to deal with the problems to enable Council to achieve a positive and sustainable outcome. These are mentioned in the Summary below.

The Society is pleased that you recognise the issues of coastal waste management as a growing problem. However, it is not so easy to understand why you see the timeframes for getting solutions as frustrating and seemingly unacceptable. The solutions to this problem are not as great as they may appear and instead of being seen as a problem they need to be viewed as a challenge that will be effectively overcome.

Further to your letter, the article in the Kaikoura Star on 18 January ‘Mayor hit out over camping’ says that my comments in the Kaikoura Star imply that the council is doing nothing was “hugely incorrect”. Again your comment needs qualifying. The Council may be doing something in terms of beginning to research freedom camping but the reality is that the Council has done little or nothing to actively manage freedom camping (long known to be a problem) along this coastline other than to put up signs in recent months stating that overnight parking is not allowed. Evidence shows that the signs without management intervention are simply not working.

The Society appreciates your comments that Council looks forward to continuing its partnership with us. We also look forward to working with the Councils Environmental Officer to further our common interests in protecting this outstanding coastline.

In Summary

It is important not to lose sight of the issue that was initially raised in the Kaikoura Star article by the KMCPS. This was that freedom camping in its current form over the peak periods is causing a significant environmental effect and potentially very serious health risks. Unless it is effectively managed, the end result is likely to ultimately affect the eco-destination image Kaikoura and the Council is attempting to promote. The issue was highlighted in the Kaikoura Star when it became apparent that the scale of the problem over the holiday period was unacceptable. From an environmental and health perspective. Its continuance is also a poor example of environmental ‘best practice’ standards in managing and maintaining the Kaikoura coastline. It is not as if this issue was new or that Council had not been lobbied about it on numerous occasions previously over several years. The bottom line is that this is simply not OK any longer in 2005.

The issue warrants an immediate management response immediately to ensure that freedom campers without adequate sanitary facilities are not allowed to leave human waste. This could be achieved through patrols, enforcement of Council sign conditions relating to “*No Camping*”; or “*Overnight Parking*”; and/or “*No Litter*” as required “*By order of the Kaikoura District Council*”. These signs become meaningless without active patrolling and enforcement. This is evident from the continuing overnight parking of commercial and private campervans, cars, station wagons and buses at Kean Point, along the Esplanade, Wakatu Quay, South Bay opposite the racecourse and at numerous other locations along the coastline where it is inappropriate to overnight park/camp unless there is either a toilet facility in the vehicle, or a toilet amenity block is available.

The Society is well aware that there are a number of stakeholders involved and that there are issues that need to be worked through to develop a final strategy. It would however be a relatively simple matter to promulgate a partial solution for the balance of the peak visitor season. This

would significantly reduce and minimise the problems. The Society's suggestions for the short term are:

1. Employ a 'Ranger' for the remaining peak period for a maximum of say up to three months to educate and uphold the rules where "No Overnight Camping" signs are located so that the "By order of Council" message included on signage means just that. The enforcement aspect of this role should primarily be to educate and inform and should only be coercive as a last resort.

This would eliminate 80 - 90% of the problem within a very short time. I am aware that the immediate issue Council is likely to raise is cost. The reality is that having an environmental strategy is that it becomes incumbent on that administering authority to 'walk the talk' enshrined within its environmental strategy. Failure to do so ultimately undermines the Councils environmental strategies and authority; and it is also likely to ultimately tarnish the image of Kaikoura as an eco-destination.

In the medium term Council could work with the various stakeholder groups and the public to determine definitive policies for dealing with all of the issues associated with rubbish and toilets. This should include seeking financial contributions from other administering authorities (multi-party approach) toward the cost of employing a "Ranger/Litter Warden" for the peak season of the year. The Society does not consider that the KDC should bear this cost alone, except in the short term to deal with immediate issues. Council could also consider funding such a position through 'user pays' so that a level of cost recovery is recovered directly from freedom campers. Cost recovery is already well established in some other districts and is widely accepted by the majority of visitors.

2. Develop a low cost information strategy comprising:

- (a) A low cost brochure for handing out to campers and visitors
- (b) Contacting the tourism sector, Motor Caravan Association and commercial campervans to advise them that camping without toilets on the coastline and where there are "No Camping or Overnight Parking" signs is being enforced.
- (c) Press releases outlining the Council approach.
- (d) Placing information on the KDC website.

3. As soon as possible create a Camping/No camping Bylaw for the District regarding 'Freedom Camping'.

These short term solutions will quickly and effectively deal with the immediate ongoing problems of human waste and rubbish on the coastline. It would demonstrate the Council's leadership and commitment in environmental matters and earn it considerable respect from the community, tourism industry, environmentalists and those who do not want to see ongoing pollution of our outstanding coastline.

4. In the medium term develop a Camping Policy and strategy that clearly defines where various types of users can or cannot camp.

I reiterate, the Society does not doubt the Councils underlying commitment to environment management but considers that perhaps there may be some practical strategies that if adopted, would quickly deal with 80% of the problems that have been identified.

This would represent a major step forward in terms of environmental enhancement and public safety by minimising significant visual effects of litter and reducing potential health risks from human waste and earn the Council respect for standing up for our coastline.

The Kaikoura Marine & Coastal Protection Society wants to work closely with Council and other stakeholder groups to achieve a better coastal environment. This is something that I know we all hold close to our hearts. We believe actions speak louder than words when it comes to “*Environmental protection and enhancement*” aimed at “*Preserving the scenic and amenity values that ensures a natural and tranquil Kaikoura*” [KDC LTCCP: 2005].

Yours sincerely

Paul McGahan
Secretary