

Kaikōura District Council Media Release: Council commits to progress and seeks community voices as it takes responsible, inclusive approach to managing Freedom camping

Kaikōura District Council is seeking two community representatives to join a Responsible Camping Working Group that is being formed to address freedom camping in Kaikōura.

Mayor Winston Gray discussed the move saying, “Councils are sometimes criticised for having lots of meetings and making little progress. In some cases people may have a point, but when it comes to managing camping in our district Council knows that the only way we can succeed is if we bring everyone together to work collectively to create a solution that will work for us as a District, as a community and as a tourist destination.”

“We’ve chosen the name ‘Responsible Camping’ because Council believes that this is the best way to describe the attitude we’re taking – it’s also the outcome we are seeking for our community. We want to ensure that we act responsibly now to protect Kaikoura’s natural environment while also protecting the right of future generations of to enjoy camping responsibly as part of the kiwi way of life.”

“Even those who are most vocally opposed to freedom camping recognise that camping along our coastline is something many of our residents as well as our visitors treasure. Most also recognise that tourism is an important part of our local economy. What this means is that we have no choice but to find a way to manage the impact of badly behaved campers whilst encouraging responsible campers to enjoy our District sustainably” he said.

The working group will work with Council to agree how camping should be managed in Kaikoura. Members of the working group will include agencies such as the Department of Conservation who have legal authority over some of the land used by campers within our district. They will also include organisations who have an interest in the Kaikoura environment or economy, including our tourism and accommodation sectors. These organisations and individuals are being contacted and invited to take part.

Council expects the working group, supported by Council staff, to be able to make significant progress on the issue of responsible camping before the next summer busy season, but recognises that permanent solutions to some of the issues are likely to be some time away. Council remains committed to having improvements in place for our worst affected areas before next summer.

The two volunteer positions are being advertised through the Council website and the Kaikoura Star. Interested individuals need to make an expression of interest and provide references.

A dedicated email newsletter has also been set up and anyone interested in following the issue can sign up via the Council’s Facebook page or website by ticking the freedom camping box on the sign up form <https://www.facebook.com/KaikouraDistrictCouncil/app/100265896690345/>

Background

- Over the last few years Kaikoura District Council has been working towards finding a sustainable, permanent and positive solution to responsible camping in Kaikoura.
- This work was disrupted by the 2016 earthquake. Since November 2016, earthquake recovery has been Council’s priority.
- In late 2017, as recovery work began to transition into ‘business as new’ responsible camping re-emerged as a priority for Council



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- Work to date includes a review of Local Government NZ best practice publications and review of other council's response to responsible camping.
- In May 2018 Council confirmed it's preferred approach was to form the Responsible Camping Working Group.

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