



**CENTRAL  
HAWKE'S BAY**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

A stylized illustration of a yellow sun with rays and several light blue clouds, positioned above a dark blue banner.

**PLACES  
AND SPACES**  
FOR A THRIVING FUTURE

# Central Hawke's Bay Camping Strategy (2022)



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## 1. Introduction

Camping is a popular and traditional pastime throughout New Zealand and is one of our favourite holiday options, particularly over the summer months. Central Hawke's Bay is renowned as a location for the classic coastal holiday, however that reputation can also have negative consequences if not carefully managed.

This plan defines a strategic position for camping in the district, recognising that there are many complex issues for the community and wider district to work through to achieve tangible change.

## 2. What is camping?

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),
  - Camping within a defined camping ground.
- For the purpose of this document, we have adopted the following camping definitions:

### 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." - Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE).

### 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". 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 a formalised area of land where people pay a fee to temporarily stay. Campgrounds are regulated by the Camping-Grounds Regulations 1985.

Camping in its various forms takes place across Central Hawke's Bay.

## 3. 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. We are already experiencing increased demand across many of our camping areas. In particular, our coastal camping sites have become a destination to Kiwis who now, more than ever, are looking to visit places where they have never been before. Places with spectacular natural landscapes and scenery and opportunities to relax and refresh are at the top of their lists and include many sites within Central Hawke's Bay.

We want to encourage responsible camping to make sure we all have access to camping opportunities across the district, but managed in a way that protects our environment, supports our economy, responds to local social needs and respects the cultural context of places and people.

## 4. What we know about camping in Central Hawke's Bay

### What you told us

Over the summer of 2021 – 2022 we asked our community to let us know how they felt camping should be managed across the district. The key take aways from this are:

- Making sure locals take priority for freedom and coastal camping areas in peak season, but recognising that beaches are for everyone and that visitors contribute to our local economy.
- Ensuring that those who use the facilities provided at our camping destinations pay for these services.

### What's happening locally

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

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. This is placing pressure on some of our environments and our infrastructure. It also puts strain on the environment and some communities, predominantly from campers choosing not to stay at an established camp site and those that are not self-contained.

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 public dump station adjacent to the Waipukurau Holiday Park will attract campers and encourage an increase in the duration of stay.

In 2020, Council completed the [Central Hawke's Bay Destination Plan and Need Assessment](#). The plan picks up on the opportunities to invest to improve camping experiences.

Some of our biggest challenges are:

- The capacity and quality of our aging existing infrastructure and facilities.
- 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.

As pressure builds 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. This also includes making sure that whanau and friends can visit our beaches for day trips. We need to establish 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's happening nationally

Tourism New Zealand's '[Domestic Travel View Report April 2021](#)' found that 66% of New Zealanders were planning a domestic holiday within the next twelve months. Many of these people were 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.

MBIE and Employment and Tourism New Zealand have been promoting the Tiaki Promise now for five years with mixed success. Tiaki is an initiative to help all travellers to New Zealand care for people, place and culture, for now and for future generations. Tiaki invites us all to look at the world through this indigenous lens. To form a deeper connection with place, and to reflect this in our attitudes and behaviours and to commit to travelling in this way is to take the Tiaki Promise. Council has been required to promote this message as a condition of funding from MBIE, however there is a place to develop and understand local values associated with and core to Tamatea Hapu.

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.

## 5. What we want to achieve

**Strategic goal: Camping is in our DNA – the Tamatea Way, looking after locals, welcoming visitors, offering mountains to beach opportunities and protecting our natural environments.**

We will know we have been successful when:

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

## 6. Strategic priorities

The strategic priorities below outline Council's commitment to camping.

Council will continue to work with hapū, communities and campers across our district to make sure our camping responses are locally led. We will also work with organisations like the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council to identify opportunities for a joined-up approach to managing camping across our district and improving and expanding our camping opportunities.

We have sequenced the delivery of actions across five timing periods:

1. Quick wins – actions that we can implement within the next 12 months within existing resources
2. Short term – actions that can be implemented within the first three years of our current Long Term Plan 2021 -2024
3. Medium Term – actions that will be implemented in years four to seven of our current Long Term Plan 2021 -2024
4. Long Term – actions that will be implemented in years eight to ten of our current Long Term Plan 2021 -2024
5. Ongoing actions that will be implemented across a number of these timeframes

#	Approach	Action	Timing
1.	<b>Develop a camping framework that enables and promotes responsible camping throughout the district.</b>	Refine the Tiaki promise to localise a responsible camping approach that prioritises locals and protects our environments.	Short term
		Develop a Freedom Camping Bylaw. Including any limitations on length of stay and type of visitor (self-contained and non-self-contained) at specific locations to support responsible camping.	Short term
2.	<b>Diversify our camping opportunities across the district to relieve pressure on current sites and promote visitation to the district's destination attractions.</b>	Work with others, including DOC and Hawke's Bay Regional Council to identify possible sites (rivers and remote) and create development and maintenance agreements that support responsible camping.	Medium term
		Implement the Reserve Management Plan for specific camping sites on reserves.	Ongoing
		Implement the Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment to provide camping facilities like potable water, dump stations and toilets where these align with our camping network approach.	Ongoing
3.	<b>Create a transparent and fair approach to charging for camping.</b>	Review Fees and Charges across the network for camping: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on user pays during peak periods to contribute to facility/service provision and maintenance and environmental enhancements.</li> <li>• Review lease costs to ensure the value of the lease is reflected in the charges.</li> <li>• Identify new management approaches that reflect the Tamatea Way (e.g. priority bookings and discounts).</li> </ul>	Short term
4.	<b>Take a location specific approach to creating the best possible camping experiences across the district.</b>	Take a place-based approach to responding to particular issues that can range from lease renewals, land ownership, boundary encroachments, land zoning issues, semi-permanent or permanent occupation of campsites, 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.	Short to medium term
		Work with hapu to understand long-term aspirations for coastal areas.	
		Work with current lease holders to review leases across all our leased coastal camping sites to ensure they are providing fair and reasonable access to camping opportunities with localised management a key goal.	Short term
		Adopt seasonal management responses to high demand areas while a longer- term approach is identified e.g., use of port-a-loos at high demand areas during peak periods and camping management in our car parking areas to protect day visitor opportunities.	Quick win
5.	<b>Improve information on camping for locals and visitors to make sure they can make the most of their experiences</b>	Engage with third party stakeholders to provide tourists with accurate camping information and promote visitation to the district through an information portal or something similar.	Short term
		Consider an ongoing Camping / Summer Ambassador position that supports responsible camping.	Short term

## 7. Our current camping experiences

These are the current camping experiences that we know about. This provides a good overview of what is out there now and how this is managed.

Camp Sites	Facility Management	Facilities	Availability and use	Type
<b>Camp Wakarara</b>	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
<b>Elsthorpe Scenic Reserve Carpark</b>	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
<b>Kairakau Beach Freedom Camping</b>	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
<b>Kairakau Campground</b> Located on Road Reserve	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
<b>Waipawa Rivers Edge Holiday Park</b>	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
<b>River Park Event Centre</b>	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
<b>Monckton Scenic Reserve</b>	DOC owned	Public toilets	4-night max stay, large vehicle accessible, No dogs	Self-Contained
<b>Waipukurau Holiday Park</b> Public Recreation Ground	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

Camp Sites	Facility Management	Facilities	Availability and use	Type
<b>Punawaitai Purerere Beach</b>	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
<b>Purerere Beach Road</b> Located on Road Reserve	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
<b>Purerere Beach Campground</b> Recreation Reserve	CHBDC owned. Campsite is leased 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
<b>Aramoana Freedom Camping</b> Council carpark adjacent to Local Purpose Reserve	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
<b>Blackhead Campground</b> Recreation Reserve	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
<b>Wazz Mac's Camp</b>	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
<b>Pōrangahau Beach Road Holiday Park</b>	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
<b>Pōrangahau: Te Paerahi Beach Freedom Camping</b> Adjacent to Recreation Reserve	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.

