

Hey, we need to talk me kōrero ngātahi tātou

We're proposing some changes to our **Responsible Freedom Camping Bylaw**.

Some of the changes may affect you or your family and we'd like to know what you think.

When we've taken into account all the feedback received, we'll finish off the bylaw and it will become effective.

We know many New Zealanders and visitors love to freedom camp in our beautiful country. We want to balance this with the need to protect our environment and our communities' enjoyment of our public places. We want to encourage responsible freedom camping in our district by providing suitable locations that are set up to cater for this.

IMPORTANT DATES

Open for feedback from
Friday 17 July 2020 4pm to Monday 17 August 2020

TALK TO US

Tell us what you think in person:
Wednesday 9 September 2020 in the Hauraki District Council Chambers, William Street, Paeroa.

WHAT IS A BYLAW?

See page 3 for a brief description of what a bylaw is, and how it works for you.

See page 3 for the various ways you can have your say.

What we're proposing

We've made some proposed changes to our Responsible Freedom Camping Bylaw and we want to know what you think. In a nutshell, we're proposing:

- Including our freedom camping sites in Ngatea and Paeroa in the bylaw (this means we can issue fines if people break the rules).
- With the exception of Rays Rest and the Hauraki Rail Trail car park area just north of the pink dairy, we won't allow freedom camping on our land on the Wharekawa Coast.
- Including two potential sites for freedom camping in Waihi; designated parks at our carpark off Mueller Street and Haszard Street, and at Morgan Park.
- Restricting overnight stays to one a night stay in a calendar month in any 50km/hr and/or 70km/hr area, unless you're in a designated freedom camping area, then you can stay for two nights.

These proposals are explored further on the following page.

Freedom Camping Act 2011

It's important to remember we have to work within the rules made by central government when we make bylaws. In this case, councils cannot ban freedom camping across an entire district. Also, when prohibiting or placing restrictions on freedom camping there has to be a reason for this, such as:

- To protect the area e.g. to protect indigenous flora and fauna or historic sites.
- For health and safety reasons e.g. public toilet availability, crime, littering.
- To protect access to the site e.g. use of boat ramps, access to beaches.



Freedom camping locations

Paeroa

We provide about 20 parks at Railway Reserve, Marshall Street, for freedom camping. People can stay for a maximum two-night stay in a calendar month because the reserve is very popular and we want to make sure it's available for all campers to enjoy. Public toilets are available 24/7 so campers with non self-contained vehicles can also stay at this site. We also provide a site for freedom camping at our Marshall Street carpark. People can stay for a two-night stay in a calendar month, however only between 6pm Friday evening and 7pm Sunday evening because we need this carpark for our staff during the week. This site is within a short distance of the same facilities as Railway Reserve.

Ngatea

We provide a freedom camping area behind our office at the Hugh Hayward Domain, off Orchard West Road. There are about 20 parks available. Tenting/ parking is not allowed on the grass areas. We want to allow a maximum two-night stay in a calendar month because the reserve is popular and we want to make sure it's available for all campers to enjoy. Public toilets are available 24/7 so campers with non self-contained vehicles can also stay at this site.

Waihi

At the moment, we don't have a specific area for freedom camping in Waihi. We want to create an area for this in our carpark, which is accessed from either Mueller or Haszard Street. Campers with non self-contained vehicles could also use the site because the Haszard Street public toilet is open 24/7. We also think it's a safe location because it can be seen from the street and it's in the town centre zone so will have minimal impact on residents. We want to allow a maximum two-night stay in a calendar month so it's available for all campers to enjoy.

We'd also like to provide some freedom camping parks at our Morgan Park carpark on Kenny Street. There are no public toilets available nearby, so vehicles would need to be self-contained to stay there. We want to allow a maximum two-night stay in a calendar month to make sure all campers have the opportunity to enjoy the site. The site is walking distance to town, and there will be minimal impact on residential properties. We've talked with Sport n Action and they think a small number of freedom camping parks will work at the site.

Check out the maps in the draft bylaw to see the proposed areas:

<https://weneedtotalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz>

Wharekawa (Seabird) Coast

We still want to allow freedom camping at Rays Rest Reserve off East Coast Road. It will remain restricted to self-contained vehicles as there are no nearby public toilets. We also want to keep the maximum two-night stay in a calendar month in place as it is a very popular spot. We want to provide a freedom camping area just north of Kaiaua at the start of the Hauraki Rail Trail. We think this will be a great location for freedom camping as it has great views, is a short walk to shops and will have public toilet facilities. It will also be a great alternative to Tauwhare Koiora, which we want to protect because of its cultural value – you can read more about that below.

No go zones

We want to continue to prohibit freedom camping at the south end of Rays Rest to protect wildlife in the area. The land is located in a RAMSAR site, which is a wetland of international importance. The area is particularly important for seabirds. We also want to preserve access to the narrow beach area. In addition, we are proposing to put in place a prohibition for freedom camping north of Rays Rest along the Wharekawa Coast to our district boundary north of Waharau. This will also extend into the townships of Kaiaua and Whakatiwai. The Coast is very popular for freedom camping and we want to protect the RAMSAR site by limiting disruption to the environment and wildlife. We also want to preserve the amenity value of the area and access to the beach for our residents and visitors. People will no longer be permitted to freedom camp at Tauwhare Koiora, Kaiaua (sometimes referred to as Swing Bridge reserve). This site is not suitable for freedom camping because of the cultural value of the site for local iwi – it is wahi tapu.

One-night stay restrictions

Our previous camping bylaw (made under the Local Government Act 2002) included a one-night stay restriction in any area across the District (except at our freedom camping locations). That bylaw is no longer in place. Instead we're proposing to include a one-night stay restriction in the 50 km/hr and 70 km/hr speed limit areas in the District - this doesn't apply if you're in a designated freedom camping area, then you can stay for two nights. We need some rules in place as we've had complaints in the past about people freedom camping in front of properties for extended periods of time and we need the ability to move these people on to more appropriate locations. We want to protect people's rights to enjoy their property, including for health and safety reasons and the amenity value.

FURTHER INFORMATION

We think this bylaw is appropriate. It protects our environment and maintains and promotes health and safety. Our proposed bylaw does not affect your rights under the NZ Bill of Rights Act 1990. The complete bylaw and the background information explaining what we've considered so far can be found on our website: <https://weneedtotalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz>

A guide to giving feedback

Any organisation or member of the public can give us feedback in writing, on the phone, in person or all of these. This is your chance to tell us your thoughts about what we're proposing.

Good feedback is clear, concise and to the point. Tell us which parts you support, and which ones you don't. Let us know why. You are most welcome to provide additional pages or supporting material to with your feedback.

Remember to provide your contact details if you would like to be kept informed of the decisions made after considering your feedback.

Your feedback will be a council record, so may be reproduced as an attachment to a Council agenda, made publicly available and remain on Council minute records. If you aren't providing feedback on behalf of an organisation and would like your contact details to be kept private, please let us know.

Everyone who provides feedback will be notified in writing of the outcome.

Special assistance

We can offer assistance with special requirements at a hearing in terms of language translation, including that of sign language, or presenting through audio visual mechanisms. If assistance is required, please let us know and we will make the appropriate arrangements.

Huh?! What's a bylaw?

Our bylaws are only applicable to the Hauraki District. They're rules that local councils can develop to make our district a safe and healthy place. We make them in consultation with you – that's why it's important to have your say. We can enforce bylaws in various ways, including educating people and giving verbal warnings, issuing infringements (fines), or in extreme cases prosecuting people.

We're up to step 3 in the process, you're feedback is crucial and could result in changes to our proposal.

1

We review how well the bylaw is working with some input from key groups

2

Changes are made to the bylaw as a result of early discussions

3

You tell us what you think of the proposed changes to the bylaw

4

We look at the feedback and may make further changes as a result of your views

5

The bylaw is adopted and then effective

How you can have your say

If you want to **talk** to us:

- contact us to book in to speak to the Council at a hearing in Paeroa on 9 September 2020, or tick the box on the feedback form to show us you're keen to attend. We'll contact you closer to the date of the hearing to arrange a time for you to speak.
- give us a call and speak with a member of the strategic planning team – we can draft your feedback into a written statement and we'll provide you with a copy.

If you want to **write** to us:

- fill out the online feedback form on our website <https://weneedtotalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz>
- private message or comment on our Facebook page
- email your feedback to info@hauraki-dc.govt.nz
- write a letter, or fill in the printed feedback form (available at our service centres, or downloadable from our website)