



#18

14 March 2018

From: The New Zealand Motor Caravan Association Inc.
P.O Box 72147
Papakura 2244
Email: james@nzmca.org.nz

Draft Long Term Plans 2018-2028

Introduction

1. We understand councils have been working on their draft Long Term Plans 2018-2028 (LTP's) and most of these will be out for public consultation in March – May 2018. LTP's describe the priority activities and community outcomes that councils want to achieve over the next 10 years, while coordinating resources and providing for integrated decision-making.
2. The New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA) appreciates the opportunity to provide this feedback towards your LTP review. Formed in 1956, the NZMCA represents the interests of over 80,000 New Zealanders who enjoy exploring New Zealand at leisure in the purpose-built certified self-contained (CSC) motorhomes and caravans. NZMCA members are taxpayers, ratepayers, and domestic travellers who enjoy camping in their hometowns and other districts throughout New Zealand.
3. The domestic motor caravan industry is growing at an unprecedented rate with more and more kiwi retirees, baby boomers and families looking for opportunities to relive the quintessential kiwi-camping lifestyle. For example, the 3-day Covi Supershow held in Auckland last year sold over **\$32 million** worth of CSC motor caravans to New Zealanders alone, compared to \$18 million sold in the previous year. It is incumbent on councils to recognise and support this growing activity enjoyed by tens of thousands of kiwi families.
4. As an official partner of Local Government New Zealand and a strong advocate for responsible freedom camping in CSC vehicles, the NZMCA wants to partner with you on infrastructure development and strategic policy planning with a view to supporting responsible motor caravanning across New Zealand. Like you, we want to ensure motor caravanning is managed properly in New Zealand and provides long-term benefits to your local businesses and communities.

Driving towards a Sustainable Future

5. To that end, the NZMCA recommends your LTP includes sufficient recognition, resourcing and prioritisation to support the continued growth of the domestic motor caravanning sector with a particular focus on the follow areas:
- New infrastructure development, e.g. public dump stations and refuse bins;
 - An integrated and permissive freedom camping management regime; and
 - Recognition of the NZMCA's Motorhome Friendly Scheme.

Infrastructure

6. All councils have a responsibility under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) and the Health Act 1956 to improve, promote and protect public health. Councils are therefore expected to provide adequate public facilities such as refuse bins and public toilets – which also include public dump stations accessible to both local residents and visitors¹. Furthermore, the LGA requires councils to assess whether they still meet public demand for these facilities and to take appropriate action if they do not.
7. Over the past 10 years, the NZMCA has helped co-fund hundreds of public dump station projects across New Zealand. While we continue to collaborate with councils and fill the gaps within the national network, there remain significant access and availability issues throughout many parts of New Zealand. There is growing demand for additional facilities like refuse bins and public dump stations to support visitors and kiwi families exploring our countryside.
8. The NZMCA also supports council projects that provide refuse facilities in strategic areas for visitors. For example, in partnership with the Mackenzie District Council the NZMCA financially supported a new 7m³ user-pays compact rubbish bin at Lake Tekapo. This bin is available for use to all visitors and local residents for a nominal charge.

Benefits and funding options

9. Offering facilities in strategic locations will encourage safe waste disposal and protect public health. Dump stations built to NZS 5465:2001 specifications will encourage responsible campers in CSC vehicles to visit and spend money in your towns, while providing visitors with a safe place to dispose of their waste water. The cost of constructing a new facility varies² and largely depends on the proximity of the underground services along with any additional requirements, e.g. widening of the carriageway. The NZMCA is available to provide practical and technical advice as well as financial assistance (provided the new station meets certain criteria). Councils can also apply to MBIE's Tourism Infrastructure Fund for additional financial support.

Recommendations

10. That your LTP includes resourcing and prioritisation for public dump station facilities built to NZS 5465:2001 specifications, along with free/low cost refuse and recycling facilities for visitors.

¹ See NZS 5465:2001 and Local Government New Zealand (2000). *The knowhow guide to assessing water and sanitary services under the local government act 2002*.

² We have worked with councils who have built adequate facilities for under \$5,000, while other councils have spent upwards of \$100,000.

Freedom Camping

11. The NZMCA supports responsible freedom camping in CSC vehicles only. We encourage all councils to recognise the value of CSC motor caravanners throughout their camping-related policies and bylaws. The NZMCA is working with Local Government New Zealand on a 'good practice freedom camping guide' which will include advice to councils wanting to improve their overall management regimes. Furthermore, central government's renewed focus on freedom camping and the formation of a cross-sector stakeholder working group may result in new ideas and management solutions coming to the fore, to help councils manage the activity differently.
12. The outcome of both initiatives may motivate your council to review its existing policy framework over the next 1-2 years, including any camping-related bylaws, reserve management plan policies, and district plan provisions. It would, therefore, be prudent for the council to set aside additional resources in anticipation of a comprehensive and holistic policy review.

Benefits

13. Setting aside sufficient resources in your LTP will make it easier for the council to adapt to the changing landscape and, if necessary, undertake a comprehensive policy review. From our experience, having immediate access to sufficient resources will make it easier for council staff to undertake adequate assessments and reviews along with genuine stakeholder engagement. Relying on unbudgeted and insufficient resources will inevitably lead to poor outcomes and exacerbate community/stakeholder angst.

Recommendations

14. That your LTP includes sufficient resourcing to initiate an integrated freedom camping management regime, which may require a comprehensive review of your relevant rules, policies and bylaws.

Motorhome Friendly Scheme

15. The NZMCA recognises the pressure New Zealand's booming tourism industry is having on local communities and infrastructure. In response to these concerns the NZMCA initiated the 'off the beaten track' campaign which encourages CSC motor caravanners to visit lesser known places around New Zealand. Our campaign helps 'spread the load' across New Zealand and supports local operators in rural/provincial areas calling out for more tourism business. This campaign is also supported through the NZMCA's Motorhome Friendly scheme, which promotes campgrounds and preferred freedom camping areas alongside a range of local events, e.g. food and wine festivals, music concerts, shows and other family-friendly activities.
16. The NZMCA Motorhome Friendly scheme was first introduced in 2010 and was modelled on the very successful RV Friendly scheme initiated by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia. The NZMCA's scheme provides a set of amenities and services that guarantee motor caravanners a warm welcome and an enjoyable visit. Motor Caravanners will generally avoid towns and districts where they are not welcome and will go out of their way to visit a town that

markets itself as being motorhome friendly. With on-the-road motorhome expenditure exceeding **\$650 million annually** (\$211 million of which come from NZMCA members) motorhomers and communities can certainly establish a mutually beneficial relationship.

17. The NZMCA scheme is primarily targeted at rural and provisional towns, and currently supports 38 councils and 50 friendly towns across New Zealand. There is no cost to any council or town wanting to participate in the scheme other than having friendly camping policies/bylaws along with the necessary infrastructure to support visitors travelling in CSC vehicles. Further information on the scheme can be found here – www.mhftowns.com.

Benefits

18. Participating in the motorhome friendly scheme is **FREE**. In return for providing adequate infrastructure (e.g. accessible dump stations) and permissive freedom camping policies/bylaws, the NZMCA will promote your town(s) and local events to motor caravan tourists across New Zealand. Our team of experienced professionals will work alongside your staff and local event organisers to showcase your towns and all they have to offer. The NZMCA also takes care of all online promotional and marketing collateral.

Recommendations

19. That your LTP explicitly recognises the value of the NZMCA Motorhome Friendly Scheme.

Summary

20. The domestic CSC motor caravan industry in New Zealand continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. More and more kiwi families are opting for passive recreational lifestyles that enable them to explore their own country. The NZMCA wants to partner with your council to help support this dream for the benefit of New Zealanders, their towns and their communities. The LTP provides an avenue for your council to recognise, resource and prioritise activities in support of this growth.
21. The NZMCA is happy to discuss this feedback and we would appreciate notification of your LTP when it is out for public consultation.

Yours faithfully,
New Zealand Motor Caravan Association Inc.



James Imlach
National Policy & Planning Manager
james@nzmca.org.nz