

Minutes of a deliberations on the Freedom Camping Bylaw 2025 held in Council Chambers, 10 Gorge Road on Thursday 28 August 2025 beginning at 1.00pm

Present:

Councillor Gavin Bartlett (Chairperson), Councillor Cody Tucker and Councillor and Councillor Lisa Guy

In attendance:

Carrie Williams (Policy Manager), Luke Place (Principal Policy Advisor), Marie Day (Community Relations Manager), Amy Galloway (Camping Manager), Colin Shields* (Traffic Engineer, Tonkin+Taylor), Peter Cochrane* (Tonkin+Taylor), Carrie Edgerton (Parking Manager), Cacie English (Parking Coordinator), Dom Harrison* (Parks Planner), Jane Robertson (Senior Democracy Services Advisor); one member of the media

*These people joined the meeting online

Deliberations

General Provisions

Mr Place spoke to a PowerPoint presentation which reminded the panel of the statutory limitations, the key learnings from the judicial review and irrelevant considerations when determining its final position.

The default position was that freedom camping could occur anywhere on QLDC land except reserves but the draft Freedom Camping Bylaw 2025 tried to provide a *structured regulatory framework* for freedom camping, identifying some rural roads for freedom camping, prohibiting freedom camping on urban roads and identifying across the district 15 specific restricted areas for freedom camping.

Ms Edgerton confirmed that freedom camping enforcement was cost neutral and income from fines covered the cost of enforcement. Enforcement was not generally pursued upon receipt of a Snap Send Solve RFS (request for service) but could be scaled up if required.

Carparking signage for freedom camping would be funded from the roading budget.

Rural Roads

The panel noted that there had been many submissions on the approach proposed by the draft bylaw and considered the different approaches (options A-E) as set out in the PowerPoint presentation.

The panel agreed that the only roads with sufficient room (at least 5 metres) to allow freedom camping would be where there was an existing lay-by area.

Rural roads provided access and a means of communication for those who lived in rural areas and were not recreational spaces.

The panel considered if speed limits could be used as a condition to regulate freedom camping on rural roads in accordance with section 11 of the Act. Officers advised that the majority of rural roads had a speed limit of at least 70 km/h and on this basis, it was agreed that applying this as a threshold for prohibiting freedom camping would essentially result in prohibiting freedom camping across all rural roads, which is not supported by technical assessment or officer recommendations.

Urban Roads

The panel supported the proposal to prohibit freedom camping on urban roads. They agreed to add sections of Stanley Street and Shotover Street in Queenstown (State Highway 6A) to the schedule of prohibited urban roads.

The existing provisions of the bylaw would manage the situation in Rutherford Road.

Specific Restricted Areas

The technical experts had recommended that at least some facilities needed to be provided for freedom camping in the bylaw. Technical experts had assessed carparks that would be suitable for freedom camping/require protection under section 11 of the Act. The technical experts had recommended that about 10% of the available carpark spaces could be provided for freedom camping but that this could change. Further consideration by officers informed the number of spaces that could be made available for freedom camping in the draft bylaw. A carpark was off the road so was a safer environment than on-road parking, and areas had been reviewed for ease of access by large vehicles (campervans).

The panel agreed to standardise the hours of arrival and departure across most sites with similar characteristics: arrival not before 6.00pm and departure no later than 8.00am.

Signage was needed to show the risk of fire and campers would be encouraged to cook within a vehicle.

The use of technology (i.e. cameras and number plate recognition) would be considered by officers for some freedom camping sites for summer 2025/26.

The introduction of a booking system could create conflict between campers although the panel noted that this had worked for the Great Walks. It was hoped that the new bylaw would encourage a behaviour change.

Reserves could only be made available for parking if it was identified in the relevant Reserve Management Plan or through Council's use of a ministerial delegation to uplift the section 44 Reserve Act 1977 prohibition on camping.

Site	Number of parks
Boundary Street carpark, Queenstown	15
Gorge Road carpark, Queenstown	2
Industrial Place carpark Queenstown	6
Lakeview carpark, Queenstown (note height restriction)	10
Gray Street carpark, Frankton	4
Queenstown Event Centre carpark, Frankton	9
Howards Drive carpark, Lake Hayes	3
Glenorchy Domain carpark, Glenorchy	3
Gibbston Highway/State Highway 6 carpark (NZTA land)	2
Kingston Road/State Highway 6 carpark (NZTA land)	50
Flint Street carpark, Arrowtown	3
Wānaka Recreation Centre carpark, Wānaka	18
Allenby Place carpark, Wānaka	3
Beacon Point Road carpark, Wānaka	3
Camp Hill Road carpark, Hāwea	10
TOTAL	141

Officers were asked to look into a registration and booking system for freedom camping.

The panel supported the remainder of the officer recommendations contained in Attachment D/and as contained in the hearing report.

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett, Councillor Tucker)

That the hearing panel resolve to:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Receives** all submissions to the draft Freedom Camping Bylaw 2025 | Ture ā-Rohe mō te Noho Puni Korehere 2025 and hears the submitters who wish to be heard;
3. **Recommend to Council** a final form of the draft Freedom Camping Bylaw 2025 | Ture ā-Rohe mō te Noho Puni Korehere 2025 to be adopted, with changes agreed as an outcome of the consultation process.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting concluded at 2.41pm.