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Tēnā koutou

Draft Freedom Camping Bylaw 2025

On behalf of Toitū te Whenua / Land Information New Zealand, Crown Property and the Commissioner of Crown Lands would like to pass on the following concerns with the Draft Freedom Camping Bylaw 2025.

The inclusion of rural roads as restricted freedom camping areas in Schedule 1B of the proposed Freedom Camping Bylaw has the potential to have significant negative effects on Crown Land and Crown Pastoral Land, including effects on the lands, our lessees, and their farming operations. The roads mapped in the proposal appear to have been selected as part of a desk-top exercise and LINZ would recommend a reassessment before the draft bylaw progresses.

The proposed areas include rural roads that pass through numerous Pastoral leases, including but not limited to Meads Road at Lake Hawea (Hunter Valley Station), the Von and Mount Nicholas Beach Bay Roads (Mount Nicholas and Walter Peak), and the Branches Road (Coronet Peak and Branches Station).

LINZ is concerned that enabling freedom camping along roads such as these appears not to consider a range of issues for both LINZ and our lessees, including the following.

Protection of adjacent inherent values - These roads pass through pastoral leases and many sections of road are adjacent to areas of significant inherent values - biodiversity, landscape, and cultural. LINZ and lessees are responsible for ensuring those values are maintained or enhanced by the low intensity nature of farming operations. In addition to physical damage, there is also the potential for weed-seeds or pathogens to spread from uncleaned tyres and vehicles, and personal and camping equipment.

Incursion onto properties and effect on farms and farming

operations- The majority of the roads through pastoral leases are not fenced and our experience is that campers will pull off roads onto tracks, paddocks, and the banks of lakes and rivers. This leads to disturbance of stock (particularly during lambing and calving) and farming operations as well as rubbish and human waste. The latter is already an issue despite existing rules requiring campers to have self-contained toilet facilities. Domestic freedom campers seeking rural locations often have dogs which pose a risk to farming and livestock through both physical presence and potential transfer of sheet measles. In addition, the roads mapped are often adjacent to or pass through livestock yards, implement compounds, and woolsheds where freedom camping would pose safety, security, and stock-management risks.

Safety - These rural roads are, in the main not designed or maintained to facilitate passage nor parking by vehicles designed for sealed roads, particularly camper vans and house buses. Many of the roads include fords and steep inclines which are not suitable for such vehicles and our lessees are generally the first port of call when people get into difficulty. A number of these roads are also part of cycle trail networks and in particular the Mount Nicholas Bay Road and Von Roads see large volumes of cycle traffic over the summer which would be in conflict with campervan-type vehicles.

Enforcement - The remote nature of many of these roads presents enforcement challenges as many of the roads are a significant distance (two to three hours) from the nearest town. Once locations are published and shared on websites and social media, they are likely to promulgate quickly. We are concerned that much of the enforcement would fall to the rural residents and farmers, including LINZ leaseholders, who live at place. This would have strong potential to lead to increasing conflict for farmers needing to ensure that the presence of freedom campers does not affect the land they're responsible for and their farming operations.

Thank you for considering this feedback.

Nāku iti noa, nā



James Holborow
Deputy Head of Crown Property