

# Council-owned Campgrounds Policy (#5020)

Adopted: March 1985

Reviewed: November 2016

## Background

The Far North district has a broad range of commercial campgrounds, holiday parks, and Department of Conservation camp grounds that provide camping opportunities throughout the year. Visitors wishing to camp in the District are encouraged to use registered campgrounds or approved freedom camping sites (for self-contained camping vehicle only) to ensure the personal safety of visitors and to reduce any negative impact to our environment from illegal camping.

During 2008, it was recognised that the high market value of coastal land was making it less attractive for private enterprise to retain coastal property as campgrounds. Nationally, a number of high profile camp grounds were sold. Council undertook a camping review in the Far North and determined that it was bucking the trend and there was a good supply but a significant gap on the west coast. There were also two camp grounds in the Hokianga on the open market (Opononi and Rawene). A recommendation of the review was that Council monitor the provision of camping on the west coast and work with New Zealand Holiday parks Association (HAPNZ) to identify potential Council land or facilitate partnerships with hapu or the Department of Conservation for campground opportunities if these campgrounds were sold.

Council's ownership of camp grounds ensures coastal camping holidays remain an option for residents and visitors. Council owns camp grounds at Houhora Heads, Tauranga Bay, and Russell, which are leased on a commercial basis.

To encourage investment in the infrastructure expected in a modern campground, Council has provided long term leases and has provided rights of renewal where the lessee has demonstrated they wish to make further investment.

Council still owns some infrastructure improvements at campgrounds owned by Council. To reduce any confusion over the responsibility for maintenance and renewal of these improvements, it is proposed that, over time, Council owned improvements are transferred to the lessee. Council owned campgrounds are listed in Appendix A.

## Legislative Context

The following legislation applies to camping grounds in the Far North District:

- Building Act 2004
- Camping Ground Regulations 1985
- Health Act 1956
- Local Government Act 2002
- Reserves Act 1977
- Resource Management Act 1991.
- Far North District Council Consolidated Bylaws

## Objectives

To ensure that Council-owned camp grounds are retained to provide an affordable coastal holiday experience while minimising the cost to the ratepayer.

## Policies

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1. Council will receive a commercial return on its land without driving up the fee structure for campers beyond the market rate.
2. Council will encourage lessee investment to reduce ratepayer funded capital.
3. Council will require lessees to achieve full compliance with all legal requirements, resource consent conditions, and building codes.
4. Council will prepare new leases in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977 when they expire.
5. Council will reflect all terms and conditions of this policy in all new leases or lease renewals.
6. Council will provide for long term leases with clear terms and conditions including:
  - a. A maximum total lease term of 21 years
  - b. Rent reviews being carried out every three years.
  - c. A consideration of a renewal of a further 21 years if the lessee:
    - i. can demonstrate it is required to enable the lessee to invest in infrastructure to improve the camping experience and to provide for a financial return on their investment
    - ii. has met the terms and conditions of the lease and has operated the campground in accordance with “best practice” for the industry

This is subject to any reasonable conditions Council may impose.
7. Council will consider the transfer of any Council owned improvements to the lessee.
8. Council will continue to promote the availability of all camping options in the District (Council, private, and DOC) through i-SITEs, websites, and camping brochures.
9. Council will encourage visitors to the district to use registered campgrounds or approved freedom camping sites (for self-contained camping vehicles only) through a range of media formats such as tourism radio, brochures, i-Sites, and website information.
10. Council will continue to review the level of camping opportunities across the District and will not purchase additional camp grounds unless this aligns with Council’s strategic priorities.

## Appendix A – Schedule of Campgrounds

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Name	Legal Description	Area	Encumbrance
Houhora Heads	Lot1-2, DP 402482	66,832m <sup>2</sup>	Recreation Reserve Endowment property
Tauranga Bay	Lot 1 DP 90523, Pt Lot 1 DP 54531, Lot 1, DP 69081	67,671m <sup>2</sup>	Recreation Reserve
Russell	Lot 1 DP 149652	30,395	Recreation Reserve