

Prospective Freedom Camping Bylaw workshop

6 May 2025

Setting the scene

A bylaw is a tool to address issues affecting public safety, health and nuisances. They need to be evidence based. The FCA 2011 sets tests for the creation of a FC bylaw.

Council resolution on 1 April to proceed to public survey and development of a draft bylaw

Public survey undertaken between 10-30 April

Purpose of this workshop

- Familiarise Councillors with the public survey responses, evidence presented, and initial officer commenting
- Seek direction about the framing of a draft bylaw, if applicable



Part 1 - what did the public survey tell us?

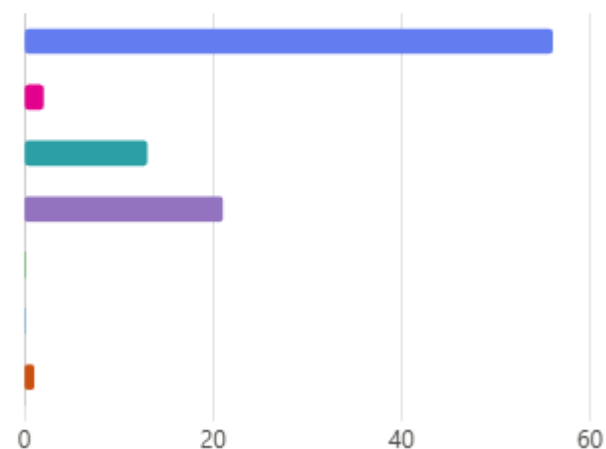


Notes: this data is as per 9am 29/4/25. The survey closed 30/4/25. More detailed information is available in the raw data provided to Councillors, and is planned to be made publicly available in the June 2025 Council report. Statistics are based on the 92 responses to the survey and do not include the four emailed submissions. Questions were optional so not all responses may add to 92; some questions were multiple-choice so percentages may not add to 100%.

Who we heard from 92 responses

5. Where do you live?

Usually in the Timaru District	56
Usually somewhere else in South Canterbury (Waimate, Mackenzie and Waitaki Districts)	2
Usually somewhere else in Canterbury (Mid-Canterbury, Christchurch and North Canterbury)	13
Usually somewhere else in New Zealand	21
Usually outside New Zealand	0
N/A - commenting as an organisation	0
Other	1

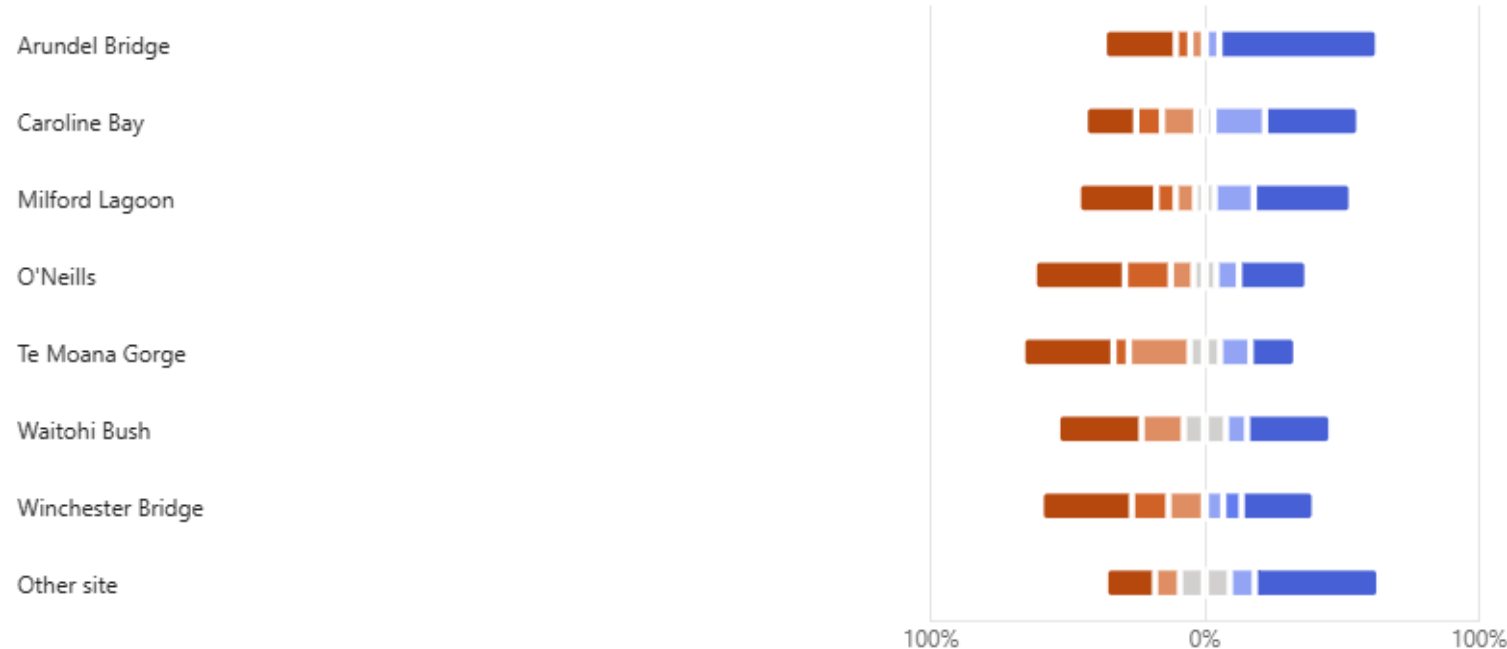


Any issues experienced?

46 responses

9. Have you experienced or are you aware of any of the following problems caused by freedom campers at any of these sites?

- (1) Negative impact on physical area/ environment
- (2) Negative impact on health and safety of people visiting the area
- (3) Negative impact on public access to/ use of the area
- Both 1 and 2
- Both 1 and 3
- Both 2 and 3
- All



Of the 46 responses

% are in the same order as the key i.e. 1; 2; 3; 1 & 2; 1 & 3; 2 & 3; All

26.3%; 5.3%; 5.3%; 0%; 5.3% 0%; 57.9%

18.8%; 9.4%; 12.5%; 6.3%; 18.8%, 0%; 34.4%

28.6%; 7.1%; 7.1%; 7.1%; 14.3%; 0%; 35.7%

33.3%; 16.7%; 8.3%; 8.3%; 8.3%; 0%; 25%

33.3%; 5.6%; 22.2%; 11.1%; 11.1%; 0%; 16.7%

30.8%; 0%; 15.4%; 15.4%; 7.7%; 0%; 30.8%

33.3%; 13.3%; 13.3%; 6.7%; 0%; 6.7%; 26.7%

18.2%; 0%; 9.1%; 18.2%; 9.1%; 0%; 45.5%

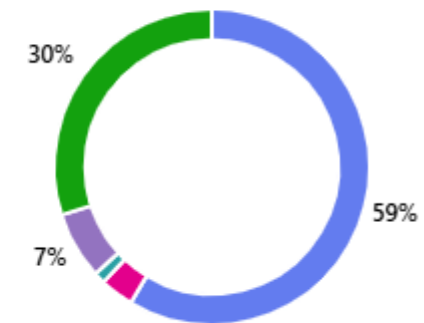
Presumably non-respondents did not experience any of the issues

New information, or not?

87 responses

12. Have you reported any of these problems to Council before?

● N/A - haven't seen any problems	51
● All of the problems	3
● More than half of the problems	1
● Less than half of the problems	6
● None of the problems	26

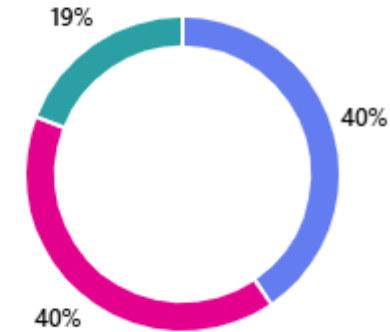


Do you think there should be a bylaw?

84 responses

13. Reflecting on any problems you have stated and what a bylaw might be able to offer to address these, do you think that the Timaru District should have a freedom camping bylaw?

● Yes	34
● No	34
● Unsure	16



Of the 56 respondents who stated they usually reside in the Timaru District, 22 (39%) responded “Yes”, 22 (39%) responded “No”, 8 (14%) responded “Unsure”, and 4 (7%) did not respond.

Other areas for improvement

15. What are one or two changes that you think would most improve freedom camping in the Timaru District?

[More details](#)

80
Responses

Latest Responses

"Limited designated areas in Timaru with set guidelines of use to stop people living... "

"Encouraging of camping in remote sites, improvement of facilities at Te Moana, red... "

"From my observations, I think freedom camping works really well in our district. Liv..."

...

25 respondents (31%) answered Areas for this question.

A word cloud centered around the word "Areas". The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central word. The words include: "freedom areas", "areas and facilities", "camping areas", "public toilets", "freedom camping", "sites", "vehicles", "freedom camp", "camp sites", "freedom campers", "rule", "people", "toilet", "Bay", "local", "district", "parking area", "fixed toilets", and "rubbish facilities". The word "Areas" is the largest and most prominent in the center.

Other areas for improvement

16. Is there anything freedom-camping related that you think has worked well in other areas (outside the Timaru District), that you would like to see considered here?

[More details](#)

61
Responses

Latest Responses

"There are many options for campers. Joining NZCMA allows use of designated are... "
"I often sleep in my car prior to undertaking a hike or other outdoors excursion or ... "

...

19 respondents (31%) answered areas for this question.

lot of area
towns
rubbish bins
camping areas
area for their events
areas for campers
toilet facilities
toilets clean
toilets/showers
people
self
Toilet
areas
freedom camping
freedom campers
CBD area
nice areas
parking area
districts

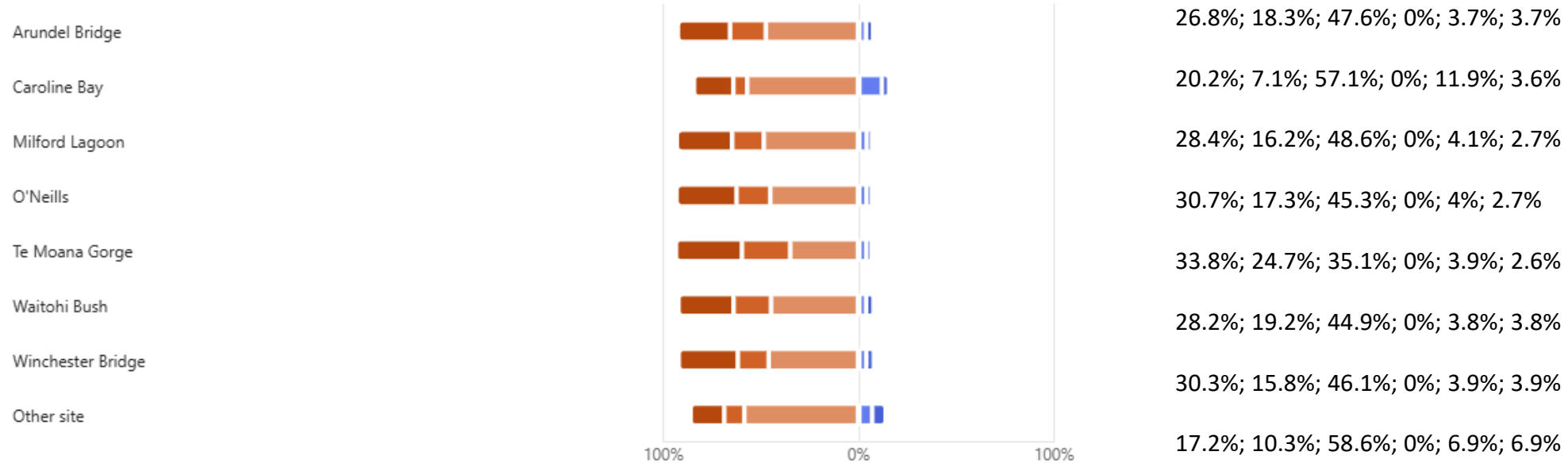
Permitted freedom camping under a bylaw

86 responses

17. What sort of freedom camping do you think should be permitted in the following locations?

● All freedom camping
 ● Only certified self-contained and tenting
 ● Certified self-contained only
 ● Tenting only
● No freedom camping permitted
 ● Other

% are in the same order as the key



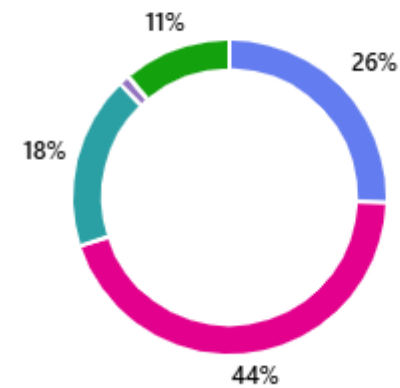
Maximum nights in a row under a bylaw

90 responses

19. What do you think is a reasonable maximum number of nights in a row that freedom campers should be allowed to stay in a location?

[More details](#)

1-2 nights	23
3-5 nights	40
6-7 nights	16
No limit	1
Other	10



Limits on users under a bylaw

83 responses

21. Should there be limits to the number of freedom campers/vehicles/tents permitted in each location at any one time?

● Yes ● No ● Other

Arundel Bridge

Caroline Bay

Milford Lagoon

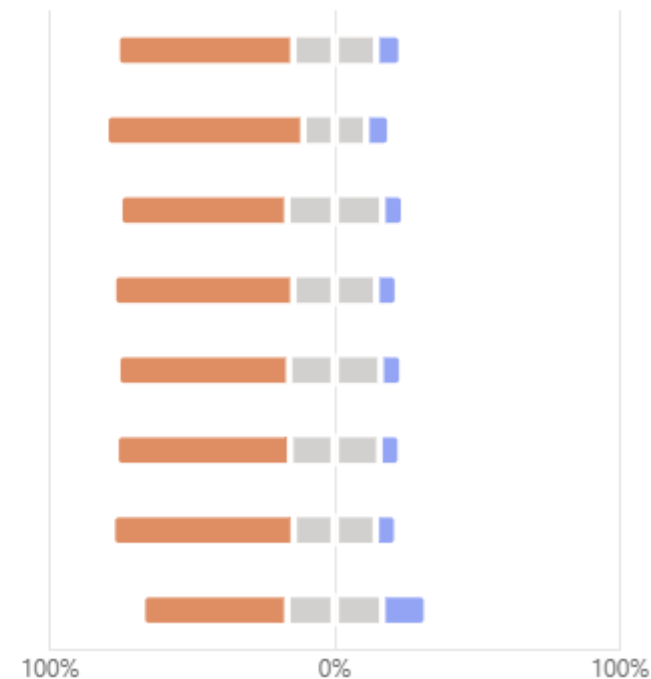
O'Neills

Te Moana Gorge

Waitohi Bush

Winchester Bridge

Other



% are in the same order as the key

62%; 29.1%; 8.9%

69.5%; 22%; 8.5%

59%; 33.3%; 7.7%

63.3%; 29.1%; 7.6%

60.3%; 32.1%; 7.7%

61.3%; 31.3%; 7.5%

63.8%; 28.8%; 7.5%

51%; 33.3%; 15.7%

Part 2 - if there were to be a bylaw

Focusing questions for discussion

- 1) Are there problems worth addressing, and could a freedom camping bylaw make a meaningful difference?
- 2) What is your vision for freedom camping in the district?
- 3) If there were to be a bylaw, what restrictions should be placed on freedom camping?
 - Where should freedom camping occur/ not occur? Type restrictions? Duration restrictions? Other?
- 4) What trade-offs are you generally prepared to accept, and what are non-negotiables?

Note: these questions should be considered with reference to the Mackenzie and Waitaki DC bylaws, and any implementation and enforcement approach

The way forward

As per the April Council meeting resolution.

Report to 28 June Council meeting to:

- Present full public survey responses and officer commenting.
- Draft bylaw, informed by survey responses and this workshop.



The options at the June meeting will be to proceed to public consultation on the draft bylaw, or stop work on developing a bylaw.