

Hanmer Springs Business Association

Submission on Freedom Camping

To: Hurunui District Council

Date: 7 November 2017

The Hanmer Springs Business Association (HSBA) recognises the role that the campervan sector plays in the overall tourism industry.

The HSBA supports responsible tourism and expects visitors to Hanmer Springs to act in an appropriate manner.

KEY POINT

HSBA is of the view that there is no need to have freedom camping sites in the Hanmer Springs Township itself. This view is formed from two perspectives – the customer's experience and the availability of other camping options close by.

Customer Experience

The positioning of overnight camping sites in the middle of a built up area is questionable at best. Whilst recognising that Hanmer Springs is not exactly 'Times Square' it does have its periods of time when it is busy in the evening.

Locating campervan sites immediately adjacent to restaurants and bars is not displaying any consideration for the end customer (the camper). Without wanting to cast dispersion on the customers of the restaurants and bars they do create noise on exiting the premise and for some the opportunity to interact with a campervan and its inhabitants may be too tempting.

The areas indicated are hardly secluded areas for camping. The outlook from the Chisholm Park site is concrete block wall or a toilet block. This is not presenting the Village in a positive light. Chisholm Park is a busy place, adjacent to three restaurants. Neither of these locations are ideal for an overnight camping experience. By recommending them The Hurunui District Council is at odds with its own Tourism arm which is trying to position the Hurunui as scenic pristine destination. HDC will be detracting from the customer experience by offering these sites.

Other camping options

The Hanmer Springs Basin has three sites presently and one potential site identified for freedom camping.

1. The New Zealand Motorhome Association provide an area for their members adjacent to the Hanmer Springs River Bridge.
2. The Hot Springs Hotel provides an area for campervans albeit with a condition. There is a cost to camp but that cost is returned by means of a food and beverage voucher which is redeemable at the Hot Springs Hotel.
3. The Department of Conservation provides an area for campervans at its Jollies Pass service area.
4. The site that Hurunui District Council has identified at the Hanmer River Reserve will accommodate 10 campervans.

Our view is that Hanmer Springs is/will be, well serviced for the 'Freedom Camping Market'. Added to this there are the four camping grounds who offer facilities albeit on a commercial basis.

Conclusion

We are of the view that the Hanmer Springs basin provides adequate options for freedom camping with the addition of the Hanmer River Reserve Park. We do not support the addition of the proposed sites in the central village as we believe:

- a) That from a customer experience perspective it is not a good option
- b) The combinations of public and private sector options which range from cost free to commercial cater for the market.

Hanmer Springs Business Association requests that Hurunui District Council puts sufficient budget to enforcing the existing and proposed bylaw.

Hanmer Springs Business Association wishes to be heard at any hearing or meeting regarding Freedom Camping.

Hanmer Springs Business Association does not wish to comment on the greater Hurunui strategy as we are of the view that we are not qualified to do so.

Graeme Abbot

On behalf of the Hanmer Springs Business Association.