

# **Change to designated freedom camping site in Ferry Landing**

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<b>TO</b>	Thames-Coromandel District Council
<b>FROM</b>	Scott Summerfield - Policy and Planning Manager
<b>DATE</b>	8 January 2018
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Change to designated freedom camping site in Ferry Landing</b>

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## **1 Purpose of report**

This report recommends that Council amend the designated site for freedom camping in Ferry Landing in order to improve public access to the ferry service.

## **2 Background**

Under the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act) freedom camping is permitted on local authority area (area of land that is within the district and that is controlled or managed by the local authority), unless it is prohibited or restricted in accordance with a bylaw made in accordance with the Act.

In 2014 Council undertook the process of looking at how it regulated freedom camping within the district. As a result the Freedom Camping Bylaw 2014 (the Bylaw) was adopted and came into force on 1 December 2014.

Restricted areas set under the Bylaw allow Council to identify designated areas available for self-contained freedom camping, in line with section 11 of the Act. These designated areas can be changed by Council resolution if Council determines that the grounds for restriction of the given area now apply to the designated site and a more appropriate part of the area should be made available for freedom camping.

## **3 Issue**

Council is recommended to change the designated area for freedom camping within the Ferry Landing restricted area from the ferry car park to the car park at the Ferry Landing cemetery on Purangi Road. This approach has been discussed with the Mercury Bay Community Board who is supportive of the change in designated area.

## **4 Discussion**

Several Ferry Landing residents, who are freedom campers themselves, have raised concerns about the location of the current designated freedom camping site in Ferry Landing, being in the car park for the ferry, between the public toilet and access to the Whitianga Rock Scenic Reserve. These relate to:

- Taking up space for users of the ferry;
- Creating a hazard for ferry users by requiring reversing into the car park area to exist the site;
- A generally unattractive area for freedom camping, being right beside a well-used public toilet and in an area which is cold and damp for much of the year.

The current site is shown below:



The Freedom Camping Act 2011 allows Council to prohibit or restrict freedom camping only:

- i) to protect the area;
- ii) to protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area;
- iii) to protect access to the area.

Staff recommend that the designated site be moved to the car park at the Ferry Landing cemetery. This is a less busy area for public parking where campers will not take up space for users of the ferry to Whitianga or people using the walking track to the Whitianga Rock Scenic Reserve. The cemetery car park is still a short walk to the ferry for campers to use, and nearby the store in Ferry Landing. The proposed new designated area is included as **Attachment A**.

Staff consider that the proposed change in area is consistent with the grounds for prohibiting or restricting areas within the Freedom Camping Bylaw 2014 as set out in section 11 of the Act. Key stakeholders in the provision of freedom camping information in the district will be advised of the change. The change is recommended to take effect from 16 February 2018.

## 5 Suggested resolution(s)

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council:

1. Receives the 'Change to designated freedom camping site in Ferry Landing' report, dated 8 January 2018.
2. Approves the proposal to relocate the designated freedom camping area in Flaxmill Bay, Ferry Landing and Front Bay from the Ferry Landing carpark to the carpark of the Ferry Landing cemetery as shown in **Attachment A**, effective from 16 February 2018.

## References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

**Attachment A** Proposed new Ferry Landing designated area

***Attachment A***