Media release - Responsible Campers Association Inc.

**Draconian Bylaws push Responsible Freedom Camping underground.**

For over 25 years now, the “New Zealand Standard for the self containment for Motor Caravans” (NZS;5465) has been in place. During this time it has failed to solve any Freedom Camping problems, but has become a method of infringement for Councils and others to enact, while discriminating against the majority of New Zealand’s Freedom Campers.

Any attempt to control Freedom campers has to provide education at the very least, unfortunately the NZ Standard fails to do that.

 Recent attempts to “raise the bar” on the Standard by some organizations, has only achieved to further drive Responsible Freedom Campers underground.

Any changes to the Standard would only be effective if it lead to positive behaviour changes. It is well known that there are Responsible Freedom Campers out there that do not meet the required standard, as well as there being irresponsible campers that do.

Any method to restrict Freedom camping must place the emphasis on the people doing the camping, NOT the mode of camping as the NZ standard does.

The “New Zealand Standard for self containment of Motor Caravans” is available only to Motorhomes & caravans, not to people who want to pitch a tent at the beach for a night.

It is draconian in that it provides for campers to be self contained for a minimum period of 3 days. As we see more and more Councils restrict freedom camping to those that meet the Standard it restricts the likes of divers, fisherpersons, surfers etc who all at times, like to spent a night at the beach waiting on tide changes, surf breaks etc.

These people, as well as the locals wanting to spend a night at the beach, along with Hunters who use motor vehicles to access hunting areas are being discriminated against in having to be Self Contained for a minimum period of 3 days. Not only are they not camping for 3 days but also have little need for the facilities and requirements needed to meet NZS;5465.

What is required is a method to educate and query people on knowledge of Responsible freedom camping principals which can lead to them being “Accredited Responsible Campers”. In this way every person as defined by the Freedom camping Act 2011 is covered. Under that act “to camp is defined anywhere within 200 metres of a Motor vehicle accessible area, with several exemptions ie driver fatigue. For years we have had people stating the likes of Hunters are not covered by this Act when if they access hunting areas by vehicle they clearly are.

After 2 years of surveying Councils and other Stakeholders, and over 1500 hours put in by Volunteers, Responsible Campers Association Incorporated is pleased to launch our own Accredited Responsible Campers program. The development of this program would not have been possible without the assistance of MP’s, Councils, outdoor clubs and other stakeholders as well as our own members.

We sought to discover the many problems that Councils and others had with the current regime, and to find solutions to those problems, so that our own program would not become irrelevant as the NZ Standard has. The ability to prevent people who breach Freedom Camping principals from becoming accredited and to be able to withdraw current accreditation is a large part of that.

The cost to become an Accredited Responsible camper is set at $20 per bi-yearly, far cheaper that the cost to become Certified as Self Contained as required by the Standard.

 Our program allows people to determine for themselves what they need to be self contained (the ability to retain waste until it can be properly disposed of) dependant on their own circumstances and mode of Camping, ie, a person who uses a method of camping solely for sleeping overnight may have no need for waste tanks, food preparation areas and other facilities as required by the Standard. Others may elect only to have a portipotti if not camping near public toilets, or others only fresh water to make coffee in the mornings.

Our website [www.accreditedcampernz.com](http://www.accreditedcampernz.com) and our facebook page, NZ Accredited Responsible Campers, have more information.

Our website provides a link to both the Education program and the Responsible Campers quiz, from which an Accredited Campers card may be obtained.