

Guidelines for Committee Members and Area Reps

When discussing APCNZ with the public.

Date. 06/07/2020

I am not going to make a list of rules or tell you what to say. We are all adults and have a certain amount of common sense.

One thing that I will insist on is that you under no circumstances make derogatory remarks, comments or statements about any other camping club or organization. There are many camping related clubs in New Zealand, from the well-known NZMCA, many local Caravan clubs, Cycle and Motorcycle Touring groups to Tramping and camping clubs. All these groups endeavour to do the absolute best for their members as do we for our membership. The main difference between APCNZ and these other clubs is that we encompass ALL types of camping, we are not limited to one or two forms of camping but embrace all forms of camping styles from the backpacker to the most luxurious motorhome.

As you all know APCNZ is a young club in its 5th year, but we are growing very fast and increasing our public profile. We do need to grow both our membership and profile so our voice can be heard when we make approaches to Local and Central Government on camping issues. This is where you can help, by enlisting new members and informing the general public what OUR club is about.

What we are about.

We as a club/ organization stand for many things camping related. The term inclusive is mentioned a lot in all areas of the club both printed and online, this just means inclusive of ALL forms of camping (tents to motorhomes and everything in-between) and all forms of Camper, we are all different.

We stand for **Responsible camping**. This means, be a responsible camper, be tidy, do not make or leave a mess (pack in, pack out) be considerate of the other campers around you.

We stand for **Sustainable camping**. This one is a little bit harder but basically if we respect and protect the camping areas now available to us and as an organization make submissions to retain camping areas we may lose. By looking after what we have, we stand a better chance of retaining it for us and future generations. We all want our children and Grandchildren to be able to enjoy the camping experiences we have had and continue to have.

We stand for **Affordable camping**. This comes in two parts,

Firstly, the cost of your camping equipment. There is a vast difference in cost between a tent and a motorhome. There is also a vast difference in how people want to camp and what suits their budget and lifestyle. It does not matter if you choose to camp in a tent, in a van, in a caravan, in a motorhome, in a bus, in a truck or anything else you may come across, we are still all out there camping.

Secondly, the cost of places to camp. Gone are the days that a family could take the caravan to a motor-camp for a couple of weeks over Christmas, the cost now would be horrendous. It cost more for two of us to stay in our bus at an average motor camp for seven days than the rent on our flat. Motor camps have large overheads and do have to make money to survive. We all know of many that no longer exist. So, to make camping affordable we mix freedom camping with low cost stop overs and the odd reasonably priced motor camp. The APCNZ club is currently in the process of building a list of recommended places to park over and affordable campgrounds to be available online to members.

These are only three of the things that we stand for and in my opinion three of the more important items. These are my personal views on each of the above topics, we all have differing interpretations of these and that is fine. By understanding what the club stands for we are better equipped to inform others about the club. For more refined info see the club constitution in club documents.

Back to the main topic of how to deal with the public. Both my 4x4 and Bus have huge APCNZ signs all over them, others have the smaller club sticker supplied with membership. It doesn't matter what you have we still all get asked at camp sites or even in town, "what is APCNZ"?

Don't go into a half hour lecture on the club, the simple answer is, "We are the second largest, fastest growing National camping club in New Zealand representing All types/ forms of campers". Easy! What comes next depends on their reply. This is where your common sense comes in to play. Most people will show interest and want to know more, enlighten them but don't push the club down their throat. Go with the flow of the conversation don't lecture. Sometimes you will meet a staunch member of another club who will think that we are in competition with their club, *we are not in competition with any club*. We should all be working together for the betterment of camping in NZ. Don't get into an argument in this type of situation, it only makes us look bad and you feel bad, and whatever you say, you won't win. In fact, don't get into an argument at all. Most people we talk to are nice, and comments I have heard are, down to earth and back to basics type camping club. That is in a way what we are.

Sometimes around campsites generally at happy hour, you might be able to mention the club. Again, use your common sense and don't lecture. You may get fellow campers approach you later and ask for more info on the club. Talk with them about our club, what the club aims for and what the club can provide to its members. Club member discounts, club events, support and advise on CSC and camping related matters and a sense of belonging to a growing likeminded camping family. You should all have some of our club handout brochures. Check that they are current and not old stock. If you require more let us know asap as we are doing a new print run shortly.

In summary, we wish to grow and promote the club. Explain what the club is for, and our club aims and goals. Be polite and don't be pushy, nobody likes pushy. We want to encourage people to join our club, the more members we have the more we can do for our members and for camping in New Zealand.

We don't only talk to prospective members; we do in our travels run into club members. Say hello, introduce yourself, ask what they think of the club and what the club could be doing better. Do we need more local rallies and events, would they be keen to help set up such events in their area? Do they have any camping areas they would recommend that we promote?

We also come across suppliers of RV and camping equipment along with maintenance firms when getting work done on our campers. If you get a good deal and service from them, mention the club as we can promote their service to our members and possibly arrange a member discount.

All our members can help with this club growth, but direction must come from the top and as committee and area reps we need to lead by example. We are the family friendly camping club so be friendly, be polite and don't degrade other clubs. Although these simple guidelines are aimed mainly at committee members and area reps they can also be a guide to club members in their approach to the public. So, go forth and multiply, hang on that's not us but you know what I mean. Enjoy your camping, promote our club, and stay safe.

Wayne Ravelich

President APCNZ