

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF seven publicly notified resource consent applications by Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (**MHUD**) to the Rotorua Lakes Council

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF JENNY PEACE

Introduction

1. My full name is Jennifer Elizabeth Peace. I currently reside at 19B Gwendoline Street. I have lived in Rotorua since 1978 and moved to the suburb of Glenholme in 1988. I have owned three properties in Glenholme and have lived in this suburb for 36 years.
2. In this brief I give evidence as:
 - (a) A resident of Rotorua and specifically Glenholme.
 - (b) Secretary of Restore Rotorua.
3. I am familiar with the matters set out in this brief of evidence, and they are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Family, work and life in Rotorua

4. I moved to the suburb of Glenholme in 1988. I have a strong affinity to Rotorua and have always loved living here. I have owned three properties in Glenholme, Rotorua, and lived in Glenholme for over 30 years. I used to live in Sophia Street and before that Wylie Street.
5. I always loved living in Glenholme because it was quiet and safe. I used to enjoy walking around the beautiful suburban streets and loved the convenience of the short walk down Fenton Street into central Rotorua. Glenholme used to feel like a great place to raise children and I never had any reservations about my children going for bike rides around the neighbourhood when they were growing up.
6. I previously submitted on the 2022 resource consent applications and spoke at the hearing. At that hearing I spoke about the changes to Fenton Street and knock-on effects for the Glenholme area. In my view the area became rundown and neglected, there was graffiti all down Fenton Street along with discarded mattresses, overturned shopping trolleys (on a daily basis) and rubbish littering the footpaths outside the motels which are used for transitional and emergency housing. Glenholme is no longer the safe, friendly suburb it used to be.

Involvement with Restore Rotorua

7. In my role as Secretary of Restore Rotorua, I have fielded feedback from a large number of Rotorua residents by way of calls, emails, and social media messages. Sometimes on a daily basis. The impact that concentrated transitional and emergency housing has had on our neighbourhood and everyday lives is alarming, and many Rotorua locals share the same concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

8. At the last hearing in October 2022 there were a lot of submissions presented and the common theme was law and order, and safety.
9. For many of those who made submissions, being heard in support of these submissions was a big deal. And for many of those who are not confident in public speaking, this was really 'pushing the boat out'. Yet they still were prepared to speak as they were passionate about how their daily lives were impacted. Many of those who made submissions felt undermined and that their opinions were under-valued during the hearing process.
10. The consequence of this is that this time round, many are reluctant to make another submission. Many of our members are also battle-weary and feel there is little point engaging in the process again. I do not believe that is an indication of the true feeling about these extensions. So as Secretary of Restore Rotorua, I am talking for many of our members and people in the wider community who are sceptical about going through the process again.

General observations of the ongoing effects of transitional and emergency housing from motels in Central Rotorua

11. There has been a marginal improvement in the past two years (the emphasis on 'marginal'). The aesthetic of Fenton Street continues to be severely compromised. The vandalism, burglaries, graffiti, dumped shopping trolleys, beggars, car thefts, property damage, drug deals in the area all still very much exist. In this environment, I no longer feel safe in my own home. I have installed security cameras and driveway alarms. I lock all doors at home no matter what time of day it is. I never drive my car without locking the doors.
12. I remain concerned about the ongoing anti-social impacts that these resource consents are having on the Rotorua community.

13. On 15 October 2024, late afternoon a man was seen acting suspiciously at the cul de sac end of our street and on private property between approximately 4.40 - 5.35pm.
14. Several residents spotted him, a male wearing a dark puffer jacket and carrying a shopping bag. Three neighbours tried to follow him but were unable to locate him.
15. After this, our Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator contacted 105 and completed a report. She had a follow-up phone call from the Police to say the person had been arrested and is in custody.
16. The man was from an emergency housing motel (we weren't told which one, supposedly for privacy reasons) wearing an electronically monitored ankle bracelet, so the Police were able to track his movements. He entered at 36 Sophia St and from there came onto the golf course and into our properties. He had in his possession items from Toi-Ohomai and mail from 3 Gwendoline St. We weren't told of anything else.
17. I have security cameras and was able to upload a screenshot of the person at 5.33pm on our shared driveway.
18. This was another reminder for us to keep vehicles always locked, garage doors closed unless we're in the vicinity, empty our letterboxes regularly etc. It shouldn't have to be this way. It never was prior to motels on Fenton Street being used for emergency housing.

Community Liaison Group

19. I attended the Community Liaison Group meetings as a representative of Restore Rotorua on 9 March 2023, 8 June 2023, 7 September 2023, 28 February 2024, 26 June 2024 and 26 September 2024.

20. I have attended every meeting and report back to members. Much of the time there is little to report as the term 'lip service' comes into play. At the February 2024 meeting I pushed for some transparency about exit plans. Along with Paul Romanes and Dianna Doughty (the community representatives) we asked at almost every meeting for some monitoring reports that only became available at the February meeting. MHUD have had a lot of time to sort out how the use of CEH is going to be reduced / ended. And instead of exit strategies they applied for extensions

Conclusion

21. There is no disputing that there are people in need of somewhere to live.
22. However, MHUD was meant to have exited all motels by December 2024. The fact that they are reapplying shows that these resource consents do not work. We went through a comprehensive and expensive process to deliver a decision in 2022. That should be binding and not up for renegotiation every two years as it continues to have a huge toll on the community.
23. The terrible and ongoing law and order issues only started with motels in the area being used for emergency housing. It was never like this before. We want to feel safe. We live amongst crime, vandalism, unruly and threatening behaviour and this should not be happening to us.
24. Based on what I have discussed above I respectfully request that the seven applications are declined.

Jenny Peace

30 October 2024