

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

MEMORANDUM OF COUNSEL ON BEHALF OF RESTORE ROTORUA INCORPORATED

DATED 30 OCTOBER 2024

1. We act for Restore Rotorua Incorporated (**Restore Rotorua**) in respect of the above resource consent applications.
2. Restore Rotorua has filed statements of evidence from the following lay witnesses in support of its submission:
 - (a) Paul Romanes
 - (b) Jennifer Peace
 - (c) Carlyne Hall
 - (d) Trevor Newbrook
 - (e) Stu Smith
3. Mr Smith does not wish to appear at the hearing to speak to his statement but has confirmed that that his statement is to be filed in support of Restore Rotorua.

4. Restore Rotorua also files the comments from parties provided as Appendix A to this Memorandum in support of its submission. These parties wish for their comments to be put forward as evidence in support of Restore Rotorua, but they do not wish to appear at the hearing to speak to their comments.

5. Counsel respectfully requests that the Statement of Evidence of Mr Stu Smith and the comments from the parties listed at Appendix A be placed before the Commissioner and tabled as evidence in support of Restore Rotorua and that these parties be excused from questioning.

DATED this 30th day of October 2024



Bridget Bailey
Counsel for Restore Rotorua Incorporated

Appendix A

Statements in support of Restore Rotorua Incorporated

Rosanne Park

I previously lived in Holland Street at the Fenton Street end. We made the decision to leave the area as we could no longer envisage living there. The motels being used for emergency housing has totally ruined the area and I wasn't prepared to let the situation ruin our lives. Rotorua has been stuck with out-of-towners being shipped in to stay in the motels. I used to love walking my little dog daily around the streets near our home, and along Fenton Street which locals used to call The Golden Mile. But then people moved onto the footpaths, the abuse started, I would see drugs being passed across fences, and I no longer felt safe. So I stopped the daily walks. I did not want to be part of this, so my husband and I moved away from the area. We are still in Rotorua but across the other side of town away from the motels. At my stage of life, I shouldn't have felt that I was being forced out of the area.

Tony Hadlow

We have lived at 7b Grey Street for the past 10 years. The area was quiet and nice then, central, close to town and had a good visitor buzz with guests staying around the area in motels. The general population were elderly, retired and families. The properties were generally well maintained. There were cafes close by and the walk to town was pleasant.

Since Covid and the introduction of emergency housing the area descended into chaos. Unsavoury individuals wandering about the area at all times of day and night. This led to vehicles being broken into regularly (our daughter's car outside at Christmas!). The people were often intoxicated, angry and abusive. There were many altercations in public with yelling and fighting. The general area became littered with bottles, cans, rubbish and shopping trolleys. It became intimidating to walk unaccompanied into town for fear of being targeted by these people. There seemed no immediate police intervention or monitoring, pretty much open slather. I spoke directly to many individuals and discovered they were not from Rotorua but had been moved here from other centres on mass. Many were large families crammed into motel units. On one occasion whilst walking my dog early one morning I came across a large group of patched gang members gathered outside Ace Motor Lodge at 7am. They were intimidating and had spilled out onto the street. They obviously had some link to someone staying there. Burglaries and people scoping out properties became more common place. There were also people drifting around Urbano begging from the customers and generally being anti-social. The area was never free from sirens at all hours of the day and night.

Now there are less motels providing this service on Fenton Street and the situation seems to have improved a bit, but there are still many people walking around the area or passing through that don't live there. There is a large amount of rubbish, furniture and general stuff lying around in front of many of the motels that just stays there. The area looks unkempt and certainly not inviting to anyone visiting from out of town. The motels also seem to be in varying states of disrepair. We do notice a couple are under renovation which is good.

It is difficult to believe our politicians or council in terms of actually stopping the emergency housing. Although looking at the many Kainga Ora housing developments that are being completed it seems this transition is well under way. I feel proud that so many of our locals have supported and backed the initiatives to rebuild and restore Rotorua. Also, I admit the police etc for doing their best under very trying circumstances.

I look forward to Fenton Street returning to the tourism accommodation hub with all the vibrancy and activity associated with that. We still walk our dog every morning and look forward to getting Glenholme back to some semblance of its pre Covid environment!

Craig Littlejohn

In this environment where we no longer feel safe in our homes or in our daily life, we have had to change our behaviours and routines since motels started being used for emergency housing. We are very conscious of ensuring all the doors and windows of our house are locked, even when we are at home. We have had a driveway alarm and security cameras installed.

I now ensure my car doors are always locked when driving around central Rotorua, as I have witnessed people intimidating drivers when cars are stopped at traffic lights, particularly when driving down Fenton Street where people stand on the traffic island in the middle of the four-lane road yelling abuse and behaving threateningly.

When I am away from town working, people I deal with, when they learn I'm from Rotorua, are quick to comment that they have no intention of returning or coming here. They have either heard terrible things about the homeless or they have experienced first-hand the intimidation and aggression.

Fenton Street and Glenholme have undergone a noticeable visual decline since the influx of transitional and emergency housing. It is clear that it is the cumulative effect of concentrated transitional and emergency housing in Rotorua which has led our neighbourhood into a state of neglect.

Dianna Doughty

I live and work at Whakarewarewa. We have a family-run business, an art gallery, situated in Tyron Street. Regularly we are having to deal with people sleeping and camping in front of the gallery, random dodgy-looking people smoking and drinking in front of the windows and front door, and around the property. Obvious drug deals being made right outside our premises. An abandoned, rusty, beat up car with a flat tyre sat right outside our front door for almost a year. This was never an issue until three properties close by started operating as emergency housing – Apollo Hotel, Alpin Motel and Pohutu Lodge Motel.

Additionally, I am one of two community representatives on the Community Liaison Group. With regard to CLG meetings, I have often felt like the concerns I raise have

not been taken seriously, or noted in the minutes accurately. For example, the case of a woman squatting and sleeping right in front of our gallery who was directly linked to the Apollo Hotel. I have found some members of the CLG to be condescending about matters that I raise, and at times certain people come off as being defensive and argumentative. However, please note that I do think these CLG meetings are important and should continue. There needs to be ongoing direct dialogue between the various government agencies, service providers and the community representatives.