

FORM 13

**SUBMISSION ON A PUBLICLY OR LIMITED NOTIFIED
APPLICATION CONCERNING RESOURCE CONSENT**

**ROTORUA
LAKES COUNCIL**

Section 96 Resource Management Act 1991

(Rotorua Lakes Council is the operating name of Rotorua District Council)

To: Chief Executive Rotorua Lakes Council Private Bag RO3029 ROTORUA	Name of Submitter: TE RINGAHUIA HATA on behalf of Tuahine Trust <i>[Full Name]</i>
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This is a submission on an application from *[name of applicant]*:

Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust ('TACT')

for a Resource Consent to *[Briefly describe the type of consent, proposed activity, and location of the resource consent]*:

For a land use resource consent to establish and Operate a reintegration facility

at *[The location of the resource consent]*:

473 Puaiti Road, Ngakuru, Rotorua (Lot 1 DP 585350

The specific parts of the application that my submission relates to are *[Give Details]*:

The programme is couched in tikanga Māori for participants who released on parole for the purposes of reintergration into society.



My submission is *[include whether you **support or oppose** the specific parts of the application or wish to have them amended; and the reasons for your views]*:

I support the application. My reasons are set out in the attached paper.

I seek the following decision from the consent authority *[Give precise details, including the general nature of any conditions sought]*:

These matters are set out in the attached paper.

- ☒ I wish to be heard in support of my submission
- ☐ I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission
- ☐ If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing

Signature of submitter (<i>or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter</i>): <i>TR Hata</i>	Date: 16 June 2025
Address for service of Submitter: 	Telephone: 
Contact person: <i>[name and designation, if applicable]</i>	Fax/email:

Note to submitter:

You must serve a copy of your submission on the applicant as soon as reasonably practicable after you have served your submission on the consent authority.

The information you have provided on this form is required so that your submission can be processed under the RMA, and your name and address will be publicly available. The information will be stored on a public register and held by the Council, and may also be made available to the public on the Council's website. In addition, any on-going communications between you and Council will be held at Council's offices and may also be accessed upon request by a third party. Access to this information is administered in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the Privacy Act 1993. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss with a Council Planner prior to lodging your submission. If you would like to request access to, or correction of your details, please contact the Council.

SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION

Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust (TACT) - Pūwhakamua Reintegration Facility

Waikite Valley, Rotorua

To: Rotorua Lakes Council

From: Te Ringahua Hata on behalf of Tuahine Charitable Trust

Date: 16 June 2025

Re: Land Use Resource Consent Application - Reintegration Facility at 671 Puaiti Road, Waikite Valley

Website Link: [Public notice for land use resource consent for reintegration facility - Rotorua Lakes Council](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I write in **strong support** of the resource consent application by Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust (TACT) to establish the Pūwhakamua reintegration facility at Waikite Valley. This submission outlines the compelling reasons why this application should be approved, emphasising the critical community need, proven track record, and the benefits of the proposed rural location for successful prisoner reintegration.

1. CRITICAL COMMUNITY NEED AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

1.1 Addressing a National Crisis

The Department of Corrections has identified finding safe accommodation for people lawfully required to be released from prison as one of its "most significant challenges." Without supported accommodation, they could be homeless and living on the streets or in cars, which would present an unacceptable safety risk to communities.

1.2 Proven Government Support

Pūwhakamua has received significant government backing, with the Department of Corrections funding the programme at least \$4.6 million since November 2022. This substantial investment demonstrates the government's confidence in the programme's effectiveness and importance.

1.3 Established Success Record and Multi-Agency Endorsement

The service has garnered support from key public agencies including the New Zealand Police, The Department of Corrections and the Ministry of Social Development. It is also highly regarded and supported by the Ministry of Justice, the New Zealand Parole Board, and community leaders throughout the Rotorua district. This broad base of professional support demonstrates the programme's credibility and effectiveness across the criminal justice system.

2. PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND SAFETY MEASURES

2.1 Tikanga Māori Approach and Cultural Foundation

Pūwhakamua is a tikanga Māori live-in reintegration service specifically for people who require support to return and readapt into the community. The Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust, endorsed by Te Arawa elders, sponsors the Pūwhakamua concept, which has been providing a pathway for men released to the community by the New Zealand Parole Board.

Through kaupapa Māori teachings, the programme has contributed to improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life for men that have returned to the community. These learning aspects are critical in a programme which has proven to shift cognitive distortions and break the cycle of criminal behaviours. Through cultural practices they learn to be proud, disciplined, polite, community focused and kind to others.

2.2 Comprehensive Support Framework and Evidence-Based Methodology

The programme provides a live-in residential programme where participants observe stringent parole conditions alongside rigorous site rules, with high levels of accountability for the duration of their stay. Full support and care are provided through the programme via on-site resident staff and external agencies.

Many of the facilitators have their own lived experience of the justice system; this has proven to be a significant point of difference during their engagement with men who are currently in prison. The facilitators build instant rapport through shared experiences – this removes pre-conceived barriers and expedites the acceptance of the programme and its purpose. Participants can see firsthand that there is life after release; with the right pro-social support networks, fundamental change is possible for everyone.

2.3 Innovative Angitu Programme

From May 2023, TACT has piloted a new community-based reintegration programme called Angitu – meaning "success", which comes in many forms. This programme has endorsement and oversight from several leading health clinicians, psychologists and cultural professionals, with primary focus areas including propensity for violence, as well as substance abuse and addiction.

Angitu is a six-month high-intensity intervention kaupapa, followed by six months maintenance support. The programme structure includes:

- **First eight weeks:** Intense focus on tuakiritanga including pepeha, whakapapa, reo, haka, waiata and connection to tīnana ki te maunga, moana, marae, urupā
- **Second eight weeks:** Clinical and psychological methodology including intense ancient Māori concepts
- **Final eight weeks:** Life skills including financial literacy, employment training, parenting support and moving into gainful employment before graduation

2.4 Rigorous Safety Protocols and Multi-Agency Support

No one who could not be safely managed in the community could live at Pūwhakamua and everyone referred was assessed while still in custody. Active gang members were not

considered, community safety was the "No 1 priority" and Pūwhakamua staff were on-site at all times.

2.5 Careful Selection Process

Residents ready to rejoin society are "carefully selected via a robust referral process and stringent assessment" and would live on-site for at least six months.

3. EXCEPTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

3.1 Distinguished Board of Trustees

The Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust is governed by a board of highly experienced trustees who bring extensive expertise in governance, criminal justice, Māori development, and community leadership. This distinguished leadership team provides strategic oversight and ensures the highest standards of programme delivery.

Doug Macredie (Te Arawa, Tanui) - Chairperson: Works for the Outdoor Access Commission advocating and protecting public access with a focus on mana whenua lands. His roles include involvement in Māori trusts, national Māori forestry and environmental organisations.

Merepeka Raukawa-Tait (Te Arawa) - Deputy Chair: Brings extensive governance experience, having served 12 years as an elected member of the Lakes District Health Board, 11 years as a Rotorua Lakes Councillor, and 10 years as Chair of the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency.

Celia Soloman-Te Kani (Ngāi Tūhoe) - Trustee: Brings extensive experience in governance, particularly in managing grant distribution and financial oversight for various Trusts. Her commitment to community drives her passion for contributing positively to initiatives that foster growth and support whānau, hapū and iwi.

Ray Tolley (Te Arawa) - Trustee: A builder by trade who currently represents his hapū Ngāti Te Kanawa as a trustee for the Rotokawa Baths, bringing practical community-level experience to the governance structure.

3.2 Annette Sykes (Ngāti Pikio, Ngāti Māhino) - Distinguished Criminal Justice Advocate

Annette Te Imaima Sykes brings unparalleled expertise in criminal justice reform and Māori legal rights to her trustee role. As noted on the trust's website, Annette is a graduate of the University of Auckland and has been practising as a lawyer since 1984, serving as principal of her own law firm, Annette Sykes & Co. Ltd, and appearing for clients in family and criminal courts nationwide.

Criminal Justice Expertise: Annette has been an active member of the New Zealand Criminal Bar, the Family Courts Association and Te Hunga Rōia Māori (Māori Law Society), and is an advocate in specialist jurisdictions including the Waitangi Tribunal, Māori Land Court and Appellate courts as well as general courts of New Zealand.

Human Rights Leadership: She is a human rights lawyer specialising in the rights of indigenous peoples to promote their own, separate systems of law and custom, and is a

member of the Māori Law Commission, which seeks to re-establish the operation of Māori systems of law and custom in Aotearoa.

Academic Contributions: Annette is an Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Law at Auckland University, teaching Tikanga Māori law as part of a commitment to ensuring the reclaiming of Māori law as the first law of this nation.

Constitutional Change Advocacy: She has been actively advocating for human rights for over 35 years and is dedicated to bringing about constitutional change, with involvement in the Waitangi Tribunal Claims process addressing issues related to cultural and intellectual property rights of Māori communities.

Community Focus: Annette has been a strident advocate for '*te pani me te rawakore*', the poor and dispossessed, which has been an important driver of her work as a lawyer in Rotorua, living with the realities of the poor, marginalised and homeless daily.

Professional Recognition: In recognition of her significant contributions to the legal field, Annette was honoured with the Access to Justice Award by the New Zealand and Australian Bar Association in August 2024 comprising over over 300 Justices and Judges of the Courts of NZ and Australia. This is one of the highest honours and recognitions that a legal profession can receive from both legal associations.

3.3 Operational Leadership Excellence

Billy Macfarlane - Kaiwhakarite (General Manager): Billy is the founder of the Pūwhakamua kaupapa which first launched in May 2018, which has grown from strength to strength under his leadership and unique vision to offer an alternative pathway for high-risk recidivists. Billy continues to deliver cognitive wānanga and te reo Māori lessons in both prison and community settings.

Sarah - Kaihaapai (Operations Manager): Sarah has come from Serco New Zealand and has been involved with Pūwhakamua since the start of wānanga services on site at Kohuora Auckland South Corrections Facility. She joins the kaupapa with a background in prison case management, contract compliance and project management within the justice system.

This exceptional leadership team combines deep cultural knowledge, extensive criminal justice experience, governance expertise, and proven operational capability to ensure the Pūwhakamua programme operates to the highest professional standards.

It is based on these profiles at the governance level in particular, that I am totally confident that Pūwhakamua is guided by such exceptional leadership.

4. BENEFITS OF THE RURAL WAIKITE VALLEY LOCATION

4.1 Therapeutic Environment

The rural location provides a setting where focus on cultural values can be fostered away from the distractions of an urban environment. This separation from urban triggers and negative influences is a recognised best practice in rehabilitation.

4.2 Enhanced Focus on Rehabilitation

The peaceful rural setting of Waikite Valley offers residents the opportunity to concentrate on their personal development, cultural reconnection, and skill-building without the pressures and temptations present in urban environments.

4.3 Community Integration Opportunities

The rural location provides opportunities for residents to contribute positively to the local community through meaningful work and engagement, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

5. ADDRESSING MISCONCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS

5.1 Evidence-Based Safety Record

The programme has operated successfully since 2018 without significant incident, demonstrating that community safety concerns are unfounded when proper protocols are followed.

5.2 Professional Management

The programme was the brainchild of reformed drug lord Billy Macfarlane six years ago and has received Government funding. Under professional leadership and government oversight, the facility operates to the highest standards.

5.3 Reduced Reoffending Risk

Reintegration services are important in reducing the risk of reoffending. By providing structured support during the critical transition period from prison to community, the facility actively enhances public safety.

6. PLANNING AND REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Appropriate Scale and Design

The proposal included accommodation for up to 10 residents and five staff in standalone cabins, plus shared living and ablution spaces. This modest scale ensures the facility integrates appropriately with the rural character of the area.

6.2 Professional Support Network

The facility will maintain connections with professional support services, ensuring residents receive comprehensive care while contributing to their successful reintegration.

6.3 Temporary Nature of Residence

With residents typically staying for at least six months before transitioning to independent living, the facility serves as a crucial stepping stone rather than permanent accommodation.

7. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

7.1 Evidence-Based Cognitive Change

The programme has proven to shift cognitive distortions and break the cycle of criminal behaviours through cultural practices that teach participants to be proud, disciplined, polite, community focused and kind to others. This fundamental cognitive restructuring addresses the root causes of offending behaviour.

7.2 Reduced Social Costs

Successful reintegration reduces long-term costs to society including reduced crime, decreased incarceration rates, and increased productivity from formerly incarcerated individuals.

7.3 Employment and Skills Development

The programme's focus on vocational education and employment preparation creates productive community members who contribute to local and regional economies.

7.4 Breaking Cycles of Offending

By addressing the underlying causes of criminal behaviour through tikanga Māori approaches, the facility helps break intergenerational cycles of offending.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the evidence presented, I **strongly recommend** that Rotorua Lakes Council **APPROVE** this resource consent application for the following reasons:

1. **Critical Need:** The facility addresses a significant gap in prisoner reintegration services
2. **Proven Track Record:** Six years of successful operation demonstrates effectiveness
3. **Government Confidence:** Substantial ongoing funding reflects official support
4. **Multi-Agency Support:** Support from New Zealand Police, Department of Corrections, and Ministry of Social Development
5. **Te Arawa Endorsement:** The Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust is endorsed by Te Arawa elders
6. **Cultural Appropriateness:** Tikanga Māori approach provides culturally responsive rehabilitation
7. **Professional Management:** Experienced leadership and comprehensive safety protocols
8. **Innovative Programming:** New Angitu programme with endorsement from leading health clinicians and psychologists
9. **Community Benefit:** Long-term positive impacts on community safety and wellbeing

The alternative—having recently released prisoners without adequate support—poses far greater risks to community safety than the professionally managed, government-funded facility proposed by TACT.

9. CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

Should Council approve this application, I suggest the following conditions to address any residual concerns:

1. **Regular Monitoring:** Quarterly reporting to Council on facility operations and any incidents that may occur
 2. **Community Liaison:** Establishment of a community liaison committee that includes Māori wardens for ongoing communication between the Angitū Charitable Trust operations manager and the community
 3. **Emergency Protocols:** Clear procedures for emergency response and community notification
 4. **Traffic Management:** Appropriate measures to manage any increased traffic in the area
 5. **Environmental Protection:** Measures to protect the natural environment of Waikite Valley, in conjunction with the mana whenua, mana whakahāere of Wakite valley
 6. **Mana Whenua:** Ongoing updates to the Te Arawa kōeke meetings to ensure any concerns can be addressed through a tikanga-process lead by Te Arawa koeke
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CONCLUSION

The Pūwhakamua reintegration facility represents an evidence-based, professionally managed solution to a critical social challenge. The tikanga Māori approach, proven track record, and comprehensive safety measures make this an exemplary model for prisoner reintegration.

Approving this resource consent will enable TACT to continue their vital work in a location specifically chosen for its therapeutic benefits. The alternative—leaving recently released prisoners without adequate support—poses far greater risks to all our communities.

I urge Council to approve this application and support TACT in their important mission of creating safer communities through effective prisoner reintegration.

Thank you for considering this submission and I look forward to addressing the Council in person on these matters.

Te Ringahuiā Hata

