

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:

Brett + Heather Vanner

[Full Name]

This is a submission on an application from [name of applicant]:

Tikanga Aroro Charitable Trust.

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

Reintegration housing activity in Rural Zone
1A

at [The location of the resource consent]:

473 Puaiti Rd

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

All of submission

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]:

We strongly oppose (see attached)

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

decline application in full.

- ☒ 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 (or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter): 	Date: 24/6/25
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.

TACT submission

Brett and Heather Vanner [REDACTED]

Background

We have lived on Dods Road for 16 years and run two rural based businesses from a purpose-built workshop on our property. We employ 25 staff in total between the two businesses; 6 work full time at the workshop and the rest work on remote forestry sites.

Our son lives on his own in a separate dwelling on the property, and is heavily involved in both businesses. We envisage he will bring up his own family on the property.

Like the majority of other locals, we are independent, hard-working and honest. We enjoy the fact we can live in a beautifully quiet rural environment, while at the same time running two productive businesses supporting 26 families including our own.

Our submission

We commend the Trust for wanting to run a programme to reintegrate people who have formerly been in custody for serious offences, however the Puaiti Rd site is the wrong location which is why we are strongly against the proposal.

We outline our reasons below:

1) Rural character and effects on current amenities

The proposal is completely out of character for Rural 1 Zone as stated in the Rotorua district plan:

Zone	Code	Description
Rural 1 Zone Working Rural Zone	RUR21	Productive rural land for agriculture and forestry. Features that contribute to the amenity of this zone include the open space, forested landscapes, large lot sizes, low traffic levels, and the low numbers of buildings. The main activities provided for within this zone involve agricultural practices such as farming and forestry as well as infrastructure and network utility operations. Moderate noise levels, odour and other disturbance from agriculture, forestry, network utility infrastructure, rural industries such as mining and quarrying, and geothermal electricity generation activities are an expected element of the working rural environment.

The proposal involves multiple buildings (17) on one intensive site that are neither rural or purely residential. Within the rural zone, one residential unit per site is permitted with the potential for one minor residential unit. This proposal and the activity significantly exceeds what is expected in the rural area and is more aligned with an urban development.

The buildings and landscaping are not typical for the rural environment and will have a negative visual impact.

There will be a significant increase in vehicle movements which will disrupt the typically quiet roading network. This extends to contractors to the site, service delivery personnel, visitors, staff, and residents. The estimate of 10 vehicles movements per day is likely underestimated, and will have a considerable impact on the quiet, safe roading network.

There will be an increase in operational noise- as Rural 1 Zone is overall a relatively quiet environment (especially at night) any amount of unusual noise carries a long way and can be disturbing.

2) Increased Health and Safety risk to the local community

We believe housing multiple legally restricted people who have previously been sentenced to life imprisonment or preventative detention poses a huge Health and Safety risk to our remote community. It is very naïve to state that such people pose the same risk to the community as everyone else, just because they have “done their time” or the Parole board have deemed them safe enough to be released from prison. Locating this facility in a remote, isolated area is untested and will have adverse effects on the health and safety of the local community.

Our concerns are detailed below.

a) Negative affect on mental health

This proposal has already had considerable impact on many local's mental health, especially the elderly and those with children. Even at this stage the “what ifs” are being considered and worried about. Statistics tell us that recidivist rates are high, and the risk of absconding is high. Generally, everyone rurally feels safe in their homes, even though their nearest neighbour might be kilometres away. This proposal shows complacency for security and safety within the context of our remote isolated community.

b) We are a very vulnerable community

Many people spend a lot of time alone, whether that is working alone on a farm, being in your home alone, kids waiting for the school bus etc. Many properties are isolated with long drive-ways. In our case family members are often home alone and employees can be working alone at the workshop

c) cell phone/internet coverage

There is very poor /non-existent and unreliable cellphone/internet coverage in the area. This means if there was an emergency many people would be unable to call for help. Although Starlink receivers provide a degree of communication, they are only effective for a few metres from the unit. So even if someone had a unit at their house it would not work over the rest of the property/ farm / neighbouring properties. Booster/mesh type systems utilising Starlink cost tens of thousands of dollars so are unaffordable for the bulk of the community.

d) time in which it takes for emergency services to reach the area

Emergency services are delayed due to the location being at least 40minutes drive from Rotorua. If you require emergency services it is common for them to take around one hour to reach the area. When we called for assistance with a scrub fire it took 55 minutes for the fire service to arrive. Another time a family member collapsed with an internal bleed. After one hour a basic Ambulance officer arrived from Reporoa as all Paramedics were busy in town.

e) power cuts are common, especially in bad weather due to downed trees

We have inconsistent power supply to the area, with frequent power cuts. No power means no lights, no water/flushing toilets (water is pumped), no landline phone, no Starlink so no internet or Wifi calling/messaging/texting. Large generators that would run all of the above cost tens of thousands of dollars and are not financially viable for most locals. It always takes time for generators to kick in. Usually most people have to manage without them/without communication until the power comes back on. Delicate electronics such as Starlinks can be damaged by being run on a generator due to power surges.

f) Local roads

There are multiple routes to the proposed site from all of the various State Highways so the whole area will be affected by the increased traffic movements. Many roads are narrow and windy and some are actually only wide enough for one vehicle to pass. Some are not tar sealed. Driving on these roads is hard enough for locals who are familiar with them. It can be catastrophic for drivers who are not used to these roads, and potentially for the driver coming in the opposite direction.

g) Weather

Puaiti, Te Kopia and Dods Roads are prone to thick fog throughout the year which provides yet another hazard to driving. It is common during adverse weather events for

culverts under the local roads to become overwhelmed which leads to roads completely washing out. Puaiti Road was recently blocked for months following a wash out and only accessible from one direction during this time. There is currently a wash out on a corner of Puaiti Road that is being repaired.

In recent times, Dods Rd (which is a no exit road) washed out over a long weekend making the road completely impassable. As there were two new Mums with newborns on the road at the time, ourselves and other neighbours used heavy machinery to make a 4WD track around the road so everyone could get out until the road was fixed.

We often use our heavy machinery to remove trees and debris off the road after weather events so the roads can be used.

Ultimately if the roads are blocked for whatever reason it would increase emergency response times, which further adds to the inappropriateness of this rural location for an activity that will be reliant on supports and services.

h) Electronic monitoring at the proposed facility

Electronic monitoring via GPS is only effective if you have a strong Cellphone/Wifi signal. As soon as a resident steps out of range the ability to track them is lost. While the applicant has been told it is 'technically feasible' to have services to the site, all signal will be lost once out of range of the site due to compromised services to the whole of Waikite Valley. As we have had GPS's in our work vehicles for Health and Safety reasons for 9 years, we are very familiar with the limitations of their use out of Cellphone range. There is often a delay in them " catching up" which adds to the time the vehicle (person) is not trackable.

3) Increased security risk to the community

Typical visitors to the area come here with an agricultural / forestry / rural purpose or for our hot pools. Introducing 20 visitors per week to this area with no rural purpose raises further concerns regarding safety and security for the wider community. Due to the nature of rural activities and the large areas they occur over, it is impossible to have all assets behind locked doors/ gates so rural communities are forced to operate with a degree of trust, and this activity serves to undermine the inherent character of how rural communities operate.

4) Business concerns

The Rotorua Lakes Council District Plan currently supports industries that contribute to the rural economy within the Rural 1a zone. We are concerned that the proposed facility would put potential employees off from working at our workshop. We are also concerned it would affect other businesses in the area and stop new businesses being set up, should a change to the plan be made. We urge council to continue to support rural focused business to thrive in this rural area without compromise.

5) Community concerns

We are concerned the proposed facility would stop people moving into the area or fear would actually make them move out of the area. Less people in the community would mean a drop in school rolls which in turn reduces the chance of attracting good teachers.

We are concerned property values would drop, as would memberships of local clubs and attendance at local events. Many people would think twice about leaving their property at night. People would also think twice before they stopped to help someone eg to change a tyre. If this proposal went ahead it would completely destroy the current social cohesion of our community.

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

As we run two safety critical business operations we manage risk on a daily basis. Like every business in New Zealand we are required to follow the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA 2015)

Under HSWA 2015, TACT is a PCBU and must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their operation does not put other people (our community) at risk from the hazards they introduce. TACT is required to control any hazards/risks their operation brings. See extract from HSWA 2015 below.

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

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Subpart 2—Duties of PCBUs

36 Primary duty of care

- (1) A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of—
 - (a) workers who work for the PCBU, while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking; and
 - (b) workers whose activities in carrying out work are influenced or directed by the PCBU, while the workers are carrying out the work.
- (2) A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking.

The main hazard of TACT's proposal is the introduction of multiple restricted people (high risk offenders who have served life sentences or may be on preventative detention) to a remote site in a vulnerable community, a long distance from emergency services, with limited lines of communication if there was an emergency.

The introduced hazard/risks cannot be controlled at the proposed site, so the proposal should be declined under the HSWA 2015.

If the proposed site was nearer to emergency services and the surrounding area had reliable cell phone/internet connections, TACT would be controlling the hazard/risks involved with the operation and therefore carrying out their obligations under the HSWA 2015.

We implore Rotorua Lakes Council and the Department of Corrections to work with TACT to find such a site

Brett and Heather Vanner