

Survey reveals increases in building related costs for social services

ROTORUA 17.02.12: Rotorua social service, emergency and relief organisations reported an increase in building and property related costs over June 2010 to June 2011.

Changes experienced by a sample group of social service organisations are revealed in Rotorua District Council's (RDC) *Examining the Environment for Social Service Organisations* survey.

RDC social research officer Caroline Matangi says 11 Rotorua-based social services and emergency organisations were surveyed in the second half of last year, and examined on their experiences over a 12 month period.

"We first conducted the survey in 2010, providing a base-line against which current and future survey results will be measured.

"The majority of last year's respondents reported that they had experienced increases in expenses, such as gas and heating bills, energy, building and room costs compared to a year ago."

Ms Matangi says other significant findings from the survey include:

- More agencies reporting changes in the demographics of their client base compared to 2010, with 36.4% of respondents reporting a change in the makeup of their clients and noting more males as a factor.
- The two areas reporting an increase in demand for client assistance across the social services sector between 2009/10 and 2010/11 were health and housing.
- In the 2011 survey 55.56% of agencies reported an increase in the range of duties expected from paid staff.

"Overall, clients appear to be requiring assistance in a wide range of areas. However assistance with housing, household assistance and health emerged as areas of greatest demand with 88.9% of agencies reporting this in the 2011 survey.

"Sixty percent of respondents reported that the length of time a client is waiting for their service from the time of referral is less than 24 hours in both 2011 and 2010 surveys."

The full *Examining the Environment for Social Service Organisation* report is available in full on Rotorua District Council's website www.rdc.govt.nz

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