

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF 13 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 GARY OWEN SMITH

Introduction

1. My full name is Gary Owen Smith. I am 65 years old. I previously resided in Lynmore, Rotorua. My family and I were based in Rotorua from late 2001 through to 2010 and then from mid-2015 until 17 February 2022.
2. I also owned a house at 6A Grey Street, Glenholme. We purchased this house for our disabled son Carl to live in.
3. I still own a property in Rotorua at 52A Robertson Street, Rotorua. This is on the corner of Robertson and Ranolf Streets. The Glenholme school is across the road. I rent this house out.
4. I have submitted as an individual on the 13 resource consents. This evidence is an update to my evidence submitted in December 2021.
5. Carl, my son, is 34 years old and from early 2019 he resided in Glenholme, Rotorua. Carl was born with Down Syndrome, a genetic condition caused by

the presence of three copies of chromosome 21. Although Carl is very outgoing, personable, and understands people very well, he has some degree of cognitive impairment which means he struggles with speech and certain social cues. Carl uses a variety of methods to communicate. His speech is limited, and it can be difficult to understand him. It can be challenging for him to describe an event that has occurred. Carl can react aggressively to confrontational situations such as witnessing aggressive behaviour or an event such as a motor vehicle accident or poor driving. Carl sees danger in these and similar situations.

6. A true copy of a map showing Carl's home relative to the proposed sites for emergency housing (EH) is annexed and marked as Appendix 1.
7. I submit this statement of evidence from my perspective as a father to a vulnerable resident of Glenholme, a current property owner in Glenholme and someone who has left Rotorua. My evidence covers the adverse changes I have observed around Glenholme and Fenton Street as a result of the existing concentrated motel-style EH in central Rotorua. Specifically, the increase in violence, anti-social behaviour, and crime around Glenholme when the Motels in that area started being used for EH, and the decline in the upkeep of the neighbourhood.
8. These changes meant that we moved away from Rotorua as we did not feel it was a safe environment for our vulnerable son to live in. In February 2022 we took the step of selling our homes in Rotorua and moving to Cambridge to a safer environment.
9. I submit this statement of evidence on behalf of myself, Rosalie Smith (Rosalie) and our son Carl, in support of Restore Rotorua Incorporated (Restore Rotorua), to assist the independent hearing panel (the Panel) in deciding the outcome of 13 resource consents by Ministry of Housing and Urban

Development's (MHUD) resource consent applications before the Rotorua Lakes Council (the Council).

10. Trevor Newbrook, chair of Restore Rotorua, has shared a list of confirmed EH accommodation locations with me that was provided by the Ministry of Social Development. This list confirms my knowledge of the widespread use of EH accommodation in central Rotorua.
11. I understand that this list includes 'contracted' and 'non-contracted' EH sites, and that MHUD has now applied for 13 sites to be 'contracted' EH sites.
12. My evidence speaks to how the applications are likely to affect residents, speaking with direct experience from my family and me.
13. I am familiar with the matters set out in this statement of evidence, and they are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I am prepared, if required, to answer any questions concerning this brief of evidence from the Panel.
14. This statement of evidence covers my observations as a resident, a father, and my experience in the New Zealand Police for 42 years.

Family, work and life in Rotorua

15. I spent 42 years in the NZ Police where I gained ample experience in navigating, and responding to, dangerous situations involving people from all walks of life. From 2001 until 2010 I was District Commander of the Bay of Plenty Police.
16. In 2010 my wife Rosalie and I moved to London as I was appointed as the New Zealand Police Liaison Officer Position based in London. We returned to New Zealand in June 2015 and settled in Rotorua where I retired from Police.

17. Our disabled son, Carl, accompanied us when we moved to London. Carl has two older siblings neither of whom live in Rotorua.
18. Carl has many favourable attributes. He is very caring and helpful to others especially when he thinks help is required. He does however have challenges because of his disability which can make him vulnerable. Some of these are:
- (a) Carl is intellectually impaired;
 - (b) Carl's speech is limited;
 - (c) Carl does not have a good understanding of money;
 - (d) Carl's ability to read is very poor;
 - (e) Carl will never be able to drive;
 - (f) Carl's employment opportunities are limited so his ability to earn an income is low. He does receive a supported living payment from the government;
 - (g) Carl does not at times respond well to aggressive behaviour; and
 - (h) Carl has a very strong sense of what's right and what's wrong.

Before transitional and EH

19. In 2015, we moved back to Rotorua. It has been a life-long goal of Rosalie and I that Carl is able to live as independently as possible. This became a priority following my retirement when we wanted to prepare for the time when we were no longer able to care for Carl as we had previously. We chose Rotorua because Carl spent a large part of his life in Rotorua, had the most connections

and support there, could be part of the community and have a good and happy life. Carl has always been included in all aspects of our lives which has assisted greatly in the development of his social skills. This is often commented on by those who know us.

20. The factors we considered to be important for Carl to live an independent life were:

- (a) Safety – this was the number one priority;
- (b) Established networks;
- (c) Accepted and supported in the community;
- (d) Accessibility, including access to public transport;
- (e) Stability/sustainability;
- (f) Developing and maintaining the skills to be independent;
- (g) Carl’s need for organised activity and routine in his life;
- (h) Good accommodation;
- (i) Affordability; and
- (j) Location.

21. Carl attended the St Chads Communication Centre Trust (St Chads), at 2 Devon Street, every weekday. St Chads is a charitable trust which works with disabled individuals to foster community, vocation, and personal development through a range of activities both at St Chads centre and across the city. Annexed and

marked Appendix 2 are some records documenting Carl's involvement at St Chads, including his artwork, attendance at St Chads prize giving and his participation in group activities. We considered Carl's participation at St Chads to bear considerable significance to his sense of community and quality of life.

22. The most important factor when choosing Carl's first home in Rotorua was safety. Given Carl will never be able to drive, it was important to choose a home near buses, support services (such as St Chads) and essential services (such as the library, supermarket, and shopping mall).
23. In March 2018, Rosalie and I purchased Carl's unit at 6A Grey Street, Glenholme.
24. Rosalie and I invested considerable time and money to implement a comprehensive safety plan for Carl over the course of 2018. We completely refurbished the home by; obtaining a building consent to allow for the floor plan to be altered, installing double glazed windows, renewing insulation, rewiring the home, building an additional bathroom, and installing a new kitchen that was big enough for two people to work in. We also installed security cameras, an alarm system, and appropriate fencing to provide for better site security. We also introduced Carl to many of the neighbours in the surrounding area so they knew who he was and who we were.
25. During the process of refurbishing Carl's home, we got to know many people who lived in the area. We informed them of what we were doing and often introduced Carl. The refurbishment took around 6 months, and I did much of the work.
26. During the time that I was refurbishing Carl's new home, I would drive with Carl to 6A Grey Street each morning. Carl would then walk, alone, from 6A Grey Street to St Chads. If I was still working on Carl's home at 3pm when Carl finished at St Chads for the day, he would walk home from St Chads to

6A Grey Street alone. This helped Carl get used to the area and the concept that the house at 6A Grey Street, Glenholme was his own. This process over time made the transition from living at home with us to having his own house easier. The walking route Carl would take was on Fenton Street. Carl enjoyed this route because people who knew him would often see and acknowledge him. When we decided that it was no longer safe to walk on Fenton Street he would walk on Lytton Street. Carl's walking route is referred to in Appendix 1.

27. Carl's house was 4.9 kilometres away from our family home. We chose Glenholme because it was relatively close to our home, and the neighbourhood was safe, quiet, and accessible. Carl's residence allowed him to access the support he required with a considerable level of independence. Glenholme at that time was regarded as desirable and a sought-after location. The demographic in Glenholme was of similar age to Rosalie and I, which gave us assurance that Carl would be able to develop a sense of community, alongside people who are patient and understanding of his condition.
28. When the house was finished in early 2019 Carl did not hesitate when we asked if he wanted to "take his stuff" to 6A Grey Street and live there. Carl told us he wanted to "take the lot". The move was completed over a weekend.
29. When Carl first moved in, I would stay with him every night which allowed him to adapt to his new environment. We were already familiar with the area and the process of walking to and from St Chads from the house. Carl's confidence to walk around Glenholme freely grew.
30. Within a few months, Carl was well settled into his home, routine, and neighbourhood. While walking down the street, Carl would engage with passers-by to say "hello" or "good morning". Most passers-by would acknowledge his friendliness, and over time, Carl became well known in the area.

31. In about mid-2019, I reduced my overnight visits to two nights a week because Carl was becoming well adapted to his new home and routine. Rosalie and I became comfortable with Carl staying at his new home alone. Carl did not spend another night at Rosalie and my house until the second lock down in the later part of 2021.
32. Carl absolutely thrived living at his new home. This signalled a huge achievement for Carl, and our family, as it showed his capability to live a happy and semi-independent life. Carl did his own laundry, mowed his own lawns, kept his house tidy and dealt with his own personal hygiene. Rosalie and I employed staff to come and help him prepare his evening meal but apart from this he was self-sufficient.
33. Carl was very proud of his house and would show any visitors through. Rosalie and I were proud of his achievements and surprised at how quickly he took on the additional responsibilities that come with living independently.
34. Carl thrived at St Chads and adapted extremely well to the Glenholme neighbourhood. Carl was able to confidently walk around from his home to St Chads, the library, mall, and other frequently visited locations which further solidified his growing independence.
35. Carl's attendance at St Chads allowed him to keep busy during the day while creating a lifelong network of peers and friends. St Chads' attendees regularly take part in art workshops and showcase their crafts at the Inspire Gallery which was then on 1138 Hinemoa Street. The Gallery in Hinemoa Street has recently closed.
36. Once a week, the St Chads attendees travelled from St Chads' centre to the Inspire Gallery via bus, getting on at the stop outside Fenton Court Motel (305 Fenton Street). As the situation on Fenton Street changed one of the clients

from St Chads had his watch taken from him at the bus stop. I understand the person responsible was seen to go into a motel used as EH. As a result of this and other incidents in the general vicinity of the bus stop St Chads stopped using this bus stop. Clients were instructed to use the bus stop in Ranolf Street. This was a lot further away than the Fenton Street stop. The walking routes that St Chads attendees would take to their regular bus stop, marked in red is in the map marked as Appendix 3.

37. Carl also participated in St Chads' community outreach initiatives, known as "Keep Rotorua Beautiful" where he helped to pick up discarded rubbish from the street. Frequently, this initiative was carried out along Fenton Street.
38. In enabling Carl's independent living, Rosalie and I achieved what many thought we wouldn't be able to and what many in our situation dreamt of. We were also aligned with the government's stated objectives for people with disabilities as outlined in the Enabling Good Lives strategy.
39. Carl's independence wasn't achieved without a significant effort in preparing him, and ongoing support provided by us, friends, family, and many others.
40. Carl became a "Friend of the Rotorua Sunrise Rotary Club". This was a special designation created by the club so Carl could participate in the Club. Carl was very proud of this. One of the members, who also lived in Glenholme, picked him up from his house at 6.30am once a month and took him to the Rotary meeting. Carl would often walk around to the Rotary member's house the night before to check that he would be picked up in the morning. Rotary helped Carl with important socialisation skills. He enjoyed attending. He felt that he belonged.

Turning point

41. In 2020 with the onset of Covid-19 it was publicly reported that those who were living rough in Kuirau Park (thought to be about 100 people) were placed in the Emerald Spa Motor Inn and Tuscany Villas on Fenton Street. These two Motels are adjacent. Tuscany Villas is still being used as EH, but Emerald Spa Motor Inn is being used as contracted EH. Both Motels are very close to both where Carl was living on Grey Street and the many motels that are part of this application.
42. In mid-2020, during the initial 2020 Covid-19 level four lockdown, we noticed the neighbourhood and character of Glenholme undergo significant change. We observed that much of the homeless population migrated into some of the motels on Fenton Street. Fenton Street is one of our city's main roads and it is a key location for short term tourist accommodation in Rotorua.
43. Over time, the situation progressively became more extreme as the number of motels being used to house the homeless increased, especially those on Fenton Street.

General observations of effects of transitional and EH from motels in Central Rotorua

44. We grew increasingly concerned about Carl's safety considering the changed demographic in Glenholme. The changes that we noticed in Glenholme were the visible mixing between people on contrasting ends of the social spectrum which caused significant tension and uneasiness in the neighbourhood. On one side, there is the elderly and high needs/vulnerable demographic that Glenholme has become typically known for, whilst on the other, a wide array of emergency and transitional housing occupants. Some of the emergency and transitional housing occupants we observed to be gang members, some have drug and alcohol dependency, mental health issues, violent and abusive

tendencies often spilling out into the street. In addition, there are many young, unsupervised children and large dogs with nowhere to play. Visible drug dealing was a frequent observation. Many of those living in the emergency and transitional housing motels have cars which are often driven at speed and in an erratic manner.

45. There had been other environmental changes such as damage, graffiti, noise, intimidating behaviour, fighting, cars being broken into or damaged, cars parked on the footpath, and abandoned shopping trolleys.
46. In a short time more and more of the motels on Fenton Street became Emergency/Transitional housing motels. Police were frequent visitors to these motels. This had a significant cumulative impact on the neighbourhood.
47. Carl is extremely routine oriented and the drastic changes to Carl's surroundings caused both Rosalie and I huge distress.
48. During the first lockdown in 2020 Carl was unable to attend St Chads during the day as it was closed because of Covid-19. He continued to live at his house on Grey Street. Because the environment had changed, I stayed with Carl overnight. Prior to this I stayed with him on most Friday and Saturday nights only.
49. The onset of these changes in Glenholme meant that we had to review and reduce Carl's newly found independence. Simple pleasures that Carl had become accustomed to, such as walking down Fenton Street safely, we now considered too risky for him to continue doing.
50. As a result of the changes, we told Carl to walk to and from St Chads using Lytton Street. It took a week to embed this change as Carl preferred to walk on Fenton Street. We also asked St Chads to talk with him about walking down Lytton Street.

51. Throughout 2021 things got progressively worse from a safety perspective.
52. It became a basic safety precaution that Carl had to have someone walking with him.
53. I also started to stay at Carl's house more frequently overnight. When I did this, I would ensure that I did not park my vehicle overnight on the road outside of Carl's house because there were many incidents of damage to cars or theft of them in the vicinity.
54. Carl's cognitive impairment means that he is less likely to assess risk like other people do, instead, he is typically fearless and unaware of when he may be putting his life or safety in serious risk. If Carl, or another walking companion was confronted in an unsafe manner, Carl would undoubtedly stick up for himself or others. We no longer felt confident that the people now living in his neighbourhood would be compassionate and understanding of his condition.
55. Carl continued to walk down Lytton Street. The route Carl took is marked in dark green and referred to in Appendix 1.
56. During the second lock down in the later part of 2021 the behaviour of those in the motels and those visiting got significantly worse reaching the point where I felt it necessary to stay with Carl every night. During this period, we decided that it would be safer and easier to bring Carl back to our home in Lynmore.
57. This was the first time that he had stayed at our home since he moved down to his house in Grey Street in early 2019.
58. Following the Covid 19 lockdown in September 2021, we made further adjustments. Carl returned to his home, but I now walked with him in the

mornings and afternoons and stayed with him every night. On the weekends he stayed with us in Lynmore.

59. We made these changes as my assessment was that there had been further deterioration in the safety situation in the neighbourhood. I knew gang members were staying in some of the motels, I had seen fighting between gangs on Fenton Street, damage to the bus stop, erratic and dangerous driving on many occasions, domestic arguments on the street, drunk/drugged people walking down the street and youths trying car doors. Many of the Motels were unkempt and the grass verges on Fenton littered and not mown. The visual cues were simply that this place was not safe.
60. Over this time security started to appear at some of the motels and there were mobile security patrols initially by vehicle and later complemented by security officers on foot walking along Fenton Street. On occasions I also observed them in Lytton Street.

Specific incidents of effects of transitional and EH from motels in central Rotorua

61. There were multiple incidences that I have experienced first-hand in Glenholme that illustrate how much the Glenholme neighbourhood changed.
62. On 18 October 2021, I was walking Carl and another St Chad's attendee to St Chads at around 8:30am. As we approached the corner of Devon Street and Lytton Street a male wearing a hoodie top walked into Lytton Street from Devon Street. He was with a woman. They would have been around 20 years of age. The woman immediately commenced a verbal altercation with the male using profanities to question why he had turned into Lytton Street. This went on for some time and eventually the male crossed the road and joined the female who was still yelling the same type of abuse towards him. We stopped and waited for this to pass then continued.

63. If Carl was alone on this walk, it is most likely that he would have said something to the couple or stood to stand and watch, or to call them "dicks" as he knows that this behaviour is inappropriate. I fear the worst if Carl was to be alone and a similar situation transpired because he would have no fear in sticking up for what he has been taught. The location of the confrontation is marked with a yellow X in the map marked as Appendix 4. The locations of St Chad's is marked with an orange dot.
64. It was just a few days after that that I observed a Police car chase. This was at 8.30 in the morning. The car came from one of the motels and went straight through the controlled intersection on the corner of Devon and Lytton Street. This is a busy street at this time of the morning, and it was extremely fortunate there was not a collision. This occurred at the same location as indicated in paragraph 63 and marked on Appendix 4 with a yellow X. I also noticed damage to the bus stop in Fenton Street mentioned earlier and the tree next to it was knocked down a few days later. This tree was quite large and blocked the foot path. There was clear evidence that this was caused by a car that had been diving on the wrong side of the road in Fenton Street. In my opinion the situation in the area was out of control at this time.
65. Daily I noticed how the neighbourhood, which was once quiet and slower paced, became at times chaotic and unpredictable. Cars speed down the roads of Glenholme at all times of the day and night, and stop signs were ignored. At night, the sounds of yelling, music, and skids from cars could be heard from Carl's home. I began to stay with Carl every weeknight that he attended St Chads as we had increased concerns about his safety at home.
66. On the weekends, Carl began staying at our family home which is 4.9 kilometres away from Fenton Street. This was a new measure we had to introduce to shelter Carl from various impacts arising from the EH motels on Fenton Street.

Widespread impacts of the transitional and EH from motels in central Rotorua

67. We feel strongly that the homeless deserve to be housed, but we do not think the current locations of emergency and transitional housing are appropriate, or helpful, to the existing population of Glenholme. The problem is further compounded by relocating people to the motels from areas outside of Rotorua. A practice that was apparent early on and until recently has been repeatedly denied by officials.
68. It was clear from my daily observations that the emergency and transitional housing occupants are also disadvantaged by this accommodation as they have insufficient space to live, play, and they have virtually no privacy to go about their lives. The facilities were inadequate for the type of accommodation being provided. Very few will have the kitchen facilities that would support a long-term stay.
69. Consequentially, the streets within a stone's throw from the locations of emergency and transitional housing (in the hub of the city centre) have become the day-to-day 'hang out' spot for people that have nowhere else to go. Places such as the library and mall, which Carl used to travel to and enjoy safely, are now unpredictable, and were potentially dangerous spaces for him.
70. The sudden high concentration of emergency and transitional housing occupants in the city centre had a drastic impact on the wellbeing and livelihood of Carl, Rosalie and me. Our family worked extremely hard to make informed decisions, and incremental progress, to ensure Carl was in a safe environment where he was able to thrive. Carl's freedom to move freely and safely around his neighbourhood was taken away from him. Rosalie and I had to make enormous and unfair compromises, by having to rewind the progress made over the last 3 years just to sleep soundly at night, doing all we could to ensure Carl's safety.

71. In September 2021 I was invited to join Restore Rotorua Incorporated. This is where I discovered that our experiences were not unlike that of others living in the area.
72. On the 29th of October 2021, my wife, Rosalie, and I met with Senior Police to discuss the situation, the options and where all these people were coming from. The Senior Police shared our views and were aware that many of those in the motels were coming from other locations throughout NZ. I was able to establish in this discussion with the Police that the Motels were placing significant demand on Police resources.
73. I was also made aware that the reported crime/victimisations for each of the Motels was higher than pre Covid times but when the incidents and reported crime was linked to those in the Motels the demand for Police services was considerably higher. To explain further Police can link their contact with individuals back to their stated address at the time of the contact. To phrase this another way there was more happenings away from the motels than was happening at the Motels.
74. I also located a 2021 Cabinet paper through a google search titled "Improving the provision of EH in Rotorua and potential expansion." Although heavily redacted it was clear that the Government and the Rotorua Lakes Council were working together and intended to allow the motels to continue operating for at least another 5 years by granting resource consent. This paper appears to have been prepared in August 2021. A copy is attached as Appendix 5.
75. Visions of a Helping Hand provide services to many (but not all) of the exclusive use motels. They are a registered Charity and are required to file an annual return. I searched the Charities Register for the annual returns for Visions of a Helping Hand.

76. The table below demonstrates the significant increase of numbers between the 2021 filing and the 2022 filing. This appears to be consistent with the intent of the August 2021 Cabinet paper titled “Improving the provision of emergency housing in Rotorua and potential expansion.”

Table 1

Statement of performance details taken from Visions of a Helping Hand annual returns filed with the charities commission women and child facility Rotorua and Taupo					
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Number of families supported	2809	1588	132	110	62
Number of children	3284	1666	101	101	101
Bed nights	160275	68841	20873	15578	6396
Days Open		365	365	365	145
Notes:					
The Charity was established on the 20th of September 2017.					

77. The cabinet paper also stated that more than 50% of those in EH are people with disabilities such as health conditions, mental health needs or are experiencing issues with alcohol, drugs, and behavioural issues.
78. At about the same time, it was reported publicly that the Boulevard Motel in Fenton Street had been purchased by the Government and was to be used for Transitional Housing.
79. It was later reported that the Council had granted a resource consent allowing the Boulevard to be used for this purpose. This was upsetting given that by this time there was a strong awareness and public comment on the significant issues that were now becoming well established in the area and were caused directly by allowing Motels to be used for EH / Transitional Housing on an ongoing basis.
80. We became increasingly frustrated by what was happening. The response of Officials to matters raised by concerned residents and others were responded to with a consistent narrative that did nothing to address the issues that were being raised. An issue for me was the constant denials that those in the Motels

were coming from out of town. I agreed to speak to the Daily Post. On the 16th of November 2021 they published an article covering our situation. My comments were shared with the Rotorua Lakes Council who were invited to respond before my comments appeared in the Daily Post. A copy of this article is attached as Appendix 6.

81. On the same day my wife Rosalie, Carlyne Hall who is another Glenholme resident and member of Restore Rotorua, with similar circumstances to ours and I met with Jean Paul Gaston and Rosemary Viskovic from the Rotorua District Lakes Council.
82. This meeting took place at Carl's house at 6A Grey Street. Both Carlyne Hall and my wife and I outlined the impact of the nearby emergency/transitional housing was having on our families. This included those visiting these motels.
83. Mr Gaston informed us that the Council was going to increase the security in the area and put CCTV in Fenton Street which would cover the motels. We stated that we did not think this would help our situation. We needed assurance about safety and the ability to move about freely. If an incident occurred, then we as parents had failed. The probability of an incident occurring was high in our assessment.
84. We specifically asked if anything else could be done that would restore our neighbourhood to its pre-covid state. The answer to this was provided without hesitation. It was no, nothing.
85. At the conclusion of the meeting, I handed Mr Gaston a paper I had prepared. He acknowledged receipt of it by email the next day, but I have heard nothing further from him. The paper is attached at Appendix 7. The email reply is attached at Appendix 8.

86. Over the remainder of November 2021 things remained much the same. Nothing occurred that reassured us that it was safe for Carl to continue to live at his house in Grey Street and move about the neighbourhood freely and safely.
87. We continued to become disillusioned with public commentary made by the Mayor, Ministry of Social Development Regional Manager, and various other officials. We were particularly concerned with the constant denials that those in the motels were not being brought into Rotorua. These were being made repeatedly and were contrary to what we were seeing and hearing. The narrative was that all those in the motels were from Rotorua, then to mostly from Rotorua, then to mostly from Rotorua or with a connection to Rotorua, then to from the Bay of Plenty and then to mostly from the Bay of Plenty.
88. Finally on 9 December 2021 my wife and I met with Mayor Chadwick. Also present was one of the Deputy Chief Executives Mr Craig Turiana. We asked for this meeting as by now we considered that our only viable option was to sell up and move to a safer location.
89. Mayor Chadwick and Mr Turiana listened to our concerns and situation but advised us there was nothing the council could do. At the meeting we also advised that we were considering our options and if things didn't change then we would most likely have to sell up and move. Mayor Chadwick told us at the meeting that we would not find anywhere safer.

Our Assessment and Decision to Move

90. By now we were resigned to the following:
- (a) There was no willingness to acknowledge the impact the motels were having on the local and wider community;

- (b) It was clear that the use of Motels for EH and Transitional housing was going to continue for another five years or longer;
- (c) The narrative being put forward by those in authority was not commensurate with our experiences;
- (d) There was no evidence of a plan to bring this to an end or to reduce the impact;
- (e) The security which was now in place was only at some motels and seemed to make little difference. It did not follow the occupants living in the motels into public places;
- (f) It was likely that some of those in the motels were going to be relocated to public housing that was to be built only a short distance from Carl's house in Grey Street;
- (g) Bringing Carl back to our house to live took us back to where we started. He would not be able to catch the bus home as he used to, and it was likely he would need to live with us again for a number of years;
- (h) The signs were that the neighbourhood would be changed permanently and issues that had arisen through the use of the motels would continue for years to come;
- (i) That the "voice" of those living in Glenholme carried no weight; and
- (j) We had limited time to do the best we could in terms of Carl's safety and independence.

91. On the positive side:
- (a) We had a great house for Carl;
 - (b) It was in an area where he had good connections and networks;
 - (c) Things were easily accessible from his house; and
 - (d) He was well established in terms of living semi independently.
92. We carefully considered our options. We researched matters as much as we could and consulted with several friends and family members over the situation, we found ourselves in. We did this as the decision we had to make was significant and either way it had consequences that would need to be weighed up and managed.
93. It was with a heavy heart, we made the decision to move away from Rotorua, knowing that it would be devastating for Carl to uproot him from Rotorua, St Chads, and the Glenholme community, who had become a pillar of support and happiness in Carl's life. However, we felt the need to resettle Carl into a semi-independent lifestyle in a safe neighbourhood was by far the best choice of those that we had available.
94. In December just a few days following our meeting with Mayor Chadwick we put a conditional offer on a house in Cambridge. This was not the ideal time to sell but the timing suited Carl's end of year break at St Chads and would make the transition easier.
95. On the 16th of December 2021 we listed our property in Lynmore and Carl's house in Grey Street for sale. We needed to move on, and this could not happen if we stayed in Rotorua. We are retired and aging. I am 65 years old and Rosalie my wife is 70. Quite simply we did not have time to wait at least 5

years or longer in the hope this situation would improve. We had well and truly lost hope. Our confidence in Officials was by now very much diminished.

96. On the 17th of February 2022 we moved to Cambridge which is where we currently live. Carl now lives at home with us and will continue to until we can build the friendships, networks, and his confidence so he can resume living semi independently of us. We expect this to take two or three years, but it may take longer, and we may not get to the same level as we had in Rotorua for many more years or ever.
97. We continue to look for a suitable house for Carl so we can start the journey again.
98. By making this decision to move, we lost networks in Rotorua that supported Carl, my wife Rosalie and I, we lost freedom, we lost time, and incurred significant financial transactional costs with the move. We have restarted the process with Carl again. We were not expecting to be in this position given the progress we had made in Rotorua. This process has been emotionally draining.
99. Rosalie and I are extremely disappointed that the city we have contributed to, and invested so much in (in particular, to retire and settle Carl into a safe and independent lifestyle) is losing its century long reputation and character in a matter of a couple years. We want to remain hopeful that this situation can be reversed, but Rotorua is already at tipping point.
100. The reality in what has happened, and our experience of the consequences was highly predictable and therefore preventable.
101. We still own a house in Rotorua. It is also in Glenholme. In January this year I rented this property to a couple who had recently moved to New Zealand. One of the tenants has now started working for Police. Because of the proximity to the Police Station, they intended to walk to and from work. When informed of

this, Police advice was not to as they did not consider it safe enough.

Impact of the thirteen applications

102. I am dismayed at how the realities faced in Rotorua have been persistently ignored. Restore Rotorua informs me that the Boulevard Motel resource consent was waived through in just 20 working days by the Council. To hear about this left us feeling helpless. I have raised concerns with the Council speaking from my professional experience of what is likely to happen, but our voices are ignored, and the decisions that are made have zero regard for community input or buy in. There has been no willingness to explore an alternative that would have less impact.

103. My family and I paid rates, and contributed to keeping this community safe, since 2001. From my professional experience as a police officer for 42 years, the reality we experienced is highly predictable and unfortunate. I am well informed about the risks which are likely to transpire in an environment where a disproportionate number of homeless people are crammed into one concentrated location, without sufficient space to accommodate their needs. Rate payers should be able to trust the Council to protect the best interests of their community, especially when it comes to safety and the amenity of the city that we have paid rates to build. It is especially disappointing that the valuable voices of the community have not had a chance to share their views, or alternative solutions to the issue of homelessness in Rotorua.

Official Information Act 1982 request

104. On the 28th of June 2022 I made an Official Information Act 1982 (Official Information) request to New Zealand Police for an Intelligence report demonstrating the increase in Demand in the Rotorua CBD and Fenton Street. This report was prepared by Police in June 2022.

105. On 25 August 2022 I received a response from the NZ Police to my Official Information request that was submitted on 28 June 2022. I have attached at Appendix 9, the Intelligence Report for the Rotorua CBD/Fenton Street Demand dated 8 June 2022.
106. This Intelligence Report illustrates the increase in crime and incidents either attended by Police or reported to Police. The report demonstrates a very significant difference between 2018 and 2021. The impacts are simply that there are more victims who have experienced a crime, more behaviour that has been reported to police (often recorded as incidents) and more demand on Police to deal with these. The true “picture” will be worse as in some types of crime and incidents there is a relatively high level of under reporting. The impacts are both real and perceived, cause both real and psychological harm and have an economic impact at both the personal level and to the wider economy e.g. tourism. I was not surprised when I saw this intelligence report. It tallied with my observations over 2021.
107. The behaviour that emanates from the motel sites has a cumulative effect which contaminates the town impacting directly on safety and perceptions of safety and the towns reputation as a tourist destination. The site security does not accompany those from the motels when they leave. Much of what I am saying that directly affected us was the behaviour that occurred off site.
108. As part of my Official Information request to Police, I also asked for the numbers of cases that Police in Rotorua were dealing with on a weekly basis at the EH Motels where the victim had a family violence plan that was from another geographical area. I did this as it had been reported at a Council meeting by Anaru Pewhairangi, Rotorua Lakes Council Community Wellbeing Deputy Chief Executive and former Rotorua Police Area Commander that Police were dealing with 5 to 10 cases per week where the family violence plan in existence had been prepared in another location. This information was refused. Mr Pewhairangi’s comments were reported in the Rotorua Daily Post

on 9 May 2022. I attach this as Appendix 10. His comments are consistent with what I have been told by former Police colleagues and strongly indicate that there are still out of towners coming into the EH motels.

Overall Conclusion

109. These events have been of concern to us. The behaviours that we had witnessed since April 2020 were now likely to be permanent features of this area for many years. It is now obvious that the plan was to make Emergency/Transition Motels a semi-permanent arrangement and that bringing people into the EH Motels from outside of Rotorua was common practice. The “official” narrative that those in the Motels are the result of population increase in Rotorua since 2013 and a lack of building in the town warrants much deeper investigation.
110. The use of motel accommodation in the city centre to address homelessness was supposed to be a temporary solution to provide housing during the heightened Covid-19 restrictions. However, the pending resource consent applications will create permanency to an inappropriate and untenable situation which has a widespread impact on our local community.
111. The size of the problem is not helped by bringing people into Rotorua to live in this accommodation. I would recommend that this practice stops immediately.
112. The focus seems to be limited to just one solution. Build more houses. A recent search of Trade Me revealed that there were 93 homes in Rotorua for rent and over 400 for sale. This presents an opportunity to relocate those living in EH to more suitable accommodation. This would be faster than the current approach and may have better overall outcomes.
113. The granting of consents for the next 5 years seems to be excessive and unnecessary. The motels have already been in existence as EH in Rotorua for 2

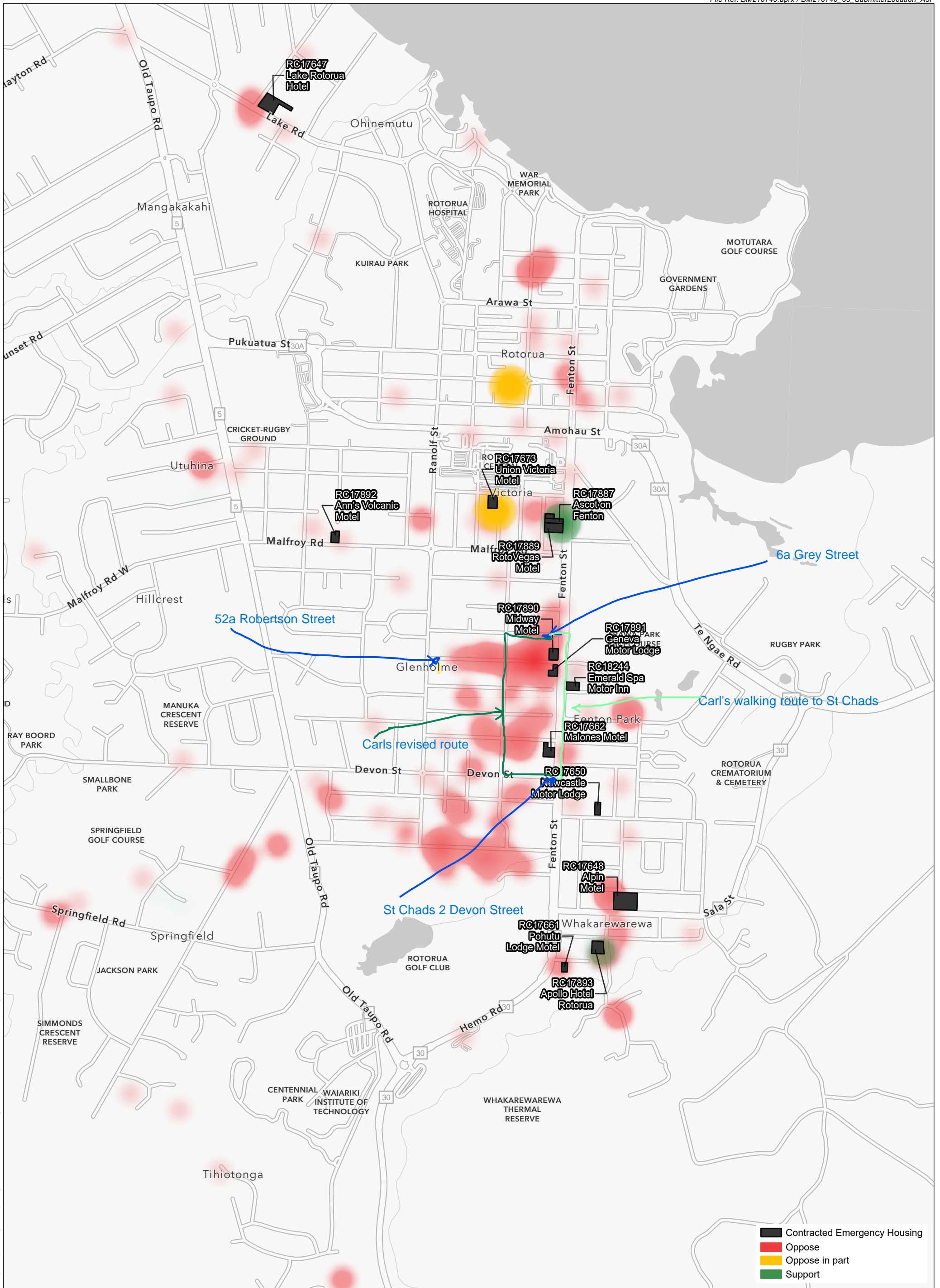
plus years so an additional 5 years, considering the known impacts seems unnecessary given there are alternatives as mentioned above.

114. The Beca Social Impact report prepared in April/May of 2022 states that the average stay in the EH motels is 22 weeks. On that basis it is difficult to understand why the consents need to be for a period of 5 years – unless it is intended to use the 13 contracted motels as a “reservoir” that can be “topped” up by continuing to reallocate people to Rotorua.
115. It seems to me that the scale of the problem now experienced by Rotorua is largely caused by using Rotorua as a national centre for EH. The solution is not helped by this practice, and it is probable that there will be long term negative impacts on Rotorua as the size of a “needy” cohort of the population grows in a disproportionate manner.

Gary Smith

12 October 2022

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Carl
Tulips
glass mosaic

Greg
Zebra
wire art

LOCAL GECKO PRODUCTIONS 

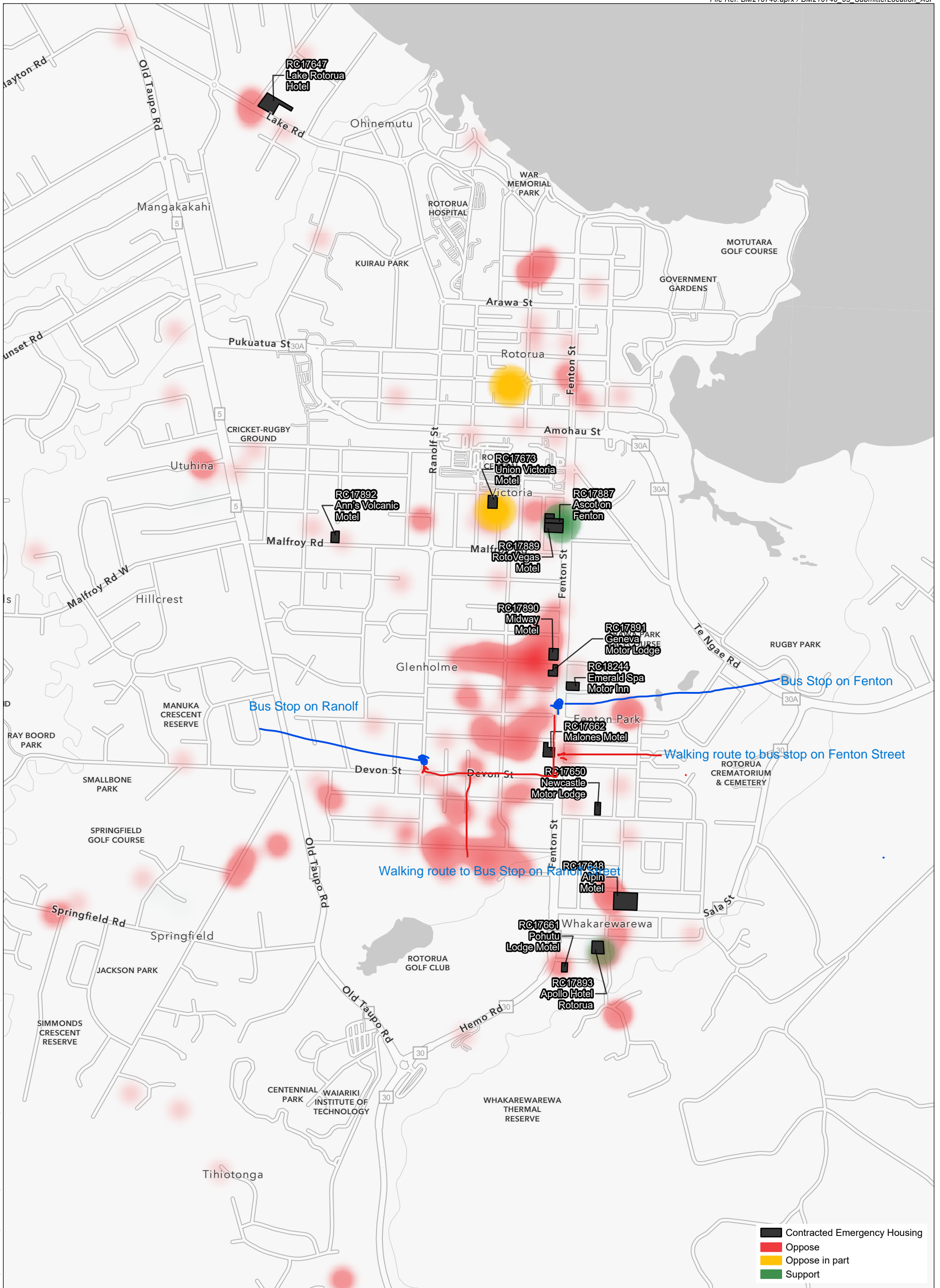


Pūkenga Ora
ST. CHADS
Life Skills Hub

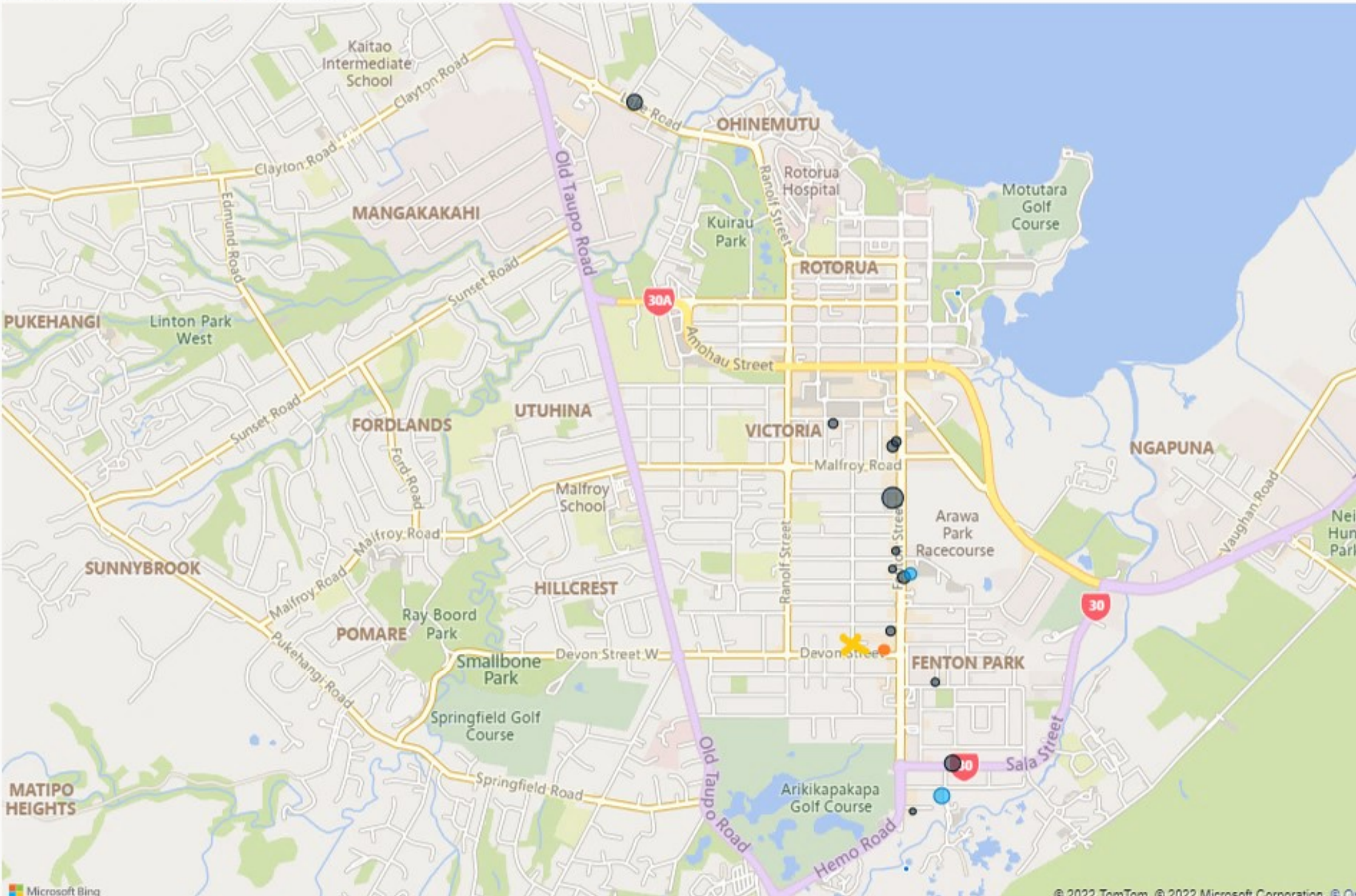
PRIZEGIVING 2021

TE POU 

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Accommodation Type ● Hotel/Resort ● Motel



In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Housing

Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment

Office of the Associate Minister of Housing (Homelessness)

Cabinet Business Committee

Improving the provision of emergency housing in Rotorua and potential expansion

Proposal

- 1 This paper outlines steps being taken to meet urgent housing need in Rotorua and seeks Cabinet’s agreement to:
 - 1.1 fund the costs of contracting motels and providing wraparound supports for around 200 families and whānau with children currently receiving Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNGs) in motels in Rotorua and associated elements
 - 1.2 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Relation to government priorities

- 2 This proposal will contribute to the Government priority of laying the foundations for the future, including addressing key issues such as our climate change response, housing affordability and child poverty.

Executive Summary

- 3 Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNGs) were introduced in 2016 by the previous Government to help vulnerable individuals and families with urgent housing need to meet the cost of staying in short-term accommodation, with limited supports. Funding was originally provided in Budget 2016 for 3,000 emergency housing places per year, 800 at any one time.
- 4 Accommodation is most often provided through motels, and is intended to be for seven nights at a time, but can be up to 21 nights in specific circumstances.
- 5 We have seen significant growth in EH-SNG numbers over the last two years. The number of distinct clients granted an EH-SNG in a month more than doubled from April 2019 to April 2021. Around \$320m was spent in the last year on EH-SNGs, and the average length of stay has also increased.
- 6 This is likely due to the combined impacts of underlying issues with the housing system, individual stressors, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and the

availability of motels due to downturn in tourism. Previous trends have shown that a tightening of the gateway into EH-SNGs could contribute to a reduction in overall use (this may or may not reflect reduced need). The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is undertaking work to better understand the pathways in to EH-SNGs.

- 7 Motels are not an ideal solution, however, it is a preferable option to people living in cars, staying in overcrowded housing, sleeping in parks or on the street.
- 8 Our goal is that we rarely need to use motels as emergency housing, in particular EH-SNGs, and where we do it is for short periods of time and not as a recurring solution. We need to offer pathways to permanent housing options, and we are making good progress on that front through our Government Build Programme and the ramping up of transitional housing places.
- 9 This Government has a clear plan and has taken significant steps (across supply, prevention and support) to directly address homelessness and prevent the need for the use of EH-SNGs. These include:
 - 9.1 the launch of the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan and associated funding of over \$300m for 18 immediate actions. As part of this, over 1,000 additional transitional housing places have been made available, and prevention initiatives such as Sustaining Tenancies have been rolled out
 - 9.2 funding for a further 8,000 transitional and public housing places through Budget 2020, to be delivered by June 2024
 - 9.3 over 1,000 people being housed through COVID-19 motels, many of whom were previously experiencing homelessness for extended periods. These motels were stood up at-pace in response to the first Level 4 nationwide lockdown
 - 9.4 changes have been made to EH-SNGs to provide greater consistency with other forms of housing support and provide some support services.
- 10 Te Maihi o Te Whare Māori: Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation (MAIHI) framework was approved by Cabinet on 18 May 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0229.02 refers]. MAIHI aims to deliver, at pace, a system-wide response to Māori housing stress, and is guided by a set of kaupapa Māori principles. Applying the MAIHI framework and its principles must be central to our continued efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.
- 11 Alongside this, a programme of work is underway to address wider housing system issues, such as a lack of affordable housing, that drive much of the demand for EH-SNGs. This work includes promoting a well-functioning housing and urban system; supporting the development of purpose-built, affordable rentals; s 9(2)(f)(iv) and better supporting people to access and retain private market tenancies. Changes to

the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 recently took effect to improve security of tenure for renters.

- 12 Māori are significantly more likely than the general population to experience homelessness and make up 58 percent of all households accessing EH-SNGs. Stage One of the Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry into Housing Policy and Services on Māori homelessness has raised numerous issues with emergency housing.
- 13 We have been concerned to see the pressure that the housing crisis and impacts of COVID-19 are placing on emergency housing around the country. Added to this, the current model of EH-SNG provision does not consistently ensure safe and quality motels, or provide wraparound social support services (targeted supports are provided). This can make it difficult for families and individuals to thrive.

We are taking steps to meet urgent need in Rotorua

- 14 Rotorua city has experienced strong population growth after two decades of stable growth. The housing supply has not responded, and the number of building consents granted remains one of the lowest in New Zealand by population. This has resulted in a sharp increase over the past five years in median rents (54 percent) and house prices (84 percent), and increases in homelessness, including overcrowding.
- 15 This has placed significant pressure on public and emergency housing, with a 67 percent increase in EH-SNGs between June 2019 and December 2020. At 19 March 2021, 371 households were in EH-SNG motels. This includes 366 children in 194 of these households. The volume of EH-SNGs in Rotorua is also the highest in the country by population. There's a high reliance on EH-SNG places relative to transitional housing, with a ratio of five-to-one, compared to roughly one-to-one ratio across the country.
- 16 While we do not see motels as a long-term solution, we need to deal with the immediate crisis that has built up over the last decade and address issues with the over reliance on EH-SNGs.
- 17 This is why we directed officials from central government to form a taskforce with the Rotorua Lakes Council and Te Arawa Iwi to develop options for providing better support and outcomes for people living in emergency housing motels. As a result of this work, Ministers have agreed to a suite of changes to meet urgent housing need in Rotorua. These changes include:
 - 17.1 Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) contracting specific motels to provide emergency accommodation, with an initial focus on the approximately 200 families and whānau with children in EH-SNG motels
 - 17.2 providing better supports through HUD contracting additional wraparound support services to meet the needs of the families in those contracted motels and MSD improving supports available for those remaining in the current EH-SNG motel places

- 17.3 the implementation of Te Pokapū – a Rotorua Housing Hub to strengthen assessment and placement processes for emergency housing clients and co-locate relevant services.
- 18 This pilot approach in Rotorua also includes near-to-medium-term supply solutions with Kāinga Ora s 9(2)(j) scaling up work to identify new-build opportunities; s 9(2)(f)(iv).
- 19 MSD is undertaking work to cease the use of unsuitable motels and ensure accommodation is suitable, explore the potential for a new complaints process, s 9(2)(f)(iv).
- 20 It is expected that this combination of actions in Rotorua will result in increased quality and suitability of accommodation, increased support services, increased safety, better pathways to more-permanent housing, and streamlined assessment and placement processes for clients. We expect to be able to implement the main aspects (contracting motels and wraparound support services) by June/ July.
- 21 The model proposed for Rotorua will cost around s 9(2)(j) per annum, made up of:
- 21.1 s 9(2)(j) for the contracting of emergency housing motels and associated supports for 200 families and whānau with children in Rotorua, as well as s 9(2)(j) in 2021/22 only in upfront costs to implement the model
- 21.2 s 9(2)(j) for the ongoing operation of Te Pokapū – a Rotorua Housing Hub, plus s 9(2)(j) in 2021/22 only for a data system¹ and fit-out of premises
- 21.3 s 9(2)(j) s 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 22 The cost of providing accommodation under the new model will be around the same as under EH-SNGs s 9(2)(j). However, we must invest in additional elements to deliver better outcomes for families and whānau with children in emergency housing and the broader community.

¹ The database is a holistic assessment tool that looks at the whole whānau and their needs. It takes a kaupapa Māori approach – Ngā Pou e rima – WERA’s cultural framework. The information will support agencies located in the Hub with appropriate placement and assessment information. This maintains a whānau-led approach under a kaupapa Māori framework.

23 We propose that [redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted] and the actions in Rotorua be initially funded for 2021/22 via:

23.1 a transfer of [redacted] s 9(2)(j) [redacted] from the BoRE: Accommodation Assistance appropriation (EH-SNGs are paid from this appropriation) to a new dedicated appropriation; and

23.2 reprioritisation of [redacted] s 9(2)(j) [redacted] from the underspend of approximately \$40 to \$50 million of the Rent Arrears Assistance appropriation.

24 [redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Elements of this approach could be applied more broadly

25 Rotorua is unique and not all locations have the same level of issues associated with EH-SNG use. It is also clear that the elements of the Rotorua approach alone will not address the significant demand that exists for emergency housing. However, there is value in considering expansion of elements of this pilot place-based approach taken in Rotorua. This is because of broader issues with the EH-SNG model and the likely need to utilise significant numbers of motels as emergency housing over the medium term.

26 [redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

27 MAIHI and its kaupapa Māori principles must drive how we expand this approach and continue to prevent and reduce homelessness. We must partner with and support Māori to deliver solutions for Māori.

28 [redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]
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Background

- 32 HUD and MSD currently fund and deliver emergency accommodation via two main methods:
- 32.1 **Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNGs)** were introduced in 2016 to provide temporary accommodation to meet an immediate housing need until longer-term options could be identified. The grant was intended to be used as a last resort and initially for no longer than seven days at a time.
 - 32.2 **Transitional housing** provides short-term accommodation, intended to be up to 12 weeks on average, alongside wraparound support to help households transition to longer-term sustainable housing.
- 33 Accommodation (mainly in motels) funded via EH-SNGs has increasingly played a role in ensuring people have a place to stay when needing urgent housing assistance. However, the current model of EH-SNG provision was never intended to operate in the way it currently does. We are seeing more people in motels, including many families and whānau with children. People in motels are also staying longer, with an average stay of around 18 weeks.
- 34 There are increasing concerns that the provision of emergency housing via EH-SNGs is unable to consistently ensure safe, adequate and suitable housing for all those who need it. MSD provides targeted support services to people staying longer than seven nights but due to high demand, support is prioritised according to need.² In addition, there are significant costs associated with this model and growing community concern in Rotorua, central Auckland, and Wellington about the social harm associated with concentrations of EH-SNG motels.
- 35 Stage One of the Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry into Housing Policy and Services on Māori homelessness has raised numerous issues with emergency housing. Claimants and witnesses in support of claimants have raised significant issues with the quality of the accommodation, unsafe and dangerous situations particularly for wāhine, the long-term effects on tamariki, difficulty accessing basic support services, and the need for housing options to move into. Witnesses have also spoken of the huge amount of money spent on emergency housing and that this funding could be better spent on programmes that provide housing and effective wraparound support. However, it was also noted that emergency housing is a critical backstop for providers to refer people to.

² MSD and its partners in the community provide targeted social support to people staying in emergency accommodation longer than seven nights through Intensive Case Managers and contracted Navigators and Support Services.

- 36 Work to improve the safety, security, and quality of emergency housing is already underway. This includes work led by MSD to address some of the key issues with the use of EH-SNGs for emergency housing, including:
- 36.1 [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
 - 36.2 ceasing use of unsuitable motels and moving clients into more suitable accommodation
 - 36.3 developing a process for ensuring emergency accommodation is suitable
 - 36.4 exploring the potential for a complaints process for emergency housing suppliers
 - 36.5 ensuring clients are aware of their obligations when staying in emergency housing.

We have a clear plan to prevent and reduce homelessness...

- 37 This Government has a clear plan and has taken significant steps (across supply, prevention and support) to directly address homelessness and prevent the need for the use of EH-SNGs. These include (see Annex One for further detail):
- 37.1 In November 2019, Cabinet agreed to a significant increase in the supply of transitional housing to reduce reliance on motels and the prioritisation of families and whānau with children for new transitional housing. 1,000 additional transitional housing places were delivered as of February 2021.
 - 37.2 In December 2019, Cabinet agreed to changes to EH-SNGs to provide greater consistency with other forms of housing support [SWC-19-MIN-0205 refers].
 - 37.3 In 2019/20, targeted social supports were introduced for people receiving EH-SNGs for longer than seven nights.
 - 37.4 In February 2020, the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan was launched and is backed by over \$300 million of funding. All 18 immediate Action Plan actions are now underway, helping people address issues that put their tenancies at risk and supporting people at points where they are at-risk of homelessness, such as leaving the care of government.
 - 37.5 In June 2020, Te Maihi o Te Whare Māori: Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation (MAIHI) was launched to fundamentally respond to the crisis that exists for Māori, improve access to appropriate housing, and review and reset systems and processes so that the housing system provides equitable solutions for Māori. The MAIHI framework and its

principles are central to continued efforts to address homelessness through the Homelessness Action Plan.

- 37.6 A flexible funding package has been introduced to assist whānau with children with the extra stresses and costs of living in emergency housing, where other support is not available. It will be used to support the wellbeing and education needs of the children, to minimise disruption to their lives and keep them connected with school, early childhood education and other activities.
- 37.7 Kaupapa Māori approaches are helping to prevent homelessness, increase housing supply, build capability of Iwi and Māori housing providers, and support Māori experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This work is supported by the He Taupua fund and He Kūkū ki te Kāinga MAIHI implementation funding.
- 37.8 A further 18 longer-term Action Plan actions are to be developed for implementation over 2020-2023, some of which are underway already. For example, new public housing supply through Budget 2020 funding, guided by the Public Housing Plan, and the \$400 million Progressive Home Ownership Fund.
- 38 There is also a range of work currently underway to address wider housing system issues, such as a lack of affordable housing, that drive much of the demand for EH-SNGs. This includes work promoting a well-functioning housing and urban system; supporting the development of purpose-built, affordable rentals; s 9(2)(f)(iv) and better supporting people to access and retain private market tenancies. s 9(2)(f) and changes to the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 recently took effect to improve security of tenure for renters.
- 39 Budget 2021 also committed \$380 million into Māori housing to deliver 1,000 new homes for Māori in the regions; further strengthen MAIHI approaches and partnerships with Iwi and Māori; improve housing quality through repairs of 700 homes; and build future capability for Iwi and Māori groups to accelerate housing projects and provide a range of support services.

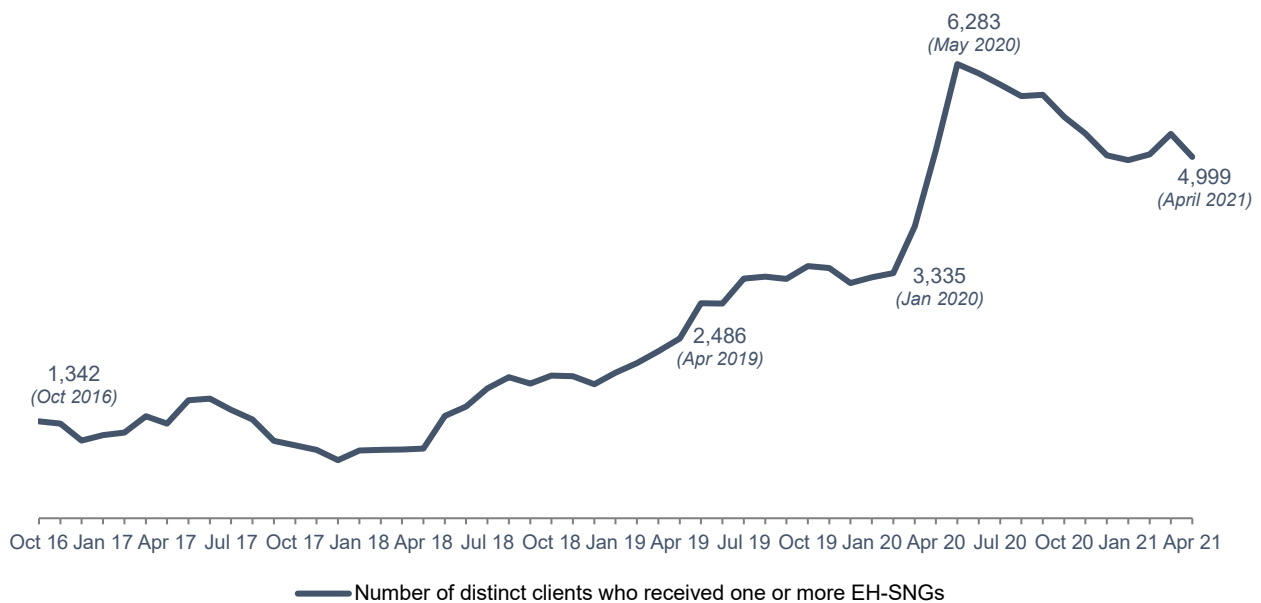
...in spite of this we have seen growth in EH-SNGs

- 40 Since the introduction of EH-SNGs, there has been significant growth in the number of households accessing the grant (see Figure 1). This growth increased dramatically in the first part of 2020. From January to May 2020, there was an 88 percent increase in the number of distinct clients who received an EH-SNG. Since the peak in May 2020, EH-SNG use has dropped slightly, with 4,999 distinct clients in April 2021 – a 20 percent decrease from May 2020. However, EH-SNG use has not returned to the level seen prior to COVID-19.
- 41 All regions experienced significant increases in the number of households seeking emergency housing during the COVID-19 lockdown period. When COVID-19 Alert Level 4 came into effect on 25 March 2020, there were 3,072

households staying in EH-SNG accommodation. As at 29 May 2020, there were 4,363 households in EH-SNG accommodation, an increase of 42 percent over the ten-week period.

- 42 Over the last two years the number of distinct clients granted an EH-SNG in a month more than doubled (from April 2019 to April 2021).
- 43 More recently, the number of clients accessing an EH-SNG has stabilised. However, previous trends have also shown that demand increases in winter months.

Figure 1: Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants



This growth is likely driven by a range of factors, including COVID-19

- 44 Homelessness and demand for EH-SNGs are driven by structural issues, such as poverty and a lack of affordable housing, and system failures, such as gaps in services that mean people do not get support at the right time. Individual pressures create pathways into homelessness such as ongoing trauma, illness, addiction and mental health issues, family violence and criminal activities.
- 45 It is likely that the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 exacerbated existing factors, such as a lack of affordable housing, and drove the increased EH-SNG demand that we have seen since March 2020. However, it is hard to determine the exact causes of increased demand and accurately identify underlying emergency housing need.

Māori are disproportionately impacted by homelessness

- 46 Māori are significantly more likely than the general population to experience homelessness and make up 58 percent of all households accessing EH-SNGs. As such, it is critical that MAIHI and its kaupapa Māori principles drive continued efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.

- 47 Families with children and those with disabilities are also highly represented in emergency housing. As of March 2021, there were 3,928 households in EH-SNG motels. Of this cohort, 53 percent of households were families with children. We know that women are more likely to be the sole or primary caregiver for children, and may find themselves in emergency housing need as a result of experiencing domestic violence. More than 50 percent are people with disabilities, health conditions, mental health needs, or are experiencing issues with alcohol and other drugs.

The experience of homelessness plays out differently across the country

- 48 As part of the Homelessness Action Plan, we committed to taking a place-based approach. Our engagement with and across communities has highlighted the local factors that influence outcomes on the ground, including local economic performance, the state and quality of housing and infrastructure, and longstanding issues facing tangata whenua. Without a clear understanding of these issues and how they play out for communities, we will not have a clear view of what solutions will make the most difference for individuals and their communities.

Proposed new approach to meeting urgent housing need in Rotorua

- 49 In Rotorua, there are a set of specific issues that have exacerbated broader issues with EH-SNGs. Rotorua has experienced strong population growth after two decades of stable growth. Housing supply has failed to respond, and the number of building consents granted remains one of the lowest in New Zealand by population. Limited private and public housing development has resulted in a sharp increase over the past five years in median rents (54 percent growth) and house prices (84 percent growth). In addition, high levels of family violence are pushing people into emergency housing need.
- 50 A shortage of affordable homes for low-income households means more people are experiencing periods of homelessness, including in emergency and transitional housing, and the public housing register is increasing. These issues were exacerbated by the need to quickly house people experiencing homelessness through the COVID-19 pandemic.³
- 51 As a result, the volume of EH-SNGs is the highest in the country by population. The reliance on EH-SNGs relative to transitional housing is also very high. Up to five households are receiving EH-SNGs for each transitional home available for placement (compared to a one-to-one ratio across the country). 30 percent of households have been in emergency housing in Rotorua for six months or longer, and 7.5 percent for over a year.
- 52 Around 500 households are currently in government-funded motels in Rotorua, including EH-SNG and transitional housing motels, and motels used as part of our COVID-19 response. As at 19 March 2021, there were 194 households with 366 children, out of a total 371 households in EH-SNG motels.

³ As at April 21, there were approximately 156 occupants across 113 COVID-19 motel units in Rotorua.

- 53 There are also up to 140 individuals utilising both the Temporary Additional Support and the Accommodation Supplement from MSD to access temporary accommodation, largely backpacker accommodation.⁴
- 54 The volume of EH-SNGs in Rotorua has placed significant pressure on the government to manage placement and provide support to households. The absence of a tailored and vetted placement process has resulted in many clients being placed in environments inappropriate for their specific needs. For example, some motels are not suitable for families and some do not have adequate safety measures in place.
- 55 The local community has also been increasingly voicing their concerns about the security, safety and appropriateness of motels used for emergency housing.

The Government is taking action to meet urgent need

- 56 We decided that immediate and targeted action was needed to meet urgent demand for supported housing and to put pathways in place for more permanent housing. This decision also responds to the high expectations of the local community for quick movement to address issues associated with motels as emergency housing.
- 57 Government has been working actively in Rotorua for some time. In late 2019 a place-based partnership was agreed between Rotorua Lakes Council, Te Arawa Iwi and government agencies. This partnership was set up in response to the pressing issues facing the community and its housing and urban system.
- 58 The Rotorua Housing Taskforce was then established in late March 2021, made up of Rotorua Lakes Council, Te Arawa Iwi and officials from HUD, MSD, Kāinga Ora and Te Puni Kōkiri. Police Officials and the Lakes District Health Board have also participated in some of the discussions.
- 59 The Taskforce developed the following objectives to guide implementation of immediate housing solutions:
- 59.1 enabling more stable, safe and supported housing with an initial priority focus on children and families
 - 59.2 ensuring a pathway to more-permanent housing outcomes
 - 59.3 a “by Te Arawa, for Te Arawa” approach to developing solutions for their whānau and those who call Te Arawa whenua home.

⁴ Temporary Additional Support is a weekly payment, paid in addition to a main benefit, that helps to cover essential living costs.

60 The Taskforce has worked collaboratively and intensively to develop immediate solutions to the homelessness and emergency housing situation in Rotorua. On 13 May 2021, we announced immediate actions to be implemented in Rotorua, including:

60.1 HUD contracting specific motels to provide emergency accommodation, with an initial focus on the approximately 200 families and whānau with children in EH-SNG motels (in place by end of June).

60.2 HUD contracting additional wraparound support services to meet the needs of the 200 families and whānau with children in those motels. MSD will also focus supports available for those remaining in the current EH-SNG motel places (in place by end of June).

60.3 MSD retaining responsibility for assessment and placement of people into the contracted motels and strengthening assessment and placement processes for emergency housing clients (in place by end of June).

60.4 The implementation of Te Pokapū – a Rotorua Housing Hub. The Hub will be a single point of contact for individuals and whānau with emergency housing needs in Rotorua. The Hub will have a focus on strengthening assessment and referral processes to ensure the right supports are put in place to meet needs. Agencies, Iwi and local providers will be co-located with defined roles and responsibilities, and holistic assessments of need will be undertaken (in place by mid-August).

61 [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

62 Involvement of local Iwi Te Arawa has led to tailored Iwi and whānau-centred support. Annex Two provides further detail of how the model will operate.

63 Kāinga Ora is also progressing immediate housing opportunities in Rotorua to begin putting pathways in place to permanent housing, including:

63.1 [Redacted] s 9(2)(i) [Redacted]
[Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted] [Redacted]
[Redacted]

[Redacted] [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

⁵ [Redacted] s 9(2)(i) [Redacted]
[Redacted]

63.4 [REDACTED]

64 [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

65 HUD is engaging with the Waiariki Women’s Refuge in Rotorua to understand issues and ensure there is enough capability and capacity to support individuals experiencing family violence in Rotorua, who may have an emergency housing need. As the Hub progresses, officials will continue working with the refuge to ensure they are connected as a key stakeholder.

Contracting motels and wraparound supports will ensure quality, safety and security of emergency accommodation

66 Through a contracting model, HUD will contract whole motel facilities and wraparound support services for the approximate 200 families and whānau with children currently in EH-SNG motels. Contracting emergency housing places rather than using EH-SNGs provides a number of advantages including:

66.1 greater control over the quality and condition of the accommodation our whānau will be temporarily housed in, and the ability to work with moteliers to ensure our expectations are being met

66.2 enabling MSD to take a more planned approach to client placement, ensuring specific needs can be met such as accessibility or appropriate sleeping situations for children.

67 While we still intend for emergency housing to be for short-stays, households will be able to remain in contracted motels and receive wraparound supports for as long as needed. As with the current EH-SNG model, these clients will be required to make a client contribution of 25 percent of their income, to be paid to the provider.⁶ Annex Two includes more detail on how Te Pokapū – a Rotorua Housing Hub will operate, and Annex Three presents a stocktake of needs and supports in Rotorua.

⁶ This ensures consistency with other forms of housing assistance, including transitional housing and the current model of EH-SNGs.

68 Table 1 below outlines the differences between places secured via EH-SNGs and contracted emergency housing places.

Table 1: Overview of differences between EH-SNG and contracted motel places

Current EH-SNG places	HUD contracted emergency places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSD administers a one-off grant to meet the cost of staying in short-term accommodation (usually motels) for seven days at a time (can be up to 21 days) • MSD provides targeted support services to people staying longer than seven nights. Due to high demand, support is prioritised according to need. • MSD assesses needs but does not have control over placement of different cohorts into specific motels • MSD does not have the legislative mandate to regulate motel standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUD contracts specific motels for use as emergency housing • HUD also contracts wraparound support services • Through a Rotorua Housing Hub, MSD assesses need and places households into contracted motels • MSD can control placement of different cohorts into emergency housing that is appropriate to their needs • HUD and MSD can ensure motel standards such as quality and appropriateness of facilities through contracts

69 This model also better enables the provision of targeted wraparound support services to meet the needs of families staying in these facilities. The level of wraparound support provided will be similar to that of transitional housing and COVID-19 motels, with flexibility to adjust based on need.

70 Service providers will work with families requiring emergency housing from the moment they arrive to assess and identify needs; support those needs through direct work with clients and linking them into wider health, social, employment and financial supports; and facilitate pathways into transitional housing or other longer-term options. s 9(2)(j)

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

71 The approximately 177 households who will remain in non-contracted EH-SNG places in Rotorua often have complex needs. For example, they may receive a

⁷ EH-SNGs can be made recoverable in situations where a client is unreasonably contributing to their immediate emergency housing need. Between April 2020 and April 2021, around 1.5 percent of EH-SNGs were made recoverable. s 9(2)(j)

Supported Living Payment, be in emergency housing for longer periods of time (often over 40 weeks), be elderly, experience issues with alcohol and other drugs, and/or face mental health challenges.

72 [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Expansion of a place-based approach to other locations

73 Rotorua is unique and not all locations have the same level of issues associated with EH-SNG use. It is also clear that the elements of the Rotorua approach alone will not address the significant demand that exists for emergency housing. However, there is value in considering expansion of elements of the place-based approach taken in Rotorua (either to specific locations or as system-wide changes) because:

73.1 it is likely that there will continue to be a need to utilise significant numbers of motels as emergency housing in the medium term as new supply of sustainable housing is rolled out and homelessness responses are embedded

73.2 short-term solutions such as contracting motels and providing adequate holistic wraparound support are needed to improve support and accommodation available particularly for families and whānau with children

73.3 there are other locations around the country with high rates of EH-SNG use and concentration of EH-SNG motels around city centres. There are also locations where this has been associated with social harm and community concern.

74 [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

76 Our approach to addressing homelessness also recognises that place-based factors have a significant impact on how homelessness is experienced in different towns, cities, and regions across the country. This means what works in one place might not be appropriate in another. [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

81

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

[Redacted]

Improving the broader emergency housing system

87 This work has also emphasised the need to look at how to improve the ongoing provision of emergency housing places across the country. To do this, officials will focus on improving the picture of emergency housing and the impacts and issues that may be associated with it. [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

88 The proposals will also require us to consider broader questions about EH-SNGs. [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

It is key that work progresses to address underlying demand for motels as emergency accommodation

89 Improving the emergency housing system requires a staged and planned approach to mitigate the risks of long-term motel use. Agencies will need to respond to urgent needs and issues arising from the EH-SNG model, while continuing to take action to address systemic issues driving demand for EH-SNGs in the first place.

90 To prevent and reduce homelessness, it is critical that multiple agencies are working together to address the many complex social issues that can lead to homelessness. Significant steps are being taken to address homelessness through the cross-agency Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan. However, more will be needed to deliver on the vision that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted]

[Redacted] and an 18-month review of the Action Plan will be completed around September/October 2021. This provides an opportunity to identify what further is required.

- 91 We must continue to increase the supply of public, transitional and affordable housing and progress work on addressing underlying issues within the housing market.
- 92 The Government is prioritising the supply of affordable housing through a \$3.8b investment in the provision of critical infrastructure through the Housing Acceleration Fund, the KiwiBuild programme and by leveraging the scale of our Government Build Programme to increase the number of market homes in mixed developments.
- 93 The Government is also undertaking wider system reform through the ongoing Resource Management Act reforms and the National Policy Statement on Urban Development.
- 94 HUD is also initiating the development of a new Māori Housing Strategy informed by a review of He Whare Āhuru Oranga Tangata to strengthen MAIHI and accelerate the momentum to achieve significant and enduring housing outcomes with, for and by Māori. [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv)
[REDACTED]
- 95 Agencies are supporting the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry process, which includes a focus on Māori homelessness. Hearings are underway and emergency housing has been raised as a key issue. This will provide an important driver to review and reset how we are enabling and supporting kaupapa Māori approaches and improve the effectiveness of policy, services and strengthen relationships with Iwi and Māori providers. Any findings and learnings will help inform future policy development.
- 96 Work across broader government workstreams will also help to reduce drivers of homelessness through addressing social and economic determinants of wellbeing.

Funding Implications

- 97 The steps being taken in Rotorua are not about saving money. They are directly focused on getting better outcomes for families, and in particular children, staying in motels. They look to minimise any potential impacts on the children and give families the best chance to quickly move to a more-permanent housing option. It is hoped they will result in downstream savings and improved outcomes in areas such as education and health for the families and children.
- 98 We propose that the [REDACTED] s 9(2)(j) per annum that would have been spent on housing 200 families and whānau through EH-SNGs is instead invested in contracted accommodation with supports.⁸ This will not meet the full cost of the proposed changes in Rotorua because the contracted model provides much more than just accommodation.

⁸ This only pays for accommodation of varying quality, in motels alongside other cohorts, including those with complex needs. This can lead to children being exposed to antisocial behaviour, and potential safety issues.

- 99 We are seeking total funding of s 9(2)(j) to cover the initial cost (for 2021/22 only) of proposals in Rotorua. We propose funding this via an interim approach s 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 100 This includes s 9(2)(j) made up of the following for the 200 families and whānau with children:
- 100.1 s 9(2)(j) to secure dedicated facilities for 200 families and whānau with children that will include up to 330 units
 - 100.2 s 9(2)(j) for wraparound support services to be provided to each family through four providers
 - 100.3 s 9(2)(j) for onsite management and security where appropriate
 - 100.4 s 9(2)(j) for provider establishment costs and to enable meth testing to be carried out to ensure that the motels being contracted are safe to be occupied.
- 101 We are also seeking s 9(2)(j) in 2021/22 to support the establishment and running of Te Pokapū – the Rotorua Housing Hub.
- 102 In addition, we are seeking s 9(2)(j) s 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 103 This funding will provide better outcomes for these families and whānau. Contracting emergency accommodation will ensure facilities are appropriate for families and are good quality. Families will also be able to access additional wraparound support that meets their needs, and 24/7 onsite management will ensure the families in these motels are kept safe.
- 104 We consider that the new contracted model is a significant improvement on the current model and the additional cost is commensurate with the additional services provided.
- 105 A full breakdown of the funding required is attached as Annex Six.

Funding approach

- 106 Due to the urgent need in Rotorua, we have directed HUD to immediately begin contracting motels and support services using existing transitional housing funding, while a sustainable solution is identified.
- 107 It would not be appropriate, in our view, to permanently direct transitional housing funding away from new supply into contracting more motels. The funding in the Transitional Housing MCA is required to retain Government's focus on continuing to deliver new transitional housing places, including the 2,000 new places committed to in Budget 2020 by June 2022. Using this

funding for contracted motels would impact on the future pipeline of transitional housing and reduce the number of more-permanent housing options.

- 108 While there are a range of possible funding options, most only provide an interim or partial solution. Our preference is to fund this model over multiple years as, to implement the model effectively, providers need certainty over ongoing funding to enable them to recruit and procure necessary resources.
- 109 However, to meet the first year of costs we propose seeking an interim funding solution, [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
- 110 We propose that the actions in Rotorua are initially funded via:
- 110.1 a transfer of [REDACTED] s 9(2)(j) [REDACTED] from the BoRE: Accommodation Assistance appropriation (EH-SNGs are paid from here) to a new dedicated appropriation, and
- 110.2 reprioritisation of [REDACTED] s 9(2)(j) [REDACTED] from the underspend of the rent arrears assistance appropriation.

111 [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Transfer from the BoRE: Accommodation Assistance appropriation to a new dedicated appropriation

- 112 Agencies have estimated that the Crown spends approximately [REDACTED] s 9(2)(j) [REDACTED] per annum providing EH-SNGs to the approximately 200 families and whānau with children in EH-SNG motels. We consider this funding would be better spent providing these families with better quality accommodation and more appropriate support that helps them find permanent housing more quickly.
- 113 Although EH-SNG spend is expected to reduce (as a direct result of the 200 families moving from EH-SNG accommodation to contracted accommodation), it is anticipated that contracting emergency housing accommodation in Rotorua could free up approximately 75 percent of current EH-SNG supply (used for those families) which would then be made available to meet latent demand in the city.
- 114 EH-SNGs are funded under a BoRE appropriation where funding is set at a level intended to meet forecast demand and is adjusted periodically, through joint Ministers' approval, to reflect changes in forecast demand.
- 115 MSD has estimated the potential increase in EH-SNG spend associated with meeting this latent demand at [REDACTED] s 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] per annum and therefore this approach is not fiscally neutral.

Reprioritisation from existing baselines

- 116 In June 2020, the Government extended rent arrears support to tenants at risk of eviction once the tenancy termination restrictions implemented as part of the COVID-19 response were lifted. The rent arrears assistance is a one-off payment that tenants are required to pay back. The extension to the assistance funding ceases at the end of this financial year and MSD have advised it is projecting that \$40-50 million will remain unspent.
- 117 This paper seeks agreement for, and early confirmation of, an in-principle expense and capital transfer of s 9(2)(j) from 2020/21 to 2021/22.
- 118 Also, as the rent arrears assistance is intended to be repayable, it is funded under a capital appropriation. As there is no expectation that the costs incurred in Rotorua will be recovered, this paper also seeks agreement for a capital to operating swap.
- 119 While this swap will adversely impact the operating balance and net core Crown debt, we are asking Cabinet to agree that the fiscal implications are managed outside of budget allowances.

New funding via the Between-Budget Contingency

- 120 While a combination of the options above could provide funding over the near term, the partial funding of these options and the time-limited nature of reprioritisation mean they do not represent a sustainable funding model. Reprioritising permanently from other areas in baselines would require trade-offs, such as a reduction in additional supply, or delays to delivery timeframes. To avoid this, new funding could be sought from the Between-Budget Contingency (BBC) fund.
- 121 We do not propose to do this as a call of this quantum would utilise a significant portion of the available contingency.

Treasury comment

- 122 Treasury's recommended funding option is that the s 9(2)(f)(iv) be factored into the costings s 9(2)(f)(iv). This is on the basis that any new or cost pressure initiatives be met from existing baselines, should baseline funding be available.
- 123 We note that the s 9(2)(f)(iv) for the current financial year, and we are supportive of this funding be carried forward to provide for immediate housing need in Rotorua, particularly given the similar outputs being purchased.
- 124 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Response

125 As noted above it would not be appropriate, in our view, to permanently direct transitional housing funding away from new supply into contracting more motels. The funding in the Transitional Housing MCA is required to retain Government’s focus on continuing to deliver new transitional housing places, including the 2,000 new places committed to in Budget 2020 by June 2022.

Implementation

Officials are working at-pace to implement the Rotorua approach

126 HUD, MSD, Kāinga Ora, Te Arawa Iwi, and Rotorua Lakes Council are working collaboratively on the ground to implement the Rotorua approach. A summary and timeline for these activities is included below.

Action	Current status
Motel contracting for 200 families and whānau with children	HUD lead agency: Officials are engaging and negotiating with moteliors to become contracted motels, and anticipate agreements to be in place by the end of June 2021.
Enhanced wraparound support services (contracted motels)	HUD lead agency: Four organisations have agreed to provide wraparound support services for households in contracted motels, with contracts expected to be in place in June.
Motels for sole EH-SNG use (non-contracted)	MSD lead agency: Officials are visiting motels to determine suitability and discuss EH-SNGs with moteliors. Officials expect to complete identifying potential motels by the end of June.
s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]	MSD lead agency: [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Te Pokapū – Rotorua Housing Hub	MSD lead agency: Te Taumata O Ngāti Whakaeue iho ake (Iwi partner) will be involved with the Hub. [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
Kāinga Ora Housing pipeline	Kāinga Ora lead agency: [Redacted] s 9(2)(j) [Redacted] [Redacted]
s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted] [Redacted]	HUD lead agency: [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]


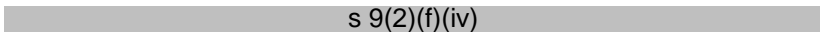
127 As officials continue to implement the actions in Rotorua, there will be further decisions to confirm:



127.1 how the Hub operates, and roles of Hub members in assessing and placing people into motels

127.2 how MSD undertakes their core EH-SNG role to better align with the placement of different cohorts into suitable motels.

Evaluating the approach to meet urgent housing need in Rotorua

128 The approach to meeting urgent housing need in Rotorua will be evaluated. Findings will form an evidence base to consider which aspects of the approach work most effectively and should be sustained, and which are least effective and should be modified. As part of this, officials will assess findings against MAIHI principles and other kaupapa Māori approaches to consider how whānau Māori are being supported, and how they could be better supported.

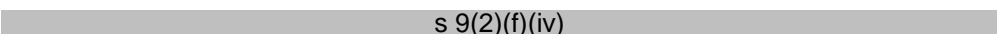



129 Evaluation learnings will also inform future emergency housing approaches 
 s 9(2)(f)(iv)



130  s 9(2)(g)(i)



Reporting on progress

131 Officials will provide regular updates to Ministers on progress in Rotorua, and on other locations. Annex Five provides a mock-up of a dashboard officials will use to provide these updates.

132 We will report back to Cabinet:

132.1  s 9(2)(f)(iv)




Legislative Implications

133 There are no legislative implications arising from the proposals in this paper.

Regulatory Impact Statement

134 A Regulatory Impact Statement is not required for the proposals in this paper.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

135 There are no climate impacts arising from the proposals in this paper.

Population Implications

Māori	The ongoing impact of cultural discrimination and disadvantage are key drivers of homelessness for Māori. Māori are significantly more likely than the general population to experience homelessness and make up 58 percent of all households accessing EH-SNGs. This proposal will positively impact Māori with an emergency housing need in Rotorua.
Pacific peoples	Pacific peoples are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, particularly in terms of the broader definition of homelessness. Low household incomes, a lack of houses designed for large multi-generational households and severe housing unaffordability in the regions (largely Auckland) that Pacific peoples are concentrated in, contribute to housing stress.
Women	Women are more likely to be the sole or primary caregiver of children and young people and sole parents with dependent children, and make up a higher proportion of those in emergency accommodation and sharing accommodation temporarily. For some women, experiences of domestic or family violence can lead to homelessness. This proposal will positively impact women accessing emergency accommodation and provide a safer environment for women who are primary caregivers of children.
People who are gender diverse	Gender diverse people (an umbrella term for a varied range of identities, including whakawahine, transgender, fa'afafine, takatāpui, non-binary, and gender-neutral people) have an increased risk of homelessness and a high level of vulnerability within mainstream services. It is important that services are tailored to the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness and seek to better understand the needs and responses required.
Children	53 percent of households accessing EH-SNGs are families with children. For children and young people, homelessness can be especially harmful and have longer-term impacts on wellbeing. Constant moving and insecure housing take children outside of familiar environments and may involve moving schools and/or school absences. There are long-term impacts from experiences of childhood poverty and childhood trauma, which have been shown to be a key predictor of future homelessness. This proposal will prioritise families with children and provide more suitable accommodation and support for these households.
Disabled people	Approximately one in four people (24 percent) in New Zealand are disabled and this rate increases with age. Disabled people, particularly those with accessibility needs, often experience more difficulty finding a home. Disabled people have specific risk factors that can lead to homelessness as well as specific needs when experiencing homelessness. The contracted emergency motel model gives the opportunity to identify and contract motels that meet the accessibility requirements of individuals and whānau accessing emergency housing.
Older people	There are many older people experiencing homelessness or living in unsuitable housing (too expensive, inaccessible or unsafe). The economic impacts of COVID-19 may impact older workers who have or

	might become unemployed and those living in rentals facing housing stress as a result of the loss of income.
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Human Rights

- 136 This proposal is consistent with the rights and freedoms contained in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.
- 137 Elements of positive discrimination are intended to respond to identified need, and improved support for general emergency housing provision is also planned.

Consultation

- 138 This paper has been prepared by Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. To prepare this paper, officials worked with the Ministries of Education, Health, Pacific Peoples, and Social Development, the Departments of Corrections, and Prime Minister and Cabinet, Kāinga Ora, New Zealand Police, Oranga Tamariki–Ministry for Children, Te Puni Kōkiri, Public Service Commission, and Treasury.

Communications

- 139 On 13 May 2021, we announced decisions we have made in relation to Rotorua. We will continue making announcements as work progresses to expand elements of the approach being taken in Rotorua to other locations.

Proactive Release

- 140 [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Recommendations

The Minister of Housing, the Minister for Social Development and Employment, and the Associate Minister of Housing (Homelessness) recommend that the Committee:

- 1 **Note** that this Government has taken significant steps to directly address homelessness and has a focus on reducing the use of EH-SNGs
- 2 **Note** that there is also a range of work currently underway to address the structural issues, such as a lack of affordable housing, that drive much of the demand for EH-SNGs
- 3 **Note** that in spite of this direct focus on reducing EH-SNG use, we have seen significant growth in EH-SNG numbers over the last two years
- 4 **Note** that the current model of EH-SNG provision does not consistently ensure safe and quality motels, or provide for wraparound social support services. This can make it difficult for families and individuals to thrive

- 5 **Note** that Ministers have agreed to a suite of changes to meet urgent need in Rotorua. These include:
- 5.1 HUD contracting specific motels to provide emergency accommodation, with an initial focus on the approximately 200 families and whānau with children in EH-SNG motels
 - 5.2 providing better supports through HUD contracting additional wraparound support services to meet the needs of the families in those contracted motels and MSD improving supports available for those remaining in current EH-SNG motel places
 - 5.3 the implementation of a Rotorua Housing Hub to strengthen assessment and placement processes for emergency housing clients and co-locate relevant services
 - 5.4 near-to-medium-term supply solutions

Funding options

- 6 **Agree** to fund the first year’s cost s 9(2)(j) of contracting motels and providing wraparound supports and 24/7 onsite management for around 200 families and whānau with children currently in EH-SNG motels in Rotorua
- 7 **Agree** to fund the first year of operating cost s 9(2)(j) for Te Pokapū, the Rotorua Housing Hub, which will strengthen the assessment and placement processes for emergency housing clients and co-locate relevant services
- 8 **Agree** to fund the capital cost of the fit-out of Te Pokapū s 9(2)(j) and the development of a data system that will support agencies located in the Hub with appropriate placement and assessment information s 9(2)(j)
- 9 **Agree** to fund the first year’s cost s 9(2)(f)(iv), s 9(2)(j)
- 10 **Agree** to establish the following appropriations to give effect to the decisions in recommendation 6 to 8 above:

Vote	Appropriation Minister	Title	Type	Scope
Housing and Urban Development	Minister of Housing	Contracted emergency housing accommodation and services	Non-Departmental Output Expense	This appropriation is limited to contracting with service providers for emergency housing accommodation (including ancillary services such as onsite management) and to supporting clients in contracted emergency

				housing to move into sustainable housing.
Social Development	Minister of Housing	Housing Place-Based Approaches	Non-Departmental Output Expense	This appropriation is limited to the delivery of housing-related services and operational support of collective initiatives utilising a place-based approach.
Social Development	Minister of Housing	Housing Hub capital costs Place-Based Approach	Non-departmental Other Expense	This appropriation is limited to the capital costs for the delivery of a Housing Hub in support of collective initiatives utilising a place-based approach.

EITHER: [Through the redirection of EH-SNG funding and projected Rent Arrears Assistance underspend – recommended option]

- 11 **Note** that EH-SNG expenditure is expected to reduce (as a direct result of the 200 families moving from EH-SNG accommodation to contracted accommodation) by s 9(2)(j) in 2020/21
- 12 **Note** that EH-SNGs are funded under the Vote Social Development Benefits or Related Expenses appropriation: Accommodation Assistance where funding is set at a level intended to meet forecast demand. It is expected that contracting emergency accommodation in Rotorua will free up approximately 75 percent of current EH-SNG supply that would then be available to meet latent demand in the city thereby diminishing any potential permanent reduction in EH-SNG spend
- 13 **Note** that MSD has estimated the potential increase in EH-SNG spend associated with meeting this latent demand at s 9(2)(g)(i) and therefore this approach is not technically fiscally neutral
- 14 **Agree** to reprioritise s 9(2)(j) from the Accommodation Assistance appropriation that would otherwise be spent providing EH-SNGs to the 200 families and whānau in Rotorua to partially fund the costs agreed to in recommendations 6 to 9 above
- 15 **Note** that MSD projects that there will be a \$40-50 million underspend in the Housing Support Assurances MCA category: Recoverable Housing Support Assurances in the 2020/21 financial year
- 16 **Note** that Rent Arrears Assistance is recoverable capital expenditure and is therefore expected to be fiscally neutral over time. Redirecting this underspend will not be fiscally neutral as there is no expectation that the costs incurred in Rotorua will be recoverable and therefore transferring the underspend will impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt
- 17 **Agree** to reallocate s 9(2)(j) of the projected \$40-50 million underspend in the Housing Support Assurances MCA category: Recoverable Housing

Support Assistances from the 2020/21 financial year to fund the balance of costs agreed to in recommendations 6 to 9 above

18 **Note** that the proposal in recommendation 17 above will adversely impact the operating balance and net core Crown debt

19 **Agree** that the fiscal implications under recommendation 18 above are managed outside of budget allowances

20 **Note** that funding this initiative from the reduction in EH-SNG expenditure and the Rent Arrears Assistance underspend is an interim measure only s 9(2)(f) (iv)

21 **Agree** to the following in-principle transfer of up to s 9(2)(j) to give effect to the decision in recommendation 17 above:

Vote Social Development Minister of Housing	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Housing Support Assistances MCA Non-departmental Capital Expenditure: Recoverable Housing Support Assistances	s 9(2)(j)	s 9(2)(j)	-	-	-

22 **Note** that early confirmation of the full amount of the available capital transfer is required to give effect to recommendation 21 above

23 **Agree** a capital transfer of s 9(2)(j) from 2020/21 to 2021/22

24 **Approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decisions in recommendation 23 above, with no impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt across the forecast period:

Vote Social Development Minister of Housing	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Housing Support Assistances MCA Non-departmental Capital Expenditure: Recoverable Housing Support Assistances	-	s 9(2)(j)	-	-	-

- 25 **Agree** to a fiscally neutral capital to operating swap to provide for the decision in recommendation 17 above, with the following impacts on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears
Vote Social Development Minister of Housing					
Operating Balance and Net Core Crown Debt Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Balance Only Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Net Core Crown Debt Only Impact	-	s 9(2)(j)	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Vote Housing and Urban Development Minister of Housing					
Operating Balance and Net Core Crown Debt Impact	-	s 9(2)	-	-	-
Operating Balance Only Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Net Core Crown Debt Only Impact	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-

- 26 **Approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decisions in recommendations 6 to 9, 21, and 23 to 25 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears
Vote Social Development Minister of Housing		s 9(2)(j)			
Benefits or Related Expenses:					
Accommodation Assistance	-		-	-	-
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Housing Support Assistances MCA:					
Non-departmental Capital Expenditure:					
Recoverable Housing Support Assistances	-		-	-	-
Departmental Output Expense:					
Services to Support People to Access Accommodation	-		-	-	-
Non-departmental Output Expense:	-		-	-	-

Housing Place-Based Approaches					
Non-departmental Other Expense:					
Housing HUB capital costs Place-Based Approach	-		-	-	-
Vote Housing and Urban Development Minister of Housing					
Non-departmental Output Expense:					
Contracted emergency housing accommodation and services	-		-	-	-
Total Operating	-		-	-	-
Total Capital	-		-	-	-

27 **Agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations in recommendations 21 and 23 to 26 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply

OR: [Through the **redirection of existing transitional housing funding – the Treasury preferred approach**]

28 **Agree** that the costs agreed to in recommendations 6 to 9 above be funded through the redirection of existing transitional housing funding as an interim measure only

29 **Note** that permanently directing transitional housing away from new supply will impact on the Government’s ability to deliver new transitional housing places, including the 2,000 new places committed to in Budget 2020 by June 2022, which are critical to reducing the ongoing reliance on motels

30 **Note** that funding this initiative from the redirection of existing transitional housing funding is an interim measure only s 9(2)(f)(iv)

31 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

32 **Approve** the following fiscally neutral adjustments to give effect to the decisions in recommendations 6 to 9 and 28 above, with no impact on the operating balance or net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears
Vote Housing and Urban Development Minister of Housing					

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Transitional Housing MCA: Non-departmental Output Expense: Provision of Transitional Housing Places	-	s 9(2)(j)	-	-	-
Non-departmental Output Expense: Transitional Housing Services	-		-	-	-
Non-departmental Output Expense: Contracted emergency housing accommodation and services	-		-	-	-
Vote Social Development Minister of Housing					
Departmental Output Expense: Services to Support People to Access Accommodation (funded by revenue Crown)	-		-	-	-
Non-departmental Output Expense: Housing Place-Based Approaches	-		-	-	-
Non-departmental Other Expense: Housing HUB capital costs Place-Based Approach	-		-	-	-

33 **Agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations in recommendation 32 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply

Next steps

- 34 [Redacted] s 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

37 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted text block]

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Dr Megan Woods
Minister of Housing

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development and Employment

Hon Marama Davidson
Associate Minister of Housing (Homelessness)

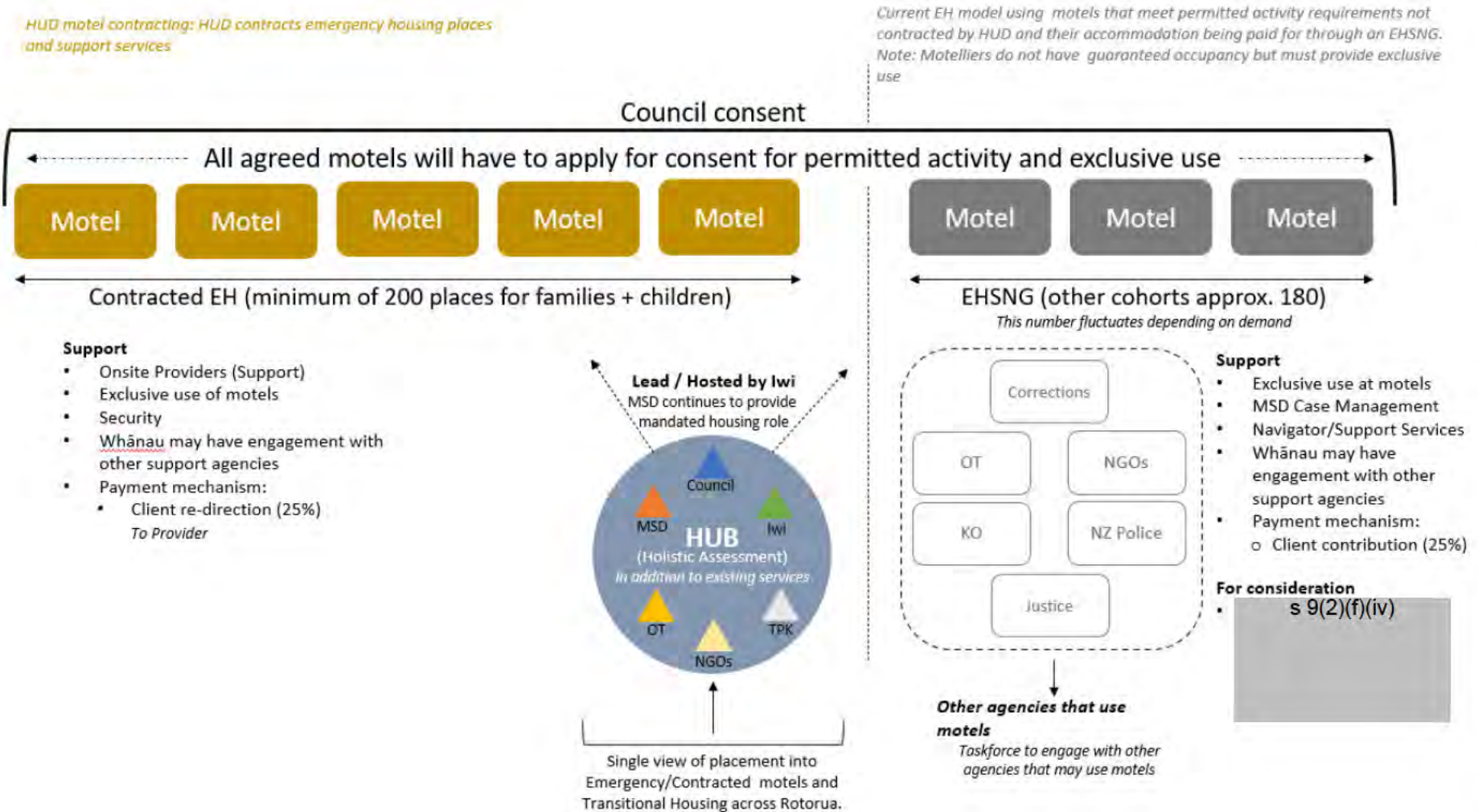
Annex One: Measures to prevent and reduce homelessness

- 1 Significant measures have already been introduced or are underway to reduce homelessness. However, we know it will take time to see the full impact of these. In November 2019, Cabinet agreed to a significant increase in the supply of transitional housing to reduce reliance on motels and the prioritisation of families with children in to the new transitional housing [SWC-19-MIN-0181 refers]. As of February 2021, 1,000 additional transitional housing places have been delivered.
- 2 In December 2019, Cabinet agreed to changes to EH-SNGs to provide greater consistency with other forms of housing support [SWC-19-MIN-0205 refers]. These changes introduced a financial contribution of 25 percent of a client's income towards the cost of emergency housing and enabled MSD to extend the duration of the grant for up to 21 days where the client is engaged with an intensive support service.
- 3 MSD and its partners in the community provide targeted social support to people staying in emergency accommodation longer than seven nights through Intensive Case Managers and contracted Navigators and Support Services. Over 2019/20, the Government allocated \$67.18 million over three years to support a total of 2,943 households in emergency housing at any one time. This included funding through the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan. Given the increase in the number of people in emergency housing, this support is prioritised based on the level of client need.
- 4 The Homelessness Action Plan was launched in February 2020 and is backed by over \$300 million to deliver on the Government's vision that homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring. This includes the focus on stable homes and wellbeing and looking past the short-term approach of providing emergency housing, so that individuals and whānau have space to recover and improve their wellbeing and be part of their community.
- 5 During the initial COVID-19 response, agencies worked collaboratively at-pace with housing providers and Māori organisations to house over 1,000 individuals and whānau in motels across New Zealand, supported by over \$100 million in funding. Providers noted very limited numbers of people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown. To meet increased demand, the number of places in Sustaining Tenancies and Rapid Rehousing was also increased (from 1,451 to 2,150 and 170 to 549 places, respectively). Budget 2020 also provided funding to maintain these places.
- 6 All 18 immediate Action Plan actions are now underway, helping people address issues that put their tenancies at risk and supporting people at points where they are at risk of homelessness, such as leaving the care of government. This included work to expand housing support for young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care; improve transitions from acute mental health and addiction inpatient units; improve discharge planning for people leaving hospital and inpatient units; support women leaving prison; and support returned overseas offenders experiencing homelessness.

- 7 With the support of He Taupua and He Kūkū ki te Kāinga MAIHI implementation funding, our delivery of kaupapa Māori approaches is helping to prevent homelessness, increase housing supply, build capability of Iwi and Māori housing providers, and support Māori experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- 8 A further 18 longer-term actions are to be developed for implementation over 2020-2023, some of which are underway already. For example, new public housing supply is underway through Budget 2020 funding, guided by the Public Housing Plan, and the \$400 million Progressive Home Ownership Fund will help between 1,500 and 4,000 New Zealand families and whānau buy their own homes. The Progressive Home Ownership Fund has a specific aim to address housing affordability issues for three priority groups: Māori, Pacific peoples, and families with children.

Annex Two: Overview of how Rotorua approach will operate

- The figure below provides an overview of how the Rotorua approach will operate on the ground, as well as its governance structure.



IN CONFIDENCE

Annex Three: Stocktake of needs and supports in Rotorua

1 This appendix provides a high-level summary of the needs of key cohorts in emergency housing in Rotorua, as well as the supports available to them. Our understanding of need will grow as case management progresses in Rotorua. There is also scope to adjust contracts with wraparound support providers to account for client needs as they emerge.

Cohort	Need profiles of those in emergency housing in Rotorua Some of these factors drive a need for emergency housing, while others are a result of being in emergency housing	Supports provided through Te Pokapū – the Rotorua Housing Hub	Support provided in Rotorua	Additional supports for those remaining in non-contracted EH-SNG places in Rotorua and nationwide	Wider health and social wellbeing supports in Rotorua
Families and whānau with children (individuals or couples)	For many families and whānau with children, the key issue driving their need for emergency housing is a lack of affordable private rentals. Additional supports for some include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budgeting support • support to overcome challenges of living in a motel, ie maintaining engagement, or re-engaging children, in education • family violence support. 	The Hub will take a holistic, joined-up approach to assessing a wide range of needs for anyone requiring emergency housing in Rotorua. The Hub will be a single point of contact, with referral processes in place, supported by defined roles and responsibilities for agencies and organisations located onsite. Iwi partner, Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake, will host the Hub.	Wraparound support will focus on identifying needs and co-ordinating access to wider social and health supports to respond to specific needs. The level of support will adjust according to the need. <i>Service providers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerge Aotearoa • Lifewise • Visions of a Helping Hand Charitable Trust • WERA Aotearoa Charitable Trust 	A flexible funding package has been introduced through the Homelessness Action Plan to assist whānau with children with the extra stresses and costs of living in emergency housing where other support is not available. It will be used to support the wellbeing and education needs of the children to minimise disruption to their lives and keep them connected with school, early childhood education and other activities.	<i>Iwi and/or kaupapa Māori services</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iwi-based social services delivered through Whānau Ora / Te Puni Kōkiri • Manaaki Ora <i>Oranga Tamariki</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Workers in Schools • Family Start <i>Ministry of Social Development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting services • Employment supports <i>Ministry of Health</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Homes Initiative <i>Lakes DHB</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and Drug services • Community mental health services
Rangatahi	Rangatahi/young people require intensive, tailored and youth-focused support to assist with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive and healthy social and community connections • engaging in education or training • mental health wellbeing • day-to-day life skills (running a home, paying bills, cooking etc) • navigating family relationships. 	As above	As above	MSD is undertaking work to improve the provision of emergency housing. This will benefit all cohorts receiving EH-SNGs through non-contracted motels, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving safety and security • ceasing use of unsuitable motels and moving clients into more suitable accommodation • developing a process for ensuring emergency accommodation is suitable • the potential for a complaints process for emergency housing suppliers • ensuring clients are aware of their obligations when staying in emergency housing. 	
Disabled people	The lack of accessible and affordable rental accommodation, or other barriers such as discrimination, poor employment opportunities and low incomes, can lead to disabled people needing emergency, transitional or public housing. Disabled people are diverse and have a variety of needs, and may require additional social supports depending on the nature of their disability. For example, they may need support to manage daily personal tasks such as cooking and washing, or need communication assistance.	As above	As above		
Individuals with complex needs	Individuals with complex needs may require support with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issues with alcohol and other drugs • mental health • anti-social behaviour. 	As above	MSD will provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular check-in with clients • housing-based case management • proactive visits to clients at motels • Navigators. 		

Annex Five: Mock dashboard to report on progress

s 9(2)(g)(i)



Annex Six: Costing assumptions and breakdowns

- 1 This annex provides costing assumptions and breakdowns for the following components of the model:
 - 1.1 Accommodation costs to house 200 families and whānau with children in Rotorua in contracted motels
 - 1.2 Support service costs for wraparound support services and 24/7 onsite management for 200 families and whānau with children in Rotorua
 - 1.3 Te Pokapū – Rotorua Housing Hub to strengthen assessment and placement processes for emergency housing clients
 - 1.4 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Component	No. of places/motels/ households	Cost per night	Cost per week	Cost per year	\$m				Total
					2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 and outyears	
Accommodation	330 motel units	s 9(2)(j)							
Wraparound supports	200 households with children in contracted motels								
24/7 onsite management at contracted EH-SNG motels	20 contracted motels								

⁹ Providers will be responsible for collecting the client contribution (generally 25 percent of their income). s 9(2)(j)

Component	No. of places/motels/ households	Cost per night	Cost per week	Cost per year	\$m				
					2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 and outyears	Total
Subtotal: Contracted Emergency Housing Model					s 9(2)(j)				
Upfront Payments to Providers	Four providers – technology set up costs plus meth swab testing on units								
Te Pokapū – Rotorua Housing Hub	Staffing: s 9(2)(j)								
	Operating: s 9(2)(j)								
	Capex: - Fitout (one-off) - Data system capex								
	Subtotal: Te Pokapū – Rotorua Housing Hub								
s 9(2)(f)(iv)									
TOTAL COST									

Rotorua emergency housing safety crisis: Retired top cop speaks out over fears for son



By [Kelly Makiha](#)

16 Nov, 2021 11:51 AM ⌚ 7 mins to read

Retired police chief Superintendent Gary Smith says new-found independence has been stripped from his high-needs adult son because of safety issues in Glenholme.

The former Bay of Plenty district commander moved back to Rotorua in 2015 to retire so he and wife Rose could prepare 33-year-old son Carl, who has Down Syndrome, to be more independent.

^
TOP

For the first time three years ago, he was able to move into his own house in Glenholme and could walk each weekday by himself along Fenton St to St Chads, a centre for people with disabilities.

But in the past six weeks, the Smiths have had to stop him walking alone because they fear for his safety.

Smith said he was forced to speak out about the dire situation Glenholme residents faced because he feared the emergency housing arrangements on Fenton St and the surrounding areas were becoming more permanent and the numbers living there were increasing.

He is part of Restore Rotorua, a group of Rotorua residents fighting to stop six more resource consents from being granted without public notification. The consents would allow more permanent emergency housing motels in the central city.

The Smiths chose Glenholme to buy a house for Carl because it was quiet, safe and there were good friends and neighbours nearby who understood their son's condition.

"Now it's a circus. Yelling at all hours late and early, public domestic disputes, cars zooming down quiet residential roads, intentional damage, theft, cars broken into, the works. It's completely overwhelming. It is a ticking time bomb and a disaster waiting to happen."

Smith said his son was friendly and said "hello" to everyone but was cognitively impaired and was likely to react to those living in

TOP

emergency housing when they spilled out on to the street.

"As a parent, we are left fearing for his life and safety. We have had to roll back much of his freedom, and ours, to keep him safe. The independent lifestyle we spent so long building for him has been disrupted. The landscape of Glenholme is now unpredictable and unsafe. There is more violence on the streets."

Smith said his son couldn't walk alone any more, he couldn't catch the bus from the places he used to, and his routine had been completely disrupted.

Smith was critical of Rotorua Lakes Council for allowing emergency housing motels to grow significantly and was critical of the Government for using Rotorua as an "easy target" because it had lots of motels.

"To say that the complaints are few, or frivolous, fails to appreciate what it's like at the coalface. This is our home. This has affected our lives and there is no end in sight.

In his view: "Enough is enough. It is insulting to be told that our issues are just perception ... "

Smith said he believed the council ought to have known bringing a high concentration of people on the opposite side of the social spectrum to the existing residents would cause huge upset and problems.

"What is happening is good for no one. It is not the fault of the homeless, they are placed in conditions where their daily activities

TOP

spill out into, and affect, the neighbours in the area. They deserve more space, they deserve appropriate housing, however, the behaviour of some of them is concerning."

He said their family would be forced to make some hard decisions if something didn't improve dramatically soon.

"If all of us stay silent then it will just get worse. I do not want to have to sell up and leave, but if six more CBD motels are approved by council for emergency housing, what choice will we have?"

"Maybe I'm being naive but I thought the council was here to represent the residents in a balanced and proportionate manner," he said, expressing his view.

Council district development deputy chief executive Jean-Paul Gaston said he was sorry to hear about Smith's concerns and the council would discuss them directly with Smith.

"We recognise and acknowledge the concerns of all residents in Rotorua, we are acutely aware of what is being communicated by those who neighbour emergency housing areas, and we are taking the housing crisis extremely seriously."

He said housing was the council's main priority and no one wanted to see people living in motels but the reality was there was a lack of affordable and available houses.

The council was working with urgency to speed up as many new homes as possible, he said.

TOP

Gaston said there were six consents currently on hold as more questions had been asked of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

He said they were included in the now 13 motels contracted by the ministry to deliver emergency housing services and were already in use.

He said a resource consent process ensured a motel was converted to suited residential living.

In response to concerns about crime, Gaston noted Senior Sergeant Mike Membery said at a recent council operations and monitoring committee meeting "the centralisation of transitional housing had not disproportionately increased the demands on police".

The Rotorua Daily Post had asked the police for data to back up this statement and has made an Official Information Act request for crime data relating to Glenholme and incidences involving those in emergency housing motels.

The safety presentation to the council also outlined plans for more security cameras on Fenton St and those cameras were expected to be live within three months.

The council was also increasing the number of Safe City Guardians from four to 10 to patrol the city including daily patrols of the Fenton St and Glenholme areas.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development housing supply, response and partnerships deputy chief executive Anne Shaw said

TOP

Rotorua was a focus area for its Public Housing Plan because it had a shortage of affordable homes as a result of increasing population, lack of available land and a historically low level of building activity.

"We don't see motels as a long-term answer for housing, but we need to deal with the immediate needs of people who need a roof over their head tonight. At the same time, we are working with a range of stakeholders to increase housing supply in Rotorua."

In May, responding to local need, the Government announced changes to emergency housing.

The changes included developing a one-stop Housing Hub and contracting for wrap-around support services.

Other changes included contracting motels exclusively for use as emergency housing by phasing out the practice of mixed-use motels for tourism and emergency housing.

Shaw said those steps were designed to ensure vulnerable people were fully supported, the motels were well managed and maintained and were operated safely for tenants and the community.

She said for this to happen, it was working with the council to ensure appropriate consents were secured.

16 November 2021

Meeting with Jean Paul Gaston and Rosemary Viskovic

Gary and Rose Smith

goro.smith@xtra.co.nz

Carolyn Hall

carolyne.hall@uil.co.nz

Approach

1. Background outline -Gary and Roses Story – Carolyn's Story
2. Problem
3. Causes from our perspective
4. The impact
5. Questions
6. What can be done and when?
7. What can we do to help?

Background (for Gary and Rose)

In early 2018 we purchased a property at 6A Grey Street Rotorua.

We had been looking for a property in the Glenholme area for several months.

The reason we purchased the property was because our youngest child Carl has Down syndrome and as we are both retired and aging, we wanted to get him living independently. This has been a long-term goal and we wanted to know that he would be able to make his way when we were no longer here or not as able as we are now. What happens to a disabled child as the parents age is something that is a concern to all parents of disabled persons. Achieving independence is challenging, time consuming and requires considerable early support, careful planning and if successful limited support as the transition nears completion.

This property was the perfect location as it was a front unit, close to town and close to St Chads (he attends St Chads daily). We had friends in the area who knew Carl well and a high degree of confidence that Carl would be safe in this area and able to walk into town and to and from St Chads.

Before he moved into the property, we undertook an extensive renovation which basically turned the property into a new house. We also installed security including cameras that can be monitored remotely.

In early 2019 Carl moved into the house. Up until that time he had lived with us in Lynmore and we had taken him to St Chads in the morning and he caught the bus home when St Chads finished for the day.

Carl quickly adapted to independent living and had not spent one night at our home until this last Covid 19 Lockdown.

Whilst he has support to cook his evening meals, he manages everything else (washing, bedmaking, folding washing and keeping his house tidy including lawn mowing).

He has often lived alone at the property (most weekdays) while Gary has always stayed Friday and Saturday nights with him.

Carl has exceeded our expectations and made huge progress personally. This is often commented on by our friends.

Since about the time of the last lock down due to Covid 19 we have become increasingly concerned about safety in the Glenholme area and Carl's safety. These problems were related to the Motels in the Glenholme area that are predominately located on Fenton Street now used for emergency housing.

A stated NZGOVT Policy is Enabling Good Lives for those with disabilities. In short this means those with disabilities can live normal lives in the community and be accepted and supported to do this by the community. What is happening in Glenholme now is in direct conflict with this and will be for many years to come.

Our problem

Carl's ability to live independently has been disrupted as it is no longer safe enough for him to continue to live safely in the Glenholme area.

Causes

- The large concentration and significant recent growth of emergency housing motels in the area
- The unpredictable behaviour of some of these people – affected by drugs, alcohol, mental health issues and anti-social behaviour. Some are gang members.
- The lack of a balanced and timely response from the Council.
- Long term low building rate in Rotorua
- Individuals and families being relocated to Rotorua
- Strategic/focus of RDLC

The impact

1. Carls' freedom of movement in the area is now restricted.
2. Our freedom has been reduced and Gary now must stay with Carl every night and walk with him to and from St Chads.
3. Failure to continue to grow and strengthen Carl's ability to live independently.
4. Depending on the solution we may need to start again somewhere else. This will be a considerable challenge as networks will need to be established again, support persons identified, location of another suitable property and activities that will occupy his day in a meaningful way.
5. Gary and Rose would also need to move and re-establish.
6. Cost of making any change will be considerable financially, emotionally, and socially

Factors that influence the Options

1. Time -Gary and Rose are retired and well into their 60s. The issue is the time that is available to ensure that Carl is living safely, developing his independence and there is a high degree of confidence for Gary and Rose that he can continue to lead a good life safely.
2. Government and Council documents indicate that using and contracting Transitional and Emergency housing Motels in Rotorua will continue for several years. There is no end date set. This means it is not temporary.
3. The establishment of new housing for the homeless in Glenholme/Central City will likely have the same issues which will result in both real incidents and poor perceptions of safety.
4. The need for Carl's independence and its continuing development.
5. The probability of significant improvement in the Glenholme environment over a reasonable timeframe seems very low.
6. The cost and disruption involved in locating and moving to a new location v the longer-term benefit
7. A simple example: Carl is walking to St Chads. There is a heated verbal argument occurring on the footpath which starts as he approaches. This will agitate him. He will mostly probably walk around the incident so he can continue. He may say something as he passes. What do you think will happen next? Highly probable something that won't be good for Carl..... these people are often spontaneous and violent in their response to issues. There is little or no consideration to the consequences of their actions.

Solutions to consider

Action	Assessment	When	Who	Likelihood
Stop using the motels in the Glenholme Area as emergency accommodation and transitional housing	Would resolve the problem.	Immediately	NZ Govt and Council	Very Low
Reduce the number of motels in use by stopping those coming from other locations	Would make the problem more manageable and there would be less immediate and long-term impact	Immediately	Council NZG	Low to medium
Continue as we are with the resulting safety issues and loss of freedom	On the information available this issue will take many years to resolve Rehousing proposals are in the same geographical area so safety problems likely to persist	Ongoing Not sustainable Stop gap measure	Gary and Rose	Low
Bring Carl back to our home to live and transport him daily to and from St Chads	Short term solution only Doesn't meet our independence need but would provide a safe place to live.	Immediately Is in place on weekends	Gary and Rose	Medium
Move to another city/town that can better meet our needs now and into the future	This is significant in terms of change, cost and effort required. Would require careful investigation May be the only realistic option.	Investigate now with a view to making decision as soon as possible. Covid restrictions are hindering this process in terms of access to physically investigate options.	Gary and Rose	Medium to High

What is the truth about the housing situation in Rotorua?

Over time we have been led to believe that there are no or not enough affordable warm dry houses available to meet the needs of Rotorua residents.

A check of trade me property to rent (residential) on the 13 November found that there were 93 properties available for rent. The most expensive was an outlier at \$800 but the majority were significantly cheaper. Remember that the Government Healthy Homes Standard require landlords to meet these requirement (if they don't currently) within 90 days of commencing a new tenancy. So, these houses are or soon will be warm and dry.

Are they affordable?

If the cost of a motel per week is \$1200 then they look like they may be significantly better value.

There are also 69 houses listed for sale in Rotorua that had a listing price under \$550k

Other locations and the number of residential houses for rent: (these are displayed as people from each of these locations have been reported as relocated to Rotorua though a variety of sources)

- **Rotorua 93 for rent and 69 for sale at \$550k or less (source trade me 14/11)**
- Tauranga 122
- Whakatane 2
- Western BOP 24

- Taupo 17
- Napier 40
- Hastings 32
- Palmerston North 78
- Hamilton 526
- Invercargill 101
- Dargaville 0 – just 11 in Northland

Scenario

If there are 280 units taken up by families in Rotorua motels as stated by Mayor Chadwick in October, then the problem could be solved reasonably quickly if this happens:

1. Stop the relocations to Rotorua
2. Re house those in motels to the available rental accommodation in Rotorua – Assume 50 Families from the 93 houses available to rent
3. Buy some of the existing houses that are for sale at the \$500k mark – Assume 40 houses of the 69 currently available/list for sale in the price bracket.
4. Build 200 new houses in the next 12 months – 200 families

As this comes on stream then the problem progressively reduces as do the impacts for the residents of Rotorua, including Glenholme.

This could happen with some good leadership.

So why is the council talking about 3000 new houses over five years being required (Mayor Chadwick) They may not be needed. The obvious rationale is that if more people are relocated to Rotorua as Rotorua has the established facilities in terms of permanent and semi-permanent transitional/emergency motels to house these people. In that scenario the houses will be needed.

Possibilities:

- Rotorua intends to accept more relocated people
- The problem is not properly understood
- Politics

A different approach required.

A closer look at what we have been led/conditioned to believe over the last few years when looked at more closely doesn't on the surface of it appear to "stack up".

The people of Rotorua expect the Council to provide leadership in our community. Leadership has many definitions and traits, but in the current situation it could simply be described as "doing what's right" for the citizens of Rotorua. This requires some careful consideration including understanding the consequences of "doing what's right" and balancing competing interests.

Quite simply it looks like the Council may have got this wrong.

Good leadership knows how to respond when things don't work out as the initially intended. This could be described as "doing the right thing."

There are many more stories like ours. There is not much value in airing these publicly.

The opportunity in this is for the Council to show some leadership – to have a rethink.

Our opportunity if invited may be to use our experiences to help.

Discussion

1. About 50% of the Motels in the Bay of Plenty that are being used or emergency or transitional housing are in Rotorua. That is around 45 motels. Why is this disproportionate?
2. A publicly available cabinet paper states that of those using emergency and transitional housing 50% have alcohol/drug dependency, mental health issues and social problems.
 - a. What will the impact short/mid and long term be for Rotorua if more people with these issues are relocated to Rotorua
 - b. How will this be managed?
 - c. What additional resources will be required?

3. Public commentary over time has shifted from those using this accommodation are all from Rotorua then when repeatedly challenged to mostly from Rotorua then to from the Bay of Plenty. It is clear that:
 - a. It acknowledged through these changing statements over time, that some people using the Motels are from locations other than Rotorua and
 - b. That the authorities are not keen to share the details of this
 - c. How many motels are being used to house families?
 - d. How many of these families/individuals have been relocated to Rotorua?
 - e. What are the reasons for relocation to Rotorua?
4. The granting of resource consents to these motels will effectively make them either permanent or semi-permanent. This then creates a facility based in Rotorua that can be used for the Bay of Plenty and the rest of NZ. There is plenty to suggest this is already happening. This will bring more people to Rotorua who have “high needs”
5. It is well known that those who have the issues mentioned above “transfer” these behaviours to their children or to new relationships. This group tend to have more children and more relationships. The net effect is a lot more persons who will require service and support over time.
6. A significant number of rental and affordably priced houses are available now. What is being done to place those families from Motels into these houses? Is this being done at pace?
7. Will the Council set an end date for the use of Motels for emergency/transitional housing in Rotorua?
8. Will the council work with its partners to stop people being relocated to Rotorua?
9. How does the council intend to rebuild the Glenholme Community?
10. How does the Council intend to beautify (restore/tidy) Fenton Street given that it is an important Gateway to the City?
11. Is there anything we can do to help?

Appendix 8

Karen Wilson

From: Jean-Paul Gaston <Jean-Paul.Gaston@rotorualc.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 17 November 2021 7:46 AM
To: goro.smith@xtra.co.nz; Carolyne Hall
Cc: Rosemary Viskovic
Subject: meeting

Morning

Thank you for the opportunity to meet yesterday and discuss some of the challenges and personal impacts you are experiencing as a result of EH on Fenton St.

I have your document to read today.

Thanks also for the fresh baking.

Regards,

jp

Jean-Paul Gaston *Manahautū Rautaki* | Deputy Chief Executive, District Development

Waea pūkoro: [0276554415](tel:0276554415)

Īmera: Jean-Paul.Gaston@rotorualc.nz | Ipurangi: rotorualakescouncil.nz

Taunga: 1061 Haupapa St, Private Bag 3029, Rotorua Mail Centre, Rotorua 3046, New Zealand

ROTORUA
LAKES COUNCIL



25 August 2022

IR-01-22-19579

Gary Smith
goro.smith@xtra.co.nz

Dear Gary

Request for information

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 28 June 2022 in which you asked for information regarding emergency housing.

My response to each of your questions can be found below.

I am requesting a report called Rotorua/CBD/Fenton Street Demand dated June 22

Please find the report attached.

I have also become aware that Police are supplying details of family violence management plans (in terms of numbers) to the Rotorua Lakes Council which provides some insight on the number of persons/families coming into Rotorua Emergency/Transitional Housing from outside the area.. I would also like to request a copy of this information under the official information act...

To be able to answer this part of your request triple sets of data and large volumes of email correspondence would need to be worked through manually. Therefore, this part of your request is refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the OIA, in that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with Police's response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Ngā mihi

Kerryn Fulford
Central Region Information Request Team
Service Delivery
E IR.Central@police.govt.nz

To: ALLAN, Natalie (Nat) <Natalie.Allan@police.govt.nz>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] official information request - Rotorua/CBD/Fenton Street Demand Report dated June 2022

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings Natalie

I wonder if you could forward this to whoever is in the D Commanders chair at the moment.

I have not had any acknowledgement or response to this request (now a week old) so am wondering if it is necessary to have it actioned at PNHQ or whether this is in fact a matter that the district can action. It is the Districts analysis that I am after.

I have also become aware that Police are supplying details of family violence management plans (in terms of numbers) to the Rotorua Lakes Council which provides some insight on the number of persons/families coming into Rotorua Emergency/Transitional Housing from outside the area.. I would also like to request a copy of this information under the official information act.

Thanks

Gary

0277559002

From: goro.smith@xtra.co.nz <goro.smith@xtra.co.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, 28 June 2022 4:32 PM

To: 'jeremy.wood@police.govt.nz' <jeremy.wood@police.govt.nz>

Subject: official information request - Rotorua/CBD/Fenton Street Demand Report dated June 2022

Hello Jeremy

My name is Gary Smith. I am a former member of Police. I am currently preparing a submission in response to several resource consents lodged by MUHD. These consents seek to allow the use of motels for Contracted Emergency Housing for a period of up to five years. The applications for resource consents are being heard by independent commissioners.

I am aware that there have been many incidents, victimisations and calls for service in the Fenton Street and CBD since much of the motel accommodation in the area became emergency housing.

I am seeking this information in support of my intended submission as I have been adversely affected by the use of motels in Rotorua for emergency housing.

I am aware that Rotorua Police have analysed the demand on their resources in the areas that these motels are located. This analysis is documented in a report called Rotorua/CBD/Fenton Street Demand dated June 22

I am informed that I should direct my request directly to you for this information. I am requesting a copy of the report under the Provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

I can be contacted on 0277559002 if you would like to discuss this request or seek clarification.

I would appreciate acknowledgement of this request and a timeframe for the release of this information.

Kind regards
Gary Smith



NEW ZEALAND
POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

Intelligence Report

Rotorua CBD / Fenton
Street Demand

08/06/2022

Released by New Zealand Police to Gary Smith in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 and Privacy Act 2010.

Introduction

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to visually display Police demand in the Rotorua CBD and Fenton Street area. This request was received from the Rotorua Area Commander and Area Prevention Manager.

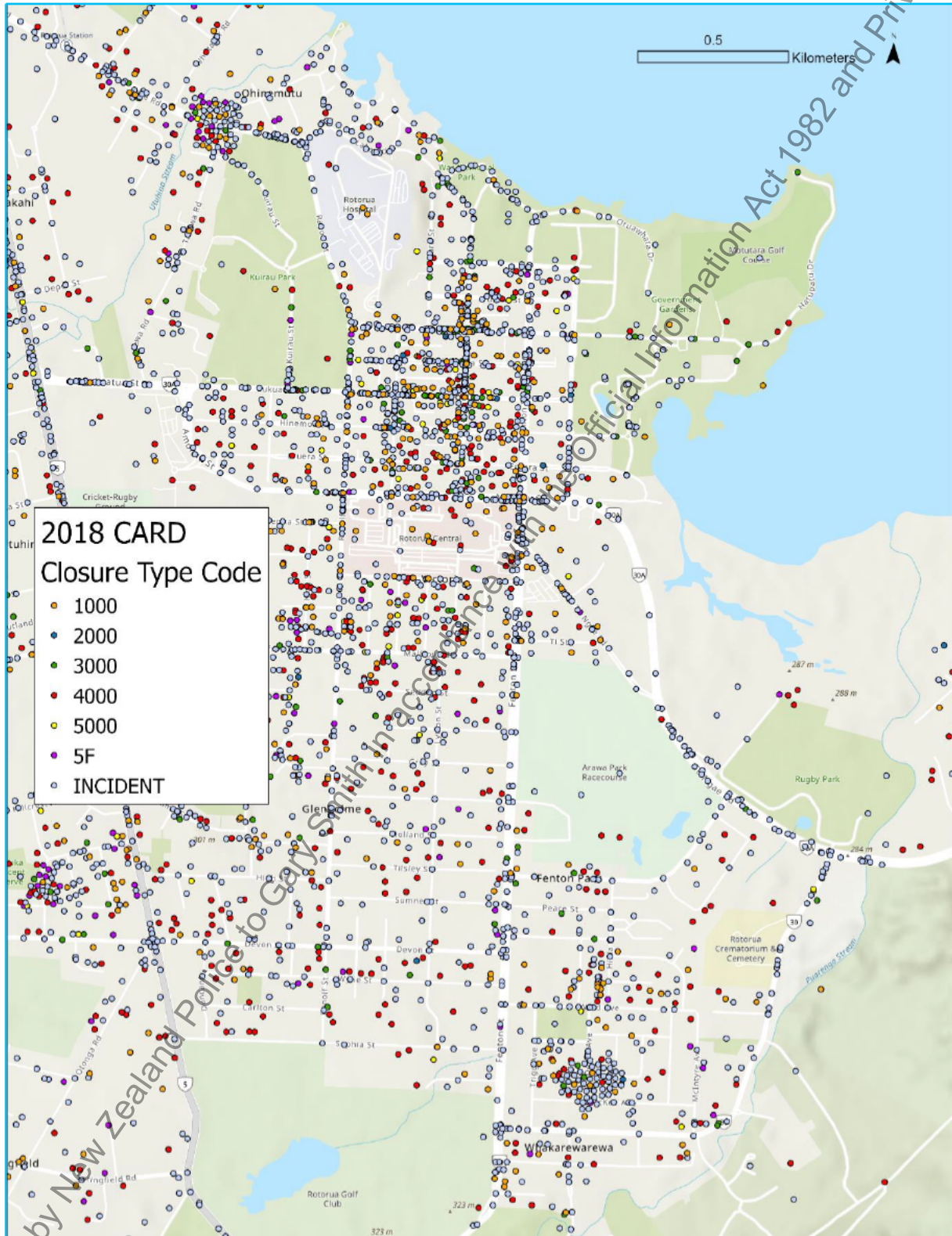
Definitions

2. The Communications and Resource Deployment (CARD) database contains information about Police resources and workload: current, pending, and historical information about events and units. This is the first location information is entered after a call has been received.
3. The National Intelligence Application (NIA) is the Police national intelligence database. In this report it has been used to retrieve details of occurrences and offences committed.
4. Incidents are situations reported to, and attended by, Police where no offence has yet been detected.
5. An Offence is any breach of New Zealand law recorded by Police. This includes offences specified in the Crimes Act 1961 and other legislation, such as the Summary Offences Act 1981, Local Government Act 2002 etc.
6. Occurrence is an event that can have multiple offences against the law or may have none.

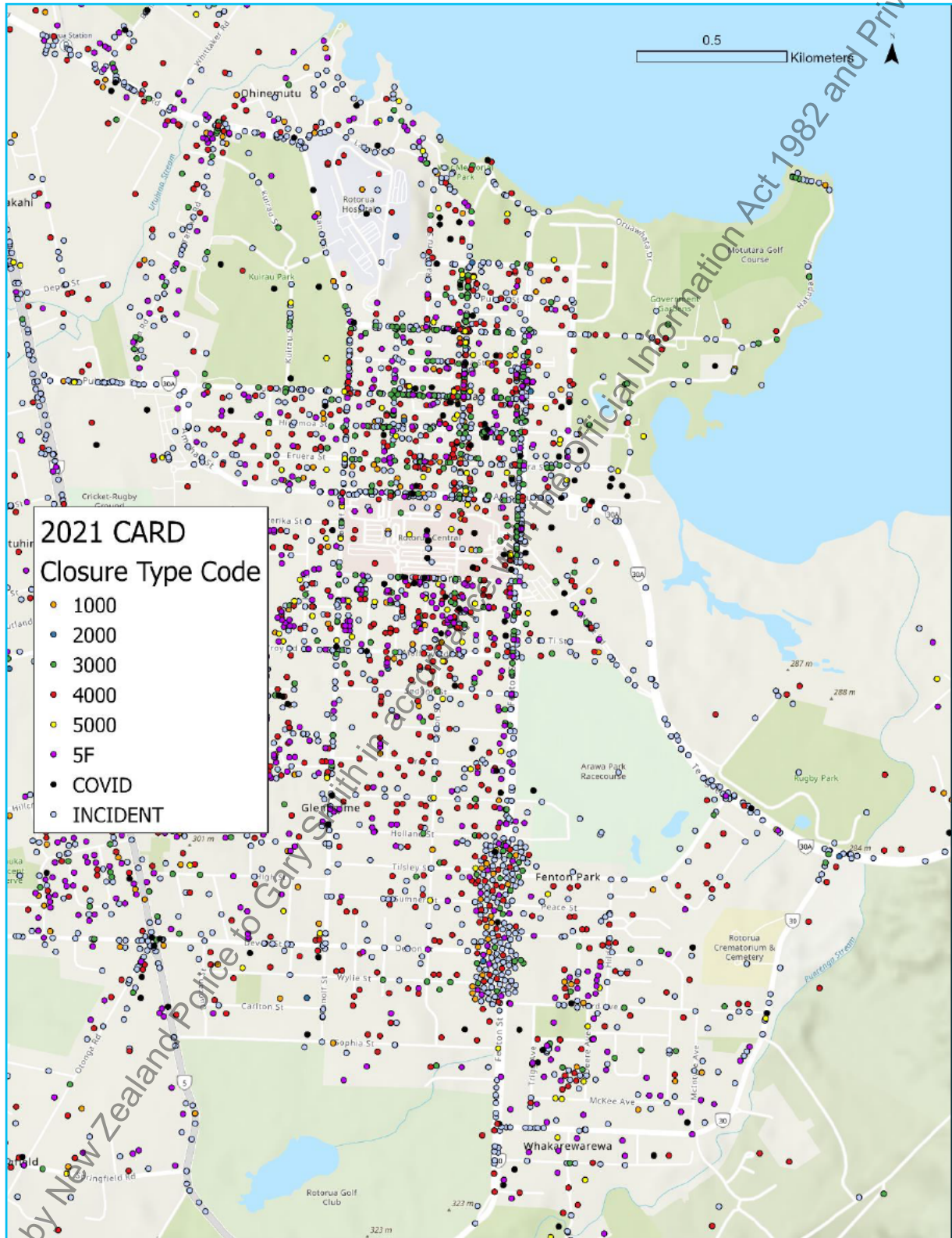
Methodology

7. Information for the report was extracted from the Business Objects using the CARD and BI NIA Occurrences universe. Data from 2018 includes calls for service between the 1st of January and 31st of December. The 2021 data is from the 1st of January to the 31st of December.
8. All CARD data uses the closure type code and excludes any duplicate calls for service. Incidents include all one series incident codes (1A, 1B, 1C etc) as well as codes from the 6,7 and 8 series. Please note the 5F code was introduced halfway through 2018, having previously been recorded as a 1D which is included in the general incident data. 6000 and 7000 series codes have been excluded from the map. The locations of each data point on the map are not exact and have been moved slightly to prevent any overlap. See Appendix for a full list of included codes.
9. All proactive, Police generated tasks have been excluded from CARD data. This includes all 2, 3, 4 and 5 series incident codes apart from 5F (Family Harm episode).

2018 CARD Data



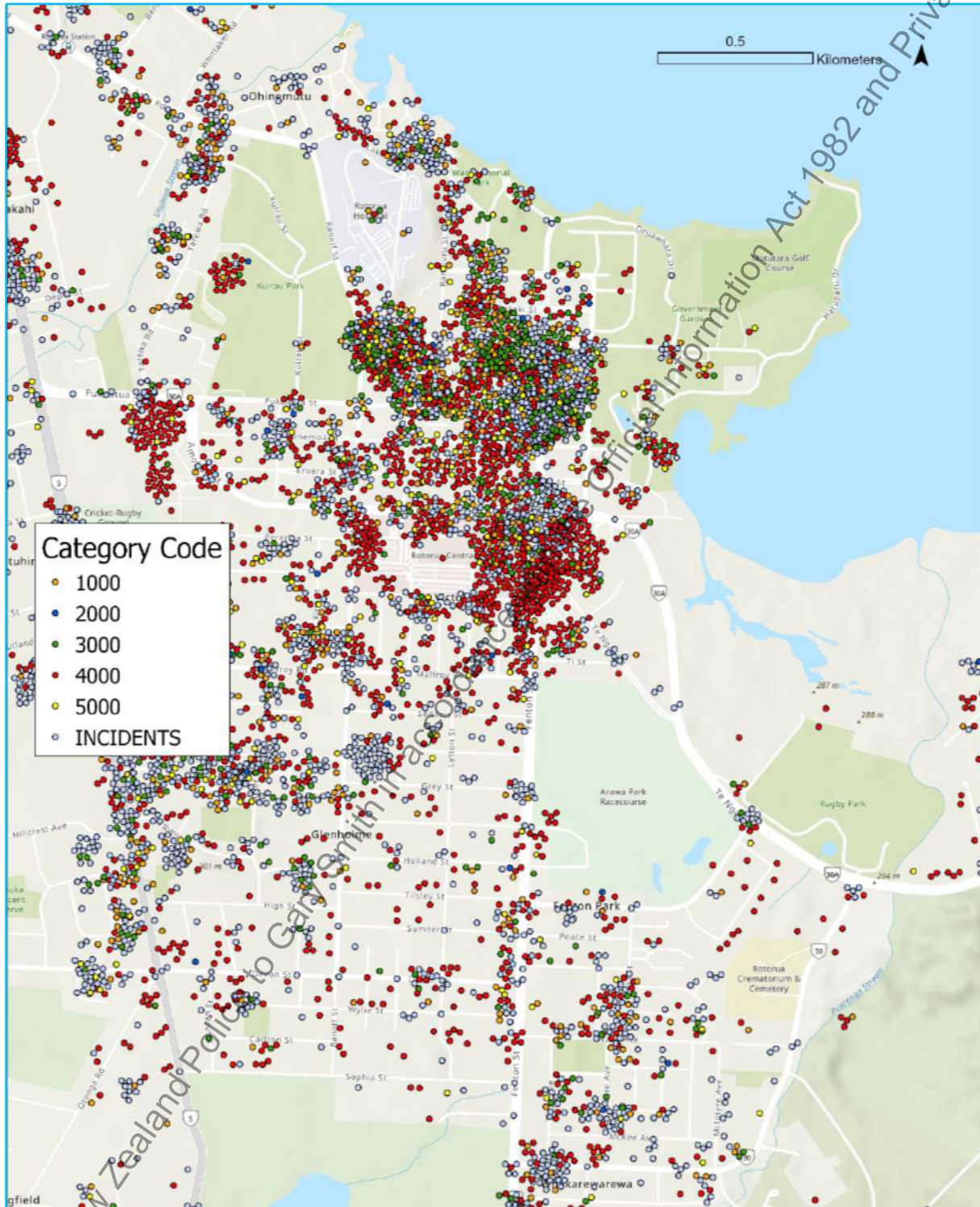
2021 CARD Data



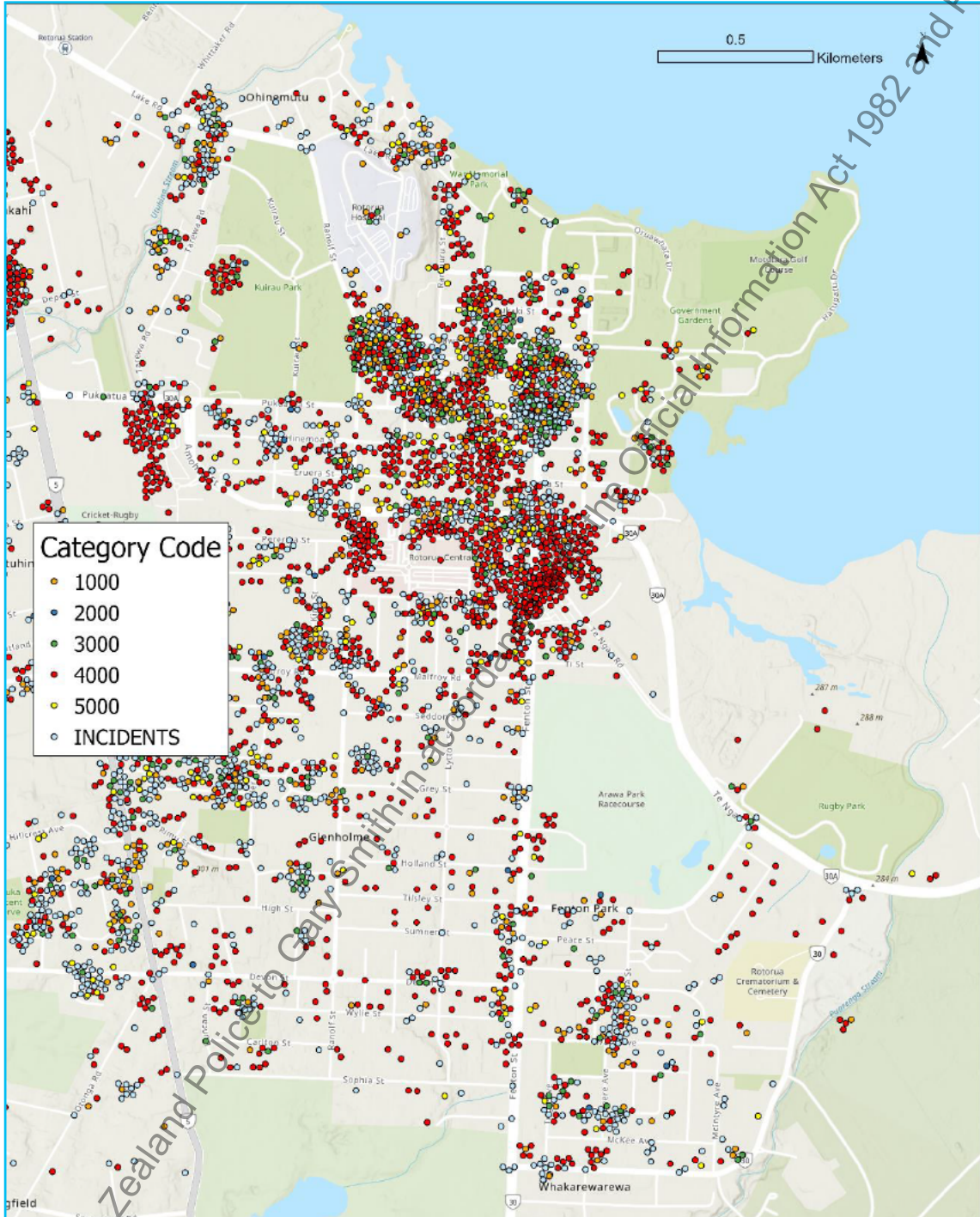
Analysis – CARD Data

10. Overall, there has been an increase in calls for service from 2018 and 2021.
11. In 2021, there is a noticeable cluster on Fenton Street between Wylie Street and Holland Street, which was not as significant in 2018. Most of the calls for service in this area are for incidents, however there is a significant amount of family harm, assaults, drugs, and dishonesty offending in the area.
12. There is a similar volume of calls for service in the CBD in 2018 and 2021, however the type of offending has changed. In 2021 there is significantly more drug and disorder related offending compared to 2018, which was mainly incidents.
13. In 2018 there was a significant cluster of offending in Fenton Park that mainly included incidents, however there were also some assaults and sexual offending.
14. The number of calls for service in the Victoria / Glenholme area near the Rotorua Central shopping area has also increased. Even though there appears to be a significant increase in the number of family harm offences in 2021, the majority of incidents in 2018 in this area were domestic disputes.

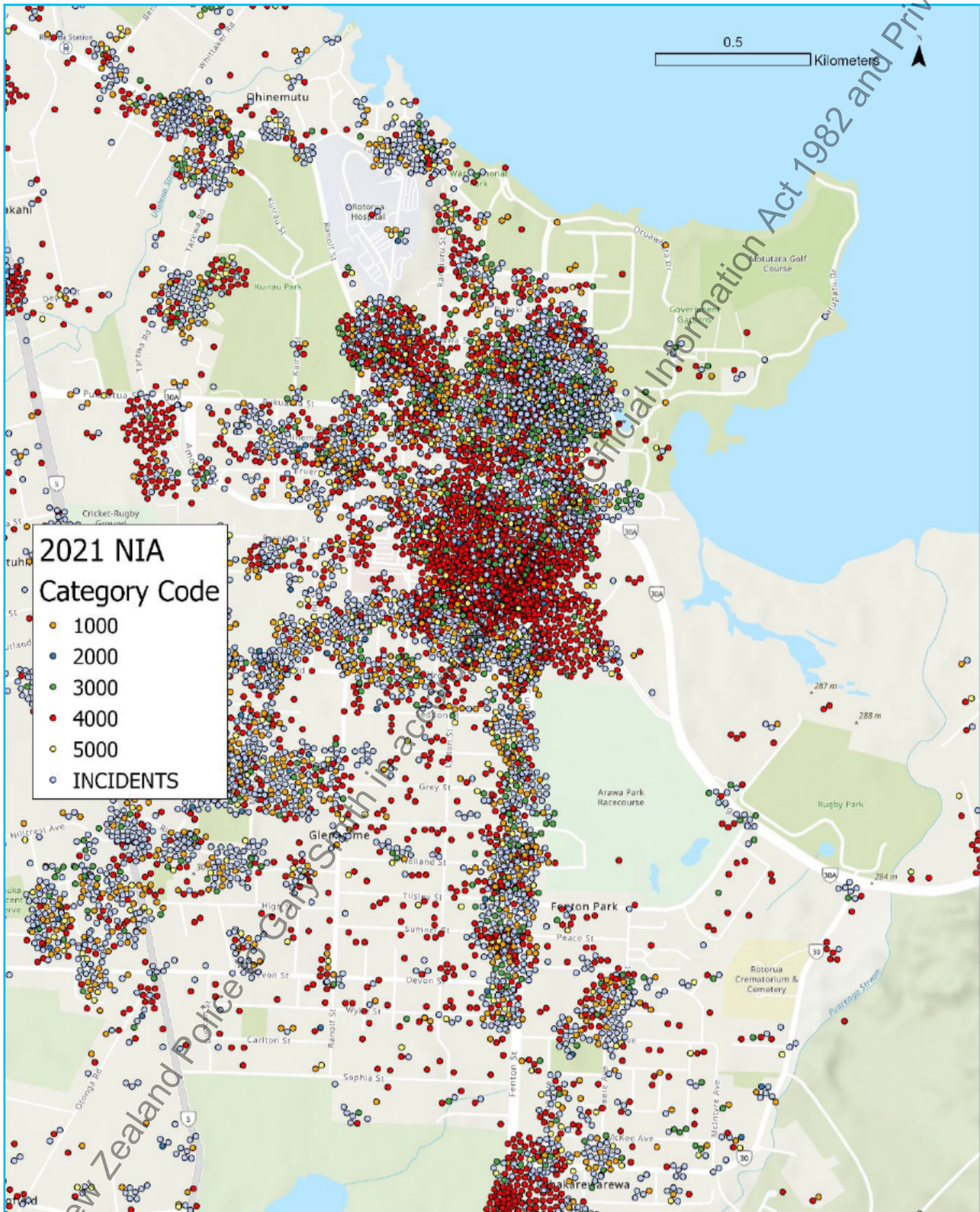
2018 NIA Offence & Incidents



2018 NIA Offences & Incidents – Excluding Officer Discovered

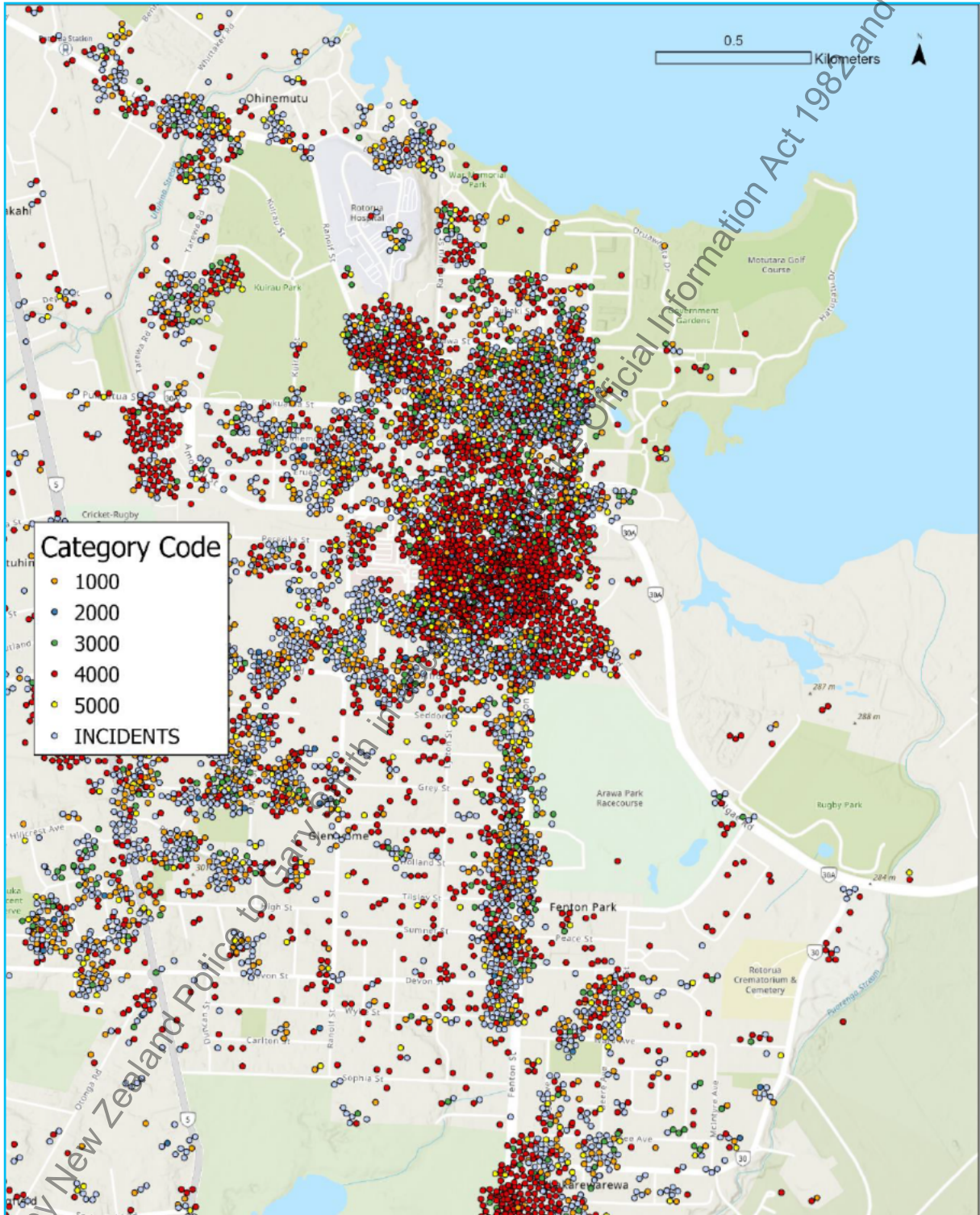


2021 NIA Offence & Incidents



Released by New Zealand Police

2021 NIA Offences & Incidents – Excluding Officer Discovered



Analysis – Offences

15. Overall, the number of offences has increased from 2018 and 2021. There is also a significant increase in the number of incidents.
16. In 2018, the majority of offending was isolated to a few clusters around the CBD. In 2021, the offending has spread out, with the whole of Fenton Street and the CBD seeing a significant number of offences.
17. The cluster around the Rotorua Central Police station is mainly offences / incidents that do not have a specific address and therefore have been recorded as the Police station.
18. The number of assaults and drug related offending in the southern half of Fenton Street has increased significantly compared with 2018.
19. Occurrences where the reporting channel is recorded as officer discovered occurrences account for a smaller proportion of overall demand in 2021 compared with 2018. The other primary reporting channels are phone, 105 online, email and front counter.

Appendix

Included Police Incident Codes

1A Alarm Sounding	1I Blockage/Breakdown on Highway	1R Breach of the Peace
1B Bomb Threat	1J Juvenile Complaint	1S Sudden Death
1C Car/Person Acting Suspiciously	1K Drunk Custody/Detox Centre	1T Truancy
1D Domestic Dispute	1L Land Rescue	1U Traffic Incident
1E Emergency/Disaster/Spill	1M Mental	1V Vehicle Collision
1F Assist Fire/Ambulance	1N Noise Control	1W Water/Sea Rescue/Emergency
1G Solvent Abuse	1P Premises Insecure	1X Attempted Suicide
1H Drunk Home	1Q Breach Graduated Drivers Licence	1Z Other Incident
5F Family Harm	6A Police Conduct Allegation	6C Child Protection Report
6D Bail Breach	6F Forbidden to Drive	6I Illegal Street and Drag Racing
6J Immigration Custody – Refused Entry	6K Immigration Custody – Removal Order	6L Immigration Custody – Refugee Claimant
6S Police Safety Order Breach	6Y Young Person Unaccompanied	8P* All COVID-19 Incidents

Included Police Offence Codes

1000 Violence	3000 Drugs & Anti-Social Offences	5000 Property Damage & New Drugs
2000 Sexual Offences	4000 Dishonesty	

~~In Confidence~~

This document is classified [REDACTED]. All In Confidence reporting and information (including data) should be dated and clearly identify the originating Government agency.

Handling Instructions

Method	Rules
Electronic transmission	IN CONFIDENCE data can be transmitted across external or public networks but the level of information contained should be assessed before using clear text. Username / Password access control and/or encryption may be advisable (with the aim of maintaining confidence in public agencies).
Manual transmission	May be carried by ordinary postal service or commercial courier firms as well as mail delivery staff in a single closed envelope. The envelope must clearly show a return address in case delivery is unsuccessful. In some cases involving privacy concerns, identifying the originating department may be inappropriate and a return PO Box alone should be used.
Storage and disposal	IN CONFIDENCE information can be secured using the normal building security and door-swipe card systems that aim to keep the public out of administrative areas of government departments. Must be disposed of by departmental arrangements.

Probabilistic Language

Probability Statement	Qualitative Statement	Percentage Probability
ALMOST CERTAIN	The event will occur in most circumstances	>95%
LIKELY	The event will probably occur in most circumstances	>65%
POSSIBLE	The event might occur some of the time	>35%
UNLIKELY	The event could occur in some circumstances	<35%
RARE	The event has remote chance of occurring	<5%

Disclaimer

The interpretations and conclusions drawn in this report are made on the balance of probability on information available at the time of preparation. The information contained herein is not evidence and is intended to provide a basis for further investigation only.

Document Production

	Originator	Reviewed by	Released by
Name	ECJ274	MMCL53	MMCL53
Role	Intelligence Analyst	Intelligence Supervisor	Intelligence Supervisor
Extension	75742	75667	75667
Date	08/06/2022	08/06/2022	08/06/2022

Distribution List

For Action

Rotorua Area Commander
Rotorua Area Prevention Manager

For Information

ROTORUA DAILY POST

Family harm in emergency housing: Motels a 'toxic environment', says councillor



By Felix Desmarais

9 May, 2022 04:47 PM ⌚ 8 mins to read

F.V.



One-third of the 120 family harm calls a week in Rotorua are to emergency housing motels, the council says.

The comments were made by Rotorua Lakes Council community wellbeing deputy chief executive Anaru Pewhairangi at an Operations and Monitoring Committee meeting last week.

A family harm advocate says emergency accommodation is an "incredibly unsafe" place for anyone, especially children.

Social Development Minister Carmel Sepuloni says the need for emergency accommodation is not ideal but is better than people sleeping rough in tents or cars.

In the meeting, Pewhairangi, who was the Rotorua police area commander from 2017 to 2019, said in 2018 police would receive about 70 calls for family harm incidents in Rotorua each week.

"Currently there are upwards of 120 family harm incidents per week."

He said it could be a good sign of increased reporting of family harm, as opposed to an increase in incidents.

"However, one-third of the family harm that's occurring here have come from our [emergency housing motels]."

He said there were "between five and 10" families coming into Rotorua each week with family harm safety plans.

"Those are people who have high-risk, complex needs, coming into our place who, from my police colleagues, do not have any association to Rotorua."

Pewhairangi said known gang members also resided in the motels, including mixed-use motels, which were shared with tourists.

Housing Minister Megan Woods announced the Government would end the practice of "mixed-use" motels in May 2021.

In the same announcement, Woods said the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development would also take responsibility for contracting motels for emergency accommodation.

In Thursday's committee meeting, Pewhairangi said contracted and managed sites had "minimal issues".

He said unmanaged sites appeared to have "the most issues".

"That would be confirmed by our police colleagues as well."

Referencing his source as data aggregator Dot Loves Data, he said 86 per cent of crime occurred in high-deprivation areas and 61 per cent of people in Rotorua lived in high deprivation.

He said the council's safe city guardians and security camera monitoring had "anecdotally" observed the impact of alcohol, anti-social behaviour and the visibility of gangs.

The council was sharing information with the police but Pewhairangi said it was "very clear" Rotorua police were "under extreme pressure" and both the police and the council had experienced an increase in calls for service, he said.

He said the most notable increase had been in issues on Fenton St, and that had not been the case in 2018 when he was area commander.

"Something's changed here."

Pewhairangi said a visit from Police Minister Poto Williams – who is also the Associate Housing (Public Housing) Minister – to Rotorua at the end of April had been "encouraging" and he had expressed the need for an "action plan moving forward" from the Government on emergency accommodation and community safety.

In the meeting, councillor Merepeka Raukawa-Tait said the safety issue was not just for the wider community but also those living in emergency accommodation.

She said it was usually – but not always – the wider community that complained about the issues at the motels, but it was important to remember some were living "day by day" in "quite a toxic environment".

Deputy mayor Dave Donaldson said the family harm callouts to emergency housing motels and other statistics "thoroughly endorses" the council's "regulatory approach".

On April 28 the council revealed it had written letters to nine motels in April to discuss compliance with the Building Act, Resource Management Act and Rotorua District Plan.

It means motels will need to let the council know if they will continue as emergency housing providers or return to hosting visitors. If they remain as emergency housing providers, they will need to comply under those laws and policies, or face court action.

Outside the meeting, Rotorua family lawyer and Waiariki Women's Refuge chairwoman Mihi James said the figure of one-third

"definitely" sounded correct based on her experience.

She said many people who left family harm situations had no choice but to go into emergency housing to escape.

"They're forced to go into a place that's actually more unsafe."

She said she had clients who said they would "rather go home and be beaten up every day" because at home they knew their perpetrator.

"It's better the devil you know.

"Emergency housing is a great risk to anyone staying in there."

She believed there needed to be emergency accommodation – with appropriate screening in place - provided specifically for people trying to escape family violence.

James said tenants in emergency housing often had serious mental health, drug and alcohol abuse problems.

"It's incredibly unsafe, especially for children."

Social Development Minister Carmel Sepuloni said the ministry provided wrap-around support to families in emergency housing and had family violence co-ordinators that sat at police-led family violence hui.

She said if family harm incidents happened she expected appropriate services to intervene and provide support.

She said moteliery supplying emergency housing were free to decide who they let into units.

"We value the assistance they provide to households in the region who are in need."

She said the ministry had advised her the majority of Rotorua motels were "not generally mixed-use", but some motels chose to accept both.

"Ideally, no one in Rotorua would be in housing distress or require emergency accommodation in motels, but successive Governments have not increased the supply of housing. While we are making good strides in this area it will still take time to build the number of houses Rotorua needs."

She said in the meantime, the Government's priority was to help those who needed emergency housing while longer-term housing options were explored.

"We understand that motels are not ideal, but it is important that people in housing distress are not left to sleep rough in tents or in cars.

"We are committed to ending the need for emergency housing by building more houses."

In Thursday's meeting a Ministry of Social Development report provided to elected members revealed about a third of those staying in emergency accommodation were from out of the district.

Sixty-nine per cent of clients were from Rotorua, while 19 per cent were from surrounding areas such as Kawerau, Taupō and Tauranga. Twelve per cent were from further afield.

Between July 2019 and June 2021, taxpayers paid \$24.7 million to 15 Rotorua motels providing emergency accommodation, according to data from the Ministry of Social Development.

Housing Minister Megan Woods and Waiariki MP Rawiri Waititi were approached for comment.

POLICE RESPOND

Police responded to a request for comment on this story on May 10.

Police acting Rotorua area commander inspector Ewan Dunsmuir said it was true that "at time" Rotorua police had seen up to 30 per cent of family harm call-outs at motels.

"It is usually however less than this, and is variable week to week.

"It's important to note, too, that people are living in close proximity in these locations, and it is highly likely this leads to an increase in reporting of incidents, as any disturbance will be more noticeable than, say, between stand-alone houses on a residential street."

He said the police commended people who reported incidents.

"[The] police agrees with Mr Pewhairangi's comments that an increase in reporting of family harm incidents is a positive thing, as it helps us build an understanding of the nature of the incidents occurring and allows us to put safety plans in place for anyone who may be at risk."

He urged anyone who had concerns for safety of themselves or others to call the police immediately on 111.

Local Democracy Reporting is public interest journalism funded by NZ On Air

Where to get help

If you're in danger NOW:

- Phone the police on 111 or ask neighbours or friends to ring for you
- Run outside and head for where there are other people
- Scream for help so your neighbours can hear you
- Take the children with you
- Don't stop to get anything else
- If you are being abused, remember it's not your fault. Violence is never okay.

Where to go for help or more information:

- Women's Refuge: Free national crisis line operates 24/7 - 0800 REFUGE or 0800 733 843 www.womensrefuge.org.nz
- Shine, free national helpline 9am- 11pm every day - 0508 744 633 www.2shine.org.nz

- It's Not Ok: Information line 0800 456 450 www.areyouok.org.nz
- Shakti: Providing specialist cultural services for African, Asian and Middle Eastern women and their children. Crisis line 24/7 0800 742 584
- Ministry of Justice: www.justice.govt.nz/family-justice/domestic-violence
- National Network of Stopping Violence: www.nnsvs.org.nz
- White Ribbon: Aiming to eliminate men's violence towards women, focusing this year on sexual violence and the issue of consent.
www.whiteribbon.org.nz