

**Before Independent Hearings Commissioners Rotorua Lakes
Council**

**In the matter of 13 applications for resource consent for
contracted emergency housing by Te Tūāpapa
Kura Kāinga Ministry of Housing and Urban Development**

Statement of evidence by Toli Maka

11 October 2022



Counsel

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Statement of evidence by Toli Maka

1 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Toli Maka.
- 1.2 I am the Housing Manager – Wera Aotearoa Charitable Trust (WACT)
- 1.3 This statement is in support of the applications for resource consent sought for Contracted Emergency Housing sites.

2 Background

- 2.1 My undergraduate studies align to Social Work, followed by postgraduate majoring in Health Science. Working in the social sector for the past 20years I have aided a wide spectrum of whānau needs within Aotearoa. For the past six years my focus has been tailored to housing specific, scaling from Whangarei to Invercargill. Rotorua is unique, being the first region to implement a collective approach (Te Hau ki te Kāinga) in the hope to combat the social injustice whānau experience when trying to source long term sustainable housing.

3 Wera Aotearoa Charitable Trust

- 3.1 Wera Aotearoa Charitable Trust is a Māori based organisation that support whānau with housing, employment, reintegration, and youth services. With whānau being at the centre of everything we deliver, our services include Hauora – where health and wellbeing is valued; Ākoranga – education and effective communication - walking and learning together. A sense of Rangatiratanga is implemented throughout each whānau journey. Together weaving the realisation of potential. Navigators support whānau and tamariki, utilising “Ngā Pou e Rima” Māori framework to identify needs and mitigate gaps which have contributed to their current situation. Whānau gain solid, strong, and self-supporting tools for their “kete” – to support a shift into long term, sustainable housing.

4 Referral Process

4.1 Referral received

- Coordination receive referral based on vacancy notification to Te Pokapu or MSD (via share file)
- Placement team then notify social service team to arrange initial discussion with the whanau, other provider or triage team based at Te Pokapu.

We consider/factor in the following when allocating rooms to whanau

(In no particular order)

- Bedding configuration
- Accessibility requirements if any
 - o Room & area motel is located
- The age of tamariki -
 - o Rotovegas – majority of tamariki are aged between 10 & 15 years old
 - o Apollo – majority of tamariki are aged between 0 & 12 years old
 - o Majority of the whanau at Ascot are employed full or part-time
- With regard to the suitability of play spaces at each of the 3 sites, we are not able in all cases to accommodate all needs because of availability constraints. For example, a whanau with young children may need to be put in a unit with little play space and they come up with other ways to ensure the tamariki are occupied
- The location of Kura/preschool that tamariki may already attend
 - o If tamariki will soon need to start attending a preschool serviceApollo & Rotovegas have neighbouring early learning centres who hold vacancies for our service
- Gang affiliations
- Best fit regarding the Navigator that will provide the wrap around support
- An awareness of current trends within incident reporting for each site to potentially reduce any known triggers or re-victimisation
- Neighbouring whanau
 - o Complexities and/or suitability
 - o Court orders and/or bail conditions

We gain most of this awareness through the risk assessment during the initial hui process with whanau.

5 Cultural Effects

5.1 Cultural impact of CEH on the neighbouring Whakarewarewa Village (Tuhourangi Iwi)

- Whakarewarewa Village members are invited to, and have attended, the regular Apollo Hotel Village hui,
- Wera have had several visits, including tours, to Whakarewarewa to educate whanau on the dangers, risks, safety and kua (Rules including respect) in play at Whakarewarewa. This is a regular training programme provided by Wera and other Apollo Hotel Villagers,
- The Apollo Hotel have posters promoting Whakarewarewa Village, its mana, history and kua,
- Whakarewarewa villagers have attended Barbeques at the Apollo Hotel village,
- The Lead Support worker (Wera) whakapapa's to Tuhourangi, and was raised in Whakarewarewa village,
- Wera's assessment process includes identifying affiliation to Tuhourangi Iwi and places priority on whanau that do. There are 10% of Apollo Hotel whanau that affiliate to Tuhourangi. Te Arawa and neighbouring Iwi are also given priority for entry,
- Wera staff and whanau are proud to support the Whakarewarewa village café,
- Apollo Hotel villagers are regularly invited to participate in Whakarewarewa village's concert group, providing employment opportunities for those that are willing and capable,
- Wera maintains a risk register that has clearly demonstrated a significant reduction in the number of incidents around the Whakarewarewa Village. There were 2 whanau that had caused issues in the past, but they have moved out, and there have been no recorded incidents since then.

6 Afterhours Support

6.1 WACTs after hours support service operates from 5pm Fridays and concludes at 8:30am Mondays and extends to cover public holidays as and when required. The service provides the 24/7 on site security team with either phone or on-site support accessed by a dedicated telephone number. With reference to the amount of incident reports received outside of weekends and public holidays, and the severity of those reported incidents throughout this time (5pm weekdays to 8:30am the following weekday), current evidence supports the use of the current - observe, deescalate and report function the 24/7 on site security service provides as an appropriate. The evidence is consistently monitored through service coordination with the support provided to on site security adjusted in response.

7 Complaints Process

7.1

- Clients/whānau are invited to provide feedback and input to all aspects of service provision. Their views and feedback will be considered at all stages
- Clients/whānau are informed about the right to give feedback and make a complaint. They are supported to exercise their right e.g. by accessing internal and external advocacy which is also reinforced by the Client Rights & Needs policy.
- Client/whānau concerns, feedback and complaints will be properly documented
- Feedback and complaints may be made easily, in any form or manner appropriate to the needs (including cultural) of the whānau complaining. All complaints and feedback will be received positively
- Complaints will be acknowledged and dealt with promptly, fairly and clients/whānau will be kept informed of the process and outcome

- Clients/whānau have the right to request a review of decision if the client/whānau disagrees with a decision made by W.A.C.T. that has an effect on them. Any review of decision request must be received in writing utilising the Feedback & Complaint Form.
Management from the respective service will confirm receipt of complaint/feedback within 5 working days.

7.2 **In the event of a complaint, WACT will:**

- Ensure policy processes and timeframes within the Complaints Process are upheld and that information is verified and accurate
- Add to Complaints Register within 24 hours of receipt
- Capture relevant information and any associated documentation to support and verify the complaint
- Present the complaint documentation to the Board of Trustees or Designated Authority
- Commence an investigation to:
 - o Confirm the integrity of the information
 - o Contact the complainant and/or meet with all parties to discuss issues and review relevant documentation
 - o Record all meetings to include any agreed decisions and/or tasks
 - o Record step by step actions
- Acknowledge receipt of complaint to the complainant within 5 working days
- Provide a summary of the complaint outcome within 10 working days of complaint submission
- Initiate the disciplinary process if the investigation becomes a disciplinary matter
- Inform the complainant of their right to seek a review of decision if they are unhappy with how their complaint is dealt with:
 - o They may ask for the complaint to be referred to and reconsidered by the CEO/General Manager/Board
 - o If they are not satisfied with the internal review process, they can complain to the relevant external agency e.g. Health and Disability Commissioner; Privacy Commissioner (if the complaint concerns privacy); the funding/purchasing agency

8 Ascot on Fenton

8.1 Ascot on Fenton is a site that has 14 units that consist of one- and two-bedroom configurations. This site has a single entry and exit point, with a space set aside for tamariki that includes a trampoline. Twelve whānau have secured private rental arrangements, and six whānau have moved through to permanent social housing. Due to the site having 24/7 security presence, incidents are mitigated within 72 hours. Our open incident timeframe was an average of 2.5 days over the last year. The motelier is very supportive of the mahi undertaken and has positive relationships with whānau. Whānau are thankful to have a warm, dry space to call home, and a safe environment that supports tamariki to engage with and make connections with other tamariki. The site is referred to as a “village” by all whānau, with whānau given the opportunity to influence how the village functions through village hui that are facilitated by whānau. Navigators support whānau which currently includes 23 tamariki, utilising “Ngā Pou e Rima” Māori framework to identify needs and mitigate gaps which have contributed to their current situation.

9 Apollo Hotel

9.1 Apollo is a site that has 34 units that consist of studio, one bedroom, and two-bedroom configurations. This site has a single entry and exit point, and a fenced play area for tamariki. The units are spread across two levels within one building. 36 whānau have secured private rental arrangements, 4 whānau have moved through to permanent social housing. Due to the site having 24/7 security presence, incidents are mitigated within 72 hours. Our open incident timeframe was an average of 2.5 days over the last year. We have never had gang related incidents at this site. The motelier is very supportive of the mahi undertaken and has positive relationships with whānau. Whānau are thankful to have a warm, dry place to call home, and a safe environment that supports tamariki to engage with and make connections with other tamariki. The site is referred to as a “village” by all whānau, with whānau given the opportunity to influence how the village functions through village hui that are facilitated by whānau.

10 Roto Vegas

10.1 Roto Vegas is a site that has 27 units that consist of studio, one bedroom, and two-bedroom configurations. This site has a single entry and exit point, and a fenced play area for tamariki. The units are spread across three independent buildings, minimising the density/overcrowding of the environment that whānau are living in. Twenty-two whānau have secured private rental arrangements, five whānau have moved through to permanent social housing. Due to the site having 24/7 security presence, incidents are mitigated within 72 hours. Our open incident timeframe was an average of 2.5 days over the last year. We have never had gang related incidents at this site. The motelier is very supportive of the mahi undertaken and has positive relationships with whānau. Whānau are thankful to have a warm, dry place to call home, and a safe environment that supports tamariki to engage with and make connections with other tamariki. Again, the site is referred to as a “village” by all whānau, with whānau given the opportunity to influence how the village functions through village hui that are facilitated by whānau.

10.2 In the event of the service or environment not being made available, Whānau would return to housing situations that do not provide basic human needs and does not promote the health and wellbeing focus that is currently in place. Tamariki would remain in potentially dangerous family violence environments, and whānau would not receive wrap around support that is currently producing solid, strong, and self-supporting outcomes. This would also diminish the opportunity of allowing whānau to thrive and be leaders in their own right.

Date: 11 October 2022

Toli Maka

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