

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 BRETT JOHN WILSON

Introduction

1. My name is Brett John Wilson. I am the CEO of Watchdog Security Group Ltd (**Watchdog Security**).
2. I am providing this evidence in support of Restore Rotorua Incorporated (**RRI**).

Background

3. I have been the CEO of Watchdog Security since starting the company in 2003.
4. I have worked in the Security industry for 35 years, most of that in Rotorua. Watchdog Security's operations are predominantly in Rotorua and Tauranga employing 60 staff providing guarding and alarm monitoring services to approximately 3500 clients in the region. I have been on the board of the New Zealand Security Association (**NZSA**) for 8 years and am current Vice Chair of the board. As part of my NZSA work I have been involved in production of the Guarding Code of Best Practice which is now the industry standard for

provision of security guarding services and approved by MBIE and associated industry unions ETU and others. I am currently involved as an industry rep in the review and development of industry training standards by NZQA and Te Pūkenga.

Effects of Emergency Housing on Rotorua

5. The emergency housing on Fenton Street has created multiple flow on effects on Rotorua, as a result of grouping large numbers of people in concentrated areas along what has been labelled by some people as the “MSD mile”. I believe it has resulted in significant escalation of criminal activity, social issues, and mental health issues both in the localised area and with a wider effect through the city.
6. Despite claims that most of the people are “local” I believe there is obfuscation of statistics by government agencies to support this claim. While MSD claims that only 30% are not local the actual numbers are more realistically to be that only 30% are local. I believe that significant numbers of people being housed in these motels are from out of town, and that a number of emergency housing residents have a criminal history. I know of one recent tenant who was recently released from prison having just completed a criminal sentence. They previously resided outside of the Bay of Plenty with no ties to Rotorua. Corrections has also confirmed that as at 15 September 2022 there were 35 people on community based sentences and orders residing at the contracted emergency housing addresses (see Appendix 1).
7. There has been a significant increase in the number of incidents in family violence that Police are required to attend. Numbers published in the Rotorua Daily Post show an increase in weekly family harm calls from around 70 in 2018 to around 120 per week which is a 71.43% increase (see Appendix 7 of Trevor Newbrook’s statement of evidence). Police sources tell me emergency housing

accounts for at least 30% of family violence and disorder calls in the city currently.

8. The concentration of emergency housing on Fenton Street has also created a concentration of drug related activity in the area and to the trained eye there is an obvious gang related drug dealing presence along Fenton Street. I have personally witnessed drug dealing occurring in or outside these motels on a regular basis. As an example, on one occasion I was parked across the road from an emergency housing motel while talking on my phone. I witnessed a vehicle pull up and a person exited wearing blue regalia that identified him as an associate of Black Power. A tenant of the motel exited his unit walked out to the road shook hands with the other party, gave him some cash and received a small plastic bag in return. This increase in activity has occurred without any increase in Police resources.
9. As an organisation who by the nature of our business has a lot of interaction with the local Police, It has been very noticeable that since the emergency housing model has grown, the availability of the Police to respond to incidents of crime in the city, such as shoplifting, disorder etc, has significantly reduced. I believe that this extends beyond our interaction and that the service that Rotorua Police is able to provide to the wider Rotorua Community has been impacted by the demand created by the emergency housing.
10. The residential area surrounding Fenton Street has been directly impacted by a significant increase in burglary and theft ex car incidents in the area. I have personally sold CCTV systems to serving Police members who live in the area to increase their own protection from such events.
11. I know one person who has had cars broken into or damaged seven times in the last two years, with no previous occurrences of this nature prior to the emergency housing in motels occurring. There have been occurrences over the last two years where every single car parked on a street near emergency

housing motels was broken into in one night. In March 2022 Rotorua police stated in a news article that 160 cars were stolen in May 2022 alone. This article is attached at Appendix 2.

The effects of emergency housing on businesses in Rotorua

12. Widespread localised crime has been occurring within the retail areas most closely located to Fenton Street. My business has recently been employed by Robert Parry, owner of Fenton Street McDonalds, to provide all day security presence to combat the begging and intimidation of customers which has become an increasing issue in recent years.
13. My business has also recently been employed by accommodation providers such as Clinton Lovell, owner of Silver Fern Rotorua Accommodation and Spa (**Silver Fern**). In Silver Fern's case - if a person at Silver Fern has a safety concern, they call Watchdog Security and our mobile patrols are dispatched to Silver Fern to deal with the security issues i.e. trespassers. Two motels in the area, that also accommodates tourists, have also employed Watchdog Security. One has a similar arrangement to Silver Fern, and another has an overnight security guard situated on site.
14. I have recently talked to a number of staff of retail businesses located in the Rotorua Central Mall. They all tell the same story of significant increases in shoplifting mainly carried out by people they believe to reside at the emergency housing motels located close by. One retailer said they have at least three incidents a day and they no longer bother to report the incidents to the Police saying they never get any response so they don't bother. While discussing this issue with a staff member at the rear of the store I noticed a bit of a commotion at the front of the store. On investigation I was told that two women had just stolen a \$300 jacket. I told the shop staff that they should report the theft to the Police. The shop staff responded saying that the Police aren't interested in a \$300 jacket. They told me that they have previously

followed these offenders and watched them walk back to the motels in question and that the offending is becoming more brazen. The shop staff are now no longer permitted to follow any shoplifters due to a change in company policy.

15. Medical staff at the Rotorua Hospital who I have talked to (Hospital Management appear unwilling to comment officially) have advised that the Rotorua Emergency Department (ED) is clogged with people from emergency housing who are out of towners with no access to local GPs and are often going to the ED with non-urgent medical issues.
16. I believe this has a negative flow on impact on the wider Rotorua community as their ability to access urgent medical care is affected by an increased demand due to this government policy, that hasn't had a corresponding increase in resource.

Crime

17. I have personally witnessed a significant amount of criminal activity which I believe is directly attributed to the people housed in the emergency housing motels. Drug dealing is the most common criminal activity occurring at or around these motels. Drug dealing is an epidemic, and I personally see obvious drug activity on a weekly basis just driving past these locations.
18. I have personally intervened in family violence related assaults on at least three occasions in the last two years and witnessed dozens more. On one occasion I spotted what appeared to be an upset young woman come out of a motel on Fenton Street. She appeared to be trying to get away from a male whom she was obviously arguing with. She took refuge in a nearby store. I stopped my vehicle and went in to talk to her. I asked if she was okay. She advised me that her partner was drunk and "being a dick" to her. I advised her that my work colleague (who was in the car with me) was calling the Police. I

asked the woman if she wanted me to stay with her, she replied no. Concerned about the behaviour of the young woman's male partner, we continued to follow the young woman and the male partner while on the phone to the Police. The situation at this stage continued to be confined to a heated verbal argument. About a block later the male partner appeared to grab the woman. We got out of the vehicle and pushed the male partner back at which point the Police arrived. The male partner was subsequently arrested after having an altercation with one of the police officers.

19. My staff who patrol the central business district area are regularly intervening in threats and intimidation incidents involving local retailers and residents of the emergency housing motels. There was one recent incident where my parking staff intervened an incident where a young male attacked staff at a food supplier's premise on Tutaneikai Street. Myself and my Operations Manager responded to the situation as back up as it was close to our office. By the time we arrived the offender had left, but then returned while we were onsite. I had a brief discussion with the offender's partner who said they were staying in emergency accommodation. The offender was trying to scam a refund on some takeaway food and became upset when refused. It was obvious that the attempt was a scam he had contrived to get a free meal as he had already consumed the food. Despite being heavily outnumbered the male became aggressive again and was restrained by one of my staff members, at which point the offender attempted to leave in the Watchdog Security vehicle. At this point the situation was escalating so I instructed my staff to let the offender go and back off. I made this instruction as it was clear there were no Police available to attend and we would be stuck restraining this person for some time.
20. These occurrence are not accurately reflected in Police statistics as many retailers have given up reporting less serious crimes given their view nothing gets responded to.

Emergency Housing Security

21. Many of the organisations overseeing operation of these facilities lack the experience and capability to prevent this behaviour.

22. I have reviewed the FENZ OIA release on Emerald Spa Motel. The OIA release contained a Security Risk Management Plan (**the Plan**) attached as Appendix 3 for Emerald Spa Motel and created by Visions of a Helping Hand Charitable Trust (**Visions of a Helping Hand**). The Plan outlines Visions of a Helping Hand's security practices in relation to Emerald Spa, carried out by their security company - Tiger Security. I have also interviewed at least three security personnel who work for Tiger Security. There are clear and obvious failings in Tiger Security's practices and they are magnified by the lack of security management experience of Tiny Deane, Clifford Deane, and Willie Ripia who are responsible for the security operations of Tiger Security but have no previous experience. For example, I don't believe they have been trained properly to de-escalate conflict as illustrated by the attached statement from Sarita Graham at Appendix 4.

23. The emergency housing locations by their nature are dealing with people with complex problems such as drug and alcohol use, varying degrees of mental health issues, propensity for violence etc. As such Security Staff operating in this environment require detailed Standard Operating Procedures (**SOPs**) to specifically define roles of the staff and actions required related to specific events. They should also undergo significant and regular training to ensure they are competent to work in this environment. Based on documents I have seen and statements taken from Tiger Security staff both the training and SOP development is woefully inadequate. The training they refer to appears to be the minimum legally required to get a Certificate of Approval to work as a security guard. This is a very basic level of conflict management that in no way prepares a guard to operate in this kind of environment. This lack of training and SOPs presents a high risk to both the security staff and tenants in this

environment. Given the lack of industry experience of the management team of Tiger Security, this is no surprise.

24. I would also like to note that there is currently significant discussion within the security business as to whether the conflict management training required for a Certificate of Approval alone is fit for purpose.
25. I recently had a conversation with Bruce Couper of RISQ group, one of New Zealand's most experienced security operators and trainers. He advised that RISQ was requested to provide some training to Tiger Security staff. After they reviewed the operation they decided to walk away as their opinion was that the operation was so poorly run and shambolic that they wanted no part of it.

Conclusion

26. There is no doubt that both the layout, location and type of people housed in these motels both increases and concentrates behaviours that negatively affects the whole city.
27. The Government agencies that are responsible for emergency housing have, based on my interaction with them, failed to address many obvious problems. They have shown a woeful lack of responsibility or appreciation of the problems they have created and have failed to attempt any logical mitigation tactics. The current use of motels provides no useful solution to any of the problems pre-existing for the tenants and creates new problems for the rest of the Rotorua city. Such is the negative impact on the city's reputation and tourism industry that it will take decades to resolve and then repair the damage created.

Brett John Wilson

18 October 2022

Appendix 1

Answers to WPQs

Reply 32553 (2022) has been answered

Portfolio: Corrections (Hon Kelvin Davis)

Question: How many people, if any, were on probation who were residing at 284-286 Fenton St, Rotorua in 2021?

Reply: I am advised that public safety is Corrections' top priority, and no person would be permitted to reside at an address if it was considered that the risk could not be safely managed and public safety upheld. Emergency accommodation at motels is used as a last option, and is a temporary measure. The alternative is that these people would otherwise be homeless, which would present an unacceptable safety risk to communities. Approximately 15,000 people are released from prison every year and finding suitable accommodation for people who are lawfully required to be released from prison is one of Corrections' most significant challenges. The vast majority of people return home to family or make their own arrangements about where to live. Most people released from prison can choose where to live, or have provided the New Zealand Parole Board with a release plan (including a proposed address) for consideration, prior to leaving prison. On some occasions, a person's address must be deemed suitable by Community Corrections. Emergency accommodation is provided to people who have an immediate accommodation need and all other accommodation options have been exhausted. A nationwide agreement is in place between the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Corrections which governs the placement of people into emergency accommodation.

I am advised that an Integrated Offender Management System report shows that, **as at 15 September 2022, there were 35 people on community-based sentences and orders residing at these addresses in Rotorua.** I am further advised that it would require substantial collation and research to determine the number of people that have previously resided at these addresses throughout the last six years and I am not prepared to request my officials to undertake this task at this time. This is also my response for other WPQs

160 vehicles stolen in Rotorua in the last month - police

Wed, Mar 30 • Source: 1News



The number of vehicles being stolen in Rotorua is on the rise, police say.



A person stealing a car. (Source: istock.com)

Phillip Taikato, Rotorua Area Commander, said in the last month alone, a total of 160 vehicles have been reported stolen.

"A lot of the time, these vehicles have been taken by people wanting to go for a joy-ride and in other cases offenders use these vehicles to commit other crimes."

Taikato said although the bulk of the vehicles stolen in the last month had been recovered, police want people to put prevention measures in place to avoid their vehicle being stolen in the first place.

READ MORE: New Zealand's top 10 most stolen cars revealed

These measures include:

- Investing in an anti-theft system such as a steering wheel lock or alarm system which will immobilise the vehicle
- Giving the impression an alarm system is installed with stickers on windows or flashing LEDs on the dashboard
- Always locking your vehicle, even when it is parked in the driveway

- Never leaving your keys in an unattended vehicle
- Avoiding leaving valuables like CDs, laptops, mobile phones and GPS devices in one's car
- Trying to park in well-lit areas when parking at night



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SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

280/282 Fenton Street, Rotorua

Document: Security Risk Management Plan
| Created & Authorised by: Visions of a Helping Hand |
| Issued: January 2022 | Review: January 2023 | Version 1.1 |

Security Risk Management Plan

1.0 Objective

Visions security will provide security officers to oversee the safe management of the accommodation facility while it is under section 70 of the Health Act 1956. The duty of the security officers is to maintain a safe environment and ensure the regulations of section 70 are adhered to. All security officers hold a COA license and are appropriately trained

2.0 Static Security Officers

There are two main entries to the Emerald Spa and Tuscany Villas facility, these are situated on Fenton Street. One security officer will stand at the Tuscany Villas entrance 24 hours 7 days per week. The entrance at Emerald Spa will be locked to prevent any entry or exits from the facility.

2.1 Roaming Security

The roaming security will be available to the static guards if extra support is required for tenants wanting to exit the Grand Treasure facility.

2.2 Health and Social Security

Security officers will be available to all planned health and social assessments, testing and swabs within the Grand Treasure facility. The times and dates of entry into the facility will be organised through Visions administration. Only approved organisations will be given permission to enter the facility. The security officer will accompany the health or social service worker to any face-to-face engagement that occurs. All security officers that enter the facility will complete training in the use of personal protective equipment.

3 Fire Exits

Fire exits will be restricted only if Fire Emergency New Zealand approves this. If this is not approved these will remain accessible with a security officer standing at the exit door.

4.0 Emergency Response Plan

The identification and reporting of health, safety and security hazards in the environment

If an incident or hazard occurs onsite there is a reporting tool available either in hard copy or electronic format. The Visions staff member who is present during the incident must report immediately or in a timely manner. The following must be reported but is not limited to the below

- Incident, accident, injury, illness, behaviour, vehicle incidents, complaints, threatening and harmful behaviour, harm and safety issues regarding children

All households will be treated with high respect and their information will remain confidential. Unless there is a risk to the household or others. If the police are required for further support they will be contacted by a Visions staff member that is present.

After the staff member has completed the reporting tool a Visions Manager will complete the outcome and action section of the reporting tool. If the incident is higher than level 7 the report will be discussed with the CEO, General Manager and the Board members. All safety measures and preventative actions will be put in place in a timely manner.

ALL onsite staff are trained in First Aid, de-escalation and have been trained to complete a reporting tool.

Child Protection – Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014: Visions holds in high regard the safety of Children and Young People. We protect children and support them to thrive and have a sense of belonging in their environment. Staff are trained to identify risk and harm including but not limited to malnutrition, miss treatment and abuse. We work alongside the household to source the most suitable supports that will enhance their family functioning and stability. Visions encourages and empowers whanau to develop strong and healthy relationships within the whanau and wider networks.

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If abuse and neglect is identified a Visions Social Worker will be contacted immediately. The social worker will meet with the whanau to establish a risk assessment plan. The social worker will make the decision whether it is appropriate to contact Oranga Tamariki. A report of concern will be reported via phone and email.

Employees – All Visions employees will complete a Ministry of Justice vetting form. To ensure they are safe to work with children.

Emergency Evacuation: In the event of an emergency evacuation, a site specific alarm will be activated, emergency wardens will sweep the premises to ensure all households are removed from inside the building where it is safe to do so & all will be guided to the sites designated assembly point, where the chief warden will make contact with emergency services to discuss further action. This site specific plan will be explained & available to all at intake / inductions.

Security Risk Assessment

Identified Hazard / Risk	Probability			Impact			How will we Manage this Risk	Residual Risk		
	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High		Low	Med	High
Covid-19		High			High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All guards are double vaccinated & have vaccination passes on record All guards are trained in the correct use of Covid-19 related PPE Masks & gloves are always mandated & worn by all guards during their shifts All guards have been informed & trained on regular cleaning & sanitisation processes for shared workstations Nurses are accessible to the facility to provide relevant Covid related advice where necessary 			Medium
Aggravated Behaviour		High			High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All guards are trained & current in COA licences All guards have relevant de-escalation training Back up roaming security is available 24/7 to support All guards are armed with relevant equipment including phones & walkie talkies to directly contact Police 			Medium
Extended Hours		High			High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All guards have regular mandated breaks throughout their shifts as according to their contracts All guards have regular contact with the Security Manager for fatigue spot checks The roaming guard is available to all guards, should support be required There are adequate facilities located inside the building with secure access to toilets & heating & cooling food amenities 			Medium

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Unsociable
Hours

High

High

- All guards are given ample notice of intention to work graveyard shifts, with time to adjust sleeping patterns
- Where possible, guards are given similar shift patterns to enable adequate body clocking
- All guards have regular mandated breaks throughout their shifts as according to their contracts
- All guards have regular contact with the Security Manager for fatigue spot checks
- The roaming guard is available to all guards, should support be required
- There are adequate facilities located inside the building with secure access to toilets & heating & cooling food amenities
- All guards are armed with relevant equipment including phones & walkie talkies to directly contact Police

Medium

Appendix 4

My Name is Sarita Graham

Myself and 4 of my children have been in emergency accommodation run by Visions of a Helping hand for nearly 5 months. I have currently moved out of this accommodation and are staying at another motel free of charge due to concerns about how we are being treated by the Visions security team.

I actually have 6 children but they asked for two of them to go to their father or another family member so we could stay we could stay in the Lake Rotorua Motel which was close to my kids schooling etc. But I was told that was just for appearances that it shouldn't be an issue for my other 2 kids to be with us most of the time.

At April school holiday time my 2 older kids had been to the Mardi Gras and after being dropped off at 10.30 pm they wouldn't let my 16 year old and 10 year old onto the site. They said they wernt on the list and they cant stay. My son ignored security and ran to my unit shouting Mum they wont let us in. My 10 year old was quite upset. I opened the door and security were saying they cant be there they arnt on the list. My 10 year old was on the list. Security insisted the two children had to go, and I said to where?? I just shut the door and said we will deal with this tomorrow.

Around 3 weeks ago we had a run in at 11pm. My son came back from work, due to previous interaction with security he just walked past them, so security knocked on the door and said he needs to check in with us. I said that was fine and agreed he would.

3 nights ago I was woken up to banging on the door and 2 security were there. They said my son had jumped the fence and then left and came back. My son said "no sir I just put a bag of Kiwifruit and Avocados over the fence and then walked to my dads place. I came back here cos there was no one at my dads place.". One of the security guys pointed over me and said "you shut your mouth I'm not talking to you". My boy was yelling back, I'm telling the truth Mum. The Security said "your sons a little fucking liar that's why all your bridges are burnt, hes got no respect".

I asked him to leave, I said youre freaking all my kids (my other kids are 12, 9, 8 and 3 and all of them had woken up and were standing there.) and I closed the door.

I then walked over to the office so I could take a photo of the phone number of the social workers so I could phone them in the morning to sort this out. While I was still outside my room I was talking to the woman from the next door unit who had come outside asking if I was alright. A Vision Security truck pulls up and a big muscly guy gets out and starts walking to the room. I said are you here to talk to my son, you can talk to me. He said "where is he I need to talk to him" and he walked past me with his arm out so I could walk in front of him .

I said "no you can talk to me again". My son then came out of the room and said "whats up Bro?"

The security guy said "who the fuck do you think you are, you cant fucking talk to our staff like that". He was unzipping his jacket as if he wanted a fight. My son said "you are the problem you cant talk to my Mum like that". It turned into a shouting match, we were surrounded by 5 security staff, my little kids were yelling please stop, my son was yelling leave my mum alone, and I was telling them to leave my son alone. My Daughter then pulled out her phone to start recording and at that point one of the older security guys, a larger older Maori man stepped in and told the security guys to all back off and that we would sort it in the morning. He also asked my daughter to stop recording.

This morning I was back at my unit grabbing some clothes from my Visions unit and another security guy came over and apologized for the way his colleagues treated us. He said what they did was shocking and he would have protected us.

As a result I no longer feel safe at the Visions accommodation because of the way that the Security staff treat us. My little kids feel safer sleeping in the caravan in their fathers driveway.

There have been other incidents where a member of the Vision Security team asked me for my number. I said NO and walked off.

I'm too scared to complain to Visions because I don't want to end up at another motel surrounded by Mongrol Mob who are using and selling P. I used to be in that scene and I know how dangerous it is and I am trying to move on and better my life. As bad as it is with the way we have been treated at Visions it is still better than that, but its like a prison. Ive been in Prison and it feels just like that. It makes me and my kids feel trapped, and belittled.

When we were at the Brylin Motel my nine year old was close by when the Police were trying to arrest a guy. As a result she accidentally got some of the pepper spray in her face. She was naturally upset and as a result she doesn't trust Police or Security now.

When we moved into Vision run accommodation the agreement was we would have a meeting with a social worker once a week. That hasn't been happening. I spoke to my neighbour who has been here a year and a half and that hasn't happened.

We would be happy in Vision accommodation if we were just treated with some respect and not made to feel like we were in prison. This is mainly due to the way the security team is run.

Sarita Graham 20/05/2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Graham', written in a cursive style.