

**PRESENTATION TO COMMISSIONERS**  
**RE MHUD'S APPLICATION FOR 13 RESOURCE CONSENTS**  
**by ROTORUA DISTRICT RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS**

**Monday 31 October 2022, 11:05-11:20 am**

E nga mana, e nga waka, e nga hou e wha, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa. Ko Reynold Macpherson ahau, Chairman of RDRR.

The RDRR was formed in 2015 and today is the voice of over 1100 residents and ratepayers. Thank you for this opportunity.

Our members are opposed to all 13 resource consent applications from MHUD. Our written submission provided detailed arguments against the proposed consents in 10 areas that I need not reiterate.

During these Hearings you have heard decent citizens and ex-citizens describe how they have been affected personally. It is morally wrong for people to be treated like this.

It is notable that all successful candidates in the recent local elections promised to end what we now regard as Rotorua's homeless industry. It is the most salient issue in local politics.

Please allow me to provide the causal story behind the difficulties we are now facing to beg you to rectify with a remedial strategy.

In effect, Rotorua's society, culture, economy and environment have been abused by what was admitted in a series of MHUD papers to Cabinet<sup>1</sup> to be a customized experiment using a "pilot place-based

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hud.govt.nz/search/?sort=& type=&q=Rotorua+emergency+housing>

approach". The experimental design had five components that together have created a homeless industry:

1. Establish a Housing Taskforce comprising our Council, MSD, MHUD, Kainga Ora, Te Puni Kokiri and Ngāti Whakaue in late March 2021 to manage the experiment
2. MSD bussing in homeless from April 2021 to the point where Rotorua today has 1% of New Zealand's total population but 10% of its homeless population
3. MSD funding Te Kopakū, a homeless reception centre owned by Ngāti Whakaue, to assess needs and allocate emergency accommodation in motels
4. Kāinga Ora purchasing land and building social housing at scale, and now,
5. MHUD to contract 13 motels to consolidate the homeless industry by providing about 1100 emergency accommodation places for five years with average stays of up to three months.

I was on Council in April 2021 and blew the whistle on the organized bussing of homeless into Rotorua. The then power bloc on Council retaliated with a Code of Conduct Complaint and later combined it with other complaints to cancel my membership on two key subcommittees of Council. It was concerted elder abuse intended to suppress my telling truth to power.

Although the homeless industry expanded at pace during the rest of 2021, the Taskforce's policy narrative gradually disintegrated as community respect evaporated for Council, the MSD and the quality of care for the homeless in the motels.

In April 2022, the MSD released a paper on the Rotorua Emergency Housing population.<sup>2</sup> It revealed a corrupted methodology that reclassified those who had been in Rotorua more than 30 days as locals. This was widely interpreted as mahi tinihanga, devious trickery, and confirmed a common view that MSD has helped turn Rotorua into a “dumping ground” for New Zealand’s homeless.

Four days ago, on October 27, it was confirmed<sup>3</sup> that “population growth”, the fundamental justification for the Council’s investment strategy since 2013, is now obsolete. While the Bay of Plenty had the second highest population growth of all regions in New Zealand between June 30, 2020 to June 30, 2022, Rotorua District had experienced 0.47% depopulation. All planning and housing policies and projections in Rotorua will now need to be revised downwards, surely with cost compression to follow.

With respect, in RDRR’s view, what should the Commission make of all this with respect to the MHUD applications?

First, please conclude that Rotorua’s Housing Taskforce experiment has failed to add value to the lives of those concentrated in emergency accommodation and Rotorua’s residents and ratepayers, despite the massive degree of public investment. It was a central government experiment supported by some local interest groups but most of that support has now gone. Given the now obvious, significant and adverse impacts, the central Government’s relocation and concentration

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/rotorua-emergency-housing-analysis-redacted.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/bay-of-plentys-population-growth-second-highest-in-country/TAWXF3BAHKY7SIAJCHWEUPGIRA/?fbclid=IwAR2n2eP8M2I3XncwCaC-\\_m5KH6wwrl8h7GIMouecScff0LwG5blEmufaXYY](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/bay-of-plentys-population-growth-second-highest-in-country/TAWXF3BAHKY7SIAJCHWEUPGIRA/?fbclid=IwAR2n2eP8M2I3XncwCaC-_m5KH6wwrl8h7GIMouecScff0LwG5blEmufaXYY)

strategy can now be seen as reckless, but since further harm can now be prevented, should now be dismantled.

Second, please note that the scale of the MHUD's proposed throughput of homeless people, up to about 15,000 over five years, cannot possibly be matched by the social housing builds projected by Council and Kāinga Ora. The proposed resource consents would therefore add an incoherent yet virtually permanent component to an already-failed experiment. MHUD's proposal must be regarded as an attempt to consolidate a failed attempt to establish a public-sector homeless industry.

Third, please conclude from the recent local election that the experimental homeless industry is the most salient political issue in the Rotorua community. If not resolved with a substantial change in strategy and practice, the consequences for those in emergency accommodation, in Rotorua's community and in our constituency will be even more significant in a year's time.

Hence, the members of RDRR would be eternally grateful if you, the Commissioners, will deny the MHUD proposal in its entirety rather than extend an experiment that has patently failed its clients and hosts, except for a small group of motel owners and central and local politicians and government officials.

No reira, therefore, we beg of you. Please help us kill off the central government's homeless industry experiment here in Rotorua and give us back our once beautiful, prosperous and peaceful city. Kia ora tatau.

I would be happy to answer any questions.