

WHIRIA TE AROHA

DRAW TOGETHER THE LOVE AND COMPASSION

ROTORUA HOMELESS ACTION PLAN 2015-16

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WHIRIA TE AROHA

Whiria Te Aroha embodies the kaupapa of the Rotorua Homeless Action Plan. It reminds us of the simple values of love, compassion, kindness and generosity; about sharing with those who are less fortunate without passing judgement.

Me aroha tetahi ki tetahi.

Whiria Te Aroha is taken from the Whakatauki of Te Ranghiwaho an ancestor and one of the six koromatua of Ngati Whakaue.

"Whiria te kaha tua makatia e motu honoa purutia Rotorua"

Draw together the strength, interweave it, if it should break, join it together. Holdfast to Rotorua.

To Tatau Whakatauki

"Ko te whakaruruhau o te tangata, ko te tangata"

It is people that take care of people

THE PROJECT

Lifewise has been supporting the Rotorua City Council, community and voluntary agencies to formulate and develop a local Homeless Action Plan. This included building a locally based project steering group, agreeing on a plan, identifying ongoing funding solutions and securing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between community and government agencies that clearly defines the roles of the services working in homelessness. James Rogers from the Community Council to End Homelessness states.

Ending Homelessness is not easy, but it is possible. It is not something that can be accomplished by any one agency, individual, team or sector. It truly takes a community to foster a sense of belong for all of its citizens (Rogers, J., At Home in Medicine Hat, Our Plan To End Homelessness, Year Five Progress Report, 2015).

To be homeless is to be excluded from one of our basic human rights, the right to adequate shelter. Contrary to common stereotypes it is not a

personal lifestyle choice and most homeless people also experience multiple disadvantages including very low income, poor physical or mental health, unemployment, addiction and exclusion from the social institutions others take for granted. There are additional disconnections for Tangata Whenua. The disconnection from their cultural and spiritual dimension further inhibits their ability to re-integrate with their whanau, hapu and/or Iwi.

Various issues can increase the likelihood of becoming and staying homeless. These include, lack of affordable accommodation, poverty and unemployment, mental illness issues, alcohol, drug and gambling addiction, emotional health and trauma including traumatic life events childhood abuse, family breakdowns or instability, foster care, frequent moving, institutional care and parental death and discrimination by some landlords (Leggatt-Cook, Homeless in Aotearoa: Issues and Recommendations, New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness 2007).





BACKGROUND

For over 10 years the Rotorua Night Shelter Trust has been working towards the establishment of a night shelter with little progress due to a number of barriers. In February 2014 Rotorua City Council called a community meeting to discuss the growing issue of homelessness in the Rotorua CBD. Lifewise contacted the Council after seeing media coverage of the proposed meeting. Lifewise attended the community meeting and offered to provide knowledge and advice based on the organisations work with homelessness in Auckland. Additional meetings were held with Council and the Night Shelter Trust and an agreed plan was put in place. Lifewise was eventually funded by Lakes DHB to convene a working project group to engage a locally based government, community, iwi and volunteer groups as well as the wider community to establish a Homeless Action Plan which defines a community based process to end homelessness in Rotorua.

— THE ISSUE

The issue of homelessness and youth homelessness is continuing to grow in the city of Rotorua, community agencies are reporting between 30 and 60 rough sleepers in and around the Central Business District. However, these figures may be an under-estimate. Research completed using the 2006 Census data had the Rotorua District with 81 people sleeping rough, 84 people living in non-private accommodation (boarding houses, motels and camping ground) 444 people living in overcrowded dwellings. A total of 609 people who are severely Housing deprived. (Amore, K, Viggers, H, Baker, M & Howden-Chapman, P (2013). Severe Housing Deprivation: The problem and its measurement. Official Statistics Research Series, 6.) Current service delivery is disjointed in Rotorua and lacks direction with a few agencies providing client centered advocacy, case management support and services. Voluntary services provide access to free hot meals for rough sleepers and others in need who are based in and around the CBD area.

THE PROCESS THAT WAS UNDERTAKEN

Lifewise hosted a number of sector meetings to establish a Steering Group to develop the Rotorua Homeless Action Plan.

The agencies who agreed to represent the sector were:

- **Ngati Whakaue**
- **Te Arawa Whanau Ora**
- **Lifewise Rotorua**
- **Salvation Army Rotorua**
- **Rotorua District Presbyterian Church**
- **Ministry of Social Development**
- **Rotorua Community Probation Services**

This group met fortnightly to ensure the project progressed as effectively as possible. In the early meetings it was agreed that a local provider would be resourced to chair and support the working party to connect and engage with Rotorua based government, community, iwi and volunteer agencies.

The Steering Group facilitated face to face meetings between June – September 2015 with 18 different community, iwi government agencies and 22 individuals who were or had experienced homelessness locally. All those engaged were consulted about their knowledge and understanding of homelessness in Rotorua and the types of services they provide. Time was also spent talking about gaps in service and delivery and what can be done to address them. The Steering Group provided updates to and sought feedback from the wider network.

The support of the Rotorua District Council and the Lakes District Health Board in the development of this plan is acknowledged.

RESULTS OF THE FEEDBACK

During the consultation process there were four key factors identified as the causes of homelessness in Rotorua. These were:

- **Addiction,**
- **Mental un-wellness,**
- **Domestic violence,**
- **Lack of, and/or poor housing standards**

These factors were discussed during the different sector group feedback processes and frontline agencies agreed these themes were all contributing issues for the homeless population they work with. The homeless who were experiencing mental un-wellness or addiction issues were known to health and community agencies and were able to access support when required.

Females experiencing domestic violence had limited access to services and what was available was oversubscribed or inaccessible due to location or inability to meet criteria.

Service delivery data received from the Salvation Army, Rotorua District Presbyterian Church and other agencies, shows an increase in those seeking support due to homelessness. In 2013 they worked with 138 individuals or families who signaled they were homeless and required support, this increased to 178 in 2014 and currently sitting at 170 year to date (January-September) for 2015.

Of those engaged with in 2015 83%

were living with friends or family while attempting to find accommodation and 16.5% identified as being rough sleepers.

Lack of access to emergency accommodation and affordability were also identified, currently there is no access to emergency accommodation and only limited access short term accommodation, what is available is either under resourced and over-subscribed or can place clients at risk of being exploited. Low cost rental accommodation is also limited and what is available tends to be of poor standard or in an undesirable location. Data from the St Johns Church short term housing service, Community Facing Ministry, states they have provided accommodation support to 28 individuals between August 2013 and October 2015.

Other factors identified during the consultation process were a lack of understanding about the issue of homelessness, a reluctance of agencies to work collectively toward an agreed outcome for those experiencing homelessness and the lack of appropriate resourcing and sup-

port to the agencies and volunteer groups who are currently providing support and services to those experiencing homelessness. Some agencies didn't believe that their role was to work with those sleeping rough while others felt the responsibility of addressing the issue sat with government services like MSD and Housing New Zealand.

These factors form the basis for the Rotorua Homeless Action Plan. The most significant requirement is the establishment of a client centered, collective working approach where all agencies, service providers and volunteer groups who are work with homelessness meet regularly, talk about who they are working with, what issues they are having and what support each agency can provide.

A collective approach should reduce duplication and ensure that client's needs are met more effectively. Mental health and addiction services and domestic violence agencies (under strengthening families) already work in this manner in Rotorua so there are structures in place that can be utilised if required.

HOMELESS ACTION PLAN



PREVENTION

Preventive work that ensures agencies can identify drivers of homelessness and have systems and processes in place to address homelessness.

INTERVENTION

Intervention work that ensures those that are experiencing homelessness are engaged with as soon as possible and have a clearly defined plan in place

INTERGRATED SUPPORT WORK

Integrated support that defines the collective approach to working with those that are the risk of being homeless, are homeless or were homeless

INDEPENDENCE

Independence – support to people and whanau to help people stay housed and well in the wider whanau and community.

PREVENTION

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Preventive work that ensures agencies can identify drivers of homelessness and have systems and processes in place to address homelessness	Establishment of a steering group of agencies that help in the progression of the RHAP (senior management)	Agencies involved in the RHAP have signed the memorandum of understanding (MOA) and are committed to the RHAP	Completed	Council	In kind support
	Establishment of a working group that carries out the work of the RHAP under the direction of the steering group	The working group is progressing the plan and actions are achieved	High	Steering Group	In kind support - May require a funded coordinator
	Agencies and providers who are involved in the RHAP appoint a homeless champion within their agency	Agency champions are identified and connected to steering group or to a working group	High	Steering Group	In kind support
	Agree a cultural framework and kaupapa for the Steering Group and action plan to guide the work of participating agencies	Cultural framework documented and discussed with participating agencies	High	Steering Group	In kind support - may require some resourcing for workshops or material development
	Each agency develops homeless policy and procedures that align with appropriate cultural frameworks and the RHAP	Agencies involved in the RHAP have a documented policy that defines practice and service	Medium	Steering Group/ Working group members	In kind support

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Preventive work that ensures agencies can identify drivers of homelessness and have systems and processes in place to address homelessness	Baseline data on the extent of homeless in Rotorua is established and trends monitored.	Agreed, aligned and documented process in place with monthly information sent to central point to map homelessness within the Rotorua region.	Low	Steering Group	Funding required for data collection and documentation process
	A monitoring and evaluation plan is developed for the RHAP	An agreed process for the monitoring and evaluation of the RHAP is in place and implemented.	High	Steering Group	Funding required for development of evaluation plan
	Promotion of the action plan and of the steering/working groups to a wider community.	There is a Communication Plan in place for Steering Group and action plan agencies.	Medium	Steering Group	In kind support - funding might be required for specialist advice. A funded coordinator could assist with this



INTERVENTION

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
<p>Intervention work that ensures those that are experiencing homelessness are engaged with as soon as possible and have a clearly defined plan in place.</p>	<p>Identify other local agencies and providers who are interested in working collectively to end homelessness in Rotorua.</p>	<p>A detailed list that describes the services offered by agencies in Rotorua is available.</p>	<p>High/Medium</p>	<p>tba</p>	<p>Initial document produced. A funded coordinator could update.</p>
	<p>Develop a practice and case coordination guide that describes how agencies and providers engage and work with the homeless in Rotorua to ensure best practice and evidenced based models.</p>	<p>The best practice guide forms the basis of work with homeless people in the Rotorua region.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>tba</p>	<p>A funded coordinator could facilitate this.</p>
	<p>Develop a clearly defined referral process for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.</p>	<p>All agencies understand referral process and use it appropriately so that "any door is the right door".</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>tba</p>	<p>In kind support facilitated by a funded coordinator.</p>

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
	Define the gaps in the service delivery pathway	Information on service gaps is documented.	Medium	tba	In kind support from Working Group.
Intervention work that ensures those that are experiencing homelessness are engaged with as soon as possible and have a clearly defined plan in place.	Formulate a business case for a support hub service based in Rotorua, including access to basic support provisions and access to emergency accommodation	Completed business plan	High/Medium	Salvation Army/ Council	Funding required.
	Develop a strategy to increase emergency and sustainable housing options in Rotorua	Accommodation procurement strategy exists and approved by relevant agencies and stakeholders	Medium	Steering Group	Existing resources coordinated by Steering Group



INTEGRATED SUPPORT

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Integrated support that defines the collective approach to working with those that are at risk of being homeless, are homeless or were homeless.	Establish a process for engaging people who have or are experiencing homelessness in programme design and delivery, communications, agency training, and peer support.	Processes are in place to engage service users and people with lived experience in the implementation of the action plan.	High	tba	In kind support from working group - assisted by funded coordinator
	Development of a collective out-reach service, as a touch point for rough sleepers and community to report those in need.	Agreed approach and area established for out-reach process. Outreach team is active.	Medium/Low	tba	In kind support from working group - assisted by funded coordinator.
	Develop a common data collection protocol for agencies to ensure key client information and demographics are collected and used effectively to ensure all parties are aware of who is working with whom and what is being done.	Agreed information collection process, and meeting process is in place.	Medium	tba	Funding required to establish data sets and process.

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Integrated support that defines the collective approach to working with those that are at risk of being homeless, are homeless or were homeless.	Develop an integrated flowchart/ pathway that defines the steps for a homeless person from their situation to accommodation and support.	Pathway in place that aligns with current best practices and agencies are engaged with pathway.	Medium/Low	tba	In kind support from working group.
	Schedule regular case management meetings between the different agencies to discuss new and current cases and how best to work with people known to different agencies. Elect co-chairs and other officers.	Regular case management meetings occur to ensure integrated service delivery for homeless people with high and complex needs or who engage with multiple services. There are agreed meeting times and dates.	Medium	tba	In kind support from working group - funded coordinator could assist.

INDEPENDENCE

STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTION	PROJECT MILESTONES	URGENCY LEVEL	LEAD AGENCY	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Independence - support to people and whanau to help people stay housed and well in wider whanau and community.	Identify and document available resources to support individuals and their whanau once they are accommodated including education, training and employment.	Resources are mapped and information is available to agencies and the public.	Medium/High	tba	In kind support from working group and others.
	Develop agreements with agencies on support that could be provided to people now housed in the community who have experienced homelessness	Agencies have agreed to provide support. Referral processes are in place to ensure individuals and families are provided with the support required to keep them out of homelessness.		tba	In kind support from Steering Group and working group.
	Provide training and information for agencies on homelessness and effective models to work with people and whanau who have experienced homelessness	Training material is developed and trainers available		tba	Funding required to implement.

