Aide-mémoire

Meeting

Date:	1 April 2022	**Security Level:**	IN CONFIDENCE
For:	Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment		
File Reference:	REP/22/4/284		

Meeting to discuss report on lessons learned from the Rotorua emergency housing pilot

Meeting details	Monday 4 April 2022, 4:45 - 5:15pm
Attendees	Hon Grant Robertson, Deputy Prime Minister Hon Dr Megan Woods, Minister of Housing
Purpose of meeting	To discuss the Implementation Unit's report - *Lessons Learned from Rotorua Emergency Housing Pilot*, with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Housing. The discussion is expected to cover how the Rotorua pilot aligns with the wider emergency housing review (EH Review) and how the recommendations of the report will be addressed.
Background	The Implementation Unit was commissioned to report on lessons that could be learned from the set-up and initial delivery of the Rotorua Emergency Housing Pilot. The report was provided to the Deputy Prime Minister on 11 March 2022. It is intended that the findings of the report will feed into the first stage of the Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) led evaluation of the pilot, as well as the wider joint HUD and MSD review of the emergency housing system. MSD is continuing to work with HUD on the emergency housing system review as outlined in *REP/22/1/014*

Progressing the reset and redesign of the emergency housing system (received 11 March 2022). MSD is leading work on resetting the EH SNG and reviewing and resetting social supports for people in emergency housing. For reference, the indicative actions from the report have been appended (Appendix One). Agencies are due to report back to Ministers in in June 2022.

This is the second report by the Implementation Unit that focuses on emergency housing. Their November 2021 report *Emergency and Transitional Housing* considered the working arrangements between agencies who deliver the key initiatives within the emergency housing system in November 2021.

Key findings and MSD response	The report outlines the outcomes of the Implementation Unit's lessons learned review, focusing on elements of the Rotorua Pilot that have either worked well or remain challenging. MSD is broadly supportive of the findings and recommendations of the report and we consider these well aligned with the actions set out in *Progressing the reset and redesign of the emergency housing system*. We agree that elements of the pilot show promise as part of an effective approach to emergency housing. s9(2)(f)(iv) The design and delivery of the pilot was a challenging and resource intensive experience for MSD that stretched capacity, as well as policy and legislative settings, to their limits. This has highlighted the need for clarity as to which elements of the emergency housing system should be consistent at the national level versus which should be tailored to local context. A focus on time and resource intensive place-based approaches may put the delivery of wider system change at risk. We note initial provider feedback about challenges associated with delivering support services in non-contracted motels. MSD shares provider concern about the concentration of people with the highest and most complex needs in non-contracted motels. Current settings provide little opportunity to influence client take-up of social services.

MSD will work with HUD to action the following recommendations as part of the EH Review:

- undertake a financial assessment to compare the costs of the pilot vs the operation of the EH SNG, including costs associated with social support services. Results could be used to assess the viability of expanding any aspects of the model

- consider how individual motel models operate as part of the housing system, which is complex for clients to navigate, and whether there remain benefits in moving clients from one motel model to another as opposed to a whānau-centred model where services follow people.

Many of the lessons learned set out in the report are most relevant to elements of the EH Review and the continued delivery of the pilot that are led by HUD. Lessons and recommendations with the most relevance to MSD are detailed below. Actions proposed as part of the EH Review are highlighted where appropriate.

What worked well	*Systems design: Service alignment, contracting and 24/7 security*
	MSD agrees that the combination of contracting, social supports and security shows promise in lifting the quality and safety of accommodation as well as better responding to the complex needs of people in emergency housing. As an income support payment, rather than a housing product or programme, the EH SNG is not intended to respond to persistent housing need and cannot achieve these outcomes.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

Systems design: Triaging to improve referral, assessment, and placement

EH SNGs were introduced in 2016 as a stopgap for people with an acute emergency housing need while they secured appropriate permanent housing or moved into transitional housing. However, the supply of transitional housing has not kept pace with demand and there are growing constraints in the private rental market. This has led to an inability to triage

effectively, and people with ongoing needs receiving EH SNGs for extended periods.

The EH Review proposes that MSD will lead a review and reset of the provision of social support services in emergency motel accommodation. This will include the development of a consistent approach to assessment, triage and referral processes for people receiving EH SNGs **(Action 14)**. MSD is also implementing a new tool to manage transitional housing referrals, placements, and vacancies **(Action 9)**.

Practices that may be difficult to replicate	*Programme design: Te Pokapū (the Rotorua Housing Hub)* MSD agrees that the model would be resource intensive to replicate and is dependent on local conditions, particularly the strong provider partnerships. Noting that more time is needed before the impacts of Te Pokapū can be assessed, at present we would not recommend replicating the model. However, there are some elements that are worth further consideration through the EH Review. For MSD, Te Pokapū is an example of an innovation that honours the principle of genuine Crown partnership. This has been achieved through supporting Te Pokapū to determine aspects of the service which would have otherwise defaulted to the Government.
Aspects that remain challenging	*Programme design: Lack of clearly defined agency roles, responsibilities, policy, and legislative settings* We acknowledge the need for greater clarity of agency roles and responsibilities. You may want agencies to undertake a more thorough examination of current policy and legislative settings via the EH Review. It is our view that gaps in understanding between agencies around the limitations (and flexibility) of respective policy, legislative and operational settings have created ongoing challenges in Rotorua and the delivery of emergency housing more generally. We recognise the challenge that a lack of clarity has presented for local partners. *Programme planning: Defining the scale and complexity of the problem as well as proposed solution at the outset* We are prioritising detailed cohort analysis **(Action 11)** and regional analysis **(Action 4)** to better understand the scale and complexity of the issues to be addressed through the EH Review.

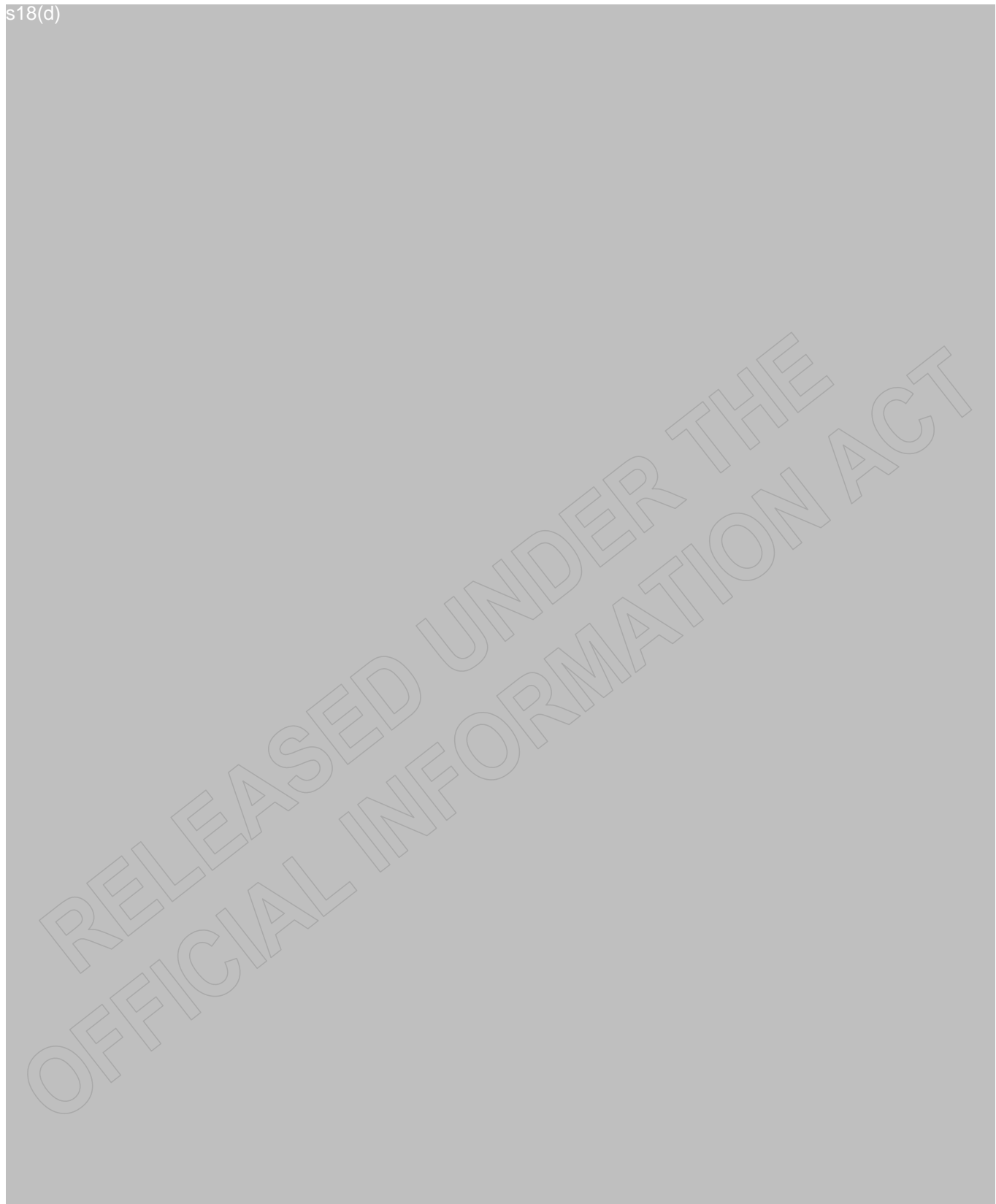| **Next steps**	We will work with HUD to incorporate and address the recommendations and lessons learned in the ongoing work to review the emergency housing system.

Author: s9(2)(a) , Senior Policy Analyst, Housing Policy

Responsible manager: Samantha Fitch, Principal Policy Analyst, Employment and Housing Policy

s18(d)