



"The Sign of a Professional"

## **NZ Heavy Haulage Association Media Statement**

### **New Rules for Relocated Homes a Cost Effective Outcome**

12 June 2014

The Heavy Haulage Association welcomes the new rules for relocated houses in the Ruapehu area as they preserve the option of cost effective and good quality homes without the unnecessary regulatory restrictions that the Ruapehu District Council was initially proposing.

The outcome is a win for the average New Zealander that wants to relocate a house into the Ruapehu area said Jonathan Bhana-Thomson, Chief Executive of the Heavy Haulage Association, which represents the house moving industry in New Zealand.

"The Ruapehu District Council wanted rules that potentially would have been restrictive and put off potential house moves. It also hadn't thought through the impact of installing wall insulation without proper consideration of the moisture issues."

The NZ Heavy Haulage Association and the local Council have been engaged in protracted discussions about the rules for houses being relocated in the Ruapehu area for the past four years, with the Association seeking a regime similar to one that was agreed in a landmark Environment Court decision about relocated houses over 10 years ago.

That decision identified that the outcome of the relocation of a house onto a new site was the same as the construction of a new house - once the reinstatement and construction had been completed.

"On the basis of the Court decision, the Heavy Haulage Association has successfully sought nationwide consistency for relocated houses in the 25 District Plans that have been consulted on since," Mr Bhana-Thomson said.

Carl Baker, the convenor of the Association's specialist housemover group said that the aim was to retain relocated houses as an economical option New Zealanders without the unnecessary red tape of a resource consent.

"We need rules for relocated homes that encourage the recycling of houses onto new sites, particularly when we are in era of increasing housing prices", Mr Baker said. "We opposed the Ruapehu Council which only wanted relocation with a more costly and longer resource consent process. We believed that the Council's regime would have made it uneconomic to relocate a house into the Ruapehu area. Instead we put forward a regime that permitted relocation as long as it occurred within agreed timeframes and met certain requirements."

The new rules require an inspection report that details the reinstatement work to be completed on a relocated house, and specific requirements for when the work is to be completed. Both these aspects are similar to the rules that are in place for other Districts around New Zealand and use an Inspection Report developed by the Association.

“It is disappointing that we needed to lodge an appeal to the Environment Court and seek the evidence of expert witnesses, particularly on the moisture risks of retro-fitting insulation in walls, before the Council finally agreed to a settlement offer that the Association put to them”, said Mr Baker. “Using information from our experts we developed a solution that would see ceiling and underfloor insulation installed, alongside the efficient heating source to warm the house. It is pleasing to see that the Council finally agreed to our proposed solution. Without our solution, the Council would have potentially been opening themselves up to liability from leaky building syndrome.”

In regard to the requirement for a bond, the Heavy Haulage Association believed that the Council had been previously taking bonds without proper authority, due to deficiencies in their previous District Plan. This had now been specifically rectified in the new Plan requirements.

In relation to the wider application of a bond, Mr Baker said “we believe that the rules in Ruapehu are specifically of relevance to the Ruapehu area, where there are a larger number of non-resident and holiday home owners, who need certain time lines and financial motivation to ensure that relocated houses are completed. Our experience in many other parts of NZ is that this can be achieved without a bond.”

Over 2000 houses are relocated annually around NZ and demand has recently been growing. Mr Bhana-Thomson noted that many Councils over the last ten years have adopted rules similar to those in the Court ruling, while many other Councils don’t have any specific rules for relocation of houses into their area – Christchurch is one area currently proposing this.

“This enables many Kiwi first-home buyers to enter into the house ownership market, knowing that they can afford to buy a home, without the need to be put off by the extra consent and bond requirements that some Council’s previously had.”

He added, “we believe that the Government should take the lead to set nationwide rules for relocated housing to encourage the recycling and reuse of good quality New Zealand homes.”

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