

Before the Independent Hearings Panel  
Wellington

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*Under:* the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

*in the matter of:* Submissions and further submissions in relation to the  
Wellington City Proposed District Plan

*and:* Hearing Stream 1

*and:* **Ryman Healthcare Limited**

Statement of Evidence of **Matthew Brown** for Wellington  
Hearing Stream 1 on behalf of Ryman Healthcare Limited

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Dated: 28 February 2023

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Reference: Luke Hinchey (luke.hinchey@chapmantripp.com)  
Hadleigh Pedler (Hadleigh.pedler@chapmantripp.com)

chapmantripp.com  
T +64 9 357 9000  
F +64 9 357 9099

PO Box 2206  
Auckland 1140  
New Zealand

Auckland  
Wellington  
Christchurch



**REPRESENTATION OF MATTHEW BROWN FOR WELLINGTON  
HEARING STREAM 1 ON BEHALF OF RYMAN HEALTHCARE  
LIMITED**

**INTRODUCTION**

- 1 My full name is Matthew Glen Brown.
- 2 I am the General Manager Development NZ for Ryman Healthcare Limited (*Ryman*). I have held this role since March 2020.
- 3 I have prepared this statement to provide a brief overview of Ryman and our interests in the present process.
- 4 Ryman is New Zealand's leading retirement village operator. Ryman was established in Christchurch in 1984 and now operates 38 retirement villages across New Zealand. Our villages provide homes for more than 13,200 elderly residents and employ over 6,700 people. Ryman is considered to be a pioneer in many aspects of the healthcare industry – including retirement village design, standards of care, and staff education. Ryman is not a developer. Ryman is a resident-focused operator of retirement villages, committed to providing the highest quality housing and care for New Zealand's elderly residents in its villages.
- 5 Ryman's existing and expected villages in the Wellington region combined will provide homes for over 1,920 of the region's ageing residents. Ryman is committed to continuing to provide the highest quality housing and care for Wellington's elderly residents. We expect continued growth and investment in the region. For example, our new comprehensive care retirement village at a site in Karori will be home to 360 residents on completion.
- 6 Widely published population statistics (referred to by Mr Collyns) strongly support a growing need for further development of retirement villages and care. I agree with Mr Collyns that there is a growing retirement living crisis given the deficit between demand and supply of appropriate retirement living options. As an example, our Karori site has 706 people on the waiting list and we have not commenced construction or started marketing the village.
- 7 We continue to be very active looking for new sites in Wellington. I note it can be difficult to find suitable sites in established residential areas that have the size and features that can accommodate our villages. Developing sites within established residential and mixed use commercial areas is important so that residents can maintain links to the communities they are currently living in (this is called "ageing in place").

- 8 We have extensive experience in RMA planning and consenting processes. A number of our Wellington region villages have been through notified resource consent processes, most recently for our site in Karori. On average, using the usual RMA process, it takes around 24 months from purchase of our sites to being ready to build. We estimate the resource consent process takes on average 12-18 months for notified consents and around 6 months for non-notified consents, although Karori was much longer than that.
- 9 In consenting processes, the needs of our residents, the social and economic benefits of our villages, and functional and operational requirements for the layouts of our villages are not given sufficient attention. Instead, the focus has tended to be on neighbouring resident amenity interests and concerns. We proactively consult with Councils before and after lodging consent applications. Ryman also designs villages to internalise the potential effects of intensification on neighbours. For example, additional height is often located towards the centre of a site, without adverse dominance, shading or privacy effects. Despite this, self-interested neighbours can create delays and disputes for no material environmental benefit. We have also found that district plans around New Zealand are inconsistent and often poorly provide for retirement villages. These two factors have led to major delays in providing much needed housing and care. Wellington is no exception.
- 10 I also note that the different requirements of our residents are reflected in lower car parking and transport needs. While Ryman provides car parking in all its villages, the age and mobility constraints of our residents mean our villages, as a whole, produce much less vehicle movements than other residential developments. Traffic movements from our villages are generally at off peak times. Our residents are also infrequent users of active modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- 11 As with Mr Collyns for the RVA, Ryman is very encouraged by the new direction in the government's enabling housing legislation. We are hopeful that this process will allow the balance of considerations in consenting processes to be reset appropriately. This outcome will enable us to move more quickly on our housing projects and invest with greater certainty.
- 12 Ryman agrees with and supports the key outcomes sought by the RVA in its submissions and further submissions.

**Matthew Brown**

28 February 2023