

Henderson - Tui Glen

Anxious wait for residents

■ by Amy Patterson

Tui Glen Motor Park residents may have to pack their bags and head for similar lodgings at Orewa if court action to save the camp fails.

Since Waitakere City Council gave notice of the lease's February expiry date, long-term residents have been considering their options.

Tui Glen proprietors David and Joyce Gauntlett-Gilbert also hold the lease to Orewa's Puriri Park motor camp, and this is where some residents are thinking of moving to.

But they will not have to move if court action to stop council closing the motor camp succeeds.

Mr Gauntlett Gilbert says they have legal advice that clearly states it would be unlawful for the council to give notice of Tui Glen's closure.

"Our legal representatives inform us that any move by the council to close Tui Glen can be prevented by injunction proceedings," he says.

"We will issue such proceedings through the

Auckland High Court if and when the council advises us of its intention to terminate our lease." Till then Mr Gauntlett-Gilbert says "it is business as usual".

Caroline Douglas has lived at Tui Glen for 18 months and says she would consider moving to Orewa.

"I'm thinking of going to the camp at Orewa, which is what a lot of people are thinking of. I don't really want to move from here," she says.

"I would actually like to stay here a bit longer." Some Orewa residents are not happy about the prospect of long-term residents at the camp-site, and time has been an issue at Tui Glen as well. According to the lease, people may stay at the motor camp for a maximum of 90 days.

The council is looking at different uses for the 12.5 acre reserve land. These include parking for the aquatic centre, open space, an open air concert, and a university campus.

Councillors will decide what its future use is over the next couple of months.

Ross Dallow, Henderson ward councillor, says the decision to terminate the lease should have been made years ago.

"It's not suitable for a motor camp to occupy such a valuable site which should be enjoyed by residents of the city," he says.

Wally Thomas, council spokesman, says they will help residents by hooking them up with government agencies if they wish.

"We don't have any direct association with the tenants. Our relationship is with the camp manager who holds the lease," he says.

"Having said that, the council is keen that those long-term residents find suitable accommodation because a lot of them have made that their home for a long time."

Gerry Vermeulen, in his 70s, has lived at Tui Glen for 21 years and has been a "Henderson-site" for about 35 years. His caravan is not able to be towed.

"It's my home, it's handy to Henderson."

He has liaised with council officers over the

residents' plight, and has a letter of assurance from mayor Bob Harvey that if he has to move it will be to a place of "higher standard in amenity, security, and stability".

Mr Vermeulen says he will wait and see what is on the offering table before he warms to the idea.

Jo Dinning, resident of 14 years, feels like she is treated as a society outsider.

"They keep saying that the residents here are homeless and down and outs. When we came here, sure we've stayed here longer than we should have and all that, but it was a choice," she says. "We like living in caravans but it doesn't mean to say we are the dogs of society."

Merle Ellis, resident of 15 years, agrees: "What harm are we doing here?"

In 1925, Tui Glen was the first camping ground to be registered in the country. The Gauntlett-Gilberts have been on a month-by-month lease which they say has made it difficult to plan for long-term improvements to the site.

West Weekly (pg 1)

PROVIDED BY
WAITAKERE LIBRARY &
INFORMATION SERVICES
LOCAL HISTORY &
REFERENCE SERVICES

4 July 2001