

# Speech For David Rutherford 6 July 2018

I have been asked to speak this afternoon. Firstly I must say that we are very sad that you are leaving.

David, I'm here to bring the warm wishes from the Community Housing sector and from all at Community Housing Aotearoa.

I want to share with everyone the amazing leadership that you, and Margaret, have provided to support us over the past couple of years in advancing our vision to see All New Zealanders well-housed.

By linking the work we do with the Human Rights Framework and the Right to Housing you have given us a strong compass to guide our work and a powerful moral mandate to carry on.

Through your leadership you have helped us understand how the work our sector does everyday - supporting the most vulnerable New Zealanders into housing - contributes to the realisation of the right to housing at a practical level.

You helped us understand that leadership from our sector could make a difference.

You worked with us towards the idea of embedding the Right to Housing through the development of a cross-party Homes Accord which would see successive Governments held accountable.

You supported the idea of developing a transparent score card that would help us track progress against the implementation of measures to see all New Zealanders well-housed.

And then you demonstrated your personal commitment with your speech at our Conference in June 2017, days after the passing of your Father.

Despite our expectation that you would not speak, you were there.

You showed us a picture of the home you grew up in in South Taranaki. A modest house but an 'adequate house' that provided a good home and a solid foundation for your family of six – enabling each of you to contribute to New Zealand in different, but equally important ways.

You showed us that human rights are not just about grand statements, but the 'Why' in why we do this work, and the 'How' in the way that we work.

Your speech had everyone in the room standing, with barely a dry eye in the house. And you gave the whole sector the confidence to never give up.

The greatest gift you have given us is the space to have those big, bold conversations about what a better New Zealand needs to look like.

In return we have a small gift for you. It is a bowl with the imprint of ake ake leaves. This seems appropriate as ake ake in te Reo Māori means forever – and this represents the contribution you have made to our work in demanding that successive governments honour their commitment to a human right to housing.