



## Waiheke rest home still open - for some

[AMY MAAS](#) Last updated 05:00 12/01/2012

Waiheke Island pensioners who have been forced to relocate to the mainland after the impending closure of the island's only rest home have found their lives turned upside down.

Last September Seaside Sanctuary told its 20 residents it would close in November 2011 as the trust which runs the home could not afford a much-needed \$4.4 million upgrade.

Although most residents were moved to alternative accommodation, six still live at the home, which now operates as a smaller unit.

Seaside Charitable Trust chairman Paul Harris said the rest home was still in the process of being closed, but that six patients still lived there.

"They are more able-bodied people who are able to be moved to a supported living situation. When we can find supported living arrangements for them on the island we will close," he said.

Harris said that having a rest home on Waiheke Island didn't work financially, but the trust was looking at other avenues to keep the elderly on the island.

"We are exploring the possibility of building residential accommodation where elderly people can live in small groups in a supported environment," he said.

Local Wes Burns, whose 92-year-old mother Doreen lived at the home and advocated for pensioner housing on the island, was surprised when he learnt that the home will close.

"I heard it's not closing until June. It's very confusing," said Burns.

"I was a little surprised at the initial announcement of the closure, there was no real reason for it and there were so few residents."

While Burns' mother has been moved to Selwyn Village in Point Chevalier for medical treatment, other residents have found themselves in a difficult position.

John Pope was moved to Ranfurly Veterans Home and Hospital in Mt Roskill nearly three months ago.

The 59-year-old who suffers from "mild dementia" is said to be "petrified" of the city and travels back to Waiheke Island every day.

"He absolutely hates it. The worst part is when he would go to the bus stop on Waiheke, people would know him and if he fell asleep they'd wake him. But in Auckland no one knows him," said his sister-in-law Sandra Pope.

"The danger is he could get mugged and he suffers from diabetes, so if he falls asleep at the bus stop and no one helps him he won't get back in time to take his medication."

Pope added that while other Waiheke residents have also been moved to Ranfurly, which has better facilities and activities for residents, the move had "traumatised" her brother-in-law.

"It's a tragedy for him. His whole world has collapsed. He spent his whole life on the island," she said.

"We've asked [Seaside Sanctuary] if they would have him back but they said it wasn't a possibility. But he's so traumatised, I might go back and see if they will take him back."

Harris said the organisation's manager has kept in touch with former rest home residents who

have been moved to Auckland city and has "certainly put in a lot of effort" by visiting the pensioners.

- **Auckland Now**