


ACT Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and  
Territory and Municipal Services

via email: committees@parliament.act.gov.au

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**Submission on the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 343  
Residential blocks surrendered under the loose fill asbestos insulation eradication scheme**

I write this submission as an individual who has grown up in the beautiful RZ1 streets of Pearce and Torrens since my family first built a home in 1967, and also as a person who is now personally affected by Mr Fluffy in the home I purchased, not far from my original home, in 1999. In 2004, my current home was extended significantly to accommodate a growing family. It is now a spacious, modern, single level dwelling, yet remains surrounded by lush gardens that create the beauty and offer the privacy for which these older, established suburbs are known and are the reason for their popularity. I am both saddened and angered by DV343 that seeks to employ labels such as "urban renewal" as an excuse to exploit these popular suburbs and change their character and integrity forever.

Impact on suburban character

By the ACT Government's own admission neither the principles of equity nor the character of our suburbs come into play in DV343 that applies to less than 1% of all RZ1 suburban blocks in Canberra, or 770 blocks that are greater than or equal to 700m<sup>2</sup>. The only considerations are:

- (a) blocks will have the potential for a greater use and so the re-sale value of the blocks will increase, and
- (b) rates are directly linked to the unimproved land value which means more revenue from rates.

Seventy percent (70%) of the Mr Fluffy homes in my street are concentrated within the first 230m. It is already a high traffic area, where we experience significant on-street parking, because of the large number of battleaxe blocks. There is a current system in place for evaluating building applications for dual occupancy and there is no valid argument for changing that system as part of a blanket rezoning proposal for Mr Fluffy blocks in established RZ1 areas where people have committed to Crown Leases because of the zoning and the character of the neighbourhood.

Impact on neighbouring properties

A number of submissions have been lodged by neighbours of Mr Fluffy blocks who feel they will be affected by the changes proposed by DV343. The sentiments expressed therein echo the sentiments of many more that I have heard. DV343 will inevitably increase population density, traffic, parking problems and have an adverse impact on the general feel and character of established RZ1 suburban areas that are attractive for the privacy and tranquillity they offer. This is particularly relevant for streets that have a high concentration of Mr Fluffy homes.

Impact on owners wishing to re-purchase Mr Fluffy blocks

Quite apart from the character of our established suburbs, Mr Fluffy home owners have been disadvantaged enough. Few have truly realized the value of their homes through the buyback scheme to be able to find a comparable dwelling in a comparable area. I know how far short our offer falls of something comparable. Our only alternative would be to look in the newer suburbs; those where the blocks are small, where the only way to get a 300m<sup>2</sup> home is to build a two-story,

ageing-unfriendly dwelling, and where you feel you are sharing your neighbour's yard. That's not how I want to live, it's not how my family wants to live and it's not how my neighbours want to live.

I still do not understand why I have to surrender my block at all – let alone buy it back at an inflated price because it has been approved for a subdivision, apparently, with a new lease, neither of which are relevant to my needs. The Government would have come out ahead if they had offered me the rebuilding costs of my home and allowed me to retain my block, for which I would have happily continued to pay the rates. In circumstances where I am being forced to surrender my block, however, I do not believe that I should have to re-purchase it for a value greater than the market value I have been offered under the buyback scheme.

#### Supporters of DV343

It is telling that the supporters of DV343 are those who stand to make money from the proposal: the Master Builders' Association and the Housing Industry Association who are clearly motivated solely by the opportunities for additional housing that will benefit their members - local builders and contractors, and the ACT Government.

#### Conclusion

DV343 flies in the face of the sound planning principles that have served the ACT effectively to date. I strongly object to having to re-purchase my block at a value based on increased development opportunities that I do not intend to exploit and that are applied inequitably in established streets and suburbs resulting in inconsistencies within RZ1 areas. Existing RZ1 zoning permissions should be preserved and DV343 should be rejected, particularly in its application to blocks in Hawker Street, Torrens.

Sincerely,

Gabry Borzatti