



Comment

on the

Recommended Final Variation to the Territory Plan No. 244 – Duffy part Block 2 Section 56 Stromlo Settlement (DV244)

**March
2005**

INTRODUCTION

ACTCOSS acknowledges that modern day Canberra has been built on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people. We pay our respects to their elders and recognise the displacement and disadvantage they have suffered since European settlement. ACTCOSS celebrates the Ngunnawal's living culture and valuable contribution to the ACT community.

The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for not-for-profit community organisations, people living with disadvantage, and low-income citizens of the Territory. ACTCOSS is a member of the nationwide COSS network, made up of each of the state Councils and the national body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

ACTCOSS's objectives are representation of people living with disadvantage, the promotion of equitable social policy, and the development of a professional, cohesive and effective community sector.

The membership of the Council includes the majority of community based service providers in the social welfare area, a range of community associations and networks, self-help and consumer groups and interested individuals.

ACTCOSS receives funding from the Community Services Program (CSP) which is funded by the ACT Government.

Comment on Recommended Final Variation to the Territory Plan No. 244

ACTCOSS welcomes the opportunity to make some brief comments on the Recommended Final Variation to the Territory Plan No. 244. ACTCOSS thanks the Committee for conducting a public inquiry into the matter and allowing members of the public and community organisations an additional opportunity to provide input on the changes proposed for the Stromlo Settlement.

ACTCOSS raises the concern that the Recommended Final Variation proposes the creation of a settlement with a significantly different social mix from that which existed before the January 2003 bushfires. The inclusion of 20 additional private residences will extensively alter the demographic characteristics of the settlement, and potentially reduce its capacity to regain the social networks and support that existed prior to the bushfires.

The Stromlo settlement was previously comprised of a tight-knit community based on close personal and extensive familial relationships, and was heavily linked with the history of the community's development as a forestry settlement. The proposed inclusion of at least 20 additional dwellings will significantly dilute this shared social connectedness, with the dramatic introduction of a large number of new residents, who will not share these links nor the experience of the bushfires. There is likely to be a disparity in the socio-economic status of existing and new residents, which may impede the re-establishment of community feeling or possibly create additional division between "old" and "new" residents.

ACTCOSS also notes that the Recommended Final Variation has deleted the requirement that 50% of the site be retained for use by ACT Housing as part of the public housing stock, which was included in the original draft variation. This leaves open the possibility that, while previous residents may initially be returned to Stromlo in re-built publicly-owned housing, the Government may progressively sell off the public housing stock to private owners, thus creating a private enclave of high socio-economic status. ACTCOSS notes the Planning and Land Council's objections to the proposal.

ACTCOSS recommends that the committee consult directly with affected former residents and engage in frank discussion with them about their wishes and their first choice option. ACTCOSS is concerned that former residents feel under pressure to support the government's proposed development for fear that if this is not supported the Government will refuse to rebuild on the site at all.

We also believe that this Variation should be considered in the wider context of the proposed changes to other parts of the former Stromlo Forest area abutting the suburb of Duffy.