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ACT Legislative Assembly

**Subject: Inquiry into proposed Appropriation (Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication)
Bill 2014-15**

To whom it may concern,

In June 2014, we received notice from the ACT Government that our home at [redacted] had been determined to be a Mr Fluffy house. By late September, and after detailed consideration, we decided that we were in a financial position to demolish the house ourselves, and rebuild, hoping for reimbursement by the current ACT Government.

Before we could commence the administration required to demolish our home, and well before 28 October, we received advice from other families who were also considering self-funded demolition, that the Asbestos Taskforce had advised that this approach could present too high a financial risk for families, and that we should await the Government's decision on the way-ahead. Noting based on this advice, we awaited the formal decisions from the ACT Government, trusting that any decision would be fair and equitable for all affected home owners.

We now find, however, that those families who did demolish their homes before 28 October 2014 have been given the opportunity to retain their land in-full, and will be compensated for the rebuild of their home. As we were specifically advised against this course of action, we now feel that we have been extremely disadvantaged by this unfair decision.

In relation to acting fairly towards all impacted homeowners, the ACT Government has by its decisions created two classes of Mr Fluffy Homeowner:

- those that can keep their current land, either through having already knocked down their house, or by virtue of living in an expensive, heritage listed area; and
- those who will be forced off their land, through financial hardship, e.g. not being able to re-purchase even a sub-divided block at future market rates.

Like many other Mr Fluffy owners, we fall into the second category, and will be financially (and emotionally) disadvantaged.

We now face the prospect of having to find a new home in a market that is already moving with the impact of Mr Fluffy, increasing our debt to do this, and having to reconsider our life

plans. In the next 6-12 months, we had planned to rent out our current home and use the income to travel around Australia. We will no longer be able to afford to do this.

We must move away from our neighbourhood, our home for 16 years, yet had we acted against the prevailing advice, we would be able to stay here. This is unfair!

We implore the ACT Government to reconsider the decision to exclude homeowners from post-demolition possession of their land. It is the right thing to do for all concerned.

In terms of the timing for any revised decisions, I note the following statement from the Chief Minister from The Canberra Times (25/11/2014)

"Once we buy the first house, that really is the scheme design locked in because you can't disadvantage people if you start changing the scheme beyond that".

With this Bill due to be passed by the Assembly on 4 December, time for any reconsideration towards a more equitable solution, is fast running out.

We urge the Inquiry to consider the 'fairness test' of the ACT Government's decision in moving forward.

Yours Sincerely,

Ryan

25 November 2014