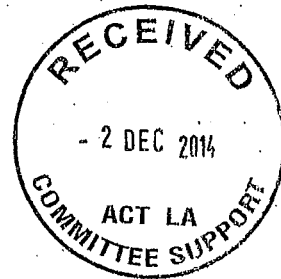


From:  
Sent:  
To: RATTENBURY  
Subject: asbestos proposal



Mr. Rattenbury,

I write concerning the programme of acquisition and destruction of houses that the government has recently announced. I understand that aspects of it need to be considered by the House of Assembly.

This letter is a plea for you to do what you can to ensure the programme proceeds on a more flexible and fairer basis than is currently proposed. The proposal will affect a wide range of people and their homes, all in widely varying circumstances. The present one size fits all approach greatly threatens the well being of some people. As it stands home owners seem to have little say in what is done to them, and almost no rights in the matter.


In our case, we are in our sixties and simply do not have the financial resources to purchase and build up another family home if our present home is taken from us. We have owned our home for 35 years and I am bewildered that, at our age, we suddenly face having it taken from us and being made homeless. The "compensation" they are apparently offering is designed to be out of date before we even get it, and there are reports of house prices already going up in anticipation of the rush. To add insult to injury, the Chief Minister has stated that she intends to rezone the land she takes from us and sell it at a profit. Thus we lose the capital gain on our land which we have always told our kids is their inheritance to help them in their lives. It seems the only ones to gain out of this sordid episode are the developers (who just happen to be major contributors to the ACT Labor Party!).

We have never been asked by the Asbestos Taskforce, or anybody else, about our wishes -- all we have ever received are demands and threats that seem to assume that we are criminals, or defeated enemy, that need to be humiliated, demoralised, and beaten into submission.

A far better approach would be to remove all coercion, and have the programme run for a longer time. Also people should be provided with information on (eg) comparative risk assessments so they can make their own decisions in their own time. By comparative risk assessments I mean comparing the risks of known levels of airborne asbestos fibres (which in our case are undetectable) with other life risks we choose to expose ourselves to or avoid such as passive and active smoking, driving a car, skin cancer from sun exposure, bowel cancer from processed deli meats, and so forth. With such information, devoid of the hysteria that has been built up by the press, surely people should be permitted to make their own decisions.

Ever since the announcement we have laid awake night after night stressed out about our powerlessness in this situation and the complete denial of rights by the government. It is as if the ACT is a corrupt third world dictatorship, not a modern, educated society.

Haines

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