

DV 343 Residential blocks surrendered under the loose fill asbestos insulation eradication scheme.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this Draft Variation.

I would like to put this consideration into the broader context of **housing choice and sustainability**, particularly for low income earners and for the fastest growing demographic - the downsizing baby boomers who, like myself, do not want to live in apartments, and would like to remain in their community. The ACT is also facing mounting infrastructure costs and transport challenges that can only be curtailed by a more densely developed city.

In regard to the Mr Fluffy homes, the ACT government has taken firm and decisive control of the buyback and eradication phases of the process but should not now outsource their responsibility for the redevelopment of these blocks. The current proposal to release the remediated sites to the market for dual occupancy development leaves established single dwelling neighbours feeling naturally anxious.

Hence, rather than just producing a tightened up version of an existing policy and applying it iniquitously to the Fluffy blocks (for financial rather than planning objectives), I would like to see a broader response to what is a unique opportunity for creative and sensitively developed housing alternatives in Canberra's established suburbs.

The ACT government have enacted some constructive policies encouraging alternative housing. The Secondary Residence policy has been a welcome innovation but without a separate titling provision has limited capacity to meet the growing need for small, smart housing options for low income or retirement living. The current zoning provisions, restricting unit titling of multiple occupancy developments are a "blunt instrument" which restricts redevelopment to areas that are often not suitable and quarantines large parcels of residential land that are often better suited to higher density redevelopment.

Hence, I would like to suggest a more far-reaching proposal:

1. I propose that the ACT government themselves develop these blocks in consultation with the affected neighbours, particularly those Mr Fluffy residents who wish to rebuild on their blocks. In doing so the government could make use of the many talented architects who have demonstrated their capacity to design sensitive and creative homes without the overly restrictive guidelines such as those now being proposed; homes which could deliver a win-win for the owners, the neighbours, create more work for the building industry and that, when sold, would yield a much greater return to the government's coffers.
2. In response to the justifiable outcry to the iniquitous nature of the draft policy, I also propose that these developments constitute the first phase of a broader application of the policy to allow unit-titled dual occupancy developments across all residential areas.
3. Furthermore, I propose that the block amalgamations be allowed (there are over 100 adjoining blocks) for multi-unit developments. These will provide the much sort after town house style community-enhancing developments that are much sort after and in short supply.

I believe that successfully redeveloped residential sites across Canberra would be a boon for the government and a much needed catalyst for housing choice across residential Canberra so that we can all enjoy the prospects of a more sustainable community and one in which we can remain living longer in our established neighbourhoods.

Yours faithfully,

Allan Spira FRAIA
23.08.15