

2016

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**QUARTERLY REPORT: UPDATE ON THE ACT GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO
THE ISSUE OF 'MR FLUFFY' LOOSE FILL ASBESTOS INSULATION
1 OCTOBER 2015 – 31 DECEMBER 2015**

**Presented by
Mr Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations**

Taskforce Quarterly Report – 1 October 2015 – 31 December 2015

Overview

This is the fifth in a series of regular reports to the Legislative Assembly on implementation of the ACT Government's Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme (the Scheme). This report complements information available through the Asbestos Response Taskforce's (the Taskforce) existing communication channels including website, social media and electronic newsletters. It is also in addition to other Assembly reporting through the Budget process.

This report captures activity and achievements of the 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015 period. This quarter was another pivotal period in the delivery of the government's response with a high level of activity, including demolition, leading to the end of 2015.

Key areas of activity canvassed in this report include:

- exceeding of the demolition target for 2015 with 57 affected houses safely demolished
- the ongoing focus on community education and information provision including the release of the publication, *Mr Fluffy – from Removal to Renewal: A guide for neighbours and the Canberra community*
- key changes in legislation through the *Building (Loose-fill Asbestos Eradication) Legislation Amendment Act 2015*
- successful implementation of emergency protocols and actions following a transport accident

- ongoing provision of high level support to affected homeowners and neighbours, with a focus on 'cluster' areas
- the Taskforce sharing best practice at the National Asbestos Awareness conference in November 2015.

A key factor underpinning the delivery of the Scheme is the Taskforce's strong collaboration and partnerships with industry, regulators and other key stakeholders. It is also made possible through the intensive and genuine engagement with neighbours and community around the demolition response and ongoing support of those most affected by this issue.

During the reporting period communication and engagement efforts broadened to community education around the safety and logistics of the demolition program. This information reached the community through a variety of communication mechanisms such as attending *Parties at the Shops* events, Community Council meetings, door knocking in affected neighbourhoods, posting educational videos including live Periscope videos and through regular and engaging social media and web content.

Acquisition of contaminated properties continued during this period with 793 houses owned by the Territory at 31 December 2015. To date a total of 816 properties have now been surrendered to the government through the Buyback Program.

A key priority for the government remains on ensuring that affected properties are maintained and secured until they are demolished to limit impact to neighbours and community.

With more than 12,500 neighbours having an affected property in their street and nearly 3,500 of these neighbours living near several affected houses, the

Taskforce continued to work with the community to ensure concerns were reported and resolved quickly. This included a concerted campaign in the lead up to the festive season, where the community was asked to assist in complementing the existing security arrangements by 'keeping an eye' on vacant houses. As a result, there was not an increase in activity over this period.

Ongoing support continued for homeowners in this period, through formal one on one meetings and engagement to broader information provision and referral. The Taskforce continued its outreach model of support in town centres and connections with Community Service partners.

The demolition program ramped up considerably in this period as the ten Head Contractors appointed began work across the Territory. Safety is the primary focus of activity and WorkSafe ACT regulators are closely involved in monitoring the work. Efficiency and reducing disruption for the community is also a key direction the government has given the Taskforce and this is reflected in the demolition scheduling.

Industry is also working collectively to harness innovation in the methods of asbestos removal and demolition with support of WorkSafe ACT. A number of new methods were trialled in this period and are now being successfully used across the program. Such innovation is also being closely watched by other jurisdictions and was a focus of the Taskforce's presentation at the National Safety Eradication Agency's National Conference keynote address in November 2015.

Finally, the Taskforce continues to work closely with media around educating and informing our community on this significant community undertaking. This

includes on-site visits to see practice in action, regular briefings and accessibility of officials. This will continue through 2016.

An overview of key Scheme activity undertaken between 1 October 2015 and 31 December 2015 is outlined below.

Buyback Program

The government's first advice was, and remains, that these properties should not be resided in. This is why the government offered to purchase all properties through the voluntary Buyback Program as at 28 October 2014. To date more than 95 percent of owners have accepted offers and are participating in the program.

As at 31 December 2015, 19 owners had elected not to participate in the Buyback Program, and as at 14 February 2016, 22 owners have now made this decision. There are many personal considerations for owners deciding not to participate such as wanting to demolish the house privately outside of the Scheme or wanting to leave the house and its future management to their estate. The Taskforce has ensured that all owners had the information and support to make an informed decision around participation in the voluntary program.

In keeping with the practice adopted in the lead up to 30 June 2015, the Taskforce continued this quarter to write to owners a month before the Territory's offer to purchase their affected property expired reminding them of the final date for participation and the implications of expiring offers. Often this prompted further personalised discussion between owners and the Taskforce.

Such an approach can be seen reflected in the flexibility around settlement times for those owners participating. To date 33 homeowners have indicated to the Taskforce they would like to stay in their homes to 2020 while 94 have asked for a settlement between now and 30 June 2020.

During this quarter, 17 valuations were undertaken. Two homeowners sought to have a Presidential Determination undertaken on their property. This brought owner-initiated presidential requests to 33. The Taskforce has initiated 27 presidential determinations in line with its policy position if the valuations came in at greater than 10 per cent variance.

The average price paid for properties to date is \$701,281 and median is \$640,000. Offers range from \$360,000 to \$3 million. As at 31 December 2015, the total of offers made was \$744.7 million. Many owners have sought to exercise their stamp duty concession as they move to another property in the ACT with 528 concessions paid totalling \$12.6 million as at 31 December 2015.

The aggregate financial impact of the Scheme will continue to be updated as part of the Taskforce's normal budget updates and reporting processes. At this stage, the estimated net cost of the Scheme continues to be \$400 million.

Key Buyback Statistics – totals as at 31 December 2015	
Offers accepted	965
Properties owned by Territory	793
Private demolitions approved (contract prior to 28 Oct 2014)	12
ACT Government Housing properties	5
Range of offers made	\$360,000 - \$3 million
Total of offers accepted	\$696,708,543
Average price paid for properties	\$701,281
Median price paid for properties	\$640,000
Presidential Determinations	60

Demolition Program

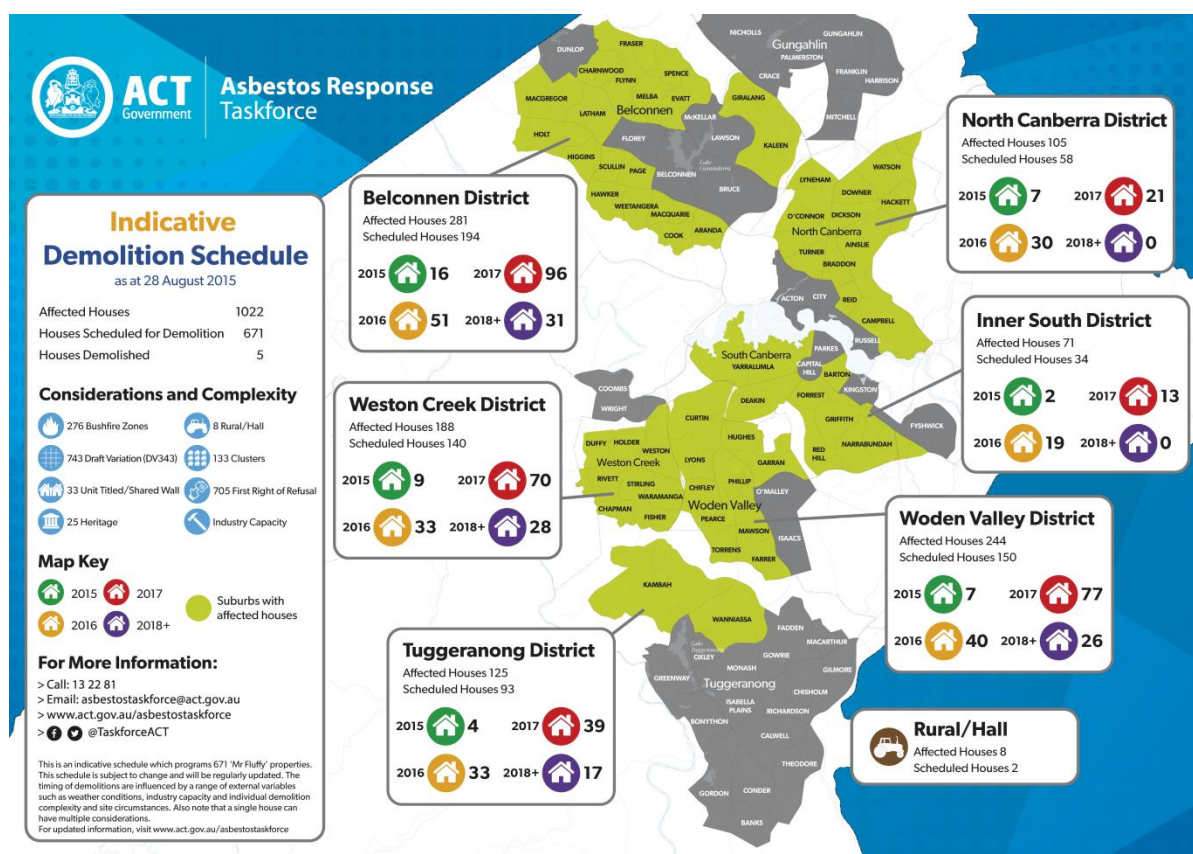
Demolition Scheduling

A key focus on the Taskforce at the end of 2015 and start of 2016 is the updating of the demolition schedule for the next six months, reflecting industry capacity, additional surrendered properties and ensuring of efficiencies across the demolitions and subsequent sales program.

The Taskforce made a commitment when it publicly released the first schedule on 31 August 2015, to release updated schedules each six months in February and August. As at the August 2015 schedule, 671 properties were mapped for demolition. This number increased to just over 720 properties in the second schedule released on 19 February 2016.

With each release of the schedule, the Taskforce will continue to inform owners of their properties scheduled demolition window and information for the public will be provided at the suburb level.

August 2015 Indicative Demolition Schedule of 671 properties



Demolition and remediation

As at 31 December 2015 a total of 57 houses had been demolished exceeding the target of 50 demolitions by the end of the 2015. Demolition has continued strongly at the start of 2016, with planning having been put in place to ensure no delays to the program after the holiday period.

As at 14 February 2016 a total of 80 properties had been demolished and the target of 200 demolitions for 2016 is on track to be achieved.

The Taskforce, regulators and industry are working collaboratively to ensure the safe and efficient demolition of properties and this includes regular reporting, including through the Taskforce's Governance group, the Eradication Scheme Steering Committee, and briefing.

The Demolition Program is a large capital works undertaking for the Territory and for the industry. The Taskforce is committed to continued improvement and innovation and this includes refinements in the practical approach to demolition activity for efficiency purposes and as understanding of these works broadens.

As we approach the demolition of 100 houses, we are already seeing refinements. It is important to understand that the regulator, WorkSafe ACT, ensures that work is carried out in compliance with the requirements of the legislation.

A refinement includes the methods in which contractors are sealing properties to create negative air environments. Such environments are critical in the phase of internal asbestos removal to allow for the safe removal of loose fill asbestos by ensuring that no stray fibres can escape the work area.

To date plastic sheeting is placed on roofs and windows and vents are sealed to create such an environment. Another method now being applied is the use of shrink wrap to encapsulate the entire house. In many cases the wrap goes to ground level. In both these methods negative air pressure units containing fans are then placed in the windows and doors. A licensed and experienced Class A asbestos removalist is engaged by the Head Contractor to undertake this work.

Methods of encapsulation meet WorkSafe ACT requirements and they continue to provide oversight on all phases of the demolition.

Encapsulation method in use on a Mr Fluffy property



This method was also used in the management of a Mr Fluffy property which was damaged by fire in Page.

The Taskforce and WorkSafe ACT continue to work with the owner of this private property around the future of the property to support the owner's decision making and also to ensure ongoing communications with neighbouring residents.

As refinements to processes and practices occur, be it in the methods used, sequencing of activities or equipment on site, the Taskforce is updating its communications materials for neighbours so they can be confident in what they are seeing on the sites is expected.

Also supporting this confidence is the ongoing debriefing and collaboration of industry. Following a successful 'Lessons Learned' workshop after the pilot demolition program in August 2015, another workshop will occur in the second half of this year, supporting the ongoing informal briefing activities.

This information is also being shared with other jurisdictions. In November 2015 the Taskforce was invited to present at the International Conference of Asbestos Awareness and Management 2015, hosted by the National Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency.

The event brought together local and international experts in asbestos management, health, advocacy and governance to look at best practice in managing the dangers of asbestos in our community and abroad. The Head of the Taskforce, Mr Andrew Kefford provided information on the ACT context including best practice in policy, regulation and community education in the management of Mr Fluffy.



A copy of the presentation can be found here: www.asbestossafety.gov.au

Key Demolition Statistics – totals to 31 December 2015	
Houses demolished	57
Targets for demolition	2016: 200 houses 2017: 300 houses 2018: 300 houses
Number of Head Contractors Appointed	10
Number of properties scheduled for demolition	671
Number of doorknocks to date to inform community about the demolition program	480

Emergency management incident and response

On 15 December 2015 the Taskforce's contingency and broader emergency service and regulatory responses were tested when a truck with rubble from a Mr Fluffy demolition site in Coree on route to the West Belconnen Resource Centre rolled onto its side near a roundabout on Uriarra Road.

There was no risk to health and safety as prior to demolition loose fill asbestos insulation had been removed and the rubble is transported damp.

Processes were immediately put in place to support traffic flow in the area and licensed asbestos assessors and removalists were on site to keep the load damp, establish precautionary exclusion zones, undertake air monitoring and provide advice to officials.

WorkSafe ACT inspectors and officers of the Taskforce, Procurement and Capital Works, site contractors and Environment Protection Authority worked collaboratively with Emergency Services Agency to manage the response and intensive media management occurred at the site with the Acting Work Safety Commissioner.

The truck was righted and load safely removed that evening, with the road fully re-opening to traffic soon after. An investigation into the incident itself was carried out by ACT Policing and an informal briefing and lessons learned occurred between officials.



Truck incident on Uriarra Road, 15 December 2015.

Demolition communications and engagement

Communications and engagement activities which inform the community about demolition activity continue to be a high priority for the Taskforce.

A coordinated engagement strategy is in place and includes grass-roots engagement activity such as door knocking to broader information provision. For neighbours of the first 50 properties to be demolished, door knocking occurred at 480 properties. More than 240 conversations were held and the Taskforce provided information packs on the demolition program and answered questions with insight from this process used to further refine its broader communication efforts.

The Taskforce continued to expand its communication mechanisms to reach the broader Canberra community through targeted engagement in areas directly affected by this legacy issue.

The Taskforce had a presence at Parties at the Shops in Garran, Watson, Erindale, Kaleen and Hall throughout 2015 and attended the Tuggeranong Festival on 21 November 2015. At these events the Taskforce explained the Mr Fluffy issue and the government's response, answered questions around demolition scheduling, demolition and work underway to reduce impact to communities.



Asbestos Response Taskforce at Parties at Shops events (Hall, Kaleen, Erindale) and Tuggeranong Community Festival

On 11 October 2015, communication mechanisms extended with the inaugural Periscope video broadcast live from Parties at the Shops in Erindale.

At each event, the Taskforce targeted its information and approach to suit the audience. For example the Tuggeranong region will see a large volume of demolition activity with a total of 125 affected houses in the region. Just under

30 per cent of these homes are scheduled for demolition before June 2016. Noting the significance to the community, during the Tuggeranong Festival officers of the Taskforce joined with local residents (and a surprise visit by Victor the Viking) to create a mural on 'What community means to Tuggeranong', noting at its heart, like the Buyback and Demolition process itself, is about people, not just houses.

Throughout the Scheme the Taskforce is sharing the stories of owners as they reflect on their journey through the Scheme and asking for their direct input in support needed moving forward.

To assist this process, a Moving Forward Survey was undertaken with owners in late 2015. The Taskforce greatly appreciated the invaluable information homeowners provided by taking the time to complete the survey. The survey will help inform the Taskforce engagement and support services and information in 2016.

The target audience for the survey was the 1,022 households eligible for the Buyback Program. With 156 survey responses received, representing 15.3 per cent of the target audience base, feedback received indicated that 93 per cent of survey respondents were homeowners, with 73 per cent having moved to a new home. Of these people 48 per cent of respondents' homes were in Weston Creek (24 per cent) and Belconnen (24 per cent) respectively, with the majority of respondents having moved to Tuggeranong (34 per cent).

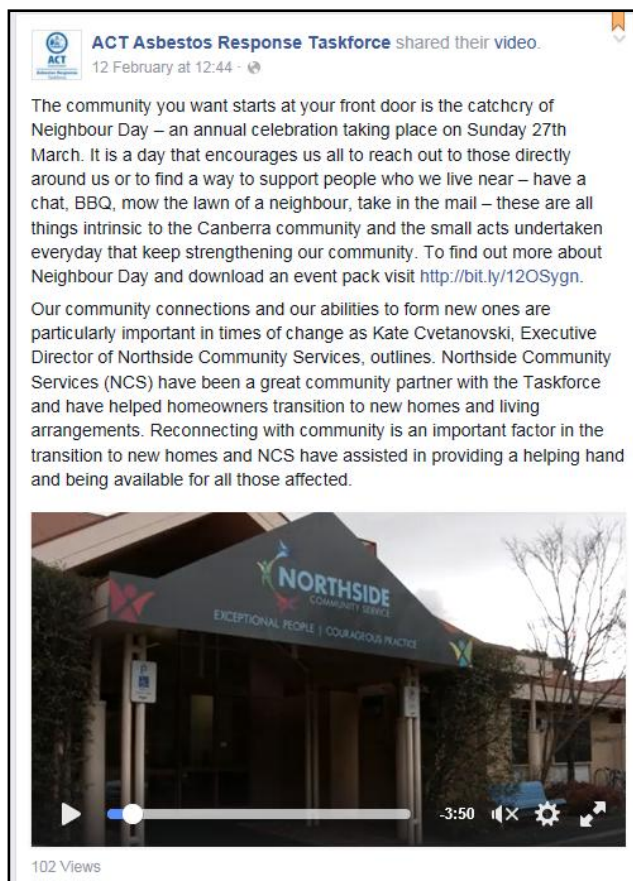
The survey found that the majority of homeowners and tenants sought information from the fortnightly newsletter, followed by the media. Just on half of the respondents attended an engagement event in the past year and

said that family and friends or workplaces or clubs is where they have found ongoing support.

The survey indicated that in the future most people will continue to seek information from the newsletter and website and will be looking to general practitioners and family and friends, followed by workplaces, as future avenues of support.

Future support and information needs identified were around forming connections with new communities or neighbourhoods as well as ongoing information on health and wellbeing.

Reflecting this feedback, this will be a focus for the Taskforce in 2016, including a partnership with Neighbour Day. This is already being reflected across Taskforce communication channels.



Recent Facebook posts with a focus on community connection, reflecting Moving Forward survey results.

In the reporting period, the Taskforce undertook targeted mail-outs to owners and to neighbours in demolition cluster areas sending a total of 7,259 letters. In the same period, 13 editions of the e-newsletter were sent to over 2,600 subscribers each week, the majority of which are affected homeowners. This brings to 48 the total number of e-newsletters the Taskforce has sent with a total readership in excess of 52,000.



The Taskforce's web presence also continued to grow with 118,165 page views from 22,583 users in the reporting period. From 2 March 2015 when the site was re-launched there has been a total of 214,924 page views from 32,312 users.

The page will continue to be a key part of the broader community education on the demolition program, providing details on scheduling and activity as well as links to educational videos and resources.

The Taskforce's social media presence including Facebook experienced an increase in users following inclusion of more video content and live demolition updates. There was an increase of 249 likes with a reach of 99,846 users. In total, the page has 948 likes and a total reach of 255,329 users.

A key focus of the Taskforce's communications and engagement approach as the demolition program continues will be around those 167 cluster areas being two or more houses in close proximity to each other. These are found across 45 suburbs with a total of 3,500 neighbours in these areas.

As well as supporting information and education provision on the demolition process the Taskforce will also be working with those communities around change management noting renewal will occur in the coming years.

Key communications and engagement statistics - totals to 31 December 2015	
Website	232,846 page views
Information Sheets	30 published
Educational videos	16, 2431 views on YouTube
Doorknocking	480 houses for pilot and first schedule = 1220 contacts
Newsletter	48 editions 1,082 = average readership 51,939 total readership
Letterbox drops and mail outs	More than 24 mail outs to owners and cluster areas totalling 13,600 letters
Social media	418 posts on Facebook and 963 followers reaching 255,329 users
Public Forums/ Drop In Sessions/ Engagement Activities	17 with 1,800 people in attendance
Community Council Meetings	14 attended and presented 295 audience total
Business/partnerships/ banks	16 banks 5 businesses 3 utilities
Senior Morning Teas	8 amounting to 300 attendees
Media mentions of Mr Fluffy	16,000 (print and broadcast with syndication)

Working with local media has also been a key focus of the Taskforce since its inception, noting the important role media play in educating and informing the community on key issues, such as the Mr Fluffy response.

Due to the technical aspects of this issue, regular background briefings are held to support knowledge and understanding and proactive updates provided. This work continued in the last quarter with regular radio appearances by the Taskforce as well as engagement with other mediums.

On 13 November 2015 the Taskforce, contractors and licensed asbestos assessors provided *The Canberra Times* with a walkthrough of a Mr Fluffy house prior to demolition.

The property had undergone internal asbestos removal with demolition to occur shortly after. Internal asbestos removal is when the inside of the house is pulled apart under negative air and any fibres in the walls, roof and subfloor are removed, double bagged, placed in barrels and securely disposed of at Mugga Resource Centre.

You can see in the photographs that the journalist, members of the Taskforce, contractors and assessors are not wearing masks. This is because, as outlined above, prior to the demolition all loose fill asbestos has been removed and an assessor has provided a clearance.

The blue in the photographs is the dyed PVA glue which is used to coat the house structure and adhere remaining fibres prior to demolition.

Such visits give the media greater insight into the process and the safety measures in place to ensure there is no risk to neighbours and community when these houses are demolished.



Media visit to Mr Fluffy property prior to demolition and ongoing media engagement

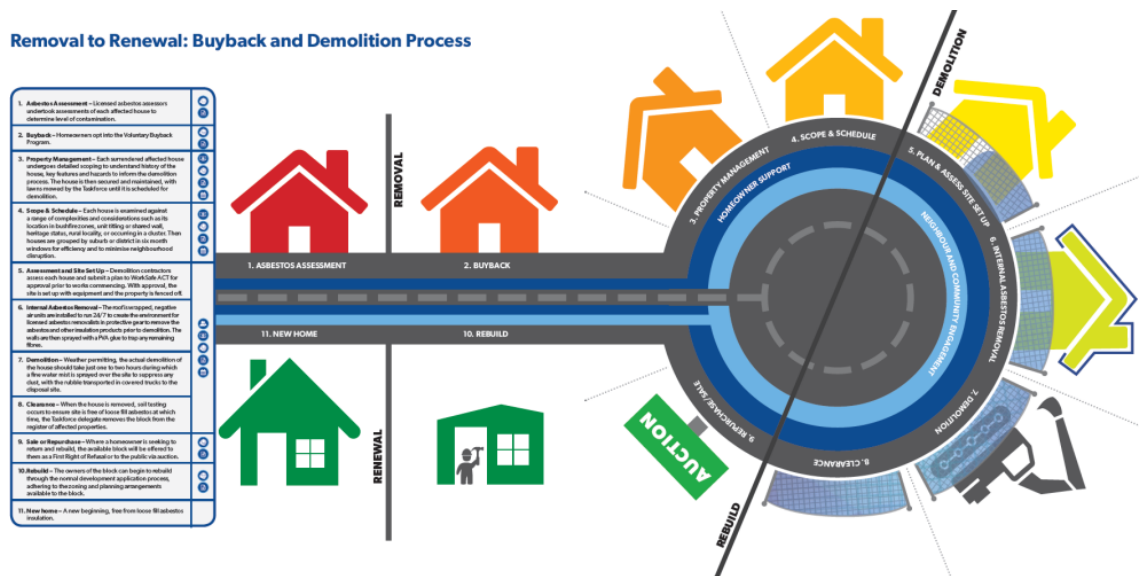
A key publication was also produced by the Taskforce this quarter for broader community education and information.

The booklet, *Mr Fluffy – from Removal to Renewal: A guide for neighbours and the Canberra community*, was produced by officers of the Taskforce and was



provided to 35,000 households through insertion in *The Canberra Times*.

It also continues to be provided to neighbours prior to demolition works and is a useful tool in explaining the history of this legacy issue, the response being provided and further points to access additional information. Feedback in response to this publication has been positive.



Outcome of the investigation into unauthorised information release

On 17 September 2015, the Commissioner for Public Administration and Head of the Taskforce informed affected owners that there had been an unauthorised public release of personal information relating to affected properties (and including owner details) in June 2015. The public disclosure was not provided until this time on the advice of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) so as to not compromise the parallel investigations requested by the Head of the Taskforce from the Commissioner and the AFP.

On 8 December 2015, the Commissioner for Public Administration, Ms Bronwen Overton-Clarke, wrote to the 1022 affected homeowners to inform them of the conclusion of the ACT Public Service's investigation into the unauthorised release of personal information.

The investigation concluded that the source of the unauthorised information release could not be determined. It was clear that the list originated from the ACT Public Service and other government Directorates and work units had copies of the list, outside of the Taskforce. However through the investigation, no links could be found between public service employees and the telecommunications company that received the list.

The investigation was rigorous and included forensic Information and Communications Technology audits and interviews with ACT Public Service employees and regular contact with the Australian Federal Police.

Unfortunately the nature of the release, including it being in hard copy form, made the investigation difficult.

The investigation did confirm that the list did not include owners' new property information, financial information, or contact details. The list

comprised primarily owners' initials and surnames, division, block, section, address and suburb of affected properties.

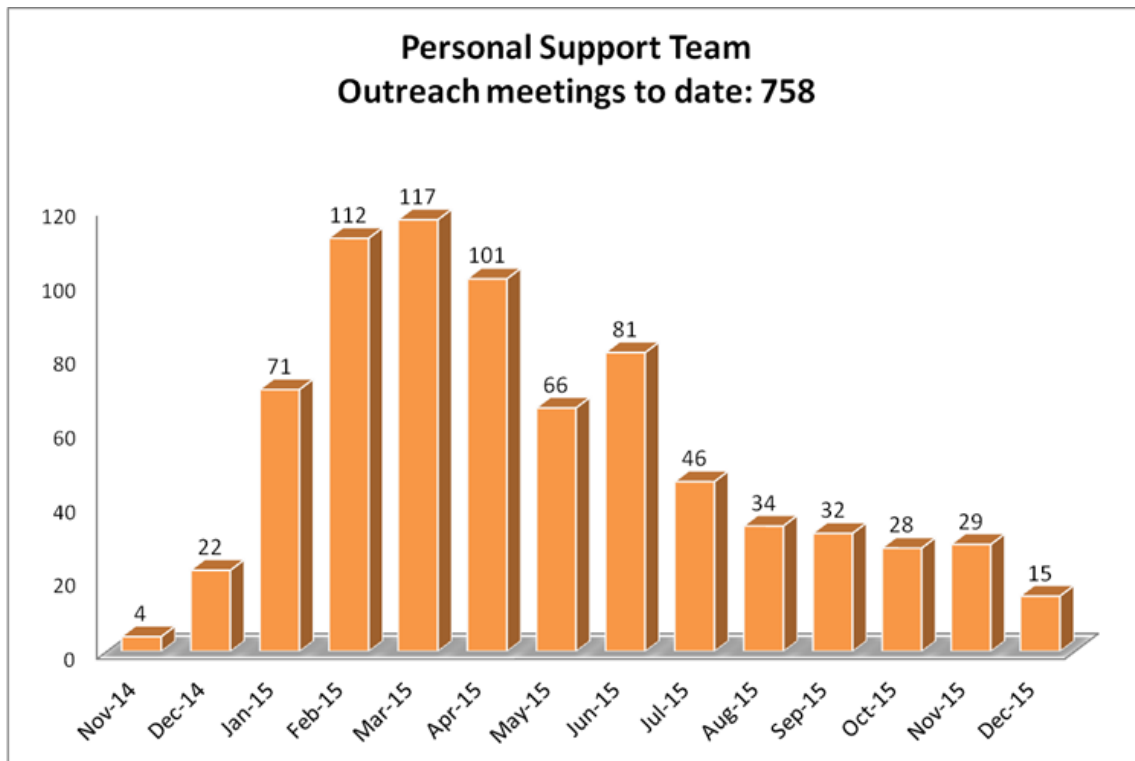
The Taskforce and government understood the outcome of the investigation would be disappointing for owners and support was available for owners who needed it.

Supporting affected homeowners

A key part of the Taskforce's support for homeowners has been, and remains, intensive one on one engagement through the Personal Support Team (PST). Homeowners are assigned officers based on geographical areas and in most cases have had the continuity of the one officer throughout their experience with the Taskforce.

In this quarter members of PST were co-located two days each week at Woden Community Services, Kippax Health Centre and Tuggeranong Community Health Centre providing support and greater connectivity and seamless referral to community based services for owners as needed.

In total since the community-based locations came online there have been 758 meetings held at these sites. In the reporting period there were 72 meetings. This does not include meetings in central office with members of the Taskforce Executive Team.

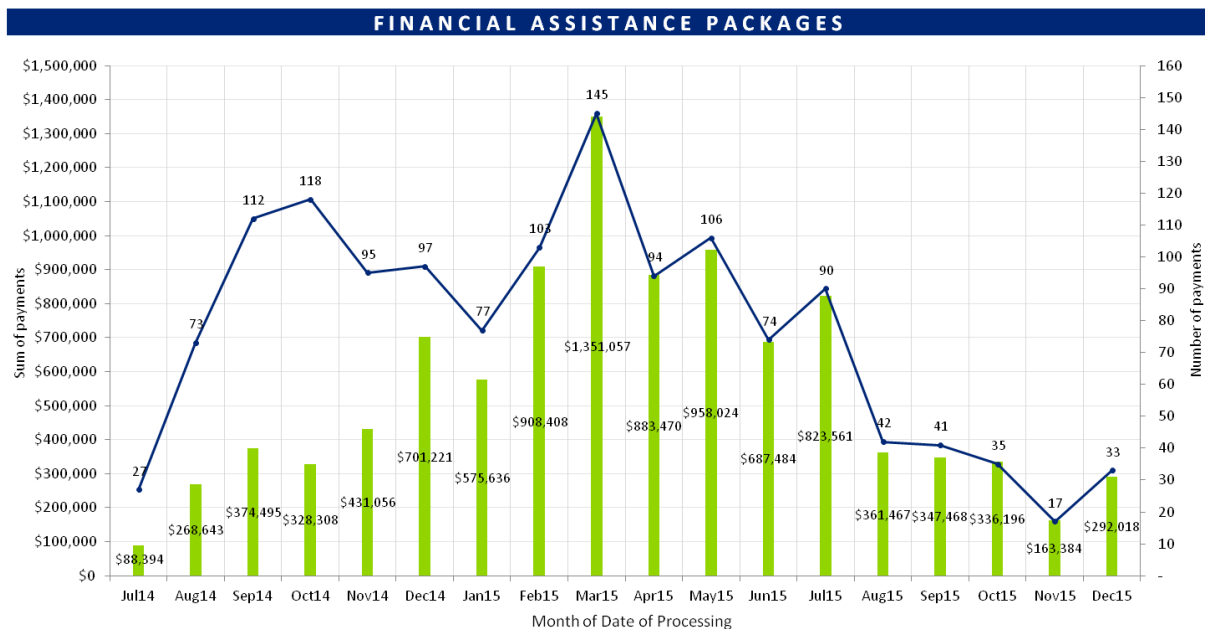


In the reporting period there were 2,936 interactions with homeowners recorded by the Taskforce in its client management database bringing a total of 31,757 interactions overall since the Taskforce formed.

The Taskforce keeps data on the nature of the contacts and key issues or questions raised and uses this to further inform its communications and support to other homeowners.

The Taskforce continued to administer financial assistance to homeowners through emergency funding or payment of Relocation Assistance Grants to assist homeowners move to safer accommodation. Assistance of \$10,000 per household and an additional \$2,000 per dependent who resided at the property, minus any previous assistance is provided. Landlord assistance is also available at \$5,000.

Between October 2015 and December 2015, \$0.8 million in support was provided and 73 Relocation Assistance Grants paid. In total, \$9.9 million has been funded to date and 890 financial assistance payments processed.



Support provided to homeowners does not end after a property has been acquired. The Taskforce continues to remain in contact with owners seeking additional support and advice as they settle into new communities or seeking to exercise their first right of refusal and return to their blocks.

At present there are 693 owners who have indicated they would still like to reserve this right, however this number is expected to decrease as more owners purchase other property or determine returning to their former blocks is no longer suitable for their circumstances.

As noted previously in the report, the Taskforce is tracking stamp duty concessions as a strong indicator of future return to remediated blocks, with more than 500 now used by owners in purchasing other property in the ACT.

The Taskforce is maintaining contact with former owners as they move through the program to new areas and if necessary provides additional support

as they settle into new communities (such as facilitating connections with community organisations and forming partnerships with existing service providers in those areas to support owners as they transition to new suburbs and regions).

Support for homeowners – totals to 31 December 2015	
Homeowner meetings at Outreach Locations	758
Relocation Assistance Grants processed	890
Financial support provided	\$9.8 million
Individual engagements with homeowners and community	more than 31,000
Calls taken by the Access Canberra Call Team	over 12,000
Senior Morning Teas	8 with a total of 300 attendees
Business/partnerships/ banks	16 banks 5 businesses 3 utilities
Examples of agencies and services homeowners have been referred to by the Taskforce for wrap around support	General Practitioners Capital Health Network (Medicare Local) Relationships Australia Partners in Recovery Council on the Aging Supportive Tenancy Service Woden, Belconnen, Northside and Tuggeranong Community Services Carers ACT Redkite (Schools Support) Housing ACT CARE Financial Public Trustee Men's Shed Child and Family Centres Communities@Work

In December 2015, the Taskforce took the time to reflect on the first year of the Scheme which has touched the lives of many people; homeowners, children, tenants, neighbours, tradespeople and the broader community. As part of this reflection a video was created and published on the Taskforce YouTube channel on 17 December 2015.

Some of the key milestones are captured below.

ACT Asbestos Response Taskforce – Key Activity in 2015



Key policy and regulation

On 19 November 2015, the Taskforce released the policy and guidelines for the voluntary *Eligible Impacted Property Buyback Program* (Impacted Buyback Program). The purpose of the Policy: *Voluntary Eligible Impacted Property Buyback Program* (the Policy) was to facilitate the demolition of an affected property that had been purchased by the Territory in order to eradicate the risk of loose fill asbestos.

Eligibility under the Policy means that the owner is invited to opt-in to the Impacted Buyback Program and the ACT Government will offer to purchase the property, which is valued at the policy release date of 19 November 2015.

The *Building (Loose-fill Asbestos Eradication) Legislation Amendment Act 2015* was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 October 2015 and included provisions enabling the Impacted Buyback Program to be implemented under similar conditions to the Buyback Program for affected properties.

A homeowner who is eligible under the Policy can apply for a one-off Eligible Impacted Property Relocation Assistance Grant of \$5,000 once they have settled their property with the Territory.

In some cases, the Taskforce may request that residents temporarily vacate their home to facilitate the demolition of a nearby affected and/or impacted property that has been acquired by the Territory. In those cases, the Taskforce will provide a one-off Temporary Relocation Assistant Grant of \$5,000 to the residents of an ‘inconvenienced’ property.

Since 30 June 2015, the Taskforce has been in contact with homeowners of potentially impacted properties through many mechanisms of communication. In undertaking analysis and investigation of affected properties to identify any impacted properties, the Taskforce examined building reports and conducted on-site physical inspections. It drew on the skills and knowledge of appropriately qualified individuals such as a building inspector and senior construction building auditor.

The *Building (Loose-fill Asbestos Eradication) Legislation Amendment Act 2015* also amended seven pieces of legislation in order to:

- provide for affected properties to be demolished by the Territory under demolition order rather than a building approval where demolition is relatively straightforward
- streamline approvals for demolition of affected heritage properties

- enable land rent to be granted to former affected homeowners who return to their original block, where they meet the eligibility criteria
- clarify that the Building and Construction Industry Training Levy will be paid for demolitions conducted under demolition orders, and states how the levy value will be calculated (thereby expressing the ACT Government's commitment to a safe and well trained building and construction industry) and
- clarify that oversight of asbestos removal is the responsibility of the asbestos removal company rather than the individual asbestos removal worker.

Variation to the Territory Plan

The Territory Plan Variation 343 provides an opportunity to permit unit-titled dual occupancy for potentially 743 surrendered blocks that are:

- in the Residential RZ1 Suburban Zone
- not heritage registered or nominated
- 700m² and over in size
- able to comply with provisions proposed to be included in Variation 343 including plot ratio requirements, building height restrictions, and a design criterion relating to existing residential character and amenity.

The Draft Variation was publicly notified by Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) with some 124 submissions received, many of which were form responses. A consultation report was prepared responding to the submissions, and it was referred to the Standing Committee for Planning, the Environment and Territory and Municipal Services (the Committee).

The Committee sought public comment and held three public hearings with submissions closing on 27 August 2015. On 27 October 2015, the Committee

published its Report into its Inquiry into the proposed Draft Variation to the Territory Plan. The Government responded to the Committee's report on 17 November 2015 and presented the plan variation, unchanged from DV343, to the Legislative Assembly. On 19 November 2015, Mr Alistair Coe MLA, under section 80 (2) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act), lodged a notice of motion to disallow proposed Territory Plan Variation 343.

The matter was dealt with by the Legislative Assembly on 11 February 2016 and commenced on 17 February 2016.

Assisted Private Demolition Program

The Assisted Private Demolition Program provides for the small number of owners of homes which were demolished between 18 February 2014 and 28 October 2014 or were subject to a legally binding contract to demolish entered into between 18 February 2014 and 28 October 2014.

During the previous reporting period, six of the 12 properties approved under the Assisted Private Demolition (APD) Program received payment for demolition costs as assessed under the policy guidelines, and were removed from the Affected Residential Premises Register that is kept in accordance with the *Dangerous Substances Act 2004*.

The six remaining properties have progressed through various stages of the APD Program but none received the required clearances or were deregistered during the October 2015 to December 2015 period.

Governance

The Eradication Scheme Steering Committee (ESSC) which is an internal governance group that provides high level monitoring and direction to the Head of the Taskforce on policy and program delivery continued to meet. ESSC provides input and support to the Taskforce in implementing the four phases of the Scheme and provides ongoing monitoring of the rollout of the buyback and demolition programs. In the reporting period, ESSC met four times.

In August 2014, as part of the ACT Government's response to the issues that faced 'Mr Fluffy' households, a Community and Expert Reference Group (CERG) was established.

CERG provides an important link to those affected by loose fill asbestos and allows the Taskforce to explore issues with direct input from those most impacted. CERG met once this quarter. In total, the CERG have met 18 times with minutes of the meetings are available publicly on the Taskforce website at: <http://www.asbestostaskforce.act.gov.au/media-and-engagement/community-and-expert-reference-group>

On 18 December 2015, ACT Auditor-General, Dr Maxine Cooper tabled the Performance Audit Program 2015-16 in the Legislative Assembly.

The Auditor-General is responsible to the ACT public, through its elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly, for the audit of all ACT public sector agencies. The aim of these audits is to promote accountability and provide independent assessments to the Legislative Assembly, including on whether the ACT Public Service and its resources are effectively and efficiently managed.

Over the quarter the Taskforce worked collaboratively with the ACT Auditor-General's Office. This work is ongoing.

Conclusion

It was a busy quarter and year for the Taskforce as officers continued to implement the government's response to Mr Fluffy.

This included the ongoing support for affected homeowners, education and information for the broader community, the demolition of affected properties, passing of critical legislation to enable the ongoing response, the sharing of innovative best practice and the agile response to an emergency incident.

I look forward to continuing to brief the Assembly and community as the work of the Taskforce moves into its next phase, being the resale of affected properties, ongoing demolition, and renewal of our community free from Mr Fluffy.