Being the owner of a 'Mr Fluffy' home, I would like to make a few comments about the situation in which we find ourselves.

Firstly, I wish to comment about the Asbestos Taskforce. In my many dealings with the Taskforce over the last almost six months, I have found them to be polite and as helpful as they possibly can. I understand that, in the circumstances, they have perhaps had to deal with very unhappy people who often probably have been rude and belligerent. They have a very difficult job to do and I appreciate that it is not necessarily their fault that they cannot give me the answers I would wish to have. All credit to them.

My biggest worry over this whole episode has been regarding the buy-back scheme. My husband and I are retired aged pensioners in our 70s. We planned well, we thought, for our retirement, but never envisaged that we would find ourselves being forced to leave our home and to delve into our finances to help us overcome our present difficulties. We are in a situation not of our making, and we are extremely unhappy about this.

We have come to terms with the fact that we will be leaving our house and will have to buy another home. This has been made very difficult because we understand that the funds for our current home will not be made available to us until we hand over the Crown Lease on our current property. That will make it almost impossible for us to buy another house before we leave this one, it will mean having to put our furniture into storage, having to rent another property, and then having to make a second move into our new home. We do not have a mortgage on our home so therefore do not have any dealings with a bank regarding transfer to another mortgage, and at our age I am sure it will be difficult for us to arrange a loan as we have little income (which is the Age Pension). I realise that it is up to us to approach the financial institutions to see how they can be of assistance and, of course, we will be doing that, BUT WE SHOULD NOT BE IN THIS SITUATION IN THE FIRST PLACE.

What will happen with the money from the sale of our current home? Will it be given to us as a bank cheque, or will it be deposited into our nominated bank account? Will we be given, in writing, advice of the amount we will receive so that perhaps we can produce that to financial institutions when we seek their assistance? If we are lucky enough to find another house, can we access early some of the funds from the sale of our present home to enable a deposit to be paid on our new home? Our children all have their own mortgages to worry about and it is not our intention to approach them for financial assistance – and indeed we should not have to do that.

We are aware that we are entitled to the Relocation Grant of up to $10,000 but we cannot apply for that grant until we have moved. We just do not have a spare half a million dollars to buy a second house while we still own this house!

I know that we are not the only ones who find themselves in this situation and that there are plenty of other families, particularly those with young children, who have been doing it very tough over the last few months.

Why does it take so long for information to be given to us? For instance I have asked about solar panels, but am still waiting for an answer. I assume that we are not able to take the solar panels with us to another home (if that house does not have them already), but we would wish to have them installed. Would that mean we would not get the same rebate from the grid that we now receive? That would mean yet another financial loss to us.

Smith
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