



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, Mr Mark Parton MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Building Quality in the ACT

Submission Number: 78

Date Authorised for Publication: 5 December 2018

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - EDT](#)
Subject: Submission for Inquiry into Building Quality in the ACT
Date: Friday, 30 November 2018 9:13:40 AM

Dear Committee Secretary

Please find below my submission to the Inquiry. I would be grateful if you could please redact my name (i.e. anonymise) and also the name and address of the complex, and my home address for when you place this on the website.

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

I write as the owner of [REDACTED] and in support of the group submission made by the Executive Committee of the [REDACTED]. I support all the points raised in our joint submission but wish to add weight to this by sharing my personal story of how the negligence of [REDACTED], the ACT Government and ACTPLA has impacted my life.

I bought this apartment as a both a home and investment. I considered an off-the-plan purchase would be less stressful than an existing townhouse because everything would be brand new and in perfect order. I only became aware of the terrible reputation of Canberra builders after my purchase.

I have not faced as many problems with my apartment as others in my complex, but I will face the costs, as they are shared. My main problems have been water pooling outside my entryway due to the tiling not having the standard, appropriate angle for drainage, and electrical outlets not working due to poor installation.

Many problems arose after the ninety-day period to notify faults to the builder. The materials used in the complex and the appliances did not match those specified in drawings and specification lists. The six-year warranty period on the townhouse is not helpful either. It is too hard to determine what is included and the builder (in the experience of my neighbours rather than me) did not follow up on phone calls or did follow up, but the resulting repairs were useless patch-up jobs.

Something which I have no idea if we will ever get rectified is that the builder used too small a pipe to connect the entire complex to water, meaning the entire complex has low water pressure. I bought a new shower head trying to rectify the problem before a plumber visiting the complex told me of the problem. As someone who appreciates a decent shower (don't we all?) this has been a daily reminder of the broader problems with my complex.

My townhouse has been a source of emotional and financial stress for six years now. I am not in current financial distress, but I don't know how I would find the tens and tens of thousands of dollars I would be required to pay if the legal options my Body Corporate is pursuing are not successful. Already I have paid several thousand dollars in levies to pay for legal fees and repairs to the complex here and

there. This is money that would be much better spent across the ACT economy, rather than to a handful of lawyers and builders. Considering the number of people affected in the ACT by these kinds of problems, there must be a genuine hit to GDP figures.

This clearly goes to term of reference five - the cost effectiveness of current building compliance and defect rectification practices for industry, government, individuals or body corporates – current practices are not cost-effective. Any new policies or schemes the government introduces would ideally have some kind of retrospective element to allow it to incorporate my case.

I agree with the policies suggested in submission number six and support the thrust of many of the submissions that the ACT Government needs to consider carefully how best to regulate this industry so that buyers of properties can have confidence that a minimum standard is being met and that they won't be required to fork out money after purchasing a brand new home. It is surprising that it has taken so long for the Government to take action on this problem, but I am grateful that action is now being taken.