



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

Jo Clay MLA (Chair), Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy), Mark Parton MLA

Submission No 6 -

Mr Ian Ross

Inquiry into DV 365 -

Housing Choices

Received - 22/04/21

Authorised - 06/05/21

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - PTCS](#)
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into Draft Variation 365 - Boarding Houses and Cohousing
Date: Thursday, 22 April 2021 2:18:20 PM

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To: The Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services,
ACT Legislative Assembly

I am writing in support of draft variation DV365, and the eventual availability of cohousing as a housing choice in residential zone RZ1.

I am involved with the small cohousing development proposed to be built in Ainslie as part of the ACT Government's Demonstration Housing project. The Standing Committee will be considering DV376, the draft variation that relates to our project, in coming weeks. If approved, it will allow Stellulata Cohousing to be a test case for small cohousing projects in residential zone RZ1.

Many people like me are searching for a way to downsize from our empty family homes without ending up in apartments or moving far away from local friends. We want more townhouses in our neighbourhoods or other smaller homes that include gardens.

Filling this "missing middle" of the housing market is a key aspect of Housing Suitability, one of the key determinants of the ACT's Housing and Home Wellness Indicator.

Cohousing has the additional bonus of bringing community right into our daily life through sharing some household resources and tasks. This is one direct way to increase a Sense of Social Connection. While this Wellness Indicator is the primary focus of a different Committee, I would encourage members of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services to include this in their consideration of cohousing.

The consultation report for draft variation DV365 (Boarding Houses and Co-Housing) explains that the currently proposed changes "implements only a small part of the Housing Choices Collaboration Hub recommendations. The full range of housing choices in the RZ1 Zone is more appropriately undertaken as part of a broader review of that zone, consistent with the zone objectives and the Collaboration Hub recommendations."

The proposal to have co-housing prohibited in the RZ1 zone by DV365 is disappointing but perhaps understandable in this context. My request is that the committee keep this issue of cohousing as a housing choice in RZ1 under active consideration in coming months.

I am confident the Stellulata Cohousing project will demonstrate that increased housing density is possible with a design that harmonises with an established Canberra suburb. I am hopeful that the viability and desirability of cohousing as a housing choice in RZ1 will be quickly recognised.

The original Housing Choices discussion paper was released in November 2017 and it is almost 3 years since the Collaboration Hub made recommendations and the government responded to them. Please do not allow this important issue to languish for many more years.

Ian Ross

