



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: 100

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To whom it may concern,

Re: Inquiry into building quality in the ACT

I write as the owner of [REDACTED] and in support of the group submission made by the Executive Committee of the [REDACTED] Complex. 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've come to the property market late in life, and as a single woman, found it challenging to enter the property market before my late 30s. Whilst I did as much due diligence as I could in purchasing my property, there was no way at the time of purchase, that anyone knew or could have predicted how appallingly our complex was constructed. I knew there were some minor visible defects: tiles were buckling and there were cracks in the walls, but despite inspecting the property, I could never have comprehended the magnitude of negligence in our building.

This damage only became apparent after extensive and extremely costly building reports – identifying extremely negligent construction of roofing in particular, which has led to water ingress issues and building damage across the site. The other incomprehensible defects came from “alternative solutions” that were approved by ACTPLA – who any ordinary citizen would think could not possibly endorse in sound conscience, such “alternative solutions” as to reduce the quality of the building.

Honestly, as a first time buyer and seeing that this shoddy building work has been approved through all the formal channels of ACT planning and construction guidelines, I still cannot reconcile how public servants and parliamentary representatives have cared so little about the people of Canberra and the ACT for so long as to allow such appalling building operations and conduct such as this to go on unchecked year after year.

The ACT government, ACTPLA and the ACT building community have turned a blind eye to unethical, corrupt and negligent building operations in the ACT for far too long and enough is enough. If the current legal cases against Bulum (as one example) aren't enough to create real, effective change within the ACT building community – what will?

The emotional and financial stress of dealing with the legal process we have had to undertake, as a result of the Master Builders Fidelity Fund (MBFF) trying to weasel out of their responsibility to guarantee the work of builders, due to sheer volume of claims against Bulum has been significant. As a member of the Executive Committee of [REDACTED], trying to navigate the disgracefully opaque system of ACTPLA and building approvals process that has allowed such negligent building works to be approved has been immensely time consuming, stressful and frustrating. The additional financial impost has been significant and is not over yet. It is beyond comprehension that the MBFF might find a loophole to enable them to avoid their

responsibility to guarantee their builders' works, and in which case, we will be liable for up to \$5 million in rectification works as owners.

As a single person, I cannot afford another \$85,000 to contribute to such works, and it would financially cripple me for the next decade. It would stop any attempt I might undertake to have a family by myself, as I would simply not be able to afford to take on such costs with a debt so large hanging over my head.

It is time for the ACT government to take responsibility for this monster of an industry that they have allowed to develop and clean up this mess for the benefit of every single one of us who currently has property built by shoddy dishonest builders and who may wish to buy property with confidence into the future.

I am available to expand upon any of our individual complex issues further, and again, direct you to our substantive submission as the Executive Committee of the

[REDACTED]

Regards,

Lisa Downs

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[REDACTED]