



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

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I write as the owner of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 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 severely on my life.

As a mother, I was concerned with raising five children and, as a result, always worked on a part-time basis in order to be home to support my children after school. They were always my first priorities. Following the breakdown of my marriage, I realised that I had no superannuation to support myself on retirement.

In order to provide myself with some kind of financial means as I approached 60, I purchased this unit to have some income through rent to supplement the small amount of super that I have. I trusted that there would be fewer issues purchasing a new unit as opposed to one of an older vintage. Having built a home previously in the ACT where we were subjected to continuous and costly intrusions by ACTPLA inspectors, I assumed (quite wrongly) that [REDACTED] would have been subjected By ACTPLA to the same kind of rigour. However, I have been to meetings where representatives of the ACT Government have admitted to sitting on their hands over the past 10 years at taxpayers' expense and waiting for complaints to come in about the quality of building in the ACT as builders such as [REDACTED] have been allowed to appoint mates to complete the required inspections.

As an ACT taxpayer, I find this intolerable and inexcusable on the part of the ACT Government. The emotional stress caused to me has been incalculable. The problems associated with my unit, including lights that won't work, a roof that leaks every shower despite repairs, constant growth of black mould that can't be eradicated because of the roof leaks, electrical systems that don't work, aren't connected or are inferior weigh on my mind all of the time causing immeasurable anxiety. Instead of looking forward to much needed rain, I lie awake and worry about what issues will result instead at my unit after each shower of rain. I suffer from Lupus and have had many clots on the lungs, in the legs and strokes as well because of this disease. The constant stress from the shoddy workmanship and the inadequate measures taken by the ACT government add to the impact of my disease and I feel helpless in being able to move forward both financially and health wise.

At times, because of the major issues outlined above, it has been difficult to find long-term tenants for my unit. The ACT Government charged me land tax for the last quarter of 2017, but my unit was vacant for the entirety of that time as the issues of leaking and mould could not be addressed. This resulted in a cost of around \$8000 in mortgage payments on my part that were not offset by rent. I am constantly afraid that this situation will be repeated. I am in a terrible position where the government expects money but gives nothing in return. I cannot afford to retire until the issues are addressed. However, because of my health, I cannot continue working. I really am caught between a rock and a hard place.

As the unit currently stands, it cannot be sold and often can't be rented. I do not have the necessary means to pay the additional \$85,000 levy if the MBFF claim is not successful. Nor do I believe that I should have to. I firmly believe that the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the shoddy builder who is more interested in a cash grab than providing a quality product and a disinterested and ineffectual ACT Government who, likewise, are happy to demand cash without the responsibility. I find it difficult to trust any government who allows a situation like this to happen.

I cannot wait for the claim to be processed over an indeterminate number of years. I have neither the health nor the financial means to allow this. It is up to this committee to resolve this matter and it is also up to the ACT Government to accept responsibility for the resultant mess that has been caused through their disinterest and inactivity. I thank you for your time.

Best regards

Marg Cummins