



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, PUBLIC WORKS AND
TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

**(Reference: RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment policies
in inner north Canberra)**

Members:

**MS M PORTER (The Chair)
MS C LE COUTEUR (The Deputy Chair)
MR A COE**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 10 AUGUST 2010

**Secretary to the committee:
Mrs N Kosseck (Ph: 6205 0435)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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Amended 21 January 2009

The committee met at 9.32 am.

STEWART, MR COLIN, Director, Colin Stewart Architects

THE CHAIR: Good morning, Mr Stewart. I welcome you this morning to the public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services inquiring into RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment policies. I presume you have read the buff card there and you are familiar with that. If you are happy that you understand the implications of that perhaps you could just say that into the microphone?

Mr Stewart: I understand the privilege statement.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I presume you would like to address some of your submission to us or additional points before you are asked questions. Would you like to do that?

Mr Stewart: Just briefly.

THE CHAIR: We have got until 10 o'clock.

Mr Stewart: I am not a resident of this area and I have not studied it in detail. I recognise that this is a very complex issue. Anything that affects any redevelopment in existing suburban areas is a very complex and delicate matter. My submission was more to do with some of the principles. Actually, I like the policies that ACTPLA have introduced on Northbourne Avenue to increase densities along transport corridors. As a principle I think that is very fine.

Unfortunately, the policy seems to stop on Northbourne Avenue. There are lots of other avenues in the central area. It is a bit different in Belconnen and Woden because you have a different sort of structure. I just think that policies of this importance should be extended and applied generally throughout the central area to increase densities, as appropriate, on transport corridors and promote walking trips—particularly when they are near centres like Dickson or the university—to allow people to live more walkable lifestyles, which is low energy living.

I say in my submission that I think there is an important connection between transport policies and planning policies. All too often, my experience is—and we are involved in many projects—that the people controlling the traffic have no idea of what the planning policy is. We will never get a system that is legible, workable and sustainable in terms of promoting public transport and walking trips unless the land use policies are integrated with parking policies.

Having said that, there are many complex planning issues. Generally, I would be trying to adopt densities that allow more people to live in locations like this which are walkable to the city, to open space, to Dickson, to the ANU, and even to bushland not so far away. It is just so precious. It is becoming more and more of a privilege to live in these areas. I think there should be more opportunities, just as I think there should be more opportunities on Canberra Avenue, on Constitution Avenue and on all the avenues—there are 25 avenues—so that things are not seen as ad hoc planning

decisions but generally across the board they develop.

I might say that we worked on a project, for example, in Deakin, on Adelaide Avenue, the old Embassy Motel site. It took 10 years to get approval to a DA, which we were encouraged to submit by both planning authorities. Unless we promote and encourage a diversity of living opportunities for communities—all communities: young and old, rich and poor—and diversity in the types of units—garden units, lift access units, walk-up units, which we were trying to do in Deakin and on most of our projects—we will just go on building new suburbs on the fringes which are very difficult for lower income groups to sustain with the cost of private transport, cars and time and everything else.

These are broad statements. I have got a listed number of policies, five policies, that I think are fundamental to any project to create a more sustainable, healthy city. Whether the building is two storeys, three storeys or higher, it has got to be looked at in detail. Generally, I think there should be greater flexibility in the height and design of buildings. It should be performance based in terms of social outcomes and environmental outcomes. I do not think it is at the moment. I think it is more aesthetics based.

The parking policy needs to reflect the fact, I understand, that a lot of people living in these areas use their car far less than other people. The studies have shown that. For example, we did a small project just recently on David Street in an RZ3 area. It is right opposite a block which is three-storey. It is only allowed two-storey, but we have got eight small units on the site, on two blocks. We had to have 14 cars on the site, nearly two cars per unit, because we had to have visitor cars. The streets are empty and visitors could easily park on the street. That would be far more practical.

I think the parking policy in these areas where we are trying to promote walking lifestyles and allowing families to save and have gardens and have quality lifestyles should be reduced to a maximum of one car per unit. The agents might say they will not sell as well, but I think in the longer term they will be very attractive, particularly for students and whatever.

On the height of buildings, traditionally walk-up cities like Paris were built before there were lifts. Five and six storeys are the norm for walking-up buildings. The more walk-up buildings you have, which also face north and have good insulation and get cross-ventilation, you get almost a nil energy cost because you do not need air conditioning, you do not need lifts and you do not need lighting. You just need some cooking utensils and whatever. When we do any project—and we are literally designing thousands of units around the central area—we try and create these greener buildings. They have got to be green—high density but green—so that they are not increasing the levels of energy usage and wastage, which a lot of buildings are.

I am rambling a bit, but these are very complex issues. It is a very unusual situation here because you have got the avenue frontage on Northbourne Avenue and then you have got the Wakefield and Macarthur Avenue frontage, which I think, again, should be higher density as it is creeping across towards Ainslie. I think that is very rational. The streets that lead down to the local centres could have an even higher density.

In addition to that you have this open space system of Sullivans Creek. Normally I would say, “Develop on the avenue frontages and then keep it low in the heartland of the neighbourhood to protect people’s quiet lifestyles.” But in this case, as it is zoned, RZ3 and RZ4, you have all these frontages to parkland which are ideal places for high density so people in units can enjoy the parkland. On the other side you have even got parklands as well. It is a very unusual situation and that is why ACTPLA have, I presume, adopted this as a high density area. Therefore, I fully endorse that.

However, I think there is a lot of detailed work to be done in some of the sites. Some of the sites on Northbourne Avenue, for example, are on the avenue corridor. They are just too narrow to develop. They are 20 metres deep, or 10 metres deep up near the information centre, for example. It is just an accident of history how these things were laid out. There would be a lot of sense in future, if these areas are going to be redeveloped, in saying that a 0.65 plot ratio is hardly any different. It is not discernibly different from a 0.5 ratio in normal suburbia. It is too low to achieve a sustainable lifestyle. It just means that it becomes more and more of a privilege to live here.

I think the starting point should at least be a one-to-one plot ratio. I do not think plot ratios should be the controlling mechanism. I think performance criteria about solar access and green space, and minimal parking, should be the criteria, not the floor space. Like at Kingston Foreshore, there is no floor space policy at all. It is mixed use. I think all great cities have to have mixed use.

I do not mean that we should suddenly build factories in the middle. No-one would want to build a factory there anyway, but at least if we are looking for our aged housing, we put it on the ground floor and allow student housing above it, or other types of housing. So we would get not just one and two-storey development everywhere but much higher density and a much higher quality of buildings.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Stewart. Before I go to members, I just have one quick question. On page 2 of your submission you talk about the boulevards being well designed. This is the third paragraph down, under point 2. You talk about having footpaths and cycle ways. You also mention parked cars as a buffer to moving traffic. How does that work in with your other comments about the fact that we should be starting to restrict the amount of parking? Are you talking about commuter parking?

Mr Stewart: No. The NCA’s policy, for example, is to have kerbside parking on all the avenues. That is their policy. I think that is good for visitor parking, but restricting the parking on-site—

THE CHAIR: Yes, I just wanted to clarify that.

Mr Stewart: I think it is important to make housing not so expensive and to allow more area for gardens, or whatever—whether the parking is on the surface or underground. At the moment, parking is generally the dominant requirement of all developments in Canberra that I know of. I do not think it should be. I think there are more important criteria. It is a car-oriented city and it is a difficult time because we are going through a transition. In 10 or 20 years, thinking will be quite different, as it

is in the city at the moment—the city centre, I mean.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I understand. Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you. Continuing on parking, because it is something that is dear to my heart, you think it should be a maximum of one car per unit. We have put out suggested policies like this and got negative comments. Are you happy with that, regardless of the size—three or four bedrooms?

Mr Stewart: Yes, it is just a principle.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am not disagreeing with you. I want to hear a bit—

Mr Stewart: It is a principle. We do a lot of commercial development. The information from real estate agents is that the more cars, the more money you get for your house. That is nice, but there are different ways, culturally, that we could address that in the longer term. I think there will be shared car parks and all sorts of things in future. At the moment there is a total conflict between trying to allow people to live closer in and doing things that almost make it unattractive for them to use public transport.

For example, on an office building we have done on Northbourne Avenue the parking is the highest we have ever done on a development and it is right in front of a bus stop. There is no incentive whatsoever for anyone in the building—it is next to Macarthur House—to manage things so that people would catch the bus. It is a difficult situation. If you are designing for commuters and that is all that matters, we might as well just say, “It’s all going to be expressways. Get rid of everything. Get rid of any sense of city or urbanism and just go down that path,” which is more or less the way we are going, I believe.

I find in my work that by adopting principles that it should be walkable, it should be mixed use, it should not be led by parking policies, it should be led by environmental policies and cultural policies, and I apply those to the jobs we do, it is the only way I can work with the projects we work with. We are very successful in working with ACTPLA in a lot of these areas by trying to get, as I said, mixed use and high-quality developments. Every family you can have in an area like this on or near Northbourne Avenue that can walk to uni, walk to work, walk to shop and walk for recreation is just the highest gift you can give a family. I think we should go out of our way to try and achieve that throughout the city.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Coe?

MR COE: Just going on from that, you talk about that particular development next to Macarthur House, but isn’t that really more a case of it is not necessarily providing an incentive to get on the bus if there were fewer car parks; it would just be providing a deterrent to parking, so it might be a relative incentive but in actual fact it would just be a deterrent? To an extent we can plan the model city but, unless you have got a good bus system to match it, it does not necessarily work on its own, does it?

Mr Stewart: No, but I do not think you will ever get a good bus system unless you

have an integrated land use and transport policy. I do not know of any city on earth that has a good public transport system with the densities we have. We have got the lowest densities in the world in Canberra. People require a degree of parking on site for operational purposes but it can be managed if one has a policy that restricts parking on site. I know Melbourne is a lot different from Canberra but they have actually brought in policies now that do not allow parking at all in the city. You cannot put in parking for love or money because they are trying to allow people to enjoy walking trips—less noise, better environment and all these things.

It is tricky if you look at isolated buildings but I think we have got to head in the direction of higher density and greener buildings and higher quality; otherwise, they will spend more energy than driving out 30 kilometres to somewhere in the suburbs. That is a real problem because at the moment there are not those standards. Sorry; I am drifting around—

MR COE: That is fine. With that in mind, do you think that the current territory plan and how it operates—this is drifting a little bit as well—especially looking at areas like the inner north, does provide that overarching strategic vision that it needs to?

Mr Stewart: It does to this avenue. But that strategic vision does not extend right throughout, from Watson right through to Fyshwick or down to Phillip. I am not aware of any strategic plan that shows a coordinated set of policies to promote a more sustainable city. There are some policies of rainwater, to put in a water tank and a few things. I am being sarcastic, but every time we go to do a project we fight and fight and fight. As I said, for the Embassy site in Deakin, it took 10 years to get some units on that site—and most of them, I understand, have been bought by people living in Yarralumla and Deakin, who want to stay in their area and live in an apartment and it does not exist.

So, yes, it is very difficult but I think it is important to have these strategic planning policies, especially integrating transport and land use. This is an ideal situation. The bus is where the traffic is, and where the cycles are, and it should be, and it should be where the parking is as well. Having a bus route somewhere else is just an anathema. You have got to have them in one corridor; otherwise you do not realise the benefits, like most great cities.

MS LE COUTEUR: You talked about designing houses or units that do not require air conditioning. Certainly, one of the big issues that we grapple with in terms of high density is the energy use and the sustainability. I totally take the transport point of view on that, and that is fairly clear. But with the other issues, because you cannot produce flow-through ventilation, for instance, or because there are so many people around that people are not prepared to open their windows because it is noisy, do you end up without doing cooling? Can you just talk a bit more about designing houses that are more dense and also energy efficient and sustainable?

Mr Stewart: Yes. I think it is just setting targets; whatever you set, the industry will try and achieve it. The higher the target, of course there will be a lot of angst about it. But it is no longer an option now; it is about levels of targets. It is almost an optional extra at the moment in the units we do. One can, with very good insulation and with cross-ventilation; anything is possible. So, if cross-ventilation was required to all units,

that is what we would do. And it can be done; it just requires sophisticated, detailed design. And with solar access it is complicated; not all units can face north, but if they are particularly well insulated and get some solar access, east, west or north—not south facing—one can achieve very high green star rating, according to the Australian green star building council.

I should say that Canberra is very fortunate that we are doing a project at Belconnen markets. The famous Lend Lease project in Sydney was the first five-star green-star office, I think, and CH2 in Melbourne was the first six-star. We are doing the first five-star—or six-star; I am not sure, but according with the Green Building Council—urban village at the Belconnen markets.

That was just looking at what was almost leftover land and saying: “We can put hundreds of units here. We can put shops, we can put offices, we can expand the markets—do all these things, and do it as a leading environmental community.” It will be the best in Australia, according to the Green Building Council of Australia, and Romilly Madew is the CEO. So that is wonderful for Canberra. But it is almost by accident that we are doing that, and that should be possible in a lot of different areas.

MS LE COUTEUR: You say that should be possible in a lot of different areas. Are there things, looking at this area in particular, which will stop it being possible there?

Mr Stewart: It is not mixed use in this area; it is strictly residential. But I think at least there should be a wide variety and diversity within the residential. There is mixed use, effectively, down Northbourne Avenue, so the precinct is mixed use, which is good.

MS LE COUTEUR: Would there be anything else that would be stopping it?

Mr Stewart: No. The parking, the numbers of cars, is the main limit. The height limits I think have to be explored in greater detail but I think there should be greater flexibility for ACTPLA to work with to achieve an optimum density. I do not know what that is, but I think 0.65 is just too low for any sustainable thing in the future. And we do not want to rip it down later on. We could not, because it will all be strata or whatever. It is very difficult to change it in the future and—

THE CHAIR: One of the points you were making was how we build community through doing these kinds of things. But we have submissions from some of the other residents that are already living in this area where currently the moratorium is on certain sections and they talk about a loss of community should that be changed. How do we manage that?

Mr Stewart: It is difficult. In many respects, the RZ3 is part of the low density fabric of the neighbourhood and should be protected. But, because there are not many other opportunities for high density, there is pressure to increase the densities there. As I have said, I think there should be higher density within the group centre and up the area on Northbourne Avenue, and it should be within a hundred metres of the avenue, not within 20 metres. I am referring to this area in the vicinity of the tourist information centre on Northbourne Avenue, which is a silly narrow site and just an accident of past decisions.

If the corridors were clearly articulated and some of the cross streets were also reinforced with high density, and that was throughout the city, you would not need to extend into the local fabric of the neighbourhood. Maybe it would be judicious to have some higher density on some of the streets—for example, this street that goes across to O'Connor and Lyneham—David Street and Wattle Street respectively. For example, RZ2 I think is a very low density, whereas that is north-east facing, opposite parkland, walk to shops; it is an ideal location.

With these policies I have talked about, you should not be touching any more than five or 10 per cent of a neighbourhood. Blanket high density development areas just destroy people's social networks and everything else. So that is why building along corridors and on major arterials is an ideal opportunity if that is combined with, clearly, not more traffic on the arterials but less traffic—more public transport, more cycling.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Stewart: So I realise your difficulty with this. In a perfect world you would revert this RZ3 back to low density.

THE CHAIR: Do either of you have any more quick questions before we—

MR COE: Not a quick one, no.

MS LE COUTEUR: I might be mildly quick. You comment on the heritage sites. Have you any suggestions as to what could be done with those?

Mr Stewart: Yes, I think the heritage citation, if I understand it right—and I am on the Heritage Council—allows significant redevelopment of those sites, subject to a conservation management plan. If that is the case, what I am saying is that it could be largely rethought, what goes on along there, that whole corridor from up at Antill Street right down to Wakefield. There are amazing opportunities that do not require knocking down houses in the local streets.

The predominant land use along Northbourne Avenue up in Dickson is car parking. It is just all car parks and then a couple of buildings. There is amazing opportunity there for higher density, mixed use and office, commercial and residential development, which would be right across the road from the group centre on the avenue and not destroying the local neighbourhood. So they are the policies that I would be pursuing.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We will send you a copy of the transcript. If you find any errors, please let us know. Members might have other questions they want to put to you, Mr Stewart. Would you be happy to take those at a later stage from the secretary?

Mr Stewart: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, and thank you very much for appearing before us this morning.

Mr Stewart: Thank you.

FITZPATRICK, MR TREVOR, Convenor—Policy Subcommittee, ACT Division, Planning Institute of Australia
SINCLAIR, MR HAMISH, President, ACT Division, Planning Institute of Australia

THE CHAIR: I welcome both of you to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services inquiring into RZ3 and RZ4. You are familiar with the privilege statement?

Mr Sinclair: Yes.

Mr Fitzpatrick: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We do not have a submission from you. I presume you would like to make some opening remarks and then members will ask questions.

Mr Sinclair: Certainly.

THE CHAIR: We have got until 10.20.

Mr Sinclair: Thank you for this opportunity to comment. You are correct: we did not lodge a submission. However, we have had time to consider the RZ3 and RZ4 terms of this inquiry and we have some comments. I will ask my associate, Trevor Fitzpatrick, to quickly read through some statements. We also have some additional comments that we would like to make.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Fitzpatrick: Thank you, Hamish. I am the policy convenor of the ACT Division of the Planning Institute. It is a volunteer organisation, but we represent across Australia about 4½ thousand professional planners. We appreciate the opportunity to speak before the committee.

Our submission to the committee directly reflects the key issues being investigated by the committee in the first instance. My objective is to focus on the primary questions that the committee is seeking to review. Hamish will then follow up with broader strategic residential development and urban policy issues facing Canberra.

Firstly, we would like to make a submission to the committee as to whether the RZ3 and RZ4 policies are currently appropriate. We look at the policies being reflected, firstly, in the objectives and, secondly, in the planning controls. Firstly, the objective of the RZ3 policy, the key objective, is to create a transition between low and higher density.

The Planning Institute considers that this key objective is not all that relevant when you look at it carefully. If you look at the zoning map of the RZ3 areas in inner north Canberra you will see that there is a very clear distinction between the RZ3 land areas and other residential areas. There are substantial urban open spaces and there is other land between the RZ3. So an absolute transition is not a necessary objective at all.

The RZ4 key objective is to accommodate population growth and meet changing household and community needs. We also submit that this objective is not achieving its desired outcome in that it is not sufficiently accommodating the population growth needed to the extent proposed in the 2004 spatial plan. All of the other objectives in both of those RZ3 and RZ4 zones are effectively the same, so we have not focused on them.

The Planning Institute considers that policies and the development controls for the RZ3 and RZ4 do not allow the level of increased density desired for this inner north location. We hear regularly about transport, thermal massing and solar orientation. Clearly, the key aspect of sustainability is our urban footprint—the allocation of a rare land resource in close proximity to city centres.

We have to start at that very fundamental principle and then all of the other sustainability principles become secondary to that very first one. The allocation of land use policy is the key determinant, as we submit. It is very important to get that land use allocation right in the first place and then ensure that planning controls about built form and the like follow sustainability principles from there.

Mr Sinclair: What we are really driving at here is the disconnect between the policies and the zones as they are laid out. We would also encourage the committee to look closely at the definition of the residential zones, all five of them, and see if they can determine any clear deferential between them. We suggest strongly that the zones should be characterised and should cover things like density controls and anticipating the character for each individual zone. Clearly, it is about having that up-front so that when the community look at the plan they can understand what their zone is about, what it is going to be in the future and what level of density, height control et cetera they can anticipate. Currently, that is not in the system of the planning documents. It is not transparent. It is certainly not clear.

Mr Fitzpatrick: If you can deal with our tag team approach here: following on from that, we advocate that the two-storey height limit plus attic and basement in RZ3, the 0.65 plot ratio, the three-storey plus attic and basement in RZ4 and the 0.8 plot ratio have a focus and an influence on density, but they relate primarily to the bulk scale built form outcome. There is no absolute density control, when you look at density in its most basic format, in the numbers of dwellings or numbers of people living in a specified land area.

As I said, we are a volunteer organisation and we have not had an opportunity to do major research on some of those densities. We have highlighted some results. We have been using ACTPLA's planning data, which shows the land area for residential zones, and we have been using the 2006 census population data. Unfortunately, because it is 2006, the newer suburbs do not come up too well.

Referring to the far outer reaches of this city, in Banks, for example, there is 163 hectares of residential development, residential land, and a population of 5,000, meaning that there are about 31 people per hectare living in Banks. There are about 30 people per hectare living in Dunlop, the far outer western suburb of this city. In O'Connor, in the residential areas, there are 22 people per hectare. In Ainslie there are 21 people per hectare. In our inner north suburbs there is far less population density

than in our most extreme outer suburbs. We struggle that this is good land use allocation.

If you then correlate that over the next few years and look at the newer suburbs of Gungahlin and Molonglo, I would argue there will even be a stronger argument in five years time unless we review what our inner north land use policies are trying to achieve. Are we trying to achieve urban infill? The spatial plan in 2004 advocated that 50 per cent of Canberra's development will be urban infill redevelopment. If that is a genuine policy—it is certainly a policy that the Planning Institute supports—and a policy to be implemented by government, something fundamental needs to happen in inner city zonings. This inquiry goes to the heart of that review—that is, what are the RZ3 and RZ4 zonings trying to achieve and what are they actually achieving? Do they achieve those targets?

On that basis the Planning Institute clearly looks at the overarching zoning objectives and what we are trying to achieve through that land use policy. However, we are still quite conscious of the individual areas. We consider that the moratoriums are not appropriate. They are not good planning policy. We consider that it is inappropriate to identify land for a higher density but for convenience reasons say that you cannot implement that planning policy. We simply do not understand that approach to planning.

If the land is not suitable for high density development it should not be zoned for high density development. It is as simple as that. Every zoning allocation investigation should look at that and make those decisions quite clear. There should be certainty in the planning system. That needs to be expressed through the zoning. If the land is zoned for high density everybody needs to understand that, both the existing residents and people buying into that neighbourhood in future.

Mr Sinclair: For us, the particular concern relates to the equity of a situation where, in effect, by putting a moratorium on one section that is allowed to have higher density you are forcing development elsewhere onto other suburbs. You are increasing the pressure on those suburbs unfairly when it should be defrayed equally across the city. So there is an equity issue there.

There is also the issue of windfall. You are effectively forcing land banking, which means profiteering on the value of that land. It has got a high density value but it cannot be actioned, so it is artificially low. As the rest of the city is developed and that land then becomes available it is at a premium and the benefit is absorbed directly by those who have, if you like, banked their land for future profit. We find that an equally unreasonable position to take as a planned solution.

We are mindful that we see the outcome as simply a political one and would counsel that there are other ways to achieve the community's agreement and support of the zoning process. It is our feeling that infill development in the current climate is more a reaction against the quality of the outcomes rather than policies such as affordable housing, which the community clearly endorse, if not in their own backyard. It is really a matter of quality.

We would go to the extent of suggesting that perhaps some kind of design quality

panel be established that might help the community have confidence in the outcomes of the planning authority and its development assessment process. We have heard in the news that the planning authority is more of a receiving rather than a determining body for quality. We are not necessarily in agreement with that position and we suggest that there are other ways to resolve quality.

A previous planning and land council looked at the quality issues for major developments. In low density areas and medium density areas, where there are perhaps more than five units being developed, the issue of streetscape, amenity and visual impact become important to the rest of the community. In the absence of any zone characteristics or anticipated outcomes for that area, the planning authority is essentially flying blind in what it is expected to assess.

If there was a reference to a design panel that had experience in these matters then they may—along with a community representative, of course—be able to assist in determining what is a reasonable outcome in terms of quality, perhaps refining some of the decisions that the planning authority makes and would like to improve on.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Do we go to questions now or did you want to have—

Mr Sinclair: There are a couple of other quick matters that I would like to touch on. One is that, with regard to the level of density that is clearly underpinning all of this issue, we would also be mindful that currently commercial office space—in fact it is not current; it has been around for a while—lower levels of quality of commercial office space in town centres, group centres and Civic, provide a very quick solution to affordable housing issues, taking some of the pressure of infill development off the suburbs. If the government may find a way to resolve the adaptation of commercial office space into residential apartments, that may also provide a very beneficial outcome in terms of sustainability, given the access to all the existing resources that are in commercial centres—supermarkets, parking et cetera. They may need to look at offsets. Obviously, it is not possible to convert office space car parking that is perhaps in the basement to residential car parking without either knocking the building down or putting in an extra floor of car parking that would be required for apartments. So there are issues around the car parking. There are issues around that affordable solution that really need to be advanced in parallel with the debate you are having here about R3 and R4.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: Where to start? You talked about the density at present being too low in the inner suburbs. What do you think an appropriate density would be?

Mr Sinclair: That is a tricky question. I think we would first direct it back to the committee and really try and understand what they are expecting and see if that is matching what the zone expectation currently is. Certainly, the figures that Trevor has worked up indicate that the 40 persons per hectare density is a benchmark. It is acceptable in the outer suburbs so why is it not acceptable in the inner? It has to be a question that leaps to mind right from step 1. But, as I said, there may be other solutions and there are other peripheral matters that really go to the heart of this issue and I think those are the ones around what are affordable housing solutions so that it

can run in parallel with some of this and defray some of the pressure.

What are the people expecting to see in their zones? There is no guidance on that. One question is whether there is a need for five residential zones and a mixed use commercial zone to cover the whole of this territory. Density around the centre is a sustainable principle that the Planning Institute has held up, and as we understand it the planning authority similarly endorses that principle, so one would expect greater densities around centres rather than the current dead ring of low-level density around the centres that suddenly increases at the periphery. We suggest that is not a sustainable outcome.

Mr Fitzpatrick: If you are looking for an actual number, I guess you can be guided by what is happening in a range of other newer urban release areas in that ACTPLA and the LDA in the RZ1 zones, for example, are looking at 15 to 20 dwellings. This is not people per hectare but dwellings per hectare. Where they are located close to shops, there would be more in the order of 30 dwellings per hectare. That probably equates to an RZ2 zoning. So our view, as Hamish highlighted, is that there should be a clear distinction. There is currently a clear distinction between the RZ1, which is the general suburban area, and the RZ2, which is close to local shops. What we are saying is that the current RZ3 zone does not take it up any great notch and RZ4 does not either, so there needs to be some research into what is that next level up. It is quite easy to pick a number somewhere, but whether that is the right number needs to be the result of some more work, I would argue.

In some respects some people say—I noticed it in the ACTPLA discussion paper—“We’ve got this RZ4 that allows this level of development, but quite often just some basic townhouses are being built and maybe that is responding to market.” Our view is that they have missed the point. With the current planning controls, if you look at the different forms of building construction of a townhouse development and the level of investment, compared to a basement and a couple of storeys above it, the cost of building is more than double when you have to build a basement and lifts to a couple of storeys above it. Your investment in 10 or 15 units that are in an apartment form is all up-front; you have to invest the entire sum, whereas if you are building a series of townhouses or villa units down a line, you can incrementally build those and get a drawdown from the bank as you are selling. So your level of investment is totally different. Your cost of construction of those villa units is somewhere in the order of \$1,200 a square metre. An apartment starts at about \$2½ thousand dollars a square metre, so you are selling the same end product but your building costs double because you need a whole lot more building mechanics, basements and the like.

So, basically, with the policies that are saying, “Let’s make two storeys and a basement and let’s put that out there,” the market is clearly saying that it just falls through the gap. Scale it right down if you do not want urban infill development. If that is the clear policy of government, fine. Just allow single-storey villa houses like you see in the country towns. Or you need to take it up a notch. The exact policies you have got now are just falling straight through the middle.

THE CHAIR: So are you basically saying that we should have minimum development controls as well so that people do not do what you are saying in the areas which are suited to higher densities?

Mr Sinclair: Yes is the short answer. Where you are wanting a policy outcome that creates a high level of density, force the issue—not by putting a moratorium on other places and hoping everyone goes to the places you have not closed down. Actually specify your minimum level of development as well. The interesting thing—and that would need to be monitored—is whether or not the market responds. You may need to change the settings to adjust to that.

I am mindful of time. There are a couple of other things with regard to corridors. Essentially what we are saying is, again, sustainability principles. You want to focus on the centre. So there is a logical sequencing of development pressure that we would suggest you direct, and you direct it at the centre rather than along corridors. We agree the corridors are a good way of increasing density, but from our perspective and from a traffic planning perspective it is easier to shift people from point A to B than start with an empty bus and slowly fill it up when you get to the end of the journey.

If you are densifying around town centres, you can also then have attendant transport nodes that operate far more sustainably and efficiently from those nodes. That increases your effectiveness of services like the Xpresso service and the intertown service. It provides for park and ride and improves the effectiveness of that policy. So there are attendant multiple benefits of focusing first on commercial areas and the centres and then rolling out along the corridors after. So it is a matter of timing that we are suggesting. Both policies are valid, but it is a matter of working the timing and we are just mindful that it is not very clear in the plan that that should occur in that way.

I guess that is really our key issue there and our key message regarding corridors and transport.

THE CHAIR: You have not had a chance to ask a question. Have you got a quick question?

MR COE: Yes, on the comparison between the outer suburbs and the inner north, in particular—and that is just comparing RZ1 areas, I take it?

Mr Sinclair: No.

MR COE: That is actually comparing the entire suburb?

Mr Fitzpatrick: Yes. It is using ACTPLA's land use policy data that they provide statistics for and the land zoned residential, so it is all of the land zoned residential. So it is taking that raw figure of land within a residential zoning and then dividing it by the 2006 census population and getting the numbers of persons per hectare. That is how we have arrived at it. It is a fairly crude approach to it, but I thought for comparison, to get a feel as to what is happening in our outer suburbs compared to the inner suburbs, it just highlights the current issue.

Mr Sinclair: It does also raise one other question strategically in the long-term plan and that is the issue of Kowen and whether that is actually a viable, sustainable option to keep on the radar. We are mindful of the eastern broadacre study's raising of that

future development. We are suggesting that let us see Molonglo finished before we even contemplate development at Kowen. We would also suggest that there is a significant amount of infill land available within the current residential areas before creating yet another estate on the periphery.

Again, in addition to the office space solution, we are starting to find there is a lot of available space, if you look for it, within the existing footprint, without further extending to the perimeter, increasing costs of infrastructure, the social costs and the many amenity costs that are attached to these far-flung suburbs with higher density than the inner centre.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I am sorry it has been such a short period of time. We will send a copy of the transcript to you and you can correct it if there are any mistakes in it. If members have got other questions, we will direct them to you, if you can answer them later on.

Mr Sinclair: We would very much like to respond to those, yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, and thank you very much for your time today.

MAYO, MS NICOLE, Committee member, Turner Residents Association
McMAHON, MS ANNE, President, Turner Residents Association

THE CHAIR: Good morning, Ms McMahon and Ms Mayo. Thank you very much for appearing before the planning, public works and territory and municipal services committee inquiry into RZ3 and RZ4. You have a buff card in front of you, the privilege card. Have you had a chance to read that? Could you indicate whether you understand the implications of that?

Ms Mayo: Yes, I do.

Ms McMahon: I understand them.

THE CHAIR: I am sure you would like to address your submission and then members will ask questions. We are running slightly late; we will probably have to go over time a bit.

Ms Mayo: I will give an overview of what Anne and I would like to address the committee on today. We made a submission; it is No 9. I am sure you have that. Anne has provided maps for you, to give you an overview of the area that we are focused on as the Turner Residents Association.

I understand that you will be receiving submissions from a much broader group, but the focus of our submission is on that area—in particular, an area that is identified in one of the maps, which is primarily section 47 in Turner. That is the section that currently has a prohibition on redevelopment. I understand that you are taking some evidence tomorrow directly from section 47 residents. Certainly, the Turner Residents Association has a position with respect to that section and we would like to make that point as well.

With respect to the submission made by the Turner Residents Association, I will be principally addressing some of the matters raised in the recommendations under point 1—it is about section 47 and section 63 and the dwellings in those areas—together with point 5, any other relevant matter, and touching also on the recommendation made by the association under point 2, which is about infill policy.

I am very conscious of the fact that we do not have a lot of time. The point that, on behalf of the association, we would like to get across today is about the spirit of community. The task that is facing us with respect to planning is a very difficult one because it involves the balancing of what we know needs to happen—that is, we need to achieve some sense or some form of higher density, particularly around areas such as centres and major transport corridors—with, at the same time, the desire to maintain and feed, if you like, the sense of community.

Turner is a suburb that has had a fair amount of infill. The graph that Anne has provided to you shows the levels of single dwellings versus dual occupancies and developments for the suburbs. You will see that, whilst Turner still has a number of single dwellings, it has the highest rate of multi-unit developments within the area, while some of the other suburbs, particularly Dickson, have very little multi-unit development, no doubt as a result of the policies with respect to the percentage that

had to be the rule—the 20 per cent or whatever it was that had to be developed before we moved on to those areas. Braddon is one of the few where multi-unit developments outnumber single dwellings.

The submission is basically this: for there to be a sense of community maintained, you have to strike and achieve the appropriate balance between the types of dwellings to achieve and attract a mix of people to the area. For there to be a strong sense of community, you need access to services, you need long-term residents, you need to attract families, as well as students and what some describe as a transient population, and you need to encourage people to make the area their home.

Certainly, you will be aware that there are parts of Braddon which do have high multi-unit development now and where there have been social issues surrounding the rate of crime in the area. It would be my submission that that is contributed to directly by the fact that there is not as strong a sense of community in that suburb as there is in some of the other suburbs.

Section 47 in particular has a mix of original residents, families now coming back into the area and a number of properties that have been developed, improved and extended. It is important, in the view of the association, to maintain section 47. You will be aware that we believe it has heritage significance. It is one of the last sections in that area that is untouched by development. The streetscape study that was done through heritage grants by the Heritage Trust and the residents association supported the view that there is a shortfall in the heritage register with respect to that postwar streetscape type of housing. It is different from Reid. Reid is a village; Turner is a garden. Section 47 is a prime example of that and it should be maintained and preserved. We would certainly be encouraging the retention of that as part of the outcomes.

Single units remain an issue generally for the community. There have been a number of media reports of late and a number of groups have been formed to ask that there be more thought put into planning and higher density. Northbourne Avenue, as a transport corridor and being close to the city, would be a great place to achieve higher density housing. What we are seeing now in some of the Turner suburbs, where one and two-bedroom units are being put up, sometimes 10 to a block, is that it is having a significant impact on the feel of the suburb and on the community of the suburb and also on the services. You have only to drive down some of the streets—and I presume that Greenway Street will be one today—to see that you do not need much rain before you have a pooling of water, and that is simply because the water no longer has anywhere to go.

We would certainly encourage being against that. In fact, it does not, in a lot of cases, achieve the outcome of encouraging more people to live in the city, because you end up with one or two people living in these units, and that has a greater cost, I would have thought, compared to what you might have if you have a family of five or six living in a single dwelling in the area. And some of those dwellings in the areas which have single residences do have that number of people currently residing in them.

So it is not about saying there should be none; it is about being imaginative about how it is achieved. I noted that one of the previous speakers commented on the fact that we have higher density in the outer suburbs. The difficulty with achieving that in the

inner suburbs is that the outer suburbs are starting off with a piece of vacant land. In the inner suburbs, there are already communities and there are already houses. So that is the complication in how you achieve that. I will pass over to Anne; I am conscious of the time.

Ms McMahon: I want to draw your attention to item 1 in our submission. This particular item focuses on rule 21. In the report written by ACTPLA, the briefing paper, rule 21 informs us that 23.5 hectares, as a percentage of land, had to be settled with multi-unit development in Braddon and Turner before any development occurred beyond Macarthur Avenue and Wakefield. That is a prime issue in relation to the purpose of this committee.

The graph that Nicole has presented to you, drawn from their paper, indicates that the density in the suburbs of Braddon and Turner has really reached a limit, whereas there is very substantial scope for development beyond Macarthur Avenue and Wakefield at the RZ4 level.

This policy, rule 21, was introduced in 1999. In the whole period, residents living in Turner have actually been subjected to sustained pressure to sell their houses since 1993, which was back in the B11 and B12 period. In those 17 years, only 51 per cent of people have actually sold. So the message, I think, is very clear: people want to live in their houses in peace, quiet and comfort and without the invasion of their privacy that occurs with multi-unit developments being placed alongside single dwellings. So our view is really about the inequity that currently exists relating to rule 21.

Moving on to item 2, this is about the infill policy. Our view is that the environment that is created as a result of the planning process should result in a safer, more secure environment. It should conserve the garden city policy of Canberra and it should retain a healthy environment for the people living in those circumstances.

One other point relates to that whole issue of safety and healthiness. You will see on the map that shows the green space, commencing at Barry Drive, the gross pollutant trap and also a sewage overflow works which exist in the middle of that block of green space at the end. The area of the sewage overflow is in a flood plain. We are informed—we have engineering expertise on our committee—that with the increasing infill, the likelihood of further flooding, more frequent flooding, in that area is a real issue.

As well as that, you will see the trickle of green, commencing at Barry Drive and flowing right through to Dickson and Lyneham. That really shows the high impact of the present policy which enables eight-storey buildings on Northbourne Avenue, beside which are four-storey buildings, beside which are three-storey buildings. So you have a kind of tiered structure, with one group looking down upon the other group, and with the third group being people who, it is our view—and we have some evidence of it but a study needs to be done—are kind of transient people. They are people who live in single flats; as soon as they have a family or as soon as they finish their courses, they move on.

So the question of what is a healthy environment, in terms of access to green space, in terms of being able to walk in safety, to exercise your animals in safety and

enjoyment, is a real issue in this area.

Ms Mayo: Certainly, when you are looking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be more energy efficient, that is going to require some thought as well. Do the people who live in the suburb actually work in the suburb? We know that we have a spread-out workforce with a lot of public servants, both ACT and particularly commonwealth. Do we know where people are working? Is it actually going to encourage them to walk?

We recently had an energy audit done, accessed through the government program, and the assessor made some comments to us about the fact that a lot of these unit complexes are required to have 24-hour lighting switched on. They are required to have lights on constantly in car parks. They do not provide areas where you can dry your clothes, so there is a greater reliance on the use of energy for the lifestyle that that sort of environment promotes.

There are some really good examples. The Space development on Northbourne Avenue is a really good example of how you can do it well in a sustainable way that both encourages and promotes sustainability and it has worked with the suburb to encourage those owner-occupied properties.

Ms McMahon: This issue of access to sunlight is an interesting one because that was brought to our attention with regard to the proposed rebuilding of Construction House, which, as you will know, is near Macarthur Avenue. The people opposite that proposed development were informed that they only had a right of access to two hours sunlight per day, which was a really interesting issue that reinforces the point that Nicole has made.

The other point that I want to bring to your attention, apart from the quality issue which we mention in point 4, is the issue of a study which we believe should be commissioned by ACTPLA to actually identify—this is in our item 5—the number of people occupying the multi-unit development. What is their status in terms of being part of the community? Are they tenants who move on? How quickly do they move on? Are they intending to live there permanently? We do not have that information and I think it would be extremely useful to know that. So that is a recommendation.

The other issue in terms of quality—and it was mentioned by the previous speakers—is the standard of dwellings. We have had some very poor outcomes in Turner in the earlier period, in Condamine Street in particular, where the standard of multi-unit development was very poor. That is a real issue.

THE CHAIR: We might go to a couple of quick questions because we are running out of time. Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: Looking at section 47, I understand you support the moratorium to quite an extent. Do you think there would be issues if people decided their houses are getting old, they are zero energy rated, they need renovation or demolition and rebuilding as a single family house? Is that consistent with what—

Ms Mayo: There are certainly some owners within that area who have been either

holding back or are reluctant to undertake renovations and extensions. I believe that the residents coming tomorrow will have some information about which of those properties have been developed, in the sense that they have been added to or renovated. Certainly, what has been achieved in the dwellings where that has occurred so far, for the main part, is a sense of maintaining the character of the original homes. There are still several on the block that are untouched, but a number of them have also been extended and renovated to some extent. There is one around the corner where they have just finished doing big extensions.

Those are the residents who are concerned. There is a concern about the loss of the community; there is a concern about the impact on privacy of having a development where people can look into your backyard at all times. That concern is real for the residents. There are a number there who are quite committed to maintaining their houses.

MR COE: I would like to get an understanding of the association. Do most of your members come from the RZ1, the single dwellings, or do you have many members that are coming from the multi-unit dwellings?

Ms Mayo: We have a mixture—

Ms McMahon: We certainly do.

Ms Mayo: and we have a mixture of views. There can sometimes be quite a robust debate around issues and positions, which gives some perspective.

Ms McMahon: The Turner Residents Association has been in existence since the beginning of 1950, so it has survived for 60 years. We have residents living in the RZ3, in the RZ4, as well as in the area which is outside the scope of the study, which is bordered by Sullivans Creek. You will see the definition regarding this particular inquiry, which is Sullivans Creek, and beyond that are the single dwellings. Particularly with the threat to section 47, we have certainly had an increase in our activity in that area, as well as in Macleay Street.

Ms Mayo: In a number of annual general meetings, for a number of years even those residents who have attended the meetings who live in multi-unit developments have been supportive. I think at two meetings out of three there has been a unanimous resolution that section 47 be maintained. There is strong support for that, regardless of whether you are for or against redevelopment in the area generally.

Ms McMahon: On the map that shows the green space, the area of green that runs straight across that map is really Haig park. Haig park is currently under a study to develop a management plan and a conservation plan, so it is already a heritage park. Part of the streetscape study was really aimed at the whole notion of Turner as a woodland suburb. Turner, in its design, was meant to connect with Mount Ainslie and Black Mountain. The canopy was meant to be intact, and that canopy, very largely, has been removed. Haig park certainly is currently under study, and the streetscape issue running along Greenway Street is really relevant to the integrity of that park.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We have run out of time, unfortunately. We

will send you a copy of the transcript for your correction. If there is anything that you find you need to correct, get it back to the secretary. If members have other questions, we can send those to you. Thank you for your time this morning.

Ms McMahon: Thank you. I would like to inquire whether you had access to the streetscape study. You have not? Oh dear!

THE CHAIR: That does not mean to say we cannot.

HUGHES, MS SHEILA, President, ACT Chapter, Australian Institute of Architects
MORSCHER, MR ALAN, Chair, ACT Planning Committee, ACT Chapter, Australian Institute of Architects

THE CHAIR: I thank both of you for appearing before the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services inquiry into RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment policies. I presume you have had a chance to read the buff card. Can you indicate into the microphone whether you understand the privilege card?

Ms Hughes: Yes, I do.

Mr Morscher: Yes, I do.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I welcome both of you. We invite you to address your submission, if you wish. We would like to leave some time for members to ask questions.

Ms Hughes: I will just do a brief summary of the key points of our submission and then we will throw it to questions, because obviously you have our submission.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Hughes: The key recommendations we have made are that the moratorium restricting development north of Wakefield and Macarthur avenues should be removed and there should be an active review of policies to support highest best use in residential areas in the currently emerging development cycle—in other words, in the next round of redevelopment that may occur in that area. We think it is a very artificial break to say arbitrarily that you are going to develop one area along what is a continuous major transport route connecting town centres. It is quite arbitrary to make a break in the way your policy implements simply based on a geographical location when it is the corridor itself that you are looking to develop into the future.

We also think, however, that in any development that occurs in this area it is absolutely essential, particularly as densities increase, that building energy efficiency and water efficiency are at the highest possible level, that the benefits of densification see real gains in population and that there are no negative impacts as a result of loss of energy efficiency or less efficient use of water in the area.

The existing infrastructure, such as the sewerage infrastructure at Dickson and those areas, as we understand it, is an older system, but the actual increase in water efficiency of systems and the decrease in population means that that system actually has capacity. As we understand it from representatives of ACTPLA, the system is suffering from a lack of material flowing through it. It actually has capacity and needs capacity.

We also think it is absolutely critical that affordable housing be provided as part of whatever mix goes in along Northbourne Avenue in these areas close to Dickson, close to Civic. The reason for that is that this provides a good level of access to services and facilities and employment to people who are financially in stress. We

believe it is critical that within the development in this area they should have housing made available to them.

We have noted in our submission that a very large area that is to the north of Wakefield and Macarthur Avenues—it is to the north, isn't it?—north of Haig Park, in fact, remains a development that was prepared by Sydney Ancher in the past as one of the early developments along Northbourne Avenue as the major entry route into the city.

Our institute has assessed that this development is significant in heritage terms and has nominated this area for registration by the Heritage Council of the ACT. We believe that in looking at the planning and delivery of development in this area it is essential that the Heritage Council make a determination on their assessment of the heritage value of this site.

This is important so that there is clarity around this issue. In the instance where they confirm that there are heritage values to that development, a conservation management plan should be prepared immediately. I would like to read to you an extract from our institute heritage policy, if I may, just to clarify what this means to us:

Some buildings are of such significance that retention in their original or existing form is essential. In other cases it may be necessary to be upgraded to achieve compliance with current standards, and/or adapted for new uses in order to survive. Adaptive re-use involves appropriate and acceptable modification of the existing entity and perhaps sympathetic extensions, in order to reinvigorate the building and to achieve a dignified and viable future.

The reason I am quoting that to you is that we do not see heritage listing as necessarily mothballing these buildings in any way, shape or form. In order for them to retain their heritage value to the community into the future they need to have a viable future and they need to be appropriately used.

That is why we regard the conservation management plan as important, because it will define what should be protected and allow for understanding of the scope of what adaptive change and potential extension can be done in order to make the Ancher housing and the use of that area more viable.

That is why we regard this issue as important. We regard the buildings as significant. It is really important to establish what the criteria are that are going to set development controls around the heritage areas. It is important to establish whether the community, through the ACT Heritage Council, shares our assessment as well. Obviously it would change the situation significantly if they did not in terms of their assessment of that.

The previous speakers referred to the fact that these areas, RZ3 and RZ4 along the Northbourne Avenue corridor and the inner north, are bounded by Sullivans Creek and, on the other side of Northbourne Avenue, by a number of ovals and that they are open spaces. These large areas of open space that are in the inner city are needed for the management of stormwater and for the provision of sports and recreation fields for the population. They will continue to be needed and will be essential to be maintained

at a very high quality as the density of this area increases.

Regarding the stormwater treatment of the water in Dickson, for example, at the minute there is a wetlands project going in. That is providing a more diverse and more interesting environment, an open space environment, and will provide different levels of recreational opportunity to the residents of Dickson than currently exist. Similarly, treatments along Sullivans Creek that addressed stormwater issues will potentially enhance the usability and the benefits that that environment could also provide to people in the more intensely developed areas.

The other thing that is really important is that we do not forget that the streetscapes of these areas are a really important part of the public realm. Their quality and their amenity are essential in protecting people's sense of the city as being a landscaped city. It is essential to protect people's amenity as they move through the city. The definition of the relationships of development to those streetscapes is really important in setting a character that promotes engagement of the community and allows people to have an ongoing sense of a well-established and well-integrated community.

We also note, however, that as you increase development in these areas it becomes really critical that public transport is delivered at a level of frequency and at a level of supply and consistency during the day that enables people living in these developments to access places of work, places of leisure and places where they can get services, whether it be medical, legal or any other form of service. To allow people to have access to public transport it needs to be brought on at the same time as the developments are brought on.

We would very much recommend the earliest possible implementation of the proposed 7.5 minute frequency bus line through the Northbourne Avenue transport corridor and the early consideration of where the stops for that system are going to be in terms of development and in terms of providing amenity for people to get onto buses. That will allow people to move very quickly to the town centre and the interchange and enable them to get onto other interchange buses that can link them to other places of employment. It also means that if employment is developing in Gungahlin people who live in this area will be able to move both ways along that transport corridor beneficially.

I think you are all aware that concurrent to this area there is a review and public consultation on a draft variation to territory plan 301 and a draft variation to territory plan 303. The draft variation to territory plan 303 is probably the most significant in the context of an established area where the road structure is already established and the infrastructure is already established.

One of the things that we have focused on historically is that we are looking to have those codes fundamentally reviewed from basic principles of what is being sought to be achieved in each of these precincts. What is it that is going to characterise the RZ3 zone as opposed to the RZ4 zone. What are the things that are going to be the objectives within those zones that are going to distinguish them from RZ2 or RZ1? That needs to be very clearly spelt out. The guidelines need to be simply and clearly written to enable development to occur which achieves those objectives and those guidelines.

At the minute we have a level of exception to the general rules because of the precinct coding in the inner north. We are suggesting that with the development of the revised residential codes we do not necessarily see that there is a need to continue with the level of exception to the residential codes that currently exist in the inner north. I think that sums up the points of our submission, so if you have any questions, please ask.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have to say that I agree with most of the things that you said in your submission. One thing I am particularly interested in talking about is referred to on page 15 under the heading “Energy efficiency of built form”. You are suggesting that high densities can be achieved at two to four storeys and that these lower forms can be more energy efficient. Can you just talk a bit more about that? When people have problems with the idea of increased density they often say, “It’ll be less energy efficient.” You are suggesting otherwise.

Ms Hughes: There is research around that has been undertaken by Griffith University, I believe, that shows within the context of Australian cities—in terms of the efficiency of development that is being done now as opposed to what might be done in the future with different levels of efficiency within higher rise developments, and that is a factor that might affect this outcome—that the levels of efficiency where we are seeing perhaps the most sustainable outcomes, in some ways, are in the up to four and six-storey level, the lower height developments.

The key thing is that it is the type of housing that you permit as to whether you can get the levels of density you need at those heights. It is about what your other controls are other than height that let you get levels of density at lower heights in order to get the energy efficiency of having denser housing at those lower heights. Examples where that might be a much more efficient form might be, for example, terrace housing. It might be unit-type housing where you have got developments of that sort of height but you have got more energy efficient ways of providing that. All of that depends on the actual energy efficiency of the built form. It depends on the fact that the built form itself is going to have a level of energy efficiency that will mean that you get substantive gains from having people in those denser environments.

The other thing we should mention, though, is that when we consider how we are going to move forward into the future—this is something we have become aware of through our own research and the work that we were doing last year—it is important that we engage with the community and talk about how we are going to live in this city that we are creating. The point was made by the previous speakers that if we live in our cities in such a way that everyone who is in an apartment is automatically going to be reliant on electrically drying their clothes and all those sorts of things then we do have some cross-benefits that are not going to be achieved.

We have got to really think about how we are going to live and what are the day-to-day decisions we are going to make that are going to affect our energy efficiency. They actually go beyond building form. That building form can contribute and there is a demonstrated opportunity at these lower levels, by looking at different types of housing, to achieve more energy efficient housing. The really high developments are the ones that are not necessarily achieving outcomes to date relative

to other developments.

MS LE COUTEUR: And by “really high” you mean—

Ms Hughes: Really high—10, 15, 20-type storey developments.

Mr Morschel: If you look at it from an energy rating perspective, as we are regulated to do, you will often find that units that are at the lower level, sharing party walls and having units above them, those sorts of clusters, can very easily produce the energy efficiency rating without a massive expenditure on building materials. Also, picking up Sheila’s comment about the high rise, but it also applies to the medium rise and low rise, it is as much about people’s lifestyle and demands. While energy is cheap, they will turn the heaters on all day, even if they are not in there, or the air conditioners. So it is a two-pronged approach. It is not just about producing the building fabric, the orientation issues et cetera; it is about adjusting people’s lifestyles or their expectations.

Ms Hughes: And to make it an important thing to be able to work to have buildings that give you some sort of reward for operating without high levels of energy use—to make it publicly known, make it known in some way so that people actually see a value in housing that uses less energy. At the moment, if you look at a lot of developments, you will see air conditioners going in. They are going in houses too; it is not that there is any fundamental difference there. They are actually being put in houses. It is just that, when you are increasing density in an area, we believe it is also an opportunity to look at changing our dependence on those sorts of technologies by looking at how we design our buildings.

Mr Morschel: It is a community expectation. If you open the glossy magazines, they will show you the fancy kitchens and the fancy bathrooms, but it is hard to find the article in those glossy magazines about the high-quality insulation or something of that nature. They are the sort of hidden components of a building or house that you cannot show; it is not the dinner table stopper.

Ms Hughes: Or even the delights of having a naturally ventilated building rather than having one that is not.

MS LE COUTEUR: In that context, do you think there will be more issues of natural ventilation in more dense developments because of noise coming in? Also, if you have two lots of flats, one on either side and a corridor in the middle, getting free ventilation becomes more problematical.

Ms Hughes: If you go to that sort of level of density, you might in fact be using what are really hybrid systems, where you are not necessarily looking to generate natural cross-ventilation in the same way that you would if you were looking at designs which allow for flow-through ventilation naturally. Ideally, what you would be trying to do is get as many apartments as possible or as many houses as possible operating so that they have naturally available flow-through ventilation rather than relying on mechanical systems. But you can in fact use outside air through other systems to also generate those flows.

Mr Morschel: It is a challenge, and the challenge, of course, is to avoid the noisy air conditioners. I think some of our offices in the bureaucracy get a lot of complaints about noisy air conditioners.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is not just the air conditioners; it is the person next door who has music on loud and you do not like their music.

Mr Morschel: That is the acoustic barrier between the units.

MS LE COUTEUR: But if both of you have windows open—

Ms Hughes: But is that different from a house?

MS LE COUTEUR: Usually only in distance.

Ms Hughes: In the house that I live in, if someone puts loud music on, I go next door, and I would expect the same social controls to be applied in apartments.

Mr Morschel: In acoustic treatment, particularly between the party wall situations and the floor, there is an acknowledgment that the Australian standards have been very poor. I think you have to acknowledge that a lot of people would build to the minimum standards. But we have seen a number of improvements from expectations regarding the building code and the Australian standards. I think we will see increased expectations regarding improved acoustic privacy. With respect to the comments Sheila made about ventilation systems et cetera, I am sure they will all be connected through the requirements of the BCA.

Ms Hughes: I think we have to be really careful about not designing ourselves into hermetically sealed boxes because we cannot manage simple social and civil relationships with our neighbours. To be honest, with a loud and noisy neighbour, it does not matter what form of housing you are in, it is an issue.

MR COE: With regard to the Northbourne housing precinct and what is really a poor use of land or an inefficient use of land for many of those complexes, do you see redevelopment or incorporating heritage values as being a higher priority than perhaps in some of the areas further from Northbourne?

Ms Hughes: I think the reason we are asking for the Heritage Council to do that assessment and for a conservation management plan to be done is that it is critical to understand the level of rating that is given to that housing, not just by us but by the community.

My anticipation, in looking at that housing, would be that the housing was designed many years ago and, if it continues to be used as housing, the standards it provides are not necessarily consistent with current standards. Also, in terms of the ongoing viability of that, one of the things about heritage that is really important to remember—and that is why I read out the policy—is that not every building is at a level that can justify community investment to retain it in its current form.

Heritage is incredibly important to the community as part of an understanding of

where they have come from and as part of an understanding of the fabric and nature of their society. These houses definitely have significance from a number of perspectives regarding how people have seen the city, both in terms of architectural design and in terms of, in some senses, a social statement about putting housing that was available to everyone on that location.

In terms of those developments, I would anticipate—but I am not an expert in heritage and I would have everyone note that I am not an expert in heritage—that in order to provide a long-term, sustainable future for that development, you would have to look at how you are going to adapt it to meet current standards.

You would have to look at how, particularly given the location of that development and the cost involved in doing that, you manage that whole environment to make sure it remained viable. In that context I would anticipate—not being a heritage expert, I hasten to add again—change in that area that would enable changes to occur in that zone.

MR COE: I must admit I do have sympathy with residents who are seeing units encroaching on their blocks, yet there are what appear to be quite significant amounts of land on Northbourne which have not been developed, simply because of perhaps the backlash or the symbolism. I think that any work whatsoever that the Institute of Architects can do to support more sustainable use of that land would be very welcome.

Ms Hughes: The fundamental point that we would make to you again is that the Heritage Council have a nomination from us; they need to take it into consideration. Then there needs to be a conservation management plan. Then everyone can move forward on this.

Mr Morschel: That position of those Dickson and Lyneham flats has been undecided for 15 years plus. You are quite right; I agree with you: it is a large tract of land.

Ms Hughes: It is a very large tract.

Mr Morschel: From the description that Sheila has given, it sits pretty fair-square in the area in which you are investigating. It is a very critical part. So our position is for the Heritage Council to make a decision so that we know. No-one knows what they can do. As we understand it, Housing ACT does not know if, when or how they could sell it. There is no market value to it because it has no standing. So a heritage decision is most critical.

I support what Sheila said, in that neither of us are heritage experts. But I just draw your attention to one example. Going back down the road to Condamine Court, that was a subdivision of a large block in which the land was sold off. The two towers have been built on former public housing land. The section that is retained has had an increase in density as well as modification of the units. I think there was an increased proportion of units suitable for aged residents. So there is an example already on Northbourne of that—

MR COE: Even The Avenue development on Barry Drive was formerly a public housing spot at one time?

Mr Morschel: Correct. There have been the full sales. This one was a partial sale and a retention of some affordable housing.

I give you another good example that came out of Condamine. In the public housing in the redevelopment, the planning authority or the planning department at the time accepted an argument that one car for one unit was not necessary, considering its location on one of the more intensive public transport routes in Canberra and, because of the nature of the residents, it was highly unlikely that all of them would be able to afford a car. So it is a development that has less than the one-for-one parking ratio as well. I am unaware of any complaints or criticisms of that arrangement. It has been in place now for nearly 10 years.

Ms Hughes: I would also flag the fact that, from our institute's perspective, this building sits on our register, and it needs to be assessed as to where it sits as to significance.

THE CHAIR: Have you been given any indication of when a decision might be made?

Ms Hughes: No.

MS LE COUTEUR: The Heritage Council have a 10-year backlog but 15 years seems—

MR COE: It is more than 10 years.

MS LE COUTEUR: Possibly one of our recommendations should be around resolving that.

Mr Morschel: In the early days of self-government it was quite clear to the housing department at the time that it was one of its problem sites. But with those early moves to consider it, it just got pushed back and pushed back.

MS LE COUTEUR: It was called the Housing Trust.

Mr Morschel: Yes, I think it had that title at the time.

Ms Hughes: The one thing we totally concur with is that this is a very significant tract of land in this area that we are dealing with, and we need to know what can proceed there.

THE CHAIR: Thank you both very much for appearing before the committee today. We will send a copy of the transcript to you for correction, if there are any mistakes in it. If other questions arise, we will send them on to you through the secretary, if that is all right.

Mr Morschel: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time today.

Ms Hughes: Thank you.

Mr Morschel: Thank you for the opportunity.

THE CHAIR: And thank you for your submission as well.

Meeting adjourned from 11.20 to 11.35 am.

BULUM, MR EMIL, Turner resident

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Bulum, for appearing before the planning, public works and territory and municipal services committee inquiry into RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment policies. Do you understand the implications of the privilege card?

Mr Bulum: Yes, I do.

THE CHAIR: I presume you would like to address your submission first and then we can go to questions.

Mr Bulum: I am the owner and resident of 18 Holder Street in Turner, which sits in section 47. My submission dwelt on that particular section and not on any of the other areas. My submission quite clearly outlined 15 reasons why I think the area should be opened up for redevelopment, but in a fairly controlled and measured way. I have been listening to quite a few of the comments that some of the previous speakers put forward, and I would probably like to comment on some of those in terms of a response.

THE CHAIR: Please feel free to do that.

Mr Bulum: I think most of what I have put on paper is pretty clear-cut. I think that some of the issues in terms of flooding and those other things that were raised are a bit of a non-issue in that all new developments that need to be done these days in the ACT need retention tanks and the like. In some ways it will probably minimise the stormwater runoff that occurs along Greenway, which I know is a bit of a problem. Redevelopment of more density would not be detrimental to that.

It is similarly the case with the issues around community. I have lived in individual homes and apartments in many cities around the world and community really is a function of the people that are there. In many ways I feel that community is actually strengthened by having proximity to people, because you have to be in the lift with them. When you are in a townhouse you actually see them a lot more. I do not think there is any more or less community in that part of the world than what I found in higher density areas. Personally, I feel that is a bit of a furphy.

Communities change over time. I have a 17-month-old boy that will enjoy that part of the world, whether it is living in a high density dwelling or living in a home that is there. My issue is probably more along the lines of crime and a few of those other areas that are of concern. I think a lot of those do not really come from the fact that there is high density in the area; they come fundamentally from the fact that there is a lot of public housing in the area and there are some social problems that come out of that. I have had a few windows broken over time as a result of those things, so I think that, again, we should not label. It is very easy to label social misfits because they live in high density housing. That may or may not be the case. I do not think that usually it is the case. It is a bit of a long bow to draw.

Issues like drying were raised as well. These days, ACTPLA mandates that balconies are required to be a certain size and certain screening to allow for that. So this idea

that if we have units we are all going to use the dryer is again a furphy and a bit of scaremongering. The reality that I have found over time is that I will actually put the washing out on a balcony because it is easier to get to it there than right at the other end of the backyard where it might be raining. I will throw it into the dryer more often the other way around.

I am just giving examples of people bringing up ideas and reasons not to do something. There is a strong anti-development push that exists in Turner. I do take exception to the fact that the Turner Residents Association seems to think that there has been a robust debate. I have gone to four or five meetings in the past and I found that there is an element of “group think” that exists there. If you do not have an anti-development viewpoint then you are not particularly welcome. I do not recall getting any invites in my letterbox any more, because my views have been quite well known, so you get cut out reasonably quickly. But that is the way it is. I do not begrudge them that but it should be clear that they are not a representative body. I do not think I have ever seen anybody from a unit that has come along to one of those meetings, but that is fine.

There was something else that I took exception to. With respect to Holder Street being a garden area, with the little pocket parks that exist there, and being representative of a particular type of urban space, that is great. But I think that a place like Hackett Gardens, a bit further away in Turner, is a far better example, and they probably should not be touched, and are not planned to be touched. So the idea that we lose that if we end up going down the path of doing some work in Holder Street is a bit of a furphy, in my view.

I am a big fan of great streetscapes. We were talking earlier about places in Melbourne and all these other things that have great adaptive re-use of space, be it with warehouses and whatever. But a lot of the time the streetscapes are kept, they are maintained, and they are the strength of these areas. People walk along the streets. It is the element of space and place that exists. That part of the world has some great potential to be a bit of a missing link, in my opinion. I travel a bit and have business interstate, particularly in Melbourne. Some of the architectural outcomes there are wonderful to see, but we do not seem to have the opportunity to do those things in Canberra because we have quite a regimented planning system. It seems to swing from one extreme to the other. It becomes an individual home that sits there, does its thing and consumes a lot of electricity. I must say that with my 17-month-old we are running the heaters 24 hours a day because the place just does not work from that perspective; it is just too cold. But we need to have that middle ground and have good quality, high density but larger stock. In my submission I suggest that you could put covenants on the area to create that sort of middle ground that I think there is a market for.

A resident jumping from a home of a similar size to a townhouse is not making a very great jump. In fact, it is probably a plus. There will be great sustainability benefits and even lifestyle benefits. But I do concede that not many people are going to jump from their home on Bent Street or Greenway into a two-bedroom unit if it is built there. I am not advocating that for a moment, but I do think, in the gradation of development as it goes forward, it is inevitable that you will get the high density on Northbourne, and that is warranted to create the critical mass for a future public transport spine,

which is pretty anaemic at the moment. I would love to see a tram at some point running up and down Northbourne Avenue, but it will not be in my lifetime. There is a longstanding joke with my mother that it has been going on for 30 years.

The other side of it is that there is a natural barrier, Sullivans Creek, and everything on the other side of that can, and probably should, remain as individual homes, and there is plenty of stock there for people to move into. It seems to me to not be a great use of that space and that land, particularly with all of the great public space that already exists in that area.

I am advocating the creation of what really does not exist in a meaningful way at the moment in that inner north area—high-quality townhouse terrace-style living that will attract a certain kind of person to the ACT that the ACT has not got enough of. Yes, we do have a large transient population, and therein lies the problem. They start off as transients but you would love to keep some of these people. They all end up going back to where they came from, or a lot of them do. So part of that is really creating the options for people. I am happy to answer questions. I think I have stated my case.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Bulum. Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: I am just looking at your proposed development conditions in your submission. You state:

Allow development of Greenway and Bent Sts once 50% or more of the blocks fronting Holders Street and Macleay Street have been redeveloped ...

Why do you see it as being of a staged nature?

Mr Bulum: I actually do not think that should exist. I am putting it there as an opportunity to get something through, effectively. I propose that that is something that might be—

MR COE: A pragmatic approach.

Mr Bulum: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: A pragmatic approach, but it is not what you actually—

Mr Bulum: A political approach, if you like.

MS LE COUTEUR: But it is not what you actually support?

Mr Bulum: No. I do not think it is necessary. It would not matter one iota. Again, as I have mentioned there, the way that the easements work throughout that section means it is highly unlikely, in fact probably impossible, that you would consolidate a block that fronts onto both Holder and Greenway or any of the other side streets—Macleay or Bent—to create some mega development. You would not do it.

MS LE COUTEUR: Because the easements are down the back, I guess?

Mr Bulum: That is right. That is effectively one of the limitations. It was probably one of those creative ideas in the middle of the night that was not too creative.

MS LE COUTEUR: Looking at your proposed conditions, if you forget about being totally pragmatic, what are those that you think would be the way to go?

Mr Bulum: Point 3. Point 3 really is—

MS LE COUTEUR: Point 3 is really it, and 1 and 2 are not?

Mr Bulum: No, they were sort of entrees. The main course is 3.

MS LE COUTEUR: The main course is No 3. Okay, thank you very much.

MR COE: In terms of almost the stalemate that has existed since 1993, have you noticed a deterioration or a neglect of some properties in the area because of this policy?

Mr Bulum: I think there have been a few—probably a few in section 48 and probably more in 47. But a lot of them are held by investors, and they will wait for however long they want to. In some ways it helps your property values if there is no development there, because these things just keep going upwards. As an investor and a developer myself in various guises around the world, I am more involved with the commercial office market but I know how that sort of land economic dynamic works. They will just sit there and collect their rent. So there is not necessarily an incentive for investors to do that.

I have been a resident there getting on close to six years now. I did look at that area in the early 90s when I was a resident of Canberra, and then I was away for a while. I do not feel that the best quality has actually risen in the area. It is very hard in some of those homes to do the adaptive re-use; it is a lot more expensive. With the knockdowns, they seem to be precluded as well. You could do a lot of nice things there if you wanted to do a single home, but everyone is caught in that netherworld at the moment: “What do I do? Do I under-capitalise or over-capitalise?” People are quite rational in the way that they look at things, so they will just wait.

MR COE: We heard earlier from some witnesses suggesting that limiting car parking might be an option for redevelopments that occur in this area. Do you think that removing car parks is viable for someone living in that area?

Mr Bulum: No, I do not. I have a strong green creed, but I do also have this view that in 20 years time we will all be driving zero emission cars and we will all look foolish if we do not start to create these places and spaces in the future. The townhouse-type development does not require you to go to a basement, to go underground, which probably means that because something is at ground level, if you do not have the cars you can convert it to other uses. But I do not think people accept that they do not have access to a car. They will probably not use it that often, which is a plus. From Monday to Friday they will probably catch public transport or walk into town but they still want their car in order to go off to the snow or whatever. Especially in this part of the world, it will not be a particularly cheap combination.

MR COE: We have that contradiction: you have a government that is pushing electric cars but at the same time it is trying to remove cars from the street, which is interesting.

Mr Bulum: My view is that people still vote on what they desire and—

MR COE: The convenience.

Mr Bulum: the convenience. The automobile has been a great liberator but if we can convert something that does not rely on the internal combustion engine, we will be doing pretty well. H₂O cars maybe; I do not know. That is a wider social issue and that is why I do not believe that would be useable, partly because people then end up parking on the street, and you have all the other attendant problems that come with that. Off-street parking is a must.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can I just go through your conditions. Firstly, condition 3—the reason for only townhouses is appropriate scale?

Mr Bulum: Partly it is an appropriate scale issue, but also it is the type of accommodation. We have plenty of units that are being built. Literally every developer that is out there is building units.

MS LE COUTEUR: They are all units.

Mr Bulum: Yes, because the policies lend themselves to do that. Given the kind of dollars you have got to pay, it is the only thing you can do to turn a buck.

MS LE COUTEUR: Given the land values are high enough, yes.

Mr Bulum: There is no middle ground there to allow some sort of moderated development to allow this kind of stock.

MS LE COUTEUR: You say that the townhouses need to be—I am taking this as a minimum—110 square metres. I am assuming that does not include the car accommodation.

Mr Bulum: No.

MS LE COUTEUR: Why do you think they should not be any smaller?

Mr Bulum: You can game the system, if you really wanted to. A one bedroom is 50-55 square metres these days. The two beddies are 75-80 square metres, give or take, and you go to 100 square metres for a three-bedroom unit and the like. That would preclude people from doing ultra skinny ones. There are ways and means. Developers are a crafty breed and they will look at ways to gain. By doing that it automatically imposes upon them a type of product that makes it more of an owner-occupied type of product.

MS LE COUTEUR: Basically what you are saying here is that you do not want to

have one or two bedrooms. You want to make sure—

Mr Bulum: No. There are plenty of those that the market is supplying and it will keep supplying it in those more traditional RZ3 and RZ4 zones. What I am proposing is something a little more different that really Canberra could do with. We are mature enough and sophisticated enough, I think, to deal with this kind of accommodation in this town. I actually brought along, for what it is worth—I did a bit of a random thing on the internet last night—what I thought were some decent examples, probably the only ones I could find at the time, of the kind of thing that could be done.

I think these came out of Melbourne or out of Richmond-South Yarra, maybe Fitzroy as well. I did not get time to look at some of the Sydney locations. A road trip down there would be a great way of seeing what sort of quality product can be achieved without having to throw it all away. There are some internal shots there, too, to show the quality of some of the internal fixtures.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

MS LE COUTEUR: Piccies are always nice.

Mr Bulum: I did that late last night on the internet off the cuff. I can provide so much more if you wanted me to.

MS LE COUTEUR: Next you have got “remove FSR caps”. I will show my ignorance here.

Mr Bulum: The floor space ratio.

MS LE COUTEUR: The plot ratio.

Mr Bulum: Yes, the plot ratio.

MS LE COUTEUR: Okay. That is what I would call the plot ratio.

Mr Bulum: Yes. It is more of a generic planning term. Again, I contrast the New South Wales environment, which I borrow heavily from—most of our planners seem to be from that environment—with the Victorian environment, where in many places they do not have floor space ratio restrictions. I have done projects in Melbourne in the CBD where there are one or two guiding principles: do not overshadow the Yarra and do not overshadow a park. Everything else is open to the aesthetics that the council at the time want to work with you on, which to my mind—plenty might disagree with me—creates a better built product in that city than it does in Sydney, for example. FSR restrictions can be quite limiting, but the restrictions on setbacks, heights and all those other things cover it all up so you really give over to an architect to be as creative as they can be with space.

MS LE COUTEUR: So you are okay with the current setback requirements?

Mr Bulum: Pretty much, yes. I think those can work. The height restrictions can work. One of the issues which is quite negative is that above-ground car parking is included

as part of the GFA. If you put it underground it is not GFA. So we are kind of pushed to put stuff underground; whereas if I had an enclosed carport or garage ACTPLA's definitions put that in as GFA. I can understand why they might do it, but as part of an overall suite of issues and changes, it is something that should not be factored in. If you want to put them around the back in a mews-type arrangement, you should not be penalised for doing that. That is where that was driven out of.

MS LE COUTEUR: Given all of this, am I assuming that you are envisaging more than one townhouse on an existing block?

Mr Bulum: Absolutely.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do you have any density in mind?

Mr Bulum: It depends on how it works. I have had some sketches done on my block, for example, which could probably yield four townhouses. Others might only yield two or three, depending on what it has in terms of solar access and the various other access issues that you have got, and the size of the blocks. That will come down to a site-specific sort of issue.

THE CHAIR: Do you envisage in your vision for this area that we could manage a certain percentage of affordable housing because we do not want to have housing close to the city all of one type, where there is no affordable housing, and then consign everyone that wants affordable housing to the greenfields?

Mr Bulum: No. That is where I think there is plenty of opportunity. In the immediate area where I am, literally within a 50-metre radius—one of my backdoor neighbours—there is an old home that the ACT housing trust owns and there is another one further up the road. They are doing their thing. As part of any overall development they could retain one or two for people who might have families. The other issue is that if you have got children and you are in need of that kind of accommodation that is the best way for it. It would not be discernibly different from any of the other accommodation. There is an equity issue here too. There are two sites there that the ACT government could be part of as part of that process.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have just one question. It is partly a question and partly a comment. You talked about many people in the area you are living in only using their cars at weekends. Do you think that if there was access to a car share scheme somewhere local it would be something that they would be prepared to use?

Mr Bulum: I very much doubt it. There would be plenty that would just out of principle. I find it strange that the younger someone is and the less money they have the more they seem to want to use their cars. It is a social imperative, it seems, that you have got to have your wheels. I think over time that might change, but it is going to be hard to match that. It is so individual. If you work in Belconnen and live in that area, by definition you can catch a bus. You will not walk to work, but if you are working in the CBD you will probably end up walking most of the time partly because it is just a bit of a pain to park in the city.

It takes me longer to get into the city and find a parking spot than it does to walk

sometimes. It is really hard to make that sort of call. I know that some of those schemes that you have mentioned are growing private schemes—the ones in Sydney and other cities. If they became trendy enough, people would do it. I can see them working, but not initially. It has to be a function of the location and where those facilities are as well.

THE CHAIR: Could you envisage, perhaps in one of these areas on Northbourne Avenue where we have multistorey developments, a multistorey car parking facility where people could—

Mr Bulum: Centralise them.

THE CHAIR: Centralise their car—

Mr Bulum: Yes, I could actually.

THE CHAIR: and leave their cars there to collect when they need them. It is the system they have in Sydney where you park your car and it is transported up into its little spot.

Mr Bulum: The stackers, yes.

THE CHAIR: And then you just bring it back down when you need it.

Mr Bulum: Yes, that could work, as long as it is not too far away from where people are. There is a convenience factor too. Again, they are all great ideas in theory, but then mum's gone shopping, she has got the kids, you are not going to put it over there and walk 200 metres; it does not work.

MR COE: I think there is a higher tolerance in the Sydney CBD than there is in Canberra.

Mr Bulum: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: In the Sydney CBD if you had to walk 200 metres no-one would even think about that.

Mr Bulum: Exactly.

THE CHAIR: As there are no more questions, thank you very much. We will send you a copy of the transcript so you can correct it if there are any mistakes. We will also send you any questions if there is something that arises beyond this. Thank you very much for appearing before us today and for your submission.

Ms Bulum: Thank you for having me.

The committee adjourned at 12 pm.