



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

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

(Reference: [Inquiry into draft variation to the territory plan No 306:
residential development, estate development and leasing codes](#))

Members:

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

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 20 JULY 2012

**Secretary to the committee:
Ms V Strkalj (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.

WITNESSES

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PURDON, MS CHRIS, Director, Purdon Associates **290**

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Amended 9 August 2011

The committee met at 2.01 pm.

MOSS, MR RODNEY, Director, Cox Architecture (Canberra)

PURDON, MS CHRIS, Director, Purdon Associates

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon. I declare open this sixth public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services into draft variation to the territory plan No 306—residential development, estate development and leasing codes. The committee will be holding one additional public hearing for this inquiry next Wednesday, the 25th. Details are available on the committee’s webpage or through the secretariat.

On behalf of the committee I would like to welcome to the table Ms Chris Purdon from Purdon Associates and Mr Rodney Moss from Cox Architecture. Thank you for your time this afternoon. I would like to draw your attention to the protections and obligations outlined on the blue card that is in front of you. Could you indicate your understanding and acceptance of what is contained within the statement?

Mr Moss: Yes, that is fine with me.

Ms Purdon: And with me too.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. You have a presentation, Ms Purdon. Is it your presentation, Mr Moss, or Ms Purdon’s presentation?

Mr Moss: We work as a team.

THE CHAIR: So it is from both of you. Would you like to present that and for us, as we go through, to ask you questions?

Ms Purdon: Yes, that would be fine.

THE CHAIR: We have your submission before us, as well as this other document that you have just given us. Please go ahead.

A PowerPoint presentation was then made—

Ms Purdon: I will start the presentation and hand over to Rodney shortly. Basically we want to elaborate on the submission that we have made and provide you with an opportunity to ask us any questions to clarify any points in that. Hopefully, there will be some that we may clarify along the way as well. In that, if we do not actually suggest specific modifications to the controls, we will certainly hint at some of those.

Before doing that it is probably worth thinking about what our concerns are. In general terms we are not being critical of all the controls. We are only talking about the RZ2 zone, not about DV 306 in totality. But we do not believe that the objectives of that zone will be entirely achieved by the controls as they currently stand.

We also do not think that the controls enable economically viable development. If a development is not viable, we are not going to get intensification, which is really the

intended outcome. In particular we have concerns about the restrictions that limit the number of dwellings. We consider that they are probably too low and too inflexible. We think that the rear setbacks are inappropriate for retaining the character of the area.

We think that the current controls prevent the development of greater housing choice in these areas. When we think that a large amount of the RZ2 zone is around shopping centres, local centres and group centres in established areas—areas that are predominantly detached housing—we really should be seeking to maximise the housing types and housing choice in those areas.

The controls specifically force development that is either large dwellings—and quite large dwellings, in fact; 150 square metres or thereabouts and more, and Rodney will talk about that in relation to one of the case studies—or, alternatively, they force inefficient use of the land. If, as a community, we think that a 50 per cent plot ratio is appropriate as a maximum, the controls should make it possible to achieve that and meet the housing demands, which we would say they do not at the moment.

I will give a bit of context. None if this is a surprise, obviously. Clearly the city, we all hope, is going to continue to grow in one way or another. We have been growing relatively quickly. Based on a continuation of that growth rate—which we all know may or may not be achieved but based on that—we may need 90,000 new dwellings in the next 20-odd years, which, based on what we have at the moment, is a very substantial increase, as you can see from the slide. That is, as I say, quite substantial.

What is happening as well in terms of demographic change is that smaller households will continue to increase. Whether they get smaller or not or stay at the sort of number they are now, again, is something for the crystal ball, but we have seen a very substantial decrease in housing size, and that is what has driven the housing demand in many respects.

Mr Moss: This 90,000 new dwellings in the next 20 years is an ACT government figure. It comes from the spatial plan. At the moment we have 125,000 dwellings in the city, so we are looking at an increase of 75 per cent—almost doubling the size of Canberra in the next 20 years, where we have already built within the footprint. It is a fairly major issue—significant.

Ms Purdon: It is exactly as Rodney said—the footprint is substantially established. We are now building Molonglo, but beyond that, we may well one day go to west Murrumbidgee, but that is basically the footprint of developable land within the territory. Clearly, and quite rightly, the landscape character, the hills and ridges and some of the other open spaces, are very highly valued by the community, right down to their local park. The community does not want to see those landscaped areas go.

Basically there seems to be broad community acceptance, at least in principle, of the need for redevelopment along the corridors, and what is occurring in some of those areas is fairly high density development. Nevertheless it is difficult to get away from the expectation and the reality that intensification and urban change are going to be an extremely important component of meeting that future housing demand. Of course—and I think it is a question of whether the territory can even afford to do this—the alternative is clearly that development occurs in New South Wales rather than in the

ACT. But that has a whole series of implications, not least of which is that it may not meet the demand of the people we are trying to cater for. Rodney will now talk about the case study.

Mr Moss: We thought it would be worth while giving you some examples from a couple of case studies. These are two blocks that we are familiar with in lower Narrabundah, just next to the shops; it is an RZ2 zone. As you will know, Narrabundah is a very interesting suburb in that the streets and the public domain are really quite generous and quite well developed, whilst the housing stock is pretty poor, and it is centrally located. Narrabundah is an ideal place for redevelopment because the public spaces are mature and well advanced and the housing stock is of no great value.

If you take these two blocks here, the market price of those two blocks is about \$650,000 each on the market. The UCV for those two blocks is \$620,000. If they were to be developed, one would think that the two blocks together would need to have a bit of an upsize. So if you sold them for \$700,000 each rather than \$650,000, an owner might be interested in selling them to a developer. So the cost of those two blocks together is \$1.4 million.

I want to quickly demonstrate what will happen under the current codes. Can you all see that?

MS LE COUTEUR: It is actually slightly easier to see in the printed one because it is a darker green. You cannot see the green very well on that one.

Mr Moss: Let me talk to that. You are now allowed to look at your book.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have not been previewing it; I thought it would be okay if I just kept up with you.

Mr Moss: We have a total of 1,440 square metres for those two blocks. Under the current provisions of the code, you are allowed to put a maximum of four townhouses on that development. They have to be in groups of two, which is indicated on the little diagram in front of you, they have to be set back from the side boundaries for solar access conditions, and they have to be separated in the middle. This little scheme in front of you is a nice scheme. It would be very nice to live there. As a planner you would say, "If I could buy one of those, that would be really wonderful."

I would like to take you to the next page, which talks about the financial viability of this. This is the crux of my main issue about the current provisions—what all of this actually means. We have two blocks, 750 metres squared each, 1,440 metres squared. The land value is \$1.4 million for the two blocks. The allowable gross floor area is 50 per cent of 1,440 metres, which is 720 metres. You are allowed four houses and no more. So the area of each house, including garaging, is 180 square metres, which is probably big. It is probably bigger than what the market really wants. The land cost per house is four divided by \$1.4 million, which is \$350,000 per house. The construction cost, 180 metres square, the size of each house, by \$1,800 a square metre—not unreasonable—is \$324,000. Now we go through the additions—\$20,000 for design, change of use charge \$8,000.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is that the rebate with the—

Mr Moss: Yes, that is the rebate.

Ms Purdon: That is for 2011.

Mr Moss: So that is going to go up in the future.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is 25 per cent of the eventual—

Mr Moss: That is correct. With the change of use charge—and we will come to this as we go further down the figures—the whole idea of the change of use charge, as I understood it, in the leasehold system is that when the use changed from A to B and the value of the land went up, it was reasonable that the territory received some of that additional value of the land. What I am going to show in this instance is that the value of the land goes down. It does not go up, it goes down, and there is still a change of use charge.

MS LE COUTEUR: The change of use charge is meant to be worked out—I know there is a code but every year the valuers are meant to look at the values. If the value was going down, on the basis of what Treasury has said, the change of use charge would be zero.

Mr Moss: Let us keep going through this and this will indicate that the change of use charge should be zero.

Ms Purdon: This is the future. We have not got to that point where Treasury would intervene yet. I think that is the situation.

Mr Moss: Change of use charge—this is per house of the four houses: stamp duty, someone has to buy the block of land for \$1.4 million to begin with, \$15,000 per house stamp duty that goes to the government; holding costs, \$50,000 to borrow the money over a year; contingency, \$35,000—not unreasonable; marketing and sales, agents' fees, marketing, advertising, \$20,000. So it is \$822,000. If I were a developer and I went to the bank and said I wanted to do this, they would only give me money—this is the Commonwealth Bank of Australia or Westpac—if I could demonstrate a 17 to 20 per cent profit or gross realisation. That amounts to \$165,000 for me to get finance. That is my profit should I do it, but I cannot do it unless I get the money from the bank. That makes the cost of that house \$1 million. The market value of that house is probably \$700,000.

Does everyone understand that? That means if you wanted to put it on the market for \$700,000 the land would have to come back to almost nothing. The reason for this is that the density, the amount of houses you can put on it, is so low. What we want to do in a minute is show you how, if you changed the rules, you could achieve a similar or higher density to this, it would work within the marketplace and it would retain the character of the area. That is what we want to demonstrate to you.

Ms Purdon: It is worth going back to the drawing that Rodney showed you a moment

ago. You will note that each unit is 180 square metres—if you develop to its maximum potential, each unit is 180 square metres. The code requires a three-bedroom unit to be a minimum size of 95 square metres. So what you can build on here is almost double the minimum that the code is requiring for a three-bedroom unit. There is a discordance in all of that. It is just not going to happen. There is not a market for this type of housing, at 180 square metres a unit, or a very limited one.

Mr Moss: You would not build a smaller house because it is the land component that is blowing you out of the water; it is not the building component.

MR COE: That ratio of land to build has to be proportionate.

Mr Moss: That is correct. The only way you can do that is increase the density, which we will explain to you soon.

MS LE COUTEUR: Or decrease the land price.

Mr Moss: Or decrease the land price, which will not happen.

MS LE COUTEUR: There will be great resistance to it. The commentators seem to think we are looking basically at a levelling of prices for quite a long time. Eventually I guess this may happen, long term.

Ms Purdon: People will not sell their houses. They will not be able to afford to sell their houses if they are going to get less in the market than they paid for it, particularly if their debt exceeds what they will get back.

MS LE COUTEUR: For a lot of people in the older suburbs, even if it is less than this, it is still going to be a lot more than they paid for it. Narrabundah still has a lot of people who did not spend a lot of money on their piece of land.

Mr Moss: If you put the house on the market just the way it is, without any development whatsoever, you get \$650,000. If you wanted to sell it, you would sell it as an individual house.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, you would.

Mr Moss: What we are saying is this: if the government is serious about infill and getting density close to the shopping centres, you have got to find a way of promoting development in these areas.

Ms Purdon: Again, if you feel that a 50 per cent plot ratio is the appropriate level of density for this form of housing, that is the measure that you use for whether the land is used efficiently or not. If in fact you are only achieving a plot ratio of 35 or something, is that an efficient use of what is a scarce resource in the territory, which is land? It is probably not. If you think about it once again, you have got a 50 per cent plot ratio for a detached house in an RZ1 zone. We should be going to at least that much, if not more, in an RZ2.

What we really wanted to talk to you about, as Rodney indicated, was an alternative

way that we think might overcome some of these problems that we think exist. What we are seeing is that there are some principles on which we have based what we are going to present to you. The first, and this is really the overarching one, is that the planning controls should facilitate the policy of intensifying residential development. If that is government policy, to intensify in certain residential areas, the planning controls should achieve that outcome. They should enable that to happen.

At the same time, though, it is important to remember, I think, that the character of the garden city is highly valued by the community and they want it retained. I think that a lot of the development we have seen today has compromised that, and that is one of the major reasons why people are opposing it. I think that residents do not object just for the sake of it. There are some, clearly, who do not want any change; there are a lot who find particular problems with things. The built form, and I emphasise the words “built form”, needs to be compatible with the existing built form of the surrounding development, and that is predominantly a detached development in the adjacent RZ1 but also in the RZ2, which is a transformation zone.

Housing choice should be encouraged, to meet diverse housing needs. We really need to be offering people, as they age, the opportunity to age in the suburb where they have social connections, for younger family members to go back to those areas. All of that is important, and that is why housing choice is important.

As we have alluded to already, development is only going to occur if it is economically feasible and viable for the people who are investing. Therefore the controls should be sufficient to enable that to happen, not necessarily for vast profits to be made. No-one is suggesting that. Nevertheless there should be sufficient in it for people to go ahead such that change occurs.

We would also say—we do not actually focus on this particularly but we would be quite happy to discuss it—that, obviously, even within the RZ2 zones, some areas are inherently more attractive. The inner areas are more attractive than, say—and apologies if anyone lives out there—out at Tuggeranong or out in Belconnen where you trade off. Invariably you are trading off higher density for lower travel costs and less time. You do not get that if you are out in those areas. And it is not just Canberra, that is the way cities function.

MS LE COUTEUR: Just one question, BTC, WTC?

Ms Purdon: Town centres.

MS LE COUTEUR: Belconnen town centre and Woden town centre?

Ms Purdon: Belconnen town centre and Woden town centre, yes, sorry. I have been in planning too long. Basically I think that what we are trying to do, as I said, is achieve compatibility of built form and we are trying to achieve retention of the character of the area and offer housing choice. They are the things that we think are really important as well as that economic one.

So what we are really seeing is that the basic form is some form of townhouse or terrace style. And if you think Paddington, for example, or Redfern or Glebe or all

those older suburbs that basically have rows and rows of very desirable townhouses, it is seen to be a very attractive form of development. The scale of it is compatible in many cases with detached housing, even though there is not a lot of that obviously in those areas. But it is seen to be an attractive form and it is certainly an efficient form of development.

We consider that the two-storey height limits in RZ2 are certainly appropriate, that there is no reason to go any higher. It is important in terms of compatibility that development addresses the street and takes into account the entry from the street into the individual dwellings. We all walk into our own house through the front gate. Some of us go through the garage but visitors come through the front door and the front gate. And that should be—people again value that—replicated in this housing to the extent that that is possible.

Development should be located around the perimeter of the sections so that again, if you think about the existing areas, there are large areas at the back of houses that give you a large landscaped area at the back of the blocks. You get the front setback; then you get rows of houses obviously separated from one another; and then an open space landscaped area at the back. Let us put that together.

Mr Moss: Let us put that all back together. Just as a prelude to that, I am sure you have heard lots of presentations from architects, builders and various other people talking in detail about the codes and how sun angles do not work and setbacks do not work until you are as confused as we are, who have to deal with it on a day-to-day basis.

I think one of the problems with the codes in the ACT government is that ever since self-government people have tried so hard to get it right and what they have been doing is layering stuff on top of stuff on top of stuff so that we no longer have a clear vision, we no longer have a direction, we no longer have the planning controls that would develop things like Swinger Hill where the secretary lives. She was just saying what a wonderful place it was and how dense and high in amenity it was and so on and so forth. We cannot do that any longer because of the details of these codes.

So what we have done here is gone right back to first principles and we have said, “Okay, let us look at a building as an envelope rather than GFAs and heights and so on and so forth.” On the first diagram here you have got two blocks, the two blocks that we were talking about in Narrabundah.

Ms Purdon: Which again will be better on your printout than it is on the screen.

Mr Moss: On your printout, they are 720 square metres each. We are proposing a building footprint on that block, which is the drawing at the bottom, block development possibilities, which is showing a setback from the street of six metres, pretty sensible; a setback from the left-hand side of six metres for a driveway; four metres on the other side for the next-door neighbour; and a 10-metre setback from the rear boundary. It is really important, we believe, to have a good setback to the rear boundary so that you can have tree cover.

Ms Purdon: And just again, remember at the moment it is three; so this is a very big

increase on that rear boundary.

Mr Moss: And this is very significant. Canberra has beautiful street trees. There is no doubt about that. And what is happening in the newer suburbs with the really tight setbacks is that is all you have got. But what you can do is have significant planting in the centre of blocks if you have setbacks that are sufficient at the back. And so you have got very large street trees, very large trees in the centre and you retain the character of the garden suburb.

Ms Purdon: And I think the important thing to recognise is that rear planting, those large trees at the back, are very important in contributing to the character of those areas. As Rodney said, we focus on the streetscape but if you look at those and you look at areas, you are actually looking at them in the context of a backdrop. They really do contribute to that character.

Mr Moss: We then say, “Really within this box you can do whatever you like.” I have shown here it being broken up into 10 two-storey loft apartments, five facing the street, five facing backwards, with a driveway down one side. What is important is that there are never any more than 10, because if you have more than 10, you will need to bring a garbage truck onto the site. The minute you bring a garbage truck onto the site, it becomes incredibly complex. If you can collect garbage on the street, things are so much easier. Ten is also smaller. If it is an amalgamation of two blocks only, you are not dealing with very large building volumes. You have still got a relatively small building volume.

This block is in the order of 20 metres wide, which means that the car parking can be directly underneath it, and it is wide enough to have sufficient car parking, 17 car parking spaces, together with storage. So it is logical and sensible and fits onto two inner Canberra blocks very comfortably.

Ms Purdon: And probably two Woden or Belconnen blocks too. I think the other thing just to note in terms of those site setbacks, which are four metres and six metres, is that again they are greater than what is being proposed in this draft code. So again, amenity is being protected.

Mr Moss: If you go over the page, we have brought some Lego with us.

THE CHAIR: Good. Hansard can pick up the Lego.

Mr Moss: We wanted to be remembered. When you go to the minister at the end, you can say, “It was those two that had the Lego.” If you look at the diagram down at the bottom, you can see how those slivers can be configured in different ways. The first sliver could be a two-story townhouse.

Ms Purdon: That is all you are allowed to do now, effectively a two-story townhouse.

Mr Moss: And the next example is a studio apartment on the ground floor, and a two-story loft apartment at the back. The next example is one that would run over the top of a studio apartment. And the next is an apartment on the bottom which goes right through, and two apartments on the top. The last one is two apartments.

So if I could, I will just come across here. Essentially you have got a building that on the ground floor might have an apartment that goes all the way through. This one is a two-story townhouse. This one is a two-story studio apartment facing that way, and a two-story studio apartment facing that way, and so on. So you can do what you like.

I will come to solar control as well, because we solved that as well. So I will just leave that with you. It is a shame Neil Savery is not still with us. He would love that.

Ms Purdon: So what we are saying there is, “Be more flexible.” At the moment, all you are allowed to do is that first one. A two-story townhouse is what you are allowed. But within that building block, you can actually do various things within that building block, subdivided in different ways.

MS LE COUTEUR: So you are saying the two-storey is the only one you are allowed, basically for financial reasons?

Ms Purdon: No, the code.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would have thought that the—

Ms Purdon: The code does not allow apartments. It only allows attached housing in the RZ2 zone.

MS LE COUTEUR: What makes a studio apartment an apartment rather than—

Ms Purdon: Apartments are basically where you have a dwelling above another one. Once you have a dwelling above another one, that is called an apartment.

MS LE COUTEUR: But the second one where you have the studio at the front and that—

Mr Moss: That would be allowed.

MS LE COUTEUR: That one would actually be allowed?

Ms Purdon: But it would be restricted by your controls on the number of dwellings.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, you quite possibly would not do it.

Ms Purdon: Yes, that one would be allowed at the moment but the others would not because they are apartments.

THE CHAIR: On the plan obviously they look pretty titchy, so compared to the other homes that you showed before that are allowed under these current rules—

Mr Moss: How big are those? It is really interesting.

Ms Purdon: Quite large.

Mr Moss: A hundred square metres each.

THE CHAIR: They are 100 square metres, those other ones?

Mr Moss: Yes. The two-storey apartment facing one direction is 100 square metres. So if there are 10 on there, they are 100 square metres each.

THE CHAIR: So each of those is 100 square metres?

Mr Moss: Yes. That takes it to 1,000 square metres, which is above the 50 per cent plot ratio. However, if you were containing it within an area that provides you with all the setbacks, why not increase the GFA? You will see in a minute, when we come to the financial part of this, why you would do that.

Ms Purdon: However, if you said that it had to stay within that existing envelope, and it would be 50 per cent, you saw in that drawing of the previous case study that that two-storey unit was 180 square metres of GFA. So if you use that, an up and a down would be 90 square metres each. Obviously if you went to four in there, they come down to 45 just on the maths—45 square metres each. So you might not go to four on there. Certainly 90 square metres is clearly a generous apartment by the standards. So you are getting some flexibility around it.

Mr Moss: With respect to the diagram at the top, with the question about northern orientation, I have a strong view on this. John Tait and others have been really pushing this solar orientation bandwagon incredibly strongly, to the point where, as the density goes up, it becomes harder and harder to achieve things. I am strongly of the view that facing north is fantastic, but facing east and west, where you get light in two directions and you have morning and afternoon sun, is fine. You do not have to face everything north. If you have a city where everything faces north, all sorts of other things are severely compromised. It is my view that the regulations have become a little bit narrowly focused around solar orientation. That is maybe a bit of an aside.

Having said that, the top diagram indicates that if you actually took this block and pushed it up against one of the side boundaries then you could break it into two and have an entrance down the middle. It is just a variation of the site plan. Over the page you can see how these Legos are all stacked together. If you go to the next page, this is interesting. You have the road on the right-hand side; your front garden and deep-rooted verge. This is showing the two-storey unit facing backwards and forwards. The way that you deal with the solar orientation is that you flip up the roof so that you get sun coming to the units that are facing to the south.

You will see on our diagrams that when we have got one-storey units, they are always on the top floor, so that you can always get sun to them if they are on the south side, and if you have a unit on the bottom floor, it goes all the way through, so that you get light in two directions. So it is pretty simple.

If we go through the financial viability of that, and we are talking about trying to produce a climate here whereby people will do things and we will get a reasonable architectural outcome, we have the two blocks at 720 square metres each, the same—

1,440. The land value remains the same, at \$1.4 million. Allowable GFA is established by the building envelope. That diagram I showed is 1,000 square metres, rather than 720. It is a bit bigger. With the allowable number of houses, you can get 10 as a maximum. You might choose to only put eight or six. That is fine; you just make them bigger. But you are providing 1,000 square metres of development.

The area of each house—that should read “excluding the garage”, if you could just make that change—is 100 square metres each. What has happened here is that the garage has gone underneath, so they are no longer counted as GFA. One of the problems with garages on the surface is that they are counted in GFA, as I am sure you have heard lots of times. So the land cost per unit has gone down from \$350,000 to \$140,000. I have increased the construction cost from \$1,800 to \$2,500 because it now has a basement and it has a concrete slab that needs to have fire protection. So I have taken account of that. I have increased the cost per square metre—\$250,000. We can go through all the other things we had before, putting the relevant number in. \$453,000; gross realisation profit of 17 to 20 per cent is another \$100,000. The cost of one house is \$544,000. It is probably worth about that on the market. So it is a goer. If a developer saw that, he would say, “I’ll do it, because I can make a gross realisation of \$90,000 a house.”

Let us see what the outcomes are. Chris might like to go through what the outcomes are.

Ms Purdon: With respect to what we think the outcomes of that are, firstly, there is limited change in the built form. If you look at this drawing of Rodney’s, he has one which is the width of two units and another which is the width of three frontages, versus the one that is the five. Both of those, but particularly the one on the right, the alternative, are of a scale that is comparable to a detached house. Detached houses in the RZ1 zone can go to two storeys. These could be detached houses in terms of their built form. They can build to similar sorts of envelopes. So the scale is quite compatible in a built form sense.

Because the setbacks are really respecting the sort of setbacks that are in the area now, particularly those rear and side setbacks—but of those, the rear ones—there is limited impact on adjacent development. Certainly there have to be more people in the development than there would be in two houses, or even in the number of dwellings that are allowed under the draft control. Nevertheless because of those other built form controls, there is much less impact than some of the existing stuff has achieved. It would be my view that because you are building smaller units, you are also reducing the number of people in that regard.

With respect to greater housing choice, you clearly have suburbs of three-plus bedroom houses. This would introduce the option for anything from a bedsit through to a three-bedroom townhouse. So there is much greater variety of the type of housing that can be achieved. It also achieves an efficient use of the land because it makes it possible to develop to around the 50 per cent, or, as Rodney is saying, to even go a bit higher than that. It was probably to about 60 per cent.

Mr Moss: Yes, a bit more.

Ms Purdon: Sixty-five or something.

Mr Moss: Sixty-five or something like that.

Ms Purdon: That might be something that needs to be controlled in a particular way. But with respect to efficiency of the land, we do not have a lot of land. I often say that land in Canberra is our mine. Once it is gone, it is gone, and we do have a responsibility to use it as efficiently as possible. As Rodney has demonstrated, it is also financially viable to do it. So the industry will come back into the market and actually do that if they have some flexibility around the number of units.

We are saying that under the current controls, on that particular case study, four units can go on that block. But on effectively the same built form, it is possible to get up to 10—that would be the maximum that you could get—while achieving the benefits of all of that and also making it feasible. That is really it. So let us achieve it. That is what we would say.

Mr Moss: I think we ought to patent it—take a royalty on every scheme done like that. In conclusion, as Chris said, it is government policy to promote development in RZ2. With the 90,000 new dwellings and the growth we are having in Canberra, it would be irresponsible not to do that. The existing controls do not encourage it. They do not work. We need to change those controls, and we would be more than happy to assist this committee to suggest parts of the code that should be changed.

Ms Purdon: It actually will not require very many changes to the code.

Mr Moss: Just delete a lot of it.

Ms Purdon: I do not necessarily agree with that but it does need some change. It is probably half a dozen or so of the controls that need to be changed or in a couple of instances deleted. We could have given you that today but we were reluctant to do that without having given it a bit more thought.

MS LE COUTEUR: Basically what you would be changing is the plot ratio. Would you possibly no longer have a plot ratio and just have setback controls?

Mr Moss: That is what I would like—a building envelope. You could do whatever you liked within—like a development control plan. They do not have GFAs. They have a height limit and a setback.

Ms Purdon: But it would also be true to say that if government said, “No, we’re keeping a plot ratio,” what we are proposing still works.

MS LE COUTEUR: It just has to be a higher plot ratio?

Ms Purdon: No, it can work on 50 per cent.

Mr Moss: It can but the numbers would be slightly different.

Ms Purdon: Yes, the numbers would be slightly different, but it would still work on

50 per cent. What is important is that we allow apartments. It is difficult to know what that little building block is. We have not got a name for that, but we are saying that there is a building block that looks from the outside to all intents and purposes like a townhouse. That can be between one and four dwellings, and it should be allowed to be between one and four dwellings. There is enough development capacity for it to be that. Let us remove that restriction about apartments and allow that to happen.

We have introduced controls about proportions of one, two and three-bedroom dwellings. It is a similar sort of thing to that. We would change the setback requirements, obviously, because we are saying it should be around 10 metres, not three. That goes to Rodney's comments about the envelopes. It is not that much of the code that needs to change to make it work, to actually achieve something that is based on a vision of what we want an RZ2 to be, which at the moment we do not have.

Mr Moss: With respect to criticism about the amount of cars, it is always the criticism, but if you increase the density, you increase the cars, until we change our modal split. There is nothing you can do about that.

MS LE COUTEUR: How easy would it be to get out of your basement car park? Is that enough space to actually get—

Mr Moss: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Drive in and out?

Mr Moss: Sorry?

THE CHAIR: Driving in and out of the car park?

Mr Moss: Yes, it is. Seventeen meets the codes, yes. It is no problem.

Ms Purdon: But I think it is also important to remember that this is an example of what you could do if you used these sorts of controls. There are lots of other ways. This is just one example.

Mr Moss: But the key is: do not forget the garbage truck. You want to have a development that is small so that you do not have to deal with TAMS over garbage trucks. Did you know that TAMS recently bought bigger garbage trucks?

MS LE COUTEUR: No, I did not.

Mr Moss: That was for some sort of garbage collection efficiency, but what does it do to building blocks? It just makes it even harder and even more ridiculous. So keep the garbage trucks on the street.

Ms Purdon: And it is also easier to amalgamate two blocks than it is five or six.

Mr Moss: And if you keep the amalgamation down to two blocks then you do not get rows and rows, yes. Anyway, that is enough from us.

MS LE COUTEUR: So the key things to make this work are that plot ratios are got rid of or increased to 60, setbacks would be made more generous than is allowed for at present, and apartments allowed?

Ms Purdon: Yes, and I would put them in a slightly different order. I would say apartments allowed, increase the rear and side setbacks, and then plot ratio, because that one only works if you allow apartments in an RZ2 and if you increase the rear setbacks. Allowing apartments gives you your efficiency that Rodney has been talking about. Increasing the setbacks is a major way of retaining amenity.

Mr Moss: And landscape.

Ms Purdon: And landscape. So they are the two really important ones. As I say, 50 per cent is achievable. Sixty-five per cent is more desirable, if you in fact fit it to the block in terms of envelopes as well.

The other thing to bear in mind in this, without wanting to introduce a new complication, is that dwellings can only be so deep. You might have a block that is 45 metres. I have seen blocks that are 45 metres deep. You are still not going to build a dwelling that is—

MS LE COUTEUR: Forty metres.

Ms Purdon: 35 or whatever metres. You might build two back to back, but you will not build one, because it is too deep. You cannot get your light in.

THE CHAIR: Have you got any questions on this particular area, Alistair? We might take a break and then come back to the solar question?

MR COE: Perhaps a little one. The question is on the broader principle.

THE CHAIR: So we could take a break now and go grab coffee et cetera, and then we could come back and start asking questions, including dealing with that other issue that you mentioned that you would be happy to discuss, which was the solar issue, more generally. We will do that then.

Meeting adjourned from 2.43 to 2.53 pm.

THE CHAIR: We will go to questions from the committee. Ms Le Coureur.

MS LE COUTEUR: On solar access, the lot that you did faced north, and I could see how that was going to work, and clearly it did work. But if you did not have a site that faced north, do you think that you could organise it so that all the dwellings did get some sun under this sort of arrangement?

Mr Moss: If you change from the residential house which has windows on all sides to the townhouse model, which we are really suggesting here, which is appropriate for RZ2, you have light coming in at both ends, with sometimes light coming in from the end, if you are on the end of a row. So if you are facing north-south, that is fine; you have north light coming in on one side and from the south on the other side. If you flip

the building around east-west, as I said before, it is my strong view that light and sun from the east and the west are quite appropriate, because you get, say, 2½ hours in the morning and 2½ hours in the afternoon. How do you deal with the western sun? You shade it in the summer time. So I think the townhouse model can actually work all the way round.

MS LE COUTEUR: But that will only work where you have apartments all the way through—

Mr Moss: Yes. But if you have a two-storey—

MS LE COUTEUR: In some of your pictures here, you have two halves. So you would end up with people having just one set of windows facing potentially east, west or south.

Mr Moss: That is correct, and in all those instances, you have a roof light. As you can see in the section, you tip the roof up so that you are able to get northern light into the two-storey studio apartment.

THE CHAIR: Or east or west.

Mr Moss: Or east or west, yes.

THE CHAIR: Something light.

Mr Moss: Yes.

Ms Purdon: Also those requirements around solar orientation may well influence how many units you put on it, and the configuration of these little blocks and how you put them together to make sure that you achieve your outcomes.

MS LE COUTEUR: The other part of solar is overshadowing. The current rules have the solar fence. What do you feel about that? One of your sets had a build-up to the boundary, which clearly is highly unlikely to be compatible.

Mr Moss: As far as boundary setbacks are concerned, we are proposing that these buildings will be a maximum of eight metres high, two storeys—a maximum of eight metres or probably even less than that.

MS LE COUTEUR: Eight metres is pretty high for two storeys.

Ms Purdon: No, you are allowed 8.5 in the code.

Mr Moss: It allows for sloping sites, roof pitch and so on. I should have done the calculation but I think it is okay. We are suggesting a six-metre setback for a driveway on the side where the adjoining property is facing north. So if the adjoining property is facing north, and that was built right up on the boundary, that would be fine because you are not overshadowing. You can build onto the boundary if you are not overshadowing, in theory. Do you understand what I mean?

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, I understand.

Ms Purdon: And with all the other setbacks, I do not think overshadowing would be an issue from any of the other directions at all.

Mr Moss: I think it can be done without any problems with overshadowing. The problem with DV 306 is that it attempts to change the angle as you go further down the block. The reason it is doing that is to try to project sunlight into the rear gardens. That is correct, isn't it?

Ms Purdon: Yes, I think so.

Mr Moss: What we are proposing with this is to keep all the development towards the front of the block. There is no development at the rear at all, so the rear of the block is all open and heavily landscaped. There was something in the paper this morning that actually said that Chris and I were coming in to talk to you today. It was talking about Molonglo. We are not talking about Molonglo here. We are talking about inner city areas. They are talking essentially about houses. We are suggesting that the RZ2 zone should go towards terrace houses as a model, rather than houses with windows all around them. We pushed that dream too far, in my view—far too far. We should have given that away and gone to terrace housing.

THE CHAIR: Which dream are we talking about?

Mr Moss: Having the residential house. It used to be what they set on a quarter-acre block. The blocks got smaller and smaller but we still kept the concept of the house with windows all the way around it, and stuck it next to another one. It has lost the amenity that it used to have compared to a townhouse which has walls on both sides, basically, and light coming in from two ends. That provides you with much more acoustic privacy and much more privacy generally. It gives you good light penetration and it gives you a higher density.

Ms Purdon: Again, as places like Paddington demonstrate, they are also suitable for families.

Mr Moss: Yes, and Swinger Hill. We should call the secretary as a witness.

MS LE COUTEUR: This sort of development is actually, as I understand it, in RZ1 areas in the new parts of Canberra. Crace is RZ1 and it has row houses. I would describe them as row houses.

Mr Moss: Yes. Crace is similar to this, except that we are suggesting that, over a city block, they are broken up.

MS LE COUTEUR: Crace is a whole estate. You are just looking at a couple of blocks.

Mr Moss: Yes.

Ms Purdon: Yes. It could be for more blocks.

Mr Moss: They have a lane at the back, so they do not need the underground—

MR COE: With this sort of development, is it actually practical in every RZ2 area? I can think of suburbs in Belconnen, which I am very familiar with, of course, and other areas that are not as close as Narrabundah, and where you have in effect terrace houses or apartments clustered around a local centre which is 15 or 20 kilometres from the city centre and perhaps five kilometres from the nearest town centre. Is it really practical to have it there?

Mr Moss: That is a really good question. We have said that we are really focusing our discussion here on central Canberra. If you go further out, what will happen to those financial things is that the land value will be right down and the current RZ2 propositions in DV 306 might in fact work. I am not sure, but as the land values go up, you cannot do it. It is no longer viable.

Ms Purdon: If you think about the value of houses in some of those areas, which becomes the land value, they are not half of what they are in the inner areas.

Mr Moss: No, they are not.

Ms Purdon: What you would say, I think, is that it would head towards what you can do now but it would not ever actually get there. Whereas we might say that we think it should be 10 units on this block, you might find that on two of the blocks in Belconnen, for example, instead of it being 10, it might be six. At the moment it could only be four but it will not ever get down to four. It will be six or seven.

In terms of the demand, I have met, over my years in planning, many people in suburbs in Belconnen, Chapman and so forth, that want to stay in that suburb. They have been there all their lives. They just want to live in something other than their house. There was a development—I think this actually precedes the RZ2 zone—in Melba a few years ago. It was only a small development. Every unit in that development went to local residents. There is clearly a demand. So in that sense, whilst it might not be near employment or whatever, there is still a demand from people. They want to stay where they are attached to.

Mr Moss: If you just say, “There’s the envelope and the maximum is 10,” you can leave it for the market to decide. The market will work out how big the units ought to be, and that is really what you want. You want the market to make those decisions.

Ms Purdon: Within the controls of the built format.

THE CHAIR: One of the issues that people have raised in the past—not necessarily with this committee—with regard to urban renewal et cetera is the number of bedrooms per dwelling and the desirability to have room for families rather than very small studios or two bedrooms; they prefer to have three bedrooms. How does this proposal achieve some variety in the size of the living spaces?

Mr Moss: We have broken that up into five but you could break it up into four if you wanted to. You could make those terrace houses, or bits of it, as big or as small as you

like. It is very interesting the way the market has gone in Canberra. As you probably know, we do a lot of apartments. We have been doing 1,500 a year at least. So you see how they change. They got smaller and smaller, one bedroom and then tiny little things, down to about 40 square metres. The developers were only doing 40 square metre houses because there was a demand for them; let us face it. If there was not the demand they would not build them. There has been a shift. It is actually changing again now and it is going back up again. Apartment living is moving more towards small two bedrooms.

It would be interesting for the committee to know that we are building more apartment buildings per head of population than anywhere else in Australia at the moment. In Canberra, this garden city, we are urbanising faster than anywhere else in Australia.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do you have any speculation as to why that is? Is it because we have also a very young population, with all the unis and the young public servants—and I know we have our aged population but we really have a huge number in their early 20s—or is it because land prices are so high that that is the only thing—

MR COE: Surely we do not have that many apartment buildings.

Ms Purdon: Yes, it is a low base.

MS LE COUTEUR: Or is it because we did not have any; so we have got to catch up?

Ms Purdon: I think it is for lots of reasons, yes.

Mr Moss: When people ask that, I put myself forward. I came to Canberra with two children in 1985. We had two children whilst we here; so we were a family of six. All those four children hated Canberra so much that they left immediately they could. They have all got married and they have all got children and they have all come back. So we have gone from four to 16. We used to live in one house and now we live in five. And I am sure if you talk to most people my age—Chris's kids are a bit slower in the reproductive stakes. Nevertheless, she has moved from one house to three houses.

Ms Purdon: We have moved to three, yes.

Mr Moss: What happened with Canberra was that there was this huge growth in Canberra as the NCDC started going and then all these families have now grown up and there is a significant amount of them that have come back. What I am beginning to see in Canberra is a serious change. It is actually becoming much more of a vibrant and interesting city, which is drawing younger people back to it.

Ms Purdon: With no evidence whatsoever, I would certainly observe that you have only got to go to Manuka on Saturday morning to see everyone having breakfast and coffee. They are not in the front garden, gardening, that is for sure. Do you know what I mean? So there are a lot of reasons for some of those changes but I think also it must be remembered that we are starting off from a low base. Eventually that proportion will come down as the base gets bigger.

MR COE: Earlier you mentioned the fact that Canberra is the garden city and that is something that is appreciated and that we have to try to conserve that in a reasonable way. The way that the RZ2 boundaries are currently drawn, a couple of witnesses have said, there does not seem to be too much logic to some of it, especially on a subarterial road. No 13 is RZ2, No 15 is RZ1. Then we have also got issues with cul-de-sacs and other suburban roads that are cached within the old core areas. Do you think that the way the RZ2 boundaries are currently drawn actually meets planning principles as well as neighbourhood expectations?

Ms Purdon: I am not sure they will meet neighbourhood expectation. The original boundaries were based on, I think it was, a 200-metre radius of the centres and then they obviously fiddled with them to get them on roads or whatever. And there is no question there are some anomalies as a consequence of that. The other problem that I have with that is that everywhere there was a vanilla approach to it—everywhere, every local centre. Again, as I said, whether it was Macgregor or whether it was Griffith or Ainslie or whatever it was, it was all 200 metres. I would question that that is appropriate. Do we want the same extent of medium or high or whatever intensification, let us call it, in Macgregor around the shops as we want around the inner suburbs? And I do not believe that we do.

It was a simplistic approach. It overcame some problems but it was a simplistic approach. This variation has not looked at the boundaries but it would certainly be something that would have been beneficial to look at, I believe, and rationalise them and extend in some cases and contract in others.

Mr Moss: The density around traffic corridors is a given, is it not really? And density close to the place of employment and shopping is logic.

Ms Purdon: But at the same time there are not a lot of higher density houses. Three, four and so forth are quite limited when you look at where they are on the plans.

MR COE: Not that I am advocating this, but would it actually make more sense if RZ2s were, in effect, on all the main or major roads in a suburb rather than just the main roads that happen to be within the 200 metres of the group centre?

Mr Moss: So you are making RZ2 bigger? You are proposing to make it—

MR COE: I am not. Again, I stress I am not advocating this, but if you did away with all the small roads but made the major roads RZ2—

Ms Purdon: I would actually want to look at it before I answered that and see what that meant. There is a logic in concentrating it around the centres. Whilst centres operate, there is certainly a logic about doing that. But equally there may be a logic in doing that but also extending it along some roads. Again, the problem is that we make up or adopt certain rules about, as I said, the 200 metres and then we apply it universally across the city without saying that Tuggeranong is different from Belconnen, is different from Woden, is different from the inner areas. We are trying without controls to apply the whole control, the same control, in every zone, in the same zone across the city.

I think that is one of the fundamental problems, that we have reduced the planning controls to tick-boxes rather than trying to get a system that respects and recognises the character of a different area. These areas are different. They are developed at different periods. They have got different roles in the city and so forth.

THE CHAIR: Which brings me to a thought that I had when you were making your initial presentation and you were talking about the homes in the lower area of Narrabundah. You were saying that the land itself was quite valuable and you were saying that the homes or houses—I think you referred to them as houses—were not. Something that just occurred to me was that people who are reading the *Hansard* later and who happen to live in that area in one of those houses, homes—do you know the film *The Castle*?

Mr Moss: I do, yes.

THE CHAIR: And to those people, I guess that is their castle and they probably feel that their home or their house is extremely valuable and not of little value at all.

Mr Moss: Yes.

Ms Purdon: But I think there is a difference, is there not, between the monetary value and the emotional value of a house?

THE CHAIR: There is but I am just thinking that people who are reading that later may consider that that is sort of devaluing the place that they live in rather than acknowledging it, for them.

Mr Moss: Yes, I totally agree.

THE CHAIR: And I know that is not what you meant, Mr Moss. I want that in the *Hansard* that we actually do realise for those people who live in those homes they are extremely valuable to them.

Ms Purdon: And I think in the RZ2 we have to recognise there will be areas where some of those people want to stay and go out in a coffin or whatever it happens to be. So they need to be able to stay there and live in harmony with redevelopment around them, and I think that is what we are trying to achieve, that capacity for them to stay and be happy, but to recognise government policy and the needs of intensification.

THE CHAIR: One of the things that people talk about is maintaining the character of their suburb and their area. “Desired character” are the words that are used here. And so people say, “How are we going to stop this building being built in my street?” And we have seen examples of it here where there is this building that is allowed under all the rules but to them it is an anathema. It just clashes with everything that they expect. How do you think the suggestions that you are making will actually work in relation to the existing homes that may never be redeveloped?

Mr Moss: I think that what we are proposing is relatively underdeveloped in its form and its scale but there is no doubt that it is a change and it is something that they

would recognise as a change. But it is an absolute dilemma. The people, including myself, who are living in the central part of Canberra are aware or should be aware of our growth rate and the need to infill. We are also aware that Canberra is a fantastic space because of our open space system, our natural open space system, and if we want to keep our natural open space system we have got to accept infill or, as I have said on a number of occasions, stop having children. It is—

THE CHAIR: Or stop getting people to come and live here.

Mr Moss: Or having a border control, yes. Accept that the thing that we cherish about Canberra is that it is a city within a landscape setting. That is what we all love about it. And we are growing. Essentially we have to understand what that means. You cannot say, “I just want my life to remain exactly the same as it is and the growth can be somewhere else.”

Ms Purdon: I think the other side of that is that when people do not like a house or development down the road from them, there are two parts to that. There is—

THE CHAIR: Or next door.

Ms Purdon: Or next door, wherever. There are two parts to that. Do they like the architecture and do they like the scale? And what we are trying to do is be really clear about the sort of scale that is permissible. You can never really control the architecture. What I like, you might hate, and vice versa. There is an element of subjectivity in that. But if you can at least get the building form that you are trying to get clear, then you really begin to put a framework around what the design is going to look like. And we all recognise, for example, townhouses and the Paddington model versus the Swinger Hill model and others in between, but there are some very common elements in that form of two-storey. They have got a certain width, they have generally got some form of veranda across the front, the front entrance from the street and so forth.

Getting those things right will remove a lot of that debate. The debate then gets down to: did the architect do something that I like? A lot of people who like a red brick, old Canberra cottage do not like modern contemporary architecture. They just do not like it. It just does not appeal to them.

MS LE COUTEUR: The example that you have given is a two-block amalgamation. Are you trying to push block amalgamations in RZ2? People have suggested that we should have amalgamations or—

Mr Moss: We suggest that two is good. If someone owns four, you say that you have to do it in two lots, so that you never get a very long extent. You are always able to see through the buildings towards the landscaped area at the back.

Ms Purdon: Although there are controls on that in the current draft.

Mr Moss: Yes, there are.

Ms Purdon: Only four in a row to try to break it down. So in that sense that is being

achieved.

Mr Moss: I think you said it is only two in a row.

Ms Purdon: No, it is four dwellings in a row. So they are trying to break it down. I would have thought that there was not a lot of need to limit your amalgamation to two. I have been quite stunned by the number of blocks some people have been able to put together. Amalgamation is really hard to do. Getting five neighbours to all agree to sell their block is no mean feat. You are certainly going to protect the scale. If it is only two blocks, you are going to manage to protect that scale very well. But it does not have to be two to achieve those sorts of things, provided those other built form controls are in place for that to happen.

MS LE COUTEUR: Have you thought at all about other zones? I am thinking particularly about RZ1. What seems to be happening in RZ1—I am in an older area of RZ1; I am in Downer. It was interesting to hear your discussion of the economics. Clearly we are working on a totally different economic reality. People, around where I live, are knocking them down and they are building a large single residence, which economically probably does not stack up. They are deciding they want a new house in that area. They could not sell it in any way for what it has cost them.

Mr Moss: That happens a lot, yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: Have you looked at the possibilities of changing RZ1? At present in RZ1, if a house has started falling to pieces you can do a substantial renovation, or it is probably cheaper to knock it down and start again. But effectively you cannot do much else. You cannot do a duplex or anything like that. Do you think that would be a useful change or you have not gone quite that—

Mr Moss: I think you are being braver than we are. We are basically saying—and this is, I think, where the planning control has got to—that we should largely accept the suburban quality of the inner city area but let us take the areas around the transport routes and close to the village and town centres and increase the density there. But let us leave the rest of it the way it is at this stage. If we do that and allow the town centres to develop, like Belconnen and Woden are beginning to do, and Northbourne Avenue and down Cooyong Street, we are going to be able to deal with our housing demand, and we do not yet have to go into the RZ1 areas.

MS LE COUTEUR: The reason I am interested is that clearly we are rebuilding the RZ1 areas. Do we want to rebuild them as large, single houses or do we want to have the possibility of some changes? But in the older areas we are actively rebuilding.

Ms Purdon: I was thinking, when you asked that question, of the garden city variation—DV 200. Prior to that, it was *carte blanche*. You could build dual occupancies anywhere. It really was not worth the uncertainty that that created in the community. It was difficult politically and in every possible way. In a way, by creating what are now the RZ2 zones or core areas, you have corralled that a bit. People know where it can happen. They accept where it can happen, leaving aside that it might need to be reviewed. And you have introduced a level of certainty for people.

Those houses in the RZ1 zone, in Downer or wherever, are being knocked down because they are beyond the end of their economic life. As you said, it is cheaper to knock them down and rebuild than to modify them. But if you can afford to buy a house in Downer or wherever, let us say on an 800 square metre block or you can go to Gungahlin and spend probably more money and buy a block of land that is seen as a large block, at about 300 square metres, and you are driving back into the city to work, as opposed to being in Downer and getting to work, it is almost a lay-down misere. You are going to take the Downer option rather than the outer option, because you are getting more land for your dollar, effectively—more living space.

When our son bought in Evatt the real estate agent said that there were actually a lot of people who had bought in Gungahlin who were moving to outer Belconnen areas to get more land. Once they had families those blocks in Gungahlin were not meeting their needs and they wanted a backyard. As to how widespread that was, I have no evidence. It was just a comment.

I think there is that move. When we first came, I know I was unusual in wanting to live in the inner areas. All our friends were moving into new four-bedroom houses in the suburbs. I am in the suburbs too but I am talking about new areas. Now that trend has changed and people accept that being in inner areas or existing areas is better than being in the outer areas.

MR COE: Going to the genesis of this draft variation or the motivation, are you aware of any significant or documented feedback about the current workings of the territory plan as it relates to RZ2? Are you aware of any review that has been done or any assessment of the plan and how it is actually interacting and playing out?

Mr Moss: Yes, absolutely, on a daily basis. Loads of people have approached us about doing schemes in RZ2, in inner areas—I could give you a list of clients—and they do not proceed.

Ms Purdon: Do you mean the previous one?

MR COE: Yes.

Ms Purdon: Before the interim effect?

MR COE: That is right. ACTPLA have spent a lot of time and money putting this together. Do you think ACTPLA were truly across the previous territory plan? Did they do a review of the territory plan?

Ms Purdon: I am not aware. I know they did a lot of work on solar but I am not aware of what else they did.

MR COE: Have you been consulted about how the territory plan is working, how RZ2 is working and what work needs to happen to make it work better?

Mr Moss: What I said previously is probably relevant in that what has happened with the planning codes, with all good intentions, is that over the years there has been layer upon layer upon layer. There is the territory plan, the leasing conditions and all sorts

of other stipulations. Working as a practitioner, we have quite a large office but we have a couple of people who are basically experts in the area of looking at planning. It is incredibly complex. It is like having to be a lawyer.

MR COE: You said earlier that because of that layer upon layer they lost the vision.

Mr Moss: Yes.

MR COE: Do you mean the vision of Canberra, the vision for each zone or in general?

Mr Moss: In general.

Ms Purdon: I would mean it for the zone. If you ask people in ACTPLA what they are trying to achieve in a built form or an outcome in an RZ2 zone or an RZ-whatever zone, they could not describe it. They do not have a vision. They know that you have to meet the parking code and they know that you have to have a three-metre setback or whatever it happens to be. But I am not sure they know why they want that or what the built form is—the end result. At the end of the day, for them to say, “That development really reflects the sorts of things that we were trying to achieve in that zone,” I am not convinced they would ever be able to say that.

THE CHAIR: Obviously when they came up with the garden city concept they knew what they were trying to achieve at that time.

Mr Moss: Absolutely.

Ms Purdon: Do you mean way back whenever, in regard to—

THE CHAIR: In 2003 or whenever that was.

Ms Purdon: I am not sure whether I should say this but I think what they were trying to do was avoid some political fallout and very substantial community opposition.

THE CHAIR: People were disturbed by the fact that there was a lot of development going on in the inner north and inner south. It appeared to me, although I was not in government at that stage, that people were saying that that was just growing like Topsy and they wanted it to stop because they were worried it was just going to keep going. Some people did not even realise that it could happen in their suburb, and still do not realise that it could have. I thought the vision was a way of saying, “Okay, let’s be more sensible about this and bring it in around the group centres.” You are saying that you thought the way it was applied was in a sort of—

Mr Moss: Homogenous.

THE CHAIR: Yes, homogenous rather than looking at each area and recognising its particular features. But it seemed to me there was a vision of bringing it in and accepting the fact that people wanted to preserve their areas—their suburban house on their suburban block, with space for their children to play et cetera.

Ms Purdon: I think that is right. They also wanted to introduce greater certainty.

THE CHAIR: They were trying to introduce certainty at that stage.

Ms Purdon: But I do not think they necessarily had a vision of what they were trying to achieve. They wanted urban change, intensification, infill, whatever you want to call it; but I am not sure they had a vision necessarily of what they wanted that to look like. I do not mean that they selected this colour or anything like that. In a built form sense, I am not sure that they really had an idea of what that should be. I think Rodney is right. Over time, there has been a bit of a change here because there is a problem and it has just become layered. There is a need to go right back to the very basics of what you are trying to do.

Mr Moss: We are in a time where we have become a lot more litigious. What has happened with the people who work in ACTPLA is that the rules have also become complex. They are terrified that they are going to have to go to ACAT for making some wrong rule interpretation. So the whole process really slows down and everyone is paranoid. Medium-sized developments that are supposed to get through ACTPLA in 45 days take seven to eight months to get through these days. We will say to all our clients that with reasonable-sized—not these little ones—projects it is going to take in excess of six months to have it approved.

THE CHAIR: What do you call a reasonable-sized project?

Mr Moss: A block of 50 apartments or something like that. I am not talking about RZ2.

THE CHAIR: No, you are talking about different things.

Mr Moss: Yes, different things. Nevertheless this sort of thing also takes a long time to get approval.

THE CHAIR: That brings us to the end of this hearing. Thanks very much, Ms Purdon and Mr Moss, for appearing before us. We will get the *Hansard* to you so that you can look at it and see whether there is anything that has been misinterpreted. If there are any questions that members think of after this, we will get them to you through the secretary as quickly as possible so that you can get the answers back to us. Thank you very much, as I said, for appearing before us. It has been a very interesting discussion and presentation. The committee will reconvene at 10.30 am on Wednesday, 25 July.

The committee adjourned at 3.28 pm.