**Jeremy Hanson MLA**

**Member for Molonglo**

ACT Leader of the Opposition

Media Release

Thursday 2 December 2014

**GREATER FLEXIBILITY NEEDED FOR MR FLUFFY HOMEOWNERS**

**Today the Canberra Liberals will support the ACT government’s appropriation to get work started on the buyback and demolition of Mr Fluffy homes across Canberra. However, following a steady stream of concerns about the program, I’ll be calling for greater flexibility with regards to certain aspects of the government’s scheme, Leader of the Opposition Jeremy Hanson said today.**

“Mr Fluffy has been a tragedy for hundreds of Canberra families and it’s essential that the government’s buyback and demolition program caters to those who have been suffering. We recognise and support the need to get the scheme underway for the hundreds of homeowners who have already signed on, but greater flexibility is needed,” Mr Hanson said.

“For many months now I have been meeting with homeowners and hearing their stories, many of which have been harrowing. More recently the Legislative Assembly Inquiry into Mr Fluffy and the government’s plan has allowed more owners to tell their stories of financial, health and emotional hardship and how they’ll be adversely impacted by the government’s inflexible scheme.

“I’m calling on the government to offer greater flexibility with regards to:

* The valuation date of 28 October.
* Homeowners, particularly the elderly, who wish to stay in their homes over the medium term.
* Allowing homeowners to purchase their own blocks at a fair price that does not include sub-division or unit titling.
* Allowing homeowners to maintain ownership of their block but to support them to demolish and rebuild.

“The government also needs to:

* Make stamp duty a waiver not a reimbursement so that owners are not faced with the significant upfront cost.
* Only clear affected areas on blocks where owners wish to return, rather than scrape entire blocks as planned.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Provide compensation for homeowners who have inadvertently missed out on the scheme and have suffered financial loss.
* Waive Variation 306 solar restrictions for affected blocks.
* Better resource the Asbestos Taskforce to manage the program.
* Grant a new Crown lease for all properties cleared of Mr Fluffy.

“The Mr Fluffy saga has caused enormous stress and financial hardship for many across Canberra, on the scale of which hasn’t been seen since the 2003 bushfires. The government’s scheme cannot simply be a one size fits all approach.

“We need to make sure the government’s scheme is an ethical balance between what is fair for the Mr Fluffy homeowners and what a reasonable cost to the ACT budget is, and at the moment I believe the ACT’s scheme needs greater flexibility,” Mr Hanson concluded.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact: Joe Prevedello 04023768432**