

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- *Your Local Voice* -

Email: info@wccc.com.au

Website: www.wccc.com.au

Phone: (02) 6288 8975

Fax: (02) 6288 9179

ABN: 52 841 915 317

PO Box 3701 Weston Creek ACT 2611

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Mr Simon Corbell MLA
Minister for Planning
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

Development Application Assessment Processes for Bushfire-Affected Blocks

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) is concerned that the time taken to assess some Development Applications (DAs) filed for bushfire-affected blocks is delaying the quick rebuilding of our fire-affected community. These concerns are based on various representations that have been made to us by families who have purchased bushfire-affected blocks and are then waiting months for their DA to be approved.

Many times you and Mr Neil Savery, Chief Planning Executive of the ACT Planning and Land Authority have stated that one of the success stories arising out of the bushfire recovery process has been the cutting of red tape for the assessment of DAs filed for bushfire-affected blocks. Indeed, it has often been stated in recent months that it only takes 28 days for a DA for one of these blocks to be approved.

Whilst this is true for DAs that are filed by families who were the lessee of a block prior to the 18 January 2003 firestorm, it is not true for families who have subsequently purchased bushfire-affected blocks. Lessees who have purchased bushfire-affected blocks after 19 January 2003 are often waiting 3-6 months for their DA to be approved.

This difference in approval timeframes cannot be easily explained since in some cases the respective building plans are virtually identical.

The Weston Creek community believes that this practice of having different approval timeframes which are determined solely by how long you have been the lessee of a bushfire-affected block is discriminatory and it is becoming a divisive issue in attempting to rebuild neighbourhoods.



All of the families who are building houses on bushfire-affected blocks are contributing to the rebuilding of our community. The Weston Creek community believes that they all deserve similar treatment and that DAs for bushfire-affected blocks should all be assessed within the same approval timeframe, irrespective of how long a person has been the lessee of the block.

The Executive of the WCCC is able to discuss these concerns with you at a mutually convenient opportunity.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Jeff Carl
Chairperson, Weston Creek Community Council