

## **ACT Government prepares for demolition of 144 public housing units near the Red Hill shops**

**The Canberra Times 10 December 2016** Kirsten Lawson

The ACT government has gone back to the drawing board on a large housing development behind the Red Hill shops, more than halving the planned number of homes to 240.

The government had planned about 550 apartments and other homes to replace the 144 public housing units.

In the face of strong community protest it scaled back the plan in February from buildings of up to six storeys to a maximum of four storeys.

Now, it has scaled back still further, in a change that Stuart Rogers, who lives across the road from the flats has welcomed. Mr Rogers attributed the "mysterious change of heart" on the part of the Land Development Agency to a possible recognition that the housing market was eager for single-home blocks, rather than more apartments.

Areas fronting Monaro Crescent, La Perouse Street and part of Cygnet Crescent will now be limited to two storeys, with four storeys at the centre of the precinct, closest to the shops.

Economic Development director-general David Dawes said the new estate development plan had a maximum of 252 dwellings. Among them, 108 would be single residential blocks for townhouses and stand-alone homes. Between 83 and 144 multi-unit dwellings made up the rest.

The government has yet to decide whether it will divide up the 53,600 square metre site into smaller blocks for sale or sell the entire area to a developer, but Mr Dawes said the blocks were expected to be sold in the 2017-18 financial year. The Red Hill flats, built in 1960, have eight bedsitters, 32 one-bedroom units, 48 two bedroom units, and 56 three-bedroom units in buildings of between one and three storeys.

Tenders to demolish them will be called on January 16, the work expected to cost \$3 million.

The government's "urban renewal" office has prepared the estate development plan in consultation with local residents. A new development will be lodged, probably before Christmas

Mr Dawes would not say how many Red Hill tenants have been moved to date, but said across the city 217 public housing tenants had been relocated from blocks being demolished.

So far, 173 new public housing dwellings had been transferred to Housing ACT, with 327 more being built.