Matthew and I decided to separate in January this year and he moved out in March. We had real estate agents in to value the home so that we could get ready to sell it, thus allowing us to separate financially. The house was valued at $700000 at that time. In late May I was watching the ABC news and became aware of the fact that our house was likely to be a Mr Fluffy home. I had received the letter in February, but the way it was written led me to dismiss the letter. It was confirmed that it is a Mr Fluffy home, something we had no understanding of prior. We are now unable to sell for anything more than land value less the cost of demolishing the house and decontaminating the soil. This would not even cover the mortgage, given that we have borrowed additional funds to pay for the renovation. This means that the only asset between us is unsellable and we can not come to a financial settlement and move forward in our separation, which is causing ongoing emotional stress for all of us.

We have received an asbestos assessment that indicated that the house is considered safe to live in. But I remain anxious every time the ducted heating switches on, as to whether the tests are valid and reliable. I would love to move out and not live in this constant state of anxiety, but financially it is not possible to pay the mortgage, plus the cost of two rentals between us.

Additionally, we have lived in the house with our 2 small children, whilst we renovated it. This involved the installation of windows which opened up exterior walls, knocked out interior walls and the subfloor was exposed in many places for weeks. All of our plans we approved by ACTPLA and no alarm bells were raised, thus exposing us and our tradespeople to the hazards that are in our walls and subfloor. If we had known, what we know now, we would have never risked the lives of our children and ourselves to renovate this house. We fail to understand how we were not warned at the time of submitting our plans of the toxic fibers in our walls.

Sharon and Matthew Prendergast

4/8/14