



# ‘Mr Fluffy’ Place of Reflection

## REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

The ACT Government recently undertook a survey via the YourSay platform to seek feedback on a proposed ‘place of reflection’ to recognise the impact of ‘Mr Fluffy’ loose fill asbestos insulation on the community, and gather insights to inform its development.

A place of reflection will provide a space where people can reflect on the impact ‘Mr Fluffy’ has had on the Canberra community and to understand and respect the experiences of those impacted. It also seeks to raise awareness and educate the general public more broadly about the historic use of loose fill asbestos insulation and the associated health and safety risks.

The Canberra community has been grappling with the legacy of dangerous ‘Mr Fluffy’ loose fill asbestos insulation, first installed in homes more than 50 years ago. In June 2014, the ACT Government’s Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme sought to address the ongoing public health and safety risks posed by this substance, and eliminate it from homes through a Voluntary Buyback and Demolition program.

This program had a significant impact on the community, particularly on those who experienced loss and grief in dealing with potential health implications and relinquishing of their homes. Establishing a place of reflection was put forward as a key recommendation from impacted community members that participated in the ‘Mr Fluffy’ [legacy project consultation process](#) in 2019, and agreed to by the ACT Government in its [response](#) in May 2020. It is one of eleven legacy projects that have been progressed or completed.

The place of reflection has been informed by the ‘Mr Fluffy’ Community Expert Reference Group (CERG), which engaged with impacted members of the community and developed the recommendation to construct a forest shelter at the National Arboretum.

The place of reflection is part of the healing process for thousands of Canberrans who owned, lived or worked in a home affected by loose fill asbestos insulation, and whose streets have been changed through the Voluntary Buyback and Demolition program. An important part of the community recovery is providing a physical place within the community for the recognition of impacts to the loss of homes and property, disruption to community networks, a changed community and personal circumstances, and a means for education for the future<sup>1</sup>.

## THE CONVERSATION

The YourSay survey was open from 21 November 2022 to 9 February 2023. It received 131 responses. The survey was made up of 14 questions; six were related to the place of reflection, and eight asked for demographic or contact information of the respondent.

## WHO WE ENGAGED

The survey was aimed at impacted community members as well as the general public. The survey was promoted through various channels to ensure interested people in the Canberra community had the opportunity to provide their feedback, including:

- direct communication to impacted community members who opted to receive key updates on legacy projects
- direct communication through stakeholder networks, including impacted community members, industry and the broader community

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2018) Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook- Community Recovery. [community-recovery-handbook.pdf \(aidr.org.au\)](#)



- media opportunities, including a Ministerial media release, 10 online news and radio features and two Canberra Times print advertisements
- social media posts published on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) Facebook account.

## KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Respondents represented interests from across the Canberra community (figure 1).

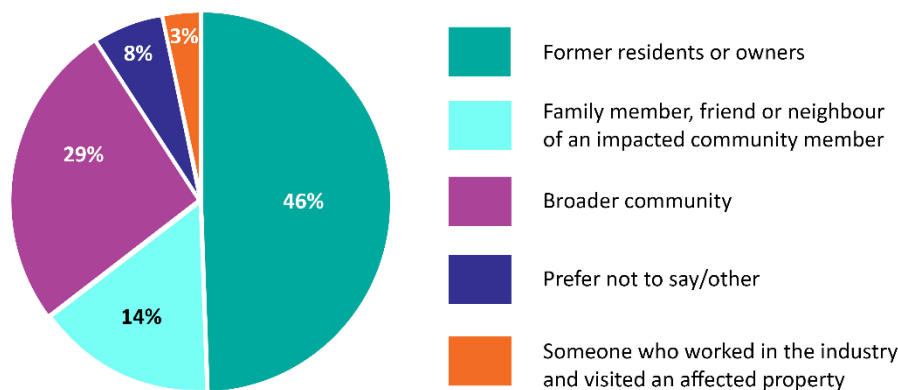
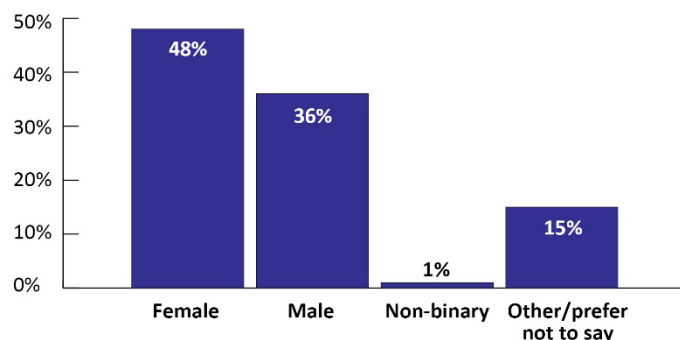


Figure 1. Respondents by interest group

48% of respondents identified as female, 36% as male, 1% as non-binary and 15% identified as other or preferred not to say (figure 2).

Figure 2. Respondents by gender



Respondents were represented across all age groups (figure 3).

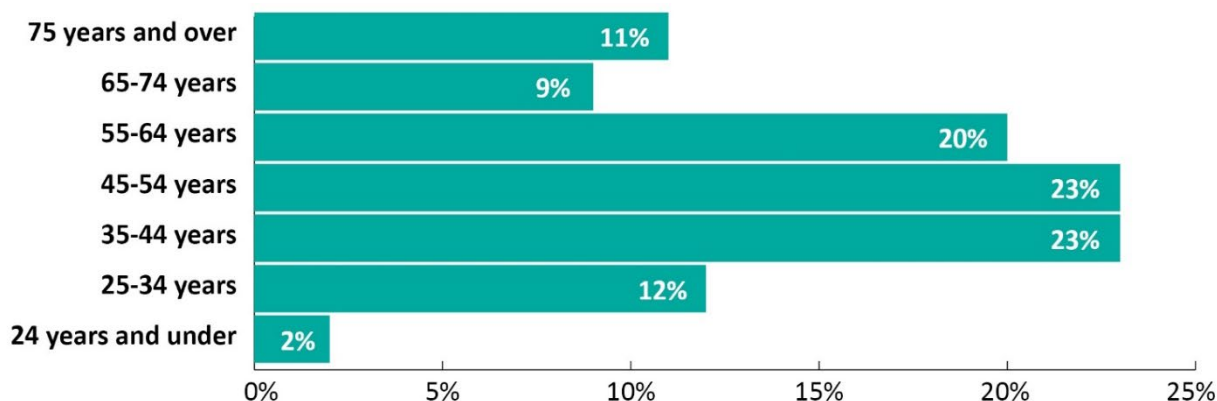


Figure 3. Ages of respondents



## KEY INSIGHTS

Respondents were asked a series of questions to prompt feedback about the place of reflection and gave a range of views. The proportion of feedback from former residents and owners has been highlighted in some responses for context, as the key stakeholder group central to the place of reflection.

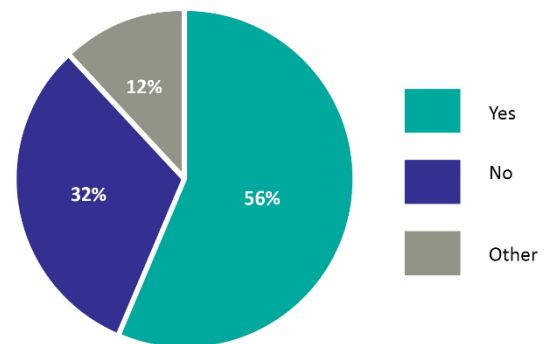
### SHARING THE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE IMPACTED

The first question asked whether it is important to share the collective experience of people impacted by loose fill asbestos insulation. Overall, 40% answered 'yes', 49% answered 'no' and 11% did not answer the question.

#### Former residents/owners

Of respondents who were former residents/owners, 56% answered 'yes' to the sharing the collective experience, 32% answered 'no' and 12% did not answer the question.

Figure 4. Responses by former residents/owners



### PLACE OF REFLECTION THEMES

Respondents were asked to rank the identified themes they feel are most significant to reflection and education about loose fill asbestos insulation and its legacy. The identified themes were ranked in the following order:

1. Acknowledgement of the collective experience of homeowners
2. Asbestos health risks and related diseases
3. History of 'Mr Fluffy' loose fill asbestos in the ACT
4. Loss of homes and changing neighbourhoods
5. Other (see below)
6. Increase awareness of potential loose fill asbestos insulation in the community
7. From Removal to Renewal – the Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme.

#### Feedback on the theme 'Other' and any themes missed

Respondents were then asked to explain their ranking of the theme 'other' and to provide further response on what other theme they thought was missing if any.

36% of respondents did not provide further response on the theme 'other'. Of those that did provide a response, 29% provided feedback that was not relevant to a missing theme, and 7% provided feedback about themes already captured in the list of identified themes.

The remaining responses (28%) provided a range of feedback on themes missed, including individual impact, moving on, grief, other topics to educate on, lessons learned, and scrutiny of the ACT Government Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme.

#### Feedback on what not to include

Respondents were asked for their views on any themes or information they would **not** want to see included, with 24% of responses providing feedback to this question. More than three quarters of these responses were from former residents or owners.



Feedback included that respondents did not want to see a focus on government (11%) including government praise, or reference to the Voluntary Buyback and Demolition program. A further 4% did not want to see any personal or home information disclosed, including images of houses being tested or demolished. Other feedback was that key messaging should not paint homeowners as victims or reflect gaining strength through adversity. Other individual points included not discussing remaining Mr Fluffy houses, serious health implications or cost.

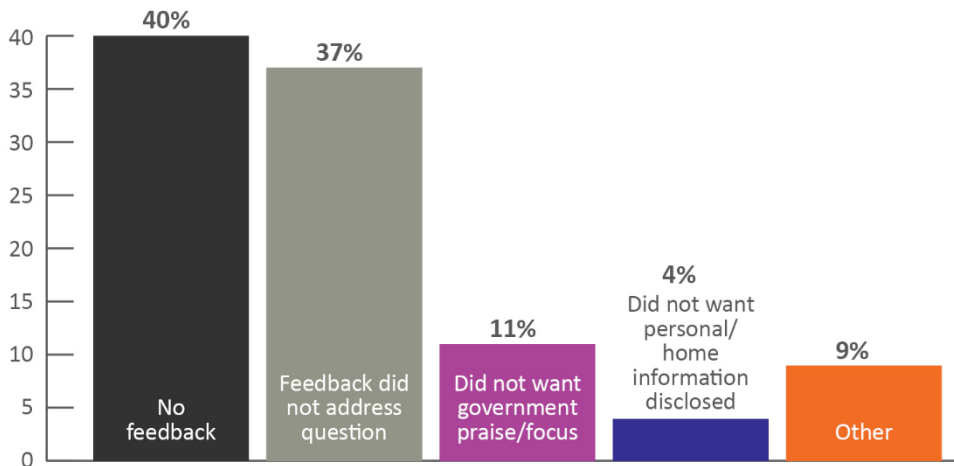


Figure 5. Feedback on any themes or information that should **not** be included. \*

\*The percentages in this figure add up to 101% as some respondents provided feedback about more than one theme.

Of the remaining responses, 40% provided no feedback, with a further 37% providing feedback that did not relate to information or themes they would not want to see included.

## FURTHER FEEDBACK

Respondents were asked if they had anything further to say about the place of reflection. Approximately 70% of respondents answered this question, providing a mix of positive and negative feedback which had largely been provided under previous responses. Of these comments, 21% were relevant to the development of the website information to support the place of reflection.

Overall, some feedback themes did not directly relate to the questions asked, including the use of public monies. Other responses related to other 'Mr Fluffy' [legacy projects](#) that have happened or are planned. 6% of respondents who identified as former residents/owners provided feedback that a Board of Inquiry would be a preferred response by government to the 'Mr Fluffy' legacy.

## WHAT'S NEXT

The information gathered through this survey will inform the place of reflection and development of digital content to educate and raise awareness, and to acknowledge the experiences of those impacted by the 'Mr Fluffy' legacy. It is expected the place of reflection will be finalised by the end of 2023.

You can register to receive project updates by emailing [LooseFillAsbestos@act.gov.au](mailto:LooseFillAsbestos@act.gov.au)

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

**795**

795 people visited the  
YourSay webpage

**388**

We engaged with 388 people  
via social media

**131**

We received 131 completed surveys