New housing estate gets green light

By Elliot Woods

AFFORDABLE housing in North Watson is being given two thumbs up by real estate experts and homebuyers.

The development application approval for the old Australian Heritage Village at North Watson, now known as The Fair, will provide many home buyers in Canberra with environmentally friendly dwellings at affordable prices.

The development will see 316 new homes built close to the city. The majority of the dwellings will be one, two or three bedroom, priced between $279,900 and $374,900.

Real Estate Institute ACT president Michael Wellsmore said he was pleased the ACT Government and developers Village Building Company had managed to combine cheap land with discount buildings.

He said although Canberra's real estate was already more affordable than other major Australian cities, the addition of The Fair at North Watson was a positive.

''We see North Watson and other projects aimed at providing affordable housing as very worthwhile,'' Mr Wellsmore said.

''They [Village] are producing product that is in demand and what is really encouraging is how Village has sought to respond to the market – with the government placing emphasis on affordable housing and the release of cheaper land, Village's plans for cheaper housing matches what the government has been working on.''

Narrabundah resident Valerie Redmore-McDonald said she was excited at the chance to buy property at The Fair.

She said having had positive dealings with developers Village in the past had added to a long list of attractive features. ''We've got a little place over in Bruce that was built by Village and I can honestly say that everything has been fantastic,'' she said.

''Watson is attractive because it's close to the city, I think it's only seven kilometres, the houses are being sustainably built and the price is reasonable, things have gone a bit crazy with prices lately.''

Mrs Redmore-McDonald will move to The Fair with her husband having spent the last six years away from Australia. Mrs Redmore-McDonald said she would join a host of families both young and old looking to buy into the new development.

Although many people are pleased with the development, many residents from Canberra's inner north have voiced strong opposition.

North Canberra Community Council will hold a meeting this Wednesday to discuss possible appeals and avenues to fight the development.

A development application at the old Heritage Village at North Watson has been given approval making way for 316 new affordable dwellings.