Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Home Buyer Concession Scheme Administration

Submission number: 015

Submitter: ACT Ombudsman

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OFFICIAL

ACT Ombudsman

A2509739

22 August 2025

Mr James Milligan MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Public Accounts
ACT Legislative Assembly
Email: LACommitteePAA@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Mr Milligan

Inquiry into the Home Buyers Concession Scheme Administration

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to Standing Committee on Public Accounts' Inquiry into the Home Buyers Concession Scheme (HBCS) Administration.

My Office handles complaints about the actions of ACT government agencies and ACT Policing. We aim to ensure that the bodies we oversee make decisions that are transparent, lawful, fair and accountable. We also aim to improve the ACT community by helping people, resolving complaints about agencies, and influencing agencies to make improvements to their processes and procedures.

In 2024-25, my Office received 35 complaints about the ACT Revenue Office and 16 of these concerned its administration of the HBCS. The types of issues reported to us by complainants related to:

- HBCS' self-assessment eligibility process
- transparency of the HBCS eligibility reassessment process
- objections and appeals process
- interest charges and penalty rates, and
- debt repayment options.

A number of these complaints are under review by my Office. As part of this process, my Office is considering the sufficiency of evidence when the ACTRO calculates penalty tax and interest, the timeframes set for people to make payment and other aspects of administration such as record keeping, communication and customer-centricity.

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My recent investigation report, [What's Fair? Collecting historical debts](), published in June 2025, considered the ACT Revenue Office's collection of historic land tax debt. Several of the issues identified in that report, are likely to align with areas of potential improvement for the HBSC such as:

- better engagement with individuals prior to issuing reassessments
- mitigating adverse consequences for individuals due to administrative delays or inadequate procedures
- better record-keeping and more proactive information sharing between work areas, and
- better communication about the HBCS eligibility requirements, including being proactive and clear.

I also encourage the Committee to consider the joint ACT Ombudsman, Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman publication *How to tell people they owe the government money*. This publication is aimed at improving how government bodies collect debts.

If you would like to discuss further, you are welcome to contact [redacted]

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Iain Anderson

ACT Ombudsman

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