QTON No. 003

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

# Inquiry into Home Buyer Concession Scheme Administration

## Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Ed Cocks MLA

Addressed to: Mr Mitch Pirie, A/g Under Treasurer, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

In relation to: Assessment of applications for the Home Buyer Concession Scheme

Hearing: 15 October 2025
Uncorrected Proof Transcript p. 57
Transcript provided: 22 October 2025
Answer Due: 30 October 2025

Mr Pirie took on notice the following question:

**MR COCKS**: Look, this has been a fairly frustrating conversation to sit through, because it is not like this has not been done before. Until 2017, my understanding is, there was a process that assessed applications before any concessions were provided. Is that incorrect?

**Mr Pirie**: Take that on notice.

**Ms Stephen-Smith**: Take that on notice. But I would note that the concession scheme has expanded considerably since that time, because the home buyer concession is the methodology with which we are implementing reductions in stamp duty for a much wider range of people as we undertake tax reform.

If the criteria for concession were very limited prior to 2017, or up to 2017, that would have been a much smaller group of people than we are now talking about. So we will take on notice of the question, but also look at—

**MR COCKS**: Well, I can tell you it is. That is what the case was. I would be very concerned if you were not aware of that. Because the barrier-free model, as it has been described, was very widely publicised at that time.

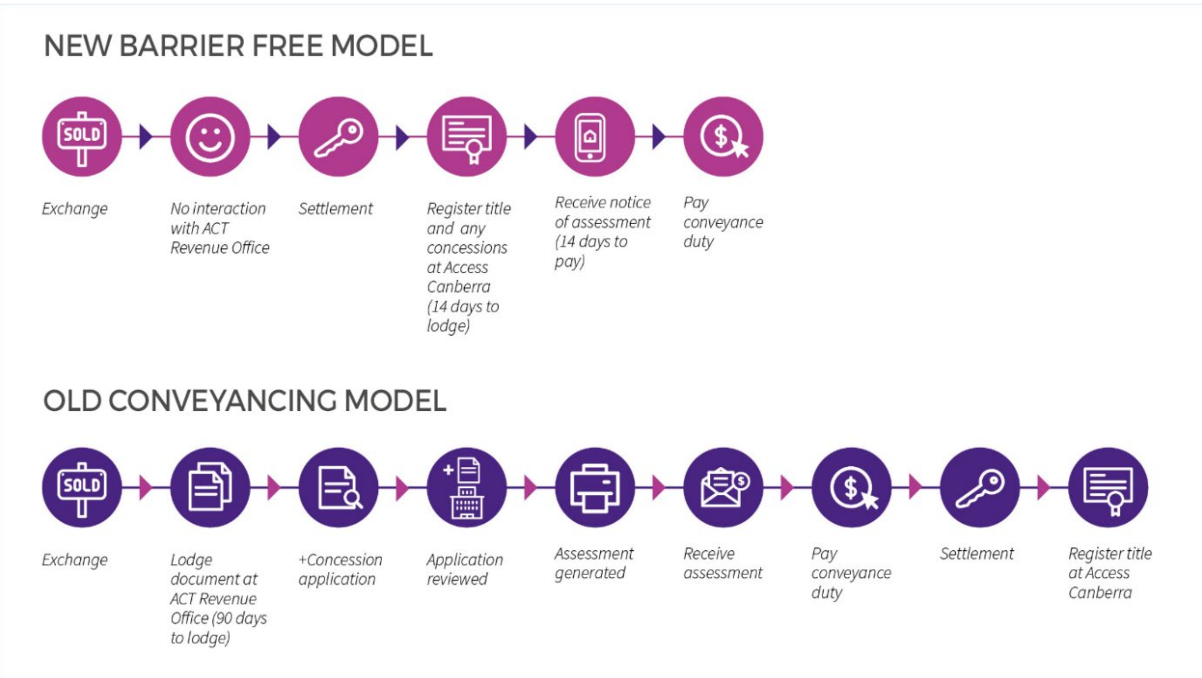
**The answer to the Member's question is as follows:**

Until 2017, an upfront assessment operated for the Home Buyer Concession Scheme (HBCS), noting that, at the time:

- Conveyance duty assessment was under the pre-Barrier Free model – see https://www.revenue.act.gov.au/duties/barrierfree and Diagram 1 below.
    - This required taxpayers to supply a range of information and documents up-front including contracts of sale, tax returns, payslips, mortgage/loan documents, and Court orders. This was an impost on individuals that is no longer required for the majority of HBCS claimants.
    - Taxpayers would also pay duty and have transfer documents stamped as a pre-requisite to settlement. The Barrier Free model moved the requirement for payment of duty to after registration of title.
- Compared to the current more extensive HBCS, which has averaged over 4,000 claims per year since 1 July 2019, HBCS at that time was only available on newly constructed (and at times substantially renovated) properties or off-the-plan properties.
- Until 30 June 2019, home buyer assistance was also available through the First Home Owner Grant.

In addition, under either approach, there will always be a need for subsequent compliance activity because of the nature of the concession and its eligibility criteria. This compliance activity provides assurance that any information provided is accurate and that claimants have appropriately claimed concessions to which they are entitled.

**Diagram 1: Comparison of Barrier Free and Pre-Barrier Free Conveyancing**



Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Signature:

Date: 30/10/25

**Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Finance**