

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates – 25–26 February 2009

Question: aet 48

Topic: First Home Owner Grant – Ownership of Overseas Houses

Hansard Page: E64 (25 February 2009)

Senator PAYNE asked:

Senator PAYNE—In relation to the operation of the scheme and overseas homeowners, if you are an applicant who applies for assistance under the scheme from overseas or an applicant who has previously held property outside of Australia, are you required to declare that?

Mr Ray—Ms Vroombout might know the answer to that.

Ms Vroombout—No. I would have to take that on notice.

Senator PAYNE—At the same time perhaps you could advise the committee whether the government has received any feedback that some applicants for first home owner assistance here might previously have owned housing in other countries, such as New Zealand. I am not sure what the level of that is, but there is certainly some feedback about it in the media.

Mr Ray—The first home owner boost is built on the old First Home Owner Grant, so it would depend on the eligibility for the original grant, but we can check that.

Answer:

The First Home Owners Scheme is available to both Australian citizens and persons residing permanently in Australia.

Applicants who have previously owned a home outside Australia will be eligible under the FHOS if their application is in relation to the applicant's first principal place of residence in Australia. Applicants must also meet all other criteria.

In relation to New Zealand citizens, special provisions exist in the States' First Home Owners Scheme legislation to ensure that New Zealand citizens residing permanently in Australia under Special Category Visas (which are not covered by the definition of permanent resident under section 30 of the Commonwealth Migration Act 1958) have equal access to the grant as other international citizens residing permanently in Australia.