

SENIORS CARDHOLDERS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WATER RATES CONCESSIONS

2088. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Treasurer

I refer to the concession provided to Seniors Cardholders in respect of Local Government and water rates and ask -

- (a) is it correct that the basis of the current concession scheme is land ownership on a specific date;
- (b) if not, what is the basis of the current concession scheme;
- (c) if the answer to (a) is yes, why does the Seniors Card discount directory say that the rebate 'is only available to applicants who own and occupy property as their ordinary place of residence on 1 July of the rate year';
- (d) if the answer to (a) is yes, will the Minister take steps to ensure that Seniors Cardholders who own land at 1 July of the rating year receive the concession to which they are entitled;
- (e) if the answer to (a) is no, will the Minister explain why he advised me, in writing, on 1 September 2003, that 'the basis of the current concession scheme is land ownership at a point in time (ie 1 July of the rating year)';
- (f) if the answer to (a) is no, does the Minister concede that it is anomalous that Seniors Cardholders who previously enjoyed the concession can, in certain circumstances, lose it for up to 12 months; and
- (g) will the Minister investigate this matter?

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

- (a) Yes. However, while land ownership on a specific date is one criterion that must be satisfied, it is not in itself sufficient to qualify for the concession. It is a combination of:
  - (i) The landowner meeting the eligibility criteria to qualify for a Seniors Card;
  - (ii) Land ownership on a specific date, namely 1 July of the rating year; and
  - (iii) Occupancy or deemed occupancy of the property on 1 July of the rating year by the Seniors Cardholder as his/her ordinary place of residence.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Refer (a) above.
- (d) It is my understanding that all eligible registered Seniors Cardholders who meet both the ownership and occupancy tests receive the concession to which they are entitled.
- (e) Not applicable.
- (f) Not applicable.
- (g) I have already indicated to the Member for Kingsley that this matter has been referred to a review being conducted by the Department of Treasury and Finance which is examining a number of matters in respect of the administration of the concessions payable under the Rates and Charges (Rebates and Deferrals) Act.