

MULLIN DEMEO

BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

2007 Update – Changes to the Municipal Property Taxes Homeowner’s Grant Program

On February 20, 2007, B.C. Finance Minister Carole Taylor announced *Balanced Budget 2007*. Included in the budget is funding to increase Homeowner’s Grants for qualifying owners of real property in B.C. Simultaneously with the release of the Budget, the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue released its Budget Bulletin 2007, which describes in detail the benefits available to homeowners in 2007. Below is reproduced the information relating to Homeowner Grant eligibility.

Effective for the 2007 Tax Year, the threshold at which homeowners qualify for the full Homeowner’s Grant will increase to \$950,000 in assessed property value, up from \$780,000 last year. This change ensure that more than 95%of homeowners are eligible for the full grant. For properties valued above the threshold of \$950,000, the grant is reduced by \$5 for each \$1000 of assessed value in excess of the threshold. The basic grant is eliminated for properties assessed at \$1,064,000 and above, and eliminated for those recipients of the additional grant (which is available to seniors, veterans and the disabled) whose properties are assessed at \$1,119,000 and above.

In addition, the grant has been expanded to increase eligibility of low-income seniors. The homeowner grant will now be provided to some low-income seniors who, but for the high assessed value of their home, would receive the additional homeowner’s grant. To be eligible, seniors , certain veterans and certain persons with disabilities must show that but for the assessed value, they would qualify for the additional grant amount, and they meet the low-income criteria set by the government.

Applications for this expanded eligibility must be made directly to the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue. Further details about the program and application forms will be available before property taxes fro 2007 become due.

For the full text of the Finance Minister’s speech and more details about Balanced Budget 2007, visit <http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2007/newsrelease> online. A Copy of the Budget Bulletin 2007 is available at <http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/budget/BudgetBulletin.pdf>