

I was made redundant on the 1st April last year, by voice mail, after 10 years with the company. I used my redundancy payout (instead of relying unemployment payments) to retrain myself to be able to carry-out environmental and sustainability assessments in the view of setting up my own business as a sole trader. To date I have spent in the region of \$30,000.00 on training, equipment and setting up my business (which I have been told by the accountants that I'm unable to claim any of it as a tax deductions, as the business has not made its first dollar, the ATO says its personal development) and to lose those twenty five (value of about \$5,000.00 of work) assessments is a big kick in the guts. I started my business in December under the NEIS program through the Fremantle Business Foundations, after completing my Cert III in Micro Business Management. I received my accreditation from Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA) to carry out the Green Loans Assessments at the end of November 09, signed the departments contract and posted it by express mail on the 7th December and it was received in Canberra on the 9th December and I hear nothing else, until the 21st December, when a box containing workbooks and all the other paperwork for carrying out the assessments arrived by air freight, I waited until after Christmas before ringing to find out what was happening with my registration and login and was told that the systems was down due to a software upgrade and would be back up on 11th January, but they would take my details and get back to me, nothing happened. On the 12th January, I sent an email to the address that I got off the web and behold in four hours I had a reply email detailing what I had to do to login, I thought my luck had changed, but it hadn't, as each time I tried it failed, after many hours on hold on the 1800 895 076 number with still no luck in talking to anyone who could do anything for me, I rang ABSA and the women that I spoke too, gave me a direct line number to the department and after talking to girls in the contracts department (which were very helpful) I was able to login. The fault was when they created my login, they not only my name wrong, but also had my email address was wrong (as we use our email address, as our User ID).

To make a booking under the guidelines of the contract, we must ring 1800 895 076 number and give them the details to be entered on the database and then the systems creates the Assessment Reference Number, which we receive by email, we must make the bookings at least 48 hours before they are due to take place, but since they have installed the new software, there has been so many problems with it, assessors are finding it impossible to get through on the 1800 895 076 number to make inquiry or make a booking. Due to the number of issues with the software people were having, it was tiring up the phones, so the department set-up an email address were you could send your bookings (only found out about this, because the trainer who I did my training with, forwarded it to me, great communications by the department), so they would be entered into the database, I tried this option and sent three bookings, which are due to be conducted this weekend, but it looks like I will lose them as well, under the 48 hour rule (as I don't have the Assessment Reference Numbers), but the email that I sent, came back, as deleted unread, with a message attached saying that this email address was no longer monitored, more great communications to the assessors by the department.

It would have been nice for the department to keep that email address operating for new bookings until they had sorted out all the issues with the current software (it looks like there was no testing of the software, before it was installed!), I don't know what was spent on the new software, but I do know if it was in the private sector, the company who installed the software would be looking at a court case. I'm looking at about a \$5,600.00 loss in work for January and \$6,600.00 loss for February, due to the stuff-up's in the way the department was handling the booking issues, a great way to start a new business.

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