

GREEN LOANS PROGRAM SENATE ENQUIRY

Saturday 20th March 2010

Tiffany Bennett
Certified Home Sustainability Assessor:
Aldinga Beach SA 5173

Please find below a copy of an email I sent to my local Federal Member, Ms Amanda Rishworth. I sent this email on the 10/02/2010 and again on the 16/02/2010, and received no reply from either email. I also emailed Mr Peter Garrett and followed up with a complaint to the Ombudsman.

I am currently living in complete limbo, waiting and hoping that the program can have the required changes put in place to get it relaunched for all the trained assessors and the Australian householders. I have only completed 5 assessments to date, however I had 16 other householders wanting assessments back in Jan/Feb but I was unable to get through to the call centre to book these assessments in. As of February 19th, after Mr Garrett announced the changes to the 'Green Loans Program' I have not booked any further assessments in. The changes made that day left us assessors working for a program called 'Green Loans', however there were no loans available, all the promotion material, workbooks, household declaration forms and Household Reports were branded with the 'Green Loans' and I was no comfortable booking in assessments when I wasn't even confident in the current program. Since that day we have been told by ABSA and DEWHA that meetings were being conducted to answer questions and that we would receive information soon.

On Saturday 20th March I am sitting here still with no idea what is happening with the Green Loans program. I have a signed contract with DEWHA, I have spent just over \$4,500 on becoming a Certified Home Sustainability Assessor and I'm a long way off recovering those costs, let alone earning any income. The mismanagement of this program has affected me and my family both financially and emotionally. I always understood that there was no guarantee of work by becoming an assessor, however I never anticipated that the department that created this exciting program would prevent me from working.

Tiffany Bennett

From: Tiffany Bennett
Sent: Wednesday, 10 February 2010 11:13 AM
To: 'Amanda.Rishworth.MP@aph.gov.au'
Subject: Green Loans program - Some answers please

Hi Amanda,

I am a certified Green Loans Assessor, a Member of the Association of Building Sustainability Assessors and live in your electorate.

I'm writing to you to inform you of the serious mismanagement of the Green Loans program.

I found out about the program back in August last year and was really excited about the opportunity to start helping people learn more about sustainable living, and the flexibility the job offered being a mother with 2 young children.

I always knew it wasn't a long-term job as the program was set to run until 2013 or when 360,000 assessments were completed, so I invested the approx \$4000 to become qualified anticipating that I would have part-time work for the next 2-3 years. This is not the case as we are being informed that the program is set to finish in the coming months, barely enough time for me to recover my costs.

As much as I am annoyed and frustrating for my own personal situation (financially out of pocket), I am more disappointed that what started out as an excellent initiative by the Labour government has become a HUGE MESS leaving thousands of assessors very bitter. This program (how I saw it) was created to gather credible data, provide a reasonable level of service in the way of "behaviour changing" advice and energy management advice to Australian households, but what has happened between the government and ABSA, large training and marketing companies were allowed to become involved in the program and ultimately ruin this exciting program.

The main problems of the program to date:

- Either DEWHA or ABSA (and either one needs to admit this at some point) made the mistake to allow RTO's to push through what now looks like being a total of 10,000 trained assessors, all seeking certification with ABSA, all hoping to make a living from the Home Sustainability Assessment Program (I was led to believe that the program would have approximately 2000-3000 assessors);
- Either DEHWA or ABSA allowed companies like Field Force to become involved in the program. These companies are 'hounding' householders with telemarketing and door knocking to get bookings and with their aggressive marketing tactics are taking assessments away from householders who genuinely want an assessment, but either can't get through to the call centre or don't know about the program (which will probably end before they do);
- The Call Centre run by DEWHA is PREVENTING assessors from making bookings. We realise there was no guarantee of work but we never anticipated that we would have to spend DAYS trying to ring through bookings (I was actually told by the RTO that online bookings were in place). Yes we understand that the call centre is struggling to keep up with calls but WHO'S FAULT IS THIS???
- Over the Dec/Jan xmas break assessors were unable to make bookings due to the new system being installed and bugs in the new system, HOWEVER, we have now found out that Field Force were able to make bookings during this time with their special direct link to the booking system;
- Households are waiting months to receive their reports which prevents them from applying for a Green Loan;
- Assessors are having to wait longer than the promised 30 days payment terms for payment;
- Materials for assessors have not arrived and now we are informed that there will be no more Workbooks, information postcards and posters printed.

As you can see, the whole scheme has been woefully managed and implemented. It is a very embarrassing position for your government to be in and I would like some answers. Amanda, do you think that is mismanagement is acceptable?

WHY has the government allowed 10,000 hard-working Aussies to shell out up to \$5000 each (that's \$50,000,000 in total) to RTOs, Accreditation organisations and Insurers, many like myself will struggle to recover costs with the current problems?

I look forward to hearing what ACTION the government is going to take to fix this.

Yours sincerely
Tiffany Bennett

Aldinga Beach, SA