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Introduction

On advice from 17 local Green Loan Assessors I submit the following recommendations to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts, inquiry into the Green Loans Program.

Recommendations

1. Urgent need to lift the current cap of assessors of 5 per week to at least 3 per day.

Using a base figure of 5000 assessors this would equal 18 assessors per week, using a 6 day week, creating a maximum of 90,000 assessors per week.

This would ensure that each assessor had at least an opportunity to have full time employment, whilst ensuring that each assessment had sufficient time to be completed professionally.

2. Accreditation & amount of assessors

There is a need to limit the amount of assessors to 3800. This is the current contracted amount to the Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA).

Many assessors have left fulltime or part time work to undertake and commit to this effective and worthwhile educational program for householders but they have been completely let down by ABSA and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

DEWHA need to honour the commitment made by the assessors in terms of money spent on training, education, insurance, registration, recruitment, marketing, advertising, and taking leases on commercial property.

3. Online booking system

The government should honour its commitment to create an online booking system which will drastically reduce the current waiting time. The current call centre system is very inefficient and extremely frustrating for assessors who can waste as much as 8-10 hours trying to log on just one job.

4. Interest free loan

The Government should restore the interest free loan component of the program which will enable Australian households to implement sustainable infrastructure and further reduce carbon emissions.

5. Honouring previous commitments

DEWHA must honour all previous commitments regarding this program, including the promise for free upgraded training for assessors and the implementation of a realistic timeframe for when householders can receive their assessment reports.

6. Investigate why some companies receive preferential treatment

I have been advised that companies such as Field Force receive an unfair advantage over other assessors by DEWHA. The preferential treatment provides easy access to the call centre and additional training for their staff. If inequities and unfair advantages are occurring under this program, a full investigation must be carried out and such practice should not be allowed to continue.