

Green Loans Senate Enquiry:

In relation to the program and reports;

I believe the program was set up well, advertised to, and attracted the right people for HSAs. Initial advertisements were from people with knowledge of buildings or other relevant experience. In my course we had a few builders, teachers, and etc. all having a passion for sustainability. At this time, May 2009, this was a pilot course, and we were informed the numbers were getting to near full country wide, as the limit was set to 800 accredited assessors. We had the importance of impartiality drilled into us, and all of us agreed this was the best way for the program to run successfully without industry bias towards products and services.

Months later, advertisements for 'green jobs' were seen in newspapers, targeting 'no experience necessary, all training provided, make huge commissions'. The jobs were to be trained up as HSAs from a large company. This seemed to blatantly disregard the 'no advertisement of products or services' rule we had known of and adhered to. It also would attract less than professional applicants from irrelevant backgrounds. It seemed the professionalism aimed for by the program was allowed to be undermined by large corporations with government support.

The assessment books were so irrelevant to the information required by the online tool they were useless. A massive waste of resources.

The types of information required by the online tool was very disappointing from a teaching point of view, and I believe we were there to teach householders about the building envelope and their energy and water use. There was little time left to say anything at all to the householder after you had questioned the hours of use of every appliance and light switch in the house. Intelligent people were trained to a high standard in our course, and to send them out to question people on the amount of television they watched each day seemed a waste of resources. Surely there is census data for this information?

The biggest reductions in energy use in homes I have assessed would be gained from implementing draft proofing and insulation effectively – but this is very limited in the scope of the report. There is no priority given to measures to improve the householder's emissions in the report, which is our area of expertise.

Far too much info is required on electricals such as lighting, which as a general rule is thematic throughout an entire house, and could be addressed as such. As another example we have to note the size of every television. In the householders' report; items scrutinized in the HSA visit are reported so vaguely they would be impossible to act on. An example is the refrigeration in the report; a 'frowny face', then "*a fridge that may be using more energy than it should due to its condition, location, settings or usage*". We inspect the fridge, and note down the position, use condition etc, and enter this data in the report, yet the information is worse than lost – it is scrambled in ambiguity.

In relation to the administration of the program;

The amount of time lost on the program has been staggering....

The launch of the online assessor tool was horrific; Plagued with errors and consequent promises to fix them. The data entry for a typical household took over an hour (much much longer initially!). Repetition, data loss etc. wasted so much of our time. The fixes took months, and IT savvy colleagues commented on the archaic manner the online tool operated. Since the upgrade at Christmas it was much better, but again after being down for a long time.

The online booking portal initially operated well, but unlike the tool, the 'upgrade' at Christmas has made it much more difficult to use and it has much less functionality – e.g. no calendar to see bookings as previously available.

I found the lack of notice of DEWHA's Christmas holidays quite unprofessional - to give one days notice of two weeks off was pretty horrid! I also work in a Government hospital, and they certainly were not all public holidays, so there was no 'assumed knowledge' of a two week break! I then had to reschedule householder's appointments which I had taken names and assigned times to, assuming I would have been able to book them in during normal business days. In addition to the two weeks there was another week of it being down with problems, then another few months of being unable to contact the call center - I waited a total of ten hours on hold over a number of different occasions, once over 3 hours just to be cut off. The program was completely inaccessible to me for the three months from Christmas eve. There was a lot of lost work suffered over this period.

Reports are still lost – I still have not received my own report from my assessment in July, and I am still chasing up various reports for people.

All messages left with the call center for a call back over the period of the program were left un-replied.

Advertising promised initially by the program was never forthcoming.

My impression of the program has been;

Fantastic initiative in it's scope, accessabilty, target audience and assessor recruitment... but only initially.

The administration, online tool and allowance of less professional assessors into the program has undermined the initial integrity, and rendered it unusable for periods. If we could reverse the last 6 months of developments, we would have a fantastic base to continue a great program.

Sam Tuck