

Friday, 26 March 2010

RE: **GREEN LOANS PROGRAM SUBMISSION –
Environment, Communications and the Arts References Committee**

I am a fully trained and Accredited HSAS Accessor (ABSA) who is yet to be contracted to the Government.

I firstly became aware of the Program on the 24th of October 2009, after seeing an advertisement by one of the accredited training organisations – Enviro Planet Solutions in the Newcastle Herald. I thought this would be a fantastic opportunity to help educate myself and others about the Environment which I have always had an interest in. After discussions with my husband, although this was going to leave us a bit short over Xmas and a holiday was certainly out of the question (as we are on one low income) I was willing to start my new Career.

I paid \$1750 to Enviro Planet Solutions and began training on the 28th of October 2009 for four days. Coming from a training background myself, I found this training to be extremely thorough. Unfortunately on the night before the last day, one of my children became ill and I missed the final day, having to complete the Course on the 14th of November 2009. The Certificate was not sent to me until the 17th of December 2009 to receive the Certificate from my training provider. Throughout this time I was unaware that the scheme could be finishing anytime soon and I was told by the training provider that there is plenty of work out there.

Thinking that everything was fine and never imagining it wouldn't be going ahead I also paid for a website \$250.20 and a Website templates package - \$66.25. I am also paying for a PDA which would allow me to complete online assessments at the householder's premises and submit them straight away and an inbuilt GPS to find the premises at a cost of \$60 over 24 months.

I had also arranged for a Police Check of \$52.00 and also passport photo's for my ID from Australia Post for \$12.95. I have also taken out Professional Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance at a cost of \$745 on the 31st of December 2009. I then sent everything off as required to ABSA with my \$660 Registration.

The long wait began ...

Only on the 23rd of January 2010 did I have any idea that the scheme was in trouble, I received an Email from ABSA outlining the mismanagement of the entire program and asking participants who were not accredited or contracted if they wish to withdraw and receive a refund from ABSA for \$660. I was extremely upset and could not believe the mismanagement of this entire process and advised ABSA of such and that I still believe that helping the environment is very important and something I wish to be

involved in as a Career, apart from the loss of money I have already spent, therefore I declined. Apparently I wasn't the only one as on the 30th of January 2010 I received another Email from ABSA with only 2% withdrawing out of 5000+ waiting.

I finally received an Email on the 11th of February 2010 stating that I had been certified by ABSA and received my official Assessor Number. On Friday the 12th of February 2010 I sent off my Contract to DEWHA and have not heard anything since from DEWHA with regard to my Contract.

I then arranged Stationery for my new Business \$330.

With all the political and program changes throughout the rest of February and March many of us still have no idea what is going on. These new changes to the Scheme, a cap on Assessors and being out of pocket already and with no income that I thought I would have had for the last three months, has put a big strain on my family's finances.

I still believe in this Program if it were properly managed, here's some suggestions:

- Audits should be commenced to get rid of unscrupulous operators and training places.
- All Assessors should be given a fair go, even if caps have to be further reduced or
- Householders receive a Tax deduction for each Assessment.
- RTOs should be used for all training and there should be a Certificate IV in Home Sustainability Assessment with the same curriculum utilised throughout Australia with free training (as originally promised) for existing Assessors.
- Companies should receive caps on Assessments also.
- I think the Program will miss the Green Loans component as this would be a harder sell and may have to re-think or talk to other financial institutions which may be willing to freely participate.
- Maybe it should only be offered to low income owners freely and other's need to pay a nominal fee?
- From what I have heard from other Assessors there are many holes the Department needs to plug up, e.g. losing Assessors invoices or reports that have been submitted, taking months to pay invoices etc. etc.
- If a solution cannot be found for Assessors in the same position as myself, then I think we should be fully refunded the money we have already spent to be involved in this program.

I am passionate about the environment and still wish to be involved in a Program/Scheme such as this.

Kind Regards,