

## SUBMISSION TO SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

NAME: Mrs. Denise Storey

### PREFACE

In October I completed a course to become home sustainability assessor. During the course I did enquire as to the numbers of assessors who would be entitled to work under the scheme. I was told that at that time 1600 had been registered although only approximately 1200 were actively assessing homes. I received my contract and identification card on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and commenced carrying out assessments.

Prior to commencement I was offered and accepted employment with an environmental company which had been doing similar work and retrofits for several years. My reasons for working for another firm was

1. information and help being new to the industry
2. covered by their insurance as required by the government.
3. Clerical and tax work would be carried out by the firm.
4. Availability of ongoing technical advice and provision of courses to enable me to upgrade my qualifications.

To date I have been satisfied with the above arrangements and the choice of an individual working for themselves or working for a company should remain available to the individual..

Up until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009 I had been satisfied with the service received from the Green Loans although I had not submitted any bills for assessments. The Green Loans went on holidays for two weeks which should only have been one week as it was potentially going to be a busy period. On return from the 2 week break and the adoption of a new booking program which never appeared to work, it was chaotic.

### POINTS OF CONTENSION

1. No or little directive from GL and DEWHA
2. One phone line which took all bookings from the public to book assessments, information and assessors seeking booking numbers. Booking numbers were required so assessors could complete assessments.
  1. Householders could not phone requesting an assessment.
  2. Assessors had to hang on the phone for 1hr+ to book an assessment. During this period assessors and householders could not even talk to anyone. This situation appears to have been resolved-separate phone numbers.
  3. Email address closed down –NO DIRECTIVE FROM GL TO ASSESSORS.

4. Portal once operating still does not give information on current situation. –My portal has a message on 3<sup>rd</sup> March- nothing since. Assessors are dependent on ABSA for information. It is not their role!
5. The assessors have had to justify themselves when the delays etc are not of their making.
3. No apparent control of the number of assessors registered. ABSA stated it had no responsibility to control numbers as this was DEWHA's responsibility. ABSA also warned DEWHA that the number of assessors had escalated and was becoming a potential problem. They were ignored.- **still no directive** from DEWHA.
4. Length of time before householders received reports- I know of one (not mine) which was carried out early September and was submitted 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009- still has not received report.
5. \$50 vouchers- where are they?
6. Most householders were interested in the Green Loans component.
7. Green Loans name is no longer appropriate. A name change should be made as soon as possible. Something that is appropriate. Vouchers which actually spell out the aims and how it benefits the householder. At present the vouchers still include the Green Loans component. Assessors have to spend time explaining Green Loans does not exist. This creates doubt in the householders minds.
8. Publicity- As this problem has been caused by the body running the scheme it behoves them that they should run a publicity campaign to make the public confident that it is worthwhile cause.
9. Enclosed is an advertisement which I saw in a local paper. This did not comply with the GL regulations – sent it to the company I work for and assume that it was passed on to DEWHA.
10. The total assessments could be increased to 10. Ten per week would allow proper time for each assessment as well as submitting it on the computer program.
11. There has been a suggestion that assessors not be subcontracted to a company- in my situation my employer was able to glean information which as an individual I couldn't- couldn't phone-no one answered, couldn't email-notified the email address had been closed.
12. No further mention of extra training which was mentioned when assessors were contracted to DEWHA

#### SUGGESTIONS.

1. KEEP ASSESSORS AND HOUSEHOLDERS INFORMED- REGULAR NEWS LETTERS.
2. Separate phone numbers for assessors, households requesting assessments and enquiries.
3. Reports should be sent within a set period- Assessors could send a copy of their assessment to householder at same time one is submitted to the government department. Government could then follow up with their report.
4. Reintroduce the Green Loan component- householders like something to tempt them.

5. If GL component not reintroduced the relevant department should instigate a comprehensive and positive publicity campaign as well as distributing appropriate advertising vouchers with an appropriate name change to represent the aim of the new scheme.
6. If problems occur assessors, householders and other stockholders should be kept abreast of the situation. Use email!!
7. Registration should not be limited to only assessors working for themselves.
8. Increase number of assessments to 10 per week and 3 in any one day. This should allow the standard of assessments be maintained.
9. Assessors should have the opportunity to upgrade their skills. There should be some compulsory components in the on going training that was proposed.
10. It would be an advantage to assessors if they could see that there was future employment opportunities such as universal acceptance of mandatory sustainability declarations throughout Australia .
11. Firms which did not follow the regulations be penalised. I am enclosing an advertisement for the course which stated assessors were allowed to undertake 7 assessments per day- only 5 were allowed. Seven assessments in one day is too many for an assessor to do properly.

Denise Storey



# HOME SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSOR TRAINING

**ASSESSORS REGISTRATION STOPS 24 DEC. SO GET IN NOW!**

Qualified assessors can conduct sustainability assessments under the Federal Government's Green Loans program. This program offers eligible residents a free sustainability assessment to help them save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as access to a \$10,000 interest free 'Green Loan'. Assessors currently get paid \$200 per assessment and can conduct upto seven per day.

**Not only will you get paid well, you will be making a positive difference in the community.**

- \$1425 for three day intensive course
- Held in Brisbane 21, 22, 23 Dec.
- Two trainers who are experienced assessors

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