



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations



**Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on
Environment, Communications and the Arts**

Inquiry into the Energy Efficient Homes Package

December 2009



Inquiry into the Energy Efficient Homes Package DEEWR

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1. Introduction

The Australian Government's Energy Efficient Homes Package (EEHP) is part of the Government's Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan, which will support jobs and invest in future long term economic growth.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) provides advice to the Government and administers programs to achieve the Government's objectives for education, employment and workplace relations. DEEWR works in partnership with the states and territories, non-government authorities, employment services providers, industry and other Commonwealth Departments to increase employment participation and to ensure fair and productive workplaces. Education, training and workforce participation are central to the goal of building a productive and socially inclusive nation, one which values diversity and provides opportunities for all Australians to build rewarding social and economic lives.

One of the Government's objectives of this initiative was to create work opportunities for job seekers, including disadvantaged job seekers. As such, DEEWR has partnered with the EEHP lead agency, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) in order to maximise the training and employment outcomes resulting from this measure. This included contracting the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council to develop training materials and resources for use by Registered Training Organisations. DEEWR has also worked closely with Job Services Australia providers and other relevant stakeholders to ensure suitable job seekers are identified and undertake the required training in order to take up the opportunities resulting from this initiative. DEEWR has also consulted relevant stakeholders in the development of a wide range of communication products, such as fact sheets and web based resources.

As such, this submission deals primarily with the following Terms of Reference:

- 1.ii.H – Ensuring the program achieves its stated aims as part of the government's stimulus package
- 1.iii.A - The employment and investment in insulation production and manufacturing resulting from the program

2. Training packages and pathways to further employment

Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) are independent, not for profit companies. The Australian Government provides funding to ISCs through DEEWR to:

- provide integrated industry intelligence and advice to Skills Australia, government and enterprises on workforce development and skills needs;
- actively support the development, implementation and continuous improvement of high quality training and workforce development products and services including training packages;
- provide independent skills and training advice to enterprises, including matching identified training needs with appropriate training solutions; and

- work with enterprises, employment service providers, training providers and government to allocate training places.

In undertaking these roles, the ISCs draw on widespread industry networks and active stakeholder engagement.

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) contracted the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) to develop a set of training materials and resources based on the units of competency which are relevant to insulation installation. These materials are based on units of workplace competency contained in the CPC08- Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework Training Package and are for use by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

When combined with the Occupational Health and Safety Induction Card, this training fulfils the required competencies for individuals to become registered insulation installers. On completion of the program, participants receive a Statement of Attainment for the units they have been assessed as competent against.

The training materials and resources were validated by industry representatives regarding their appropriateness and comprehensiveness before being made freely available from the CPSISC website (www.cpsisc.com.au/tpresources/InsulationMaterials). The training materials include a strong emphasis on safe work practices and identification of likely hazards (including electrical) which might be encountered by insulation installers.

The specific resources developed are a:

- Ceiling Insulation Pocket Book
- Learning Summary - Handout For Learners
- Recognition Application - A Self Assessment Tool for Learners
- Assessment Guide - Resource for Assessors
- Assessment Instrument - Appendix 2 to the Assessment Guide, and
- Delivery Guide - Resource for Trainers.

The Ceiling Insulation Pocket Book was completed by 3 August 2009 while the other resources were all available from late June 2009.

The units of competency on which these materials are based are:

- CPCCCM1006A Work safely at heights
- CPCCOHS2001A Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry
- CPCCPB3014A Install batt insulation products, and
- partial coverage of CPCCPB3015A Install acoustic and thermal environmental protection systems.

Training to fulfill required competencies can be undertaken through any of the RTOs listed on a database on the SkillsInfo website:

<http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au/skills/TrainingInsulation/>

Prior to commencement of the program, representatives from DEWHA and DEEWR undertook a series of national workshops to discuss the program with RTOs. These workshops included discussion on the training materials and resources that had been prepared and highlighted that they were available free of charge.

In October and November 2009, DEWHA convened a number of meetings of training organisations, industry representatives and regulators to review electrical and insulation safety issues.

After consultation, the training support resources for the Ceiling Insulation Training Program were strengthened resulting in a number of enhancements being applied to the:

- Assessment Guide and Instrument
- Delivery Guide
- Learning Summary
- Recognition Application
- Pocket Book, and
- PowerPoint Presentation.

Through the strengthening of the training materials, the electrical safety and risk elements have been amplified and an increased emphasis has been placed on risk assessment and knowledge of specific electrical hazards.

Completion of the training can provide pathways to future trade related training in the construction industry. For example, the training units required to meet the competencies of a registered insulation installer count towards other training courses for the construction industry such as:

- Certificate II in Construction
- Certificate III in Wall & Ceiling Lining, and
- Certificate IV in Building and Construction.

Additionally, the CPSISC is currently developing an amalgamated unit of competency 'Install Ceiling Insulation', which will proceed through the regular National Quality Council (NQC) endorsement process. The new unit will capture the three existing units of competency:

- CPCCOHS2001A Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry
- CPCCPB3014A Install batt insulation products
- CPCCCM1006A Work safely at heights
- as well as the new inclusions of risk assessment, electrical safety and hazard identification and other insulation products.

This process is likely to be completed in early 2010. DEEWR is providing assistance in the development and endorsement process where appropriate.

3. Memorandum of Understanding

On Thursday 2 July 2009 the Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, and Minister for Employment Participation, Senator Mark Arbib, announced the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), under which the Government, industry and Job Services Australia providers work closely together to ensure job seekers are connected to job opportunities under the Energy Efficient Homes Package.

The parties to the MOUs are:

- Construction Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)
- Master Builders Australia Incorporated (MBA)
- Housing Industry Association Limited (HIA)
- National Employment Services Association (NESA)
- Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA)
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

The signing of the Memoranda of Understanding shows a clear commitment on the part of the building and construction industries and Job Services Australia providers to connect job seekers with training, skills development and employment opportunities. The parties agreed to work jointly and collaboratively to:

- Identify workforce needs arising from the Energy Efficient Homes Package to support ongoing implementation including the location, number, and skills and training needed for these job opportunities. Encourage businesses to communicate anticipated workforce needs to Job Services Australia providers.
- Work with Job Services Australia providers as far as practicable to identify suitable job seekers and help them to access relevant training and support.
- Maximise the job readiness of Job Services Australia job seekers, including through the Employment Pathway Fund, Work Experience activities, and self-employment support through the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme panel.
- Identify ways to maximise opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers and those in regional and remote locations, particularly, Indigenous Australian job seekers.
- Work with RTOs to encourage provision of training in the installation of ceiling insulation utilising materials commissioned for the Energy Efficient Homes Package.
- Encourage employers to employ job seekers who satisfactorily complete the training after meeting any shortlist screening.
- Engage with other interested stakeholders to identify related opportunities and initiatives, and to review and update approaches in light of experience.

DEEWR is the Chair of the MOU Steering Committee, and has held two Steering Committee meetings on 27 July and 26 November 2009. The discussions included:

- the accessibility and location of on-line information across MOU member sites
- the availability of vacancy data to report on achievements to date
- the role of apprentices
- training requirements

- the monitoring regime that was being implemented
- employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians, and
- the importance of compliance (including an audit being undertaken by an external party to provide assurances of compliant project delivery).

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for early in 2010.

4. Keep Australia Working

DEEWR has supported Senator Mark Arbib and Parliamentary Secretary Jason Clare in hosting Keep Australia Working forums in the 20 Priority Employment Areas. Many of these priority areas have a significant level of employment in construction and trade related industries that are at risk from the effects of the Global Recession. These forums included key local stakeholders from the region, such as community and business leaders, as well as representatives from business, employment services and the three levels of government.

These forums discussed how to:

- maximise the impact of the stimulus package;
- support existing jobs and industry;
- promote new opportunities, new industry and new skills; and
- identify what new skills need to be developed.

The forums also encouraged local participation in the Energy Efficient Homes Package initiative.

Information on the Energy Efficient Homes Package was provided to forum attendees through fact sheets, which also included key contacts for the initiative. Strategies for employment creation from elements of the stimulus package, such as the Energy Efficient Homes Package, also formed a significant part of forum discussions.

The Energy Efficient Homes Package has resulted in the creation of opportunities for businesses in the ceiling insulation industry, while also supporting jobs in insulation manufacturing, distribution and installation, and increasing the energy efficiency of Australian homes.

5. Job Services Australia 'Provider Portal' - Energy Efficient Homes Package webpage

The Energy Efficient Homes Package webpage on the Job Services Australia 'Provider Portal' features information aimed at Job Services Australia providers. The webpage outlines a process for Job Service Australia providers to support the Energy Efficient Homes Package which includes:

- identifying suitable job seekers for insulation jobs
- connecting the job seekers with RTOs to complete necessary training
- using the Employment Pathway Fund to finance the training, and

- networking with employers in their region to ensure a pathway from training to employment.

The webpage also contains links to further information on the Energy Efficient Homes Package and explains how to make contact with registered insulation installers.

Further work is currently underway to identify the accessibility and location of information on Steering Committee websites to assist members in ensuring they have the necessary information or links to information for their audience/s.

6. Local Employment Coordinators engaging with employers

Local Employment Coordinators have been appointed in each of the 20 Priority Employment Areas.

Local Employment Coordinators will:

- Work to maximise the employment opportunities resulting from the Government's economic stimulus in these regions
- Establish and work with local Keep Australia Working Advisory Committees to develop a Strategic Employment Plan for the region
- Work towards developing apprenticeship opportunities and match the skills needed with jobs of the future, and
- Find new job opportunities and provide support for workers who have lost their job due to the global downturn.

The Local Employment Coordinators have been engaging with local employers and employment service providers in order to establish linkages between these groups and demonstrate the opportunities under the Energy Efficient Homes Package.

This engagement has included:

- Keep Australia Working forums
- Centrelink Jobs Expos
- The development of a Regional Employment Plan, and
- The development of strategies with local stakeholders to market the rebates available under the Energy Efficient Homes Package.

7. SkillsInfo site

Following representations from DEWHA it was agreed to provide, through the DEEWR SkillsInfo website (www.skillsinfo.gov.au), basic contact details for RTOs offering accredited training to those wishing to become insulation installers under the Energy Efficient Homes Package.

A SkillsInfo 'channel' was developed to host the requisite RTO details. These details include the RTO National Training Information Service registration number, trading name, address, contact details and the States and Territories where the RTO has

coverage. Details are provided by DEWHA. Details, including additions and removals of RTOs, are amended in a timely manner.

The role of SkillsInfo is limited to the provision of this information. Any issues arising from users who visit the home insulation installers channel are referred back to DEWHA for direct resolution with the user.

8. Employer Surveys

In November 2009, DEEWR undertook a telephone survey of employers in the insulation industry. The survey focussed on businesses installing ceiling insulation.

The purpose of the survey was to collect information on the recruitment experiences of employers and the demand for insulation installers in the ceiling insulation industry following the introduction of the Energy Efficient Homes Package on 1 July 2009. The survey also looked at the impact of the Package on business activity, future recruitment expectations and the characteristics of new businesses entering the insulation industry since the start of the Package.

The survey was developed in consultation with the DEWHA and was able to be implemented quickly by drawing on DEEWR's extensive experience in conducting employer surveys across both regions and industries.

The employer contact list used for the survey was sourced from the Installer Provider Register which is maintained by DEWHA. Testing indicated that the sample reflected the distribution of businesses installing ceiling insulation across Australia.

Interviews were conducted with 473 employers who were installing insulation at the time of the survey. Compilation and analysis of the results is currently underway. Initial discussion with DEWHA on the results of the survey is expected to take place in late January/early February.

9. 4000 training places

As part of the Clean Sustainable Skills Package the Government will invest a total of \$14.7 million, for insulation installers on completion of their work under the Energy Efficient Homes Program. This is made up of \$5.7 million to fund support through the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program and \$9 million in the Language Literacy and Numeracy Program.

2000 places under the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program and 2000 places under the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) will be provided, from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2012, for job seekers who were employed in the insulation installation industry.

These training places will assist in allowing workers who have found employment through the Energy Efficient Homes Package to increase their skills, become more employable and increase their long term career development options.

The Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (Access Program) supports eligible clients to gain and maintain an Australian Apprenticeship (particularly in a priority occupation area) through the provision of nationally recognised pre-vocational skills training; employability or generic skills; personal support and advocacy; and job search and post-placement support.

The Access Program includes a minimum of 150 hours of nationally-recognised, accredited pre-vocational training linked to an Australian Apprenticeship pathway; individualised intensive job search assistance for up to 13 weeks; and a further 13 weeks of post-placement support.

The LLNP seeks to improve clients' language, literacy and/or numeracy with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force and lead to greater gains for society in the longer term. Eligible clients will be entitled to up to 800 hours of free LLNP training from over 300 training sites nationally.

DEEWR is also working with DEWHA to identify other green industry opportunities into which insulation installers could diversify their business. This will involve working with business and Job Services Australia to identify what further training is available for workers and job seekers to help them take up the opportunities in the green industry sector.