

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Green Loans and Home Assessors Enquiry

I undertook to become a Green Loans Assessor for the following reasons:

A qualified electrical tradesman with a broad range of experience and a good understanding of energy efficiency.

As a junior geriatric I was finding it increasingly difficult to gain employment.

A believer in the need to address environmental matters.

Short of building a new house; had installed superior insulation, low energy lighting, ‘Solatube’ sky-lighting, 70kl of rainwater storage, solar hot water, a 1kW PV system and, as funds allow, energy efficient appliances.

Here was an opportunity to learn more, preach what I had been practising and become more involved in environmental matters.

It meant setting up a small business, being self employed and dealing with the vagaries of self employment; all of which seemed worthwhile if pursuing a cause with the possibility of an income.

Now having put everything in place, undertaken the training, set up the business, purchased the necessary tools and equipment, paid for ABSA membership and all the other costs associated with setting up, I am out of pocket by several thousand dollars.

I submitted my contract application to DEWHA before the cessation of the Green Loans Scheme (not knowing it was going to be curtailed) but to date have had no response from DEWHA.

With the five assessments per week cap there is little incentive to pursue the assessor role as a business venture – two per day – ten per week would be more realistic and would still only provide an average income after the expense of running a small business.

The cap of five was obviously a bureaucratic decision made by a bureaucrat with no experience of small business and the daily fight for financial survival.

The Green Loans Program was poorly promoted.

Without the Green Loans Program there is no perceived incentive for the average householder to undertake a home assessment; even though there is no cost to the householder and the benefits could be still be significant.

I would like to see the Green Loans Program reinstated and along with the Home Sustainability Assessment Program, widely and properly promoted via all facets of media, with the importance and benefits to homeowner and the country in general highlighted.

The Department, by whatever name or section of Government it operates under must be run by experienced industrial business professionals, not bureaucrats, and staffed by people from appropriate industries.

I would like to see the Programs regularly audited and if it means assessors have to undergo additional studies to ensure the appropriate level of knowledge, integrity and professionalism, so be it.

The original idea was brilliant, let us make it work!