

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

Answers to questions on notice

Inquiry into the Energy Efficient Homes Package

February 2010

Question No: 22
Topic: ACCC actions
Hansard Page ECA:

Senator TROETH and BARNETT asked:

(Companies that continued to advertise after they had been deregistered were referred to the ACCC) Do you know what action the ACCC took, or should we ask them?
(Can you provide) ongoing correspondence and communications with the ACCC?

Answer:

Any updates on action taken by the ACCC on fair trading matters should be obtained from the Commission itself.

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Question No: 35
Topic: HIP Project Control Group
Hansard Page ECA:

Senator FISHER asked:

Can you provide a list of members of the project control group for the home insulation scheme?

Answer/s:

Malcolm Forbes from DEHWA chaired the Project Control Group, which also included other departmental representatives. The Project Control Group also comprised representatives from the Office of the Coordinator General, DEEWR, Medicare Australia, the Department of Human Services and the Australian Taxation Office.

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Question No: 42
Topic: ACCC investigations
Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BARNETT asked:

Please provide a brief on the status of the ACCC investigations regarding the HIP as far as the department is aware.

Answer/s:

Any updates on fair trading issues should be obtained from the Commission itself.

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Question No: 44
Topic: Auditing houses
Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BARNETT asked:

Please provide your plan for auditing the houses with faulty or substandard insulation. Please provide as much detail as possible. Will you be auditing 15%, 50% or 100% of all homes affected? Exactly how long will such an audit take and at what cost? What is the average length of time and cost of undertaking an audit of one house? What is the average size of such a house?

Answer/s:

The new Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Greg Combet, made a detailed statement to Parliament on 10 March on these issues.

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Question No: 49
Topic: Complaints
Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BARNETT asked:

Please provide a total of complaints received under the program and detail the nature and status of the complaint and relevant state or territory. Please also advise the outcome of complaint?

Answer:

The Home Insulation Program had received 7,881 complaints as at 21 February 2010. As a proportion of installations completed as at the time of Program closure, this represents approximately 0.64 percent.

Complaints generally fall into the following categories:

- Installer practice/behaviour
- Compliance/work standard
- Payment
- Program structure/Guidelines
- Incorrect advice
- Whistle blowing
- Fraud tip off
- Safety issues

As these complaints are received through the Department's website, it is not possible to provide an accurate breakdown of their state of origin as not all complainants identify their location.

The Department has a formal complaints handling process which includes complaint prioritisation. Any complaint in relation to fraud, whistle blowing, safety, installer practices and non-compliance with program guidelines, is also passed to the Compliance Section for investigation under the audit and compliance strategy.

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Question No: 62

Topic: Prime Minister's Code of Conduct

Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BARNETT asked:

Has the Prime Ministers code of conduct been breached by Minister Garrett and possibly Minister Arbib? If not, why not?

Answer/s:

The Department is not responsible for administration of the Prime Minister's Code of Conduct.

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February 2010

Question No: 68

Topic: Foil Insulation – Inspections

Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BIRMINGHAM asked:

- a) How many homes were fitted with foil insulation under the Home Insulation Program?
- b) How many of these homes have been inspected to date? Who by?
- c) Will all remaining homes be inspected? Who by?
- d) When will the first of the remaining homes be inspected?
- e) When will the last of the remaining homes be inspected?
- f) What is the total estimated cost of all inspection and compliance activities related to foil insulation?

Answer/s:

- a) As at 4 March 2010 50,330 claims had been received for foil insulation installations, noting that this figure will continue to change as residual claims are processed.
- b) 996 were inspected under the arrangements that existed prior to the announcement on 10 February 2010. These inspections were done under contractual arrangements with PricewaterhouseCoopers. It is not yet possible to report on the number of inspections completed by independent electricians at the request of householders.
- c) The Government has committed to every home that has foil insulation installed under the Home Insulation Program undergoing an electrical safety check. This is subject to the ability to obtain the property owner's consent. Current arrangements allow householders to organise their own inspection. The Department is finalising alternative inspection arrangements with service providers to facilitate the efficient delivery of the inspection program.
- d) Current arrangements allow householders to organise their own inspection, and this will continue until alternative arrangements are in place to organise the inspections on behalf of householders.
- e) and f) It is not possible to determine a completion date or cost estimates at this stage, as the alternative inspection arrangements have not yet been finalised.

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February 2010

Question No: 80

Topic: Support for manufacturers, importers

Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BIRMINGHAM asked:

What financial support exists for businesses involved in manufacturing or importing insulation? What assistance is there for these businesses to pay rent? What assistance is there for these businesses to pay for orders of stock made prior to the suspension of the program? What tax relief is available to these businesses? When, if at all, can the first insulation manufacturing or importing business expect to receive a payment? How many of these businesses existing prior to the suspension of the Home Insulation Program? How many does the Government estimate have or will exit the business before resumption of the program?

Answer/s:

The Government's \$41.2 million Insulation Worker Adjustment package includes a \$10 million Insulation Workers Adjustment Fund to help workers and firms through the transition period. The Fund will support firms to retain their workforces in work or training activities or to support workers directly.

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Question No: 82
Topic: Training Package
Hansard Page ECA:

Senator BIRMINGHAM asked:

What role did the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council play in developing the training package for home insulation workers? What section or sections of the Council undertook this work? What feedback was provided about this work and the role of the Council by state training councils? What role did the Electrical Industry Skills Council play in the development of the training package and what feedback did they provide?

Answer/s:

The Construction and Property Service Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) are the recognised custodians of the CPC08 Construction Training Package which is home to insulation specific units of competency.

Recognising the need to develop capacity in the insulation sector, the Department worked with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and CPSISC to develop a relevant ceiling insulation training program.

CPSISC engaged professional vocational education instructional designers to consult industry and develop the Ceiling Insulation Training Program.

The Ceiling Insulation Training Program consists of the following three units:

- CPCCOHS2001A *Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry*
- CPCCPB3014A *Install batt insulation products*
- CPCCCM1006A *Work Safely at heights*

The following materials were created for the delivery of the training program:

<i>Assessment Guide</i>	Developed for Registered Training Organisations to assist in conducting formal assessment processes.
<i>Delivery Guide</i>	Developed for trainers to provide some basic tools and guidance for delivery of the training program.
<i>Learning Summary</i>	Brief summary of key knowledge areas for learners.
<i>Recognition Application</i>	Developed for candidates to assess current competence and assist in formal recognition of competence.
<i>Training Presentation Materials</i>	Developed for trainers to present key knowledge areas relating to the unit.

In addition, the *Insulation Installers Pocket Book* (Pocket Book) is a free pocket-size reference guide to installing insulation safely, available from the Program website. A hard copy of the Pocket Book has also been provided to every registered installer business. Electronic copies of the Pocket Book are available for downloading from the Department's website and CPSISC's website.

A Training Working Group, facilitated by CPSISC, brought together industry organisations on 8 May 2009 to review the training materials. The group included:

- Insulation Council of Australia and New Zealand (ICANZ)
- Australian Cellulose Insulation Manufacturing Association (ACIMA)
- Master Builders Association (MBA)
- Housing Industry Association (HIA)
- Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)
- Fletcher Insulation
- Cool NRG
- Install Assist
- The Aluminium Foil Insulation Association (AFIA) and Plastic Industry Manufacturers Australia (PIMAA) were consulted via teleconference.

The ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council (EE-OZ) was also involved in reviewing the Pocket Book.

After serious workplace health and safety incidents, the Department convened meetings with training organisations, industry and regulators (including the CPSISC) to review the training resources. The meetings occurred on 27 October and 12 November 2009. Resulting enhancements to the training program included:

- more information on site risk assessments,
- how to identify and control electrical and other hazards including identification of wiring types, and
- further improving accessibility of the information for learners with lower literacy levels.

CPSISC also developed a new unit of competency specific to residential ceiling insulation, which combines and enhances the three units of competency in the current Ceiling Insulation Training Program. It was endorsed by all state and territory training authorities in January 2010 and was endorsed by the National Quality Council on March 2, 2010. It is now available for Registered Training Organisations to use.

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Question No: 112

Topic: Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme

Hansard Page ECA:

Senator FISHER asked:

Will the assessment be made public?

Answer/s:

The Government will consider an interim report on the proposed implementation arrangements for the Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme shortly. Decisions about release of the expert panel's advice to Government will be made at the appropriate time.