

April 14, 2010

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Submission to Green Loans Senate Inquiry

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to table a submission to the inquiry you are conducting in relation to the Government's Green Loans Program.

My involvement:

I had a keen interest in green design & through my own research & learning I came across information about the GLP in early August & became excited about the possibility of being involved in an area of work that was important.

I researched the program thoroughly by accessing the information that was available publicly through DEWHA & ABSA; along with attending an introduction night & asking further questions of a number of RTO's. When I did my research & subsequently the training, there were under 1000 assessors accredited, contracted & listed publicly.

I was keen to get the best training & to provide a service that was based on quality client service & integrity. I chose to go ahead with the training in early October & then set about getting together the funds to become accredited & contracted.

I was able to finance & submit my application in December just prior to the major panic of the last weeks of training & the ceasing of the receipt of applications by ABSA – as we now know (it seemed no-one knew at the time) on top of the assessor numbers swelling to over 4000, another 5000 were pushed through in the closing moments.

This was the beginning of my involvement in the Green Loan Program. I do believe it was & still could be a very worthwhile program.

Unfortunately, up until now it has not been the success & great example in moving forward on sustainability education that it could have been. Until being personally involved & experiencing how things have unfolded directly through my inside role as an assessor, I could & would never have believed that a Government program utilising public funds could be so badly mismanaged. It at times has been incredibly stressful & also disillusioning in terms of trusting the ability of the Government & also at times its intention & integrity. This has previously not been a position I have had any cause to take.

My personal concerns as they unfolded:

1. Inadequate & incomplete training.
2. Early examples of greed rather than Green within the program.
3. Reports of some companies/individuals doing very short assessments.
4. Reports of some companies utilising assessments to on-sell products.
5. Training becoming substantially looser & less effective as class numbers swell to 50+ with some RTO's.
6. Big delays in the accreditation/contract process & in gaining access to tools due to the increasingly large assessor numbers & (apparently) ongoing problems in the program.
7. ABSA was overwhelmed with the application numbers & unable to support its members effectively.
8. DEWHA was in stone-walling mode – we were unable to communicate with anyone in the department to gain clarity, access to tools, materials, support, make bookings etc, etc.
9. Increased concerns that the program was going to end abruptly in the coming weeks due to the (now known) large numbers of assessors & the rapid take-up of the assessments, largely due to the aggressive marketing & cold calling drives that some companies with large assessor numbers were engaging in.
10. Household reports weren't being sent, green incentive vouchers weren't being issued, a mismatch in data collected to what was/is utilised in the report, errors & inconsistencies in the report, assessors not being paid.
11. Not able to get through to the call centre, book jobs or work for an extensive period of time whilst Field Force had 600 assessors accessing assessments through a direct booking system with DEWHA that by-passed the complete breakdown in the system we were facing.
12. No time to market for new clients/assessments due to the time spent trying to contact the call centre & navigate the problems in the system.
13. No time to learn what wasn't taught in the training due to the ongoing demands of trying to access the call centre whilst also trying to reach other DEWHA staff, alongside all of the other continuing problems in the program.
14. Peter Garrett announced the sudden changes to the program without communicating how assessors were now to operate – the next couple of weeks are spent trying to piece together what the changes mean & how to operate as an assessor within the new arrangements.
15. The call centre works but I hadn't marketed for any new work & didn't know how to market it due to the unplanned for program changes.
16. There was no longer a green loan available yet it was/is still called 'The Green Loans Program', we are still required to say that this is the program we are contracted to & all of the materials still reference it as 'The Green Loans Program'.
17. The banks begin pulling the pin on the loans rapidly & prior to the deadline given by Peter Garrett which means there is a race to take care of clients who expected to access this.
18. Working alongside colleagues/peers (1000's of them) that may or may not be accredited & contracted to ABSA/DEWHA due to a gross mismanagement of the numbers that were allowed to train.
19. The dust started to settle but I found myself still struggling to re-gain my sense of direction & professionalism in a program that was still called the Green

Loans Program without a green loan & was facing many problems within it.
20. To date I have completed 12 assessments during what could only be described as a complete crisis period in the Green Loans Program & have not yet received any payment.

Evidence (previous correspondence):

Sent to DEWHA on the 22 January 2010:

“I have been advised that the two start-up packs have been sent to me but nothing has arrived as yet.

In order to up-hold the professionalism of the GL program I will need these materials. As it was - I gave this new client a computer printed post-card, as they were requesting some business materials from me - I don't feel that this looked professional or up-holds the image I would like to go forward with in representing the GL's Program.

I am also waiting on a call back regarding access to the Assessor Portal - I was not sent the link for this, there is a blank space where the link was meant to be included. I also need to clarify the Login & Password procedure as I am getting mixed messages about this.”

Sent to ABSA on the 27 January 2010:

“I am concerned that the processing & posting of my ID may be delayed in the major overwhelm that ABSA is facing with the 5000 new assessors to be processed. I wish to bring this to your attention today so that the posting of my ID card will continue & be sent to me as soon as possible. I received my accreditation e-mail from ABSA 2 weeks ago on the 13th January.”

Sent to DEWHA on the 28 January 2010:

URGENT RESPONSE REQUIRED

“Please advise as soon as possible:

- 1) When I will have my initial access to the Portal activated? This has not worked based on the advice/suggestions given to me from DEWHA.
- 2) When I will receive my initial materials package as advised by DEWHA in my initial contract acceptance e-mail.

These are essential for me to carry out my contractual duties with DEWHA & also a minimum in DEWHA meeting its contractual obligations to me.

I have e-mailed a number of times, requested call-backs with DEWHA's call centre through the answering service prompts, phoned the call centre & waited on hold with the call centre for 40 minutes only to have the line drop out, waited on hold for 1 hr & 10 mins & told I would receive a call-back & I have not had a successful response

from any of these contacts as yet.”

Sent to all below on the 8 February 2010:

To the Ombudsman, Peter Garrett, Greg Hunt, Julia Gillard, Eric Abetz, Ian Cohen, Lee Rhiannon, Sylvia Hale, John Kaye, Robyn Kruk (DEWHA), Alison Carmichael (ABSA) & Stephen Gallagher (ABSA)

”If you are not already aware, the Green Loans Program is in an absolute crisis! Please do something about it immediately. Unfortunately, it is the Assessors, Taxpayers & Householders who are wearing the brunt of this. You have entered into a working contract with many individuals (5 to 10,000?) & the contract is not being upheld because DEWHA is not acting appropriately or fairly in managing this program.

We (Assessors) have no support or guidance & can't get answers to questions that we ask, let alone action on systems & processes that are absolutely not working.

Amongst many complaints...

...if you request & gain access to the ABSA Assessor Forum you can view all of these, some are dating back to the launch of the program in the middle of last year...

We are not able to access the Call Centre and book jobs. Therefore, in case this isn't clear....we are unable to work! We have jobs & can't book them in, it is not that the funding has run out (yet) nor is it that DEWHA can't promise us any work; we have work & can't book it in. Do something about this urgently & communicate this to all assessors - both of these actions have been seriously absent on many issues.

We also apparently have the market leader, Field Force (leaders in numbers of assessments, door knockers & call centre staff), making bookings with a specially set-up on-line link. If you can't understand that you are already giving someone who has monopolised the market, an extremely unfair advantage & that this amounts to unequal & unfair contractual arrangements then you seriously should not have been gifted with the opportunity to manage/oversee/be involved with this amount of public money.

This is my process in trying to make bookings today:

I have a repeated pattern of dial around 5 times, don't get through, dial again & it rings & then a recorded message says that if I'd like to submit bookings please call back....

So then I do it again all over again with the same result....

There is no option to leave a message nor is there an option to wait in the cue....the best result is if I actually get a ringing tone & am then connected to the recording that tells me I have to ring back!!

Previously, I have had wait times up to 2 hours, promises of call-backs that never happen - both live & recorded, disconnections after extremely long wait times & a

variety of ineffectual communications.

This is one story of many. I suspect many Assessors have given up.

This has to be some sort of breach of contract???"

Sent to all below 11 February 2010:

To: @environment.gov.au, ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au,
peter.garrett.mp@aph.gov.au

Cc: imogen.birley@aph.gov.au, senator.milne@aph.gov.au, admin@absa.net.au,
hsas@absa.net.au, support@absa.net.au, Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au,
Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au, ian.cohen@parliament.nsw.gov.au,
Lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au, sylvia.hale@parliament.nsw.gov.au,
john.kaye@parliament.nsw.gov.au, public.affairs@environment.gov.au,
greenloans@environment.gov.au, glassessors@environment.gov.au,
senator.abetz@aph.gov.au

Attention: Peter Garrett, Ombudsman,

“After repeatedly trying to gain access to the materials I have been told recently that they are now available under the Assessor Resources tab - they aren't there!

1. First I was told I would receive them in the mail.
2. Also told that they are already on their way.
3. Then told there is a new CD containing the artworks for materials I will get.
4. Then informed that DEWHA is out of all materials promised.
5. Finally told that all artwork files are now available via the online portal for downloading under the 'Resources' tab...where?!

Please send me the CD immediately & put the artwork resources on the Assessor Portal as you advised had already been done.

I would also like some householder declaration forms posted as promised.

And please confirm that I am on the E-news list as previously asked - I have not received the past 2 Newsletters in spite of checking & re-checking that this had been done.”

Sent to ABSA 12 February 2010:

“DEWHA is in breach of its contract in not giving us access to a booking system that

works & also in breach of its contract in offering unequal treatment to its contracted Assessors.”

From DEWHA 12 February 2010:

(Please note: we are now aware that on the 19th February Peter Garrett’s announcement was made & there is no longer a Green Loan which rendered all of these materials (below) still referencing the Green Loans Program, null & void).

“Apologies for the delay in getting back to you.

I am sending through the artwork files that are on the CD via email so that you don't have to wait any longer to receive these files.”

Sent to all those below on 14 February 2010:

To: @environment.gov.au; ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au; Garrett, Peter (MP)

Cc: Birley, Imogen (Sen C. Milne); Milne, Christine (Senator); admin@absa.net.au; hsas@absa.net.au; support@absa.net.au; Hunt, Greg (MP); Gillard, Julia (MP); ian.cohen@parliament.nsw.gov.au; Lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au; sylvia.hale@parliament.nsw.gov.au; john.kaye@parliament.nsw.gov.au; public.affairs@environment.gov.au; greenloans@environment.gov.au; glassessors@environment.gov.au; Abetz, Eric (Senator)

Kevin Rudd (e-mailed through web contact link), Penny Wong (e-mailed through web contact link), Peter Garrett, Ombudsman &

Day 5 calling the Call Centre & I have been unable to make any bookings.

“Confirmed today by a call directly to me from DEWHA that Field Force is able to continue with their arrangement that by-passes the Call Centre which is not working & are allocated 6000 assessment booking numbers per week (apparently) for 600 Assessors - last week I was told they had 385 Assessors - seems business is booming for Field Force while independent Assessors have no work due to not being able to access the Call Centre.

DEWHA is grossly in breach of their individual contracts.

GIVE US ALL ACCESS TO THE WORKING SYSTEM THAT FIELD FORCE HAS...”

From DEWHA 15 February 2010:

(Note: fortunately, I didn’t have the money to immediately get my business &

promotional materials printed with the newly acquired artworks referencing the Green Loan – I am sure many spent money & wasted time & resources on this).

“Thanks for your email and my profuse apologies for the delay in getting these files to you.

The CD is unfortunately no longer in circulation as the items were to be available on the portal, but there have been issues with this which are currently being sorted out.”

Sent to all those below on 15 February 2010:

To: Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au, "Simon (Senator) Birmingham" & Senator.Birmingham@aph.gov.au

“02 6277 7700 - called PM's Office 2.45pm - told they were transferring me to Peter Garrett's Office...

Peter Garrett's Office answered & said that I would need to speak with Rod White who is in the Minister's Office today & he apparently looks after the Stakeholders in the DEWHA program...

I was then transferred & got X (name can be supplied) at DEWHA - he was going to transfer me until I stopped him there...

He is filling in for Rod White today as Rod is away so somehow I had been automatically transferred to him & by-passed the Ministers Office. He asked what I was needing help with & I told him I had been trying for 6 days to get bookings in & was requesting I speak to someone about that in order to find out a) what is actually happening b) when it will be fixed - he was polite about it & said he wanted to help but in summary his response was...

'Unfortunately, I am unable to give you a timeline on when it will be fixed - we don't know - they are working on it - some measures have been implemented & they haven't worked & they are considering a range of options'.

I asked if we could have a daily up-date & he asked if I get the E-News - I told him I don't receive it & have asked repeatedly to be put on the list & it hasn't happened - he said he would get this fixed. I told him the E-news isn't very regular & doesn't have much information in it in regards to what's actually happening so he has taken a note that we want daily up-dates.

He also said he'd organise a call-back from the Green Loans team for me & I informed him that they don't call back & we don't get responses to our e-mails. He said he would organise this one & it would probably be tomorrow morning & if I didn't get the call-back to call him tomorrow on

I also called the Ombudsman's Office on 1300 362 072 & got a recording & then placed on hold, then after a period of time a message occurred saying they are currently busy & apologise for the delay & to leave a message. I have placed e-mails with this office since last week for further investigation & have at this stage not even

had receipt of e-mails responses to my messages.

It felt like I was in a game of hot potato & I was the potato - it was a huge waste of time & I am left wondering...

If anyone in Government/Management really is attending to anything in the Green Loans Program..."

Sent to all below on 16 February 2010:

To: @environment.gov.au, ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au, peter.garrett.mp@aph.gov.au, greenloans@environment.gov.au, glassessors@environment.gov.au, imogen.birley@aph.gov.au, senator.milne@aph.gov.au, Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au, Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au, ian.cohen@parliament.nsw.gov.au, Lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au, sylvia.hale@parliament.nsw.gov.au, john.kaye@parliament.nsw.gov.au, public.affairs@environment.gov.au, senator.abetz@aph.gov.au, admin@absa.net.au, hsas@absa.net.au, support@absa.net.au

To Kevin Rudd, The Ombudsman, Penny Wong, Peter Garrett, & all other interested parties.

"This is now URGENT for many Assessors.

Day 6 - NO access to the Call Centre, NO work & NO income.

Advise us immediately what you are doing about it & when it will be fixed."

Sent to all those below on the 15 February 2010:

To: "Greg (MP)Hunt" Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au
Cc: "Simon (Senator)Birmingham" Senator.Birmingham@aph.gov.au

"Ringing this number has been worse than ringing the Call Centre & not getting through.

For your information this is how it went:

- Called at 1.20 & it rang out.
- Called at 1.20 & it rang out (have previously gotten through to the contract team via this number).
- Called at 1.30 & got transferred twice while I was in the middle of speaking, to a number that has a recording saying that they are temporarily experiencing a high number of calls & can't take my call.
- Called again & said I was ringing for my third time, could I ask who I am speaking with & I was told that they are on switch & don't provide their number -

I attempted to request to speak with Chris Mobbs, a Manager or a Supervisor & this same switch person cut in again while I was speaking, I asked him not to do this – to let me finish & then I will listen to him - he continued to speak over me & then cut me off.

- Got through & asked to speak to Chris, a Manager or a Supervisor & was told she would have to put me on hold.

Around 10 mins later I was transferred (no-one came back to the call) to someone whose name is X (name can be supplied) he is an Invoicing Officer & said he definitely had nothing to do with Management/Supervising roles.

I again asked to speak to _____, a Manager or a Supervisor - he said _____ was in a meeting & he couldn't help even if he was here as bookings are a Call Centre problem. I explained that if the Call Centre isn't actually working & I can't get through to them than it can hardly stop with the Call Centre, it needed to go to someone in Management.

He said he would see if he could get someone & then put me on hold again.

Not surprisingly, X didn't come back to the call - he transferred the call to the same number above that has the message saying they temporarily can't take calls & I'll have to call back.

- Called again & got the above recorded message again.

- Called again & got the same fellow who had cut in on me & cut me off - I politely asked if I could speak to Chris, a Manager or a Supervisor.

He transferred the call & it continuously rang for 5 mins before he came back & said that _____ was out. I asked if I could have _____ direct no. so I could call him back later & the response was: no we can't give you that - he is a Director & we don't give out Directors numbers. I asked if there is anyone else I could speak with & he said no it would only be _____ so the only option is to try this number again later.

Meanwhile, another hour has gone by & I have no bookings in as yet.

This is after calling the 1800 895 076 Call Centre number over 80 times today & getting an engaged signal!!

If you have any other suggestions for us as Assessors, to get some resolution on this, I would appreciate it.”

Sent to all those below on the 15 February 2010:

To: _____ @environment.gov.au, ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au,

peter.garrett.mp@aph.gov.au, greenloans@environment.gov.au,
glassessors@environment.gov.au, imogen.birley@aph.gov.au,
senator.milne@aph.gov.au, Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au,
Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au, ian.cohen@parliament.nsw.gov.au,
Lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au, sylvia.hale@parliament.nsw.gov.au,
john.kaye@parliament.nsw.gov.au, public.affairs@environment.gov.au,
senator.abetz@aph.gov.au, admin@absa.net.au, hsas@absa.net.au,
support@absa.net.au

To Kevin Rudd, The Ombudsman, Penny Wong, Peter Garrett, & all
other interested parties,

“This is now URGENT for many Assessors.

Day 6 - NO access to the Call Centre, NO work & NO income.

Advise us immediately what you are doing about it & when it will be fixed.”

Sent to Kevin Rudd & others on 16 February 2010:

Attention: Kevin Rudd

“Please address the urgent issues occurring within the GLP immediately.

Myself & many other Assessors are now unable to seek further work as we spend all of our time trying to access the Call Centre & book in the existing jobs we have.

I am on day 7 in trying to call them without having any success in securing bookings. We can't represent the program & ask people if they want an assessment if we are unable to book the work in - a number of people are expressing an interest & I am not able to follow up on this as I am unable to book the existing jobs I have.

This means DEWHA is blocking me (& many others) from carrying out our current work that we are contracted to perform & are also preventing us from pursuing any further work...this is a GROSS breach of contract?!?

We CAN'T be expected to sit and redial all day, every day, in the hope of being placed on hold, then to wait in extremely long cues, risk being cut off (it happens often), only to start the whole process again.

Meanwhile, Field Force continues to by-pass the Call Centre & book in 6000 jobs a week. This has to be breaching discrimination laws & also fair practice laws - there can't be one rule for some & another for others.

Give me & all other Assessor's access to the same arrangement that Field Force has now!!!

I am starting to believe that this is a deliberate political manoeuvre to delay the ending of the GLP & the inevitable unsavoury truth's that are likely to come out of this - it really isn't a hard task to have an effectively functioning Call Centre & an online

booking system - we have neither.

I would appreciate you attending to this & a written response to this as soon as possible.”

Sent to all below on the 16 February 2010:

To: @environment.gov.au, ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au,
peter.garrett.mp@aph.gov.au, greenloans@environment.gov.au,
glassessors@environment.gov.au, imogen.birley@aph.gov.au,
senator.milne@aph.gov.au, Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au,
Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au, ian.cohen@parliament.nsw.gov.au,
Lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au, sylvia.hale@parliament.nsw.gov.au,
john.kaye@parliament.nsw.gov.au, public.affairs@environment.gov.au,
senator.abetz@aph.gov.au, admin@absa.net.au, hsas@absa.net.au,
support@absa.net.au

“X, (name can be supplied) we spoke yesterday in relation to the impossible booking situation for Assessors in the GLP. You promised you would organise a call-back for me which you expected I would receive this morning. I didn't! When I informed you that we are continually promised call-backs & they don't occur & we also don't get responses to our e-mails your response was:

I will make sure this one is organised & if it doesn't happen you can call me back tomorrow on:

The first time I rang this number I got a recorded message telling me that the line was busy & calls couldn't be taken so I would need to call back - so much for the number I can call you back on!

I then re-dialled & the call was picked up by X (name can be supplied) who said you didn't work in his department...he also wasn't sure how I got through to him, another name (name can be supplied) came up on his phone...

When I asked to speak to you, after being placed on hold, X returned & said that you were unavailable...predictable yet still very disappointing!

I had a very wordy conversation with X who was giving me all of the official scripts he has been told to pass on which resulted in...

They are working on it urgently...we can't take your bookings...you'll have to keep trying the call centre.

X also advised that they are also no longer organising call-backs I would have to keep trying the call centre.

I asked who had told him the booking system was being worked on 'urgently' & he said it was "his supervisor"... "can I speak to a supervisor"... "no, we don't do that - we don't transfer to a supervisor"

We CAN'T be expected to sit and redial all day, day in & day out...

Give me & all other Assessor's the same arrangement that Field Force has now!!!

Day 7...tried earlier - no. engaged. Have now been redialling for 40 minutes - do you understand how stressful that is?...am now on hold...will I get through before 5?

Please attend to this urgently, fix it urgently & communicate what you are doing about it & have done urgently.”

Posted to all those below on the 16 February 2010:

To: senator.milne@aph.gov.au, Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au
Received: Tuesday, 16 February, 2010, 3:09 PM
Christine & Greg,

“What now? Do you have any further suggestions for us?

I tried the PM's Office as you suggested Christine & got immediately transferred to Peter Garrett's Office - he was out so they promptly put me through supposedly to the Minister's Office to speak to Rod White - I don't know what happened to him as I was then put through to X (name can be supplied) at DEWHA who was standing in for Rod yesterday.

He was polite but unhelpful, his comments in relation to fixing the booking system were:

'Unfortunately, I am unable to give you a timeline on when it (the booking system) will be fixed - we don't know - they are working on it - some measures have been implemented & they haven't worked & they are considering a range of options'.

He also promised me a call back today which hasn't occurred. This is on top of over 80 phone calls to the Call Centre yesterday with no success.

I tried to speak to _____ & was told he was out & also tried to call the Ombudsman's Office after many letters to them & received a recorded message prompting me to leave a message, as they were busy - no call back & no responses to any of my e-mails.

Greg, I also tried the number you suggested & that experience was worse than getting a continual engaged signal from the Call Centre.

Is there another political agenda at play??

I actually don't believe they can't fix it - it is a relatively simple system to organise so I can only guess that they don't want to fix it...

Are they stalling until they can close the program?? Are they trying to lose a few thousand or more Assessors, due to oversubscribing the program by around 8000 Assessors by wearing them out?

Are they trying to cover up the preferential treatment they have given to FF - why?
Does someone or several in DEWHA/parliament have hushed financial links to FF?

I am now unable to seek further work as I can't ask people if they want an assessment as I am unable to book the assessments in.

They are blocking me carrying out the current work I have & preventing me from pursuing further work & not communicating with me about this...I am not alone in this - there are many of us in the same boat...surely this is a GROSS breach of contract?!?

Any assistance provided will be greatly appreciated.”

18 February 2010 from DEWHA:

“You recently requested your login details for Green Loans Online Assessor. These are provided below.

Your Login ID:

New Password:

To access your Online Assessor account, login with the details above at:
<http://gov-au-greenloans-assessor.com/>

When you login, you will be prompted to create a new password for yourself.

For further help please contact your Green Loans team contact.”

Best Regards,
The Green Loans Team

Sent to ABSA 23 February for DEWHA meeting:

“Please add if you don't have already:

1. Clarification around the booking limits & how this impacts on the cc & assessors:

What will happen at the cc when the daily 3000 limit is reached? How will we be notified?

With a limit of 15,000 per week & up to 5000 assessors it seems like it is first in first served so this places a demand on the cc I thought they were trying to avoid - I know I will be trying to get my 10 in first thing on the Monday of each new fortnight - how will the cc manage this?

What happens to assessors that miss out on work because the limit has been reached? Is it going to be less than part-time work for some if they miss out? We shouldn't be in a situation where we have to worry about getting our work booked in before all the jobs are gone & what about the HH - if we miss out we have to reschedule & they

have to wait another fortnight.

2. Clarification around company versus individual assessor:

Has the GLP been re-designed this way to try & remove companies? Are they trying to make it an individual assessor group only? Will there be space for anyone coming in within the 1200 under a company arrangement?

3. Full transparency around FF:

What exactly was their arrangement? When did it start? How many jobs did they book in total out of the 260,000 already gone (& assessor numbers)? How far ahead have they booked out of the 360,000 ax pool & how many did they book before the media release by PG (that were still to be done after this date). Were they told about the media release & the cut-off prior to it being announced publicly? Will DEWHA be continuing their contract & if they have assessors leave would they be able to replace them?

There have been a number of reports of under-assessing ie 20 minute assessments & other practices that could be breaching the contract - will DEWHA audit FF?

4. Clarification around further training:

When will the Cert. IV be ready & when can we do the up-grade & who with? Will this be closely monitored & regulated?

There has been mention of applications for the 1200 positions being assessed based on the training they were given? Can DEWHA explain this? What does this mean? Have some RTO's been struck off & some of those in waiting won't have their training recognised? What if some of us already working have been trained by the same RTO?

5. Communication:

Will DEWHA now move into appropriate professional behaviour & up-date its assessors, in full, immediately following any technical difficulties or changes in the working arrangement, answer their phones, answer e-mails & provide access to supervisors & managers where required?

I apologise if these are double ups - the forum & keeping track of what is relevant for this meeting is very hard at this time."

Sent to ABSA 23 February also for DEWHA meeting:

"Can you please make sure that DEWHA understands that 'no guarantee of work' is completely different to being prevented from working when you have work.

And if it helps in your discussions around easing the CC load - it isn't working this week.

No guarantee of work does not mean being prevented from accessing work that you have ready to go - I had work & couldn't book it in...9 days calling the call centre & continuous lengthy holds, drop-outs & also cut-offs at 5pm.

I also stopped seeking work due to spending all my time contacting the cc & not knowing whether I'd actually be able to book jobs.

Now I don't know what I am marketing so I hesitate in charging out there to promote what I'm not clear about. I also again spent all day yesterday getting through to the call centre for the 2 jobs I already had & didn't get through last week.”

From me to the Greens on the 4 March 2010:

“Thank you very much for your e-mail - it is a relief to get any form of communication.

Both DEWHA & ABSA, our professional association, have not been doing this & this in itself has caused much greater hardship than was ever necessary.

It is one thing to mismanage & make mistakes, that in itself has been at times hard to reconcile, but to then not offer those affected by this any real communication or information on how to operate on a day to day basis & also on where the immediate future of the program lies, has further extended the mismanagement of this program to sadly also encompass a gross neglect of their 'duty of care' obligations.

Thank you again for your continued assistance in this matter.”

Solutions:

Re-brand & re-market the program immediately to re-build the public's faith in the government's sustainability initiatives & in particular with this program so as to allow us the opportunity to work in a program with consistency, clarity & professionalism.

To save on further wastage maybe it could simply be re-launched as the Government's Green Program & existing marketing materials/tools/reports could be easily adapted rather than re-doing everything.

Raise the weekly limit from 5 to 10 so that the program doesn't lose its qualified professionals due to the limits on work hours & financial gains as this would leave the industry & program greatly diminished & also leave those of us who are new to this work with no experienced colleagues to learn from – as would normally occur in any industry sector & without adequate training this is critical.

Resolve the assessor numbers immediately.

Provide some security after a period of enduring extreme chaos by assessors who have been involved with this program through either again extending this program or by developing a pathway into the next program when this one finishes.

Resolve all other program problems as tabled by assessors & other interested parties.

Thank you for your time with this & I look forward to hearing the outcome of this inquiry.

Kind regards,

Kim Maree
Home Sustainability Assessor