

Friday, 9 April 2010

Senate Committee Submissions

Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senate,

I believe all 4 programs (schemes) under the DEWA should be re evaluated and rebadged.

The 4 schemes I am speaking of are the green loans program, which has gotten high media attention due to its bungled insulation, hsa assessor contracting mismanagement and also the nabers, nathers and the hopeful green start program.

These programs have suffered from mismanagement, poor oversight, and lack of control and weak policies that influenced corruption.

First all programs should be initially contracted out to individual assessors who have industry related experience, remaining seats should be contracted out to individual assessors who lack industry experience but have passed and obtained certification and registration.

I am a registered HSA with ABSA, I paid for the training, passed and registered with ABSA and I have yet to be contracted out with the program. I have industry experience as an electronic technician, a degree in Electrical Engineering Technology, IT cert II certificate, I designed my own electricity use analysis software for energy reduction, own my own green business and still I cannot get contracted to the program. I have invested a substantial amount of capital in persuing this new industry to be left out in the cold by mismanagement. I am not alone, there are many assessors in the same situation.

The program lacks efficiency in that once a property is assessed, the processing of the paperwork is so slow that the property owner wait too long for the energy report. If the energy report is delayed, processing of the loan is also delayed. There were problems with the loan component even when energy reports were processed timely. Loans were not acquired due to extremely slow loan processing times.

The bookings for assessment should be secured/web-based to ease pressure off of the call centre. Booking limits should have been implemented and this is common sense in that it would prevent rorting.

The discontinue of the loan component works in a negative direction as the majority of people seeking to reduce their carbon footprint and energy consumption took interest in the program for the sole purpose of acquiring a non interest loan. With the loan component gone, what part of the program will attract people into investing in energy reduction devices?

The direction of the DEWA programs lack poor vision and is unbalanced in regards to assisting property owner and assessors.

For example, under the NABERS program assessors pay for training (\$3000), are certified by the DEWA then they are required to find work on their own. Each assessor must market the NABERS program in order to get leads. Marketing does cost money. Once the assessor get a lead and performs an assessment, a portion of the proceed goes to NABER (DEWA) around +\$600. This is sort of like a commission. However, the NABERS program for energy reduction in commercial property is a mandatory from July 2010 for office buildings greater than 2000 square metres. Any building that is non compliant receives a hefty fine. That being said, what is the purpose of assessors having to market the product when it is mandatory to get an assessment? And why should

DEWA charge the assessor to perform assessments. In effect, the market would automatically seek out assessment in order to avoid being fined. I find that this DEWA policy is counterproductive and borders on abuse in charging the assessor to conduct an assessment that is required. Furthermore, I understand that mandatory disclosure for commercial building will eventually be required for smaller buildings as well.

Advice

Evaluate, Review and Rebadged if needed all schemes that were managed by DEWA. Administers of the program, call centre, loans component, finance office, and all administration services should be employed with strict oversight and policies that govern their actions, government workers should be fined heavily or imprisoned for corruption. A web based booking system need to be implemented where booking limits are enforced.

The web booking system should be encrypted and secured from hacking

The processing of assessments need to be streamlined and more efficient. Assessors should be able to give the client a copy of the assessment which would become an official copy if the administration department fails to submit one in a specified time frame. This would give the client some assurance that a quality service have been given.

The loan component needs to be re activated with transparency, quality assurance and oversight. It must also deliver the loan in a most efficient manner. The population would more readily agree to retrofit property with energy saving devices if there is a financial incentive.

Have a list of government authorized installers of energy reduction products. These authorized installers must agree to in writing that they will deliver a certain standard of quality service for the end customer. Anyone found breaching the contractual agreement face fines and litigation.

Assessors vary in quality of service rendered. All assessors must be held to a high standard and deliver a quality service. Assessors should be contracted out and ranked based on their individual industry experience in related fields not just based on the fact they passed a four day course and happen to make the cut off. Some assessors that made the cut-off are the ones conducting poor assessments. A national course in HSA is not a one all answer to the problem. Good quality assessors contracted and non contracted would view this as just another course they have to pay for when the majority of assessors are try to stay afloat and have not even benefit from the capital investment.

Companies that employ assessors should be limited to 3 assessors within that company.

Do not charge assessors for conducting assessments when the government has made assessments mandatory and at the same time expect individual assessors to find leads on their own. Again, a web based booking for the NABERS/NATHERS program should be implemented where assessors are given equal opportunity to obtain bookings. The client would input his/her need for an assessment, the computer program would choose an assessor based on the assessors availability, the program would take into consideration how many assessments were done by the assessors available on that date. If an assessor reach booking limit, the program moves on to next available assessor. Again if the government have made assessments mandatory for nabers/nathers, the client will seek out the assessment not the other way around.