

To: The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment,
Communication and the Arts
PO Box 6100, Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

My name is Jeffrey Stokes; I made my first inquiries into the home sustainability assessment business in October 2009 and made a decision to apply myself to this worthwhile cause. I am an environmentally conscious person and can see the environmental merits of this home sustainability assessment system. Green loans can help to increase efficiencies in Australian homes, while educating Australians on the conservation of resources and reduction of energy consumption; providing them with the financial resources to actually implement some of the changes that will achieve this.

In October 2009 I was told that I could be one of 2,000 home sustainability assessors paid by the government to process the first 360,000 homes to go through the program. I am a full time mature aged student and thought this business offer would provide me with income for the remaining duration of my degree. I am currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Business, Commerce, and Property degree, and would like to move my career in the direction of environmentally sustainable property. The idea of working as a Home Sustainability Assessor was exciting and appealed to me.

During a time of financial crisis like this, governments usually support their constituents by spending money to improve the financial position of families. So far my decision to be involved in this scheme has only financially hurt me and my family. I have spent approximately \$4,000.00 on the education program, accommodation, ABSA membership, police reports, application fees and insurance; now five months later I have still not earned a dollar in return for this large outlay of money and time. So far my Talokes Pty Ltd company contract with Green Loans has been accepted but has not been made active. I ask you to reward, not punish, people training in these skills, reinstate this worthwhile cause and allow the Green Loans and Home sustainability assessments to continue.

To revitalise the home sustainability education program for Australian homes, full disclosure energy efficiency, in the form of a star rating system, should be legislated as mandatory for all property sold in Australia. We currently put star ratings on appliances sold in Australia, why not rate the efficiency of properties and reward environmentally conscious home owners with higher star ratings. Home sustainability assessments should be undertaken by accredited ABSA assessors, recorded by the relevant government department and attached to the contract of sale for access by prospective purchasers.

ABSA should offer course upgrades to allow assessors to generate star ratings using the government accredited program. This improvement would speed the ratings process for each vendor, allowing them to place their property on the market more quickly and, while the information is still collected, alleviate pressure on over-loaded government

departments. A government or highly qualified ABSA representative could conduct spot checks on assessment quality and adjudicate assessments under the new Australian Government, Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency legislation. This currently is controlled by the Green Loans Program – Terms and conditions of contract with assessors under clause 20 Fraudulent, dishonest, inappropriate conduct and suspected breaches. This contract legislation would give power to the inspectors to adjudicate fairly on any fraudulent, dishonest or inappropriate assessors reports.

Reform of the current system in the ways discussed above could employ all of the current ABSA members, and the 960,000 free assessments currently available could be used to integrate the new legislation into the property market. These legislative changes would still educate the public on reducing energy consumption and give any prospective purchasers the opportunity to select more efficient homes according to the documentation attached to the contract of sale. Once the free assessments were finalised all ABSA members could retain their government legislated contracts and continue conducting assessments for property vendors.

Thank you for considering my position in this very important issue

Yours sincerely

Jeffrey Stokes