

14/04/10

Dear Sir/Madam

Please consider my thoughts on the Green Loan program.

4 parts

1. Quality of assessors
2. Companies employing assessors
3. Tax concession consideration in the future
4. ABSA.

1. Quality of Assessors/Training

Summary: Training companies checked, assessors audited, Training to be tested properly.

Detail to back my thoughts:

My main questions are in the area of assessors.

Assessors Audits and Training.

I undertook a course with Ecomaster from Melbourne. The course was indepth (8am to 6pm 5 days), professional and incredibly educational.

There was a maximum of 20 people on this course which was his fullest.

I came home each night and studied the notes and the following day the trainer (who happened to own Ecomaster) answered everything thoroughly for everyone. He was an exceptional teacher and all the participants felt confident that he covered every conceivable question a house holder may bring up.

I was in good company, there was many permaculturist, town planners and some retired architects. All had a wealth of knowledge and experience to add to the day.

I finished energized, full of knowledge and raring to go.

I decided to 'practice' on 2 friends with very different homes.

I spent 2/3 hours respectively and left with them measuring doors for draft proofing and closing blinds to keep the sun out and reduce the air con bill. (Both have since told me their bills have dropped by \$30 and \$23 on the same time last year. Both are thrilled and can impart some of this knowledge on to their families and also to any other home they move into).

Imagine my dismay after hearing a friend had an assessment where they 'popped' in, measured, and left. I was gob smacked. This was about influencing people, helping them – what a wasted opportunity.

So, my question is – I think assessors should be audited. The training companies checked (I know 3 people who went through 'Melbourne Star' training and said it was a few nights, the trainer was an hour late each night. It finished early each night – meaning they had 3 nights of 2 hours a night. All 3 were from the same company and said they couldn't go ahead and become assessors as they were embarrassed over how little they knew. I wonder how many of those assessors are assessing?

I think the CPD needs to be tested, i.e you need to be tested properly to ensure the scheme is of a high standard.

2. Companies that hire people

**Summary: This questions the assessment motivation.
I think each assessor should be self employed or as least by small companies – 5 or less.**

Summary: Training companies checked, assessors audited, Training to be

Detail to back my thoughts:

I think this has spoilt the scheme. Assessing then having someone call about 'solar power' a few days later is embarrassing and in my opinion undermines the assessment. These assessors are on commission. If you were the householder would you assume they are giving impartial advice?

3. Tax concessions

Summary: Re think the way this works.

Detail to back my thoughts:

I think this is a very sensitive area.

My neighbour earns \$250k, he lives alone.

The family of 5 across the road are in a flat and earn \$45k

My single neighbour will get back \$90 of the \$200

The family of 5, \$60 back.

My retired parents in law nothing.

4. I agree with the ABSA in their opinions:-

ABSA members believe that Government support should be offered to assessors in line with that offered to those affected by the changes to the insulation package.

Despite a belief that the two schemes were quite different in their nature, ie one was an employment program (Home Insulation Package) and one was an environmental program (Green Loans) the Green Loans program was promoted by Government as a potential business/ employment opportunity.

For example job seekers were encouraged to undertake training for accreditation; contracts make reference to small business and marketing etc.

ABSA also strongly believes that the Government should consider some form of recompense for costs of training, insurance etc for those assessors already in the system now deemed superfluous to need.

ABSA believes that an offer of reimbursement for training, insurance and police check costs would again see a natural and orderly attrition rate from the program and would go some way to resolving the widespread anger of some of our members towards the Government.

ABSA would also implement its own refund policy for money paid to ABSA to accompany this.

Longer Term

Accreditation

ABSA believes that the current accreditation process is robust and has functioned well against a backdrop of major upheavals in the program, unprecedented demand as well as program delivery shortcomings.

However, issues surrounding training standards remain problematic.

ABSA proposes:

Every effort is made, with the support of Minister Wong, to push through endorsement of the Certificate IV qualification for mid year 2010. This requires the support and action by the Federal Education Minister and agreement from the States. This would assist to establish the role of assessor as an occupation with consistent training standards across the country;

The Government honors a previous commitment to support assessors to upgrade their qualifications to a Certificate IV, over time this being a requirement for continued accreditation and access to this, and future programs;

It assists to produce CPD units quickly from Certificate IV units for assessors to upgrade their skills.