

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**Additional Estimates Hearing – February 2010**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Topic: Green Loans – Assessor Training**

**Question reference number: CC57**

**Type of Question: Hansard ECA page 98, 9 February 2010**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010**

**Number of Pages: 2**

**Question:** (Senator Milne)

**Senator MILNE**—Mr Berry has put in writing that DEEWR would cover the cost of assessors being upgraded to a certificate IV qualification and people are expecting that that will happen. Now, I understand, the department is saying that it does not have any knowledge of that. First of all I would like to know how is it that you embarked on allowing training that is not nationally accredited? You have a framework that you operate within. There was a Victorian training course, at least, that was an accredited course that could have been used as a stepping stone. I would really like to know why you embarked on a training program without national accreditation and, secondly, whether DEEWR is going to cover the cost of being upgraded to a certificate IV qualification?

**Senator Wong**—In relation to the first question, I will ask Mr Thompson to respond. In relation to the second question, I am reluctant to deal with particular individuals in the department in an estimates process. You asserted in your question that you had written information about that. If you would provide that to the secretary, but I would ask that we be able to deal with that on notice, given that it deals with a named individual inside the department.

**Answer:**

The Department of Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts (DEWHA) commenced an internal review to verify the statement that the Department would cover the costs of assessors upgrading their qualifications. This review will report to the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

The Victorian Course in *Home Sustainability Assessment* has a broader approach to sustainability issues compared to the Professional Home Sustainability Assessment course, as it incorporates ecological footprints, waste management, garden and environs, transportation and general green living aspects. It is the Department's view that requiring assessors to undertake the broader topics covered by the Victorian course may not necessarily improve the skill sets of the Green Loans assessors as they focus only on the energy and water efficiency performance of houses.

To become a certified Home Sustainability Assessor under the Green Loans program, people need to first complete the Professional Home Sustainability Assessment course provided by a Registered Training Organisation. This course is not nationally accredited as the process for obtaining national accreditation would have taken up to one year for approval under the National Quality Council. This would have led to delays in commencing the roll out of the program until such time as there were trained assessors.

On advice from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, in May 2009, DEWHA commissioned the Construction & Property Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) to consult with stakeholders and develop a national qualification. A Steering Committee of key stakeholders was established and a training package developed for Certificate IV in Home Sustainability Assessment. This package is about to be submitted by CPSISC to State Training Authorities for comment which will be followed by a submission to seek endorsement by the National Quality Council in 2010.

No decision has been made about the costs of the assessors upgrading to the new National Qualification.