

## **The Greens' Dissenting Comments**

The tragic mismanagement of the government's well-intentioned insulation roll-out has resulted in deaths and house fires. It has left many high-profile people and business casualties in its wake, not to mention people who are fearful of the consequences for their homes. One of those casualties is public confidence in what is a vital tool for reducing emissions, saving money and energy.

There are many lessons to be learnt from the failure of the scheme in terms of governance regimes and preparation at both departmental and ministerial levels, but it is critical that that failure is not used as a reason to abandon insulation. The government should be actively promoting insulation instead of allowing a negative image to take hold in the public mind.

When moving again to encourage the roll-out of insulation across the country, it is critical that the government ensures that high standards are in place and enforced and that all installers are trained through properly accredited registered training organisations. Proper audit functions need to be built in at the start of any future programme.

Although the failings in administration and project management of the Energy Efficient Homes Package were serious, and the Greens share the Opposition's frustration with the lack of transparency of the Departments of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the refusal of the relevant Ministers to appear before the Inquiry, we believe that it is premature to call upon the extraordinary powers of a Royal Commission.

What is clear is systemic failure across both the Home Insulation and the Green Loans schemes to act on warnings and identified risks. The Greens believe that the most important cause was a refusal by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to heed repeated warnings about unacceptable levels of risk and their stubborn adherence to an unrealistic timeframe for roll out. Political imperatives relating to the roll out of the stimulus package took precedence over the proper design and implementation of these programmes.

The Greens believe that the Government's administration of the Insulation scheme should not be seen in isolation from the Green Loans Scheme and that both should be the subject of further consideration by the Senate once the Auditor General's reports into both schemes have been released and the Coroner's reports into the deaths of the installers have been completed.

**Senator Christine Milne**  
**Greens Spokesperson on Climate Change and Energy**

