

Home Sustainability Assessment Scheme

Assessor Code of Professional Practice

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1. Definitions

The definitions of key terms are contained in the Glossary available at www.environment.gov.au/greenloans

2. Objectives

2.1 Home Sustainability Assessment Scheme:

- 2.1.1 The Australian Government has established the Home Sustainability Assessment Scheme to improve the standard of advice provided to Households on domestic actions that would lead to a reduced environmental impact (specifically energy, water and greenhouse reductions). The Scheme facilitates Home Sustainability Assessments undertaken by suitably qualified and accredited Assessors.
- 2.1.2 The National Administrator has established a Protocol for Accrediting Organisations to authorise organisations to accredit Assessors who are qualified to undertake Home Sustainability Assessments.

2.2 Assessor Code of Professional Practice:

- 2.2.1 The Assessor Code of Professional Practice defines the principles and standards of professional conduct and competence that Assessors must abide by in conducting Home Sustainability Assessments. Agreement to adhere to the Code is a prerequisite of Accreditation by an Accrediting Organisation. Failure to abide by the Code may lead to suspension and cancellation of Accreditation.
- 2.2.2 The National Administrator may vary this Code from time to time at its absolute discretion. The National Administrator will give prior notice to Accrediting Organisations and Assessors of any such variation.

3. Assessor Documents

3.1 Documentation structure

- 3.1.1 A suite of documents specify the standards of conduct that:
 - a) Assessors must abide by when providing Home Sustainability Assessments.
 - b) Accrediting Organisations must comply with in accrediting persons under the Scheme.
- 3.1.2 This *Assessor Code of Professional Practice* is the principal document that sets out practice requirements for Assessors engaged in the carrying out of Home Sustainability Assessment services.
- 3.1.3 The *Assessor Procedures* sets out procedures for Assessors carrying out Home Sustainability Assessments. The Code must be read in conjunction with the *Assessor Procedures*, and documents referenced therein, which sets out rules for the conduct of Home Sustainability Assessments by Assessors.
- 3.1.4 The *Protocol for Accrediting Organisations* sets out the rules that govern Accreditation of suitably qualified persons for conducting Home Sustainability Assessments. The Protocol for Accrediting Organisations describes the obligations of Accrediting Organisations in providing services for Assessors.

4. Agreement with Accrediting Organisation

4.1 Agreement

- 4.1.1 To gain Accreditation with an Accrediting Organisation, each Assessor must enter into an agreement with the Accrediting Organisation. Such an agreement may include:
- a) the minimum level of qualification and experience required to be eligible for Accreditation;
 - b) obligations to abide by the provisions of this Code and comply with the requirements of the Assessor Procedures Manual;
 - c) the requirement to pay fees;
 - d) requirements to hold and maintain specified levels of insurance;
 - e) requirements to undertake training in respect of privacy obligations;
 - f) requirements to maintain skills, knowledge and competence by complying with the Accrediting Organisation's continuing professional development requirements;
 - g) the requirement to record all Home Sustainability Assessments undertaken and participate in audits;
 - h) terms governing disciplinary proceedings and action that the Accrediting Organisation may undertake;
 - i) terms governing the suspension and / or cancellation of Accreditation; and
 - j) other terms and conditions as determined by the relevant Accrediting Organisation.

5. Communication under the Scheme

5.1 Assessor Contact Details

- 5.1.1 Assessors must ensure their contact details are kept up to date on the Register of Assessors. Assessors can access their records through the responsible Accrediting Organisation.
- 5.1.2 Assessors agree that their contact details on the Register of Assessors may be used by:
- a) the National Administrator and the Accrediting Organisations to communicate information to Assessors, including any notices relating to requirements of, or changes to, the Code;
 - b) members of the public, or other relevant authorities to contact or check the Accreditation status of an Assessor; and
 - c) the National Administrator and Auditors contracted by the National Administrator, to confirm Assessor Accreditation compliance.

5.2 Communication with the National Administrator / Accrediting Organisations

- 5.2.1 The responsible Accrediting Organisation will notify Assessors of any changes to the *Assessor Procedures* and other documents identified in this Code, by email or post, to the address recorded for the Assessor on the Register of Assessors.

- 5.2.2 Communications from Assessors to the National Administrator should be made through the Accrediting Organisation in the first instance.
- 5.2.3 Communications in relation to this Code from Assessors to the Accrediting Organisation, or where appropriate to the National Administrator, must be in the format required and to the address defined in the Assessor Procedures. The National Administrator and Accrediting Organisations contact details for general enquiries may be found on the National Administrator website at www.environment.gov.au/greenloans.

5.3 Assessor Accreditation Number

- 5.3.1 The Assessor's Accreditation Number must be included on:
- All Home Sustainability Assessment certificates and reports; and
 - Other material as reasonably required by the Accrediting Organisation or the National Administrator from time to time.

6. Standards of Professional Performance

6.1 Duties of an Assessor

- 6.1.1 Assessors must:
- conduct Home Sustainability Assessments competently and with integrity in accordance with the terms of this Code and the *Assessor Procedures*;
 - comply with all Accreditation requirements as directed by an Accrediting Organisation;
 - provide objective, accurate and impartial advice to the Household;
 - familiarise themselves, and practise in accordance with, the requirements of applicable building or development laws and regulations; and
 - comply with all reasonable directions and determinations given by the National Administrator and the Accrediting Organisation.

6.2 Professionalism

- 6.2.1 Assessors must act in accordance with required standards of professionalism:
- Timeliness:** Promptness is a priority; Assessors must inform Householders when delays cannot be avoided.
 - Preparation:** Assessors must ensure they are adequately prepared to conduct Home Sustainability Assessments when attending Homes.
 - Thoroughness:** All relevant information for each Home Sustainability Assessment must be collected and lodged using the Assessment Software.
 - Accuracy:** Assessors must be careful to ensure the accuracy of all information collected during the Home Sustainability Assessment, and the accuracy of all statements made to Households.
- 6.2.2 Assessors must not undertake professional responsibilities beyond their competence or authority nor offer services for which they cannot demonstrate the skill, knowledge and/or experience required by any of:
- this Code;
 - applicable local government, State or Federal laws and regulations; and

- c) reasonable industry practice.

If Assessors are unsure of their competence to perform a requested service, they must seek advice and assistance from their Accrediting Organisation.

6.3 Conduct

6.3.1 Assessors must at all times:

- a) provide professional services with competence, fairness and integrity; and
- b) exercise reasonable care and attention in carrying out their duties.

6.3.2. Assessors shall not engage in any conduct that is detrimental to the effective implementation of the Scheme.

6.4 Respect

6.4.1 Assessors shall take pride in always presenting themselves in a professional manner, recognising the values of cleanliness and tidiness.

6.4.2 Assessors shall at all times:

- a) act in a manner that demonstrates respect for Households;
- b) act in a manner that demonstrates respect for the property of others; and
- c) take care to avoid damage to property.

6.4.3 Assessors must demonstrate professional respect and courtesy to fellow Assessors and those involved in the associated industry.

6.4.4 Assessors must respect the views of others that are alternative to their own, especially when engaging with Households.

6.5 Independence

6.5.1 Home Sustainability Assessments must be independent expert assessments free of commercial influence. The Scheme relies on suitably expert assessors conducting comprehensive Home Sustainability Assessments that can be trusted by Households as independent advice on actions to reduce the Household's domestic environmental impact.

6.6 Conflict of Interests

6.6.1 Assessors must not allow any personal or financial interest to affect the conduct of a Home Sustainability Assessment.

6.6.2. Assessors must declare to the Household and any relevant regulatory authority or program funding agency, any interest the Assessor has in relation to a Home Sustainability Assessment, including:

- a) receipt of fees for the provision of professional services related to the assessed Home or in the provision of Home Sustainability Assessments; and
- b) any financial interest in the assessed Home.

6.6.3 Assessors must act impartially at all times. When conducting a Home Sustainability Assessment they must not (unless otherwise approved by the National Administrator in writing):

- a) communicate commercial product or service branding, or
- b) direct Households towards a product range developed or supported by an enterprise with which the Assessor is associated or from whom the Assessor receives a commission or other benefit.

6.7 Privacy of information

- 6.7.1 The collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information is subject to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).
- 6.7.2 Assessors shall not disclose information related to a Home Sustainability Assessment, without the express written permission of the Householder or the Householder's agent, to parties other than to:
- a) a member of the Household or his or her agent;
 - b) relevant regulatory and certifying authorities;
 - c) the Chief Auditor for the purpose of conducting quality assurance procedures and external assessments; and
 - d) the National Administrator or its agent.

6.8 Communication with Households

- 6.8.1 Assessors must communicate with Households to ensure that they:
- a) understand the fees, purpose, process and outcome of a Home Sustainability Assessment; and
 - b) understand the relative cost, performance change and other implications of any recommended action.
- 6.8.2 In the provision of Home Sustainability Assessment services for persons of non-English speaking backgrounds the Assessor must follow any specific requirements set out in the *Assessor Procedures*.

7. Quality Assurance

7.1 Auditing

- 7.1.1 The National Administrator, the Chief Auditor or persons authorised by the National Administrator may audit Home Sustainability Assessment services conducted by Assessors to ensure compliance with this Code and the *Assessor Procedures*.
- 7.1.2 The failure of the Assessor to appropriately participate in an audit will result in the referral of the Assessor to the Accrediting Organisation for consideration of disciplinary action.

7.2 Records

- 7.2.1 Assessors must maintain records of Home Sustainability Assessments conducted, for the period, and in accordance with the requirements, defined in the *Assessor Procedures*.