



Green Moves Australia

By Alistair McCaskill

No greenwash

Green Moves Australia founder Danie King is passionate about two things: promoting sustainable homes and supporting the independent assessors who deliver the Green Moves range of services. Both homes and assessors need to pass one critical hurdle in order to gain Danie's attention: no greenwash.

"I admit it, I'm very choosy," she says. "Our assessors need to be passionate about sustainability and know what they are doing." The same high standards are applied when deciding which real estate agents, building designers and builders will be granted space on her website.

Smaller footprints

Green Moves offers a range of services to home owners, buyers, sellers, renters and landlords. Pre-purchase reports examine heating and cooling systems, energy efficiency, water efficiency and the relationship between the house and its garden. They alert home buyers to the likely energy and water consumption of a property and provide recommendations for remedial actions to reduce the environmental footprint of the home. A variety of services are available to existing home owners, landlords and renters that provide advice on how to most cost-effectively reduce energy and water demand. "Even landlords are now recognising that efficient homes with low running costs rent more easily and have a lower tenant turnover than other properties," observes Danie.

Location! Location?

The other significant part of the business is the Green Property List of homes for sale or rent. All listed properties offer multiple sustainable features. "When we opened the doors in 2010 I expected our range of services would generate about the same revenue as property listings," says Danie. "As it has turned out, the listings side of the business has done much better." This may be because the value of sustainable homes is starting to be recognised. In the USA highly sustainable homes sell at premiums of 10% above the prices obtained for less energy efficient homes, and they sell 25% faster. This is starting to happen in Australia in some areas. So sellers see a benefit in promoting the green credentials. The growing network of real estate agents affiliated with Green Moves also appreciate that sustainability helps to sell. Danie points out that it isn't just a matter of being "green". Well-designed, energy-efficient homes save money and are both more comfortable and healthier to live in.

Danie's view is that energy efficiency is unlikely to be the number one reason why someone buys a particular house, but it will soon be the second or third priority. "Many people choose their car on the basis of fuel economy, smart home buyers are now doing the same."

Support for independent operators

Green Moves is structured to minimise resource use whilst delivering high quality service. Danie and her “silent” business partner support a network of independent assessors. With everyone working from home they avoid the consumption of resources that are associated with occupying offices. Danie ensures each assessor is properly qualified, has the appropriate insurance and shares her passion for service and the environment. “The quality of our people is critical to our future success,” she says.

Assessors deliver the full range of Green Moves’ services, but are not restricted to them and retain the freedom to offer their own complimentary services. In most cases assessors retain the full fee they earn. The exception is property listing. A proportion of Green Moves’ revenue comes from a share of the fees charged for inspecting, rating and listing properties for sale or rent.

Classroom inspiration

Although most of her career has been spent in IT management, Danie has always been interested in property and sustainability. “I opted for a ‘green change’ from the corporate world and was doing a course on sustainability,” says Danie. “I was wondering how to merge it with my interest in property and that was when the idea of Green Moves occurred to me.”

Danie takes a hands-on approach to the business, and personally delivers all of Green Moves’ services in her area. She also conducts training sessions and seminars, and is developing a range of educational materials that will soon be added to the website.

Asked if she has any regrets or thoughts on how she could have done things differently, Danie is upbeat. “No regrets at all,” she says. “It was definitely a good move and with the growing need for more efficient homes, it’s something I should have done earlier.”

<http://greenmoves.com.au/>