



# Building Newsflash

## Mandatory sustainable housing measures – 2006

### Purpose

To provide details of new measures starting from 1 March 2006 requiring that all new homes include sustainable housing measures to reduce water and energy use.

### Background

On 8 December 2004 the Queensland Government released the Discussion Paper *Towards Sustainable Housing in Queensland*. The paper outlined a process for making new housing more sustainable and proposed six measures to improve energy and water efficiency. Following overwhelming community support, the Government has decided to implement these measures. These measures are expected to reduce energy use in new houses by 33 percent and reduce water use by up to 36 percent.

### Legislation

From 1 March 2006, under changes to the *Standard Building Regulations 1993* (SBR), applications for new home approvals must include:

- greenhouse-efficient hot water systems (i.e. solar, gas or electric heat pump water heaters);
- energy-efficient lighting (i.e. fluorescent or compact fluorescent lights to be used to illuminate at least 40% of internal floor space);
- AAA-rated shower roses in reticulated town water areas (AAA shower roses use a maximum of 9 litres of water per minute compared to 15 to 25 litres for standard shower roses);
- dual-flush toilets (6 litre full flush/3 litre half flush); and
- water pressure-limiting devices to restrict maximum water pressure to no more than 500 kilopascals (only required where the water pressure at the house exceeds 500 kilopascals).

New units and townhouses will also be required to provide water-saving shower heads, dual-flush toilets, and energy efficient lighting. Bathroom renovations in both units and houses will require water-saving shower heads and dual flush toilets.

The SBR will call up two new standards in the *Queensland Development Code* (QDC), namely the sustainable building standard, which addresses the above measures, and the model rainwater tank standard.

Building certifiers will administer the new requirements as part of the building approval process. In relation to the installation of plumbing items such as water heaters, dual flush toilets and water pressure limiting devices, plumbing approval is also required under current plumbing regulations.

Requirements for rainwater tanks will only apply in those areas where individual councils choose to apply the model rainwater tank standard. The areas where the standard applies are to be identified in council planning schemes and may include all or part of a local government area.

Where rainwater tanks are required, local governments are to specify whether they are plumbed for use outside of the house only, or plumbed to toilets and washing machines as well as for outside use. Local governments may also specify the minimum size requirement for rainwater tanks or choose to use default sizes specified in the model code.

Copies of the sustainable building standard and the rainwater tank standard can be downloaded from [www.lgp.qld.gov.au/?id=247](http://www.lgp.qld.gov.au/?id=247). The Department will also prepare guidelines to assist councils in deciding whether to require rainwater tanks in their area.

### Contact Officer

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