

Water savings targets for new homes

Queensland has responded well to the water conservation challenge. As the drought continues, the Queensland Government is working hard to develop new measures to help conserve our precious water resources.

In an effort to reduce demand on reticulated town water supplies, the Government has introduced mandatory water-savings targets that will apply to building development applications lodged for the construction of new houses in South East Queensland from 1 January 2007, and will be rolled out statewide on 1 July 2007.

The targets can be achieved through a number of options including:

- ✓ household rainwater tanks;
- ✓ dual reticulation;
- ✓ communal rainwater tanks; or
- ✓ stormwater reuse.

Where rainwater tanks are used to meet the water savings targets, councils have the freedom to adopt the minimum requirements set out in Part 25 of the Queensland Development Code, or specify an increased minimum in local government documents for storage capacities, roof catchment areas or other household fixture connections.

Rainwater tanks:

When a rainwater tank is used to meet the new targets, it is important to follow the minimum capacity and connection standards specified for tank installation. These are:

- ✓ single detached houses must install a minimum 5000-litre rainwater tank;
- ✓ non-detached houses, such as terrace houses and townhouses, must install a minimum 3000-litre rainwater tank;
- ✓ all rainwater tanks must receive rainfall from a least half of the roof catchment area or 100m²,

whichever is lesser;

- ✓ provisions must be made during installation for tanks to be connected for external use and internal use for toilet cisterns and washing machine cold water taps; and
- ✓ internal fixtures supplied from a rainwater tank must have a continuous supply of water, which may be achieved by an automatic switching device or a trickle top up system.

Voluntary installation:

Existing houses within South East Queensland where the building development application was lodged prior to 1 January 2007 are not required to install tanks on their properties, but are encouraged to consider voluntary installation. Water conservation is an important issue for all Queenslanders.

Existing households can apply for a rebate of up to \$1000 towards the purchase and installation of a rainwater tank under the Queensland Government's Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme. Rebates may also be available from your local council.

Local water restrictions:

Rainwater tanks not only catch valuable water for use around the home but also reduce demand on reticulated water supplies. If however, your tank is empty and you fill it with water from town water supplies, either directly or by water carrier, you must comply with water restrictions set by your local council.

If your tank is connected to the town water supply and does not have a by-pass valve, outside water use must still comply with local water restrictions. Please contact your local council for more information.

Tank maintenance:

Regular maintenance of rainwater tanks is important and helps to ensure good quality water that is safe for use around the home. Homeowners can help keep their tanks healthy by:

Activity	Interval
Check and clean mosquito net on tank overflow outlet.	Oct–March every month April–Sept - every 3 months
Clean first flush device.	3 months
Check water quality – must be clear with no smell.	6 months
Check and clean gutters and roof catchments (consider installing gutter screens or guards).	3 months
Check roof flashings for defects and repairs, and remove any overhanging branches.	6 months
Check tank for defects, cracks, leaking taps and pump noise/leaks.	6 months
Ensure taps have correct signage installed.	6 months
Check tanks for sludge and clean if there is a thick layer of sludge at the bottom.	2 years

More information:

- www.lgp.qld.gov.au
- phone: (07) 3239 6369
- email: buildingcodes@dlgprs.qld.gov.au



Queensland Government
Department of Local Government, Planning,
Sport and Recreation

For more
information:

Call Building Codes
Queensland on:

(07) 3239 6369

Water savings targets
for new homes

