



# Building Newsflash

## Changes to the Queensland Development Code (QDC) Part 25 Water savings targets

### Purpose

The purpose of this newsflash is to advise of amendments to Part 25 of the QDC requiring new houses to meet water savings targets.

### Background

Water saving targets will apply to applications lodged for the construction of new houses in the 24 councils using South East Queensland water reserves from 1 January 2007 and to new houses in the remainder of Queensland councils from 1 July 2007.

The amended Part 25 of the QDC replaces the existing Part 25 of the QDC from 1 January 2007 and requires Class 1 buildings connected to reticulated water supplies to meet water savings targets. Acceptable solutions for meeting the targets include the installation of rainwater tanks or use of dual reticulation, communal rainwater tanks and stormwater reuse measures.

### Legislation

*Building Act 1975*

*Building Regulation 2006*

### Interpretation

The water savings targets are set by local council area. Targeted levels of water savings are grouped in seven bands to simplify their application. Appendix B, Part 25 of the QDC lists council areas under the bands and provides one target for each band. Water savings targets will apply to all approvals for new Class 1 buildings connected to reticulated water supplies. Compliance options include use of water source options such as -

- a rainwater tank;
- dual reticulation;
- communal rainwater tanks; or
- stormwater reuse systems that can be used to meet the water savings targets.

Under section 7 of the *Building Regulation 2006* councils can set higher water savings targets than specified in the QDC.

Where a rainwater tank is used to meet the targets, the requirements are -

- single detached houses must install a rainwater tank with a minimum 5000L capacity;
- other Class 1 houses, such as terrace houses and townhouses, must install a rainwater tank with a minimum 3000L capacity;
- rainwater tanks must receive rainfall from at least one half of the roof catchment area or 100m<sup>2</sup>, whichever is the lesser;

- rainwater tanks must supply water for external use and internal use to toilet cisterns and washing machine cold water taps; and
- internal fixtures (toilet cisterns and washing machine cold water taps) supplied from a rainwater tank must have a continuous supply of water by using an automatic switching device or a trickle top up system.

Homeowners can achieve water savings higher than those stated in the QDC, for example, by plumbing rainwater tanks to internal functions that are additional to those required in the QDC, providing council requirements are met. Homeowners may also install larger tanks or use larger roof catchment areas.

### **Council options**

Councils may specify alternative water substitution measures in local planning instruments. This may include any one of or a combination of, dual reticulation, communal rainwater tanks, stormwater reuse and rainwater tanks or other alternatives.

Where rainwater tanks are used to meet the water savings targets, councils can adopt the minimum -

- rainwater tank storage capacities set out in Part 25 of the QDC or specify increased minimum storage capacities in a local planning instrument;
- roof catchment area set out in Part 25 of the QDC or specify increased minimum roof catchment areas in a local planning instrument; and
- requirements regarding connected household fixtures set out in Part 25 of the QDC or specify other household fixture connections in a local planning instrument.

### **Exemption conditions**

Councils may apply to the Minister for an exemption from water savings targets for all or part of their area where viable water savings options are not found or there is an assured future water supply. Exemptions may also be granted for operational reasons or for a limited time, for example to allow for planned additional water infrastructure to be delivered. The approved form 'Application for an exemption – QDC Part 25 Water Savings Targets' is available on the Department's website at [www.lgp.qld.gov.au](http://www.lgp.qld.gov.au).

Council areas or parts of areas exempted from complying with the water savings targets will be listed on the Department's website [www.lgp.qld.gov.au](http://www.lgp.qld.gov.au).

### **Siting requirements**

Unless a council has alternative siting provisions for rainwater tanks in its planning scheme, Parts 11 or 12 of the QDC require tanks more than 2.4m high (including any supporting structure such as a stand) to be setback at least 1.5m from a side or rear boundary. Tanks no more than 2.4m in height are permitted within these boundary setbacks. Tanks generally must also be at least 6m from the road boundary. Councils can however relax these requirements.

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) currently requires tanks to be located no closer than 450mm to a side or rear boundary. (Proposed changes to the BCA, due for commencement on 1 May 2007 will allow non combustible tanks to be located closer than 450mm to the boundary).

## Contact

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