



Building Newsflash

RAINWATER TANKS

Purpose

To provide advice on the rainwater tank requirements to be implemented on 1 March 2006.

Background

On 8 December 2004 the Queensland Government released the Discussion Paper *Towards Sustainable Housing in Queensland*, which proposed measures to improve energy and water efficiency in new housing. These measures included the development of a model code for rainwater tanks.

Legislation

From 1 March 2006, the *Standard Building Regulations 1993* (SBR) will reference a model rainwater tank standard under Part 25 (Rainwater Tanks) of the *Queensland Development Code* (QDC). The standard will come into affect where called up in council planning instrument.

Interpretation

Rainwater tanks will only be required in those areas where a local government calls up the model code in a planning instrument. The requirements may apply to all or part of the local government area, as specified in the planning instrument.

The model code only applies to Class 1 buildings (attached or detached houses). It over-rides any pre-existing local government rainwater tank requirements for Class 1 buildings in areas provided with reticulated mains water after a 6 month transition period. Other classes of building fall outside the scope of the standard. Any local government requirements for rainwater tanks for other classes of building or for tanks in areas not served by reticulated mains water are not affected by the model code.

Size of the rainwater tank

The minimum size of the rainwater tank will be specified by the local government in its planning instrument or, if not specified, the default minimum size specified in Part 25 of the QDC will apply.

Where water from the rainwater tank is used

The local government will specify in its planning instrument whether the minimum requirement for water from the rainwater tank is to be used either:

- a) external to the house (e.g., for gardens, lawns, swimming pools and car washing); or
- b) internal and external uses (e.g., in addition to the above, for water closet (WC) flushing and the cold water tap for laundry washing machines).

Roles and responsibilities

Local Government

Responsible for:

- Justifying that there is a community benefit in requiring the installation of rainwater tanks.
- Designating rainwater tank areas in its planning instrument.
- Ensuring that planning maps show each of its designated rainwater tank areas and when the designation was made.
- Determining whether the tank is to be used externally only or both externally and internally for toilet flushing and connection to cold water washing machine taps.
- Assessing applications against the performance criteria of Part 25 of the QDC if an alternative solution or alternative acceptable solution is proposed.

Private certifier

Responsible for:

- Determining if a rainwater tank area has been designated in a local government's planning instrument.
- Ensuring that a building development application for building work in a designated area contains details of the proposed rainwater tank installation.
- Assessing a development application against the acceptable solutions of Parts 11 or 12 (Siting Requirements) and Part 25 (Rainwater tanks for Houses) of the Queensland Development Code.
- If an alternative solution to Part 25 is proposed, ensuring that a development application for building work is not decided until the local government has made a decision about the alternative solution.

Builder

Responsible for ensuring:

- Where the tank is required under a planning instrument, the rainwater tank is installed and in the location shown on the approved development permit.
- That the tank is connected to fixtures and fittings nominated in the local government's planning instrument designation and in accordance with relevant standards.
- That the construction of the rainwater tank complies with the Building Code of Australia (for example, any structure supporting the stand must be structurally adequate) and appropriate Australian Standards.

Owner

Responsible for ensuring that the rainwater tank is maintained in good operational condition and that it continues to be connected to the services nominated by the local government.

Approval requirements

Plumbing (refer AS3500)

For the connections of a water supply from the rainwater tank to the laundry cold water taps and water closets, a plumbing approval is required under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* as this is regulated work. Inspections of the work will also need to be undertaken by the plumbing inspector to ensure that all work complies with the *Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003*.

Building

For all new building work (excluding alterations and additions) in designated rainwater tank areas involving the construction of a Class 1 building, the installation of the rainwater tank is assessable development which requires building approval. Details of the tank installation must accompany the development application for the house. Sufficient detail should be included to show that the tank will satisfy Part 25 of the Queensland Development Code.

Siting

Rainwater tanks in designated areas must comply with the siting standards of Parts 11 and 12 of the Queensland Development Code.

More Information

A copy of the amendment regulation can be viewed at the following web site:

<http://www.lgp.qld.gov.au/sustainableliving>

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