

# Building and Plumbing Newsflash 513

## Repeal of laws mandating energy efficient hot water systems and water savings (rainwater tanks) laws

### **Purpose**

To advise that laws mandating energy efficient hot water systems, rainwater tanks and other water savings measures will be repealed in 2013.

### **Background**

Reviews of laws requiring the mandatory inclusion of rainwater tanks and energy efficient hot water systems in building and plumbing codes were conducted from April to December 2012 as part of the government's commitments to reduce red tape and improve housing affordability.

#### ***Rainwater tanks***

An independent cost-benefit analysis of rainwater tank and water savings laws (Queensland Development Code mandatory parts 4.2 and 4.3) carried out by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) concluded that the costs associated with mandating rainwater tanks for new houses will generally outweigh the overall benefit to the community.

The QCA analysis recognised the net benefit of compulsory rainwater tanks for new houses will vary depending on the location and the current and future water demand and augmentation needs of these houses. Therefore, the QCA recommended that local governments be able to seek approval to 'opt in' to the laws where they can demonstrate that opting in will result in a net benefit to the community.

#### ***Hot water systems***

Current laws (the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code) mandate the installation of solar, heat pump or gas hot water systems in new houses and in existing houses located in gas reticulation areas when replacing an existing hot water system.

On 14 September 2012, [Newsflash 504](#) advised a review of existing hot water system laws was being undertaken by the government. The Newsflash sought and received public feedback and submissions on the current laws.

### **Repeal of existing laws**

#### ***Rainwater tanks***

Mandatory requirements will be repealed for rainwater tanks and other water savings measures for new houses. Similar requirements for commercial and industrial buildings under Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 4.3 will also be repealed.

Local governments will be able to 'opt-in' to water saving requirements provided they can demonstrate that opting-in will deliver a net benefit to their local community. Amended design, installation and maintenance standards will apply to ensure that rainwater tanks continue to meet health and safety standards.

## **Hot water systems**

Energy efficient hot water system requirements for new and existing houses will also be repealed. Homeowners will now be able to install hot water systems that best suit their budgets and lifestyles.

Further, the proposed national phase-out of electric hot water systems for existing homes will be discontinued in Queensland. The state government also intends to investigate the potential to encourage the connection of electric hot water systems to 'off-peak' tariffs.

## **Implementation**

It is anticipated that the changes to the laws for rainwater tanks and hot water systems will take effect in early 2013. Owners will still need to comply with existing requirements until the changes take effect.

Further advice and information will be distributed via future Newsflashes and published on the department's website at [www.hpw.qld.gov.au](http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au).

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