



Speech by

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WATER TANKS

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (7.05 pm): One of the most important ways to provide additional water in these times of drought or lack of infrastructure is household water tanks. Tonight I want to talk about something that has occurred with regard to the installation of water tanks which I think is quite ridiculous. Just a few years ago it was quite possible for people to have tanks in place and to have a manual system of switching that tank water on or off. The best way to do that is to have two plumbing systems with one connected to the tank water. When that runs out, they can simply turn that off and turn the other one on so they can go on to city water. In that way they can save enormous amounts of water. Because of the expense of the householder putting the tank in, they can benefit because they can access additional water for the modest watering of a garden, washing their car or washing the dog.

However, In January 2006 under Building Codes Queensland and part 25 of the Queensland Development Code a direction was given by the Water Commissioner that people have to have an automatic device. Because people have to have an automatic device put on water tank systems in new houses, that means that they are all caught under the level 5 or level 4 restrictions that apply to that city water. As a result, they get no actual benefit from having the tank in place. They cannot water their garden or pot plants or wash the car even though they have put in a tank. Worse still, if the tank happens to be in the ground, then they have to have an automatic backflush prevention device, which costs about \$400. That has to be checked, and that costs about \$75 or \$80. Then that has to be checked and inspected every year. As well as that, they have to pay an annual licence fee of \$27. I think it has got pretty well out of control and we need common sense to come back into this whole situation.

If we look at the average rainfall of places such as Toowoomba, even during the drought the average house would be able to collect enough water for people to use—that is, one litre per square metre per millimetre of rain would provide for four people at 140 litres per day for almost a whole year. Seventy per cent of water used in houses is for flushing, washing and yard water and it is certified safe water. The previous system of the manual switch-over was cheaper, practical and enabled those people to see very quickly whether they were using council water. It was safer and it rewarded people who of their own initiative put in water tanks, which are a wonderful and great addition to the supplies provided by governments or councils because they mean that everybody in every household can be almost self-sufficient. I call on the government to fix this situation.