



Speech by

# Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 25 March 2010

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Housing, Energy Efficiency Ratings

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.24 am): Today I announce that the government will implement another of its election commitments by increasing the energy efficiency rating for new houses and town houses from five stars to six stars on 1 May this year. This six-star rating will recognise and reward the uniquely green features of Queensland's tropical and subtropical homes. These include the affordable and environmentally friendly features that have been cooling our homes for more than a century, such as suspended timber floors, wide doors and hallways, verandas and outdoor living areas. With the introduction of a six-star equivalent to the Queensland Building Code, these features will be acknowledged and accredited. Importantly, development applications submitted before a new or amended building code begins do not need to comply with the new or amended code. Similarly, building certifiers have a discretion to not apply new or amended codes in cases where the planning of a building was well advanced before the new or amended code began and it would take more than minor changes to make the application comply.

Queensland is growing by around 115,000 people every year. That growth is equal to a city the size of Darwin. That is why there is a real need to protect Queensland's lifestyle and landscape which we know and love. The six-star equivalent will award, for example, one star to outdoor living areas, which will help reduce household energy use and meet the Q2 target to reduce the household carbon footprint by one-third.

Earlier this month I hosted a tropical design forum in Cairns to discuss the six-star standard with industry, academics and local representatives. As the member for Mulgrave can attest, the forum participants overwhelmingly supported the six-star standard, provided it continues to encourage tropical and subtropical design principles and promote innovative solutions. We could not agree more. The six-star standard will recognise and reward Queensland house design features and work with Queensland's unique regions, not against them. We understand that Queensland has a unique climate, which ranges from the tropical north to the subtropical south and beyond the range. We acknowledge the shortfalls of house design requirements that have been developed for southern climates and which are not appropriate for Queensland. That is why we will continue to consult by holding an energy efficiency forum in Toowoomba on 9 April to further discuss the unique design features of our many and varied homes in our regions, including draft amendments to the Queensland Development Code that will introduce those measures. The government is committed to sustainable housing standards for a prosperous and well-planned Queensland.