

Question on Notice
No. 379
Asked on Thursday 9 March 2006

MS STONE asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (MS DESLEY BOYLE)–

QUESTION:

What initiatives has the State Government implemented to encourage environmental design and sustainable housing programs?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has introduced changes to its building laws that will create a more sustainable approach to housing. From March 1 this year, all new home plans approved in the State must have:

- greenhouse-efficient hot water systems;
- energy-efficient lighting;
- AAA-rated shower roses;
- dual-flush toilets; and
- water-pressure limiting devices.

These requirements are already having a positive impact, driving changes in the building industry and improving energy efficiency beyond what is required by the regulations. A major lighting company has informed my Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation that its customers are requesting their house designs include 80% energy-efficient lighting. This is double the minimum requirement set out in the building regulations.

In addition to the five key sustainability measures, there are two complementary measures that will be introduced on a council-by-council basis. The first of these relates to ‘greywater’ – household wastewater from baths, showers, hand basins and laundries. New State legislation allows homeowners in sewered areas to apply to their local council for permission to install greywater systems to water their lawns and gardens. About 50% of total household water use is typically expended in the garden, so using greywater irrigation is a good way to conserve potable water.

The second measure allows councils to require rainwater tanks to be installed in designated areas. It has been estimated that by using water from a rainwater tank for gardens and in toilets and laundries, additional water saving upward of 100,000 litres a year for each house is possible.