

Question on Notice
No. 751
Asked on Thursday 11 May 2006

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

QUESTION:

Will she advise how the new grey water usage regulations will operate and what benefits it can bring?

ANSWER:

The amendments made to the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* that commenced on 1 March 2006 permit the use of greywater from the bath, shower, washbasin and laundry in sewered areas for watering lawns and gardens.

All Queensland residents can now manually bucket their greywater to lawns and gardens. However more complex greywater irrigation systems require council approval prior to installation and a licensed plumber must perform the installation.

Additionally, greywater diversion devices and treatment plants which form part of the greywater system must also have chief executive approval before they can be legally installed.

To reduce potential health risks associated with the use of greywater, the legislation requires that all greywater systems disperse the water via a subsurface irrigation system.

To further support the safe use of greywater, the new legislation gives councils the right to opt out of accepting greywater system applications in their area if it is inappropriate for their circumstances. For example, some councils have opted out of accepting greywater system applications because the soil types in their area are not capable of absorbing the greywater effectively, or because they have alternative water conservation plans, or because they have sufficient rainfall in their area. It is encouraging that, so far, 42 councils will accept greywater system applications.

Guidelines have been developed and distributed by the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation to support councils, plumbers and homeowners in understanding the greywater legislation.

A greywater system is essentially a garden watering system and because Queenslanders use approximately 35 to 50 per cent of their potable water on their lawns and gardens, using greywater can save more than 100,000 litres of potable water per year in an average house.

The Livingstone Shire Council Mayor, Bill Ludwig said the State Government's greywater legislation is a perfect fit with his council's water smart planning. Educating the community on the smart reuse of water is a major focus for the Livingstone Shire Council.