

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 85

asked on Wednesday, 13 February 2008

MRS MENKENS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the changes to the Home Waterwise Rebate Scheme announced on 13 December 2007 and implemented on 1 February 2008—

- (1) How much money will the changes save the State Government (reported separately by individual rebate scheme)?
- (2) How many people will be deemed ineligible to apply for the water tank rebate due to the changes that states “Owners and tenants of residential properties where mains water is not available are not eligible to claim a rebate for an internally plumbed rainwater tank.”?
- (3) Why has the department's policy changed so that rural areas that are not on mains water are ineligible for water tank rebates?

ANSWER:

- (1) It is no secret that the Opposition have never believed in the benefits of the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme, unlike the majority of the State's population. When the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme commenced in July 2006, it was a \$29 million program over 3 years. It is now a \$306 million program. Unless the Member has some secret way of making \$306 million equal less than \$29 million, it is unrealistic to claim that Queensland taxpayers will save money with this change.
- (2) It is impossible to tell how many people will not apply for a rebate. The scheme only supplies figures on actual applications.
- (3) The changes to the rainwater tank element of the Scheme seeks to gain increased savings of reticulated water by providing an incentive for the internal plumbing of rainwater tanks on or after 1 February 2008. The Department's policy recognises that those residents without access to a reticulated mains water supply will already have an internally plumbed alternate water supply for their residential use.

In addition, many local governments' building regulations require that a new residence built in a non-reticulated area must be provided with an alternate water supply. The terms and conditions of the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme clearly state that a rebate will not be paid

where the provision and internal connection of rainwater tanks and other water savings devices are mandated under either State or local government building codes or approvals.