

Building and plumbing newsflash

Sustainable housing policy commences through revised codes QDC MP4.1 and the QPWC, and specified *Integrated Planning Regulation 1998* assessment timeframes are amended

Purpose

To advise that amendments to Queensland Development Code (QDC) MP4.1—Sustainable Buildings, the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code (QPW Code) and the *Integrated Planning Regulation 1998* have been approved, and to confirm the associated commencement dates.

Background

On 15 June 2008, the Queensland Government released the *Improving sustainable housing in Queensland* discussion paper (see [Newsflash 320](#)). Community and industry were consulted on the discussion paper over a three month period (June–September 2008). A total of 286 responses were received and a very high level of support was shown for the majority of the measures.

On 14 December 2008, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland, released a media statement advising that the Queensland Government had approved the implementation of a range of measures outlined in the discussion paper (see [Newsflash 344](#)).

Some of these sustainable housing measures will be implemented through amendments to the QDC MP4.1 and the QPW Code which were approved under the *Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2009*. The amended codes are available on the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP) website at www.dip.qld.gov.au. Commencement dates vary between measures and they are outlined below.

Queensland Development Code MP4.1—Sustainable Buildings

From **1 March 2009** amendments to the existing QDC MP4.1 will require new class 1 and class 2 dwellings to have:

- 4-star Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme rated toilets (previously 3-star WELS rated). **Note:** The water efficiency requirements (except tapware) also apply to the retrofitting of existing in homes where renovations involve both a building development approval and plumbing application.
- 80 per cent of all fixed internal lighting to be energy efficient (previously 40 per cent of gross floor area, including garage). **Note:** The lighting requirements only apply to new building work, such as new homes or additions to existing homes.



The following additional energy and water saving measures have been added to QDC MP4.1 and will also commence from **1 March 2009 (unless otherwise indicated)**:

- Minimum 5-star (out of 10) energy equivalent rating for new class 1 buildings, using the methodologies prescribed in the Building Code of Australia (BCA) 2008.
- An optional credit of 0.5 or 1-star will be available for class 1 buildings in climate zones 1 and 2 (as outlined in the BCA) that have an outdoor living area that meets certain specifications.
- Minimum 3-star WELS rated tapware for kitchen sinks, basins and laundry troughs.
- Minimum 2.9 Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) (equivalent to a current 4-star energy rating) for air-conditioners permanently attached to fixed wiring in class 1 and class 2 buildings (where new and replacement systems are installed) from **1 July 2009**.

From **1 March 2009** licensed plumbers must install 4-star WELS rated toilets and 3-star WELS rated tapware for kitchen sinks, basins and laundry troughs in new class 1 and class 2 buildings. For any major renovation work that involves both a building development approval and a plumbing application, the retrofit of existing toilets with 4-star rated toilets is required. The retrofitting of existing taps is not part of this new requirement.

Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code

The QPW Code has two new parts: Part 7—New and replacement electric hot water systems and Part 8—Water conservation for class 1 and class 2 buildings.

Part 7—New and replacement electric hot water systems

The QPW Code has been amended to set installation requirements for the replacement of electric resistive hot water systems in existing houses (class 1 buildings) located within a gas-reticulated area. This amendment commences on **1 January 2010**. Existing systems that need replacement must be replaced with a system that has a low greenhouse gas emissions impact (i.e. gas, solar or heat pump system) from **1 January 2010**.

Current requirements in QDC MP4.1 for the installation of gas, solar or heat pump hot water systems in new class 1 buildings have also been placed in the amended QPW Code. These requirements will take effect through the QPW Code rather than through QDC MP4.1 from **1 March 2009**.

Part 8—Water conservation for class 1 and class 2 buildings

A new part of the QPW Code has been included to set requirements from **1 March 2009** for the installation of efficient irrigation systems. The new requirements will also apply to replacement work.

Integrated Planning Regulation 1998

The amendment of the *Integrated Planning Regulation 1998* will commence on **1 March 2009** and will increase the assessment period for a local government from 5 to 10 days for:

- building work to demolish or remove any building or structure or rebuild, after removal, any building or structure; and

- building assessment work for a single detached class 1 building or a class 10 building.

Local governments will have a further 5 days to prepare assessments. This is expected to decrease the number of applications that are refused due to the assessment period lapsing.

Legislation

- *Building Act 1975*
- *Building Regulation 2006*
- *Integrated Planning Act 1997*
- *Integrated Planning Regulation 1998*
- *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002*
- *Queensland Development Code (QDC)*
- *Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code (QPW Code)*
- *Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003*

Contact for further information

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