

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 532

Rainwater tanks approved for Toowoomba Regional Council area

Purpose

To advise that Toowoomba Regional Council has been approved to opt-in to the Queensland Development Codes (QDC) for rainwater tanks.

Effectively, from 1 September 2014 a rainwater tank or other supplementary water supply systems will be required in the Toowoomba Regional Council area when a building development application is submitted for some new commercial buildings and for a new single detached house on a lot over 250 square metres.

Background

Since 1 February 2013, local governments have been able to mandate the installation of rainwater tanks where they can demonstrate that to do so will provide a net benefit to their local community. This supports local governments to tailor water supply measures suitable to their local conditions.

Toowoomba Regional Council applied to opt-in to the QDC and requested variations to the requirements for new houses and new commercial buildings.

The Minister has approved Toowoomba Regional Council application to opt-in to QDC Part 4.2–Rainwater tanks and other supplementary water supply systems (QDC 4.2 for residential buildings) and Part 4.3–Supplementary water sources (QDC 4.3 for commercial buildings).

Application

Houses and buildings in the Toowoomba area

From 1 September 2014, QDC 4.2 and QDC 4.3 will apply to building development applications for certain new buildings in the Toowoomba Regional Council area, as follows:

New houses

The QDC 4.2 requirements will only apply to new single detached houses (class 1a(i) buildings) on properties over 250 square metres in lot area. Houses on small lots will be excluded from requiring a rainwater tank.

The requirements will also not apply to other new class 1 buildings. Therefore attached dwellings such as townhouses and villa units (class 1a(ii) buildings), and guest houses and boarding houses (class 1b buildings), will not be required to install rainwater tanks.

New commercial buildings

The QDC 4.3 requirements will apply to new commercial buildings, but only for classes 5 to 9 (not classes 3 and 4). For instance, new motels and school dorm accommodation (class 3 buildings) and residences above a shop or an office (class 4 buildings), will not be required to install rainwater tanks.

All other applicable performance requirements of QDC 4.2 and QDC 4.3 will apply with the installation of rainwater tanks or other supplementary water supply systems for new houses and commercial buildings.

Installation requirements

Where a rainwater tank is to be installed with a new single detached house, it will be required to have:

- a minimum 5000 litre tank size
- a minimum roof catchment area
- internal plumbing connections to supply water to toilets and washing machine, and
- a continuous supply of water, using either an automatic switching device or trickle top-up.

Planning and siting requirements

Inclusion of a rainwater tank on the property may also be subject to local government planning requirements for siting and boundary setbacks to correctly locate the rainwater tank on the property. For more information about planning and siting requirements for rainwater tanks or other supplementary water systems contact Toowoomba Regional Council.

Building and plumbing approvals

Where a rainwater tank or other supplementary water supply system is included with a new house or commercial building, it will be assessed as part of the building and plumbing approvals.

More information

The current versions of QDC 4.2 and QDC 4.3 are available on the department's website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au.

Contact for further information

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