

Building newsflash number 421

Changes to building energy efficiency requirements from 1 May 2010

Purpose

To advise that Queensland is adopting of new energy efficiency requirements for buildings from 1 May 2010, including a 6-star energy equivalence requirement for new homes.

Background

On 2 March 2009, the Queensland Government announced as part of its Cleaner, Greener Buildings election commitment to require new houses and major renovations to meet a 6 star energy efficiency standard by the end of 2010.

On 30 April 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced to increase the energy efficiency requirements for new residential buildings to six stars nationally in the 2010 update of the Building Code of Australia (BCA), and to increase the stringency of energy efficiency requirements for all classes of commercial buildings.

On 25 March 2010, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe, announced Queensland will be adopting the 6-star energy equivalent housing standard from 1 May 2010.

Legislation

Building Act 1975
Building Code of Australia
Building Regulation 2006
Queensland Development Code (QDC) Mandatory Part 4.1

Interpretation

Development and building applications approved on or after 1 May 2010 must comply with the new 6-star standard set in the Queensland Development Code (QDC) and BCA. Applications approved before 1 May 2010 must comply with the QDC and BCA versions currently in place. To assist with transitioning new building requirements, under section 37 of the *Building Act 1975* building certifiers have discretion not to apply new or amended provisions in cases where the planning of a building is well advanced before this date and it would take more than minor changes to make the application comply.

Building Code of Australia 2010—Volume one
From 1 May 2010, all new commercial buildings (classes 3 to 9) will be required to comply with Section J of the BCA 2010 for energy equivalence. This requirement will also apply to new work done on existing buildings, such as additions and alterations.

The QDC requirement for all new units (class 2 buildings) and major renovations to achieve a minimum 5-star energy equivalence rating remains unchanged with the commencement of the BCA 2010.



Building Code of Australia 2010—Volume two

From 1 May 2010, all new houses and townhouses (class 1 buildings) and enclosed garages (class 10a buildings) attached to class 1 buildings will be required to achieve a minimum 6-star energy equivalence rating. This requirement will also apply to new work done on existing buildings, such as additions, alterations and re-locations.

Following on from the tropical design forum in Cairns on 2 March 2010, Queensland specific matters for energy efficient lighting, hot water systems and suspended flooring are intended to be included in the QDC—Sustainable buildings before 1 May 2010. A draft QDC will be made available on the department's website in coming days.

Optional credits

For designers using the software assessment method, the QDC will continue to provide optional credits for outdoor living areas of up to 1 star (where an outdoor living area meets minimum design specifications). It is proposed to extend the availability of OLA to climate zones 3 and 5. A new 1-star credit option is also proposed to be made available for houses or townhouses that install a solar photovoltaic system with a minimum of 1 kilowatt capacity.

Toowoomba energy efficiency forum

An energy efficiency forum will be held on 9 April 2010 in Toowoomba to discuss the draft QDC and a proposed guide on regional design features. The forum will be held at the Highfields Cultural Centre O'Brien Road, Highfields from 10 am–1.30 pm. Please contact Building Codes Queensland if you would like to attend.

Contact for further information

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