



Rainwater storage benefits

AUSTRALIA is a dry country with a high per capita water use.

A growing population with increasing demand on existing infrastructure has created water shortages in many parts of the country, including Cairns.

The collection and use of rainwater from house roofs in new and existing urban developments can significantly reduce mains water consumption where this water is used for non-human consumption.

This reduces the demand on existing supply and infrastructure and can greatly assist with reduced storm water run-off.

The water used for human consumption, which is required to be of higher quality, is reported to represent less than five per cent of all water supplied to residential properties.

In Queensland, like many other Australian states, it is now a mandatory requirement to install a 5000 litre rainwater tank to capture and store water for toilet, laundry and garden use in all new homes. A \$500 government rebate is also available to install a tank for an existing home.

A rainwater tank, when used with a pump and automatic mains back-up facility, ensures a priority is given to the use of rainwater to the approved appliance.

When the tank is empty or a power failure is experienced, an automatic switching back to mains water will occur. This maintains a constant supply of water for all approved uses.

For further information and to obtain a one page guide for retrofitting rainwater tanks in cyclonic areas, including council permits, contact Emma Thirkell from the Tropical Green Building Network on 4053 1274 or go to <http://www.greenbuild.com.au/forum/> to download the guide.



The network's charter is to identify, develop and action projects that will have a measurable impact on the uptake of sustainable building practices in Far North Queensland.

The network meets on the first Wednesday night of every month at the Cairns City Library from 5.30pm-7.30pm.

Greening your home delivers future gains

INVESTING your \$900 economic stimulus payment in the "greening" of your home can significantly add to its value, according to Andrew Barrett of Queensland Energy Ratings and Australian Sustainability Solutions.

"New regulations being enforced in 2010 will mean all houses for sale and rent will have to be advertised with their star rating," Andrew said.

"Research in Victoria and the ACT, where these regulations are already in place, shows that each star adds approximately \$15,000 to the value of your home."

Andrew said that instead of putting the money into the mortgage, it would be wiser to install insulation or a new hot water system now, while government rebates of up to \$1600 are available.

"This is a golden opportunity to future-proof your home and to do something for the economy," Andrew said.

"Using your stimulus can mean that

you have these benefits with little or no out-of-pocket expense – not to mention the added savings in power bills and improved thermal comfort in your home."

Landlords and their tenants can also benefit from a \$1000 rebate.

"Ask your landlord if they can install a solar hot water system or insulation in your roof; it is beneficial for them, as well as reducing your electricity bills," Andrew said.

There are also other rebates and soon "Green Loans" which are expected to be either interest free or low interest loans, will be available.

Queensland Energy Ratings and Australian Sustainability Solutions can advise you on these and also handle the installations.

■ For more information, contact Queensland Energy Ratings and Australian Sustainability Solutions on 4038 3558, email energyrate@bigpond.com or visit www.qldenergyratings.com.au online.

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ADVERTISEMENT

The \$8000 rebate to install solar power for your home ends in only four weeks.

The Federal government has offered the \$8000 rebate for a 1kW Photovoltaic Grid Connect system to provide solar power for your home. The rebate is in huge demand and NQ Solar are installing systems everyday in Cairns. We have had many satisfied clients.

Richard from Whitfield reported that his electricity bill is now only 70 cents after the installation of a 1kW Grid Connect system.

Craig from Mareeba comments on NQ Solar's service; "I have been impressed by the quality and efficiency of you and your staff. Professional, reliable, honest and prompt, thank you".

Bob from East Barron said; "Your men did a great job with the solar power set up, not only technically, but they worked very hard and

were very obliging and pleasant. It is a great feeling to watch the display as it generates power. Thanks again and did I mention that it is great to deal with such a professional firm, who simplify the paperwork."

You can submit your application for the \$8000 with no commitment or deposit to NQ Solar and you have nine months to install a system.

Customers are reporting 70 - 80% savings on their power bill, a saving for many years to come.

This rebate is a once

off opportunity and should not be missed, so if you have not submitted an application for the \$8000 solar rebate, contact NQ Solar today.

NQ Solar will be exhibiting at Cairns Central Shopping Centre as a local exhibit for the Climate Smart Road Show from Tuesday 26 May to Saturday 30 May 2009. Hope to see you there.

