

Can we 'Design Out' Air-Conditioning that is visually offensive and energy guzzling?

Control currently through planning scheme and EPA regulation

Planning Controls:

See: Controls in development assessment: File note

EPA regulation:

- Cairns Regional Council enforces residential and commercial noise problems
- Cairns Regional Council has recently been given responsibility for commercial and industrial regulation enforcement from the EPA.
- EPA regulations and offences relating to noise standards:
 - 10pm to 7am 3 DB above ambient background noise
 - 7am to 10pm 5 DB above ambient background noise
- Non-compliance penalties = fine plus cost of compliance
- Compliance generally requires installation of new quieter and more energy efficient systems and, or re-location of the system.
- Can we bring about an increased level of control?

Past Practice - House



Past Practice - House



Present Poor Practice - House



Present Poor Practice - House



Present Poor Practice - House



Present Good Practice - House



Present Good Practice - House



Present Poor Practice – Multi-Units cnr. Martyn and Gatton



Present Poor Practice – Multi-unit dwellings



Present Poor Practice – Commercial, Industrial



Present Poor Practice – Commercial, Industrial



Present Poor Practice – Commercial, Industrial



Present Poor Practice – Commercial, Industrial



Present Good Practice – Commercial and Industrial



Present Good Practice



Non compliance and solutions including 'designing out the problems'

Area's of control and non-compliance:

- New houses: no targeted design opportunities control in the Cairns Plan/ Queensland Development or Building Codes. Only controlled by noise offences.
- Dual and Multi unit residential has some planning controls, and controlled by noise offences with cost to regulate.
- Commercial, Industrial and other developments is addressed in a general manner with no targeted design control and controlled by noise offences with cost to regulate.

Solutions:

- Noise control is an expensive procedure for Council to regulate. Suggest prevention is better than cure.
- Design solutions : Do they cost?
- Technology solutions: better and cheaper?
- New air-conditioning laws forbidding the sale of less than 4 star rating units.
- Publications and awareness - **REDUCE NOISE, AVOID COMPLAINTS AND COSTLY MISTAKES**

Initiatives to assist in the 'Design Out' of Air-Conditioning that is visually offensive and energy guzzling?

Brisbane City Council and AIRAH publications:

- Air Conditioning Residential Best Practice Guideline.
- A Guide to Buying and Operating an Air Conditioner - REDUCE NOISE, AVOID COMPLAINTS AND COSTLY MISTAKES (This initiative is part of *Living in Brisbane 2010* – a vision for our city's future
<http://www.airah.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/Resources/BestPracticeGuides/default.htm>
- The Guidelines are currently provided by CRC Health Department to public.

Can we work with AIRAH to produce a new guide based on the established publications?

- Air Conditioning 'Tropical Best Practice Guideline'
- An advantage for AIRAH may be the provision of 'best practice' guidelines for use in the Pacific and South East Asia for the Air-Conditioning industry.
- A new guide may include placement to suit tropical design; cost savings; best practice for insulation and the right and wrong materials; rubble pits for drainage etc.
- Support for the cost of new guides and their publication may be supported by Austrade?

Summary and recommendations

Create a working taskforce including CRC Planning, Sustainability and Environmental Health officers and local Air-conditioning Industry representatives and AIRAH to carry out the following:

- Secure permission to use the AIRAH guidelines and review to incorporate residential, commercial and tropical needs.

Planning Controls:

- Revision of planning scheme to include targeted measures in particular for self and code assessable development. Impact assessable development can include conditioned approval.
- Where the Queensland Development Code provides the design and siting standards, recommendations to include air-conditioning control should be in place on reviews.
- The Cairns Style Guide and other policies (i.e. Douglas Shire Policy No. 2 Building Design and Architectural Elements) should introduce targeted information on their reviews.
- Promote and cross reference the AIRAH guidelines - REDUCE NOISE, AVOID COMPLAINTS AND COSTLY MISTAKES

Noise Controls:

- Prevention is better than cure: Promote the AIRAH guidelines - REDUCE NOISE, AVOID COMPLAINTS AND COSTLY MISTAKES .
- Increase the penalty (only \$1,000 for individual and \$2,000 for corporation)
- Remedial works may include adherence with the AIRAH Guidelines and the relevant planning codes to control placement and screening to minimise visual offensiveness.
- Compliance should trigger the requirement of new quieter and more energy efficient systems and, or re-location of the system and this may trigger compliance with the planning codes and AIRAH Guidelines.

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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. To achieve this, builders, construction service professionals, building material manufacturers, retailers, government representatives, industry and community associations and other interested stakeholders are invited to work together. www.greenbuild.com.au/forum