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Master Builders

# Member Alert

December 2012

## Changes to rainwater tank and hot water system requirements

After persistent lobbying of the state government to strip out unnecessary building costs that are impacting on housing affordability, Master Builders has **welcomed the government's recent decision** to remove the mandatory rainwater tank requirement for new homes and change the requirements for greenhouse-efficient electric hot water systems in new homes and renovations. These changes will save around \$10,000 on the cost of a new house.

It is important to note that, under the new laws, Councils will be able to opt to retain mandatory rainwater tank requirements where they can prove a net benefit to the community. This will entail making an application to the Minister, which includes a cost/benefit analysis.

It is anticipated that the new laws will commence in early February 2013. Our current understanding is as follows.

Up until the date of commencement of the new laws, all contracts and/or building applications for new houses must include provision for a rainwater tank and energy efficient hot water system. Building certifiers cannot approve an application that does not include these items.

Once the new laws commence, and if the building certifier has not issued the final certificate, the contract can be varied to remove the provision of a rainwater tank and/or energy efficient hot water system. The applicant can go back to the building certifier to vary the approval. Building certifiers may vary the approval by omitting the rainwater tank and/or including a standard electric hot water system.

Building Codes Queensland has confirmed that the certifier may make an annotation on the approved plan indicating that the rainwater tank is no longer required and will not be installed. For the energy efficient hot water system, the annotation should indicate that an energy efficient hot water system is no longer required and show the type of system that will be installed.

Building certifiers will be entitled to charge a fee to reassess the building application; however, as the changes are entirely procedural, it is expected that the fee will be nominal.

Further information will be sent to members once it is released by the government.

***For advice specific to your circumstances, please contact your local Master Builders office on 1300 30 50 10.***

