

NEW HOMEOWNERS SAVE FIVE BILLION LITRES OF WATER

16 November 2008

More than 42,000 new houses have slashed their household water consumption by nearly 50 per cent thanks to a NSW Government home sustainability policy.

Premier Nathan Rees today released the Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) report which shows the environmental savings achieved for all houses since the scheme was introduced State-wide in 2005.

Mr Rees said the BASIX initiative aims to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in energy and water consumption for all new dwellings and alterations built in NSW.

“More than 42,000 new BASIX houses have been approved since 2005, leading to a dramatic decrease in energy and water usage across NSW,” Mr Rees said.

“With NSW still facing water shortages and the effects of drought, BASIX houses have saved 5.7 billion litres of water.

“This is equal to 2,275 Olympic swimming pools, or nearly three times the average storage capacity of Manly Dam.

“Allowing homeowners the freedom to choose their own design features to meet these targets has been a major factor in the success of BASIX.”

Mr Rees said pre-BASIX homes use an average of 247 litres of water per person per day, whereas the average BASIX house uses less than 135 litres per day per person – a cut of 45 per cent.

“The adoption and installation of rainwater tanks has made a huge difference to housing water consumption with 96 per cent of BASIX homes nominating a rainwater tank as part of their design,” Mr Rees said.

“Prior to the introduction of BASIX, just 12 per cent of NSW homes had a rainwater tank. Now we have created 290 million litres of new water-storage capacity across the State.”

Ms Rees said the report indicates that 80 per cent of BASIX homes are now using an alternate water supply - such as recycled or tank water - for laundry uses and more than 90 per cent for their toilet and garden.

Minister for Planning Kristina Keneally joined the Premier today at a home ideas centre to inspect the latest in green building materials such as rainwater tanks and solar panels.

Ms Keneally said this scheme has been an unqualified success for homeowners who have saved money on their water and power bills by reducing water and energy consumption.

“Becoming BASIX compliant is not only relatively easy to do, but it will save homeowners money in the long-term.”

Ms Keneally said it was pleasing to see the BASIX scheme is having a positive influence on the adoption of climate change initiatives across NSW.

“A typical BASIX house will produce 1.2 tonnes less carbon dioxide, per person, per year than a typical pre-BASIX house,” Ms Keneally said.

“This equates to each BASIX home-owner planting eight trees a year, every year.

“The BASIX initiative for new houses has helped cut 173,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases over three years or 39,000 cars off the road each year.”

“New houses across NSW with access to reticulated natural gas can install gas hot water systems as well as gas cooking and heating which will mean ready compliance with BASIX.

“In regional NSW, where natural gas supply is not readily available, we are seeing innovative alternatives adopted by home-owners such as solar panels, heat pumps and energy efficient lighting.

“Items such as these can be easily installed to a new or existing home and can save homeowners up to \$600 a year on energy and water bills.”

Mr Rees said the BASIX scheme is a key component of the Government’s commitment to achieve a 60 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and a return to year 2000 greenhouse gas emission levels by 2025.

“The program was first introduced in 2004 for all new dwelling houses in metropolitan Sydney and was expanded State-wide in July 2005,” Mr Rees said.

“The results today are very encouraging and I am looking forward to a report on the BASIX results from multi-unit dwellings and alterations and additions, due out early next year.”