

Sustainability declaration reference guide

A reference guide to assist in the completion of the sustainability declaration.

Version 1 December 2009



Top five things to remember when you are completing the sustainability declaration

1. Don't know—don't tick

Sellers must complete a sustainability declaration to the best of their ability and knowledge. If you do not know the answer to any question, please leave the box blank.

2. Do it yourself (DIY)

There is no need to engage a building professional to complete the form.

3. Check product labels

Labels on appliances such as hot water systems and air-conditioners may help answer some questions.

4. Check your receipts

Check your receipts for any appliances in your home, such as insulation, water efficient tapware, toilets and showerheads or energy efficient lighting, as this may help to complete the form.

5. Sign and date

Remember, the seller must at least fill in the address of the property as well as sign and date the declaration.

The sustainability declaration is a compulsory form that must be completed to the best of the seller's ability and knowledge before a house, townhouse, duplex (class 1a buildings) or unit (class 2 building) is offered or marketed for sale from 1 January 2010. The declaration will help inform buyers about the sustainability features of the property and increase community awareness of the value of these features.

The declaration identifies the sustainability features of a home in four key areas:

1. energy
2. water
3. access
4. safety.

Advertising and open house inspections

A home cannot be advertised for sale (by a seller or a seller's agent) unless the advertisement contains information about where a potential buyer may obtain a copy of the completed sustainability declaration. This could be as simple as a statement announcing that the declaration is available from the agent's office. This does not apply to newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements or generic signage which has not been prepared specifically for the property.

A copy of the completed sustainability declaration must also be conspicuously displayed whenever a home is open for inspection by the seller, such as an open house.

Privacy

If a seller has privacy concerns about a sustainability declaration being made available for advertising purposes and open house inspections, the personal details section on the declaration may be blanked out, providing the property address and date are still visible. The signature section can instead read 'seller has signed this form.' However, the seller will still need to sign the original copy of the declaration and a signed copy must be given to the buyer. The seller's agent can retain this copy in their office until it is required.

Guide to symbols used in the sustainability declaration form

- * Potential savings in electricity costs and water consumption have generally been estimated based on an average Australian household size of 2.5 people, typical electricity and water consumption of the selected features/fittings, and electricity charges (Tariff 11) of 16.29c/kWh, where applicable. Please note: estimated savings in electricity costs do not take into account any additional costs related to gas supply.
- ▲ Design features indicate estimated potential savings from typical household use and are presented as a guide only. Actual savings can vary significantly depending on household location, type, size and householder usage.
- # Please note: actual electricity generation will be dependent on external factors. Potential savings for wind systems have been estimated based on a 1.54 kW system and approximately six hours per day of effective operating time. Solar systems have been estimated based on an average 2 kW system producing 9.2 kWh per day. Please refer to the sustainability declaration fact sheet for further information on the obligations and requirements in relation to the sustainability declaration.
- ~ Estimated potential electricity savings are based on comparisons with a 340 litres electric resistance hot water system (commonly used standard hot water system).
- ^ Estimated potential electricity savings for solar hot water based on a gas-boosted system. Potential savings for electric-based solar hot water systems could be slightly lower.
- ⌘ Electricity savings related to outdoor living areas are based on two hours outdoor living area use per day for 200 days per year, which then offset the use of a 2.2 kW air-conditioning system during those times. Savings are based on a covered outdoor living area that is 12 metres square in size.
- ◆ Please note: this is the average electricity consumption taken across a wide range of households with different features, fittings and appliances. Actual electricity consumption may be significantly lower or higher than this amount.
- » WELS stands for the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme, which labels a range of products via a star-rating system to outline their water efficiency.



1. Energy

This section outlines some key features that can contribute to increasing the energy efficiency of your home. Installing all or some of these features can help reduce your household electricity usage and costs and consequently reduce your total household greenhouse gas emissions.

E1—Energy efficient lights

These include fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent lamps (CFL), light emitting diodes (LED), neon and metal halide lights.

Count the number of fixed internal light fixtures (not individual globes) you have and write this information in the space provided on the sustainability declaration. If you have had the ClimateSmart Home Service visit your home, you will have been supplied with CFL globes to replace standard incandescent globes. Visit www.climatesmarthome.com to book this service.



Example of a compact fluorescent lamp



Fluorescent tubes are an example of energy efficient lighting

E2—Alternative power sources

If you know how many kilowatts your system produces, please indicate this in the space provided on the sustainability declaration. If you don't know this information, leave it blank.

Solar energy systems are easily identifiable as either ground level standalone solar panels or a collection of solar panels located on the roof of your home.



Solar power systems can be identified by a collection of solar panels on the roof

Wind power systems incorporate a system of blades that spin to create energy. They look similar to a large fan.



Wind power systems look similar to a large fan

E3—Greenhouse efficient cooking appliances

Gas cooktop/oven—properties that have either natural gas or LPG bottled gas may have a gas cooktop and/or oven.

The key visual difference between a gas and electric cooktop/oven is that you will be able to see a naked flame when you turn the gas cooktop/oven on.



An example of a gas cooktop

Induction cooktops are typically distinguished by a flat, smooth cooking surface that is not hot to touch when the power is on. If you have a coil element or if the element radiates heat after you turn it off, this is not an induction cooktop.



Induction cooktops have a flat, smooth cooking surface that isn't hot to touch when the power is turned on



The main unit of an evaporative air-conditioner is usually located on the roof

E4—Energy efficient air-conditioners

Check the label on your air-conditioner if it is still affixed and note how many stars are on it. The more stars, the more energy efficient the system is—4 stars is considered energy efficient under the current ratings scheme. However, from 1 April 2010, a new ratings scheme will mean air-conditioners that are 1 star will be considered energy efficient for the purpose of the sustainability declaration.

Evaporative air-conditioners use water to cool your home. The main unit is generally located on the rooftop and cool air is ducted into rooms. These air-conditioners are also energy efficient.

An **energy efficiency ratio (EER)** can be determined by contacting the manufacturer of your system and giving them the model number. This information is also available on the Department of Infrastructure and Planning’s website. Visit www.dip.qld.gov.au/sustainablehousing. On this page, click on the link for more information on air-conditioners. The air-conditioning page has a link to a product list which contains this information.

E5—Pool and spa pump tariffs

To confirm if your pool or spa is connected to an off-peak tariff, check your electricity bill details. Off-peak tariffs may be listed as ‘Tariff 31—night rate (super economy)’ or ‘Tariff 33—controlled supply (economy)’. If you are unsure contact your electricity supplier.

E6—Greenhouse efficient hot water systems

Check the label on your hot water system to see if it identifies the type of system you have i.e.—solar, gas, electric, heat pump.

Solar hot water system will generally have solar collector panels located on the roof. A water storage tank may be mounted on the roof, at ground level or inside the roof.



A solar hot water system will generally have solar collector panels on the roof

Heat pump hot water system may look like an electric system but has a fan and evaporator incorporated into the top section. The fan grill will be visible (see below). Sometimes it will be a ‘split system’ where the fan and evaporator will be split from the main water storage tank (see image below).



A heat pump hot water system with fan and evaporator incorporated



A split system heat pump hot water system

Gas hot water systems can be either a storage system where the water storage tank is at ground level (storage) or a small box mounted to the side of the house (instantaneous). It will be distinguishable from an electric system as it will have gas lines running from a meter or gas cylinders into the system.



An instantaneous gas hot water system



An example of a storage gas hot water system

E7—Insulation

If you only have insulation installed in part of your home, tick the 'partial' box and state where it is located e.g. kitchen extension.



This example shows bulk ceiling insulation and reflective foil on the inside of the roof

Roof/ceiling—if you can access your roof space, look for any insulation such as bulk fibres like wool, glass wool and insulation batts or reflective foil sheets on the ceiling or under the inside of the roof. Reflective foil looks similar to aluminium foil but is thicker and may be in single or multiple layers.

Walls—you may be able to see insulation in the wall cavities from inside the roof. It may look similar to that used in the ceiling.

Floors—this type of insulation is not commonly used in warmer parts of Queensland but if your house is suspended and not enclosed underneath, you could look under the house for insulation such as foil sheets. If your floor is enclosed you could check your building plans if they are available.

E8—Energy efficient windows

Check if there is only a single pane of glass on all or some windows. If there are two or more panes separated by a cavity, this is double or triple glazing.

If your windows have a grey, green or bronze colour to them, this will generally indicate that they are tinted or laminated. Alternatively, your building plans (if they are available) may indicate whether you have energy efficient windows.

E9—Covered outdoor living areas

Areas such as decks, patios and pergolas help save energy by encouraging outdoor living rather than using air-conditioning. This is especially the case when they are connected to indoor living areas such as kitchens, living and dining rooms.

E10—Pale or light coloured roofs

Light colours like white, cream, light grey, beige and dull galvanised steel reflect the sun's rays and help reduce the heat entering your home.

E11—Window shading

If the windows on the eastern and western sides of your home have reliable shading, such as wide eaves, tree shading or awnings, this can reduce the heat gain from a rising or setting sun.



Wide eaves that have vents can reduce heat from the sun by shading windows and help ventilate your home

E12—Roof ventilation

Check around your eaves and your rooftop to see if there is any visible ventilation, e.g. a whirlybird, eave vents.



Whirlybirds are a good example of roof ventilation

E13—Ceiling fans

Write the total number of bedrooms and/or living areas with ceiling fans, if any.

2. Water

This section lists some features that can help boost the water efficiency of your home. Water efficient taps, toilets and showerheads can significantly reduce water usage in your home and help you save money on your water bills throughout the year.

W1—Rainwater tank

New homes generally have a rainwater tank located above ground. In some instances they are located underground and generally require a rainwater tank pump.

Some homes also have signs displayed on the property and on taps located inside and outside the home indicating rain water is in use. You can also check your building plans if they are available. If you know how many litres your rainwater tank stores, please add this in the space provided on the sustainability declaration.

W2—Greywater treatment systems

These are generally used for toilet flushing, laundry use and garden irrigation.

These systems will generally be identified through the use of signs located on taps which advise 'do not drink'.

Purple pipes also indicate greywater is being used in the home. If you know how many litres your greywater storage treatment system stores, please add this in the space provided on the sustainability declaration.



An example of a greywater treatment system

W3—Water recirculation devices

These devices use a pump to deliver hot water quickly so that water is not wasted while you wait for it to heat up.

They are connected to the hot water tap pipe and are generally located under the sink in areas such as kitchens and bathrooms.

They have a box-like appearance and are usually labelled appropriately.



Water recirculation devices are usually located under kitchen or bathroom sinks

W4—Water efficient showerheads

Houses, townhouses and units approved on or after 1 March 2006 will have 3-star water efficiency labelling and standards (WELS) scheme rated showerheads. If you have had the ClimateSmart Home Service or Waterwise Home Service visit your home, you will have been supplied with one water efficient 3-star WELS rated showerhead.

Flow rates (litres per minute) can be measured by placing a container under your showerhead and turning the tap on full for 10 seconds.

After this time, turn off the tap, measure how much water is in the container and multiply by six to see how many litres are used in a minute.

If the water in the container/bucket is 1.5 litres or less after 10 seconds, your showerhead is 3 stars (1.5 litres x 6 = 9 litres).

W5—Water efficient tapware

Houses, townhouses, duplexes and units approved on or after 1 March 2009 will have 3-star WELS rated tapware.

Flow rates (litres per minute) can be measured by placing a container under the tapware and turning it on full for 10 seconds.

After this time, turn off the tap and measure how much water is in the container and multiply by six to see how many litres of water are used in a minute.

If the water in the container is 1.5 litres or less after 10 seconds your tap is 3 stars (1.5 litres x 6 = 9 litres).

If you cannot fit a container under your tap you may use the following procedure:

- place a plug in the sink, basin or trough
- turn the tap on full for 10 seconds (this will need to be timed carefully)

- mark the level of the water with masking tape and empty the water out
- replace the plug and, using a measuring jug, refill to the mark, and record the number of jugs used
- if the volume of water required to reach the mark is:
 - more than 1.5 litres = the tapware is not water efficient
 - less than 1.5 litres = the tapware is likely to be 3-star WELS rated or better.

W6—Water efficient toilets

Houses, townhouses and units approved on or after 1 March 2006 will have minimum 3-star WELS rated (6 litres full flush/3 litres half flush) dual flush toilets installed.

Houses, townhouses and units approved on or after 1 March 2009 will have 4-star WELS rated (4 litres full flush/3 litres half flush) dual flush toilets.

Check behind the seat hinge on the bowl for information about the brand name and volume per flush.

If your toilet has two flush buttons, it is dual-flush and you can specify you have at least a 3-star WELS-rated toilet.

W7—Water efficient garden irrigation system

A water efficient garden irrigation system has a flow rate of no more than 9 litres per minute.

The flow rate (litres per minute) can be measured by placing a container/bucket under the emitter (dripper/spray nozzle), turning the source tap on full for 10 seconds and catching the water.

After this time, turn off the tap and measure how much water is in the container and multiply by six to see how many litres are used in a minute.

If you have 1.5 litres or less after 10 seconds your system is considered to be efficient (1.5 litres x 6 = 9 litres).

3. Access

This section outlines social sustainability features that help to make homes more liveable for occupants throughout their various life stages and help reduce the occurrence of injuries such as trips and falls in the home.

A1 – External entry

Check if there are any steps greater than 10 millimetres between the outside and inside of your home. Also, check there are no more than three steps, a ramp or a lift that provide entry to the home.

A2 – Level access

Check if there are any steps greater than 10 millimetres between all the main living areas (kitchen, a living room and at least one bedroom, bathroom and toilet).

A3 – Bathroom access

A shower with level entry (step-free) has a level entrance to avoid tripping when entering the shower.



An example of a shower with a level entry

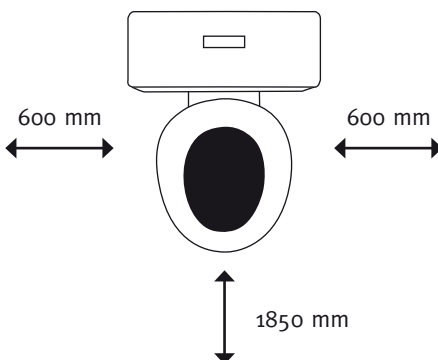


Grab rails attached to the wall provide leverage and stability

Grab rails are attached to the wall to provide leverage and stability (shown above). Unlike towel rails, they are designed to take the weight of a person.

A4 – Toilet access

Measure the space either side of the toilet. The toilet is considered accessible if it measures 600 millimetres each side (or 1200 millimetres in total), 1850 millimetres in front of the toilet bowl and grab rails are in place.



A5 – Doorways

For accessible areas such as the ground floor or each floor if you have a lift, measure horizontally from the inside face of the door (when it is fully open) to the inside face of door frame on the opposite side of all doorways in the main living areas (kitchen, a living room and at least one bedroom, bathroom and toilet).

A6 – Hallways

For accessible areas such as the ground floor, or each floor if you have a lift, measure hallway widths in all hallways that provide access to main living areas (kitchen, a living room and at least one bedroom, bathroom and toilet).

4. Safety

This section outlines some important features which can help increase the safety for all residents, for instance, the mandatory requirement to install smoke alarms and electrical safety switches.

S1—Smoke alarms and smoke detectors

These are usually round white devices mounted to ceilings or walls.

If your house, townhouse, duplex or unit was approved on or after 1 July 1997, it is required to have at least one hardwired smoke alarm installed.

Since 1 July 2007 all existing (built before 1 July 1997) houses, townhouses, duplexes and units need at least one 9-volt battery powered smoke alarm installed.



If your home was built before 1 July 1997 it will require at least one 9-volt battery powered smoke alarm

Household report card

The household report card section of the sustainability declaration provides information about the amount of electricity and water currently used within the home, as well as the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced. This section gives prospective purchasers an indication of the potential energy and water usage in comparison to the average Queensland home. Note that the household report card is an indication of electricity and water use of current occupants of the home and does not necessarily indicate what the ongoing costs will be for future occupants. If you do not have access to the property's utility bills, please leave this section blank.

S2—Electrical safety switch

Homes built on or after 1 June 1992 must have electrical safety switches installed on power circuits.



Check your meter box or switchboard to see if you have an electrical safety switch

If you sell a property, you need to establish whether a safety switch is installed. This must be declared on the standard sales contract and Form 24—property transfer.

Check your meter box or switchboard for a test/reset button to determine if you have a safety switch.

S3—Pool safety barriers

This question only relates to pools, including spas on residential land.

A properly maintained pool safety barrier includes:

- a self-closing gate (and sometimes a doorset for pools built before 1991)
- no deterioration
- no climbable objects that may assist a young child in gaining access to the pool area.

Go to www.dip.qld.gov.au/poolfencing for more information on pool safety.

S4—Hot water tempering valve

A tempering valve ensures that hot water is delivered to hot water outlets at a maximum 50°C to prevent scalding.



Tempering valves can be identified by either a blue, green, orange or black plastic cap

Hot water systems installed on or after 30 April 1998 are required to have a tempering valve fitted.

Tempering valves can be identified by either a blue, green, orange (solar systems) or black plastic cap.

S5—Property number

Check your property number contrasts against the background and is large enough to be seen from the street to provide easy identification for emergency services.



A good example of a visible property number

For further information:

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