

Queensland to ban inefficient air conditioners

A ban on the sale and installation of inefficient air conditioners will come into effect in Queensland on 1 September, when all new or replacement air conditioners must have a minimum tested average energy efficiency ratio of 2.9 – equivalent to four stars – on a current energy rating label. Premier Anna Bligh says the ban will result in significant savings to the state's electricity network. "This is not only about getting more and more Queensland households to get greener but it means a reduction on the costs inefficient air conditioners pose to our electricity network," says Bligh. "Every time an air condition[ing] unit is installed, it costs our network up to \$5,000 – the more efficient we can make these units the less the costs to our network and the less it costs every electricity customer. By introducing higher standards for air conditioner energy use early we have a great opportunity to get ahead of the summer rush." Bligh says that air conditioners and space heaters are estimated to use more than a quarter (27 per cent) of total household energy in a typical Queensland home. "Using the air con is a way of life for many people but leads to constant demands for more energy infrastructure and a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions," she says. "According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of Queensland households with air conditioners has more than doubled – from around 32 per cent in 1994 to over 67 per cent of households in 2008." Infrastructure and Planning Minister Stirling Hinchliffe says currently air conditioners can be sold and installed with a minimum EER of 2.5, which equates to a star rating of 2.5. "A target of Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland is to cut the state's carbon footprint by a third and these measures will reduce electricity use," says Hinchliffe. "Across Queensland, the new minimum EER is estimated to save around 12,500 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year – and that's equivalent to around 2900 cars off the road annually – and collectively save Queenslanders over \$1.7 million on their annual electricity bills. "These savings have been calculated based on an average 600 hours of use each year and the new electricity charges of 17.13c/kWh." Hinchliffe says the ban will also advantage local manufacturers who meet the new standard and will cut down on the installation of cheaper, often imported units. "On average the price of more efficient air conditioning units is comparable to those less efficient models," he says, advising consumers to exercise caution when purchasing an air conditioner by making sure they know the tested average EER of the unit.

Source: esaa news – Issue 25, 29 June 2009