



Outdoor living areas can reduce the need for air-conditioners in the home

Did you know?

The running cost of air-conditioners varies between star ratings.

7 kilowatts air-conditioner (living room size):

On average a 1-star MEPS* rated air-conditioner costs \$294 per annum to run compared to a 4-star MEPS* rated system of the same size which costs \$205 per annum. By choosing a 4-star MEPS* rated system, you could save approximately \$89 per year in running costs.

*MEPS—Minimum Energy Performance Standards

3.1.4 Prevent the sale and installation of inefficient air-conditioners

Why is this important?

Queenslanders are increasingly installing air-conditioning, or moving into air-conditioned new homes. Overall, more than 58 per cent of households now have an air-conditioner. For the environment and our energy grids, this trend is not good news. Growing use of air-conditioning is increasing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from fossil-fuel-fired electricity generators, which must work harder to meet demand spikes on hot days.

Purchasing and running an air-conditioner can be a costly exercise. Good housing design and the use of insulation can reduce the need for an air-conditioner. However, if you have an air-conditioner or if you are considering buying one, you can reduce running costs significantly.

The proposed improvement does not discourage the use of air-conditioners but ensures that any sold will be energy efficient.

The more stars, the more energy-efficient an appliance is, and the more money you will save in running costs. An air-conditioner with a star rating of two needs more energy to function than an equivalent unit with a star rating of five.



Energy efficient air-conditioners are available to cool your home

Did you know?

An average air-conditioner uses the same amount of energy per hour as up to 30 standard portable fans.

How can you cool your home more energy efficiently?

The Queensland Government is encouraging Queenslanders to conserve energy in the same way they have conserved water. Using less energy (switching off appliances, using them for shorter durations) is one of the most simple and cost-effective ways that Queenslanders can cut greenhouse emissions.

In summer, there are many simple things people can do to ensure their homes stay cool and comfortable on hot days, rather than just turning on the air-conditioning.

Try:

- installing good external shading on windows, particularly those facing north and west—this can cut heat entering the home by 70–80 per cent
- installing insulation in ceilings and, where possible, walls
- sealing gaps around doors and windows to prevent hot air from getting in
- planting trees and shrubs to protect your home from summer sun and hot winds
- opening your home at night so when a cool change comes through, the cool air is let in
- on hot days, dressing appropriately, and using a fan to stay cool
- for homes with air-conditioners, closing off unused rooms.

If you are a household in the market for an air-conditioner, one of the most important things to look for with an air-conditioner is the star rating. You will also need to work out what size air-conditioner you require for the task and then choose the most efficient model that will perform the task.

For more information on choosing an energy efficient air-conditioner visit www.energyrating.gov.au



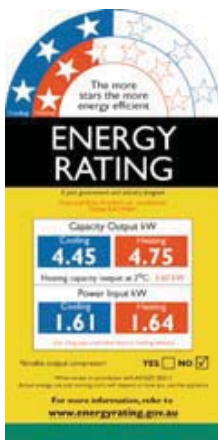
Ceiling fans can provide an efficient alternative to air-conditioners



Have your say:

- Do you think that all air-conditioners sold and installed in Queensland homes should be made to have at least a 4-star energy efficiency rating?

Refer to section 3 of the response form at the back of this discussion paper.



Factors to consider

Split systems consist of an outdoor unit that conditions the air, plus an indoor unit (or several) that blows the conditioned air into the house. They're less noisy and more efficient than cheaper window/wall units.

Inverter air-conditioners can vary their heating or cooling output to correspond to room conditions.

Airflow—The air-conditioner's fan circulates the cooled (or heated) air around the room. Ideally, you want a model with a wide airflow range: from very high to help the room cool down quickly, to very low so there's less noise and no unpleasant draught once you have the right temperature.

Efficiency—this tells you how many kilowatts (kW) of cooling or heating an air-conditioner provides per kW of electricity it uses. The more stars on the energy label, the more efficient it is and the lower the running costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Note that star ratings are different for heating and cooling.

In the energy rating label shown, the numbers in the blue and red boxes give the product's cooling and heating capacity. Heating is measured at an outside temperature of 7°C; some labels also show the capacity at 2°C in small print underneath. The higher the number of stars, the more efficient it is—blue stars for cooling, red for heating (efficiency is calculated by dividing the output capacity by the input power).

Noise—a noisy indoor unit may interfere with your conversation, entertainment or sleep. In addition, most local councils have noise restrictions relating to the use of air-conditioners: check before you buy, especially if the outdoor unit has to be installed close to your neighbour.

Current requirements

There are currently no minimum requirements on the sale and installation of energy efficient air-conditioners in Queensland.

Both the Victorian and Western Australian governments are considering banning the sale of air-conditioners that are not a minimum 1-star energy rating.