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WEST MORETON REGION GARDEN AWARDS LAUNCHED

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan today launched the Department of Housing's Garden Awards.

The Awards provide tenants in the West Moreton region the opportunity to officially showcase their garden spaces, and pride in the environment in which they live, and are open to all Department of Housing tenants residing in the West Moreton area.

"The Garden Awards are a great way to publicly recognise and reward tenants who care for the properties they live in through gardening," Ms Nolan said.

"And their popularity is evident by the number of tenants participating in the event every year."

Despite the extended drought conditions affecting many regions throughout the state and the introduction of water restrictions, there were still 1,616 entries received in 2005.

This year, there are a few changes to the structure of the award categories.

The category of Small Space garden has been separated into Courtyard garden and Balcony garden. This is a reflection of the increase in the number of tenants who live in unit complexes who enter the Awards.

Ms Nolan said tenants are especially encouraged to consider how to save water when gardening in light of current drought conditions in many areas of Queensland.

"There is a Water-wise Garden category that recognises environmentally friendly gardening techniques, such as using composting materials and mulch, and selecting plants that require little water or fertiliser," she said.

Entry in each of the categories is free and judging is based on effort and creativity rather than the size or cost of the garden.

All entrants receive a certificate recognising their participation, a photo of their garden and a plant and/or voucher for gardening products. Prize-winners receive a special certificate and a gift voucher for garden supplies.

"It doesn't matter what size or type of garden you have, whether it's a balcony, patio, flower or vegetable garden. It doesn't have to be the biggest and most expensive to win an award," Ms Nolan said.

"Gardening offers many rewards, such as a sense of pride and achievement in addition to the beauty or usefulness gardens can generate."

Entries close on 1 September. For further information and entry forms, contact the Department of Housing office in Ipswich.

