



COMBUSTIBLE CONSTRUCTION IN BUSH FIRE-PRONE AREAS

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

FACT SHEET 2/17
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This fact sheet clarifies the requirements of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) for combustible construction in Bush Fire Attack Level 40 and Flame Zone (BAL-40 and BAL-FZ) areas.

Background

Where building construction is combustible and located in BAL-40 or BAL-FZ areas, the proposed building solution fails the performance criteria of Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006 (PBP), except for window inconsequential trim type elements.

Materials that allow flaming in these areas can be problematic and are not supported by the NSW RFS for the following reasons:

- Flaming materials increase the exposure of other elements of construction and adjoining structures to flame contact;
- Flaming materials will potentially increase the exposure of occupants of the building to radiant heat, direct flame contact, smoke and embers after a bush fire front has passed
- The increase in exposure can also contribute to the risk of loss of life and compromise the ability of residents to defend their property and egress from the building;

- It can reduce the capacity of occupants to make safe and effective decisions about their safety.

Section A3.4 (d) of PBP *Addendum Appendix 3* states that 'for building elements subject to a radiant heat flux of greater than 29kW/m², the use of exposed timber is generally not suitable without specific testing in accordance with suitable protocols'.

Combustible Construction

Except for window frames and inconsequential trim complying with AS3959 as below, combustible construction is not permitted in BAL-40 or BAL-FZ. This includes walls, doors, decking, roofing, exposed flooring and the like.

Flaming of Window Frames

Combustible window frames and can be regarded as inconsequential trim in BAL-40 and BAL-FZ if the window assemblies comply with AS1530.8.1 and AS1530.8.2 respectively. Use of other inconsequential trim may be considered contingent on consultation and approval by the NSW RFS.

Applicants should be referred to the NSW RFS Bush Fire Survival Plan and should be engaged in the bush fire issues associated with their situation.

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