

Building with Timber in Bushfire-prone Areas



With the appropriate design considerations, you can create a safe and desirable timber home in bushfire-prone areas using sustainably sourced renewable timber products both inside and out.

The emphasis is on keeping out embers and protecting against radiant heat and even flame contact. These are the key aspects of building-out bushfires.

In bushfire-prone areas, all new buildings must be constructed in accordance to the current Australian Standard AS 3959:2018 *Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*. AS3959 utilises six bushfire attack levels (BAL's) ranging from low to extreme risk (BAL LOW, 12.5, 19, 29, 40, FZ) and provides construction requirements for each of these zones. The BAL takes into consideration a number of factors including the Fire Danger Index, the slope of the land, types of surrounding vegetation and its proximity to any building.

AS 3959 provides detailed requirements for construction in the different BAL areas for all elements of a home including:

- roofs,
- external walls,
- flooring systems including supports,
- external glazed windows and doors, and
- verandas, decks, steps and landings.

It should be clearly understood that there are no issues with the use of timber-framed construction for homes built in bushfire-prone areas, when constructed (as with all building materials) in accordance with AS 3959.

AS 3959

- makes no demands on structural framing material,
- allows the use of suspended timber-floor construction, and
- includes options for weatherboard and other lightweight external cladding materials.

Wherever you are building, you can safely use cost-effective and sustainable timber framing.

There are a wide range of resources available explaining how to build with timber in bushfire-prone areas.

If you or your builder has any questions on the use of timber products and construction in bushfire-prone areas then please refer them to

www.woodsolutions.com.au.

Resources include the following:

- WoodSolutions Technical Design Guide No. 4 *Building with Timber in Bushfire-prone Areas*
- WoodSolutions Bushfire BAL Calculator
- Timber Framed Housing in Bushfire-prone Areas - Flyer
- Construction Requirements in Different BAL Areas - Summary Table