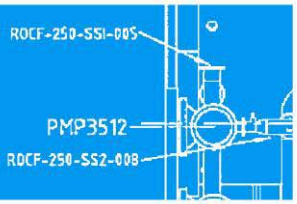

Building Newsflash

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR BUILDINGS WITHIN DESIGNATED BUSHFIRE-PRONE AREAS

Purpose

The purpose of this Newsflash is to explain the application of the State Planning Policy – Mitigating the impacts of floods, bushfire & landside ('the SPP') in assessing construction standards for buildings in designated bushfire-prone areas.

Background

Under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* the SPP has an effect when development applications (material change of use and reconfiguration of lots) are assessed, when planning schemes are made or amended and when land is designated for community infrastructure. The SPP is not referenced under the *Building Code of Australia (BCA)* as a tool for deemed-to-satisfy assessment of development approvals for building work.

Section 12 of the *Building Regulation 2006* allows local governments to designate, in a local planning instrument, all or part of its area as a bushfire-prone area for the *BCA*. Once a designation is made, the provisions of the *BCA* that apply to designated bushfire prone areas apply for any building assessment work within the area.

Legislation

Building solutions for a class 1, 2 or 3 building within a designated bushfire-prone area comply with performance requirements GP5.1 of *BCA Volume 1* or P2.3.4 of *BCA Volume 2* where they are designed and constructed to reduce the risk of ignition from a bushfire while the fire front passes.

A class 1, 2 or 3 building constructed in a designated bushfire prone area is to provide resistance to bushfires in order to reduce the danger to life and reduce the risk of the loss of the building. Australian Standard *AS3959 – Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas* prescribes a site assessment method and construction details. *AS3959* is a reference document under Part G5 of *BCA Volume 1* and Part 3.7.4 of *BCA Volume 2* and is a deemed-to-satisfy solution.

Where a bushfire protection design is proposed as an alternative solution to *BCA* deemed-to-satisfy provisions, the quantitative and qualitative methodology of the SPP is one of many tools that may appropriately be considered in the development and assessment of the alternative solution.

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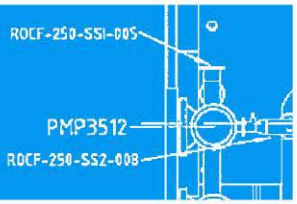

The SPP reflects the generally lower natural hazard levels inherent in Queensland's conditions and vegetation. A natural hazard assessment of bushfire risks using the SPP may require a lesser stringency than that of *AS3959* resulting in a more cost effective design for owners in bushfire prone areas.

Building Codes Queensland, in partnership with the Department of Emergency Services, is working with Standards Australia to include a Queensland appendix in *AS3959* to specify site assessment rules and bushfire hazard levels (in line with the SPP) for Queensland conditions.

Local government planning instruments

Analysis of designated bushfire-prone areas should be conducted by local authorities on a regular basis to ensure their local planning instruments reflect current conditions.

Further information on the SPP can be found at www.ipa.qld.gov.au.

Contact for further information

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