

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 538

Commencement of Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 2.4—Construction in bushfire prone areas

Purpose

To advise that the following take effect from 1 May 2015:

- a new Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 2.4—Construction in bushfire prone areas (MP 2.4); and
- the 2015 version of the National Construction Code (NCC).

Background

MP 2.4

To support the Australian steel industry and enable greater choice in construction materials, the National Association of Steel-Framed Housing (NASH) developed a building standard that provides specific, quantified solutions for the construction of steel-framed buildings in areas of bushfire risk. After extensive development and consultation with relevant government and non-government building industry stakeholders, the NASH Standard was subsequently included in the 2015 edition of the Building Code of Australia (BCA), which will commence in Queensland on 1 May 2015.

As part of meeting the BCA requirements in bushfire prone areas, establishing the level of bushfire risk requires the classification of vegetation types under AS 3959. Some classes of vegetation set out in AS 3959 are not considered to present a bushfire risk in Queensland. In response to this, Queensland has an existing variation in the BCA which recognises that some vegetation types need not be considered as part of an assessment under AS 3959.

During the 2015 amendments to the BCA, this Queensland variation under Volume Two of the BCA (i.e. for houses and associated buildings and structures) was not updated to include a reference to the NASH Standard. An unintended consequence is that the NASH Standard would not have been referenced for use in Queensland from 1 May 2015.

To provide an interim solution to this issue, the new MP 2.4 will take effect on 1 May 2015. MP 2.4 includes the reference to the NASH Standard and maintains the exclusion of certain vegetation types that do not present a risk in Queensland. MP 2.4 is available on the Department's website: www.hpw.qld.gov.au/construction/BuildingPlumbing/Building/BuildingLawsCodes/QueenslandDevelopmentCode/Pages/QueenslandDevelopmentCodeCurrentParts.aspx.

NCC 2015

The 2015 version of the NCC takes effect on 1 May 2015. The NCC can now be accessed for free online by registering at the Australian Building Codes Board's website:

<http://services.abcb.gov.au/NCCOnline/Account/Register>.

Contact for further information

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