

M E D I A S T A T E M E N T

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Standards Australia to fast track completion of bushfire Standard

Standards Australia has fast tracked completion of the revision of *AS 3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas*, which provides design and construction requirements to help minimise injury, loss of life and property damage due to bushfires.

The revised Standard provides requirements for improved ember protection and refinement for a range of building materials, as well as optional fire shutters on windows for buildings designated to be at the higher levels of bushfire attack.

The Draft Standard is ready for final consideration and Standards Australia is awaiting results of the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) which went to public review in November 2008.

“As a result of the weekend’s tragedies in Victoria, we have fast tracked the project timeline and now expect to receive the results of the RIS within a week. The next step will be to take the recommendations to our Committee for approval next week. We are working towards final approval in a matter of weeks to enable the ABCB to consider adoption within the Building Code of Australia at their Board meeting in early March 2009,” said Colin Blair, Deputy CEO of Standards Australia.

“Standards Australia’s expert Committee on bushfire protection (FP-020) has been working on a revision of AS 3959 for several years but faced delays in an effort to reach consensus amongst Committee representatives.

“The revision process was further delayed whilst awaiting the publication of AS 1530.8 which provides test methods specifically for building materials in bushfire-prone areas,” Mr Blair said.

“As the nation’s peak Standards body, Standards Australia facilitates the development of Australian Standards by working with government, industry and the community. Every effort is made by Committees to maintain consensus and ensure the interests of all relevant organisations are considered,” he continued.

Topics of debate included the assessment methodology particularly in relation to flame temperature and the inclusion of a ‘flame zone’ as the most extreme category of bushfire attack.

The interests of the following organisations are represented on Standards Australia’s Bushfire Committee (FP-020):

- Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council
- Australian Building Codes Board
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
- Australian Steel Industry
- Australian Window Association
- CSIRO
- Engineers Australia
- Fire Protection Association Australia
- Housing Industry Association
- Master Builders Association

Plastics and Chemicals Industries Association
Property Council of Australia
Think Brick Australia
Timber Australia
Timber Preservers Association of Australia
Testing Interests

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