



## NEW VICTORIAN BUILDING REGULATIONS IN FORCE NOW!

Following the tragic bushfires of February 2009 in Victoria the building industry has found themselves fulfilling an increasing role in protecting the state against loss of life and property in future bushfires.

The Victorian Government has adopted a new Residential Building Standard to provide for increased fire protection of residential buildings in bushfire-prone areas without compromising safety.



From 11 March 2009 the new standard and planning measures come into effect as an amendment to the *Victorian Building Regulations 2006* and focus on improving protection of new and replacement homes designed constructed and located within bushfire-prone areas.

The Building Standard will be dependent upon the **Bushfire Attack Level** of the property which must firstly be determined before design and construction of the building takes place. The Bushfire Attack Level may be assessed on paper or may require a surveyor.

There are many factors which are taken into account when assessing the Bushfire Attack Level. These may include the proximity to forests, the gradient and topography of the land, surrounding buildings and landscaping.

There are now six levels which range from “low” where there is an insignificant risk to warrant increased protection through to the highest “FZ” level where there may be direct exposure to flames from the fire front in addition to heat flux and ember attack.

The levels determine both the type of materials required for the construction of the premises and specific designs with regard to the exterior and footings of the building. Attention is required in the sub-floor supports, floors, external walls, external windows, external walls, roofs and verandas and decks and what is required for each of these building features is depend on the Bushfire Attack Level which affects the premises.

For example there are no additional / special construction requirements for the above mentioned features of premises when those premises are within low Bushfire Attack Level areas. However, where premises are built in high Bushfire Attack Level areas strict requirements including the use of non combustible materials and specific flame-retardant designs are required.



The new Building Standard applies to most types of residential buildings and includes alternations and additions to existing buildings. Building permits are required for all new buildings and reconstruction works, alterations and additions to homes and outbuildings.

For any questions or concerns about the new Building Regulations please do not hesitate to contact our office on (03) 9009 5800.