

AS 3959—1991

Australian Standard®

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**Construction of buildings in  
bushfire-prone areas**

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This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee BD/64, Construction in Bushfire-Prone Areas. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 7 June 1991 and published on 9 August 1991.

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The following interests are represented on Committee BD/64:

Australian Assembly of Fire Authorities  
Australian Institute of Building Surveyors  
Australian Timber Research Institute  
Australian Uniform Building Regulations Coordinating Council  
Board of Fire Commissioners, New South Wales  
Bush Fire Council of New South Wales  
Clay Brick and Paver Institute  
Commonwealth Fire Board  
Country Fire Authority  
Country Fire Services, South Australia  
CSIRO, Division of Building, Construction and Engineering  
Department of Defence  
Department of Local Government, South Australia  
Insurance Council of Australia  
Ministry of Education, Victoria  
National Association of Forest Industries  
National Parks and Wildlife Services  
Office of the Environment, Victoria  
Royal Australian Institute of Architects  
Timber Promotion Council

Additional interests participating in preparation of Standard:

A.C.T. Bush Fire Council  
Australian Surveying and Land Information Group  
Blue Mountains City Council  
Department of Environment and Planning, South Australia  
Forestry Commission of New South Wales  
Housing Industry Association (Victorian Division)  
Master Builders Construction and Housing Association, Australia  
Shire of Healesville  
Urban Development Institute, Victoria

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee on Construction in Bushfire-Prone Areas.

Although the measures set out in this Standard will improve the performance of the building when subjected to burning debris, they should be considered as offering minimal protection from bushfires, and additional measures such as fuel reduction, landscaping and additional construction measures would normally be appropriate, depending on the level of bushfire hazard.

A Commentary setting out the reasoning and rationale behind the content of some of the more significant clauses is provided in an appendix. The paragraph numbers in the Commentary relate directly to the clause numbers in the Standard, i.e. Paragraph A1.1 relates to Clause 1.1.

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## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

## Australian Standard

## Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas

## SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

**1.1 SCOPE** This Standard sets out requirements for the construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas. These requirements are intended to improve the performance of buildings subjected primarily to burning debris and not to radiant heat or direct flame contact.

## NOTES:

- 1 A Commentary is provided in Appendix A.
- 2 Additional information on the nature of bushfires is provided in Appendix B.

**1.2 APPLICATION** This Standard applies to the construction of buildings in areas designated as bushfire-prone by the appropriate legislation.

NOTE: This Standard is not necessarily intended to be applied over wide areas such as entire municipalities. It may be more appropriate for some local authorities to apply it on a site-by-site basis.

**1.3 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS** The following documents are referred to in this Standard.

## AS

- 1288 Glass in buildings — Selection and installation
- 1530 Methods for fire tests on building materials, components and structures
- 1530.1 Part 1: Combustibility test for materials
- 1530.2 Part 2: Test for flammability of materials

## BS

- 4016 Specification for building paper (breather type)

Building Code of Australia

**1.4 DEFINITIONS** For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

**1.4.1 Approved** — approved by the regulatory authority.

**1.4.2 Burning debris** — flaming or smouldering brands, bark or other pieces of ignitable materials including embers.

**1.4.3 Combustible** — a material that is combustible when tested in accordance with AS 1530.1.

**1.4.4 Non-combustible** — a material that is not combustible as defined by the *Building Code of Australia*.

**1.5 FIRE-RETARDANT TREATED FOREST PRODUCTS** Where fire-retardant treated forest products are specified in this Standard, the system used to achieve durable fire-retardant properties shall be approved by the appropriate legislative authority.