

# ADVISORY NOTICE BUILDING

02/19

*Advisory Notices are issued to assist in the interpretation of the Development Act 1993*

*April 2019*

## **ADMINISTRATION: Building Code of Australia 2019**

This Advisory Notice provides information about the 2019 edition of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) in the National Construction Code (NCC) series which is scheduled for adoption on **1 May 2019**.

### **BACKGROUND**

The BCA contains the technical provisions for the design, assessment and construction of buildings and other structures and addresses matters such as structural stability, fire safety, certain aspects of health and amenity, and energy efficiency.

### **DISCUSSION**

In addition to reformatting the BCA to improve readability, key changes made to the 2019 edition include -

#### **Volume One:**

- New requirements for accessible adult change facilities in certain shopping centres, sports venues, museums, art galleries, theatres and passenger areas within airports.
- New provisions clarifying the application of requirements to occupiable outdoor areas, such as roof top spaces.
- Sprinkler protection for apartments, hotels, boarding houses and other residential buildings of 4 or more storeys and less than 25 metres in effective height.
- Clarification when measuring the distance between required alternative exits.
- Deletion of the requirement for fire hose reels in office buildings.
- The addition of new Verification Methods for Parts C, D, E, F and J.
- A substantial improvement of the energy efficiency requirements for commercial buildings.

**Volume One** also includes two new referenced standards published by the Fire Protection Association Australia (FPAA) that apply to fire sprinkler systems. The standards specifically apply in Clause E1.5, Specification E1.5 and Specification E1.5a as well as the relevant fire safety section of the Plumbing Code of Australia (Volume Three). The referenced Technical Specifications are:

- *FPAA101D Automatic fire sprinkler system design and installation – Drinking water supply.*
- *FPAA101H Automatic fire sprinkler system design and installation – Hydrant water supply.*

FPAA101D and FPAA101H also refer to Australian Standards. In particular, FPAA101D adopts and varies AS 2118.5:2008 and references AS 2118.1:2017 and AS/NZS 3500.1:2018. FPAA101H

references AS 2118.1:2017, AS 2419.1:2005 and AS 2941:2013. Guidance on the FPAA101D and FPAA101H is available on the [FPAA website](#).

**Volume Two:**

- Improvements to the energy efficiency provisions, which include-
  - introducing separate heating and cooling load limits into the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) compliance pathway.
  - strengthening the reference building Verification Method.
  - including a new Verification Method for building envelope sealing.
  - clarifying building sealing requirements under the DTS Provisions.
- A new performance requirement for managing potential health risks from condensation.
- New requirements for earth retaining structures, masonry veneer construction, timber, metal and composite cladding, fire properties for materials and construction, condensation management; and attachment of decks and balconies to external walls of buildings.

**Provisions postponed from adoption on 1 May 2019 or subject to transitional arrangements**

At its November 2018 meeting, the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) agreed to postpone the adoption of the new fire safety verification method (Schedule 7) until 1 May 2020. Similarly, the increased energy efficiency requirements are subject to a 12 month transition period - allowing practitioners to use the requirements in either BCA 2016 or BCA 2019 until 1 May 2020.

Both the postponement and transition dates are reflected in the published BCA.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ADDITIONS AND VARIATIONS**

The 2019 edition of the BCA published by the ABCB in February 2019 included a number of changes to South Australian variations and additions. Some of these have since been clarified, amended or deleted by way of the [gazette notice](#) published on Thursday 11 April 2019.

**Changes to Volumes One and Two for South Australia include -****1. Waterproofing of wet areas**

Waterproofing and water resistance requirements for building elements in wet areas have been removed and the national provisions for waterproofing of wet areas now apply in South Australia.

**2. Provision of floor wastes**

Floor waste and drainage provisions have been amended to provide further clarification of the vessels and rooms that require floor wastes and floor drainage.

**3. Construction in bushfire prone areas**

The Application of Part, Construction requirements and associated SA Table (and referenced documents) for BAL-Low, BAL-12.5, BAL-19, BAL-29, BAL-40 and BAL-FZ sites have been removed. The national provisions now apply in South Australia, providing greater national consistency and the use of the *NASH Standard – Steel frames construction in bushfire areas*.

The bushfire attack levels, which align with the requirements in Council Development Plans have been adopted by gazette until such time as the Planning and Design Code is implemented<sup>1</sup>.

**Changes to Volume One for South Australia include-****1. Farm buildings**

Reference to SA Part H3 has been removed. The provisions previously contained in *Minister's Specification SA H3.2* have been transferred into the relevant parts of the SA Variations and Additions. The national definition of 'farm shed' has been adopted (previously 'farmer's shed' in SA) and means that fire-fighting water and equipment will not be required for a farm shed.

SA E1.3 Fire hydrants has been clarified by gazette to ensure the correct interpretation of defined terms as per Schedule 3 or SA Schedule 3 Definitions where appropriate.

**2. Bulk grain storage facilities**

The provisions previously contained in *Minister's Specification SA H2.2* have been transferred into the relevant parts of the SA Variations and Additions.

**3. Swimming pool safety**

Reference to SA GP1.2 has been removed and the national provisions for swimming pool safety now apply in South Australia, however a variation applies to the Application of GP 1.2. South Australia includes requirements for resuscitation signage in SA GP 1.2(c). Clarification is also provided that both SA G.1(d) and SA G1.1(e) have been included as SA variations.

**Changes to Volume Two for South Australia include-****1. Energy efficiency**

The variations previously contained in *Minister's Specification SA 3.12.0.1(a)* have been transferred into SA 3.12.0.1(a) Heating and cooling loads. Reference to the Minister's Specification has been removed from Table 1 of SA Schedule 4 Referenced documents by gazette.

**2. Swimming pool safety**

SA 3.10.1.0(b) and SA 4.2.1 Application have been amended and clarified due to a typographical error.

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<sup>1</sup> Further advice will be issued in relation to bushfire prone areas with the phased adoption of the Planning and Design Code (which will replace all Development Plans) and relevant Ministerial Building Standard (which will replace all Minister's Specifications) over the next 18 months under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

A comprehensive list of all amendments to BCA 2019 is available from the [ABCB website](#).

The Sprinkler Technical Specifications FPAA101D and FPAA101H are available from the FPAA at <http://www.fpa.com.au/technical/technical-specifications.aspx>; by completing an [order form](#) and emailing it to [shop@fpa.com.au](mailto:shop@fpa.com.au) or; by phoning (03) 8892 3184.

Information and advice about changes to the Plumbing Code of Australia in the NCC series can be obtained from the Office of the Technical Regulator, phone 1300 760 311 or email [otr.plumbenquiries@sa.gov.au](mailto:otr.plumbenquiries@sa.gov.au).

The next amendment to the BCA is scheduled for adoption on **1 May 2022**.

*This Advisory Notice is for general information only and should not be relied upon as legal advice or an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations you should obtain independent legal advice.*

**Further information**

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