



Issue 3

July 2020

Welcome to the third issue of the 'Building Focus' newsletter. Building Focus brings you the latest news for the building, building surveying and painting industries.

## Licensing-related fees discounted for 12 months

On 31 March 2020, the Premier announced a COVID-19 economic and health relief package. One element of the Government's package was the waiving of occupational licensing-related fees for a period of 12 months to assist small and medium sized businesses. The term "licensing-related" fees includes fees for various types of authorisations including licences, registrations, permits, certifications, and extends to incorporated associations and co-operatives.

The Government recently clarified its intention that the waiving of licensing-related fees for a 12 month period is limited to single-year payments.

[Read more](#)

### Smoke alarms not to be located in dead air space

Clause 3.7.5.5 – Installation of smoke alarms is a new clause that has been introduced to the residential Fire

Safety provisions of the 2019 edition of the Building Code of Australia (BCA 2019), Volume Two of the National Construction Code.

### **Clause 3.7.5.5 Installation of smoke alarms**

Smoke alarms required by 3.7.5.3 and 3.7.5.4 must be installed on or near the ceiling, in accordance with the following:

(a) Where a smoke alarm is located on the ceiling it must be—

- (i) a minimum of 300 mm away from the corner junction of the wall and ceiling; and
- (ii) between 500 mm and 1500 mm away from the high point and apexes of the ceiling, if the room has a sloping ceiling.

(b) Where (a) is not possible, the smoke alarm may be installed on the wall, and located a minimum of 300 mm and a maximum of 500 mm off the ceiling at the junction with the wall.

[Read more](#)

### **Replacing smoke alarms in existing dwellings subject to sale, rent and hire**

Existing compliant smoke alarms in dwellings subject to sale, transfer of ownership, rent and hire do not need to retrospectively comply with Clause 3.7.5.5 even if they are not located in accordance with the new requirements. However, new replacement smoke alarms will need to comply with Regulation 60(2) of the Building Regulations 2012 including the most up to date deemed-to-satisfy provisions of the BCA (including Clause 3.7.5.5) when next installed where the existing compliant smoke alarm exceeds 10 years or is no longer in working order.

**NCC 2019 Amendment 1 is now in effect with transitional arrangements!**

On 1 July 2020, NCC 2019 Amendment 1 was adopted.

Western Australia has transitional provisions in place for the adoption of the Building Code of

Australia which is Volumes One and Two of the National Construction Code.

### Key changes

- A new provision, A2.2(4), in the Governing Requirements to require (from 1 July 2021) that a process be followed when creating and documenting Performance Solutions.
- A new provision, A5.7, in the Governing Requirements to require labelling of Aluminium Composite Panels.
- A new provision in Volume One, D1.18, regarding egress from early childhood centres.
- Clarification amendments in Specification C1.1 of Volume One regarding concessions that permit the use of timber framing for low-rise Class 2 and 3 buildings.
- Amendment to 3.5.2.5 in Volume Two to clarify that anti-ponding boards are not required in roofs where sarking is not installed.
- Correction of minor errors.

[Read more](#)



### Free access to bushfire standard

Standards Australia and the Commonwealth Government announced they will make **AS 3959:2018 - Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas** accessible to all Australians at no cost until 30 June 2021.

AS 3959:2018 provides guidance to professionals in the building and construction industry and is primarily concerned with improving the ability of buildings in designated bush fire prone areas to better withstand bush fires.

Providing access to the Standard is intended to help communities rebuild after the devastation of the 2019-

20 bushfire season.

### **How to access the Standard**

The Standard is available from the [SAI Global website](#). For further information contact SAI Global at [sales@saiglobal.com](mailto:sales@saiglobal.com) or call 131 242.

### **Building in bush fire prone areas**

Building and Energy recently released guidance about AS 3959 BAL assessments during the extended transition of the previous Building Code of Australia. See [Industry Bulletin 131](#).

Guidance is also available on other transitional provisions for bush fire prone areas including for alterations and extensions. See fact sheet: [Transition for alterations and extensions in bush fire prone areas](#).

The Building and Energy [webpage on building in bush fire prone areas](#) contains useful information and links including FAQs; information about roof-mounted evaporative coolers in bush fire prone areas and Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas.



For the latest articles on what's happening nationally go to ABCB Connect

[www.abcb.gov.au/Connect](http://www.abcb.gov.au/Connect)

### **Bushfire building report prompts improvement action**

Building and Energy is working closely with industry to improve understanding of bushfire building requirements after an inspection report, *[General Inspection Report Three – Bush fire building requirements in Western Australia](#)*, highlighted some areas that were unsatisfactory.

The inspections evaluated work carried out by building surveyors, bushfire consultants and builders at 54 new homes in bushfire-prone areas across 14 WA local governments.

[Read more](#)

## Less red tape for strata proponents

On 1 May 2020 amendments to the *Strata Titles Act 1985* and consequential amendments to the *Building Act 2011* and Building Regulations 2012 came into effect that streamline provisions of the Building Act dealing with strata proposals. A number of Building Act forms have also been discontinued to reduce duplication and additional costs.

The discontinued forms are:

BA11 - Application for occupancy permit strata

BA15 - Application for building approval certificate strata

BA12 - Occupancy permit strata

BA16 - Building approval certificate strata

[Read more](#)

## Energy efficiency matters

The objective of energy efficiency provisions in the Building Code of Australia (BCA) is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and for a dwelling, this requires compliance with the minimum energy efficiency Performance Requirements that relate to the building envelope and its fixed domestic services.

When applying these provisions for residential dwellings, building surveyors, designers and building industry practitioners should be aware of the following energy efficiency matters:

- Separate heating and cooling load limits do not apply in Western Australia
- Use of renewable energy as part of Performance Solution for P2.6.1
- Use of NatHERS software with the Verification Method V2.6.2.2

[Read more](#)



## Pool gate safety

Did you know that a pool gate must open away from the swimming pool area and that pool gate hinges need to be installed at certain locations and meet the relevant Australian Standard?

[Read more](#)

## Pool safety checklist

Building and Energy is letting building industry practitioners know about its new private swimming and spa pool safety barrier checklist. It is a simple self-assessment tool to check the basic elements of a pool's safety barrier.

The checklist is not intended to replace the four-yearly inspection conducted by the relevant local government to verify compliance.

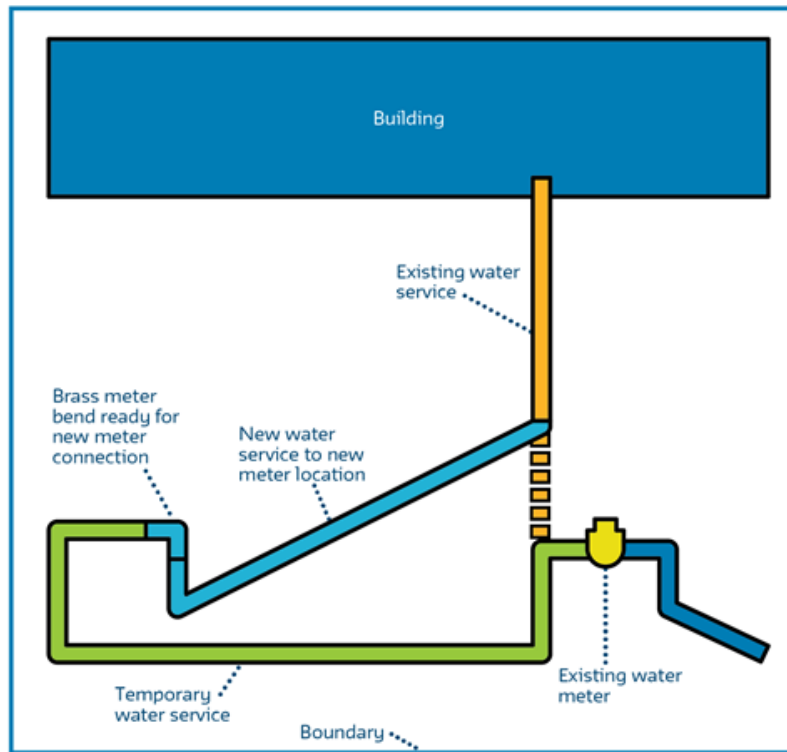
[Read more](#)

## Updated water meter relocation process

In response to feedback, Water Corporation has provided clarification and guidance to ensure the effective application of the new water meter relocation process.

[Read more](#)

## Typical plumbing installation for a water meter relocation



### Water safety advice for dormant buildings

As many businesses prepare to reopen, WA's plumbing regulator is urging owners and managers of recently unoccupied buildings to ensure that hot and cold water services are thoroughly flushed before use to clear potentially hazardous stagnation.

Building and Energy is supporting an [advisory note](#) issued by the Australian Building Codes Board, which warns that water quality could change if it has been dormant in pipes during the COVID-19 coronavirus restrictions.

[Read more](#)

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## NEWS RECAP

Prosecution, infringement and board matters

[Media releases on disciplinary matters](#)

Web announcements and media releases

[Inspection change to ease home owners' building complaint costs](#)

Take urgent action on all shocks and tingles  
Changes to Water Corporation asset protection  
documentation

## Industry bulletins, publications and reports

Compliance report: A summary of technical building  
inspections 2018–19

Consultation paper – Registration of building  
engineers in Western Australia

General Inspection Report – Bush fire building  
requirements in WA

IB131 – BAL assessments during the extended  
transition of the Building Code

IB130 – Prescribed deposit limit for cabinetry work  
where more than 50 per cent of the contract value is  
undertaken off-site

IB129 – Extension of transitional provisions

IB128 – Dis-application of NCC 2019 heating and  
cooling load limits for residential energy efficiency.

IB127 – Streamlining strata registration

IB126 – Building Amendment Regulations 2020

IB125 – New requirements for plumbing services to  
survey strata lot developments

IB124 – Warning on inappropriate wind classifications

IB123 – Gate hinges in private swimming pool safety  
barriers – AS 1926.1

IB122- FPAA101D Automatic fire sprinkler system  
design and installation

IB121 – Tie-down of timber framed sheet metal clad  
roofs to timber frame walls and beams

IB120 – Subfloor ventilation: suspended concrete  
slabs

Public naming of building service providers policy.

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