



# Transition for alterations and extensions in bush fire prone areas until 1 May 2021

***The building legislation of Western Australia requires new building work to comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA). The term building work includes the renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair to a building or incidental structure.***

To assist in the implementation of the new bush fire reforms in response to the Keelty Report into the Perth Hills 2011 bush fires **a transition period, until 1 May 2021**, of the BCA bush fire construction requirements has been provided for certain renovations, alterations, extensions, improvements or repairs in designated bush fire prone areas.

## **How does the transition work?**

Until 1 May 2021, a renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair to certain residential buildings in designated bush fire prone areas does not need to comply with the BCA bush fire construction requirements if it complies with one of the following options:

**Option 1:** the estimated value of the renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair is less than \$20,000.

**Option 2:** the renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair does not increase the risk of ignition from bush fire attack for the existing building.

These options form part of the definition of **excluded building work** for the purposes of the transition. Examples of excluded building work are provided at the end of this document.

## **Which residential buildings does the transition apply to?**

The transition applies to a renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair of the following buildings as classified by the BCA:

**Class 1** e.g. dwellings; bed and breakfasts.

**Class 2** e.g. apartments.

**Class 3** e.g. hotels; accommodation for aged, children or people with disabilities.

**Class 10a buildings or decks** associated with Class 1, 2 or 3 buildings e.g. garages, sheds.

The transition does **not** apply:

- if the existing building was required to comply with BCA bush fire construction requirements;
- to the installation of a roof mounted evaporative air conditioner;
- to a new stand-alone building e.g. an outbuilding, garden shed or separate ancillary accommodation;
- to the relocation of an existing building; or
- to unauthorised building work.

## **Do I need to upgrade my existing building?**

There is generally no requirement to retrospectively upgrade the parts of your existing building that are not undergoing any change.

### Do I need a building permit for my alteration or extension?

Most alterations or extensions require the granting of a building permit from the permit authority (usually the local government in which the building is located) before you can start building works. To check if you need a building permit, please contact your permit authority.

### Does my alteration or extension have to comply with other BCA requirements?

Yes. The transition only relates to the bush fire construction requirements of the BCA. All other BCA requirements (e.g. structural, weatherproofing, ventilation, energy efficiency) still apply to the alteration or extension.

### Further information

If you are not sure if your building work needs to comply with the BCA bush fire construction requirements, you should discuss the project with the relevant permit authority.

### Examples of excluded building work

#### Scenario 1

The applicant proposes an alteration to an existing house where the estimated value of the building work is \$10,000. Therefore, this alteration **is excluded building work**, regardless of whether the alteration increases the risk of ignition from bush fire attack for the existing building.

#### Scenario 2 (see Figure A)

The applicant proposes an extension to an existing house which is to be constructed from the same materials as the existing building on the side of the existing building that is not exposed to the bush fire prone vegetation.

The existing house was not required to comply with the bush fire construction requirements of the BCA at the time of its construction. This extension does not reduce the setback between the existing building and the vegetation or use different materials, so it will not increase the risk of ignition from bush fire attack to the existing building. Therefore, this extension **is excluded building work**, regardless of the estimated value of the building work.

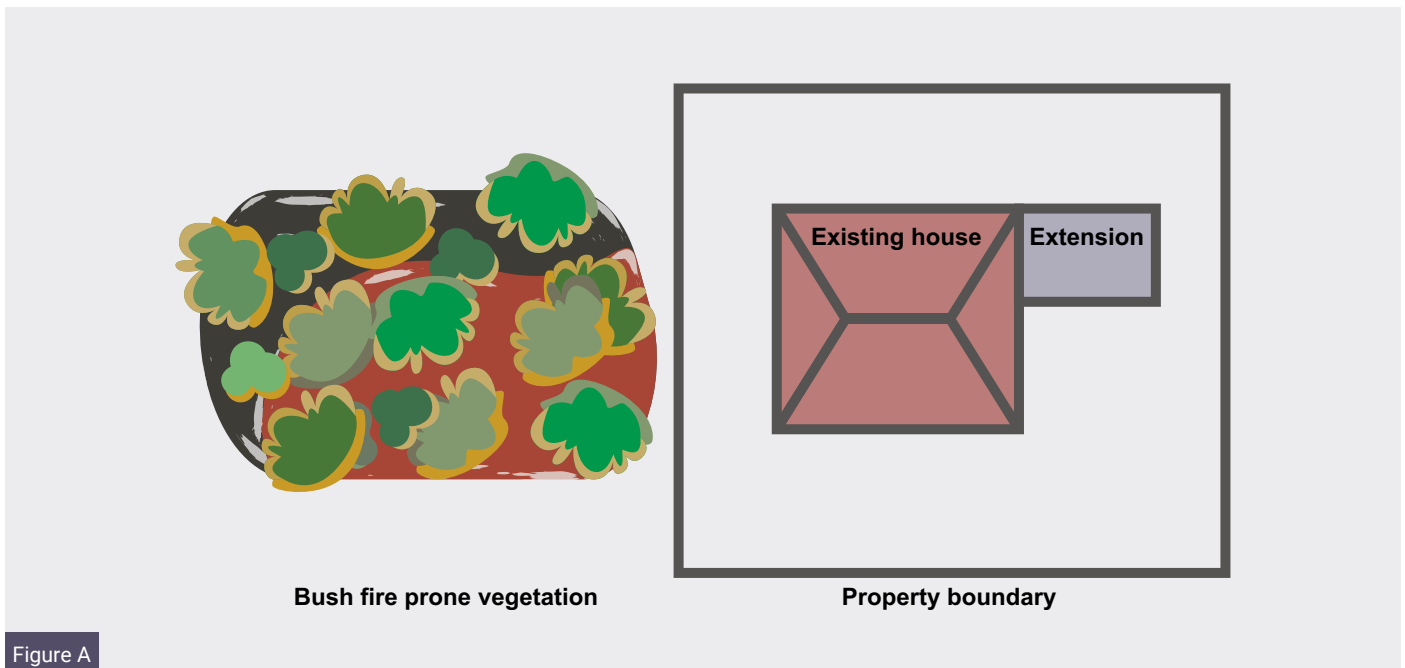


Figure A

## Examples (continued)

### Scenario 3 (see Figure B)

The applicant’s existing house is located 40 metres from bush fire prone vegetation. The applicant proposes to construct an extension between the existing house and the vegetation using the same materials as the existing house. The extension of this new part of the building will reduce the setback between the building and vegetation to 20 metres. This increases the risk of ignition from bush fire attack to the existing building. Therefore, if the estimated value of the building work for this extension is over \$20,000, this extension **is not excluded building work**. If the value of the building work for this extension is under \$20,000, this extension **is excluded building work**.

### Scenario 4

An applicant proposes to construct a two storey extension that proposes to use combustible cladding over the footprint of an existing building that uses non-combustible cladding. While the construction of the new storey does not reduce setbacks between the existing building and the vegetation, the use of combustible cladding on the extension increases the risk of ignition from bush fire attack to the existing building. Therefore, if the estimated value of the building work for this extension is over \$20,000, this extension **is not excluded building work**. If the value of the building work for this extension is under \$20,000, this extension **is excluded building work**.

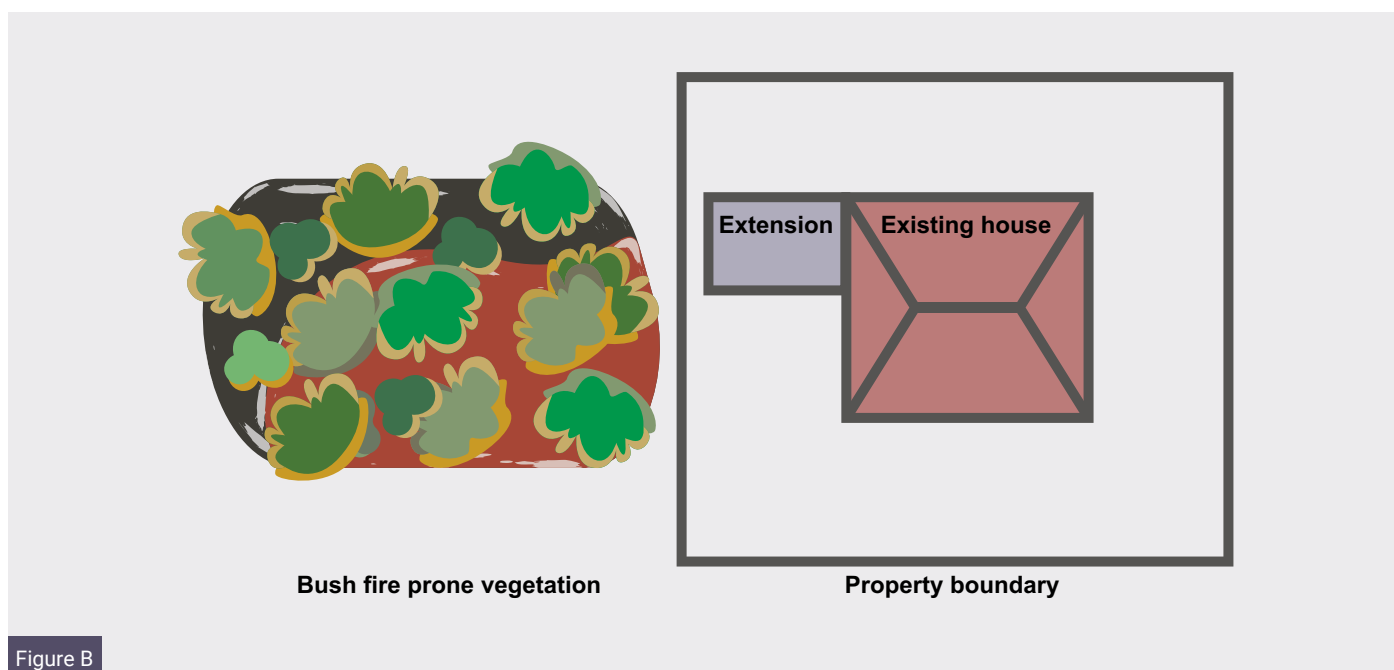


Figure B

**Note** – This document was originally published in April 2016. It has been updated and republished to reflect changes in the Building Amendments Regulations 2018.

**Disclaimer** – The information contained in this fact sheet is provided as general information and a guide only. It should not be relied upon as legal advice or as an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations, you should obtain independent legal advice.

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