



Media release

The Hon Peter Ryan MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Police & Emergency Services

Minister for Bushfire Response

Minister for Regional & Rural Development

Friday 28 January 2011

Regional bushfire-prone communities urged to use retrofit guide

Regional Victorians looking to rebuild or renovate are being encouraged to retrofit their homes using a new guide developed by the Building Commission and the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

Deputy Premier and Minister for Bushfire Response Peter Ryan today visited the Traralgon CFA Brigade with The Nationals Member for Morwell Russell Northe for a regional launch of the new retrofit guide.

"Retrofitting is not mandatory but the retrofit guide is an extremely useful tool for those wanting better protection from a bushfire," Mr Ryan said.

After extensive consultation with the CFA, fire specialists and other key stakeholders, the Building Commission has developed the guide to meet the new bushfire risk categories, known as Bushfire Attack Level (BAL).

"The guide contains simple and easy steps for home owners to modify their home to help increase its chances of surviving a fire," Mr Ryan said.

"The new retrofit guide provides an extensive list of building recommendations for owners to retrofit their home to withstand a bushfire up to and including BAL-29."

Mr Ryan said the retrofit guide was not suitable for homes deemed to be in BAL-40 & BAL FZ categories, which required design support from experienced professionals and the use of appropriate building materials.

"The Coalition Government understands some bushfire survivors are having difficulties rebuilding in areas with these BAL categories and we are committed to working with bushfire-prone communities and industry to provide support where possible," Mr Ryan said.

Mr Ryan said while retrofitting could not guarantee a house would survive a bushfire it increased a home's resilience to bushfire attack. A retrofit also increased a home's environmental rating and reduced heating and cooling costs.

"Retrofitting is highly recommended for homes where new renovations, which comply with current building legislation, have been undertaken but older sections have not been built to the current building code," Mr Ryan said.

Further information about the retrofit guide can be found on the Building Commission website www.buildingcommission.com.au or by calling the commission on 1300 815 127 for a retrofitting brochure.