

Assessing Class 1 buildings with timber floor designs submitted on or before 31 August 2007

1 Summary

This Practice Note applies for the period 1 May 2007 to 31 August 2007 and provides advice about compliance with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) for new Class 1 buildings that are of timber floor construction¹.

2 Background

2.1 BCA 2006

The Victorian variation Clause 3.12.0 of Volume Two of the BCA 2006 contained two Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions² for satisfying the Performance Requirement P2.6.1 for the thermal performance of a new building. In particular, Clause 3.12.0(b) provided that Performance Requirement P2.6.1 is satisfied by "complying with Practice Note 2006-55."

The relevant section of Practice Note 2006-55 provides:

3.2 Options for Class 1 buildings

Between 1 May 2005 and 30 April 2007, instead of requiring 5 Star rating and either a rainwater tank or a solar water heater, a new Class 1 building that is of timber floor construction, may be constructed to achieve:

- (i) A HER³ of 5 Stars; or
- (ii) A HER of 4 Stars and have either a rainwater tank system connected to all sanitary flushing systems or a solar water heater system.

2.2 BCA 2007

The BCA 2007 came into operation on 1 May 2007. The Victorian variation of Clause 3.12.0 of the BCA 2007 does not contain any reference to Practice Note 2006-55. Therefore, the options set out in 3.2 of Practice Note 2006-55 can no longer be recognised as a Deemed-to-Satisfy Provision for Performance

Requirement P2.6.1 for Class 1 buildings with timber floor construction unless substantial progress has been made on the design of the building prior to commencement of the BCA 2007, as certified by the relevant building surveyor (the RBS) under sub-section 10(2) of the *Building Act 1993* (the Act).

3 Continued applicability of Practice Note 2006-55 until 31 August 2007

On 30 April 2007 the Government announced its support to continue the transitional provisions for dwellings of timber floor construction for a further 4 months. This decision effectively continues the application of 3.2 of Practice Note 2006-55 as Building Solutions for new Class 1 buildings that are of timber floor construction for the period commencing 1 May 2007 and ending 31 August 2007.

4 Means of assessing a Class 1 building design incorporating a timber floor

The Building Commission supports the following means of applying 3.2 of Practice Note 2006-55 to applications for building permits for new Class 1 buildings designed with a timber floor up to 31 August 2007.

4.1 Sub-section 10(2) of the Act

Section 10 of the Act relates to the applicability of new or amended building regulations to building work. The BCA is adopted by and forms part of the *Building Regulations 2006*. Sub-section 10(2) of the Act provides that:

A building regulation, or an amendment to a building regulation, does not apply to the carrying out of building work if the relevant building surveyor is satisfied, and certifies in writing, that substantial progress was made on the design of the building before the building regulation or amendment commenced.

¹ The entire ground floor of the Class 1 building must be of timber floor construction. A floating timber floor on a concrete slab is not considered timber floor construction.

² Capitalised terms used in this Practice Note are as defined in the BCA.

³ House Energy Rating

It is expected that during the 4-month period ending 31 August 2007 sub-section 10(2) of the Act will apply to many Class 1 building designs submitted to the RBS for purposes of obtaining a building permit.

If the RBS is satisfied and certifies in writing that substantial progress was made on the design of a Class 1 building with a timber floor prior to 1 May 2007, then Clause 3.12.0(b) of BCA 2006, and 3.2 of Practice Note 2006-55 applies to that building work.

4.2 Practice Note 2006-55 as an Alternative Solution where sub-section 10(2) of the Act does not apply

Where an application for a building permit is made between 1 May 2007 and 31 August 2007 and the RBS does not certify under sub-section 10(2) of the Act that substantial progress has been made on the design of the building before 1 May 2007, the RBS should accept a proposal with a timber floor construction where the building achieves a 5 star rating, or a 4 star rating with the installation of a solar hot water system or a rainwater tank connected to all sanitary flushing systems as an Alternative Solution complying with Performance Requirement P2.6.1.

Building permit applicants may submit a copy of this Practice Note in support of such an Alternative Solution proposal to the RBS. The RBS may treat the review of this Practice Note as a Verification Method accepted by the Building Commission for determining compliance with Performance Requirement P2.6.1.

5 Useful contacts and references

For further information on the 5 Star Standard, plumbing standards, or energy efficient design in general, please contact the following organisations:

www.pic.vic.gov.au
www.buildingcommission.com.au
www.sustainability.vic.gov.au