

Media Release

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Easy, low-cost steps to boost your home's bushfire protection

Blazes in remote areas of Gippsland have signalled an early start to an expected above-normal fire season and serve as a reminder for people living in bushfire-prone areas to take steps to protect their properties, families and themselves.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has joined Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA), to urge individuals and communities to have their bushfire plans and their properties ready.

While most people living in bushfire-prone areas will have taken steps during the year to ensure they are prepared should their property be threatened, there are some quick and affordable actions people can still take in the lead-up to summer.

Research shows that ember attack was the key factor in more than 85 per cent of houses destroyed by bushfire. Many of the measures to prevent ember attack are low-to-moderate cost and easy to act upon, including:

- Seal gaps with joining strips, silicon weather strips, draught excluders etc on side-hung doors
- Seal vents and weep holes in external walls with corrosion resistant steel, bronze or aluminium mesh
- Seal around roofing and roof penetrations check that is securely fixed and won't blow off or allow embers into the roof space
- If you have an evaporative cooler, protect it with a mesh screen
- Clear leaves from gutters and consider installing a leaf-guard type product made from a non-combustible material
- Check that your gutters are in good condition and will hold water if you block the downpipes
- Apply to a fire-retardant coating product to external timber
- Enclose the subfloor of your home with a non-combustible material
- Install shutters or metal flyscreens to doors and windows.

VBA Acting Director of Technical and Regulation Jeffrey Gilmore said a Registered Building Practitioner can advise on whether property owners can retrofit safety elements, and to what extent it is possible before bushfire season is fully upon us.

"In addition to these steps, routine building maintenance, vegetation management and the removal of flammable materials close to buildings are important but easy bushfire protection measures you can take," Mr Gilmore said. "For example, where window or door metal shutters are fitted, check that they work before there is an immediate bushfire threat."

The VBA and the CFA have produced the [Guide to Retrofit Your Home for Better Protection from a Bushfire](#) as practical information for people wishing upgrade to their existing homes to be better protected from bushfires. The guide is for properties up to Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) 29.

For more bushfire information, visit the [VBA website](#), or visit the CFA website to view or download the CFA's [Your Guide to Survival](#).

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