



# COBBLE

**5 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN  
BUILDING IN A BAL 29 AREA**

# IN THIS GUIDE, WE'RE GOING TO OUTLINE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS TO MAKE WHEN BUILDING IN A BAL 29 RATED AREA.



## AUSTRALIA IS FILLED WITH INCREDIBLE AND AWE-INSPIRING LANDSCAPES.

From quaint beachside towns to expansive, arid deserts, our country boasts many unique vistas. With each of these natural environments comes a range of challenges and dangers. As the devastating fires across Victoria and New South Wales in 2020 have shown, one of the biggest dangers in secluded regional areas of the country is bushfires.

Many of Australia's most beautiful rural locations, like the Yarra Valley, are identified as being bushfire-prone and are rated via a Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) system. This system analyses and rates an area's potential exposure to ember attacks, dangerous heat and direct flame contact and requires homes be built with specifications that tackle this threat.

With years of experience in building within BAL-rated areas, Cobalt Constructions can help you to design & construct an exceptional and safe family home



# 1

## EXTERNAL CLADDING

**EVERY HOME DESERVES TO BE UNIQUE BUT BUILDING IN A BAL 29 OR HIGHER AREA CAN LIMIT YOUR EXTERNAL FACADE FINISHES.**

With the right team who can guide you through all the different choices on offer, you can achieve a unique and functional look for your home.

Gone are the days when you only had bricks, cement sheets and corrugated Colorbond to choose from. Now, the options are limitless, even steel – crucial to high BAL-rated homes – which comes in many different profiles. For a modern look, you can't go past standing seam steel.

Pre-finished composite boards, like the ones on offer from Euro Selekt Clad, can help you achieve a classic luxury home look and have the appearance of timber weatherboard (without the fire hazard).

Rendering has also come a long way in Australia over recent years. We now have BAL-rated foam boards for lightweight render options. Whatever the style or look you're chasing for your new home or renovation Cobalt Constructions can provide crucial knowledge and assistance for your BAL 29 build.

# 2

## DECKING

There's nothing like coming home after a busy day of work and unwinding on your deck, looking out over the hills. Whilst your timber selection for decking is not severely hampered in a BAL 29 area, the installation of the decking boards contains strict requirements.

Here is a quick guide covering what you need to know about decking in a BAL 29 area:

### BOARDS

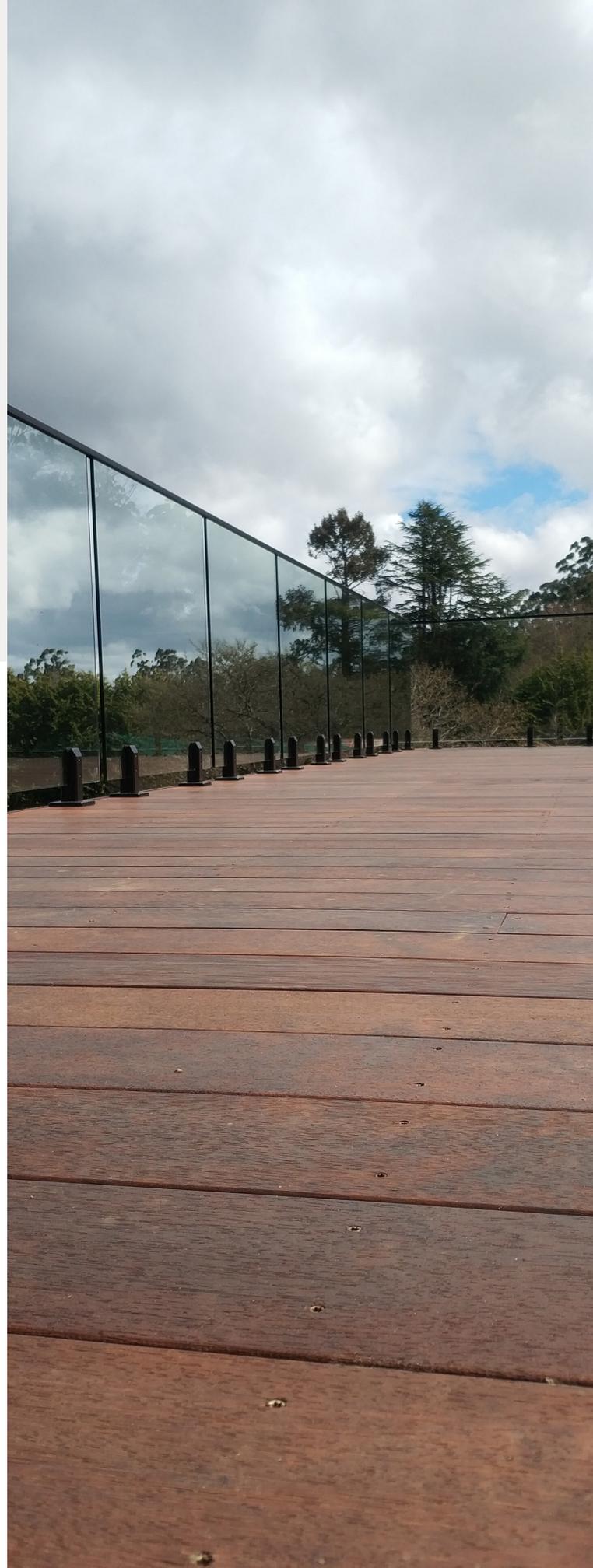
The only requirement is that your timber choice must be bushfire resistant. Almost all common boarding, such as Merbau, Blackbutt, Spotted Gum and Red Ironbark, adheres to this requirement.

### GAPS

All decking and plinth board gaps are required to be 2mm-4mm max, as gaps of 5mm-10mm are particularly vulnerable to ember attacks.

### BALUSTRADES AND HANDRAILS

Not much changes here unless you are 125mm from glazing or a combustible wall. In this case, you'll need to use bushfire-resistant timber or a non-combustible material such as steel for your balustrades and handrails.



# 3

## WINDOWS AND GLAZING

Mixing style, functionality and energy efficiently whilst trying to adhere to BAL 29 requirements can be a tricky task.

At Cobalt Constructions, we can help you combine all of these elements in order to achieve the perfect choice of windows.

**If you're installing windows in a BAL 29 home, you need to remember:**

All glass must be toughened safety glass (minimum 5mm)

All opening windows must be screened with metal fly screens

All window frames must be made from bushfire-resistant timber, a metal like aluminium or uPVC with metal reinforcing



# 4



## EXTERNAL DOORS

The entrance to your home is where many choose to make a bold statement, however BAL regulations can hinder this. Cobalt Constructions have the knowledge and experience to provide your home with a stylish and grand entrance that remains in line with BAL guidelines.

Timber doors are timeless and come in many styles and colours. Solid timber doors are standard practice at Cobalt Constructions, but they are also required under a BAL 29 rating for all external doors. Glazed doors need to be solid timber for the first 400mm above the threshold and must be made from bushfire resistant timber or non-combustible materials such as aluminium.



Expansive pivot doors make for a grand entrance and require a full certification to be installed in a BAL 29 area. Cobalt Constructions are able to work alongside our trusted suppliers to make custom, BAL-rated pivot doors, so you can enter your home in style whilst remaining safe.

# 5

## OTHER PRECAUTIONS

Even when you've met all the BAL 29 requirements, it's recommended to have additional precautions in place to protect your most precious asset – your family. Some additional safety installations include:

### BUSHFIRE SPRINKLERS

Well-designed and installed roof sprinkler systems can protect your home from ember attacks for hours, unmanned

### BUSHFIRE ROLLER SHUTTERS

These have been credited with saving homes from burning to the ground in instances where surrounding properties were not so fortunate

### CFA TANKS

10,000L water tanks with a CFA fitting can be used to protect your property during an active fire



# LOOKING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN CONSTRUCT YOUR DREAM HOME WHILST ADHERING TO BAL REGULATIONS?

Get in touch with the team at Cobalt  
Constructions today.

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BAL-rated areas, we can help you to design  
& construct an exceptional and safe family  
home.

## CONTACT US

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