NCC changes to termite management systems

[This Building Note supersedes and replaces Building Note 19]

The purpose of this building note is to advise of changes to Australian Standard 3660 - Termite Management, which is a National Construction Code (NCC); Building Code of Australia 2016 referenced standard for the installation of termite management systems. This building note must be read in conjunction with the AS 3660 suite.

The AS 3660 suite of Australian Standards were reviewed and Parts 1 and 3 were updated in 2014. There has been a transition period from the previous version of AS3660 to the 2014 version under the NCC which ended 30 April 2017. This means that as of 1 May 2017 compliance with the 2014 version of AS 3660.1 (AS 3660.1:2014 Termite Management, Part 1: New Building Work) is required.

Additionally AS 3660.3 Termite Management, Part 3: Assessment criteria for termite management systems, was adopted as a primary standard and is referenced in Volume 2 of the NCC. It includes new requirements and pass/fail criteria that will enable manufacturers and system proposers to assess their products and methods. It provides a clear path for compliance with AS 3660.1:2014 (Part 1: New Building Work).

A termite management system is intended to reduce the risk of a termite attack on a building and therefore when choosing a termite management system consideration should be given to the design, location, site conditions and building characteristics in accordance with the Standard. Various approaches may be taken whereby practitioners and contractors may select either a single system or combination of termite management systems.

The most significant changes to the AS 3660.1 include, but are not limited to:

- Chemical hand spray treatment beneath slabs will no longer be allowed as a single termite management system in concealed and inaccessible areas. The use of chemical treatments, when used as the primary termite protection system, requires a reticulation system which allows for recharging the chemical at a later date.

- Revision of the requirements around the protection of service penetrations (including electrical, communication and plumbing) pipe collars which relates to the flange dimension, allowing smaller units to be considered compliant.

Keywords: termite, mastotermes, chemical, variations
An update of generic descriptors of barriers used so that the market is able to access a broader selection of products, provided that compliance with AS3660.1-2014 is demonstrated with evidence of suitability in the NCC BCA 2016.

Practitioners and contractors are to note that the NT variation in NCC Volume 1 and Volume 2 still applies, which includes additional termite risk management measures in areas where *Mastotermes darwiniensis* are prevalent.

An extract of Volume 2 of the NCC: Building Code of Australia 2016 is as follows:

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In the Northern Territory delete 3.1.3.3(d) and insert 3.1.3.3(d) and (e) as follows:
(d) include additional termite risk management measures in areas where Mastotermes darwiniensis are prevalent; and
(e) where a chemical termite management system is used—
   (i) the chemical must be included on the appropriate authority’s pesticides register; and
   (ii) when used as an external perimeter termite management system for *Mastotermes darwiniensis*, it is—
      (A) installed by excavating trenches, treating the exposed trench and backfilling the trench with treated material; and
      (B) covered by a concrete cover strip not less than 50 mm thick and 300 mm wide measured from the external wall of the building.
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Examples of additional termite risk management measures can range from visual barriers, greater frequency of visual inspections and building site management precautions as per Appendix F of AS 3660.1 2014.

Building owners, in conjunction with their appropriately qualified building practitioners, should consider the additional risk mitigation methods appropriate for their building. Only appropriately qualified practitioners can provide advice on termite management measures which should be determined on a ‘building by building’ assessment taking into account the risk management measures the building owner wishes to put in place.

In considering management practices, it is noted that hand spraying treatments as additional termite risk management to the ground may be used as a precaution to kill any existing termites, however chemicals used in hand spray applications typically do not have an extended life of 50 years and therefore long term additional management measures may not be achieved through the use of hand spraying.

The Informative Guidelines in Appendix A of the Australian Standard AS 3660.1:2014 may be relied upon and referenced to ensure treatment has been installed in accordance with AS 3660.1 – 2014.

Users of AS3660 Termite Management are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the changes.

Section 51 of the Building Act (NT) allows for transitional arrangements to be made to account for the regular updates to the NCC. This ensures that if a new edition of the NCC commences prior to the issue of a building permit, and substantial progress has been made in relation to the design of a building, the previous edition of the NCC can be applied to the building work.

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