

# Media Release

Page 1 of 2

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**IMMEDIATE**

## Australia's building code change creates exciting new opportunities for timber framing

*The culmination of three years work, orchestrated by industry body, Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA), the Australian Building Code Board recently approved amendments enabling timber framing to be used on a far wider range of projects. The new regulations now permits the use of fire and acoustic rated timber-framed construction systems for 3 storey Class 3 buildings (eg hotels/motels) and broadens the market for timber. The amendment will apply from May 2014.*

“This welcome change in the building code to allow deemed-to-satisfy solutions will provide architects and building designers with the opportunity to use more wood and wood products,” said the University of Tasmania’s Associate Professor Gregory Nolan, “hopefully this is the tip of the iceberg and we can look forward to more approved applications for traditional wood framing and new engineered wood products in taller buildings.”

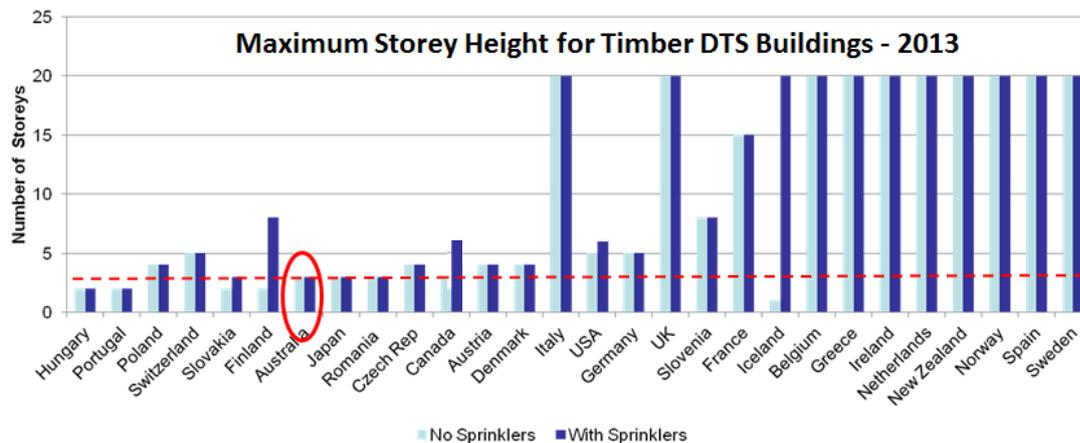
Australian designers and builders have to comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) that includes performance standards for different classes of buildings and specifies materials that have been tested and approved to meet the standards. Until now, 3 storey timber framing has not been an approved method of construction for Class 3 buildings, which covers a wide range of accommodation, including hotels, motels, hostels and residential parts of health-care facilities for staff accommodation.

The three-year process, which involved submissions by Forest and Wood Products Australia Ltd (FWPA), testing by fire engineers Exova Warringtonfire and work by the Timber Development Association, led to the Australian Building Code Board approving the amendments in late 2013.

This is a step towards bringing Australia into line with the majority of overseas building codes, that allow deemed-to-satisfy solutions for much taller timber buildings, as shown in the table below. FWPA’s Codes & Standards program is continuing to address these restrictions, working with industry and regulatory bodies to broaden the market opportunities for both structural and non-structural timber products.

### **About Forest and Wood Products Australia**

FWPA aims to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian forest and wood products industry through innovation by investing in effective and relevant R&D and promotion of the industry’s products, services and values. FWPA undertakes industry-level activities where a collective approach delivers more effective and valuable commercial outcomes than individual action. We deliver services that support the industry’s capacity as a major exporter and mainstay of regional communities in many parts of Australia.



“This is a positive development for all stakeholders,” said Ric Sinclair, FWPA’s managing director, “designers and builders gains a broader material palette – and the option of bringing the environmental advantages of wood to more projects, while for the timber industry it’s part of a market development process that will add substantial volume for Australian companies.”

“However, as the international comparison shows, there’s still an enormous opportunity to increase the use of timber in taller buildings – and we’re working to ensure our industry can make the most of it,” Mr Sinclair concluded.

## ENDS

A copy of the December 2011 report on which the findings were based:

### ***Extension of the Concession which Allows Timber Framed Construction in Class 2 Buildings to Include Class 3 Buildings***

*A report from the Alternative solution compliance resource for fire safe timber design project is available from:*

<http://www.fwpa.com.au/sites/default/files/MRTFC%20Report%20-%20Issue%201.pdf>

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