

# Media Release

From the Building Commission

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## **Victorians warned against buying non-accredited bushfire shelters**

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The Building Commission is warning Victorians against buying non-accredited private bushfire shelters, or using 'storage shelters' for personal use in the event of a bushfire.

The Building Commissioner, Mr Michael Kefford, said a number of companies had been advertising bushfire shelters in newspapers and online, but the quality and safety of those shelters had not been accredited by the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC).

"Some companies are even calling these constructions 'storage shelters', which don't usually require a building permit to create, but also have not been accredited as fire shelters," said Mr Kefford.

"A storage shelter should not be relied upon to keep you safe during a bushfire.

"Only one company, *Wildfire Safety Bunkers*, has received the BRAC 'stamp of approval' for use in situations assessed up to and including the highest bushfire attack level.

"This followed a series of rigorous tests by *Wildfire Safety Bunkers*, and an assessment by BRAC and an independent expert panel.

"Any other models by any other companies should be treated as non-accredited, as they have not been approved by BRAC.

"Buying one of these non-accredited models is not worth the risk it could pose to you and your family if a major bushfire threatened your home."

All private bushfire shelters require a building permit before construction, which specifies performance requirements for design and construction—such as access to the shelter, and necessary facilities, tenability and air supply.

Mr Kefford added that private bushfire shelters should only be used as a place of last resort.

"Regardless of the quality of the shelter, the only way to absolutely ensure your safety is to leave early," said Mr Kefford.

For more information on Bushfire Building Regulations and home preparedness, contact the Building Commission on **1300 815 127** or visit [www.buildingcommission.com.au](http://www.buildingcommission.com.au)