



## BUILDING NOTE

NUMBER 28-2004

20 September 2004

### USE OF UNTREATED SOFTWOODS IN AREAS INFESTED BY EUROPEAN HOUSE BORER

#### Background

Further to our previous Building Note on this subject matter, dated 15 September 2004, the presence of the European House Borer has now been confirmed in the suburb of Casuarina in the Town of Kwinana. Previous confirmed infestation areas were limited to the Shire of Mundaring, suburb of Ellenbrook and Gnangara pine plantations in the City of Swan, suburb of Walliston in the Shire of Kalamunda and the suburb of Southern River in the City of Gosnells.

#### Action by Building Surveyors

Building surveyors considering building licence applications for the Shire of Mundaring, suburb of Ellenbrook in the City of Swan, suburb of Walliston in the Shire of Kalamunda, suburb of Southern River in the City of Gosnells, suburb of Casuarina in the Town of Kwinana, and neighbouring districts should advise the applicants, builders and building owners of the presence of European House Borer with the recommendation not to use untreated pine or other susceptible species for structural members.

#### Fourth Advisory Note

Copies of the attached fourth Advisory Note should be on display at local authority offices and libraries, and should, together with the previous Advisory Notes, be included with documentation provided with a building licence. Copies of the Advisory Notes can be obtained from the Department of Housing and Works by:

Telephone: 9222 4563  
E-mail: [buildingcontrol@dhw.wa.gov.au](mailto:buildingcontrol@dhw.wa.gov.au)

#### To Report Possible Infestation

For further information, or to report a possible infestation contact the Plant Pest Hotline on free call 1800 084 881.

Peter Gow  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OFFICE OF POLICY AND PLANNING

*Building Notes are produced by the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) primarily to inform building surveyors and the building industry. The information contained in this Note is intended for general guidance only and must not be relied upon in any particular set of circumstances. To ascertain your precise rights and obligations, you should consult a building surveyor or other appropriate professional or refer to the applicable legislation.*

*Copies of Building Notes may be obtained from the DHW at 108 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth or by accessing the Department's web-site at [www.dhw.wa.gov.au](http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au).*



## Advisory Note #4

### USE OF UNTREATED SOFTWOODS IN AREAS INFESTED BY EUROPEAN HOUSE BORER

#### European House Borer

The European House Borer is a destructive pest of seasoned coniferous timber, including pine, fir and spruce. If allowed to become established it can cause major structural damage to buildings. The European House Borer was detected in the Shire of Mundaring earlier this year however, more recently other confirmed infested areas have found. More information, including a picture of the European House Borer, can be found at the following website: <http://www.ehb.wa.gov.au>

#### Confirmed Infested Areas:

1. Shire of Mundaring
2. Suburb of Ellenbrook and Gngalara pine plantation in the City of Swan
3. Suburb of Walliston in the Shire of Kalamunda
4. Suburb of Southern River in the City of Gosnells
5. Suburb of Casuarina in the Town of Kwinana

#### Precautions for New Buildings

It is recommended that building owners, designers and builders constructing buildings in infested areas and neighbouring suburbs should not use untreated pine or other susceptible timbers until the extent of the infestation has been determined and a decision is made on whether eradication is possible. In particular, untreated pine should not be used in critical structural members including roof, ceiling, floor, stairway or ramp and wall framing members, or in areas such as roof spaces where regular inspection is not practical.

At this stage there is no evidence that the European House Borer is established in other parts of the metropolitan area or in other parts of the State. However, it is possible that infestations will be reported or found as part of the survey to determine the extent of the infestation and its control. If widespread infestations are found, it may be impractical to eradicate the borer and formal measures may be needed to restrict the structural use of untreated softwoods in other areas.

#### Precautions for Existing Buildings

It is recommended that building owners in infested areas and neighbouring suburbs, should check for the presence of untreated pine or other susceptible species and regularly inspect the timber for evidence of infestation, such as exit holes and powdery residue. It is particularly important to check roof spaces and structural members. If any indication of borer damage is found, building owners should contact the Plant Pest Hotline on free call 1800 084 881.

At this stage there is no evidence that the European House Borer is established in other parts of the metropolitan area or other parts of the State. However building owners should make sure regular maintenance inspections or inspections by pest controllers include inspection of roof spaces and structural members for evidence of infestation. If any indication of borer damage is found, building owners should contact the Plant Pest Hotline on free call 1800 084 881.

If European House Borer is detected, fumigation of the building may be necessary. Fumigation will destroy existing infestations, but will not provide protection against future infestation.

#### Information on Treatment Options

Because the European House Borer has recently been identified in Western Australia, it is not yet known which treatment options are best to prevent an infestation. Industry and Government are researching treatment options for susceptible timbers. Before considering treatment options you may check with the supplier or manufacturer of the product for its suitability.

#### To Report Possible Infestation

To report a possible infestation contact the Plant Pest Hotline on free call 1800 084 881. For advice on building laws contact the Department of Housing and Works on 9222 4563.

20 September 2004