

TERMITES FACT SHEET

Australia has approximately 300 species of termite, and of these only about 15 attack timber used by humans.

Subterranean termites cause by far the most damage to timber in service in Australia.

They are generally ground-dwelling and require soil contact or some external source of moisture. These, and are the type of termite discussed in this fact sheet.

What are termites?

Termites (or commonly known as white ants) are social insects who live and work together in large colonies, with each individual having a specific task to perform to enable the colony to function.

How do I identify termite nests?

Termites build various types of nest. Some termites have a completely underground existence without a central nest, whilst others build a central nest in the soil, or in dead or living trees.

A termite mound is the most familiar form of termite nest. Mounds are often very distinctive in form, depending on the species of termite. They can vary in size and shape from hardened flat lumps to the tall, columnar structures which may be more than seven metres high.

What could termites do to my property?

Termites feed on dead or living plant material containing cellulose. Some species of timber are resistant to termites, but none is 'termite proof'. Termites will often damage materials they cannot digest e.g. plastics, rubber, metal or mortar.

In reality, any structure containing wood is exposed to possible subterranean termite invasion unless protective measures are taken.

What do I do if I notice termites at my property?

Please advise UnitingSA Housing as soon as you notice termites, or a termite nest at your property. We will treat the problem and protect the structure of your home.

