

thickness of the walls.

"We can't see the hempcrete now that it's rendered, but we can feel that we're surrounded by thick walls. It's very comfortable and cosy," says Vercha. In fact, one small section of wall has been left unrendered and exposed to create an 'honesty window', offering a view of the fibre structure of the hemp.

Vercha and Kamil used Tradical hempcrete from supplier Oz Hemp: a mixture of lime, hemp hurd and water. Hempcrete provides excellent insulation and thermal properties, keeping the house cool as the day warms up, and warm as outside cools at night. "The winters are cold in Blackheath, so it's nice to come home to a house that maintains a fairly

constant temperature," Kamil says.

The Tradical hempcrete is CodeMark certified and exceeds minimum requirements for BAL-FZ rated building. Being in a direct flame zone, the house couldn't feature any timber externally, with the exception of the timber-framed windows and doors from Paarhammer, which are also BAL-FZ rated. Hempy is a small house so there aren't a lot of windows, but these rigorously tested, Australian-designed and made windows (with German hardware) are still an investment. Kirstie designed and strategically positioned the windows to make sure each one serves its purpose. "Because they're expensive, you have to think about each window's size,

placement and purpose: whether it's for light, views or cross ventilation. It's really useful to do that in any build," says Kirstie.

The need to avoid external timber can make decking a difficult issue in bushfire zones. Kamil and Vercha chose non-combustible fibre cement with a ceramic wood-look tile on top. It gives the impression of timber and meets the BAL-FZ requirement for no gaps in the decking (gaps are dangerous for ember ingress).

The bushfire rating does not impose restrictions on timber use inside, though. FSC-certified spotted gum flooring and paulownia lining boards to the ceilings give a soft and natural feel to the space. Delicate timber trim conceals the junction between the ceiling and walls, curving

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Kamil and Vercha spend most of their time at home in the living area or outside, so the two bedrooms are smaller, but still well-designed and cosy.

