

# Preparing for NABERS Ratings

## Overview

This fact sheet explains what NABERS is, and how to go about getting your ratings.

## About NABERS ratings

The National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) is a suite of rating tools to measure the environmental impact of Australian buildings. NABERS is an initiative of federal, state and territory Governments, and is managed by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW.

The NABERS tools use quantifiable data to measure the actual Energy, Waste, Water and Indoor Environment performance of an office building. Over 40 percent of available office space in Australia has been rated with NABERS Energy, and more than 20 percent with NABERS Water.

NABERS rates buildings on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. Ratings benchmark a building against the current market performance, with 2.5 stars representing market average performance. A 5 star rating demonstrates best practice, market leading performance, while a 1 star rating means the building is performing well below average market practice and has considerable scope for improvement.

A rating generally takes four to six weeks from when it is sought to receiving the certified accreditation. The Waste tool also requires a two-week audit to measure actual waste generated. A NABERS rating is valid for one year. An annual review ensures the rating is up-to-date and accurate for the building's current operational performance. Visit [www.nabers.com.au](http://www.nabers.com.au) for more information about NABERS ratings.

## Policy Context

As outlined in the NSW Government Premier's Memorandum no. 2008-28, all government office buildings larger than 1000m<sup>2</sup>, owned and/or tenanted by budget dependent agencies, require NABERS Energy and Water ratings before 31 December 2008. Only NABERS Accredited Assessors can undertake the ratings.

## Purpose of this guide

This guide aims to help you and your property service providers to identify and collate the information needed for the ratings to commence. Different rating types are available, depending on your circumstances:

Rating type	Covers	Applicable to
Tenancy	The tenanted space	Government tenant occupying a leased office space within a privately owned or Government building
Base Building	Central services and common areas	Government owned office building with multiple Government and/or private tenants
Whole Building	A combination of the above	Government owned and tenanted building

Different data is required for tenancy, whole or base building ratings, as outlined in this document. Your Assessor will need this data, as well as evidence of its completeness and accuracy. This document is greatly simplified for your quick reference, and your Assessor may require more detailed information. To make the rating process as smooth as possible, promptly provide your Assessor with the required information.

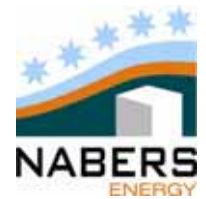
For more information, visit [government@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:government@environment.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 361 967.



## Data requirements for NABERS ratings

### NABERS Energy

- Energy consumption data
- Net lettable area
- Number of computers
- Hours of occupancy



Note that submetering is required for tenancy or base building ratings. If there is inadequate submetering, a whole building rating should be used.

#### Energy Consumption Data

Your Assessor will need copies of the utility bills for **all sources of energy consumed, such as electricity, gas, LPG, coal, oil, etc**, in the last 12 months, the latest bill to be no more than four months old.

The energy consumption data included in a rating is different for each rating type:

- for tenancy rating – energy consumed by building occupants, such as tenant’s light and equipment and tenant-controlled supplementary air conditioning, etc.
- for base building rating – energy consumed by central services, for example common area lighting, lifts, air conditioning, etc.
- for whole building rating - combination of the above.

Your Assessor is primarily concerned with the consumption data (i.e. the amount of electricity in kWh or gas in MJ) rather than the energy costs, so please ensure that you provide full copies of the bills and not just the first page to your Assessor.

If you are having trouble finding a continuous record of energy bills for the most recent 12 month period, it may be easier to arrange for your Assessor to contact energy utilities to verify energy supply information. To arrange this, you will need to write a letter to your energy supplier granting your Assessor permission to access this data.

#### Net Lettable Area

Your Assessor will need documentation on the net lettable area (NLA) for:

- tenancy rating - the tenancy space being rated
- base building or whole building rating - all the tenancies in the building.

Your evidence of the NLA may include:

- layout plans of the premises, or
- lease documents.

The documentation must specify that the NLA is measured based on the Property Council of Australia (PCA) publication *Method of Measurement for Lettable Area* March 1997 or the *BOMA 1989* or *BOMA 1985 Method of Measurement*.

It is important that the NLA documentation is current and valid for the configuration of the premises during the rating period. If the plans are outdated or not available, you are advised to have the floor plans revised or prepared by a registered surveyor before commencing the rating process. Your Assessor will visit the site to check that the information sources match the current configuration of the tenancy. Some Assessors may also be able provide additional service to measure the NLA during the site visit.

Note that NABERS for offices only rates the office spaces. Where a tenancy or building includes areas that are not actually office areas and not used exclusively by office occupants, such as a café open to the public, an Assessor may exclude that area from the rating. Your Assessor will know the rule that applies when excluding an area from the rating.

If some areas were vacant during the rating period, you will have to provide details of vacant areas (NLA) and the exact dates that the space was vacated and/or re-occupied. An example is the lease documents that show these dates.

#### Number of Computers

The total number of computers kept on the premises needs to be determined. A count of active computers will be done by your Assessor. You will need to give your Assessor permission to access to your tenancy so that they can perform the computer count. The computer count for a whole building rating will take in all the computers for all the office tenancies in the building, whereas a tenancy rating considers the number of computers in that tenancy only.

This data is not required for base building ratings.

## Hours of Occupancy

For tenancy and whole building ratings the hours of occupancy equals the number of hours per week for which the premises has 20 per cent or more of normal peak occupancy. This is determined by the Assessor who will survey your staff managers with a standard survey form. Surveyed managers should have a good idea of the arrival and leaving patterns for people in their area. You are encouraged to prepare a list of managers' names and contact details to facilitate the survey.

To help your Assessor understand the occupancy patterns, you are encouraged to provide floor plans showing the office layouts marked up with the various business departments or team locations if such groups have different occupancy hours.

For base building ratings, the hours of occupancy are the hours per week for which services are provided to tenants, excluding plant start-up times. This is determined by the "hours of service" or "hours of occupation" as stated in the lease documentation.

## NABERS Water

- Water consumption data
- Net lettable area - as for the NABERS Energy whole building rating (above)
- Hours of occupancy - as for the NABERS Energy whole building rating (above)

Note that NABERS Water ratings are only available for whole buildings.



## Water Consumption Data

Your Assessor will need copies of the bills for all externally supplied water consumed by the occupant(s), central services, landscaping and common areas of building in the preceding continuous 12 month period, including mains water, bore/well water, externally supplied recycled water (potable and non-potable) and dam/river water.

Please note that your Assessor is primarily concerned with the consumption data, i.e. amount of water in kL or m<sup>3</sup>, rather than the water costs, so please ensure that you provide full copies of the bills and not just the first page.

## NABERS Waste

- Mass of waste generated and waste recycled
- Number of computers - as for the NABERS Energy rating (above)

A NABERS Waste rating uses a different benchmarking approach to the Energy and Water ratings.

Where Energy and Water ratings use utility billing information as the primary data source, a Waste rating relies on audit data initiated by your Assessor.

A NABERS Waste tenancy rating considers the total mass of waste that is generated by a single office tenant and their recycling efforts, whereas a whole building rating considers the total mass of waste generated by an office building including all of the office tenants and their recycling efforts. A NABERS Waste base building rating only considers the recycling efforts of all office spaces within a building.



## Mass of Total Waste and Recycling Generated

You will need to allow your Assessor to conduct a waste audit in your office over **ten consecutive working days** (between Monday and Friday; no weekends or public holidays are to be included in the audited days). More than 75 per cent of full time equivalent staff who normally occupy the rated space must be present during the audit period.

The waste audit cannot occur in the following periods:

- two weeks before or after the end of the financial year
- within public school holiday periods
- within January or February or in the last two weeks of December.

The waste audit data collected from the 10 sampling days is extrapolated to represent the previous 12 months of waste management practices.

The waste audit for a tenancy rating should involve either an audit, i.e. weighing of all waste disposal streams within your office, ensuring that no streams are missed, or auditing these streams as they leave the tenancy, possibly in the lift lobby,

when collected by cleaners or contractors. It is not recommended that the audit be done at the main loading dock since extreme care should be taken that no other tenant's waste is included.

The waste audit for a base or whole building rating should be in a centralised location such as the loading dock where the building's waste is consolidated. However, consideration should be given to other waste disposal paths in addition to these centralised areas (i.e. secure recycling, toner cartridge and fluorescent tube collection, etc).

To help your Assessor plan for the waste audit, you should provide floor plans of your office(s) showing the locations of all waste disposal streams and possible sampling points.

## NABERS Indoor Environment

- Net lettable area - as for the NABERS Energy rating (above)
- Occupant Satisfaction Survey
- Site visit for collecting quantitative measurements.



The NABERS Indoor Environment Performance Rating is based on qualitative results from an occupant satisfaction survey and quantitative measurements of indoor environment parameters collected by your Assessor.

### Occupant Satisfaction Survey

Your Assessor will liaise with you to create the distribution list and timing for the survey. Ideally, 100 per cent of staff should be surveyed, however at least 75 per cent of full time equivalent staff must be surveyed and at least 50 per cent of those staff must complete the survey for the rating to proceed.

You will be requested by your Assessor to distribute the survey by email to your staff at the beginning of the survey period. To encourage a better response rate, send out reminder emails to your staff four to eight business days following the initial email. The survey is not required for a NABERS Indoor Environment base building rating.

### Site Visit for Collecting Quantitative Measurements

The site visit **must occur after** the survey has been completed. You will need to grant permission for your Assessor (or their sub-consultant) to visit your office, and plant rooms in the case of whole building ratings, to perform the quantitative measurements.

The site visit has been designed such that the activities can be accommodated within typical occupancy hours, e.g. 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday excluding Public Holidays. In most cases, all site measurements can be taken within one day but this may not be possible for larger offices. Your Assessor can perform measurements over more than one day, but not more than five working days.

To help your Assessor to plan and organise the assessment, you will need to provide the following information:

- floor plans of tenanted office space to show the arrangement of open plan office area as well as private rooms
- leases that show hours of operation, vacancy schedules and thermal comfort conditions where applicable.

Where a rating is performed on a base or whole building, the Assessor will also require:

- details of the number, location and type of ventilation system, e.g. mechanical, mixed mode or natural, and how each system distributes air to the tenanted spaces
- copies of Building Management System (BMS) reports for temperature readings on all rated floors if available. If BMS reports are used, you will need to supply copies of calibration reports for the BMS sensors.

The NSW Government Sustainability Policy is helping Government save water and energy, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, increase recycling and sustainable purchasing and become carbon neutral by 2020. The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW) is the lead agency implementing the Sustainability Policy. Visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government) for more information.

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