

NABERS Ratings and Building Energy Performance

Canonical: <https://northmoregordon.com/technologies/nabers/>

Details:

Rating · Boundary · Improvement plan · VEU pathway · What to prepare

NABERS provides operational and design ratings for eligible buildings and premises. A rating can benchmark performance, support disclosure and create a common basis for an improvement programme. It does not by itself identify every project or guarantee energy-efficiency certificates.

Northmore Gordon can connect a rating with an energy audit , building-services investigation, investment sequence and assessment of relevant Victorian Energy Upgrades pathways.

Understand what the rating represents

Record the rating product, date, rated area, building use, meter set, operating data and any exclusions. Distinguish an achieved operational rating from a design target or planned improvement. A rating prepared for one boundary cannot be assumed to describe another tenancy, base-building or whole-building scope.

Align control, meters and responsibility

A building owner, tenant and facilities manager may control different equipment and decisions. Define whether the investigation covers a tenancy, base-building services or the whole building. Identify meters, services, occupancy, operating hours, leases and responsibility for capital and operating costs.

This prevents split incentives and incomplete recommendations. It also establishes who can authorise control changes, provide data and implement projects.

Turn the rating into an improvement programme

review interval data, plant schedules, faults and control sequences;

investigate HVAC, chillers, pumps, fans, lighting, hot water and tenant loads;

separate tuning and maintenance from capital replacement;

define performance objectives and commissioning tests;

prepare an investment sequence with owners and milestones; and

track achieved performance under representative occupancy and weather.

Use the rating trend alongside engineering evidence. A star change can indicate operational improvement, but project savings and certificate quantities require their own boundary and calculation.

NABERS in a Victorian Energy Upgrades assessment

VEU project-based activities can use measurement and verification or a benchmark-rating method. A NABERS improvement may support the benchmark pathway where the current activity, premises and evidence rules are met. Select the method before work changes the baseline, and confirm the governing specification and approval scope.

Before relying on certificate value, document the eligibility assumptions, calculation basis, rating dates, evidence responsibilities, certificate quantity, market price, fees and payment conditions. Keep operational savings and certificate proceeds separate. See government schemes and M&V; services .

What to prepare

Provide existing NABERS reports, the rating boundary, floor area, leases, meter map, 12 to 24 months of bills and interval data, plant and control information, occupancy changes, known faults, planned projects and decision deadlines.

Related examples include Aurora Place , Charter Hall and the commercial buildings sector . Published cases illustrate experience and do not establish current eligibility or results for another building.

Contact Northmore Gordon with the current rating and the operational or investment decision the assessment must support.

What is NABERS and why is it important for building assessments?

NABERS is an authoritative rating system providing operational and design ratings for buildings. It serves as a starting point for building assessments by offering quantitative assessments of building performance that can be used as comparison baselines. NABERS ratings may indicate eligibility for improvement schemes, making it valuable for establishing a credible reference point before committing to upgrades or seeking incentive funding. However, the existence of a rating alone does not guarantee scheme eligibility.

What are the different types of NABERS ratings and how do they differ?

NABERS ratings take three distinct forms: an achieved operational rating based on actual building operation; a design ambition representing the intended performance target during the design phase; and a comparison baseline serving as a reference point for evaluating improvements. These are different pieces of information that must be clearly distinguished when assessing building performance, as each serves a different purpose in the improvement planning process and should not be confused or combined.

How does NABERS integrate with the Victorian Energy Upgrades scheme?

Under Victorian Energy Upgrades, benchmark rating is one of two project-based methods available, using NABERS ratings to assess eligible activities. This approach is particularly useful for commercial buildings where an existing NABERS rating can establish a credible performance baseline before improvements are implemented. However, eligibility depends on the specific activity, premises, equipment and scheme conditions, so technical sensibility alone does not guarantee automatic eligibility.

What should be confirmed before using an existing NABERS rating as a baseline for improvements?

Before using an existing NABERS rating as a comparison baseline, confirm its scope, date and rating type. Distinguish whether the rating represents an achieved operational performance, a design ambition, or a planned improvement, as these serve fundamentally different purposes. Verify the assessment boundary covered—whether a tenancy, base-building services or whole building—and ensure the rating period and occupancy conditions remain representative of the proposed improvement baseline.

Does a NABERS rating alone guarantee eligibility for environmental certificates?

No. The existence of a NABERS rating does not confirm certificate eligibility. A technically sound upgrade may not be automatically eligible; eligibility depends on the specific activity, premises, equipment and scheme conditions. Separate verification of eligibility assumptions, activity

requirements, method specifications and evidence responsibilities is necessary before relying on certificate proceeds in an investment case or assuming a particular pathway applies.

How can Northmore Gordon assist with NABERS-related building assessments?

We provide energy optimization services combining engineering assessment with implementation, funding and performance support for commercial buildings. Their expertise includes establishing assessment boundaries, investigating operations before committing to equipment replacements, and identifying applicable improvement pathways including NABERS-based benchmark rating methods. They can help align building control, performance management and investment strategies to address energy efficiency effectively and determine scheme eligibility separately.

What practical steps should be taken when investigating a commercial building for improvements?

Start by establishing who controls building services, who pays energy bills and who can approve capital works. Record whether the investigation covers a tenancy, base-building services or the whole building. Identify included meters, services, operating periods and occupancy conditions. Confirm the scope and date of any existing NABERS rating before using it as a comparison. This foundation enables selection of appropriate assessment methods and separate decisions on scheme eligibility and operational feasibility.

Why is early method selection important when planning NABERS-based improvements?

Choosing the assessment method early—such as a NABERS benchmark rating approach—helps identify the evidence that must exist before equipment changes. Early planning ensures that meaningful baseline data can still be obtained and measurement requirements are understood before operational changes occur. Delaying method selection can make intended analysis difficult or impossible, compromising both technical credibility and scheme eligibility. This planning should occur during the project scoping stage before binding commitments.