



NABERS Strategic Plan

Draft for Consultation

November 2023

1. Context

The current 5-year NABERS Strategic Plan runs from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2024. This plan has helped to guide the strategic direction of NABERS. Significant progress has been made towards its two core goals of expanding to all major building types and doubling the number of NABERS ratings.

The next NABERS Strategic Plan is under development and will run for five years, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2029 (FY25-29). The plan is intended to help set the direction of NABERS for the next 5 years and provide a framework for decision making and prioritisation.

NABERS has developed a draft of key components of the upcoming plan reflecting inputs from an initial sample of over 80 stakeholders. This includes representatives from government, building owners, peak bodies, NABERS Assessors, and NABERS staff members. Feedback from these stakeholders was used to refine this draft, in preparation for this broader consultation process.

This public consultation process aims to reach the broader range of stakeholders in the NABERS community, providing an opportunity for all interested parties to contribute.

We are focusing our consultation on our draft Vision, Mission and goals, as these form the backbone of our new plan. Other components of the plan such as organisational values and other supporting information will be developed internally and will not form part of this consultation.

We have also included a summary of the preliminary feedback we have already received, to help you understand the stakeholder inputs that shaped this draft plan.

2. How to provide feedback

We will be collecting feedback using an online survey. The survey consists of 5 questions, one each for the vision, mission and 3 goals. For each of the 5 items, we would like to hear whether you have any critical objections and whether there are things you don't understand. We'd also like to hear how much you support each of these items on a scale of 0-5.

The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

You can access the survey by clicking on this [link](#).

3. Draft Strategic Plan – Vision & Mission

The proposed vision and mission are shown in the breakout boxes below. The accompanying text provides more context.

VISION

We all live, work and play in a world where people and planet are in balance supported by sustainable buildings.

MISSION

Our team collaborates with others to enable the design, construction and operation of more sustainable buildings.
Our valued information accelerates urgent environmental change.

At NABERS, we know that sustainable buildings are not only better for the planet, but they also make happier and healthier spaces we can all thrive in.

NABERS provides simple, reliable, and comparable sustainability measurement our stakeholders trust across a range of building sectors. These ratings help customers to accurately measure, understand, and communicate the environmental performance of new and existing buildings while identifying areas for cost savings and future improvements.

Collectively the built environment sector is facing into a range of complex sustainability challenges that require considered action in the coming decade. Not least of these is helping Australia reach its 2035 and 2050 decarbonisation targets. NABERS is committed to collaborating with other key players to address these and other urgent building related environmental issues.

The rationale behind our Vision and Mission

What is a vision?

A vision paints a picture of the future state of the world that an organisation works alongside others to achieve.

The actions an organisation takes to implement its mission and goals are connected to the vision.

What's included in our Vision and why

The phrase “sustainable buildings” includes a number of environmental aspects NABERS assesses and can directly impact through assessment. These include but are not limited to:

- carbon emissions (embodied and operational)
- resource efficiency (across energy and water)
- indoor environment quality, including air quality and thermal comfort
- waste reduction and implementation of circular economy

- energy network transformation, including electrification and renewable energy.

NABERS provides tailored solutions for several sectors – as this list is evolving, detailing these sectors would date the document to the time of development.

What is excluded from the Vision, and why

A focus solely on net-zero emissions or zero-environmental impact was not chosen because it could limit the reach of NABERS within the lifespan of this Strategic Plan and prevent NABERS from seeking to make an impact in other areas of environmental concern.

Net positive was excluded because no widely used definition of net positive exists. Environmentally friendly was excluded as sustainable allows for a broader scope of issues to enable future generations to achieve their needs.

This Strategic Plan will focus on sustainable buildings rather than sustainable places. There are other sustainability tools in the infrastructure space, although there could be cross-over for buildings within infrastructure projects and embodied carbon.

What is a mission?

A mission details what an organisation contributes to the vision – in this case, how NABERS will contribute.

Why collaboration is a key aspect of our Mission and what it means

One of NABERS' key value drivers is its focus on collaboration. This includes:

- working with customers in product design and evolution.
- harmonisation with highly-complementary initiatives (such as Green Star).
- working with decision makers to maintain value in NABERS' tools and information.

Unpacking the phrase “Our valued information accelerates urgent environmental change.”

The unique contribution of NABERS is the provision of affordable and robust information on building performance.

There is strong agreement that NABERS should continue to focus its core program on the provision of valued information.

This information is needed to drive decision-making within the building sector, ensuring information is high quality and evolves with emerging sustainability challenges is essential.

Action in the built environment sector, enabled by NABERS' collaboration with other key players, is required for Australia to achieve its 2035 and 2050 decarbonisation targets.

4. Draft Strategic Plan – Goals

The draft Strategic Plan consists of three goals which are designed to work together to achieve maximum impact and alignment with the Vision and Mission.

In particular, the first two goals are complementary, and the best outcome relies on them both being achieved. Enablers are detailed for each of the three goals and these articulate how NABERS will achieve the goals.

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

All sectors and rating types improve their NABERS performance over time.

This goal is about using NABERS ratings to drive impact.

Buildings that regularly rate improve their performance. This leads to a healthier environment, better circular economy outcomes and faster decarbonisation. There are also financial advantages like reduced utility bills, higher asset values and easier access to capital.

Enablers

- NABERS will proactively enable policy makers, regulators, investors, businesses and building stakeholders to set ambitious targets to drive improved performance.
- NABERS will encourage building stakeholders to rate regularly and track improvements over time.
- NABERS will connect building stakeholders to advice and initiatives to help them improve their performance.
- NABERS will regularly report and share data around building performance to support decision making.

Rationale supporting our “Improve Performance” goal

How this goal supports our Mission

Our Mission focuses on a desire to enable the design, construction and operation of *more sustainable buildings*. This aim is inherently linked with the concept of buildings that improve their NABERS ratings over time.

Our Mission also focuses on providing valued information to *accelerate urgent environmental change*. This goal supports this ambition because improving a building’s ratings leads to better sustainability outcomes, including reduced carbon emissions, reduced water consumption, better circular economy outcomes, and improved air quality and thermal comfort.

Use of the term “all sectors and rating types” rather than specifying a rating improvement target

A unilateral target for improvement that is equally applied across all sectors and rating types (e.g. all buildings should achieve a 0.5-star ratings improvement) was considered but not pursued. This is because starting points and improvement rates for different building sectors vary, making it difficult to create a uniform metric like this.

GROW THE MARKET

Triple the number of NABERS ratings by driving uptake of existing tools and expanding to new sectors.

This goal continues on from the previous Strategic Plan. Despite the progress that's been made there is still a lot of opportunity to expand all rating types to all jurisdictions, building types and building sizes. This includes maintaining the rigour and robustness associated with NABERS that our stakeholders value.

Enablers

- NABERS will influence and enable policy makers, regulators, investors, tenants and businesses to require NABERS ratings.
- NABERS will streamline operations and processes to ensure service and quality are maintained (or improved) as more ratings are certified every year.
- NABERS will regularly update its sector expansion roadmap to guide our approach and maximise impact.
- NABERS will adapt its market development strategy to respond to the barriers and opportunities across different building types.

The rationale supporting our “Grow the Market” goal

How this goal supports our Mission

As we increase participation in NABERS, more buildings will benefit from having robust ways to measure, compare and verify performance in a transparent way. This will lead to improved sustainability outcomes for the built environment, which is a key focus area in our Mission.

What we heard from stakeholders

Urgent action on sustainability in the built environment requires more buildings to measure and set NABERS rating improvements for their environmental performance. This applies to all rating types and building types.

There is still lots of opportunities to grow the market by working with policymakers and decision-makers, including investors, tenants and shareholders, to help them see the benefit of requiring

NABERS ratings. This is also an opportunity to grow ratings in all jurisdictions across Australia. This needs to be backed up by expanding the NABERS offering across all building sectors and sizes for all rating types.

Why we are focusing on the number of ratings

This goal focuses on increasing the number of ratings, rather than the number of participants that rate, to encourage building owners and operators to undertake a range of rating types across all NABERS sectors.

Why we are aiming to triple the number of ratings

Preliminary modelling indicates that a three-fold increase in ratings is challenging but achievable, provided certain policy levers are in place, and NABERS has support to expand its product offering to new sectors for all rating types. While increasing the number of NABERS ratings, we will also need support to increase our capacity significantly, whilst maintaining the quality and rigour of our rating tools.

EVOLVE FOR IMPACT

Evolve and continuously improve NABERS.

While our other goals look at growth and performance improvement, this goal looks at ways NABERS can evolve and continuously improve to have more impact. This includes:

- Evolving our existing tools to stay relevant to industry.
- Driving greater action on emerging sustainability challenges, such as building electrification and reducing embodied carbon, among others.
- Evolving NABERS to support this Strategic Plan.

Enablers

- NABERS will create an evolution strategy that leverages its strengths.
- NABERS will enhance capacity of its staff and delivery partners to support current and future offerings.
- NABERS will maintain and grow strong collaborative relationships to drive urgent action in the built environment.
- NABERS will support Federal, State and Local government to create ambitious built environment goals and directives around emerging sustainability challenges.
- NABERS will develop an International Strategy for purposeful and impactful work overseas.

The rationale supporting our “Evolve for Impact” goal

How this goal supports our Mission

Evolving and continuously improving sets NABERS up to deliver on both parts of our Mission: enabling the design, construction and operation of more sustainable buildings and accelerating urgent environmental change.

Leveraging NABERS’ strengths

While there is much to be done, there is a strong consensus that NABERS is not well placed to do everything and should focus on leveraging its strengths to be most impactful.

Evolving our existing tools

NABERS will need to evolve its tools to remain impactful, trusted and based on market needs. Conversations around this touched on the following:

- Keeping emissions factors up-to-date
- Influencing building-level Scope 3 emissions, which crosses over with encouraging tenants to manage their emissions and bedding down the NABERS Upfront Carbon tool, which are also important priorities.
- Connecting NABERS ratings to sustainable finance reporting and outcomes
- Automation and data sharing to streamline ratings and improve communication and reporting.

Emerging challenges

Emerging challenges that stakeholders frequently raise include climate resilience, embodied carbon and supporting the electrification of buildings.

Strong collaboration with industry and partners alongside robust feedback loops will continue to be necessary, as will advocacy for policy, regulations, procurement practices and standards across Australia to support more sustainable buildings.

Some stakeholders felt that NABERS should recognise buildings that support nature and positive social outcomes. However, many think it’s currently more important for NABERS to focus its limited energy on expanding rating numbers, driving performance improvements and on the emerging challenges listed above.

Evolving NABERS so that the team can deliver on this ambitious plan

Considered effort and funding will be required to ensure NABERS can deliver on this ambitious strategy. This may include evolving our structure, delivery models, IT capability and ways of working.

How NABERS should engage internationally

There are diverse opinions about how NABERS should engage internationally.

Some stakeholders feel there are opportunities to use NABERS to contribute to global efforts to tackle climate change, and to positively influence the global environmental reporting frameworks Australian buildings must report in.

However, there are also others who want to make sure international engagement does not negatively impact the mission of NABERS in Australia. Developing an International Strategy would seek to help Australia make a positive contribution to global sustainability efforts, while also making sure this is done without compromising the program's mission in Australia.