

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Higgins to the Minister for Corporate and Information Services:

Property Leasing Services

1. Please advise whether NTG's commitment to NABERS-rated office environments requires regular maintenance and refurbishment of pre-existing office spaces in order to meet the requirements?
2. In order to ensure that a department or office remains NABERS-compliant, would it often be more economic for a new building to be built rather than retrofit a pre-existing office building?
3. How many buildings in the Darwin CBD are unfit for use by NTG due to the commitment to a NABERS-based policy?

Answer:

1. For leases greater than 2000 m² in an existing commercial office building, the Northern Territory Government's standard lease requires the building owner to achieve a 4.5 Star NABERS energy rating.

For leases greater than 2000 m² in a newly constructed commercial office building, the standard lease requires the building owner to achieve a 5 Star NABERS energy rating.

The 4.5 and 5 Star NABERS Energy requirement affects around 20% of the government's leases. Leases for warehouses, specialised facilities, and those under 2000 m² are not required to have a NABERS rating.

The inclusion of NABERS ratings in the government's standard lease was introduced in 2012, endorsed by the Property Council of Australia and is consistent with other jurisdictions.

The onus for obtaining and maintaining NABERS ratings is on the building owner. Leasing experience is showing that building owners with an existing asset that has contemporary air conditioning equipment and energy efficient lighting have been able to readily achieve and sustain the 4.5 Star or 5 Star NABERS energy rating.

Building owners routinely maintain their buildings to protect their assets and ensure longevity. The agency has not received indications from owners that NABERS ratings are requiring additional maintenance.

2. The building owners for both existing and new buildings have been achieving the required NABERS ratings and have not been raising issues of excessive costs related to meeting this requirement. The government's fit out in a building does not generally impact the NABERS energy rating.
3. The NTG does not have any information on the NABERS ratings of buildings in the Darwin CBD that are not leased to the NTG, or the requirements that would be needed for such buildings to achieve NABERS rating, where this is not held.