

Published: 29 August 2011

## Green building ratings moved higher with progress

**The Australian green building industry is progressing so rapidly it is getting new ratings targets. The National Australian Built Environment Rating Scheme (NABERS) is being extended from 5 to 6 energy stars for performance.**



Credit: NABERS

NABERS is a national rating scheme for an existing building's environmental performance. The federal program is administered by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Announcing the change on the 18 August, the office said it was being made to recognise increasing levels of market leading performance and to ensure NABERS continues to offer an aspirational target that drives innovation and environmental improvement.

Office of Environment and Heritage Chief Executive, Lisa Corbyn, said that the Australian property industry is reaching a standard previously considered above world's best practice.

'This is a move that was called for by top performers in the commercial property industry who are already moving beyond NABERS 5-star excellence towards a market-leading 6 star goal.'

'It reflects an ongoing improvement in the environmental performance of Australian buildings over the past 10 years, underpinned by the robustness of the NABERS tool as a performance measure.'

Ms Corbyn said office buildings using NABERS to measure and manage energy and water use improved greenhouse performance by an average 11.5 per cent and water efficiency by 9 per cent.

A 6 star rating is now the Market Leading category of performance, and represents a 50 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions or water use from a 5 star rating.

According to the Office of Environment and Heritage, 60 per cent of Australian office space has been rated with NABERS Energy, 68 per cent of it in NSW. Around 5 per cent of rated buildings are currently achieving a 5 star rating, set as an aspirational target in 2000.

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) heartily endorsed the change. It established a voluntary national Green Star scheme in 2003 that evaluates the environmental design and construction of buildings.

It is also currently developing a Green Star-Performance rating assessment tool, in conjunction with NABERS, for the operational performance of existing buildings.

GBCA's Executive Director for the Green Star scheme, Andrew Aitken, said 'buildings that are carbon neutral, carbon positive and even restorative are rapidly becoming a reality. Rating tools such as Green Star and NABERS must keep evolving to keep up with best practice.'

Source: NABERS, GBCA

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC11022>