



Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme

Protocol for Assessor Accrediting Organisations

March 2016

Disclaimer

This publication provides information on the requirements for being a NatHERS Assessor Accrediting Organisation and is provided on the understanding that the NatHERS Administrator, the State and Territory Governments and the Commonwealth (the Participating Bodies) are not providing professional advice.

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The material in this Protocol may not necessarily reflect the views of each Participating Body, or indicate their commitment to a particular course of action.

Foreword

The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) is an initiative administered under the work program of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council. NatHERS is overseen by the Steering Committee, currently the Energy Working Group, which includes representatives of the Australian Government and state and territory energy and building authorities. The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science is the NatHERS Administrator.

NatHERS was initiated to provide a standardised approach to rating the thermal performance of houses throughout Australia. NatHERS-accredited software has been developed to calculate the theoretical annual heating and cooling energy load on a house. It does this by modelling the effects of heat flow through the building fabric, taking into account factors such as the building's location, orientation, glazing, construction details and the impact of air movement on internal comfort conditions. The software attributes a star rating between zero and 10 to the house based on the estimated total annual energy load and the climate zone where the house is located.

NatHERS-accredited software may be used to comply with certain building regulations including the thermal performance provisions for residential buildings in the National Construction Code (NCC).

The success of NatHERS is contingent upon accurate, consistent and reliable ratings being achieved through the correct use of NatHERS software. Given the level of complexity of NatHERS software, it is important that those who use the software to assess the thermal performance of buildings are adequately trained in its use and have a minimum level of understanding of building construction, building thermal performance and the applicable building regulations. Assessors also need to work within a quality assurance framework that encourages and maintains a high standard of ratings.

This Protocol for Assessor Accrediting Organisations (AAOs) has been developed to provide a national framework for the approval and operation of organisations that accredit users of NatHERS software for regulatory purposes. The Protocol enables there to be a number of AAOs operating across state and territory jurisdictions.

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1. Scope

- (1) This Protocol describes the processes that are required to be implemented by Assessor Accrediting Organisations that are approved by the NatHERS Administrator to accredit NatHERS Assessors for regulatory purposes.

2. Definitions and interpretations

- (1) Where used within this Protocol:

AAO means an Assessor Accrediting Organisation, which is an organisation that accredits Assessors in accordance with this Protocol.

ABCB means the Australian Building Codes Board.

Applicant means a person who applies to an AAO for accreditation as an Assessor.

Applicant Organisation means an organisation which applies to the NatHERS Administrator to become an AAO.

Assessment means a thermal performance simulation performed using NatHERS Software of a residential building (NCC Class 1, 2, 4 and 10 buildings only) conducted by an Assessor for regulatory purposes.

Assessor means a person accredited by an AAO to use NatHERS Software to estimate the thermal performance of buildings for regulatory purposes.

Benchmark Assessment means an assessment done by an Assessor of one or more standardised plans provided by the AAO or NatHERS Administrator where the rating result has already been calculated, to check the accuracy of the Assessor's rating and competency in software operation.

Commonwealth means the Commonwealth of Australia.

CPD means Continuing Professional Development, which provides a mechanism for Assessors to maintain and improve skills and knowledge.

Disciplinary Action means action undertaken by an AAO in response to underperforming or otherwise unsatisfactory behaviour of an Assessor, and includes the suspension of accreditation pending an investigation of the Assessor's actions.

Jurisdiction means the relevant state or territory government department or regulatory authority.

NatHERS means the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme.

NatHERS Software means a thermal calculation software tool that is accredited by the NatHERS Administrator as complying with the current version of the NatHERS Software Accreditation Protocol or software that is otherwise recognised by the Steering Committee.

NatHERS Administrator means the Commonwealth officials responsible for administering NatHERS on behalf of all governments, currently the Energy Productivity Branch of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

NCC means the relevant version of the National Construction Code.

Quality Assurance or **QA** means the quality assurance system for checking whether Assessments have been performed correctly in accordance with the NatHERS Technical Notes and any other requirements placed on Assessors by this Protocol.

Regulatory Mode means the operation of NatHERS Software using a specific set of defined inputs and parameters for the purposes of completing an Assessment for achieving compliance with a particular Jurisdiction's application of the NCC.

Remedial Action means a process undertaken by an AAO to support improved rating outcomes from accredited Assessors found to have produced inaccurate Assessments following a Quality Assurance review.

RTO means Registered Training Organisation as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Steering Committee means the body that oversees the development and administration of NatHERS, currently the Energy Working Group of the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council. The Steering Committee has currently established and delegated responsibility for scheme administration to the NatHERS Administrator and responsibilities for implementation of the NatHERS Strategic Plan to the Buildings Committee of the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council.

Technical Notes means the procedures detailed in the NatHERS Software Technical Notes published on www.nathers.gov.au for entering a building's characteristics into NatHERS Software in Regulatory Mode.

Universal Certificate means an official certificate using templates approved by the NatHERS Administrator and generated by the NatHERS Software detailing data from the Assessment.

3. Assessor Accreditation

3.1 Assessor qualification

- (1) The Certificate IV in NatHERS Assessment (CPP41212) is the qualification approved for persons seeking accreditation with an AAO as an Assessor.
- (2) From 1 January 2016, all Assessors will be required to hold a Certificate IV in NatHERS Assessment to maintain their accreditation. Further information about the course can be found at www.training.gov.au.

3.2 Requirements for accreditation of Assessors

- (1) A person (Applicant) may apply to an AAO to be accredited as an Assessor.
- (2) An AAO may accredit an Applicant as an Assessor where the Applicant meets all of the following requirements:
 - (a) the Applicant has completed the required qualification in accordance with section 3.1;
 - (b) the Applicant has notified the AAO of any current or previous accreditation with another AAO;
 - (c) the Applicant has nominated to the AAO the software tools they will use, and the AAO has confirmed this to the Applicant (see section 3.5);

- (d) the Applicant agrees that they will comply with the AAO's Assessor Code of Practice;
 - (e) the Applicant agrees that, when using NatHERS Software to demonstrate compliance with a Jurisdiction's application of the NCC, they will create and use Universal Certificates if the software has functionality to do so; and
 - (f) the Applicant agrees that they will conduct their Assessments in a way which ensures the health and safety of themselves, and others, so far as reasonably practicable and which complies with all relevant workplace health and safety laws in the Jurisdictions in which they operate.
- (3) Where an Applicant applies to have their accreditation as an Assessor reinstated following cancellation by an AAO as a Disciplinary Action, or voluntarily withdrawal of their accreditation prior to Disciplinary Action taking effect, the AAO must seek agreement from the NatHERS Administrator. The Applicant must provide evidence to satisfy the AAO that they:
- (a) have undergone appropriate activities as directed by the AAO to improve their ratings accuracy or otherwise address their unsatisfactory behaviour; and
 - (b) will comply with the requirements of the AAO's Code of Practice; and
 - (c) agree to be subject to a Quality Assurance (QA) review under section 4.8 within their first 12 months of re-accreditation.

3.3 Notice of accreditation

- (1) Upon satisfying the accreditation criteria in section 3.2 of this Protocol, the AAO must:
- (a) notify the Assessor in writing of their accreditation
 - (b) provide the Assessor with a unique accreditation number; and
 - (c) provide an electronic copy of their Code of Practice and the NatHERS Software Technical Notes to the Assessor.

3.4 Accreditation with more than one AAO

- (1) An Assessor may choose to be accredited with one or more AAO (see Appendix A). For Assessors with multiple accreditations, AAOs must agree to:
- (a) notify the other applicable AAO where an Assessor confirms their current accreditation with another AAO under subsection 3.2(2)(b); and
 - (b) if requested by any other AAO with which the Assessor is accredited, share information relating to the Assessor, such as Assessment volumes, the results of QA reviews, accreditation status, CPD compliance and insurance status, no more frequently than on an annual basis.

3.5 Accreditation in more than one tool

- (1) Assessors may only be accredited in more than one tool if:
- (a) for Assessors seeking accreditation with an AAO for the first time – they have completed the Certificate IV in NatHERS Assessment (CPP41212 – or

equivalent) in at least one Software Tool and all of the following units in any additional Software Tool with which the Assessor is seeking accreditation:

- (i) CPPHSA4012A (or equivalent) – Conduct NatHERS assessment of planned residential buildings; and
 - (ii) CPPHSA4013A (or equivalent) – Conduct NatHERS assessment of existing residential buildings.
- (b) for existing Assessors – they have completed the Certificate IV in NatHERS Assessment (CPP41212 – or equivalent) in at least one Software Tool and either:
- (i) Completed all of the following units in any additional Software Tool with which the Assessor is seeking accreditation:
 - (I) CPPHSA4012A (or equivalent) – Conduct NatHERS assessment of planned residential buildings; and
 - (II) CPPHSA4013A (or equivalent) – Conduct NatHERS assessment of existing residential buildings; or
 - (ii) Completed any previous recognised training course in the nominated second tool and completed at least 10 Assessments using that tool in the two years prior to accreditation.

4. Quality Assurance system for Assessor services

4.1 General requirements

- (1) An AAO must have a Quality Assurance (QA) system in place that has been approved by the NatHERS Administrator to ensure Assessors conduct Assessments in an accurate, consistent and repeatable manner.
- (2) The QA system must include, as a minimum, the establishment and implementation of:
 - (a) an Assessor Code of Practice;
 - (b) ongoing technical support to Assessors;
 - (c) management, tracking and coordination of CPD activities;
 - (d) an Assessment monitoring, review and remedial program, including mechanisms to check that Assessors are using the relevant version of the Technical Notes and a version of the NatHERS Software accredited at the time of the Assessment and for which the assessor is accredited to use;
 - (e) a system for managing complaints about Assessors; and
 - (f) a Disciplinary Action policy.
- (3) Where agreed by the NatHERS Administrator, activities performed by an Assessor to comply with an AAO's QA system may be eligible for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points.

- (4) Proposals for changes to any element of an AAO's QA system must be lodged with the NatHERS Administrator for approval before implementation, and the NatHERS Administrator will respond to the AAO within 10 business days.

4.2 NatHERS Technical Notes

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator will provide to AAOs:
 - (a) a draft of any new or amended NatHERS Technical Note for comment;
 - (b) reasonable notice, of at least three months or as negotiated with the AAOs, of any changes to a Technical Note; and
 - (c) a final version of a NatHERS Technical Note.
- (2) AAOs will be required within three months, or other period set in consultation with the NatHERS Administrator, to:
 - (a) implement any new or amended Technical Notes across their QA systems; and
 - (b) advise their Assessors of the changes to the Technical Notes.

4.3 Assessor Code of Practice

- (1) AAOs are required to establish and implement an Assessor Code of Practice which, as a minimum, covers the requirements in Appendix A.
- (2) AAOs may include additional requirements in their Code of Practice, provided they are consistent with the intent of this Protocol.
- (3) Where there is any inconsistency between an AAO's Code of Practice and this Protocol, the Protocol shall prevail.
- (4) AAOs must ensure Assessors adhere to the AAO's Code of Practice to maintain the Assessor's accreditation.

4.4 Assessor support

- (1) AAOs must ensure that the Assessors they accredit are provided with ongoing support, including advice in relation to accuracy, consistency and repeatability of Assessments and advice on changing requirements due to Technical Note updates and relevant building regulations, including any state or territory-specific requirements.
- (2) This service does not extend to advice on the operation of NatHERS Software which is expected to be provided by the software developers and/or distributors.
- (3) Assessors must be able to access support services from their AAO via no less than email and telephone. Upon receipt of a request for support from an Assessor, an AAO must provide a response within two business days (days on which the AAO is open for business).

4.5 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- (1) AAOs must provide CPD activities for Assessors they have accredited, including via:
 - (a) the distribution of regular electronic newsletters at appropriate intervals; and

- (b) coordination of a professional development program. For example this may include workshops and seminars on topics of interest, advanced training in specific areas of relevance to Assessors and/or Benchmark Assessments.
- (2) AAOs must make available to Assessors they have accredited, a mechanism for recording their attendance of all CPD activities, for validation by the AAO.
- (3) AAOs must ensure that their Assessors complete at least 12 CPD points in each year of accreditation, where one point equals at least one hour of time spent undertaking the CPD.
- (4) At least six of the CPD points must be completed in technical training in relation to the use of the NatHERS Software.
- (5) AAOs must implement mechanisms for assessing the learning outcomes of the CPD activities they provide, where feasible.

4.6 Quality Assurance processes for Assessments

- (1) AAOs must undertake QA processes for Assessments produced by their Assessors to ensure, as far as possible, that:
 - (a) Assessments are accurate, consistent and repeatable;
 - (b) Assessors are correctly applying the relevant building regulations, including any state or territory-specific requirements;
 - (c) Assessors are complying with the AAO's Assessor Code of Practice;
 - (d) Assessors are conducting Assessments in line with the relevant version of the NatHERS Technical Notes and using NatHERS Software accredited at the time of the Assessment; and
 - (e) appropriate and timely Remedial Action is taken to improve the performance of Assessors whose Assessments are found to contain errors.

4.7 Review of Universal Certificates

- (1) This section 4.7 will only come into effect if and when AAO and Universal Certificate systems are established to undertake this review.
- (2) AAOs, or another body agreed to by the NatHERS Administrator, will undertake automatic checks on all Universal Certificates to review items such as:
 - (a) information on Universal Certificates for common errors and consistency of data input as agreed with the NatHERS Administrator
 - (b) a minimum number of critical fields, as agreed with the NatHERS Administrator
 - (c) the accuracy of postcode/climate zone selection; and
 - (d) the consistency of ratings with results from similar construction types and climate zones.
- (3) Where any factual content errors are detected, relevant AAOs will be notified and will provide feedback to Assessors either individually or collectively as appropriate.

- (4) Where an Assessor has multiple factual content errors detected in three separate Universal Certificates under this section 4.7, the Assessor may be subjected to a QA review under section 4.8.

4.8 Quality Assurance (QA) Review of Assessors

- (1) Each year, AAOs will undertake a QA review of 20% of all Assessors it accredits under a process to be agreed with the NatHERS Administrator.
- (2) In 2016 AAOs will implement a process whereby Assessors are selected by AAOs to participate in the QA review process, based on a risk Assessment process agreed by the NatHERS Administrator.
- (3) In undertaking a QA review, the reviewer will:
 - (a) review one Assessment completed by the Assessor in the last 12 months;
 - (b) investigate for any errors identified under section 4.7;
 - (c) investigate the software file and Universal Certificate against dwelling specification and drawing documentation to identify any errors; and
 - (d) score the accuracy of the Assessor's software inputs and processes.
- (4) The AAO will provide feedback in a timely manner to the Assessor regarding any errors and the correct method.
- (5) Where the Assessor receives a score of less than 80% from the QA review process, the Assessor will be subjected to Remedial Action under section 4.10.
- (6) Where the AAO considers the findings from the QA review process warrants such action, the AAO may pursue Disciplinary Action under section 4.11 without first undertaking Remedial Action.
- (7) The AAO must notify the Assessor that, where an Assessor has concerns with the outcome of the QA Review, they must present this in writing to the AAO within 10 business days of being notified of the QA review outcome. Following consideration of the Assessor's concerns, the AAO's decision will be final.

4.9 Requirements for Quality Assurance reviewers

- (1) QA reviews are to be carried out by Assessors with a high degree of competency and experience in the NatHERS Software used by the Assessors that they are reviewing.
- (2) AAOs must undertake an annual benchmarking exercise, whereby measures are undertaken to ensure consistent rating practices and assumptions between QA reviewers.
- (3) QA reviewers must have:
 - (a) been continuously accredited with at least one AAO for the last three years
 - (b) submitted at least 30 Assessments in the last 12 months for the tool with which they undertake QA reviews;
 - (c) had no remedial or Disciplinary Action taken against them in the last three years; and

- (d) collectively, across all QA reviewers, the ability to undertake QA reviews in all recently accredited versions of each software tool.
- (4) A QA reviewer must report to the AAO, all potential real or perceived conflicts of interest with the Assessors that they are reviewing.
- (5) The AAO must implement processes to manage any potential real or perceived conflict of interest between QA reviewers and the Assessors they review.

4.10 Remedial Action

- (1) The objective of Remedial Action is to support improved rating outcomes from underperforming Assessors.
- (2) AAOs must have policies and procedures, approved by the NatHERS Administrator, for taking Remedial Action to ensure underperforming Assessors meet the required standards.
- (3) Remedial Action may include, but is not limited to, examinations, use of Benchmark Assessments, targeted CPD, mentoring, refresher training and/or retraining.
- (4) In the event that Remedial Action does not improve the quality of an underperforming Assessor's Assessments in a timely manner, an AAO will initiate Disciplinary Action to suspend the Assessor's accreditation until they are satisfied that sufficient improvement has been demonstrated.
- (5) The AAOs policies and procedures must include an appeals process for Assessors that are required to undertake remedial or Disciplinary Action.

4.11 Disciplinary Action

- (1) AAOs must have policies and procedures, approved by the NatHERS Administrator, for taking Disciplinary Action against underperforming Assessors or Assessors whose behaviour is otherwise unsatisfactory.
- (2) Pending an investigation of the Assessor's actions, an AAO will suspend the accreditation of any Assessor who it deems has:
 - (a) refused to participate or cooperate in a QA review or Remedial Action;
 - (b) failed its QA review and subsequent Remedial Action;
 - (c) produced Assessments that do not comply with the NatHERS or AAO's branding, stamping and/or certification guidelines; or
 - (d) failed to comply with the requirements of their AAO's Assessor Code of Practice
- (3) When an Assessor's accreditation is cancelled or when an Assessor withdraws their accreditation to avoid Disciplinary Action, the responsible AAO will notify the NatHERS Administrator and other AAOs within 10 business days and remove the Assessor from the AAOs list of accredited Assessors.
- (4) Where an Assessor withdraws their accreditation to avoid Disciplinary Action, this will be deemed a cancellation of accreditation by the AAO. The AAO's policies and procedures must include an appeals process which allows an opportunity for Assessors to appeal a decision prior to suspending or cancelling their accreditation.

4.12 Process for dealing with complaints

- (1) AAOs must establish a system for responding to complaints about Assessors from other Assessors, clients, businesses, Jurisdictions or members of the public. This includes a process for:
 - (a) logging complaints and actions taken to resolve them and
 - (b) managing responses to complaints in a timely manner.
- (2) AAOs must notify the NatHERS Administrator within 10 business days of any complaints that relate to issues that impact on Scheme integrity. For example, an AAO may become aware of systemic deficiencies, or a concentration of complaints associated with particular Assessors that may not be random.

5. Public statements by AAOs

- (1) AAOs may make statements to their members or to the public regarding government decisions in relation to NatHERS policies or operations.
- (2) AAOs must present factual statements in relation to NatHERS policies or procedures to the NatHERS Administrator prior to publication for checking to ensure accuracy. AAOs must provide the NatHERS Administrator a minimum of two business days to provide comments before a statement is released publicly.
- (3) The NatHERS Administrator will present factual statements in relation to an AAO's policies or procedures to the relevant AAO prior to publication for checking to ensure accuracy. The NatHERS Administrator will provide the AAO a minimum of two business days to provide comments before a statement is released publicly.
- (4) Statements by the NatHERS Administrator or AAOs containing opinions on AAO or NatHERS policies or procedures should indicate this clearly in the statement and be provided to the relevant party prior to publication for its information only.

6. Communication to Assessors

- (1) Communications between an AAO and an Assessor, or an AAO and the NatHERS Administrator, may be sent in electronic form by email.
- (2) The NatHERS Administrator will advise AAOs of notices to be forwarded to Assessors in relation to:
 - (a) new, or changes to, NatHERS policies and operations;
 - (b) significant changes to the NatHERS Software;
 - (c) upcoming events being organised by the NatHERS Administrator; or
 - (d) changes to jurisdictional application of NatHERS ratings in building regulations.
- (3) The AAOs undertake to forward any notices within two business days or as agreed with the NatHERS Administrator.

7. Annual reports

7.1 Submission of annual reports

- (1) AAOs must submit an annual report for the previous financial year (or from date of accreditation if accredited during that year) to the NatHERS Administrator by 31 October each year.
- (2) Newly accredited AAOs may have the timing of their first annual report adjusted at the discretion of the NatHERS Administrator.
- (3) The NatHERS Administrator will make available all annual reports to Jurisdictions for their information and comment.
- (4) The NatHERS Administrator will provide feedback to the AAOs on the quality of their annual reports, or on any issues raised by the AAOs in the reports regarding the implementation of the AAO Protocol, within three months of receipt of the report.

7.2 Content of annual reports

- (1) As a minimum, annual reports submitted by an AAO must include each of the following:
 - (a) A statement of compliance with this Protocol, signed by a person with authority to act on behalf of the AAO.
 - (b) Organisation details, including:
 - (i) an overview of structure and operations including staff and/or Board membership;
 - (ii) notice of any changes to organisational processes required by this Protocol; and
 - (iii) a financial statement for the previous financial year audited according to the relevant Australian Accounting Standards.
 - (c) Quality Assurance details, including:
 - (i) a summary of the QA review system used by the AAO and how this meets requirements as per sections 4.7 (review of Universal Certificates) and 4.8 (QA Review of Assessors);
 - (ii) details of the outcomes of the reviews undertaken by the AAO under sections 4.7 and 4.8;
 - (iii) the names, qualifications and experience of the AAO's Quality Assurance reviewers, and details of the process employed to avoid conflicts of interest with the Assessors they review;
 - (iv) a summary of errors found and actions taken to improve Assessments and manage risks;
 - (v) if desired, recommendations to the NatHERS Administrator for improvements to the accuracy and consistency of NatHERS Assessments;
 - (vi) a summary of all Remedial Action undertaken by accredited Assessors, type, length, and outcome; and

- (vii) a summary of all Disciplinary Action taken by the AAO against Assessors including Assessor name, reason for the action, date and outcome of the action;
- (d) Continuing Professional Development details, including:
 - (i) a statement on the CPD activities managed by the AAO for its Assessors, including the number of attendees, and learning outcomes;
 - (ii) a summary of the total level of CPD achieved by all Assessors in the most recently completed reporting year;
- (e) A summary of the support services provided by the AAO, including the number and type of requests for support received;
- (f) A summary of complaints made about Assessors, including the type of complaint, severity and how it was resolved;
- (g) Assessor details, including:
 - (i) the total number of Assessors accredited, numbers of new and ceasing Assessors, and the overall number of Assessments undertaken by the AAO's Assessors in the reporting year;
 - (ii) a summary of the Assessor demographics into categories including ratio by Jurisdiction, number of Assessments undertaken per Assessor, and breakdown of tools used by Assessors;
 - (iii) a list of the names and accreditation numbers of any Assessors who ceased being accredited during the year and the date and reason for the cessation;
 - (iv) a list of the Assessors currently accredited by the AAO, including the following details about each Assessor:
 - (I) Name
 - (II) Accreditation number
 - (III) Contact details
 - (IV) Date of first accreditation
 - (V) Which NatHERS Software is used by the Assessor
 - (VI) Whether they have multiple accreditation, and with which AAOs
 - (VII) Date that Certificate IV was achieved and
 - (VIII) Date the last QA process was conducted on the Assessor.
- (2) The NatHERS Administrator may request the AAO to clarify, or provide additional information on, any aspect of their annual report.

8. Review of Assessor Accrediting Organisations

8.1 Investigation of AAO practices

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator may at any time decide to:

- (a) conduct a review of any AAO procedure, policy and/or practice or
- (b) undertake audits of:
 - (i) random Assessments;
 - (ii) groups of Assessments done by particular Assessors;
 - (iii) the records of the AAO in relation to the accreditation and activities of particular Assessors; or
 - (iv) Disciplinary Actions taken by the AAO against particular Assessors.
- (2) Investigations may be undertaken by the NatHERS Administrator itself or a representative of the Administrator.
- (3) AAOs must comply with reasonable requests from the NatHERS Administrator or its representative for information required to undertake its investigations, and for the NatHERS Administrator or its representative to inspect records at the AAO's offices.
- (4) The AAO must cooperate in any Benchmark Assessment studies undertaken by the NatHERS Administrator in relation to its Assessors.

8.2 Requests for Information and confidentiality

- (1) At any time the NatHERS Administrator may reasonably request that AAOs provide:
 - (a) evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of this Protocol are being adhered to; and
 - (b) information regarding its Assessors or the AAO's activities in implementing this Protocol.
- (2) AAOs must keep all information (including data and personal information) they collect for or on behalf of the NatHERS Administrator confidential, including:
 - (a) taking all steps necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of that information; and
 - (b) not using or disclosing that information without the consent of the NatHERS Administrator.

8.3 Compliance

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator reserves the right to take action at any time to ensure that an AAO fully complies with this Protocol. This may include:
 - (a) applying conditions on the operations of the AAO; and/or
 - (b) suspending or withdrawing the approval of the organisation to be an AAO.

8.4 Withdrawal of AAO status

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator may withdraw its approval of an AAO at any time if any of its policies or operations as required by this Protocol are deemed by the NatHERS Administrator to be unsatisfactory and are not rectified by the AAO within one month of notification by the NatHERS Administrator.

- (2) The NatHERS Administrator will provide to the AAO a notice period of at least three months of the withdrawal of its AAO status.
- (3) In the event the NatHERs Administrator withdraws an organisation's status as an AAO, or the organisation voluntarily withdraws from being an AAO, other approved AAOs must accept as members Assessors that were accredited with the formerly approved AAO.
- (4) Transferred Assessors must provide the accepting AAO with their Certificate of Currency for Professional Indemnity Insurance and pay any membership and accreditation fees as required.
- (5) The accepting AAOs will treat transferring Assessors as existing Assessors for the purposes of the Assessor qualification requirements, and may give credit to the transferring Assessors' current CPD points if acceptable to the AAO.

9. Extension of Accreditation

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator will review an AAO's performance six months before its accreditation expires to determine whether its accreditation will be extended for a further period, and determine whether any conditions should be imposed.
- (2) The NatHERS Administrator may consult with Jurisdictions as necessary on reviews of AAOs.

10. Application to become an Assessor Accrediting Organisation

- (1) An incorporated organisation (Applicant Organisation) may apply to the NatHERS Administrator to become an AAO. Unincorporated organisations may not apply.
- (2) Applications must be submitted to the NatHERS Administrator and include evidence to demonstrate:
 - (a) experience in providing member services to the building industry;
 - (b) the demonstrated availability of Assessors who will undertake the organisation's QA processes, who have equivalent qualifications to those specified in section 4.9;
 - (c) how the organisation will address each of the requirements outlined in this Protocol, particularly the QA system which will applied by the organisation;
 - (d) that the organisation's Board, governance and management structure is capable of managing conflicts of interest which might impede the proper execution of accreditation activities;
 - (e) the organisation's ability to provide accreditation services across the Jurisdictions in which it is proposes to operate;
 - (f) the financial viability of the organisation for at least the period of accreditation; and
 - (g) the holding of an appropriate ongoing level of professional indemnity and public liability insurance cover.

- (3) The NatHERS Administrator may, in its sole discretion, approve an application by an Applicant Organisation to become an AAO.
- (4) The NatHERS Administrator may request further information from the Applicant Organisation about its application.
- (5) The NatHERS Administrator may consult with Jurisdictions before making a decision with respect to an application.
- (6) Applicant Organisations will be notified of the NatHERS Administrator's decision within three months from the date the application is received, or from when the NatHERS Administrator receives further information requested from the organisation.
- (7) Approval to operate as an AAO will be granted for a specified period of no more than three years, and may include conditions governing the scope of accreditation services that can be provided by that AAO.
- (8) Approved organisations will be given an initial provisional accreditation period of six months, at which time the NatHERS Administrator will decide if full accreditation will be granted, based on the AAO's performance in establishing procedures for meeting the requirements of this Protocol.
- (9) The NatHERS Administrator will notify Jurisdictions, AAOs and relevant industry bodies about the determination of applications. The status of all AAOs will be listed on the NatHERS website.
- (10) AAOs may promote their status to the extent of the approval issued by the NatHERS Administrator.

11. Amendments of this Protocol

- (1) The NatHERS Administrator may make amendments to this Protocol at any time to ensure its currency and effectiveness. The NatHERS Administrator will consult with AAOs prior to making amendments.
- (2) Final amendments will be notified to all AAOs, Jurisdictions, relevant industry bodies and on the NatHERS website.
- (3) The AAO will be required within three months, or other period set in consultation with the NatHERS Administrator, to:
 - (a) make any necessary adjustments to their policies and operations to ensure compliance with the amended Protocol; and
 - (b) advise their Assessors of amendments to this Protocol.

Appendix A – Assessor Code of Practice

- (1) AAOs must include the following requirements in their Assessor Code of Practice. AAOs may include additional requirements in the Code of Practice, provided they are consistent with this Protocol.
- (2) To achieve and maintain their accreditation, Assessors must commit to:
 - (a) a high level of diligence and professionalism to ensure that their Assessments are as accurate as possible;
 - (b) operating at all times in compliance with all applicable laws;
 - (c) producing Assessments in compliance with relevant building regulations, including any state or territory-specific requirements;
 - (d) not knowingly publishing false or misleading information about their accreditation or the Assessments they have undertaken, their AAO or NatHERS;
 - (e) avoiding conflicts of interest with their clients for whom they do Assessments;
 - (f) applying the relevant version of the NatHERS Technical Notes and using a version of NatHERS Software accredited at the time an Assessment is completed for regulatory purposes;
 - (g) providing a copy of all Assessments conducted for regulatory purposes to the AAO to which they are accredited (also see multiple accreditation below);
 - (h) accepting responsibility and liability for each Assessment that has been lodged with the AAO under their name, and not reassigning, delegating or transferring this responsibility to another Assessor;
 - (i) using the NatHERS name and logo only in accordance with the NatHERS Guidelines for using the NatHERS logo;
 - (j) maintaining professional indemnity insurance commensurate with the volume and scope of the work they undertake;
 - (k) submitting any reviews of their Assessments as required by the AAO or NatHERS Administrator, providing access to all relevant documentation, including Assessment data files, and plans and specifications upon which the Assessments are based, and being available to answer questions about their Assessments;
 - (l) accepting the results of any reviews and diligently undertaking any remedial or Disciplinary Action required by the AAO;
 - (m) participating in the system for dealing with complaints about Assessors maintained by the AAO and responding promptly, diligently and with courtesy to any complaints;
 - (n) meeting at least the minimum requirements of the AAO's CPD program;
 - (o) advising the AAO promptly of any change in their circumstances that may affect their accreditation;

- (p) agreeing to the release to the NatHERS Administrator of any information in relation to their accreditation held by the AAO; and
 - (q) keeping any information the Assessor collects on behalf of the NatHERS Administrator confidential.
- (3) In addition to the obligations in subsection (2), Assessors accredited with more than one AAO must also commit to:
- (a) notifying all AAOs with which they are accredited within 10 business days of obtaining accreditation with more than one AAO;
 - (b) agreeing to the AAOs sharing information about the Assessor in relation to their accreditation and their Assessments; and
 - (c) providing a copy of all Assessments conducted for regulatory purposes to one or other of the AAOs to which they are accredited, in proportions agreed by all AAOs to which they are accredited.