



**Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme**

**Strategic Plan  
2015-2018**

**Updated November 2017**

**Disclaimer**

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

## Foreword

The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) was an initiative of the former Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE) and now falls under the responsibilities of the COAG Energy Council. NatHERS is overseen by the NatHERS Steering Committee (NSC), currently the Energy Efficiency Advisory Team, a COAG Energy Council committee which includes representatives of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. The Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy is the NatHERS Administrator on behalf of States and Territories.

This Strategic Plan has been developed by jurisdictions in collaboration with stakeholders to establish a clear and focused strategy for progressing NatHERS.

The Plan outlines the context in which NatHERS operates, the overall vision for NatHERS, its core mission and values, and the strategic priorities out to 2018.

## 2017 Update

The NatHERS Strategic Plan commits to reviewing and updating the Strategic Plan annually.

This update does not seek to re-evaluate the Strategic Plan, but rather outlines the actions to be completed ahead of the finalisation of a new Strategic Plan 2018-2022. New actions have been added to Appendix B to reflect the current NatHERS Administrator work program.

A complete update on progress of priorities and actions against the Strategic Plan can be found in the NatHERS Annual Reports on the NatHERS website.

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# 1. Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to communicate the vision, objectives and strategic priorities for NatHERS for the period 2015 to 2018 in order to:

- ensure that jurisdictions have an agreed approach to the future directions of NatHERS;
- facilitate shared understanding, collaborative working arrangements and communication between jurisdictions and stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the Plan; and
- provide a reference for work prioritisation and resourcing decisions made by the NatHERS Steering Committee and the NatHERS Administrator.

## 2. Vision

The vision for NatHERS is to support the improvement of the energy efficiency of Australian residential buildings through the availability of scientifically valid, cost effective and, reliable house energy ratings that can be integrated across the building design, compliance, construction and renovation cycle.

## 3. Objectives

The objectives of NatHERS are to:

- Assist the public and the building industry to identify the extent to which a new or existing house has the potential, through its design and construction, to be productive in its use of energy; and
- Facilitate rating of the energy efficiency of dwelling design and construction, in a manner that is nationally coordinated and consistent, and is regionally sensitive to variations in climate, housing design and other factors.

## 4. Values

NatHERS will operate with the values of:

- **Integrity** – the administration of NatHERS will be performed in an ethical, professional, impartial and transparent manner;
- **Quality** – NatHERS will strive to ensure that the rating tools it accredits are technically robust, accurate and reliable and that assessors use the tools correctly;
- **Collaboration** – NatHERS will inform and seek out the views of stakeholders on current and proposed actions to ensure that it remains relevant, useful and effective for their needs;
- **Leadership** – NatHERS will strive to be on the leading edge of thermal performance rating tools within Australia and internationally in terms of its scientific validity and its facilitation of more energy efficient housing;
- **Social responsibility** – NatHERS will serve the public good by enabling the use of energy efficiency rating software that can be trusted by designers, builders and home buyers to identify more comfortable and energy efficient homes.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 What is NatHERS?

NatHERS was initiated in 1993 to provide a standardised, government directed approach to rating the thermal performance of Australian homes, based on modelling software that had been developed by the CSIRO over many years previously. A 'second generation' of the NatHERS software was released in 2006 to provide increased functionality.

Given the Australia-wide operation of the housing industry and the shared involvement of the Commonwealth, states and territories in the setting and implementation of building regulations, NatHERS was established as a national scheme involving all jurisdictions in its management.

NatHERS does not own or operate its own software tools. Instead, it accredits software which meets the Scheme's requirements of being able to estimate the annual heating and cooling energy load of a dwelling's design that would be required to keep it at a comfortable temperature for its occupants, using standard occupancy assumptions. The software 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 (with 10 stars being for buildings which require virtually no additional heating or cooling to be comfortable) to the dwelling based on the estimated total annual energy load for the climate zone where the house is located.

NatHERS accredited software can be used to verify compliance with certain building regulations including the energy efficiency (thermal performance) requirements for houses and apartments in the National Construction Code (NCC). The success of NatHERS is contingent upon accurate, consistent and reliable ratings being achieved through ongoing enhancement and validation of the rating software, the correct use of tools by assessors and quality assurance of ratings.

### 5.2 Why is NatHERS needed?

NatHERS is a national scheme that currently rates the thermal performance of residential dwellings. NatHERS provides a way for designers, builders and homebuyers to assess and test the thermal performance of a dwelling before it is constructed, which can be used to inform dwelling design, construction and purchase choices.

Households currently account for around eight per cent of Australia's net energy consumption<sup>1</sup>. Governments have recognised that the long-lasting nature of buildings means that the housing being built now will influence Australia's energy consumption for decades to come and that it is cheaper to incorporate energy efficiency at the time of construction rather than retrofitting later. NatHERS contributes to Australia's energy productivity by supporting initiatives to reduce energy demand from the residential sector and providing financial benefit to householders through reduced heating and cooling costs.

Building energy efficiency standards began to be introduced by a number of State and Territory Governments in the 1990s. In 2003, minimum energy efficiency standards for residential dwellings based on NatHERS star ratings were first incorporated into the Building Code of Australia (BCA)<sup>2</sup> as it was recognised that one centrally administered national program can minimise regulatory costs and improve regulatory consistency.

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<sup>1</sup> *Australian Energy Statistics*, BREE 2014,

<sup>2</sup> The BCA became Volumes One and Two of the NCC in 2011.

The NCC performance requirements for energy efficiency can be verified through several methods, with the use of NatHERS software currently being the preferred assessment method. The ability of NatHERS software to reduce the complex thermal modelling for residential buildings to a simple star rating has provided a useful and flexible mechanism for governments to identify and promote energy efficient homes and set minimum building standards for designers, assessors, building certifiers and builders to apply.

### 5.3 Role of NatHERS Software Tools

The three functions of NatHERS Software Tools are:

- Regulatory:
  - NatHERS Software Tools provide a mechanism for demonstrating the thermal performance of a residential building meets the minimum performance requirements as set out in jurisdictional instruments that reference the NCC.
- Design aid:
  - NatHERS Software Tools provide a mechanism for those aiming for best practice, by demonstrating the thermal performance of a residential building exceeds the minimum performance requirements, and allows designs to be modelled before being built to maximise cost effective solutions and comfort.
- Disclosure tool:
  - NatHERS Software Tools could provide a mechanism for evaluating and assessing the performance of existing residential buildings.

Around 70 per cent of new houses and apartments are currently being rated using a NatHERS tool to show compliance with the NCC<sup>3</sup>. NatHERS software is recognised by industry practitioners to provide a more flexible method to achieve building code compliance than the NCC's elemental Deemed-to-Satisfy method. NatHERS software can rate dwellings in any part of Australia as it includes weather data from 69 climate zones. However there is no data available on how many new dwellings are rated in each climate zone.

Three software tools are currently accredited by NatHERS – FirstRate5 produced by Sustainability Victoria and BERS Pro produced by Energy Inspection which share most of the market, and AccuRate produced by CSIRO which is used by a smaller number of assessors.

### 5.4 Role of Commonwealth, States and Territories

The Commonwealth Government is the NatHERS Administrator on behalf of the States and Territories. This function currently sits with the Department of the Environment and Energy. The NatHERS Administrator acts on behalf of the jurisdictions who provide direction to the Administrator through the Energy Efficiency Advisory Team of the COAG Energy Council.

The role of the NatHERS Administrator includes:

- Scheme Management:
  - The NatHERS Administrator manages the ongoing development and operation of NatHERS. This includes: developing and maintaining NatHERS Protocols and procedures; NatHERS website maintenance; communication with industry, government and consumer stakeholders; and facilitating policy development on NatHERS and related issues.

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<sup>3</sup> Estimate made by the NatHERS Administrator based on numbers of assessments performed by accredited assessors.

- Maintaining the benchmark software tool:
  - The NatHERS Administrator in partnership with the CSIRO ensures the NatHERS benchmark software tool is maintained and upgrades are managed in line with policy decisions agreed between Australian jurisdictions.
- Software Accreditation:
  - The NatHERS Administrator accredits software tools that assess the thermal performance of a residential building based on its design to ensure they are scientifically valid, consistent, reliable and cost effective.
- Assessor Accreditation:
  - The NatHERS Administrator accredits Assessor Accrediting Organisations and provides guidance to ensure consistent, reliable and cost effective assessments are being provided using NatHERS Software Tools.

NatHERS is an administrative program and has no legislative basis. Decisions made by the Energy Efficiency Advisory Team and the Administrator are not binding on jurisdictions. States and territories are responsible for the application of NatHERS in their own jurisdiction to meet their specific circumstances such as the accreditation of assessors.

The use of NatHERS software to show compliance with the NCC is given legal effect by relevant legislation in each state and territory. This legislation prescribes or “calls up” the NCC to fulfil any technical requirements which have to be satisfied when undertaking new building work, including energy efficiency standards. This means the states and territories are able to vary the technical provisions of the NCC to suit their own circumstances.

**Note:** In early 2016, following a review of working groups within the COAG Energy Council, the Energy Working Group that acted as the Steering Committee for NatHERS was changed to the Energy Efficiency Advisory Team. In mid-2016 the NatHERS Administrator function moved to the Department of the Environment and Energy. Refer to Appendix A for the current governance structure.

## 5.5 Role of Assessor Accrediting Organisations

NatHERS does not accredit Assessors directly but approves Assessor Accrediting Organisations (AAOs) under a Protocol that requires AAOs to:

- ensure accredited assessors meet minimum qualification requirements and adhere to a code of conduct;
- undertake quality assurance checks of a sample of ratings done by accredited assessors and provide remedial advice where errors are found;
- provide and monitor continuing professional development undertaken by accredited assessors;
- provide technical support to accredited assessors;
- provide avenues for dealing with consumer complaints about assessors;
- provide reports to the NatHERS Administrator.

There are well over 500 accredited assessors around Australia, accredited by two AAOs – the Australian Building Sustainability Association (ABSA) and the Building Designers Association of Victoria (BDAV). There are also an unknown number of non-accredited assessors, as not all jurisdictions require assessors to be accredited to perform assessments for building approval purposes.

## 6. Current Challenges and Opportunities

To meet the vision and objectives of the Strategic Plan, the actions included in this Plan take into account a number of changes within NatHERS that have been occurring over the last two years. These changes have presented both challenges and opportunities, in particular:

- The introduction of new versions of accredited NatHERS tools from October 2014. This included changes to the Chenath Engine, a new windows module and the introduction of the Universal Certificate. The software providers have also moved to an online pay-per-certificate system, driven by the need to change from a product-based to a certificate-based licence. This enables cost recovery to improve software functionality and accuracy, and to adequately maintain and support the software.
- The introduction of the Certificate IV in NatHERS Assessment as the minimum qualification for existing and new accredited assessors. This has contributed to a decline in the number of accredited assessors. In addition, most jurisdictions do not require assessors who perform assessments for building approval purposes to be accredited. This is leading to many accredited assessors who perform a limited number of assessments likely to drop their accreditation rather than undertake the Certificate IV.
- There is a lack of consolidated data on the energy ratings being performed across Australia and the features of new housing that is contributing to these ratings. This is hampering policy analysis and development regarding NatHERS, and residential building energy efficiency in general. However, the introduction of the online pay-per-certificate system will over time create a repository of data on submitted assessments.
- The NCC is undergoing regulation reforms and the alignment between the NCC and NatHERS is changing. Potentially a more structured and longer transition is required for the upgrading of NatHERS software where it is used for NCC compliance. There are also likely to be expanded pathways for verifying compliance with the NCC energy efficiency requirements which do not require the use of NatHERS software.
- At the same time, there are a number of industry and social trends that NatHERS needs to be cognisant of:
  - The demand from homebuyers on governments and industry for more sustainable housing is unlikely to diminish and is likely to increase due to increased energy costs, households' desire for thermal comfort, and public concerns about climate change;
  - There is increasing consumer concern about whether housing once built complies with its original building approval including its expected energy efficiency performance. Housing that is underperforming compared to its original rating, or the original rating was incorrect, can cost homebuyers and tenants more in energy costs than what would be expected. Rating consistency and accuracy concerns may also influence confidence in the NatHERS. The National Energy Efficient Buildings Project (NEEBP) was initiated by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in 2013 to identify and address concerns about systemic non-compliance with the energy efficiency requirements in the NCC;
  - NatHERS software needs to take account of the continuing scientific advances on building thermal modelling, and the new building materials and techniques that are regularly entering the market;

- The increasing use of computer-aided design (CAD) for building design and documentation, growing cloud-based computing capacity, and the pressure on assessors to minimise assessment costs is placing demands on the integration and useability of NatHERS software, and
- The number of apartment (Class 2) dwellings is increasing relative to detached housing, particularly within the established areas of capital cities. These types of developments present different challenges to designers, assessors and builders due to different thermal performance characteristics and construction types.
- There has also been public discussion in recent years about the possibility of developing a 'whole of house' energy efficiency standard and rating scheme that incorporates the building fabric and fixed appliances and equipment. It could be expanded to cover other sustainability elements such as water use, e.g. the proposal in the 2009 National Strategy on Energy Efficiency to develop a National Building Energy Standard-Setting, Assessment and Rating Framework. Given that governments are currently developing a National Energy Productivity Plan (NEPP), the Strategic Plan has not considered widening NatHERS beyond its current focus on the thermal performance of the building fabric.
- The window component in the NatHERS software is a critical element of the energy efficiency rating. Stakeholders have commented that the window libraries developed by the AFRC require further development. NatHERS Administrator does not have any formal agreement with the AFRC. Better relationships and understanding of responsibility would assist in cooperatively developing and improving NatHERS software. Improvements to the window processes in the software will provide better certainty to assessors.
- In December 2015 the NEPP was released by COAG. Key measures in the NEPP that relate to, or could impact, NatHERS are:
  - NEPP 5: Improve residential building energy ratings and disclosure;
  - NEPP 31: Advance the National Construction Code; and
  - NEPP 32: Improve compliance with building energy efficiency regulation.

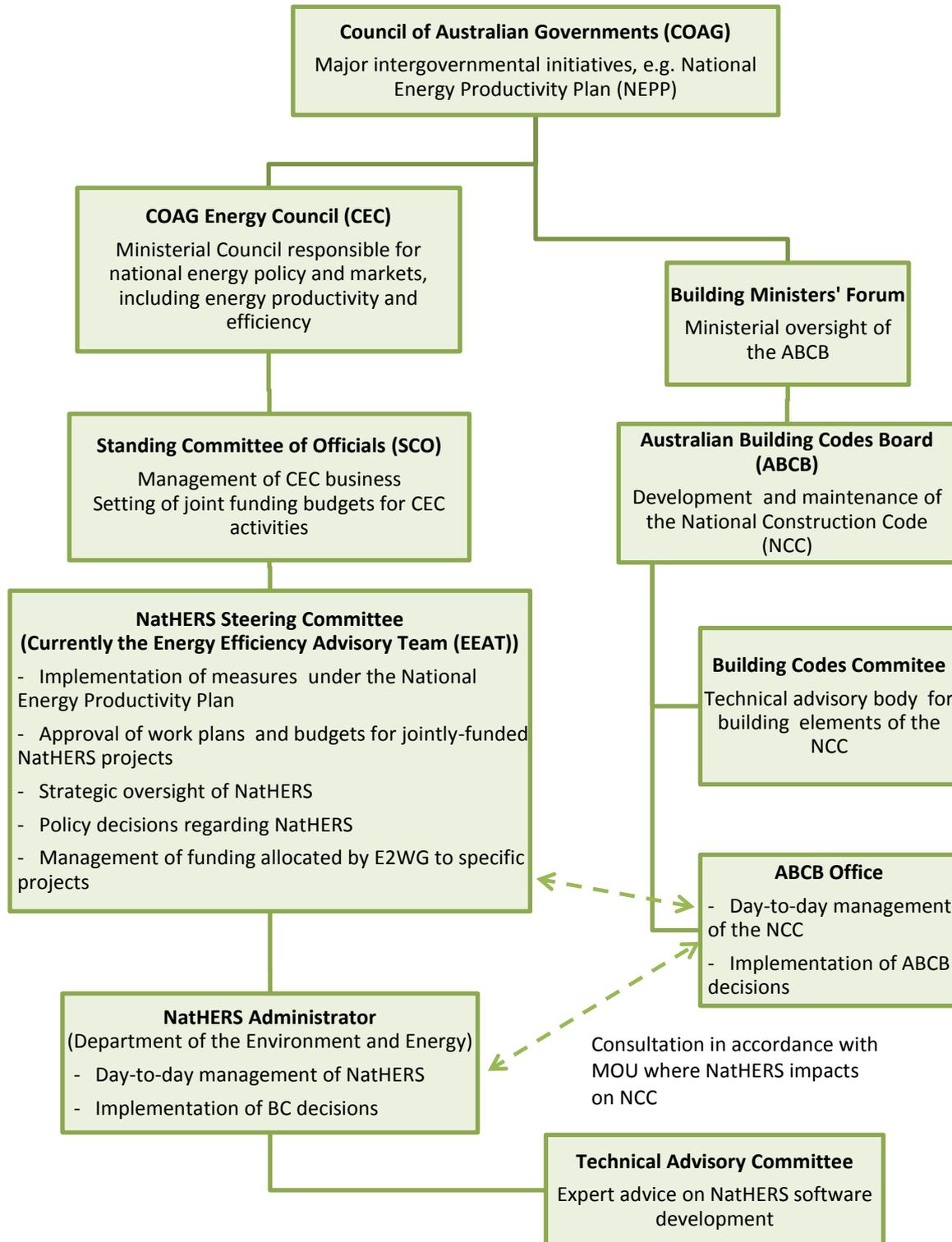
## 7. Strategic Priorities

The objectives of the Strategic Plan (previously section 4 of the Plan) have been reframed as strategic priorities going forward. The NatHERS Administrator will pursue the following priorities over the life of this Strategic Plan:

- 1) **Governance and program management** – The NatHERS Administrator will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its management. This will create clear roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes in the areas of governance, operating procedures, protocol setting and administration, risk management, and stakeholder engagement.
- 2) **Accreditation of rating tools** – the consistency of NatHERS accredited tools with the benchmark software will be improved. All updates of software will be managed in a way that provides certainty and sufficient time to adjust for software providers, assessors and the housing industry.
- 3) **Research and development** – the benchmark software and the accredited software tools will have improved functionality and ability to accurately model building thermal performance. NatHERS will continue to adapt to changes, challenges and opportunities to ensure that it remains relevant, useful and beneficial to the public and the building industry.
- 4) **Industry skills and capability** – the skill levels, competency and consistency of assessors will be improved, and designers, building certifiers and builders will be informed about the appropriate use of rating tools.
- 5) **Monitoring and evaluation** – mechanisms will be put in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the scheme, including the use of the software, the validity of ratings and performance of assessors.
- 6) **Public and stakeholder engagement** – measures will be undertaken to improve public and stakeholder confidence and engagement in the effectiveness, accuracy and function of NatHERS.

# Appendix A: Outline of NatHERS Governance Structure

[Current as of September 2016]



## Appendix B: Updated NatHERS Administration – Key Actions

### Improving governance and program management

Action	Deliverable	Timeframe	Participants
<b>Governance</b>			
a) Review of NatHERS operational structures and financial flows	Report completed and NSC response published on the NatHERS website	Late 2017	NA NSC
b) Finalise documentation of updated governance structures, processes and accompanying templates in an updated NatHERS Administrative and Governance Arrangements document and publish them on the NatHERS website	Updated NatHERS Administrative and Governance Arrangements document published on the NatHERS website	Early 2018	NA NSC
c) Develop the Strategic Plan 2018-22	Strategic Plan 2018-2022 published on the NatHERS website	Early 2018	NA Stakeholder Consultative Group All stakeholders NSC
d) Have annual review of this Strategic Plan	Annual Report including performance against KPIs published on the NatHERS website	Late 2018	NA NSC

### Accreditation and updating of rating tools

Action	Deliverable	Timeframe	Participants
<b>Software Accreditation Protocol</b>			
a) Undertake a review of the Software Accreditation Protocol and supporting documentation for software providers to clearly outline software tool requirements	Revised Software Accreditation Protocol published on the NatHERS website	March 2018	NA NSC Software providers
<b>Future Software Updates</b>			
b) Intended release dates for software to align with the NCC dates, with a standard transition period	Revised Protocol with key dates outlined published on the NatHERS website	Ongoing	NA NSC ABCB

## Research and development

Action	Deliverable	Timeframe	Participants
<b>Software tools</b>			
a) Undertake analysis and implement improvements to window processes in the software tools	New Custom windows library Builder MOU between NA and Australian Fenestration Rating Council (AFRC) De-identified custom windows in software	Mid 2018	NA CSIRO Software providers AFRC ABCB
b) Implement outcomes from Universal Certificate Review	Updated Universal Certificate	Early 2019	NA All stakeholders
c) Encourage consistency in use of software tools by assessors through investigating how internal rule and logic checks, and help information from the Technical Notes, can be incorporated into the software	New version of NatHERS tools	Subject to priorities in 2018-2022 Strategic Plan	NA TAC Software providers
d) Update Climate zone mapping to reduce reliance on post codes	Updated Climate zone map published on NatHERS website Research into options for climate zone mapping	Subject to priorities in 2018-2022 Strategic Plan	NA TAC NSC CSIRO Software providers
<b>Benchmark software</b>			
e) Update the climate files and undertake a PIA for this action	Preliminary Impact Analysis (PIA) document completed and climate files updated in a beta version of Chenath	Late 2017	NA NSC CSIRO Software providers ABCB
f) Implementation of high priority Chenath updates	Chenath changes incorporated in all software tools	Early 2019	NA CSIRO Software providers ABCB
<b>Collaboration</b>			
g) Collaborate with other interested institutions to review the assumptions of the NatHERS benchmark software and the validity of its outputs	Assumptions and other research documents	Ongoing	NA TAC CSIRO CRC LCL
h) Liaise with the CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRC LCL) and leverage off relevant projects	Meetings and research reports	Ongoing	NA TAC NSC CRC LCL

## Improving assessor skills and capability

Action	Deliverable	Timeframe	Participants
<b>Certificate IV in NatHERS assessment</b>			
a) Facilitate changes to Certificate IV following outcomes of the Certificate IV review	Meetings and discussions with stakeholders to implement changes	Mid 2018	NA NSC ARTIBUS AAOs TAC RTOs
b) Contribute to the review and implementation of updates to the Certificate IV curriculum.	Research and feedback	End 2018	NA ARTIBUS RTO AAOS
<b>Assessor skills</b>			
c) Consolidate NatHERS User Guidance, and revise Technical Notes and other documents to better communicate the principles and functional specifications that underpin NatHERS software tools	Assessor Handbook for NatHERS Software, and revised NatHERS Technical Notes and Practice Notes, published on the NatHERS website	Mid 2018	NA NSC AAOs Accredited assessors Software providers
d) Conduct a review of the usage and relevance of worked examples	Report and proposal for how to proceed	End 2018	NA AAOs NSC
e) Investigate options to do QA reviews of assessments done by non-accredited assessors (e.g. through the software portals)	Discussion Paper	Subject to priorities in 2018-2022 Strategic Plan	NA NSC Software providers
<b>AAO responsibilities</b>			
f) Facilitate changes to the requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) following outcomes of the Certificate IV review to ensure they are contributing fully to improving assessor skills	Meetings and discussions with stakeholders.	Mid 2018	NA AAOs
g) Investigate means for electronic linking of AAO assessor accreditation details and QA requirements with NatHERS software portals	Discussion Paper	Subject to priorities in 2018-2022 Strategic Plan	NA AAOs Software Providers

## Monitoring and evaluation

Action	Deliverable	Timeframe	Participants
<b>Data</b>			
a) Develop a national ratings dataset that provides the NatHERS Administrator with comprehensive information on new dwellings to inform policy-making and scheme administration	Data collection and Annual Report	Late 2017	NA NSC CSIRO Software providers AAOs
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>			
b) Publish an annual report on the outcomes of NatHERS against the KPIs and include statistics from software providers and AAOs	Annual report published on the NatHERS website	Annually	NA NSC

## Public and stakeholder engagement

Action	Deliverable	Timeframe	Participants
<b>Engaging stakeholders</b>			
a) Identify opportunities to promote NatHERS in relevant publications and forums	Positive articles and references to NatHERS in the public domain and participation in events	Ongoing	NA
b) Continue to engage and communicate with stakeholders through mechanisms identified in the Service Charter	Regular engagement and communication with stakeholders	Ongoing	NA NSC
c) Establish a Stakeholder Consultative Group and outline the details and role of the Committee in a Terms of Reference (TOR), and publish it on the NatHERS website	Stakeholder Consultative Group established and items published on the NatHERS website	Late 2017	NA
d) Hold an annual stakeholder workshop to review progress on the Strategic Plan (linked to review of Plan)	Stakeholder workshop	Mid 2018	NA All key stakeholders
e) Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy with certifiers	Stakeholder engagement strategy	End 2018	NA
f) Publication of updated design solutions information	Design solutions video	End 2018	NA NSC
<b>Operating procedures</b>			
g) Implement the NatHERS Service Charter and other operating procedures	Ongoing delivery of the NatHERS Service Charter	Ongoing	NA

<b>Compliance</b>			
h) Develop a compliance and education strategy for software providers, AAOs and accredited assessors	Scoping paper	End 2018	NA NSC Software providers AAOs Accredited Assessors
<b>Technical Advisory Committee</b>			
i) Appoint new TAC members	TAC meeting organised	Late 2017	NA
j) Revise the TOR for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	New TAC TOR document	Late 2017	NA NSC

## Glossary

**AAO:** Assessor Accrediting Organisation, which is an organisation that accredits Assessors in accordance with the Protocol for Assessor Accrediting Organisations.

**ABCB:** the Australian Building Codes Board.

**AccuRate:** The commercial software tool developed by CSIRO comprising a graphical user interface and the Chenath Engine.

**AFRC:** The Australian Fenestration Rating Council who are responsible for maintaining and updating the custom windows library that are used in the NatHERS software tools.

**ARTIBUS:** A Skills Service Organisation responsible for national qualifications. They provide support to Industry Reference Committees, who work with industry, to ensure skills and qualifications reflect existing and emerging workforce development needs.

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

**Assessor:** a person accredited by an AAO to use NatHERS software to assess the thermal performance of buildings for regulatory purposes.

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

**Benchmark Software:** the most recently accredited combination of the Chenath Engine and AccuRate graphical user interface developed by CSIRO.

**CAD:** computer-aided design software used by architects, engineers, building designers, artists, and others to create precision two-dimensional (2-D) or three-dimensional (3-D) drawings, technical illustrations and models. It can be used to assist with the design of dwellings.

**Chenath Engine:** the CSIRO-developed thermal calculation engine that predicts hourly heating and cooling energy requirements for residential buildings across Australia. CSIRO maintains the Chenath Engine and licenses the engine to software tool providers.

**CPD:** Continuing Professional Development is an educative mechanism for assessors to maintain and improve skills and knowledge.

**Jurisdiction:** the relevant Commonwealth, state or territory government department or regulatory authority.

**NatHERS:** the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme.

**NatHERS Administrator (NA):** the body that is appointed by the NatHERS Steering Committee to administer NatHERS in consultation and agreement with jurisdictions and relevant government agencies. The NatHERS Administrator is currently the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy.

**NatHERS software:** a current software tool, with a designated name and version number, that is accredited by the Scheme as complying with the NatHERS Software Accreditation Protocol.

**NatHERS Steering Committee (NSC):** the Energy Efficiency Advisory Team of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council. It is responsible for oversight, strategic direction, and policy for NatHERS. The Energy Efficiency Advisory Team comprises officials from Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies with responsibility for energy efficiency policy and overseeing the NatHERS work program.

**NCC:** the current version of the National Construction Code.

**NEPP:** National Energy Productivity Plan.

**QA:** the quality assurance process for checking whether Assessments have been done correctly in accordance with the NatHERS Technical Notes and any other relevant requirements for Assessors.

**Regulatory Mode** means the operation of NatHERS software when completing an Assessment for achieving compliance with a particular jurisdiction's implementation of the NCC or their own particular building regulations.

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

**Software Provider:** An entity that owns or has the legal right to sell or licence the use of a NatHERS accredited software tool.

**TAC:** NatHERS Technical Advisory Committee who provide advice to the NatHERS Administrator on NatHERS technical issues.

**Technical Notes:** Reference documents issued by NatHERS which describe the correct procedures for entering a building's characteristics into NatHERS software in regulatory mode.

**Universal Certificate:** An official certificate bearing the NatHERS logo produced by an Assessor from the NatHERS software. It details key data from the assessment and relevant specifications for the residential building, and includes the star rating for the dwelling's design. For accredited assessors it is generated in colour and for non-accredited assessors it is in black and white.