



Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme®

Complaints Management Policy

Publication information

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At a glance: Making a complaint

When making complaints, you CAN:

- remain anonymous, although this may limit how your complaint can be addressed
- ask questions about the complaint process, including how your privacy will be protected
- be supported by a friend or family member, an advocate, an interpreter, or a community Elder
- request how you prefer to be contacted e.g. phone, email

Send complaints about **NatHERS accredited assessors** to the relevant Assessor Accreditation Service Provider:

<p>Australian Building Sustainability Association e: admin@absa.net.au w: www.absa.net.au p: PO Box 856 North Sydney NSW 2059</p>	<p>Design Matters National t: 03 9416 0227 e: info@designmatters.org.au w: www.designmatters.org.au p: PO Box 429 Elwood VIC 3184</p>	<p>House Energy Raters Association t: 0447 099 392 w: www.hera.asn.au p: 96A Trudy Crescent Cornubia QLD 4130</p>	<p>Existing Homes Assessor Accreditation Provider t: xx xxxx xxxx e: xxx@xxxx.xxx.au w: www.xxx.xx.au p: PO Box xx City State P/Code</p>
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Include the main facts; your contact information (unless you want to remain anonymous), relevant dates and times, a description of the problem, and what outcome you want. Attach relevant supporting information.

Your complaint will be registered and assessed to work out how it should be handled. Your complaint will be acknowledged within **5 days** of the date it is received.

If the matter is straight forward and likely to be easily resolved

The Assessor Accreditation Service Provider will work out how to resolve your complaint, take any necessary actions, and inform you of the outcome at the earliest possible opportunity. They will try to resolve your complaint within 30 business days. If they are unable to do so, they will tell you this and the reasons for the delay.

If the matter is complex, or unlikely to be easily resolved

Your complaint will be allocated to a staff member who is responsible for investigating and resolving your complaint and will collect relevant information and evidence and make a complete record of the investigation.

As part of the process, they will assess if your complaint raises matters that may require referral to a regulatory authority or law enforcement

If there are matters in your complaint that need to be referred to a regulatory authority or law enforcement, the person handling your complaint will refer it directly if they are able to do so. If not, they will assist you to find the correct agency to deal with it.

The time to investigate and resolve complex complaints varies based on a range of factors. If your complaint cannot be resolved within 30 business days, you will be provided with regular progress updates every 20 business days.

When investigations are completed, the Assessor Accreditation Service Provider will decide how it should be resolved and advise you of the outcome. They will explain the steps they took and the reasons for their decisions.

<p>If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint you can request an internal review. Your request must be sent to the Assessor Accreditation Service Provider within 30 days of the date they notified you of the outcome of your complaint. You should tell them why you believe they have made an error and include any supporting information.</p>	<p>The review will be undertaken by someone who was not the original decision maker. They will consider all the information and may decide to confirm, vary, or revoke the decision. If revoked, a fresh decision will be made.</p>	<p>They will tell you what the review decided, what steps were taken, and the reasons for the decision. You will also be advised of any external review options available to you.</p>
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Complaints about NatHERS service providers are managed by the NatHERS Administrator. See 'How to make a complaint' on page 3 for further information.

Complaints about assessors not accredited by NatHERS cannot be resolved by the NatHERS Administrator or our Assessor Accreditation Service Providers. However, if you contact the NatHERS Administrator or any of our approved Assessor Accreditation Service Providers, we may be able to assist you to identify where to direct your complaint.

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NatHERS approach to complaints

All members of the public have the right to make complaints. Your feedback helps us to improve our programs and services, ensuring we meet your expectations of high quality, timely services, and make fair and transparent decisions.

Where errors, misunderstandings or unexpected problems occur, we encourage people to let us know so we can act quickly to take any necessary corrective action and identify ways to improve outcomes.

Our approach to complaints management is:

Make it easy:

Information about how and where to complain is readily available and easy to understand, and methods for making complaints are accessible to diverse groups of people. There are no costs for making a complaint.

Make it responsive:

Complaints are acknowledged and dealt with in a timely way, and people are kept informed of the progress of their complaint. Where a commitment to action is made by us, it is followed through.

Make it fair:

Privacy of information is protected as much as possible, and all parties are treated with respect. Decisions are transparent, objective, and accountable.

Confidence in the integrity of our complaints processes is our priority. People have a right to make a complaint without fear. Reprisal action against a person who makes a complaint is not tolerated and if proven, is treated as serious misconduct.

Who can you complain about?

NatHERS accredited assessors:

Energy performance assessors accredited under NatHERS to produce NatHERS ratings and certificates.

Approved NatHERS service providers:

Third party organisations approved by the NatHERS Administrator to provide services to assessors.

- **Assessor Accreditation Service Providers** accredit assessors and oversee assessor compliance with the obligations of accreditation.
- **Software Providers** provide and maintain software tools accredited by NatHERS, which collect and process data and information to produce a NatHERS energy rating and certificate.
- **Independent auditors** undertake impartial reviews of assessments.

The NatHERS Administrator:

Sets the rules for NatHERS and ensures approved NatHERS service providers are compliant with their obligations to the scheme.

Complaints about the NatHERS Administrator

Complaints about the decisions, acts (or failure to act) and behaviour of the NatHERS Administrator and NatHERS staff are managed under Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water (DCCEEW) processes. Complaints can be made via www.dcceew.gov.au/about/contact/client-feedback

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the services or actions of a **NatHERS accredited assessor** or an **NatHERS service provider**, and where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. Examples of complaints include:

- poor accessibility or quality of services
- inadequate knowledge/training of an assessor or approved NatHERS service provider staff
- poor treatment by an assessor or approved NatHERS service provider
- incorrect or unfair actions or decisions, or reasons for them not properly explained
- fraud and compliance issues
- not responding to requests or applications, delays providing services, and/or no explanation for inaction or delays
- disagreement with policy or process, flawed or deficient policy and process, or policy and process that has not been properly explained

What is not a complaint?

An initial request for a service or action, or requests for information, explanations or updates are not considered complaints.

Feedback may be compliments, criticisms, comments, overall statements of opinion, or suggestions. Criticism is not treated as a complaint if the person providing the criticism is not seeking a response to their feedback, and it would not be otherwise reasonable to provide one.

When making complaints, you:

- can be supported by a friend, family member, an advocate, an interpreter, or a community Elder
- can tell us how we should communicate with you
- can remain anonymous, although this may limit how your complaint can be resolved
- can ask questions about the complaints process, including how we protect your privacy when you make a complaint
- will be provided with information about how your complaint will be managed, including what you can do if you are unhappy with the result.

How to make a complaint

Complaints about NatHERS accredited assessors

Complaints about accredited assessors are dealt with by the relevant Assessor Accreditation Service Provider. There are currently four organisations approved by us to accredit NatHERS assessors:

Australian Building Sustainability Association



Email: admin@absa.net.au



Website: www.absa.net.au



Post: PO Box 856
North Sydney NSW 2059

House Energy Raters Association



Website: www.hera.asn.au



Telephone: 0447 099 392



Post: 96A Trudy Crescent
Cornubia QLD 4130

Design Matters National



Email: info@designmatters.org.au



Website: www.designmatters.org.au



Telephone: 03 9416 0227



Post: PO Box 429
Elwood VIC 3184

Existing Homes Assessor Accreditation Service Provider



Email: xxxx@xxxx.xx.au



Website: [www.xxxx.xxx.au |contact](http://www.xxxx.xxx.au/contact)



Telephone: xxxx xxx xxx



Post: P O Box x
City State P/Code

If you do not receive a response to your complaint, or experience difficulties contacting the Assessor Accreditation Service Provider, please contact the NatHERS Administrator (details below).

Complaints about approved NatHERS service providers

Complaints about approved NatHERS service providers are managed by the NatHERS Administrator



Email: admin@nathers.gov.au



Website: www.nathers.gov.au



Telephone: 1800 920 528
(DCCEEW General Enquiries)



Post: NatHERS Administrator,
Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and
Water
GPO Box 3090
CANBERRA ACT 2601

What happens to your complaint?

Whether you make a complaint about an assessor to one of the Assessor Accreditation Service Providers, or you make a complaint about an approved NatHERS service provider to the NatHERS Administrator, it will be handled the same.

Your complaint will be acknowledged, registered, and assessed to determine how it should be managed. If the complaint can be resolved straight away, it will be. If the matter is complex or unlikely to be easily resolved, your complaint will be allocated to a responsible officer for further investigation. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint, including steps taken to arrive at the outcome, and reasons for decisions.

Response times

Complaints are **acknowledged and registered within 5 business days of receipt.**

The time it takes to resolve complaints can vary depending on a range of factors including the complexity of the complaint. As a guide, we aim to resolve complaints within 30 business days (not including time in which we are waiting on more information from you). If your matter cannot be resolved within the 30 business day timeframe, you will be told why and provided an update every 20 business days.

Responsibilities in complaints

Your responsibilities

When making a complaint, you are responsible for:

- Providing a clear description of the problem and what you would like to happen.
- Providing as much relevant information and supporting evidence at the time of making the complaint. This assists us to resolve your complaint much more quickly.
- Telling us promptly about any changes that affect your complaint, including if you no longer wish to progress your complaint.
- Understanding decisions are based on the information and evidence available, and this means some decisions and outcomes cannot be overturned or varied.
- Engaging respectfully with the person handling your complaint. We do not tolerate unreasonable behaviour including abuse, aggression, or disrespect.

Our responsibilities

The NatHERS Administrator and Assessor Accreditation Service Providers are responsible for:

- Fostering a culture that is receptive to complaints, and ensuring staff who deal with complaints are able to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring that all matters are followed through to conclusion in a timely manner, and keeping you informed on the progress of your matter.
- Engaging with you respectfully when handling your complaint, ensuring decisions are fair and objective, and ensuring actions taken are proportionate to the matter.
- Ensuring the ways that people can make a complaint, and related information, is accessible and fit for purpose.
- Ensuring we keep accurate records about complaints and use the insights we gain to make improvements where required.

Resolving complaints

Where a complaint is substantiated, you can expect us to be accountable and take appropriate action. Resolutions to complaints will be fair, practical, and proportionate to the seriousness of the matter.

Resolving complaints may involve:

- Acknowledging the matter and apologising.
- Providing better explanations for policies, decisions, or actions.
- Explaining what is being done to prevent an issue from happening again.
- Reversing or varying an earlier outcome.
- Requiring remediation of an error.
- Taking performance improvement action against an accredited assessor.
- Taking performance improvement or enforcement action against an approved NatHERS service provider.
- Other appropriate means of redress.

Internal review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can request an internal review.

Internal reviews are conducted by experienced staff who have not previously been involved in your matter.

A request for internal review must be received by us **within 30 business days** of the date we notified you of the outcome of your complaint. Your request should explain why you believe we have made an error and any supporting information or evidence.

You will be advised of the outcome of any internal review process, and any external review options available to you.

We aim to complete internal reviews within 60 business days of the request date (not including time in which we are waiting on more information from you).

External review

Complaints managed by Assessor Accreditation Service Providers

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or handling of your complaint by an Assessor Accreditation Service Provider, you can request an external review by the NatHERS Administrator. We will generally not consider conducting a review if the Assessor Accreditation Service Provider has not been given an opportunity to review their original decision. **We aim to complete external reviews within 60 business days of the request date** (not including time in which we are waiting on more information from you).

Complaints managed by the NatHERS Administrator

If you are not satisfied with an outcome of the NatHERS Administrator's handling of your complaint, you can raise your concerns with the Commonwealth Ombudsman, via <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au>

Matters we cannot deal with

Some complaints may be beyond our authority to resolve. Wherever possible, we will assist you to identify alternative avenues you can take to resolve your complaint.

Payment disputes with assessors

Assessors deliver NatHERS ratings as privately operated businesses. We are not able to deal with payment disputes between you and your assessor, however a local state and territory consumer protection agency may be able to help. The Australian Consumer and Competition Commission maintains a list of state and territory agencies on its website www.accc.gov.au

As-built compliance for new home ratings

Energy performance ratings for new homes are based on the design information provided by builders or architects. Therefore, we are unable to deal with matters where the construction of a new home is different to the design information that the NatHERS rating was based on. Your state or territory building authority may be able to help. The Australian Building Codes Board maintains a list of state and territory building regulators on its website www.abcb.gov.au

Regulatory or criminal matters

Complaints that involve actual or suspected unlawful behaviour must be referred to the relevant authority. Sometimes it will be mandatory for us to refer matters to other agencies or authorities. Sometimes we will be unable to refer a matter on your behalf and will instead assist you to identify the appropriate organisation to deal with your complaint.

Improving how we deal with complaints

We are committed to ensuring that Australians remain confident in NatHERS, and we are accountable for ensuring our complaints processes are user-friendly, accessible, responsive, and transparent.

To ensure people making a complaint are being treated fairly, approved NatHERS service providers are audited periodically by the NatHERS Administrator for compliance with complaints handling processes.

Approved NatHERS service providers report to the NatHERS Administrator on complaints they manage.

NatHERS Administrator staff provide periodic reporting on all complaints to senior management, who use this information to ensure our complaints processes are working well and to identify opportunities for improving NatHERS.

Feedback on our complaints process

We welcome your feedback about this publication and/or our approach to complaints. You can send this to us by:



Email: admin@nathers.gov.au



Website: www.nathers.gov.au



Telephone: 1800 920 528
(DCCEEW General Enquiries)



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