



## **Australian Government**

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### **Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water**

# **COST RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT**

## **Commercial Building Disclosure Program 2024–25**

Charging for regulatory activity involves government entities charging individuals or organisations in the non-government sector some or all the minimum efficient costs of a specific government activity. The Australian Government Charging Policy (AGCP) and Cost Recovery Policy set out the policies under which government entities design, implement and review charging for regulatory activities. The Cost Recovery Implementation Statement is the public document to ensure transparency and accountability for the level of the charging and to demonstrate that the purpose for charging, as decided by Government, is being achieved.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Purpose

This Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) provides information on how the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) implements cost recovery charging for the Commercial Building Disclosure (CBD) program. It reports actual financial and non-financial performance information for the CBD program and contains financial and demand forecasts for 2024–25 and three forward years. The department will maintain the CRIS until the activity or cost recovery for the activity has been discontinued.

The CBD program aims to improve the energy efficiency of Australia's large office buildings and requires building owners to disclose information about the energy efficiency of large commercial office buildings (1,000 square meters or more) at the time of sale, lease or sublease. To meet the program requirements, building owners are obligated to obtain a Building Energy Efficiency Certificate (BEEC) or an exemption. BEECs consist of a National Australian Building Environment Rating System (NABERS) rating, a Tenancy Lighting Assessment (TLA), and online guidance on how the energy efficiency of the office could be improved. All CBD assessments are conducted and submitted by CBD accredited assessors. NABERS ratings are issued by the NABERS Program, which is a national initiative managed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on behalf of the Australian, state and territory governments.

The BEEC enables potential purchasers or lessees to include consideration of a building's energy efficiency as part of their decision-making process. This creates a strong market-based incentive for owners to improve their properties with cost-effective energy efficient upgrades that are attractive to buyers and tenants and increase return on investment.

The department administers the CBD program and collaborates with the regulatory community to help them comply with their disclosure obligations.

The CBD program provides four services: assessor accreditation, approval of applications for TLAs, BEECs and exemptions. The department however only charges for exemptions and accreditations in line with the Australian Government's charging policy decision, and in accordance with the *Building Energy Efficiency Disclosure Act 2010* (BEED Act). This initial partial cost recovery decision was taken when the Act was made and reflects the government policy decision at the time to only charge for part of the costs of the services. This decision included a consideration of the overall costs to industry from introducing the Act, including non-statutory costs associated with obtaining a certified NABERS rating.

Building owners who apply for an exemption from their disclosure obligations and individuals wishing to become CBD accredited assessors pay an application fee. The remaining program costs are funded through government appropriations.

The CBD program does not charge fees for BEECs or TLAs, however they result in a cost to building owners. Building owners are required to pay for the services of a CBD accredited assessor to conduct an assessment on-site and apply for TLAs and BEECs on their behalf.

Whilst it is possible to apply for TLAs, BEECs and exemptions voluntarily, most owners apply and incur these costs because they are legally obligated to.

## 2. POLICY AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CHARGE (COST RECOVER)

### 2.1. Government policy approval to charge for this regulatory activity

The Australian Government announced its decision to establish the CBD program as part of the 2009–10 Budget process. In the budget papers, funding of \$5.3 million over four years was announced to accelerate and expand a national regime for the mandatory disclosure of commercial building energy efficiency at the point of sale or lease to improve awareness of building energy performance. The funding was intended to cover both the initial phase of the scheme, covering office buildings, and the expansion of the scheme over the coming years to include other types of commercial buildings. Administration of the scheme would be undertaken with the objective of moving to full cost recovery.

The budget papers can be found at [Budget Measures Budget Paper No. 2 2009–10](#).

The policy authority for the CBD program provides for partial cost recovery of the department's expenditure on the CBD program. Charging is applied to fully recover the cost of processing of exemptions and accreditations delivered within the program's Issue Approvals and Certification output. The department implements this authority through the imposition of fees-for-service. These implementation settings are reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether charges continue to cover the program's relevant outputs and associated costs.

### 2.2. Statutory authority to charge

[Building Energy Efficiency Disclosure Act 2010](#) (BEED Act)

Subsections 17(2)(c) and 24(2)(c) of the BEED Act provide legislative authority for the imposition of fees for exemption and accreditation applications respectively as prescribed in the BEED Regulations.

[Building Energy Efficiency Disclosure Regulations](#) (BEED Regulations)

Subsections 5(3) and 7(2) of the BEED Regulations prescribe fees, for the purposes of Subsections 17(2)(c) and 24(2)(c) of the BEED Act.

The fee amounts are updated annually to account for any increase in the CPI in accordance with Section 11 of the BEED Regulations.

### 3. CHARGING (COST RECOVERY) MODEL

#### 3.1. Outputs and business processes of the activity

The outputs, description of business processes and specific examples relating to the CBD program are described in Table 3.1.1 below.

**Table 3.1.1 – CBD outputs and business processes included in the charging arrangement**

| <b>Cost group</b>                            | <b>Outputs</b><br>Business Processes<br><i>Examples</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Program management and administration</b> | <b>Workforce and Business Management</b><br><br>Managing employees, business planning and reporting, procurement, financial management, information management and corporate enabling services.<br><br><i>Specific examples include CBD program data analysis and reporting, updating internal and external user guides, publishing of Program statistics on the public CBD program website and management of supplier contracts for enabling services.</i>                               |
|                                              | <b>Business System Administration</b><br><br>Developing, acquiring, testing, implementing, and supporting applications and business systems.<br><br><i>Specific examples include developing, testing, and implementing necessary changes to the CBD program ICT platform and CBD assessor portal such as annual fee updates.</i>                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                              | <b>Stakeholder Engagement</b><br><br>Engaging with persons, businesses, organisations, and peak industry bodies, attending consultative committees and industry meetings, and the maintenance of public facing information.<br><br><i>Specific examples include responding to building owner and assessor enquiries via phone and email and providing relevant program information, engaging with real estate agents on non-compliant listings and engaging with real estate lawyers.</i> |
|                                              | <b>Policy and Instructional Material</b><br><br>Developing, maintaining, and communicating the program's instructional and guidance material, such as standard operating procedures, work instructions and public facing guidelines.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                              | <b>Business Improvement</b><br><br>Assessing, monitoring, and managing business performance, including improvements to regulatory authority, business processes and cost management.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Assurance</b>                             | <b>Risk Management</b><br><br>Assessing and managing the risks posed to achieving the stated financial and non-financial regulatory outcomes. This includes communicating results of risk analysis, modelling and forecasting to operational areas and the collection, receipt and use of reliable compliance data and intelligence to meet the department's compliance objectives.                                                                                                       |

| Cost group                 | <b>Outputs</b><br>Business Processes<br><i>Examples</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | <b>Verification</b><br><br>Activities undertaken to provide stakeholders and departmental executive with confidence that systems and processes are operating in accordance with their intended design and associated documentation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                            | <b>Surveillance</b><br><br>Monitoring the activities, documentation and behaviour of regulated entities or groups to assess overall program compliance. Surveillance differs from inspection as it is conducted on the regulatory system and not against the behaviour of individual participants.<br><br><i>Compliance monitoring may be undertaken through a range of activities including:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>analysis of information gathered from advertisements for sale, lease or sublease</i></li> <li>2. <i>analysis of and cross reference with information from other sources, such as state title records</i></li> <li>3. <i>desk top auditing of assessments</i></li> <li>4. <i>targeted onsite audits using appointed auditors.</i></li> </ol> |
| <b>Incident management</b> | <b>Incident Management and Investigation Support</b><br><br>Activities to coordinate and manage any incident of non-compliance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                            | <b>Corrective Action</b><br><br>Actions taken to bring about compliance or enforceable actions arising from non-compliance or contravention of legislation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Intervention</b>        | <b>Assessment</b><br><br>Assessing information to determine if it meets necessary requirements and conditions. This includes all preparatory work (such as confirming necessary requirements and conditions) and post work (such as assessment report preparation).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                            | <b>Inspections</b><br><br>The physical examination (and supervision of a physical examination) of products, goods, and processes to determine compliance with obligations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                            | <b>Issue approvals/certification</b><br><br>Issuing decisions to grant an approval or permission in relation to an assessment of information. This includes activity relating to the creation of evidence for a decision.<br><br><i>Specific examples include activities provided to an individual, business, or organisation by the department to communicate the approval of an application for an exemption or to become an accredited assessor.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                            | <b>Audit</b><br><br>Systematic examination to determine whether the activities and processes of regulated entities comply with legal and other requirements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| Cost group | <b>Outputs</b><br>Business Processes<br><i>Examples</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | <p><i>A Level 2 Audit may lead to the revision or withdrawal of a Tenancy Lighting Assessment (TLA) or exemption, with serious implications for rating clients, building owners, and tenants. These parties must fully cooperate with the CBD accredited assessor—providing access to the premises, complete and compliant documentation from the start, and any additional materials required during the audit.</i></p> <p><i>If concerns arise about an assessor's conduct or evidence of collusion is found, the case may be escalated to a Level 3 Audit. This involves an on-site inspection by an auditor to verify the submitted information and evidence.</i></p> |

### 3.2. Costs of the regulatory activity

The department's total recoverable expenditure to administer the CBD program in 2024–25 is estimated at \$1.38 million, of which \$0.199 million of the Issue Approvals and Certification Output is to be cost recovered. The estimated costs for the 2024–25 year are outlined in Table 3.2.1 below.

**Table 3.2.1 - cost breakdown estimates for 2024–25**

| Output                                        | Direct costs (\$m) | Indirect costs (\$m) | Capital costs (\$m) |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Policy and Instructional Material             | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Workforce and Business Management             | 0.211              | 0.056                | -                   |
| Business Systems Administration               | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Stakeholder Engagement                        | 0.019              | -                    | -                   |
| Business Improvement                          | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Risk Management                               | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Verification                                  | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Surveillance                                  | 0.242              | 0.065                | -                   |
| Incident Management and Investigation Support | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Corrective Action                             | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Assessment                                    | -                  | -                    | -                   |
| Issue Approvals/Certification                 | 0.560              | 0.151                | -                   |
| Audit                                         | 0.076              | -                    | -                   |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>1.108</b>       | <b>0.272</b>         | -                   |

\* Indirect costs are calculated as approximately 27% of direct employee expenses.

Direct costs incurred by the department and which are included in the charging arrangement cover:

- the cost of employee salaries and salary on-costs, such as superannuation loadings and long service leave loadings. Employee costs are allocated to the charging arrangement based on the amount of effort applied to the CBD program from department staff.
- the cost of materials and services supplied to the department in direct relation to CBD activities. This includes labour hire, consultancy expertise and provision of communication, data, and ICT services.

Indirect costs are also included in the charging arrangement to fund the necessary contribution to CBD activities from the department's enabling services functions. These enabling services provide infrastructure, expertise and support human resource, financial management and information and communications needs.

There are no capital costs included in the current charging arrangement. Should capital investment requirements increase significantly in future years, the CBD program cost model will be revised.

The direct and indirect costs are allocated to the outputs based on the effort applied toward those outputs. Employee costs, including indirect costs, are allocated to the outputs based on management estimates of effort. Supplier costs are allocated to the outputs using a similar methodology to that for employee costs.

The main cost driver for the CBD charging arrangement is the number of commercial buildings that are subject to regulation and the risk that non-compliant buildings are offered for sale, lease, or sublease.



The Issue Approvals and Certification output and associated costs are variable in relation to the volume of applications. This output is delivered in direct response to the level of industry activity and demand. Costs are allocated based on the level of effort required from CBD staff to meet that demand.

The level of effort required by and allocated to the outputs is monitored throughout the year and adjusted annually where required.

### 3.3. Design of the regulatory charge

The relationship between outputs and the charge types is summarised in Table 3.3.1 below.

**Table 3.3.1 – relationship of output to charge type**

| Output                        | Nature of the output                                                                                | Charge type     |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Issue Approvals/Certification | Provided to a specific individual or organisation at their request and for their immediate benefit. | Fee-for-Service |

Under current settings, costs associated with the Issue Approvals/Certification outputs are partially recovered through a fee-for-service.

The charge point for the recovery of CBD costs is established against the application for an exemption or accreditation. The implementation settings are applied to recover the immediate costs of processing exemption and accreditation applications. A fee-for-service applies to each accreditation and exemption application lodged for the assessment of the application.

The charge rates in Table 3.3.2 are prescribed in the BEED Regulations and updated annually to account for any increase in the CPI.

**Table 3.3.2 – Charge rates for applications**

| Charge Point             | Charge Type     | Rate of Charge |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Assessment-Accreditation | Fee-for-Service | \$500          |
| Assessment-Exemption     | Fee-for-Service | \$500          |

\* Note these fees are scheduled to increase to \$512 from 1 July 2025 in line with CPI increases.

The relationship between outputs, types and rates of charge and estimated total cost and estimated total revenue is summarised in Table 3.3.3 below.

**Table 3.3.3 – Cost/revenue relationship**

| Output                          | Fee-for-Service Charge Point | Estimated total cost (\$m) | Charge Rate (\$) | Estimated volume | Estimated total revenue (\$m) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Issue Approvals / Certification | Assessment - Accreditation   | 0.020                      | 500              | 50               | 0.025                         |
| Issue Approvals / Certification | Assessment - Exemption       | 0.179                      | 500              | 100              | 0.050                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    |                              | <b>0.199</b>               |                  | <b>150</b>       | <b>0.075</b>                  |

## 4. RISK ASSESSMENT

A Charging Risk Assessment (CRA) has been undertaken on the CBD program cost recovery arrangement. The CRA assesses the risks of whether any change in the charging arrangement may adversely impact on its regulated entities, and/or be inconsistent with government policy and legislative requirements.

The cost recovery arrangement was assessed as having a 'medium' risk level. The department views the risks associated with the charging arrangement as being appropriately managed. This conclusion is based on the following factors:

- The program has a multi-million-dollar operating budget yet currently recovers less than \$100,000 annually from industry representing under 10% of total program costs.
- There are no proposed changes to the existing cost model, and no immediate cost impacts are expected for regulated entities. While there may be future changes, the current revenue collected through cost recovery is minimal.
- Revenue and activity levels under the CBD program's cost recovery framework are demand driven.

The department regularly monitors and reviews revenue and activity levels on an annual basis. This approach enables early identification of any emerging issues or trends, allowing the department to adjust resources, as necessary.

## 5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Building owners are the primary CBD program stakeholders. Owners engage accredited assessors to complete assessments and submit applications to the department on their behalf, to meet their legal obligations under the BEED Act and BEED Regulations.

The department communicates with stakeholders through various channels, including phone calls, emails, and information published on the CBD program website. Each year, CBD accredited assessors are notified of fee changes (if any) in line with first quarter CPI adjustments.

The department also engages with federal and state government to better understand their perspectives, concerns, and overall satisfaction with the department's services. This feedback plays a crucial role in driving improvements to the program's efficiency and effectiveness.

The inaugural CBD program annual assessor survey was initiated by the department to better gauge and understand the experiences, needs, and perspectives of CBD accredited assessors regarding CBD program operations and stakeholder engagement. The survey ran from 1 March to 31 March 2025, with aggregated results to be published on the public CBD program website.

From 14 June to 13 September 2024, the department also undertook [public consultation](#) seeking input from the commercial building sector and other interested stakeholders regarding potential expansion of the CBD program to other building types. Further industry consultation will be undertaken to inform any future decision regarding improvements to the cost recovery model, including any fee increases or introduction of new charge points.

The department will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the current charging arrangement and assess the appropriateness of charge rates. Any consideration of changes to the cost recovery model will take account of the wider non-regulatory costs on industry to comply with the CBD program. This includes the costs of engaging an accredited energy assessor to undertake a NABERS assessment and obtaining a certified NABERS rating.

The department will publish an updated CRIS including non-financial performance data annually to support transparency and uphold the integrity of the program.

## 6. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Information on the financial performance of the combined total of all outputs is presented in the following sections.

### 6.1. Financial Estimates

Financial estimates for the 2024–25 budget year and the three forward years are presented in Table 6.1.1.

**Table 6.1.1 – Financial estimates for the budget year and forward years**

| Financial Item                    | 2024–25<br>(\$m) | 2025–26<br>(\$m) | 2026–27<br>(\$m) | 2027–28<br>(\$m) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total expenses</b>             | <b>1.380</b>     | <b>1.441</b>     | <b>1.490</b>     | <b>1.541</b>     |
| <i>Activities Charged For</i>     | <i>0.199</i>     | <i>0.207</i>     | <i>0.214</i>     | <i>0.221</i>     |
| <i>Activities not Charged For</i> | <i>1.181</i>     | <i>1.234</i>     | <i>1.276</i>     | <i>1.320</i>     |
| <b>Total revenue</b>              | <b>1.256</b>     | <b>1.312</b>     | <b>1.357</b>     | <b>1.403</b>     |
| <i>Charging income</i>            | <i>0.075</i>     | <i>0.078</i>     | <i>0.081</i>     | <i>0.083</i>     |
| <i>Government Contributions</i>   | <i>1.181</i>     | <i>1.234</i>     | <i>1.276</i>     | <i>1.320</i>     |
| Balance= revenue - expenses       | -0.124           | -0.129           | -0.133           | -0.138           |
| <b>Cumulative balance</b>         | <b>-0.538</b>    | <b>-0.667</b>    | <b>-0.800</b>    | <b>-0.938</b>    |

Historical financial results for the period 2020–21 to 2023–24 have not been included in this CRIS but will be presented in the 2025–26 CRIS following alignment to the current calculation methodology.

## 7. NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Since its commencement in 2010, the CBD program has had a significant impact on the Australian commercial office property market, particularly in driving improvements in energy efficiency and reducing emissions. Independent reviews of the program were undertaken in 2016 and 2019. Details of these reviews can be found on the CBD program website.

The 2019 program review (not finalised due to the impacts of COVID-19) found:

- The program has been effective in promoting energy efficiency and emissions abatement. This includes benefits to building owners/tenants, because savings in energy bills outweigh the costs of the improvements made and community benefits from reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- After accounting for all the costs and benefits of achieving energy savings, and including impacts from changes already made to buildings and that will occur over the next ten years, the Centre for International Economics (CIE) estimated the net benefits of the program to be \$86 million in net present value terms
- These benefits are expected to increase over time. Under a ‘business as usual’ scenario, CIE estimates that the net benefits of the CBD program will increase to \$217.2 million by 2030.

Raw data for the history of the program is available on the CBD program website. This includes all data published on the public register on BEECs including NABERS office energy ratings and details of functional spaces assessed through TLAs. Interactive visualisations of published data are also available on the reporting page.

The CBD program team processes a substantial number of applications annually including:

- BEECs
- TLAs
- Exemption applications (including unsolicited offers)
- Accreditation of new and re-accreditation of existing CBD assessors.

Details of historical application volumes are provided in Table 7.1 below.

**Table 7.1 - Non-financial performance**

| Application type                     | 2020–21 | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| BEECs                                | 1,521   | 1,699   | 1,686   | 1,617   |
| TLAs                                 | 325     | 815     | 663     | 382     |
| Accreditations and re-accreditations | 41      | 34      | 56      | 85      |
| Exemptions                           | 117     | 108     | 70      | 96      |

With BEECs, NABERS star ratings of 4.5 to 5 (with 6 being the highest possible) are the most common. The top three states by application volume are New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.

## 8. KEY FORWARD DATES AND EVENTS

While the CBD program currently focuses on office buildings, it may expand to other types of commercial buildings in the future. For more information on CBD expansion, please visit [CBD Program Expansion](#).

Any expansion would require legislative change to the underlying legal framework of the CBD Program. The government may use any future change in legislation as an opportunity to review the current charging arrangements, including before the October 2027 sunset of the related legislative instruments, with any outcomes documented in an amended CRIS:

- This would ensure that any amendments to the cost recovery regime could be designed to align with broader program changes that result from these ongoing review processes.
- Appropriate stakeholder consultation will be undertaken, with feedback considered.
- Appropriate delegation will be sought by both the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Climate Change and Energy.
- Consider and implement recommendations from any legislative review process.

Key events scheduled and anticipated to occur over the life of this CRIS (2024–25 to 2026–27) and beyond are listed below.

| Key forward events schedule                                          | Date    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Publish 2024–25 CRIS                                                 | 2025    |
| Publish 2025–26 CRIS                                                 | 2025–26 |
| Potential legislative amendments to CBD Program legal framework      | 2026    |
| Consider recommendations arising from any legislative review process | 2027–28 |
| Portfolio Charging Review                                            | 2028    |

## 9. CRIS APPROVAL AND CHANGE REGISTER

| Date of change | CRIS change           | Approver                                                                   | Basis for change                         |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 02/07/2025     | Certification of CRIS | Secretary, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water | Initial CRIS for cost recovered activity |
| 22/08/2025     | Approval of CRIS      | Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy                           | Initial CRIS for cost recovered activity |