



What Must Be in a **Comprehensive Testing and Assessment Report** for it to be acceptable for the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme?



Why have a testing and assessment report?

The Private Buildings Cladding Scheme supports Owners Corporations of eligible buildings to contract with professional service providers who can test and assess the façade on their buildings. The testing and assessment process should result in a Comprehensive Testing and Assessment Report (the Report) which provides the Owners Corporation with **sufficient information to understand the risk posed by the combustible cladding and what they should do to reduce this risk.**

The Report will also be used by the ACT Government to develop a concessional loan scheme to assist eligible Owners Corporation with the costs of remediating the combustible cladding on their buildings. It will also help ACT Fire and Rescue plan for potential fire emergencies.

How can the comprehensive testing and assessment report be of most use?

The Report will be of most use if it is sufficiently detailed and contains all the information that an Owners Corporation will need to make a risk-based decision regarding the combustible cladding on their building. The Report needs to:

- Include information as to whether the façade is combustible cladding and the type of cladding that has been used
- Detail the level of fire safety risk to the residents of the building as a result of the cladding
- Explain whether remediation building works need to be undertaken to reduce the risk to residents and detail what the recommended building works are
- Provide an itemised and detailed cost estimate of the cost of these remediation works, and
- Detail any fire safety measures that should be taken in the interim until the remediation work is completed.

What is fire safety risk and how should it be determined?

It is not necessarily the case that all combustible cladding needs to be removed. The decision to remove cladding should be based on an assessment that the combustible cladding is a real risk to the safety of the residents in the building. A partial removal may be possible to achieve a low level of fire safety risk to residents.

An assessment of risk cannot just be based on combustible cladding itself being risky, because combustible cladding is always going to be assessed as a high risk. However, some of the risk might be mitigated by the fact that not much cladding is used, or the cladding used is at the top of the building, rather than a wall, or that the building is a low level building.

Accordingly any assessment of fire safety risk needs to be comprehensive and based on the building as a whole, including:

- the characteristics of the building (including egress points)
- the extent of the cladding used on the building
- the placement of the cladding on the building
- the height of the building and
- the fire safety measures adopted in the building.

The [Engineers Australia Society of Fire Safety Practice Guide on Façade External Wall Fire Safety Design](#) should be used as the minimum standard in assessing risk.

What is an acceptable cost estimate?

To ensure that the cost estimate provides a realistic assessment of likely costs for an Owners Corporation to consider, we ask that all cost estimates are prepared by a Quantity Surveyor to P80 standard, that is - provides 80 per cent likelihood that this cost would not be exceeded.

All cost estimates must be itemised and sufficiently detailed to provide clear guidance to the Owners Corporation on the likely costs that will have to be paid to have the cladding on their building remediated. The cost estimate should include:

- contingency costs of at least 30%
- consultancy fees (architects, structural engineers, fire engineers etc)
- certifier costs
- authority fees (eg building approval fees)
- waste removal costs – recycling of cladding is required under the Scheme
- replacement of combustible sarking and insulation (if required), and
- any traffic management costs (if relevant).

Where the professional services provider has suggested a number of options in terms of remediation work, all the options should be costed.

Sometimes, your professional services provider will not include a cost estimate as part of the Comprehensive Testing and Assessment Report – we are happy to accept a cost estimate as separate documentation, but it needs to be provided.

Interim fire safety measures.

All Comprehensive Testing and Assessment Reports need to contain interim fire safety measures that could be adopted by the Owners Corporation to reduce the risk in the period before the permanent remediation works are implemented. Some of these measures are likely to go to the behaviour of residents in ensuring fire safety on balconies – for example, the use of barbecues.

Some of these measures may go to how spaces are used – for example, designated smoking areas. However, to be acceptable, these safety measures need to be:

- practical and implementable by the Owners Corporation
- will assist to mitigate risk in the short-term