



## **ACT House Energy Rating Scheme (ACTHERS)**

# **ACT RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES**



ACT PLANNING AND LAND AUTHORITY

Updated 18 August 2004



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# 1. SETTING THE SCENE

## 1.1 *ACT Planning and Land Authority's Vision, Purpose and Goal*

The Vision of the ACT Planning and Land Authority (the Authority) is that Canberra should lead the world in livability and sustainable development.

The Authority's Purpose is to plan and facilitate quality sustainable development in the ACT by providing responsive services in planning, development, land management and building regulation, while ensuring that Canberra continues to be a great place to live and work.

The Authority's Goal is to be recognised universally as an innovative, professional and responsive organisation, which leads social and urban change, reflective of community needs and aspirations.

To attain the Authority's vision in relation to energy use, all industry sectors will need to be considered. Within the Built Environment, energy efficiency is considered as an integral part of the Authority's purpose towards fulfilling its vision, and relates to the design of Subdivisions, Residential Construction, Commercial (including Industrial and Retail) Developments, low embodied energy Construction Materials and Major Appliances. An overview of the Energy Strategy follows.

## 1.2 *The Authority's Energy Strategy Statement*

The **Energy Strategy** for the Built Environment, in line with the Authority's Vision and Purpose, is:

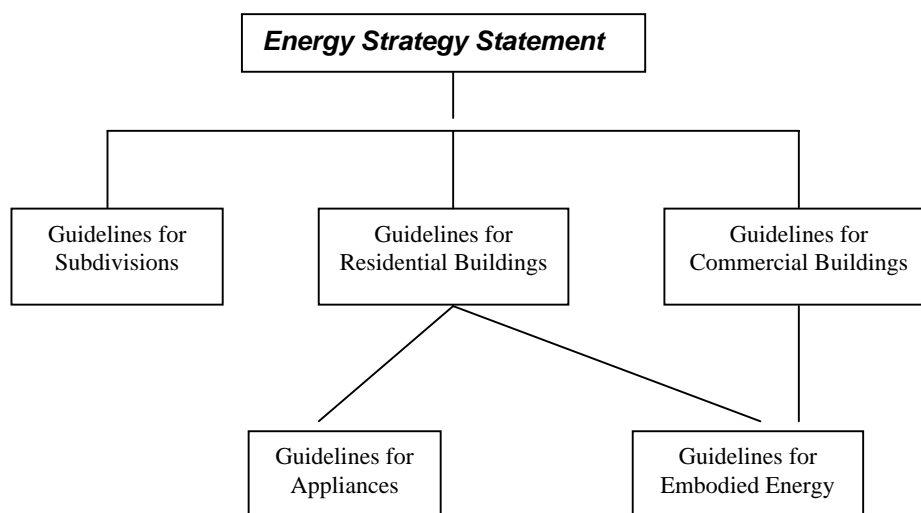
*In order to contribute to quality and sustainable design and development for energy efficient Subdivisions, Residential Construction and Commercial Developments, specific Guidelines have been and are currently being developed to assist developers and builders. Raising community and industry awareness with regard to the use of low embodied energy construction materials and energy-efficient major Appliances will assist in this task, and to this end, separate Appliances Guidelines are being developed.*

*Monitoring mechanisms will also be built into systems to provide ongoing information on performance against the Guidelines.*

(COMMENT: The Guidelines for Subdivisions, Appliances and Embodied Energy are being developed. Those for Commercial Buildings are being held in abeyance until the mandatory minimum standards are established in the Building Code of Australia.)

### 1.3 **Graphic Representation of the Authority's Energy Planning**

Graphically, the Authority's Energy Guidelines are being developed as follows:



## 2. **INTRODUCTION TO THE A.C.T. RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES**

These ACT Residential Guidelines are included on the Register of Guidelines under the main page of the Territory Plan Online. All residential premises including those which are incorporated within a commercial building, are considered under the Guidelines and are required to comply with the standards of the ACT House Energy Rating Scheme (ACTHERS). The address for the Register is :

[http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/planning\\_register/index.htm](http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/planning_register/index.htm)

### 2.2 **Background**

The Government's decision to improve the energy efficiency of ACT residential design and housing stock followed a recommendation by the Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure. The mandatory minimum energy efficiency rating of four stars was agreed. This was designed to encourage awareness by the community and building industry of the benefits of energy efficiency. It also demonstrated the Government's commitment to the National Ecologically Sustainable Development and Greenhouse Strategies, the Council of Australian Government's agreement on residential energy efficiency of 1993 and the ACT Greenhouse Strategy.

In consultation with the residential building industry in 1993, the ACT Government agreed to defer the commencement of the mandatory assessment requirement for two years. This provided time for the necessary adjustments in building procedures, and to trial an energy assessment process. It was also agreed that ACTHERS would conform to the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) so that the ACT building industry would not be disadvantaged nationally.

Since 1 July 1995, in order to improve the energy efficiency of all new residences, the Territory Plan requires all residential design and siting applications to be

accompanied by an energy efficiency rating (EER) statement which achieves a mandatory minimum of four-stars except in rare special circumstances. From 1 July 2001 all assessments are produced by the new software model *FirstRate* and undertaken in non-regulation mode by ACTHERS Accredited *FirstRate* Assessors.

If the dwelling was built after July 1995, it would have been required to achieve a four-star minimum under the existing tool of that time. *It should be noted that at that time certain allowances were included in the new assessments, such as assuming that carpet with underlay and heavy-lined drapes with pelmets would be installed in the dwelling.*

*Special Conditions* are included to consider a minimal number of exceptions because of unusual but genuine circumstances cause designs for developments NOT to achieve the minimum performance. These are discussed later in Section 7.2.

In December 1997, a further development relating to existing dwellings occurred. The *Energy Efficiency Ratings (Sale of Premises) Act 1997* ('EERSOP Act') was gazetted and became operational on 31 March 1999. In essence, this required the disclosure of an existing dwelling's energy rating value in all advertisements for sale, and also that the ACTHERS EER Statement must form part of the Contract for Sale. On 1 July 2004, the *Civil Law (Sale of Residential Property) Act 2003* ('the Act') became operational, and the EERSOP Act was repealed on the same day. Although more stringent, the essence of the EERSOP Act is enshrined as Part 3 of this new Act. The EER Statement discloses the actual energy performance of the dwelling represented by stars and point values. Details are discussed in Section 8.

On 1 July 2001, it was necessary to introduce the new software model into ACTHERS in order to maintain conformity with the national benchmark *NatHERS*, which had been refined to reflect updated environmental measures. Such upgrades will occur on each occasion that there is an update to *NatHERS*, as this is a dynamic area of development. The ACT software model *FirstRate* was developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Victoria (SEAV). It is used to produce all EER Statements for all ACT residential properties, including any discrete habitable parts of a larger commercial building. In the ACT, the climatic settings must be either for Zone 24 to reflect the ACT (Canberra) region, or Zone 25 to reflect the Alpine region. The rating must be undertaken in Non-regulation Mode to ensure inputs reflect the actual details for either design plans, or for already built dwellings which have been occupied and which are to be sold.

The ACTHERS software model *FirstRate* produces an EER Statement, which shows how well the dwelling is designed or is expected to function, as well as its overall energy efficiency performance.

### **3 THE NATIONAL BENCHMARK**

The implementation of ACTHERS represented a commitment made by the ACT Government to adopt a scheme which conforms to the national benchmark, *NatHERS*. This benchmark was set when the National Building Energy Efficiency Coordinating Committee (NBEECC), charged with the implementation of *NatHERS*, adopted a modified CSIRO energy assessment computer software package (CHEETAH) to provide nationwide assessments of the energy performance of buildings. The package is maintained by CSIRO as the benchmark for validating State/Territory energy rating packages or models, and incorporates 28 climatic zones in order to assess locations nation-wide.

The role of NatHERS in relation to the ACT scheme is to be the standard for validation of the ACT based scheme, and as a basis in the event of dispute resolution regarding ACTHERS based ratings.

#### **4. ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGN IN THE A.C.T.**

Design standards of energy efficient housing in the ACT aim to minimise energy consumption of non-renewable resources for heating and cooling and hot water. The associated advantage of this is to reduce costs borne by the householder.

Cost-effective energy efficient housing is usually easiest to achieve at the initial design stage by integration of the dwelling and the site. This allows maximum use of natural elements such as solar access and air movement, and enables the development of interior design elements to produce a high degree of comfort while minimising and conserving energy use.

Although ACTHERS is based on the potential of the dwelling's design to reduce energy use, the behaviour of occupants and the energy efficiency of major appliances are also very important in overall energy consumption.

As already discussed above, the Scheme is based on extensive computer simulations of housing performance in the ACT climate. It focuses on insulation, orientation (of living areas and windows), air leakage levels and other design features to provide a comprehensive picture of the dwelling's potential for reduced energy consumption.

In the ACT, design measures which achieve better energy efficiency include:

Orientation	north facing living areas with good winter sun access (extremely important design issue)
Insulation	appropriate R-ratings of insulation where appropriate in ceilings, framed walls and under floors (eg concrete slabs and suspended floors);
Air leakage	draught-proofing around fireplaces, windows and doors;
Design features	ceiling height, north facing windows in living areas;
Floor type	slab on ground, suspended slab or timber; with appropriate levels of insulation;
Zoning	internal zoning of living areas with ability to segregate areas for optimal heating and cooling;
Glazing	type used for various orientations (eg. Smart glass, double or tinted), and the optimal percentage of windows appropriately oriented and designed for reduction of heat loss in winter, and for shading in summer
Thermal mass	use of building materials with high thermal mass for floors and internal walls, and use of trombe thermal mass walls;
Width of eaves	optimal widths of eaves to accommodate various aspects and seasons;

Cross Ventilation reduces residual heat in summer and adds benefit of diminishing fungus and bacteria in carpets and curtains:

Common walls especially in multi-unit/townhouse developments.

Windows are a critical element in energy efficient house design, as unprotected single glazing allows the rapid transfer of heat into a residence in summer, and out in winter. The larger the window, the greater the transfer of heat.

As living areas are those most commonly used, thermal comfort in these areas is important. Where it is not possible to secure northern window access for every room, priority should be given to locating as many as possible of the living areas on the northern side of the house. These areas need to be comfortable. They should optimise natural light during winter and be shaded in summer, improving overall energy efficiency.

In order to conserve captured heat within living areas, the house design should provide for doors which separate the living areas from bedrooms and service areas. Grouping rooms with similar uses will also assist in making the most efficient use of heating and cooling systems.

Although these should be kept to the minimum, south facing windows are useful for assisting cross flow ventilation, particularly in summer. However, their use should be carefully considered, especially with respect to their internal coverings. Without adequate insulation treatment, the south facing windows may also contribute to heat loss.

East and west windows if too large, may gain large amounts of unwanted heat during summer and lose heat during winter. Selection of glazing and window treatments for summer shading and winter protection is critical to the overall performance of the residence.

With its ability to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat or cool a house, insulation is an important element of energy efficient design that can be added to a home. The ACT Government recognises this, and conforms to the Building Code of Australia (BCA) as the minimum standard.

The BCA has set the minimum parameters for energy efficient design as follows.

For Class 1, 2, 3 and 4 Buildings (ie. Residential - Single detached dwellings and multi-unit developments), the standard required is an ACTHERS EER Statement of 4-stars minimum as assessed by an accredited FirstRate ACTHERS Assessor.

For extensions to the above Buildings, either an ACTHERS 4-star minimum rating, or comply with the following standards:

Since July 1997: (This is the insulation alone, **without** building fabric included)

Floors

- (a) concrete floor (can only include insulation information from the approved building plan); or
- (b) timber floor with an R-rating of 1 including carpet and underlay;

Roofs or ceilings

- (a) R3 insulation material in the ceiling space; or
- (b) R2 insulation material (+ optional sarking R0.5) in exposed raked ceilings;

Walls (see Exemptions (a) below).

R1.5 insulation material in the external wall space.

**Exemptions** – *The requirements of this Part of the BCA do not apply to the following types of construction:*

- (a) *cavity brick, earth wall construction, ashlar stone or other masonry walls which have a thickness (excluding any cavity) of not less than 180 mm.*
- (b) *Class 10 Structures forming part of a Class 1 building.*
- (c) *Moveable dwellings and mobile homes where their form of prefabricated constructions does not readily permit achievement of optimal insulation requirements*

Insulation assists in retaining any energy input to a residence, whether for cooling or heating, and whether achieved by solar access or an appliance. This reduces the rate of turnover in the replacement of that energy.

The use of building materials with high thermal mass (the ability to store heat) is also of value to an energy efficient home. Concrete floors and internal masonry walls are examples of materials which assist in the regulation of internal temperatures. High thermal mass is particularly important in climates such as the ACT where summer and winter temperatures vary greatly, and large differences occur between minimum and maximum daily temperatures.

Unwanted or uncontrolled ventilation or air-leakage may add significantly to the costs of cooling, and especially heating a home. The use of weather strips and door seals will improve the overall energy performance of a house, while reducing energy consumption and costs. However, ventilation is also an important component for regulating internal temperatures during summer and for allowing fresh air into the house to control dampness and mildew if required. Cross flow ventilation during summer is enhanced by appropriately placed windows and doors on all sides of a house.

Other elements may further add to the energy efficiency of a home. However, these do not form part of the energy rating assessment. These include:

- . an efficient and flexible heating system,
- . an energy efficient hot water system (such as solar),
- . use of energy efficient lighting and appliances, and
- . landscaping sympathetic to the microclimate of the house.

In Canberra's climate with its extremes in temperature, the potential long-term benefits to the community of energy efficient housing are significant, both for individual home owners and in reducing the costs of infrastructure. A well-designed energy efficient residence will also reduce the costs of space heating and cooling, because a well-oriented and insulated house will use less energy for heating and cooling.

On average, an energy efficient home is up to 5 degrees warmer in winter and up to 10 degrees cooler in summer. As well as being more comfortable all year round, an energy efficient house also has much more natural light in areas most commonly occupied, including direct sunlight which does not detract from internal thermal comfort. The principles of energy efficient design do not limit housing choice, but rather create opportunities to use a variety of design features to produce an attractive and functional home.

## **5 THE MODEL USED IN ACTHERS - *FirstRate***

Energy rating assessments are prepared using a detailed computer-based software modelling package, *FirstRate*, based on ACT climatic conditions. When used as a design tool for development application (design and siting) purposes, this model provides feedback to the designer to enable refinement of the final design. When used to disclose the actual energy efficiency of an existing house it provides options

for improvement to its efficiency, which are incorporated into the report for use by the homeowner or prospective purchaser.

All assessments in *FirstRate*, whether for design and plan approval, or for disclosure of efficiency of existing dwellings, are undertaken in non-regulation mode. For new residences, the details which appear in the EER Statement reflect what is incorporated in the plan, and show what is planned to be built. For existing residences, what appears in the EER Statement is the energy rating for what is actually already built. The assessor is responsible for ensuring that the software model is used appropriately with the correct ACT climate and in non-regulation mode.

The model does not make any assumptions about inclusions in the building fabric of the residence, and does not consider future or existing appliances. It is good practice however to use appliances and fittings which contribute to better energy efficiency, as this will enhance comfort while reducing energy costs.

## 6 STAR RATINGS

### 6.1 How the Star ratings are Used

ACTHERS uses *Star Ratings* as the basis for its modelling. The higher the star value, the better. The *FirstRate* model recognises 0 to 6 stars, with 4-stars being the mandatory minimum for all new residential design approvals. There are also point values within the model, which equate to the star range. Ratings are reported in EER Statements in half-star increments as follows:

**Canberra Climate Zone**

Star value	0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0
Point score range	Less than or equal to -87	-86 to -71	-70 to -57	-56 to -46	-45 to -35	-34 to -26	-25 to -18	-17 to -11	-10 to -3	-2 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 16	Greater than or equal to 17

### 6.2 Definition of an acceptable EER Statement

The EER Statement definition covers the requirements of sale for both:

- Existing Dwellings which have been occupied, and
- New Designs and Extensions, which may include an 'Onsale' of an identified property "off the plan".

AN ACCEPTABLE ENERGY EFFICIENCY RATING STATEMENT means an EER Statement, which is (1) CURRENT and (2) VALID and (3) COMPLETE. If an EER Statement cannot meet the three mandatory requirements of currency, validity and completeness, then a new energy efficiency rating, which produces a new EER Statement, must be undertaken.

- An EER statement is deemed CURRENT if it:
  - reflects the dwelling as it EITHER appears on the approved plans in the case of a new design, OR as it actually exists 'on the ground' if it is an existing dwelling about to be on-sold, and
  - in cases of selling existing dwellings which have been occupied, was commissioned by the same owner/vendor who is currently involved in this transaction, and
  - is undertaken in an accepted version of the software model used under the ACTHER Scheme (*FirstRate*, Version 3.1 or Version 4), and

- (d) in cases of selling existing dwellings which have been occupied, where the EER statement is older than six months, is also accompanied by an appropriately witnessed ACTHERS Statutory Declaration attesting to the currency of the status of the existing EER Statement, duly signed and completed by the owner/vendor who originally commissioned the EER Statement. [The Statutory Declaration](#) must be appropriately witnessed to be legal. Copies of this Declaration Form are also available from the [Authority's Customer Service Centre](#).

The Statutory Declaration requires the owner/vendor to state that no alterations and additions, and no changes to items listed therein have been made to the existing dwelling since the EER Statement in question was undertaken. Copies have been sent to all Assessors, and this is the official form to be used to address this issue.

2. An EER Statement is deemed VALID if it:
- (a) was undertaken and completed by a person who was a currently qualified and registered *FirstRate* Assessor at the time of undertaking the rating to produce the EER Statement, and
  - (b) bears on the first page the imprint of the Assessor's ACTHERS *FirstRate* stamp stating the number of points and stars achieved by the dwelling, the date the assessment was completed, and the printed name, registration number and signature of the Assessor.
3. An EER Statement is deemed COMPLETE if it conforms as follows:
- (a) **For a Development Application (DA)** submission of a new development design/plan or new extension design/plan, the EER Statement will comprise:
    - (i) the front page containing the logo, and the stamp imprint as per Clause (2) above,
    - (ii) the '*Rating Summary*' sheet, and
    - (iii) the '*Detailed House Data*' tables, which may be one or more pages depending on the complexity of the dwelling.

NOTE: The age of the EER Statement may be in excess of six months, but is acceptable for the first settlement between the developer and the purchaser after the property's completion.

- (b) **For an 'Onsale' of a property "off the plan"**, the following may occur. (*This is a variation of (a) above.*) A developer may sell a property to a purchaser "off the plan". When this is done, the relevant EER Statement produced at the DA submission stage by the developer is used in the conveyancing. However, settlement does not take place, as the property has not as yet been built. This action may be followed by several occurrences of Onsale, until the property finally obtains its Certificate of Use, at which time, settlement occurs. The purchaser and all interim vendors are involved in the settlement transaction.

One special case in this cycle is where the property settles, but the purchaser continues to offer the 'investment' property for sale, and does not at any time occupy the dwelling until the sale occurs.

Within this cycle of Onsales, the original DA EER Statement is used. The time taken in covering a series of Onsales may be well in excess of a six month period. However, under this specific case, the original DA EER

Statement is acceptable, without any additional documentation, and will comprise the same as for (a) DA above – namely,

- (i) the front page containing the logo, and the stamp imprint as per Clause (2) above,
- (ii) the *'Rating Summary'* sheet, and
- (iii) the *'Detailed House Data'* tables, which may be one or more pages depending on the complexity of the dwelling

(c) **For the on-selling of an existing dwelling which has been occupied,** the EER Statement will include:

- (i) the front page containing the logo, and the stamp imprint as per Clause (2) above,
- (ii) the *'Rating Summary'* sheet,
- (iii) the *'Detailed House Data'* tables, which may be one or more pages depending on the complexity of the dwelling,
- (iv) the *'Improving Your Rating'* sheet, which offers options for improving the energy performance of the dwelling, and
- (v) in cases where a *Statutory Declaration* is to be provided, inclusion of the Declaration, duly signed, dated and witnessed.

**If a statement cannot meet the three mandatory requirements of currency and validity and completeness, then a new rating must be undertaken.**

### **6.3 What is the Value of a Star?**

Please note the following information is provided as a guide only. Actual energy consumption will depend on the area of the house, the individual style of occupancy and the efficiency of appliances.

#### **6.3.1 Dollar Cost**

For a 150m<sup>2</sup> home, combined annual heating and cooling cost would be as follows:

<b>Star Rating</b>	<b>Estimated Cost<sup>#</sup></b>
0	\$1350
1	\$1090
2	\$800
3	\$640
4	\$510
5	\$400
6	\$310

# 1999 costs which do not include energy supply costs.

The above estimates are based on the following assumptions:

winter gas central heating to 21°C for 3hrs in the morning and 6hrs in the evening;

summer air conditioning to 25 °C throughout the house;

occupants will adjust their blinds and curtains to minimise energy use; and

windows and doors are shut during heating and cooling.

### 6.3.2 Energy Use in MegaJoules per Square Metre per Annum

Alternatively, it is possible to look at the annual energy consumption for the same house which would be:

Star Rating	Annual MJ/m <sup>2</sup> for heating (h) and cooling ©
0	720 (612h, 108c)
1	486 (413h, 73c)
2	357 (303h, 54c)
3	285 (242h, 43c)
4	228 (194h, 34c)
5	180 (153h, 27c)
6	139 (117h, 22c)

## 7 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION (DESIGN & SITING)

### 7.1 *Process*

An application for Design and Siting Approval of new residential designs will be required, along with other mandatory requirements, to include an EER Statement.

The EER Statement needs to be undertaken by a current authorised ACTHERS *FirstRate* accredited assessor, indicating an energy rating of four-stars or greater (unless special conditions apply). The report will be checked by the Authority's design and siting officers to determine compliance with the minimum rating requirement, or in the event of non-compliance, whether special conditions apply.

The Authority's Development Assessment area requires, for a residential Development Application (DA), that:

EER Statements for the purpose of submitting a DA must conform to the [EER Statement definition](#); and

The number of copies required to be submitted to the Design and Siting area are:

*Four (4) copies of plans for either a unit development DA, or a single detached dwelling DA; and*

The assessment of the property must be carried out in accordance with the ACTHERS PROCEDURES FOR *FIRSTRATE* ENERGY EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS. Each registered Assessor has a copy of these, and must use them for every EER Statement produced.

### 7.2 *Special Conditions*

There are six special conditions under which an exemption may be claimed from achievement of the minimum house energy rating requirements for new houses. Where one or more of the special conditions apply, approval is subject to provision of ceiling and wall insulation, and under floor insulation to timber floors.

- a) *Block Geometry* - orientation or shape of block such as to preclude the northerly orientation of the house, defined as 340° to 30°
- b) *Block Overshadowing* - adverse slope of block, existing obstruction or planned or existing development resulting in overshadowing of northerly windows
- c) *Block Topography and Geology* - slope, drainage or geo-technical constraints such as to preclude the adoption of 'slab on ground' type construction
- d) *Novel Construction* - where the prescribed assessment techniques do not reliably assess the thermal performance of the construction being adopted and there are prima facie grounds for believing that the prescribed techniques significantly underestimate the construction's performance.
- e) *Conflicting Guidelines* - lease and development conditions, Territory Plan guidelines or any other imposed restriction eg. heritage requirements, which preclude the attainment of the minimum rating requirement
- f) *Uneconomic Requirements* - where it may be demonstrated that the attainment of a 4 star rating would require additional expenditure which is not cost effective.

## 8 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING RESIDENCES

### 8.1 *The Civil Law (Sale of Residential Property) Act 2003*

In December 1997, the *Energy Efficiency Ratings (Sale of Premises) Act 1997* (the '*EERSOP Act*') was gazetted and became operational on 31 March 1999. This required the disclosure of an existing dwelling's energy rating in all advertisements for sale of the premises, and also that the ACTHERS EER Statement was to "form part of the Contract for Sale".

On 1 July 2004, the *Civil Law (Sale of Residential Property) Act 2003*, (*'the Act'*), became operational, and incorporates the essence of the *EERSOP Act* as Part 3 of the Act. The *EERSOP Act* was repealed on the same day, 1 July 2004.

If you are selling residential property in the ACT, there are legal requirements which need to be met. It is mandatory that an EER Statement which is **current and valid and complete** as per the definition in Clause 6.2, must form part of the Contract for Sale, and be available on view as part of the Contract immediately the property is placed on the market. If the EER Statement is not present as part of the Contract for Sale, the Contract is not complete and therefore not valid.

The EER Statement will disclose the actual level of energy efficiency of an existing dwelling, and may range from 0 to 6 stars. This value is to appear in all sale advertisements for the premises. Unlike new residential designs being submitted to the Authority for development approval (which must achieve a minimum of 4 stars), existing dwellings for sale (which have been occupied) do not have to meet a minimum energy efficiency rating. The Act requires disclosure of the actual energy efficiency of the residence.

To comply with the Act, which relies on the ACT Residential Guidelines in the Register of Guidelines in the Territory Plan, an acceptable energy efficiency rating Statement is as set out in [6.2 Definition of an acceptable EER Statement](#) above. At all times, recognition of the requirements of this definition must be observed.

The *FirstRate* rating value reflects the actual energy efficiency performance of the home, and provides yet another piece of information about the residence to both the vendor and the purchaser. All ACTHERS EER Statements from 1 July 2001 are also undertaken in non-regulation mode, using the *FirstRate* modelling software, Version 3.1 or Version 4.

[A list of Current ACTHERS Accredited Assessors](#) with their contact details, appears on the Authority's website.

## **9 PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY OF ASSESSORS**

ACTHERS Accredited *FirstRate* Assessors are expected to have appropriate Insurance to cover situations which may be legally challenged by their clients who believe that incorrect ACTHERS Assessment information has been provided by that Assessor. Assessors shall indemnify themselves against any claims for losses or damages of any nature which may occur as a result of any act or omission by the Assessor. The Authority will not take responsibility for inappropriate actions or resulting outcomes stemming from assessor error. It is the responsibility of each assessor to adequately insure themselves and/or their businesses against such errors, and can be done by way of Indemnity Insurance. This requirement is in accordance with the ACTHERS Assessor Code of Practice which is signed by each ACTHERS Assessor graduate under the rules applying to the ACT House Energy Rating Scheme. It is advisable for a client to request proof of insurance prior to employing any service provider.

## **10 TRAINING OF ACTHERS *FirstRate* ASSESSORS**

### **10.1 Training Program**

The ACTHERS Accredited *FirstRate* Assessor Course is an advanced in-depth two day course. There is a three hour examination with a pass mark of 85%, which is a necessity given that strict quality guidelines need to be met when undertaking assessments for developers and the community. The course also includes clarification of the ACTHERS procedures, the role and responsibilities of accredited assessors, the ACTHERS Quality Control Procedures and the Code of Practice for the Scheme.

### **10.2 Eligibility Requirements**

To be considered for training in the advanced technical ACTHERS *FirstRate* Course, applicants are required to show proof of eligibility. You will qualify if you hold one of the following:

- 1) Qualifications in Architecture that would be accepted as part of the requirements for registration as an Architect in Australia or equivalent;
- 2) Qualifications in Structural Engineering or Civil Engineering with a specialty in Structure that would be accepted as part of the requirements for registration as an Engineer in Australia or equivalent;
- 3) Degree of Bachelor of Construction Management from the University of Canberra or an equivalent ;
- 4) An Advanced Diploma or Diploma in Drafting from the Canberra Institute of Technology or an equivalent;
- 5) Diploma in Building from the Canberra Institute of Technology or an equivalent;
- 6) Certificate IV in Building from the Canberra Institute of Technology or an equivalent; or
- 7) An 85% pass in the ACTHERS Pre-Requisite Examination which demonstrates knowledge and ability in each of the principles of:
  - (i) building design and drawing

- (ii) heat transfer and storage
- (iii) insulation, its application and thermal designation
- (iv) glass and glazing, and their location
- (v) air change and ventilation controls
- (vi) shading, and
- (vii) site selection.

Copies of relevant qualifications need to be supplied. If a candidate does not qualify under 1 to 6 above, then an 85% pass mark in the ACTHERS Pre-Requisite Examination is required prior to entry to the *FirstRate* training course.

## 11. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

As the Scheme progresses in liaison with the building industry in an effort to meet community demands for more energy efficient, functional and comfortable homes, it is expected that many innovations will be incorporated to continue with reduction in energy resource use. The latest of these is recognition of efficient designs up to 6-stars. This assists in identifying homes worthy of recognition and indicating to prospective purchasers that the energy efficiency of these homes is superior.

## 12. FURTHER INFORMATION

Various documentation relating to the Scheme is available from the Authority's Shopfront at 16 Challis Street Dickson, or from the internet by navigating from <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au> through Development Application & Design Guidelines to the ACT House Energy Rating Scheme at:

<http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/design-guide/acthers/index.htm>

Included in the documentation are: the *List of Current ACTHERS Assessors* and the *ACTHERS Statutory Declaration* to be used by homeowners as appropriate.

Information regarding technical and training aspects of ACTHERS can be obtained by contacting the Authority's ACTHERS Hotline on tel. (02) 6207 1743 during office hours.

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