

How To: Get Quotes

Getting Quotes from Building Professionals

Below are some tips for getting and accepting quotes from building professionals for major and minor works.

Be specific in communicating what needs to be done

To get an accurate quote, you need to provide the building professionals with work plans that are as detailed as possible. A comprehensive scope of works or job brief will make sure that you receive accurate cost estimates to complete the works. You are more likely to get a large variation in quotes if you haven't effectively communicated the work required. If you change your mind about what needs to be done after you've received the quotes, provide each building professional that originally provided a quote with the same modified or amended information so that they can each reissue an updated quote.

A job brief should:

- be specific
- list the brand names and models of all items required
- include everything you have in mind about the job you want done
- be attached to the design plans, if applicable
- indicate if you want the builder to take responsibility for cleaning the site.

From NSW Fair Trading

Always get more than one quote

Get at least three (3) written quotes from building professionals to compare prices and make sure that you're receiving reasonable quotes. Give each person the same information and scope of works to make sure you're comparing the same services and products. Also consider the professionals you are obtaining quotes from, and whether they are similar in terms of certification, work experience and expertise.

Don't just go with the lowest quote

While it might be tempting to go with the lowest quote at first inspection, look at what each quote is offering. If the exact same services are being offered, the lowest quote might be

the best option, however be wary of quotes that are significantly lower than the others as there may be an error or omission of important items. Alternatively, slightly more expensive options might offer a lot more or could incorporate building professionals with greater experience. Depending on what needs to be done, more expensive options could be appropriate for the extent or type of works.

Get comprehensive quotes

Written quotations should:

- include all work to be done
- include all materials to be used
- reflect your specifications
- be checked that materials quoted are what you want, not substitutes.

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A comprehensive quote is important, as some quotes might lack information and exclude costs that will come up later down the track. The more comprehensive the [scope of works](#) or job brief you provide, the more comprehensive your quote will be.

When assessing a quote, note which items are lump sum (fixed costs) or which are provisional costs (subject to [variation](#)). Too many provisional costs in a quote might put you at risk of spending more as the work progresses.

Look for items that might be missing from the quote, such as building approval or certification fees or insurance and consider why these are missing, or if they are necessary. If you are unsure of what is excluded from the quote, simply ask the building professional to draft a list of what is and isn't included and a trade breakdown listing all the different trades required in the project. This will help you to compare seemingly similar quotes and avoid confusion later down the track.

Getting a comprehensive quote is difficult for strata committee members with no prior building knowledge. If you have no prior building knowledge and the work is major, it might be worthwhile to [hire a project manager](#) that can help you to understand building jargon, differentiate between quotes, and seek out quotes from [experienced building professionals](#). Inexperienced builders might incorrectly quote if they are not familiar with the type and the usual challenges of the works you want done.

Additional Resources:

- [Your Home, Australian Government](#)
- [Getting Quotes, NSW Fair Trading](#)