



CITY FUTURES RESEARCH CENTRE

GETTING QUOTES

GETTING QUOTES FROM BUILDING PROFESSIONALS

There are a few things to consider when getting quotes for building defect rectification work, renovations or installing sustainability retrofits. Below are some tips for getting and accepting quotes from building professionals.

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 written comprehensive [scope of works](#) or job brief will ensure that you receive accurate quotes on the cost 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 and in writing;
- 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; and
- indicate if you want the builder to take responsibility for cleaning the site.

From [NSW Fair Trading](#) (CC BY 4.0)

Always get more than one quote

It is important to get at least three 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 comparable 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, sometimes the

more expensive options could be appropriate for the extent or type of works.

Get comprehensive quotes

A comprehensive quote is important, as some quotes might lack transparency and exclude costs that emerge later down the track. Naturally 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 that are 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 scaffolding fees and consider why these might have been omitted, 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 inclusions and exclusions and a trade breakdown listing all of the different trades required in the project. This will help you to compare seemingly similar quotes and avoids confusion later down the track by revealing potential extra costs.

Getting a comprehensive quote is difficult for strata committee members that might have no prior building knowledge. If you have no prior building knowledge and the work is complex or extensive, 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](#) relevant to the works you wish to undertake. Inexperienced builders might incorrectly quote if they are not familiar with the type and the usual challenges of the proposed works.



IMPORTANT:

Written quotations should:

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

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Your Home – Australian Government](#)
- [How to Request Quotes from Builders – BUILD](#)
- [Getting Quotes – NSW Fair Trading](#)

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Strata Community Association (NSW) is the peak industry body for Strata and Community Title Management in New South Wales. Membership includes strata managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA (NSW) has in excess of 3,000 members who represent over 75% of strata lots in NSW by way of helping to oversee, advise or manage a combined property portfolio with an estimated replacement value of over \$400 Billion. SCA (NSW) proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate. Contact: (02) 9492 8200 | enquiries.nsw@strata.community | <https://nsw.strata.community/>