

SPECIFICATIONS

WHY HAVE A SPECIFICATION?

The primary function of the drawings and specification is to give effect to design decisions. Many design decisions cannot be expressed in graphic form and therefore rely on words for their expression. Other decisions would be too tedious or impractical to be conveyed in graphic form. The drawings and specification complement each other.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SPECIFICATION?

The quality of a building project is dependent on the documentation provided. The contract documentation includes the conditions of contract, the drawings, the schedules and the specification. Whilst the specification is a multi-purpose document, its primary function is to define precisely and succinctly the quality required and the processes necessary for achieving it. Its role includes, but extends beyond, the selection of materials by providing the criteria for acceptable quality of construction.

THE ROLES OF THE SPECIFICATION

The specification has many roles including being:

- A document embodying design decisions.
- A document demonstrating compliance with statutory requirements.
- An estimating document.
- A tendering document.
- A legal (contractual) document.
- An on-site working document.
- A dispute settlement document.
- A project management tool.

THE FORM OF A SPECIFICATION

NATSPEC specification worksections are classified, numbered and sequenced in a logical order, which responds to the Australian construction industry. There are recognised methods of specification writing. These include specifying by:

- **Reference:** Where an identifiable printed and published document is incorporated by reference to it. These may be Australian Standards or manufacturer's technical manuals.
- **Performance:** That is, by stating a desired end result and the criteria by which the result will be judged for its acceptability.
- **Description:** Detailing the materials, workmanship and installation procedures to be used.
- **Direct/Proprietary:** Specification stating a proprietary trade name product.

Typically, each NATSPEC worksection is divided into General, Products, Execution and Selections:

- **General** includes cross referencing, standards, interpretation, tolerances, submissions and inspection requirements.
- **Products** includes details of materials and components.
- **Execution** deals with the fabrication, installation, erection and completion as part of a project.
- **Selections** may be made within the text, in schedules within the worksections or provided separately. With simple projects, all selections may be on the drawings.

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NATSPEC, founded in 1975, is a not-for-profit organisation that is owned by the design, build, construct and property industry through professional associations and government property groups. It is impartial and is not involved in advocacy or policy development.

NATSPEC's major service is the provision of the comprehensive national specification systems endorsed by government and professional bodies. NATSPEC, the National Building Specification, is for all building structures, with specialist packages for architects, interior designers, landscape architects, structural engineers, service engineers and domestic owners. AUS-SPEC is the Local Government specification system for the life-cycle management of assets. Packages include Urban and Open Spaces, Roadworks and Bridges, Public Utilities, and Maintenance.

NATSPEC's objective is to improve the quality of construction in Australia through its updating services and via the provision of information, tools, products and other services.

Stakeholders

- Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors' Association of Australia
- Australian Elevator Association
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Australian Institute of Building
- Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
- Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors
- Construction Industry Engineering Services Group
- Consult Australia
- Dept of Energy and Public Works (QLD)
- Dept for Infrastructure and Transport (SA)
- Dept of Finance (Federal)
- Dept of Finance (WA)
- Dept of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (NT)
- Dept of Treasury and Finance (TAS)
- Dept of Treasury and Finance (VIC)
- Engineers Australia
- Major Projects Canberra
- Master Builders Australia
- Public Works Advisory (NSW)
- Standards Australia

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