Metering strategies for commercial buildings

Smart metering helps commercial property teams reduce energy waste, reduce costs, engage tenants and improve building performance.

Who is this for?

Property managers, facilities managers, consultants and sustainability managers responsible for office, retail, educational, healthcare, mixed-use and other commercial buildings.

Key metering benefits

- Disaggregate energy use by system, tenancy and floor.
- Detect after-hours usage and operational inefficiencies.
- Enable fair cost allocation and tenant engagement.
- Strengthen NABERS, Green Star and Climate Active certification pathways.
- Supports ESG reporting and asset performance benchmarking.

What to look for in a good system:

- submetering by tenancy, floor and building system
- real-time alerts for abnormal or after-hours loads
- compatibility with NABERS, Green Star and Climate Active frameworks
- dashboards accessible by facilities and asset managers
- data export options for integration with ESG platforms or reports.

Why it matters

Commercial buildings are significant energy users, with consumption spread across systems, tenancies and floors. Without submetering, it can be hard to distinguish between base building and tenant loads, track after-hours waste or confidently pursue performance certifications and sustainability goals.

Metering shows energy use such as HVAC, lighting, lifts, hot water, servers and plug loads in detail. This enables improvements to identify inefficiencies and reduce costs, fairer cost allocation and stronger ESG outcomes.

It supports NABERS, Green Star and Climate Active pathways, and helps identify underperforming sites and benchmark portfolios to guide future investment.

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How it works in practice

Submetering provides circuit or system-level interval data across common services and tenancies. With interval data, property managers can:

- detect and address after-hours energy waste
- benchmark usage across buildings, floors or tenancy types
- align HVAC and lighting controls with occupancy patterns
- optimise HVAC with better zone control
- improve transparency in tenant billing or green lease compliance
- validate upgrades and support certification processes.

The result: better building performance, lower energy costs and improved landlord–tenant collaboration.

Implementation tips

- Start with a metering and monitoring plan, including gap analysis: focus on your largest or most energy-intensive asset.
- Pilot submetering on HVAC systems or variable-use tenancies.
- Use the data to engage tenants, support green lease terms and inform upgrade priorities.
- Leverage insights to improve ratings, reduce emissions and track portfolio performance.

Related resources

- [NABERS: commercial buildings](#)
- [Green Star: performance](#)
- [NSW Government programs, grants and schemes](#)

Real life success stories

1. A commercial office landlord
- Sub-metered three mid-sized assets.
- Flagged one tenancy using 3 times more energy per m^2 than the building average.
- Optimised base building HVAC based on actual loads.
- NABERS uplift from 3.5 to 4.5 stars.

2. A luxury metro hotel
- Installed submeters and loggers on boilers.
- Identified gas waste during unoccupied periods.
- Adjusted boiler settings to match real heating needs.
- Delivered a 50% reduction in baseline gas use, improving emissions reporting and NABERS alignment.

3. A regional shopping centre
- Sub-metered food court HVAC zones and key tenants.
- Found 2 systems driving excessive baseloads.
- Implemented controls that delivered ~200,000 kWh/year in savings.

4. A mixed-use commercial asset
- Deployed interval submetering to support Green Star Performance.
- Used data to validate building-level initiatives and pursue NABERS improvements.

5. A national retail group
- Benchmarked 40 stores using submeter data.
- Identified older HVAC and non-LED lighting as drivers of 17% higher energy use.
- Prioritised upgrades and justified a national controls rollout.