

Understanding EPDs

(Environmental Product Declarations)



What is an EPD?

An Environmental Product Declaration tells the environmental story of a product over its life cycle in a clear, simple format that a wide audience can understand. It is science-based, independently verified and publicly available. EPDs are often compared to the nutrition labels on food products.

There are EPDs for many products, including building and construction products. EPDs are usually valid for five years.

EPDs do not judge a product as environmentally 'good' or 'bad'. A product with an EPD is not necessarily environmentally better than a product without one. EPDs list and disclose a product's environmental impacts, which helps you make informed choices.



Where does the information come from?

An EPD is based on a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). An LCA is a detailed environmental study that looks at the whole life cycle of a product. This includes the environmental impacts involved in sourcing and transporting the materials, making the product and transporting it to site, using the product and disposing of it or recycling it at the end of its life.

Why can I trust EPDs?



EPDs follow an internationally recognised system and are publicly available. Most EPDs for products made in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia are registered on [EPD Australasia](#).



EPDs are third-party verified. They list the details of the LCA expert involved and the name of the independent verifier.



EPDs for the same product follow common rules for data. These common rules mean that you can compare EPDs for the same product.

How can I use an EPD?



To understand or compare the environmental footprint of our products

You can compare the environmental impacts of our Fletcher Building products and other products. What is the carbon footprint of this insulation? Which pipe system contains more carbon?



To support your green building projects

EPDs and the information they contain contribute points towards ratings like Green Star and Infrastructure Sustainability.



To comply with government regulations

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE)'s Building for Climate Change programme is changing the building code. New buildings will need to state their carbon footprint. EPDs provide this information.

In Australia, the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) is developing a tool to measure embodied emissions in non-residential buildings. EPDs are the preferred source of data.



To make claims about your own projects or products

You can confidently show the environmental impacts involved when you use our products.

Why does Fletcher Building produce EPDs?

At Fletcher Building our ambition is to play a leading role in championing climate solutions and creating long-term value for future generations. EPDs help you make informed decisions, using transparent information that you can trust.

How does my business benefit when I use an EPD?

Think about your business' sustainability and business goals. Understanding the impacts of the products you buy will help you reach them.

EPDs can help you reduce your environmental and business risks, reduce your costs, increase your revenue and build your brand.



Reduce risks



Reduce costs



Increase revenue



Many of your customers want to buy products and services from a business that is working hard to become more sustainable.



Many employees (current and future) want to work for an organisation that is serious about sustainability.



Many investors (shareholders) and funders (banks) want to invest in a business that prioritises sustainability.

Which environmental impacts do EPDs communicate?

EPDs provide data about many environmental impacts



Energy

The amount of energy used at each stage of a product's life cycle. This can include the energy we need to extract raw materials and manufacture our product, and the energy you need to use it. The EPD also describes the kind of energy used and whether it comes from a renewable source (such as thermal energy).



Carbon

The amount of carbon released at each stage of a product's life cycle (its 'carbon footprint' or 'embodied carbon'). This is measured as Global Warming Potential (GWP) and expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-eq).



Other impacts

These include the amount of water we use to make our product, and whether the product releases gases that deplete the ozone layer or contributes to smog. The EPD will explain the impacts it measures.

How do I read an EPD?

An EPD provides information about the product and the company that made it. The EPD gives background information and follows a standard process. It lists:

- » The standards and rules it complies with. This includes the Product Category Rules (PCR) which define how manufacturers collect their data.
- » The scope of the study (what it covers and what it leaves out)
- » The name of the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) expert who completed the LCA
- » The name and contact details of the EPD's independent verifier
- » The modules it covers. A module is one part of the product's life cycle, such as manufacturing or using it
- » The declared unit – how much product is measured in the EPD, e.g. 1m³ of cement
- » The environmental impacts measured, with data. For example:

The results give detailed information on the impacts of different environmental indicators. For example, the total global warming potential for 1m² of R4.0 Pink® Batts® Ceiling insulation is 1.53kg CO₂-eq, (from our EPD published in 2019).