



The Confidentiality of EQC's Cost of Repair Estimates

Requests for EQC's cost estimates will be considered under the Official Information Act 1982 and will be kept confidential in cases where:

- a settlement decision has not yet been made;
- where property repairs are to be managed by Fletcher EQR's project management office.

EQC may choose to withhold information if there is good reason for doing so, pursuant to sections 6-9 of the Official Information Act. EQC considers that section 9(2)(j), which relates to negotiations being carried out without prejudice or disadvantage, including commercial negotiations, constitutes good reason for withholding this information. Although EQC is not a commercial entity, it is responsible for protecting the commercial interests of taxpayers and reinsurers by ensuring that customers receive their correct entitlement.

The negotiations referred to are those which involve awarding contracts for repairs, either through Fletcher EQR or customers who have elected to opt out and manage their own repairs. In order to ensure that contractor quotes are independently arrived at, EQC will keep its cost estimates confidential. Releasing cost estimates creates the risk of contractors pitching their quotes to match EQC's, instead of independently assessing the damage.

EQC is required to consider whether the reasons for withholding this information would be outweighed by other considerations that would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available. EQC considers that keeping estimates confidential will not prevent you from assessing whether EQC will properly settle your claim because:

- the Statement of Claim (or un-costed Scope of Works) identifies what EQC intends to repair and how it intends to do so; and
- all repairs by Fletcher EQR must be carried out in accordance with the EQC Act regardless of the cost.

If the tradesperson engaged by Fletcher EQR identifies additional natural disaster damage, this will be noted and EQC informed. Alternatively, if customers identify additional damage through the engagement of a private assessment or a private insurer full assessment, EQC will compare this with its own and if necessary undertake a reassessment.

Once a settlement recommendation has been confirmed or repairs have commenced on the property, customers may receive, on request, a copy of the costed Scope of Works.

Please note that the Ombudsman has previously confirmed to EQC that this approach is consistent with the Official Information Act.