

What's included

There are many occasions when writers need to prepare reports ranging from monthly updates to specific topics. Examples include project updates, business cases, engineering reports, research reports, credit reports as well as business reports such as Board and monthly reporting.

Best practice for reports

Effective reports should

- have a clear purpose and desired outcome
- be written in clear, concise, simple language
- provide a clear structure that is easy to navigate
- have a logical flow that takes the reader on a journey
- make the case/use persuasive arguments backed up by facts
- have a compelling executive summary
- make important, critical information stand out.

The Challenge

One of the greatest challenges in writing effective reports is to present often technical information in a summary form for a non-technical audience. Reports are often lengthy to document all the information and require some form of summary for readers who are only interested in the key points.

As the Before sample shows, an Executive summary can add little value and force all readers to hunt for the information they require.

The Solution

The After document shows how a 36-page report can be summarised in 2 pages.

1.0 Executive Summary

At the request of <client>, we report our visual inspection and assessment of the <street> facade of <address>.

The purpose of the assessment was to inspect the general condition of the building facades and to identify items which may require repair, replacement or maintenance. Also, to comment on compliance with current Codes and Australian Standards, sufficient to form a professional engineering opinion as to the performance of the building facades. The driver for the assessment was the dilapidated condition of air conditioning plant platforms to the <street> elevation.

The <street1> and <street2> elevations are reported on separately. The condition of the following items is reported on:

- Condition of facades generally
- Plant platforms (<street1> façade only)
- Window lintels
- Window sills
- Window joinery
- Rainheads and downpipes
- Marble clad shopfronts (<street2> only)
- Seismic stability of roof parapet walls.

Due to the diversity of matters covered, conclusions and recommendations are made at the foot of each section, rather than at the end of the report.

The most urgent safety concerns are the dilapidated condition plant platforms and window lintels to the <street1> façade of the building, which could result in items of steel and/or concrete falling from the building.

Also, there are recommended repairs – such as repairs to rainheads and downpipes – that will save the building owner incurring more expensive repair costs in the short to medium term.

Executive Summary

Introduction This report covers our visual inspection and assessment of the <street> facade of <address> for <client>.

Purpose The purpose of the assessment was to

- inspect the general condition of the building facade
- identify items which may require repair, replacement or maintenance
- comment on compliance with current Codes and Australian Standards, sufficient to form a professional engineering opinion as to the performance of the building facades.

Summary The most urgent safety concerns are

- the dilapidated condition of plant platforms and window lintels which could result in items of steel and/or concrete falling from the building.

There are recommended repairs – such as repairs to rainheads and downpipes – that will save the building owner incurring more expensive repair costs in the short to medium term.

Inspection details

Property: .<address>
Inspector: <engineer>.
Type: Visual
Dates: <date of inspection>

Inspection Findings A summary of the condition of the various items is in the following table

Item	Condition
General condition of facade	Fair
Plant platforms	Dangerous to allow any persons to access the plant platforms at levels 2 to 7 in their present condition.
Window lintels	Around 50% at level 2 and above have concrete spalling. The worst cases are at levels 5 and 7, where pieces of concrete are at risk of falling.
Window sills	No defects were noticed.
Window joinery	Most window sills and external frames have not been repainted in a very long time and many are in advanced states of decay or disrepair.
Rainheads and downpipes	Rainheads appear blocked; downpipes generally sound.
Seismic stability of roof parapet walls	Needs assessment.

WHS potential issues Masonry falling on public
Lead in paint (not tested for, but can be assumed)

Recommendations We recommend that

Plant platforms

- no one be permitted to access these platforms (other than by boom lift or rope access) and that the platforms should ultimately be removed
- the level 3 and 6 spalled brickwork should be immediately stabilised or netted over to minimise any future risk to the public

Window Lintels

- a single lintel first be investigated to find out whether the lintels are reinforced concrete or concrete encased steel beams
- as a minimum, concrete considered at risk of falling should be immediately removed or netted over, to minimise any future risk to the public

Window sills

- all ferrous items and fixings that are no longer required be removed from the façade and the holes in brickwork and concrete patched

Window joinery

- a timber window specialist contractor be engaged to inspect all the windows to advise on repair

Rainheads and downpipes

- both rainheads be resecured to the wall and the roof rainwater outlets re-flashed into the rainheads

Roof Parapet Walls

- these walls be assessed for earthquake loading
