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Designing High-Performance Building Envelopes – From Interior Walls to Façades



1. Name the various components that typically make up external walls.

External walls typically include cladding, cladding top hats, a weather-resistive barrier (WRB), framing, insulation, and internal lining.

2. In the context of external walling, what does AS/NZS 1170 refer to?

The AS/NZS 1170 series sets out the actions and load combinations (including wind pressure, seismic and other loads) that wall assemblies must resist over the life of the building, in order to ensure safety and serviceability under a range of conditions.

3. In the context of external walling, what does 'Fire Resistance Level' mean?

Fire Resistance Level (FRL) is a three-part fire rating (structural adequacy/integrity/insulation) expressed in minutes that indicates how long a building element can withstand fire, as defined by AS 1530.4 and the NCC.

4. What two factors affect the acoustics performance of external walling systems?

The acoustic effectiveness of external walls depends on material specification and construction quality..

5. What does Part J4 of the NCC 2022/2025 say about the thermal requirements of external walling systems?

Part J4 of the NCC 2022/2025 prescribes minimum Total R-Values for external walls by climate zone to ensure buildings achieve required energy efficiency outcomes, including the effects of thermal bridging.

6. What are the benefits of taking a 'whole of wall' approach when specifying external walling systems?

Taking a 'whole of wall' approach ensures that structural adequacy, fire safety, thermal performance, acoustics, weathertightness and durability are addressed holistically as a system. It enables solutions to be tailored to project requirements, while maintaining compliance with NCC 2022/2025.