

The Complete Australian Homeowner's Guide to Concreting Projects

Everything You Need to Know Before Starting Your Concrete Project

2026 Edition

- ✓ State-by-State Cost Breakdown
- ✓ How to Choose a Licensed Concreter
- ✓ 10-Point Verification Checklist
- ✓ Concrete Finish Comparison Guide
- ✓ Cost Estimation Worksheet
- ✓ Maintenance Schedule & Tips
- ✓ Red Flags to Avoid

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Introduction

Welcome to your comprehensive guide for planning and executing a successful concreting project in Australia. Whether you're considering a new driveway, house slab, patio, or pool surround, making informed decisions from the start will save you thousands of dollars and years of headaches.

This guide combines insights from industry professionals, licensing authorities across all Australian states, and real homeowner experiences to give you the complete picture of what to expect.

Why This Guide Matters

Concrete work is a significant investment, typically ranging from \$2,000 to \$30,000+ depending on your project. Unlike other home improvements, concrete mistakes are expensive to fix and can affect your property's value and structural integrity.

The difference between a successful concrete project and a costly disaster often comes down to three things: choosing the right concreter, understanding fair pricing, and knowing what questions to ask. This guide covers all three.

How to Use This Guide

Start by reviewing the cost breakdowns for your state to establish realistic budget expectations. Then use the verification checklist to assess potential concreters. Before signing any contract, work through the questions section and complete the cost estimation worksheet.

Keep this guide handy throughout your project as a reference for maintenance schedules and troubleshooting common issues.

Understanding Concrete Costs in Australia

Concrete prices vary significantly across Australia based on location, labour costs, material availability, and market competition. Understanding these variations helps you budget accurately and recognize fair pricing.

State-by-State Cost Breakdown

State/Territory	Standard Concrete	Decorative Finish
New South Wales	\$35-\$50/m ²	\$95-\$140/m ²
Victoria	\$25-\$40/m ²	\$85-\$130/m ²
Queensland	\$30-\$45/m ²	\$90-\$135/m ²
South Australia	\$30-\$45/m ²	\$90-\$130/m ²
Western Australia	\$40-\$55/m ²	\$100-\$150/m ²
Australian Capital Territory	\$20-\$35/m ²	\$80-\$120/m ²
Tasmania	\$35-\$50/m ²	\$95-\$140/m ²
Northern Territory	\$40-\$60/m ²	\$100-\$160/m ²

Note: Prices include labour and materials. Decorative finishes include exposed aggregate, stamped concrete, and coloured concrete.

Common Project Costs

Project Type	Size	Cost Range
Standard Driveway	40m ²	\$2,600 - \$6,000
Decorative Driveway	40m ²	\$4,000 - \$8,000
House Slab	150m ²	\$10,500 - \$18,000
Concrete Patio	20m ²	\$1,500 - \$2,600
Shed Slab	24m ²	\$1,800 - \$3,200
Pool Surround	30m ²	\$2,700 - \$4,200

Pathway	10m ²	\$600 - \$1,100
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What Affects Your Costs

- **Project Size:** Larger projects typically have better per-square-metre rates due to economies of scale.
- **Finish Type:** Decorative finishes (exposed aggregate, stamped, coloured) cost 30-100% more than plain concrete.
- **Site Access:** Difficult access requiring concrete pumping adds \$170-\$230 per hour.
- **Ground Conditions:** Poor soil, rock, or excessive excavation increases preparation costs significantly.
- **Reinforcement:** Steel mesh adds \$10-\$30/m². Some projects require heavy reinforcement.
- **Location:** Metro areas are generally cheaper than regional due to competition and proximity to suppliers.
- **Timing:** Off-peak bookings (winter in most areas) can save 10-15% on labour costs.

How to Choose a Licensed Concreter

Choosing the right concreter is the single most important decision in your project. A licensed, experienced professional delivers quality work, complies with Australian Standards, and provides warranty protection. An unlicensed operator puts you at legal and financial risk.

Why Licensing Matters

Every Australian state requires concreters to hold appropriate licenses for work above certain thresholds (typically \$3,300 to \$20,000 depending on state). Licensed concreters have demonstrated competency, carry mandatory insurance, and are accountable to building regulators.

Licensing Thresholds by State

State	License Required When Value Exceeds
NSW	\$5,000 (inc. materials & GST)
VIC	\$5,000 (inc. materials & GST)
QLD	\$3,300 (inc. materials & GST)
SA	Building work license required
WA	\$20,000 (inc. materials & GST)
TAS	\$5,000 (inc. materials & GST)
NT	\$12,000 (inc. materials & GST)
ACT	\$5,000 (inc. materials & GST)

The 5-Step Verification Process

Step 1: Request License Details - Ask for license number, type, and expiry date. Legitimate concreters provide this readily.

Step 2: Check Online - Every state has an online register. Verify the license is current and covers concreting work.

Step 3: Verify Insurance - Request certificates for public liability (\$10-20 million), building indemnity, and workers compensation.

Step 4: Check References - Ask for 3+ recent clients with similar projects. Actually call them and ask specific questions.

Step 5: Review Past Work - View completed projects in person if possible. Photos can be misleading.

Online License Verification Resources

- **NSW:** www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au - Select 'Check a licence'
- **VIC:** www.vba.vic.gov.au - Select 'Check a Practitioner'
- **QLD:** www.qbcc.qld.gov.au - 'Licence Search'
- **SA:** www.cbs.sa.gov.au - 'Check a licence'
- **WA:** www.commerce.wa.gov.au - Building Services Public Register
- **TAS:** Contact WorkSafe Tasmania - 1300 366 322
- **NT:** nt.gov.au - Building Practitioner Licensing
- **ACT:** www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au - Construction Occupations Register

10-Point Concreter Verification Checklist

Use this checklist when evaluating potential concreters. Each item should be checked 'Yes' before hiring. Even one 'No' should raise serious concerns.

✓	Item to Verify	Status
■	Holds current, valid license for your state	___
■	License covers concreting work (not just general building)	___
■	License verified through official state register online	___
■	Provides current public liability insurance certificate (\$10M+ coverage)	___
■	Provides building indemnity/warranty insurance (if required in your state)	___
■	Provides workers compensation insurance (if employing staff)	___
■	Can provide 3+ recent references from similar projects	___
■	References verified by phone with positive feedback	___
■	Provides detailed written quote with specifications (concrete strength, reinforcement type, etc.)	___
■	No record of disciplinary action on license register	___

BONUS TIP: If a concreter cannot or will not provide any of these items, walk away immediately. No discount is worth the risk of unlicensed, uninsured work on your property.

Popular Concrete Finishes Comparison

Choosing the right concrete finish affects both aesthetics and functionality. This comparison helps you understand the pros, cons, and costs of Australia's most popular concrete finishes.

Finish Type	Cost/m ²	Best For	Lifespan
Plain Broom	\$65-\$95	Budget driveways, functional areas	30+ years
Coloured	\$80-\$120	Modern patios, defined pathways	30+ years
Exposed Aggregate	\$95-\$140	Driveways, pool areas, high-traffic	40+ years
Stamped/Patterned	\$100-\$150	Premium patios, feature areas	30+ years
Polished	\$80-\$150	Interior floors, modern spaces	40+ years
Spray-On Coating	\$60-\$100	Resurfacing old concrete	10-15 years

Detailed Finish Breakdown

1. Exposed Aggregate

What it is: Natural stones revealed on the surface by removing top cement layer.

Pros: Extremely durable, slip-resistant (10x more than plain), hides dirt/stains, beautiful natural appearance.

Cons: 30-50% more expensive than plain, can be rough underfoot with coarse stones, requires professional installation.

Best applications: Driveways (excellent durability), pool surrounds (safety), outdoor entertaining areas.

Maintenance: Seal every 2-3 years, pressure wash annually.

2. Stamped Concrete

What it is: Patterns stamped into wet concrete to replicate pavers, stone, brick, or tiles.

Pros: Premium appearance, no actual joints (no weeds), seamless surface, highly customizable.

Cons: Most expensive decorative option, can crack along pattern lines, color fades without UV sealer.

Best applications: High-end patios, feature driveways, courtyards, entertainment areas.

Maintenance: Re-seal every 2-3 years with UV-resistant sealer, gentle cleaning only.

3. Polished Concrete

What it is: Surface ground with diamond abrasives to create smooth, glossy finish.

Pros: Extremely low maintenance, highly durable, reflects light, modern sophisticated look.

Cons: Can be slippery when wet (high gloss), shows scratches, cold underfoot, hard surface.

Best applications: Interior living areas, retail spaces, modern garages, contemporary homes.

Maintenance: Dust mop regularly, damp mop with neutral cleaner, re-polish every 3-5 years.

20 Questions to Ask Your Concreter

Before signing any contract, ask these critical questions. The answers will reveal the concreter's professionalism, experience, and whether they're the right fit for your project.

Licensing & Insurance Questions

Q: What is your license number and can I verify it online?

Q: Is your license current and does it cover concreting work specifically?

Q: What insurance do you carry and can you provide current certificates?

Q: Do you have public liability insurance and what's the coverage amount?

Experience & References Questions

Q: How long have you been working as a concreter?

Q: Have you completed projects similar to mine in size and scope?

Q: Can you provide 3+ references from recent similar projects?

Q: Can I visit a recently completed project to see the quality?

Technical Specifications Questions

Q: What concrete strength (MPa) will you use and why?

Q: What thickness will the slab be and is reinforcement included?

Q: What type of reinforcement (mesh or bar) and what grade/size?

Q: How will you prepare the base and what compaction testing will you do?

Q: What Australian Standards will you follow (AS 3600, AS 2870)?

Q: How will you handle drainage and what fall will be incorporated?

Project Management Questions

Q: How long will the project take from start to finish?

Q: When can I drive on the driveway/use the surface?

Q: What is your payment schedule?

Q: Do you handle council permits and inspections?

Q: What warranty do you provide on your work?

Q: What happens if there's a problem after completion?

Cost Estimation Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate your project costs and compare quotes accurately. Fill in your measurements and use the pricing from earlier sections.

Your Project Details

Project Type: _____

Project Dimensions: Length: _____ m x Width: _____ m

Total Area: _____ m² (length x width)

Preferred Finish: _____

Your State/Territory: _____

Cost Calculation

Item	Calculation	Cost
Base Cost	Area (_____ m ²) x Rate (\$ _____/m ²)	\$ _____
Reinforcement	Area x \$12/m ² (approx)	\$ _____
Site Preparation	As quoted	\$ _____
Decorative Finish Premium	If applicable	\$ _____
Access Issues	Pumping if needed	\$ _____
Sealing	Area x \$10/m ² (approx)	\$ _____
	SUBTOTAL	\$ _____
Contingency (10-15%)	Subtotal x 0.15	\$ _____
	TOTAL ESTIMATE	\$ _____

Note: This is an estimate only. Actual quotes may vary based on site conditions, access, and specific requirements. Always obtain multiple detailed quotes.

Concrete Maintenance Schedule

Proper maintenance extends your concrete's lifespan from 30 to 50+ years. Follow this schedule to protect your investment.

Frequency	Task	Time Required
Every 3 Months	Visual inspection for cracks Basic cleaning (sweep/rinse)	15-30 minutes
Every 6 Months	Thorough cleaning Measure existing cracks Clean drainage areas	2-3 hours
Annually	Pressure wash Repair minor cracks Check expansion joints Apply sealer	Full day
Every 2-3 Years	Complete re-sealing Professional inspection if concerns	1-2 days
Every 5-10 Years	Consider resurfacing if worn Repair accumulated damage	Varies

Sealing Requirements by Finish Type

Finish Type	Sealer Frequency	Cost/m ²
Plain Broom	Every 3-5 years	\$8-\$12
Coloured Concrete	Every 2-3 years	\$10-\$15
Exposed Aggregate	Every 2-3 years	\$10-\$18
Stamped Concrete	Every 2-3 years	\$12-\$18
Polished Concrete	Every 2-3 years	\$10-\$15

Common Problems & Solutions

Understanding common concrete problems helps you identify issues early and determine whether DIY fixes or professional help is needed.

Cracking Assessment Guide

Crack Width	Severity	Action Required
<0.5mm (Hairline)	Low	Monitor, seal if desired
0.5-2mm (Minor)	Low-Medium	Seal to prevent water ingress
2-5mm (Moderate)	Medium	Professional assessment recommended
>5mm (Major)	High	Immediate professional assessment
Widening (Active)	Very High	Urgent professional assessment

Common Problems & Quick Solutions

Surface Staining (Oil/Rust): Absorb fresh spills with cat litter. Use concrete degreaser or rust remover. Pressure wash. Re-seal surface.

Efflorescence (White Deposits): Brush off when dry. Natural occurrence in new concrete. Seal concrete to prevent recurrence.

Minor Spalling: Remove loose concrete. Clean area. Apply bonding agent. Fill with concrete repair mortar.

Settlement/Sinking: Professional slab jacking or foam injection required. Costs \$800-\$2,500 per area.

Color Fading: Clean thoroughly. Apply concrete stain or color enhancer. Re-seal with UV-resistant product.

When to Call a Professional

- Structural cracks (>3mm or widening over time)
- Extensive spalling (>1m² or deep damage)

- Settlement or leveling issues
- Active water infiltration or drainage problems
- Reinforcement corrosion (rust stains, exposed steel)
- Cracks in house slabs or foundations
- Major resurfacing projects

Red Flags to Avoid

These warning signs indicate unlicensed operators, potential scams, or unprofessional contractors. Even one red flag should make you reconsider hiring that concreter.

■ Cannot Provide License Number

Legitimate concreters readily provide license details. Delays or excuses are major red flags.

■ Cash-Only Payments

Requests for cash without invoices avoid paper trails and tax obligations. Sign of unlicensed operation.

■ No Written Contract or Quote

Verbal agreements only with vague scope of work and no detailed specifications.

■ Unusually Low Quotes

Prices 30%+ below competitors may indicate cutting corners or unlicensed operators.

■ Large Upfront Deposits

Demands 50%+ upfront payment. Standard is 10-20% deposit. May take money and disappear.

■ No Insurance

Cannot provide insurance certificates or makes excuses. Expired or invalid certificates.

■ No ABN or Business Details

Operates under personal name only with no business registration. Uncontactable after hours.

■ Pressure Tactics

Pushy sales tactics, limited-time offers, or pressure to sign immediately without review time.

■ No References

Cannot or will not provide references from recent projects. Refuses to show past work.

■ Vague Specifications

Won't specify concrete strength, reinforcement type, or Australian Standards they'll follow.

IMPORTANT: If you've hired an unlicensed concreter, stop work immediately. You have no warranty protection, no insurance coverage, and no recourse with authorities. Consult a lawyer and report to your state's building regulator.

Your Next Steps

You now have the knowledge to make informed decisions about your concreting project. Follow these steps to ensure success:

Step-by-Step Action Plan

Step 1: Define Your Project - Determine exact size, preferred finish, and realistic budget using the cost worksheet.

Step 2: Research Licensed Concreters - Find 5-7 licensed concreters in your area through AussieWork.au or state registers.

Step 3: Request Detailed Quotes - Contact 3-5 concreters with your project details. Request detailed written quotes.

Step 4: Verify Credentials - Use the 10-point checklist to verify each concreter's license, insurance, and references.

Step 5: Ask the 20 Questions - Interview your top 2-3 candidates using the questions in this guide.

Step 6: Compare Quotes Carefully - Don't just choose the cheapest. Compare specifications, materials, and warranties.

Step 7: Review Contract Thoroughly - Ensure everything discussed is in writing before signing.

Step 8: Monitor the Work - Stay involved throughout the project. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Step 9: Inspect Before Final Payment - Thoroughly inspect completed work before making final payment.

Step 10: Maintain Properly - Follow the maintenance schedule to protect your investment for decades.

Connect with Licensed Concreters

AussieWork.au makes it easy to connect with licensed, insured concreters in your area. Our platform verifies credentials, provides transparent reviews, and helps you compare multiple quotes quickly.

- ✓ Licensed professionals only
- ✓ Free, no-obligation quotes
- ✓ Compare multiple concreters
- ✓ Read verified reviews
- ✓ Get competitive pricing

Visit [AussieWork.au/concreters](https://www.aussiework.au/concreters) to get started

Compare licensed concreters in your area and get free quotes for your project.

Additional Resources

For more detailed information on specific topics covered in this guide, visit the AussieWork.au Concreters Resource Center at www.aussiework.au/concreters

- Complete Guide to Concreting Costs by State and Project Type
- State-by-State Licensing Requirements and Verification Links
- Detailed Concrete Finish Selection Guide with Photos
- Comprehensive Concrete Maintenance and Repair Guides
- Australian Standards (AS 3600, AS 2870) Explained for Homeowners

Your Concrete Project Success Starts Here

This guide has equipped you with the knowledge to make confident decisions about your concreting project. From understanding fair pricing to choosing licensed professionals, you now have the tools to avoid costly mistakes and ensure quality results.

Remember: The difference between a successful concrete project and a costly disaster lies in choosing the right concreter, understanding what you're paying for, and knowing what questions to ask.

Ready to Start Your Project?

Connect with licensed, verified concreters in your area through AussieWork.au. Get multiple quotes, compare reviews, and make your decision with confidence.

www.AussieWork.au/concreters