

Home Renovation Guide

Your go-to guide to help
you achieve the renovation
you've been dreaming of.

Everyone has a different reason to renovate.

Many of us want more – more space, more light, more rooms. A little more money on sale day? And some of us just want less – less heat in summer, less maintenance, fewer restrictions to our lifestyle.

Yet the journey we take through our ‘reno’ – from dream to done – often follows the same path. It’s exciting, overwhelming and exhilarating. And this guide can help steer you through every stage of the process.

You’ll see tips and inspo to help find your own stunning style – inside and out. Advice on hiring experts you can trust and information on how to select the right products to bring it all together.

A home renovation is always a challenge. But with the right help and advice, you can manage the project today and your home will be magnificent for years to come.

1. GET STARTED

Dream big. Think of your lifestyle and the right look.

2. GET PLANNING

Find the right people and products for your build.

3. GET BUILDING

Manage the job so you build it once and build it right.

Time to dream

Design and mood

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Site and space

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Benefits of renovating

Benefits of adding space

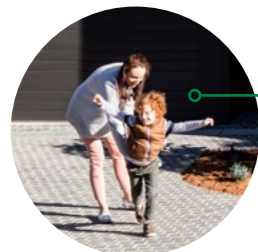
Whether you're living or flipping, the benefits stack up.
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Know your house and buyer, and you'll know profit.
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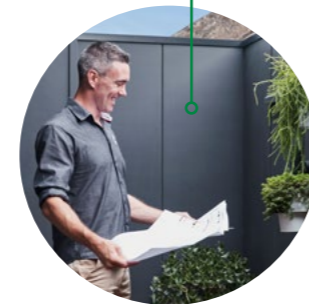
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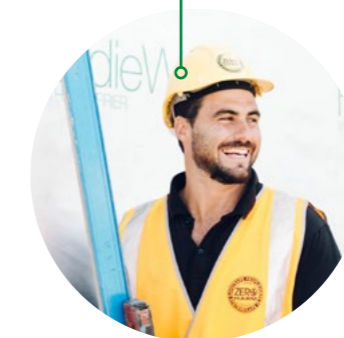
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Honesty + detail + spreadsheets + calculators = success.
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HomeBuilder grant

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1 Get Started

It's exciting right? You've decided to upgrade your home and suddenly it's time to dream. Anything is possible. Everything is on the cards! Hang on for just a sec. It pays to pause at this point of the process. Are you 100% clear on your reason for renovating – is it for resale, changing family needs or the creation of a forever home? With your purpose sorted, you can focus on your space, design budget and block. In short, you can get started – with confidence.

Time to dream

Design and mood

Once you know why you're renovating, it's time to dive into the fun stuff – design. As you're researching looks and layouts, consider both the functional elements of a house – how do you and your family want to use the space? And the more abstract – how do you want them to feel in the space?

It can be chaotic trying to remember all those flashes of colour and texture you stumble across online – so keeping a Pinterest board can help. We suggest having a master board for your overall project and then a board for each area of the home. Before you know it, you'll build a picture of a beautiful, functional home that flows from space to space.

We also suggest following architects, interior designers and landscape gardeners you discover on Instagram. They can be your link into an endless stream of striking, contemporary ideas and images coming from across the globe.



Site and space

When it comes to renovating, there is no one single best layout. To get the best result for your project, your lifestyle needs must be balanced with the opportunities and challenges of a specific property and site.

The principles are simple and logical. Homes should be orientated to get the best of everything – views, natural light and energy efficiency. But when considering the variety of renovation sites in our country – sloping blocks, narrow sites, apartments, north facing,

south facing, coastal surrounds for example – each requires its own solution.

Do you build up or out? Promote shade or sun? Views or privacy? Professional architects and designers, such as those with the Building Designers Association, specialise in ways to get the most out of every block. Making the most out of your site will not only improve the comfort and liveability of your home, but also its resale value.



The Famous Five – Natalee Bowen's expert tips

The right questions to ask and the mistakes to avoid.

1. What don't you like about your home right now?

How much more space do you need?
Is the floor plan working?
How will any changes affect your lifestyle and that of your family?

2. Create a vision board of elements you love and want to include in your current home - including open plan living, alfresco area and façade.

3. What are the things that will add value?

Adding a level, upgrading to cladding to transform a dull brick home into a Hamptons-style home.
Finding a classic style that won't date?

4. Create open plan living. Remember lifestyle equals value. Create a holiday at home feel, open the layout of the home and find that indoor-outdoor feel. A better flow adds a sense of luxury.

5. What is your budget?

With the government's HomeBuilder grant you can add more into your home. If you were going to pay \$150k for a renovation use the \$25k to add the extra featured details of panelling, ceiling details, add cladding, feature wall and adding value.

Natalee Bowen has over 20 years of design industry experience.



Benefits of renovating

Benefits of adding space

If you have outgrown your current home or it is not working for you, there are plenty of options. Sell up and move on. Knockdown and rebuild. Or renovate. If you're reading this guide, chances are you've already chosen option three. Great choice. Renovating allows you to keep living in your suburb of choice, and preserve the things you love about your

home – the classic design elements, the feel, and sentimental features you'd be sad to demolish. And at the same time, you can increase the functionality and liveability of your property, maximise the use of your block, and add some serious dollars to your resale value. So whether your renovation is for living or flipping, the benefits stack up.



If your home is in good condition and has endearing features it makes sense to renovate. If your home is in bad condition and doesn't make good use of the site in space and orientation, it might make more sense to knock down and rebuild.



Things to think about when renovating for your family

- Think about what your family will be like in 5 or 10 years, not just next year.
- Ask your family what they want and incorporate it into your design.
- Keep your spaces connected. Family is about sharing moments. Design a renovation that helps make them.
- Let's face it, families are messy. Now is your chance to plan for a clutter free, easy tidy home.
- Think about the rooms that really count - bathrooms, play and study areas.

Renovating to sell

Some renovate to make a life more comfortable, others to make some money. If you're looking to flip your way to financial reward, here's where to start.

First you need to be sure you are buying a property that is worth renovating. Is it in the right area, on the right street? Is it structurally sound? Will it need repair work, such as rewiring or plumbing before you start your renovation? Are there any planning or heritage issues? Be sure to speak to experts and get the right advice.

Before you purchase a house and crunch half of it down, you need to crunch the numbers. What are all your potential expenses? What is a realistic resale price? What happens to the numbers if the market crashes?

Get as detailed as you can and discuss your plan with experienced builders, renovators, or tradies – the details can have a big impact on your bottom line.

If the numbers look right on your project, every bit of your design should have one purpose in mind - increasing value. So you need to know your buyers and understand what they're looking for in a home. That means elements like improving natural light, creating open plan spaces, energy efficiency and sprucing up street appeal. Remember, each area and buyer group has its own specific wants and needs. So talk to real estate agents, builders and buyers about the things that create the most value in homes.

Before you start

Materials matter

Starting to think about what your renovation looks like is one thing. The right materials to use is just as important. It's the right materials that help you achieve your vision, deliver you street appeal and give you the flexibility to design the way you want.

A modern home needs modern materials. Not just for speed and efficiency but also for strength and durability. Frames can be built from timber or steel. Homes can be skinned in durable fibre cement cladding or weatherboards.

Fibre cement can provide the look of a timber weatherboard or a rendered wall while being easy to install, offer a great amount of design diversity and be long lasting and low maintenance.



Find out more about different building materials

Stria cladding:
A contemporary and pared back look



The right materials can help you achieve your vision, deliver street appeal and give you the flexibility to design the way you want.



Project features Axon cladding 400mm

2 Get Planning

It's time to stop dreaming and make some decisions. After what can feel like a lifetime of consideration, you've made the big call to renovate. The moment has come to assemble a team you can trust, perfect your plans, pick products you can rely on and calculate some concrete, well-informed figures. Do your research. Ask questions. Interrogate every angle and opportunity – because the decisions you make right now will shape your build, and your lifestyle for years to come.

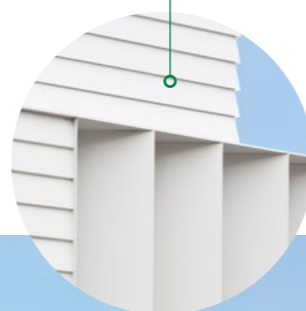
Research

The right materials

How do you elevate your renovation from the simple to the striking? How can you connect with the environment and make sure your build is the right size for your needs? By using the right materials to build a timeless modern design.

The modern look, with its clean lines, hidden roof lines, geometric patterns and minimalist style has stood time's test. With its origins in 1930s Europe, modern styles provide the flexibility to work across environments – from coastal to suburban and easily compliment existing homes as part of a renovation.

The best renovations meld into current buildings using modern lightweight materials such as fibre cement cladding and weatherboards that can work on single or double storey builds.



Linea weatherboards: Ideal for creating a Hamptons or coastal inspired look

[Download the Modern Look Book](#)



Renovation foundations – Joe Snell's expert tips

- **Use a professional.** Renovating is often our biggest investment. You wouldn't skimp on a doctor or lawyer. Please don't do so on your home.
- **Do your research on builders,** and make sure to meet their past clients and see the work done. If a builder can't recommend anyone then alarm bells should be going off.
- **Confirm and understand your budget.** Think carefully about what you really need. Nail down your budget and contract with your builder before you start. Ensure that the builder is licensed and registered.
- **Design for the future.** Don't get caught up designing your renovation for your family now. Ensure that you have designed for your changing family needs over the next five to ten years.
- **Connect with the outside.** We live in one of the most liveable climates in the world, make sure any money you spend on your renovation is making the most of the outside environment.

Joe Snell is an award winning architect, designer and author of 'Your Best Home: 5 spaces x Design steps = a Better Life'.

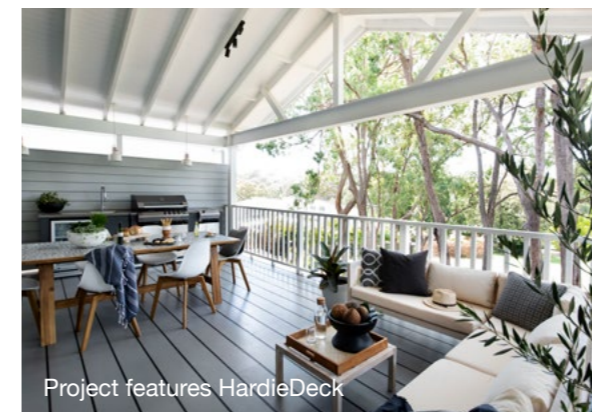


Rooms to prioritise

Think about the rooms where you and your family spend the most time or need to be functional. These are the key areas you should focus your attention on to get the most from your renovation.

Let's start with the kitchen. It's the heart of the home. Cooking, connecting with family and entertaining friends. So you can invest a little more here, knowing you'll get it back in serves.

Then we have the bathroom. Don't jump on the latest trend, rely on your personal style. Bathrooms can be a sanctuary - providing nobody is banging on the door. So ensure you have space you need, invest in quality products in this high use area.



Project features HardieDeck

And finally, the great outdoors. The backyard has always been part of the Australian way of life. And with gardens getting smaller and lawns shrinking, how we connect outdoor areas with entertaining areas is even more important. Gone are the days of rotten decks and rusty BBQs. Think of your outdoor areas like another room – inviting and beautiful.



Make sure you consider what's behind the wall in your wet areas.

Villaboard on the walls and Secura on the floors will make sure your project lasts the test of time.

Reality

Planning

We'll give it to you straight – submitting planning applications is not much fun. But that's all the more reason to approach this part of your renovation with care and clarity.

The first thing to work out is do you need any formal planning approval at all? Depending on where you live and the type of renovation, Exempt and Complying developments do not need a separate approval process. Speak with your design company or local council to see if this applies to your renovation.

But if you do need planning approvals, who is going to handle them? Your builder? Your architect? Your project manager? A planning consultant? You? In reality, it's often a combination of all of the above and it's essential everyone is crystal clear on their responsibilities.

And perhaps the most important thing to consider with the planning approvals process is time. Your application has to adhere to both state and local-council laws, and could be objected to by your neighbours. Should you require amendments, you may need to resubmit your application and start the process again. With the timeframes involved in each part of the process, approvals can take up to 8 weeks, or longer. And that can blow out further in difficult scenarios.

To avoid objections, it's a great idea to talk with your neighbours through the planning process to avoid surprises. And be prepared to work closely with your build team and local council to quickly amend plans and deal with objections.



Find a builder

Some people have the time and skills to manage a renovation themselves. But for most, who hold down full-time jobs and a full life of social commitments, the task can be too big to take on.

Enter the builder. Now, you are going to spend a lot of time with your builder. Calling them. Waiting for them to call you. Meeting them for coffee. Meeting them on site. Meeting them for coffee on site. Texting. Emailing. You want to choose the right one.

A good builder is a true partner in your reno. Someone who protects your best interests, manages trades seamlessly and has a keen eye for quality control on every part of the job. To find yours, speak to at least three different builders about your plans and vision, ask for references from previous clients and to see some of their finished builds.

A great way to create or cutdown your shortlist is to ask for recommendations from family or friends – because anyone who has used a builder will know them well by the end of the project.

If you don't have any first-hand recommendations, start by looking at online reviews. And, of course, balance all your research with your budget and their availability.

Some builders have habits that are hard to break. Remember, it's your reno, so if your builder won't build the renovation you're after, find another builder. It may seem like a lot of work, but getting the right builder will save you so much more work in the long run.

Your team

Your renovation dreams are all about the big picture. And architects are experts in going from the big picture to the little details. They can translate your vision into a plan or give you that vision that you have been searching for – maximising light, space and functionality.

The larger and more complex a project becomes, the more benefit you can get from having a building designer on your team. They can help make sure

your build complies with the minefield of planning and council regulations, and give you advice through the entire building process.

If you are starting a renovation that requires complex planning approvals, it can pay to bring a planning consultant on to your team. Paying for their expertise in negotiating regulations and approvals at the start can speed up your build and save you in the long run.



A good builder is a true partner in your reno. Someone who protects your best interests, manages trades seamlessly and has a keen eye for quality.



Project features Matrix cladding in black caviar

Scope

Budget

How much will my renovation cost? Even if you know how many bedrooms and bathrooms you want, the answer to this question is all in the detail.

Estimates – or a more accurate term would be ‘guesstimates’ – for renovations come in anywhere between \$1,000-4,000 a square metre. But several key factors including the size and shape of the addition, the number and size of bathrooms, the type of external cladding, roof covering, windows and joinery selected, and the condition of existing dwelling all contribute to building costs.

An accurate quote requires a fully finished plan, including detailed product and fit-out specifications, that can be estimated by your builder. The simplest way to ensure you’ll be on budget for a big job is to approach an architect, builder or design build company with your specific budget to begin with.



To ensure you maintain a balanced budget, allow a contingency of 5% for simple renovations, and more for houses where integrating the old and new can create challenges. Be disciplined enough to stick to your spec and mood boards, and avoid last minute variations with additional costs.



How to take advantage of the HomeBuilder grant

The federal government’s \$25,000 [HomeBuilder grant](#) is designed to stimulate the construction sector and wider economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The package is for eligible singles and couples for substantial renovations to existing properties and for new builds. So how can you make the most of the grant?

There’s strict eligibility criteria for the \$688 million building scheme, with rules around income and the cost of the renovation and/or land.

And remember time is ticking. Eligible contracts must be signed before December 31, 2020 and building must start within three months.

Your budget checklist

Getting your budget right and sticking to it is crucial to delivering the renovation you imagined. Here’s an easy to use checklist to make sure you start on the right track.

Your team

Architect/Building Designer/Draftsman
\$ _____

Interior Designer
\$ _____

Structural Engineer fees
\$ _____

Private or Council Certifier
\$ _____

Environmental/Soil specialist
\$ _____

Surveyor
\$ _____

Water Board
\$ _____

Council fees
\$ _____

Arborist
\$ _____

Inside

Cabinetry
\$ _____

Wardrobes
\$ _____

Air Conditioning
\$ _____

Fixtures and fittings
\$ _____

Flooring
\$ _____

Window coverings
\$ _____

Appliances
\$ _____

Styling
\$ _____

Before you start

Rent
\$ _____

Removalists
\$ _____

Outside

Landscaping
\$ _____

Fencing
\$ _____

Solar Panels
\$ _____

Pool
\$ _____

Awnings
\$ _____

Renderer
\$ _____

Builder and trades

Demolition
\$ _____

Builder
\$ _____

Electrician
\$ _____

Plumber
\$ _____

Tiler
\$ _____

Painter
\$ _____

Glazier
\$ _____

Plasterer
\$ _____

Total \$ _____

[Download our budget checklist](#)



3 Get Building

Now the fun begins. The daggy and dated comes crashing down. The leaky and loose gets ripped out. And the old makes way for the new. This is another point in the build where it can be easy to get carried away with the excitement of all that's taking place. But achieving the best results, and keeping your sanity, requires a calm, considered and logical mindset right through the construction phase. Here's how to keep the ship steady through the ups and downs of the build – and beyond.

The build and beyond



Working with your builder

Your relationship with your builder and tradies has a defining affect on your overall renovation experience. So work hard to ensure they stay positive and productive. Like all relationships, the key is communication. Ensure there is a clear understanding of responsibilities and expectations at every point in the process. Everybody should know who is managing every task.

Ask every question you have about the build and ask it early – because making retrospective changes to work can be costly, time consuming and is often based on misunderstandings.

And while conversations should always be part of the process, make sure you put all your communication in writing. Starting with your building contract, put all your questions, queries and instructions to your builder via email. It may feel cold at first, but this will ensure there is no confusion about your requests and each party's responsibilities.

Stay on time and budget

Renovation budgeting is hard. Sticking to a renovation budget is even harder. Even with a budget tracker calculator (which is a must), costs can creep in a number of ways. Some of the most common causes of budget blow-outs are unforeseen problems, such as the need to rewire or restump, or last-minute upgrades to fixtures and fittings – like changing from a benchtop to a stone benchtop.

It's important to stay true to your budget and your plans throughout the build. A little bit of design discipline will keep you on track.

Keeping your budget balanced also relies on very clear, detailed contracts with your construction partners. Ensure every task and cost must be accounted for and allocated to someone before you start the build. Get it all in writing because you don't want to get halfway through the job and hear the dreaded words, "that wasn't included".

And a final watch out is landscaping – the too often forgotten part of the renovation. With so much time and effort into planning and budgeting for their dream home, the dream garden is often neglected.

Safety and best practice

The best builds do not sacrifice safety for speed. At every point of your renovation, the safety of your family and the workers on site should be the main concern. Before anyone starts swinging a sledge hammer or laying cladding, you need to be conscious of the materials you are handling and protect yourself with the right equipment.

Some other common sense safety tips to consider for the construction part of the build include ensuring you use the right tools for any job you attempt yourself, researching task specific rules and regulations, and getting appropriate expert safety sign offs for each job.



💡 10 tips for working with a builder – Futureflip's expert tips

1. Do your research and ask for references
2. Check the fine print. Ask your builder if they are fully licensed and fully insured.
3. How long has the builder been in business? How many projects of this type have they completed?
4. Have a clear idea of what you want to achieve so that builders can provide accurate quotes and plan the process accordingly.
5. What's your final budget? There's often a difference between budgeted cost and the total cost of the project. Preliminary costs can be an extra 20% of the build budget.
6. How will the builder communicate with you during the project. What's their standard turnaround time for communication?
7. Ask how many projects they're currently working on, and how many they will be working on during your build.
8. Ask your builder how often you can access your home during the build.
9. Ask about the latest date to make changes to your plans without incurring extra charges.
10. Ask your builder to outline exactly what is included in the contract and any items that could vary in price.

Futureflip is a Sydney-based design and build company



Get the look

Hamptons

A little coastal, a little Queenslander, and a little country – Australia has developed its own Hamptons style.



Australian Hamptons

Sitting comfortably in the Australian landscape the Hamptons look suits single or double storeys and can revive dated bungalow brick.



Traditional Hamptons

Pretty, luxurious and highly detailed are the trademarks of American Hamptons style.



Contemporary Hamptons

Bold gables, high contrast and high sophistication – the modern Hamptons look has landed.



[Download our Hamptons lookbook](#)

Modern Modes

The modern look is design with restraint – and perfectly suited to the pace of modern life.



Box Modern

Clean lines. Hidden roof lines. Feature windows. Old allows new. Let form follow function.



Mid Century Modern

1930s Europe via 1950s Palm Springs – resurgent modernism delivers open style.



Modern Coastal

Beach shack vibes. Crisp white weatherboards and outliving areas make this coastal style.



[Download our Modern Homes lookbook](#)



Mixed Cladding

Geometric and playful, break up and separate designs and increase street appeal.



Scandi Barn

High exposed beam ceilings, open plan, bold presence – Scandi Barn is the best of minimalist style.

Our products

James Hardie products for the Hamptons look:



Linea™ Weatherboards

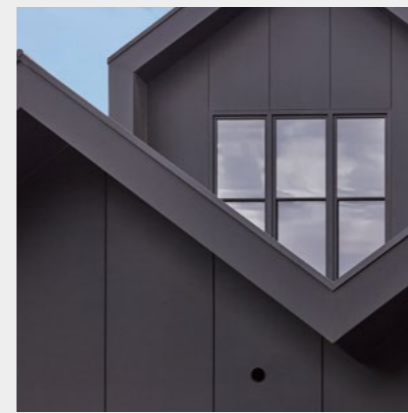


Axent™ Trim

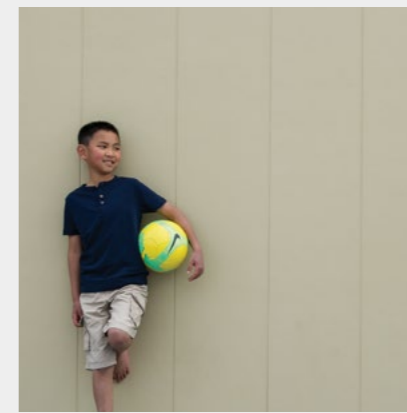
James Hardie products for the modern look:



Stria™ Cladding



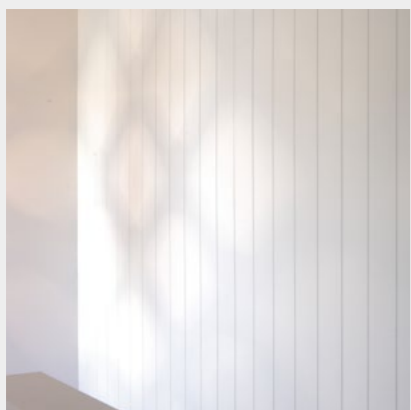
Matrix™ Cladding



Axon™ Cladding



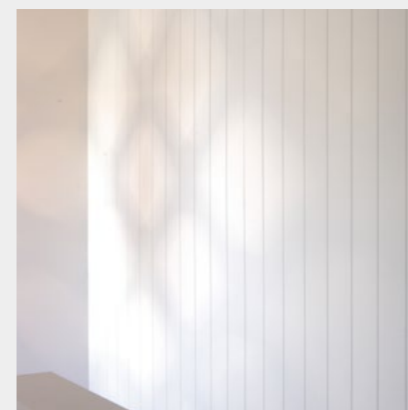
Linea™ Weatherboards



HardieGroove™ Lining



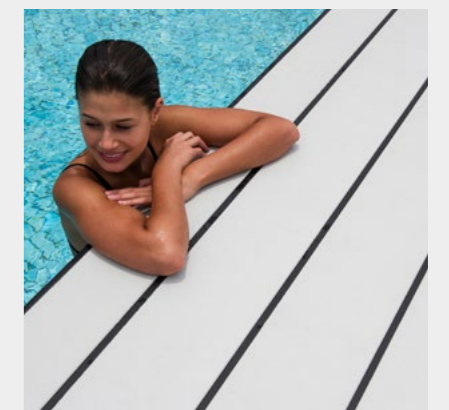
EasyTex™ Panels



HardieGroove™ Lining



Villaboard™ Lining



HardieDeck™