

GympieToday

HOME BUILDERS

GUIDE

THIRD EDITION



Build your dream, don't buy it

By Donna Jones

AS the great Australian dream becomes increasingly more expensive to own an established home, more and more people are choosing to build as a way to get the features and amenities that will work for them with a much friendlier price tag.

While established homes can have character, they can also have any myriad of issues such as termite, structural or water damage, poor ventilation so they are draughty in winter and sweltering in summer, poor insulation thereby costing a small fortune to heat or cool, or can be badly dated and sorely need a facelift.

Even if you find a property relatively problem free, the massive ticket price is just the start with all the additional fees and charges that go on top adding up to be a monumental mortgage and headache.

A much more affordable option for many people is to build their own home.

These days, building companies can often package up the house and land and prospective buyers can customise layouts, fixtures and finishes and even factor in external living spaces and landscaping.

The Gympie region is a great place to buy and build, with it's close proximity to Brisbane and the coast, and the expanding list of amenities, shops and restaurants, excellent schools and universities, while still retaining the friendliness of a small town.

It's no wonder people are moving to the area in record numbers.

This booklet is a handy guide on building your own home and services and businesses that can help you achieve your dream.



GympieToday HOME BUILDERS GUIDE

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Keep track of contacts

WHEN you are building your own home there are a number of people you will be conversing with regularly.

Here's a place for you to store all your important phone numbers and email addresses.

1. Gympie Regional Council Planning Department

- Phone: 1300 307 800
- Email: council@gympie.qld.gov.au
- Website: www.gympie.qld.gov.au/development

2. Conveyancer _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

3. Architect _____

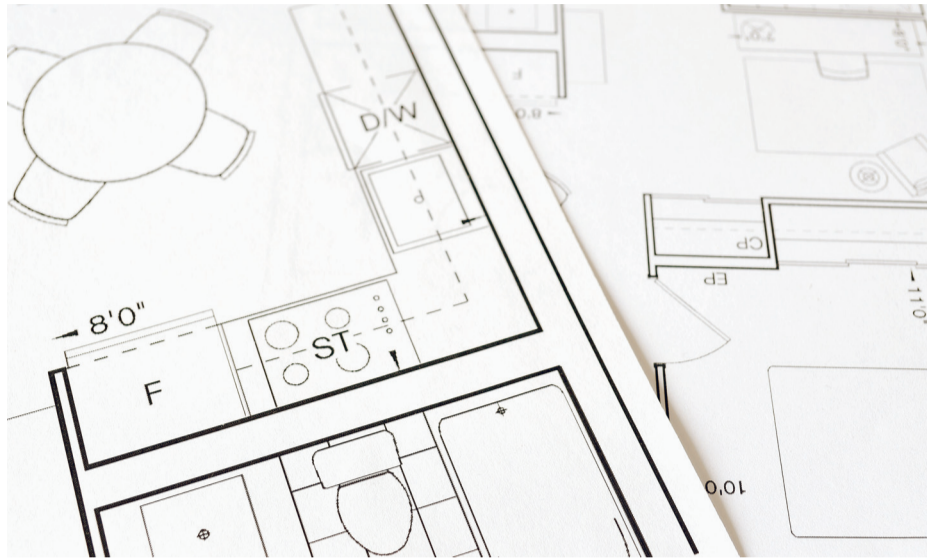
- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

4. Excavator _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

5. Builder _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____



■ Website: _____

6. Plumber _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

7. Telecommunications/IT _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

8. Concretor _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

9. Electrician _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

10. Tiler _____

- Phone: _____

- Email: _____
- Website: _____

11. Carpet Layer _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

12. Painter/Decorator _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

13. Glazier _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

14. Roofer _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

15. _____

- Phone: _____
- Email: _____
- Website: _____

16. _____

- Phone: _____
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Floored by choices

THERE are so many things to consider when choosing the right floor covering that will suit your home.

Whether you want the feel of carpet throughout the home or want the sleek look of timber or laminate, there are so many ways to dress your house.

When buying coverings, think about how it would be used in the look of the home.

Will it blend into the room or will it be a main design feature?

It is helpful to have an overall design picture of what the room should look like once it is completed and fully furnished.

If you need to use underlay, select one that is good quality, provide comfort and will be long-lasting.

Test out the underlay by walking on it to find the correct one for your needs.

CARPET

Consider the texture, pattern, fibre and performance of the carpet when making a choice.

How the carpet looks and feels is created by different yarns, processes and pile heights which creates texture.

Think about the traffic through the house and how much each room will be used.

There are different ratings for carpets so be careful when choosing carpet for the right traffic level.

LAMINATE

Laminate floors can provide the look of wood at a more affordable price and are often more scratch and stain resistant as well.

There are self-locking laminates, which are popular with DIY fixers, but if you are not the handyperson then use a professional who will be able to get the job done much quicker and with more precision.

VINYL

Vinyl is highly durable and is an excellent choice for high traffic areas such as kitchens, laundries and offices.

It is hard wearing and provides comfort and warmth and is quiet underfoot, and if installed and cared for correctly it can last more than 10-15 years.



The flooring in a home can enhance its beauty.

TIMBER

Real timber is highly sought after as a feature, but is not suited to wet areas.

It is a long term investment which is ageless and there are plenty of options to choose from.

Be aware of water and moisture damage and termites and borers can

be an issue, so regular pest control checks should be undertaken.

SLATE

Using slate will be a statement piece which is ideal for entrances, kitchens and dining areas.

It is durable, water and stain resistant

and surprisingly feels good underfoot.

However, slate can easily drain the budget and installation should always be handled by a professional.

If there is a change of heart, ripping up slate can also be a very costly exercise.

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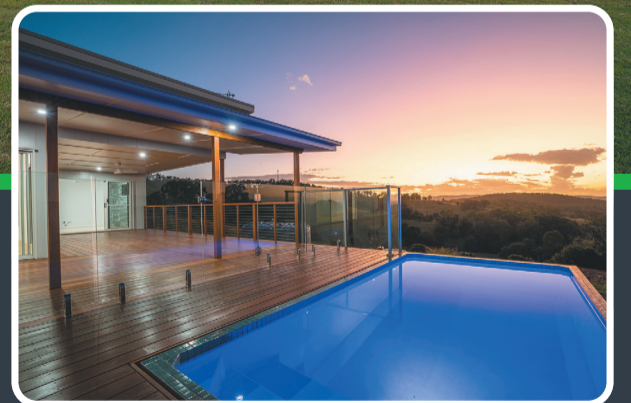
A BUILD TAILORED FOR YOU

Company Director and Builder, Todd Stolberg, has a passion for design and quality carpentry. He has worked in the construction industry for 17 years. Since establishing Alternative Construction Projects in 2018, Todd has been of the firm belief that knowledge is power and has undertaken training to further and better himself within the industry including becoming a certified Passive House tradesman. He prides himself on quality workmanship and clear communication.

Alternative Construction Projects offers its own unique build process when it comes to custom designed homes. The Alternative Build Process is tailored specifically to each and every client. This process allows Todd and the team to spend more time with their clients and enables efficient scheduling and pricing of each job. This process brings Builder, Draftsman, and client together in the one team to collaboratively design and

construct each client's dream project. Throughout this process all relevant information required for the build is gathered to minimise any unforeseen costs that could arise. This provides for an in depth and transparent estimate which allows the client to make educated decisions around their budget and the cost buildability of their home. By delivering clear communication at all stages of the build and working closely with the client Alternative Construction Projects are able to design, quote and deliver a unique home whilst minimising unforeseen costs along the way.

Todd is a proud member of Master Builders and has been recognised as a Rising star within the industry. Taking out the Sunshine coast and Queensland awards for young builder of 2023 and finishing in the top 3 young builders for 2023 at a National level.



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CONTACT US



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At the home's heart

WHEN planning a new kitchen or renovating an older one, it is best to start with a budget and stick to it.

There will be a few added extras that are not included in the initial plans, such as plumbing alterations, power issues and floor surfaces, so having a little extra in reserve is handy.

The kitchen plan should be people-friendly and make it easy to work within.

Ideally appliances should be within a couple of steps of the centre of the kitchen, which allows them to be within easy reach.

Depending on the situation you may need to install a new oven, stove top or fridge so choose carefully to get the most benefit within your budget.

Also take into account future expenses by checking energy efficiency ratings.

There is so much to choose from when it comes to bench tops, cabinets, walls and flooring, allowing for personal style and needs.

Choosing factors such as looks, durability, hygiene, safety and maintenance are key as you want a concept that will not date quickly.

Electrical and lighting is usually one



of the bigger issues when renovating a kitchen, so try to work with the systems in place, otherwise it could get costly.

If you want to revamp the lighting why not look at skylights as a natural alternative.

Lighting should also be taken into account over the kitchen sink and stove top.

KITCHEN

Once you have an idea on how you want your kitchen to look, it is time to engage a cabinetmaker, plumber and electrician to make your dream kitchen a reality.

If it is possible, ensure you have all the quotes and contracts finalised before one of the trades starts so it becomes a

smoother process and it is completed in a timely manner.

Purchase or choose the larger items such as oven, stove top and kitchen sink once the quotes have been accepted as delivery dates can also become a problem and halt proceedings.



The kitchen.

Picture: Ivan Kemp

Meet your Builder



We are a home specialist with a passion for perfection and a wealth of experience and knowledge. We specialise in one-off custom-built & designed homes, Extensions and Renovations and Bathrooms. We understand that building or renovating a home is one of the biggest investments a person, couple or family can make so we ensure we are as transparent, professional and flexible as possible during the process. There is a stigma in the building industry that this process can be very stressful and daunting so our goal at Thistle Homes is to make sure this process is as enjoyable and stress-free as possible. Our entire team are local and have a strong commitment to making sure we offer first-class service and workmanship and ensure that every facet of your home construction process is considered with passion and attention to detail. We are a small family operated business that is passionate about employing local staff, using local suppliers and keeping the money in the local community.

Client Testimonials

"Thank you so much to Thistle Homes for making our dreams come true. A truly wonderful team to work with. We have gone from a single story, 2 bed, one bath with half a living room, to a double story 4 bed 2.5 bath and 2 huge living rooms. This will be a house our family will be proud to call home for many, many years to come. Thanks again to Steve and the team for all the extra efforts you put in. I highly recommend Thistle Homes to anyone." - Alison Buckley

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Don't be pestered

YOUR home is your most valuable asset, so it pays to protect it, inside and out.

Pests such as spiders, ants, cockroaches, and termites are at least a nuisance, and at most, can destroy your property.

When purchasing a home use an expert to check the entire house and property using a visual and technical inspection.

It may save a lot of heartache and money to know what the situation could be before signing on the dotted line.

Inspections can include checks for

termites, fungal decay, borers and poor drainage, not just inside the home but around the property as well.

Inspections should include trees, landscaping materials, garages and sheds, fencing and even retaining walls.

If you think you have a problem be assured there are solutions available using the latest in technology and treatment systems.

Rats and mice can also be a problem as they will use a home for their own needs which include food, shelter and water.

Electrical wiring, appliances and bedding can be affected by the rodents causing safety issues such as electrocution, and unhygienic circumstances and odours through droppings.

Using a quality pest control service will be able to help provide a range of solutions, especially for people who need to factor in pets and other animals.

Bugs such as earwigs, silverfish, ants and centipedes can be eradicated as well, with a pest controller able to provide the best advice on how to treat the property.

Spiders can be an issue, especially in rural areas, so ask for advice on how to treat the home or business.

Bees and wasps often use homes as a place to build their hive, making it a very awkward situation for all.

Most pest controllers will use a product which will help the bees and wasps make the decision to leave their current location.

Whatever the problem, property owners should call in an expert to treat the cause.



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Do in a day

DO it yourself (DIY) projects can often provide a feeling of accomplishment and pride once completed.

With a bit of spare time, some of those little projects around the house can be done quick and easy with simple tools and a can do attitude.

Whether it be simple repairs or deciding to upgrade your home, DIY gives you the freedom to change and decorate the way you want to.

With the added bonus on saving a couple dollars by skipping the professional and giving it a go.

Here are some simple DIY projects that can be done in a day:

FAUX MERCURY GLASS

This project will let you mimic the look of mercury glass with this simple DIY technique.

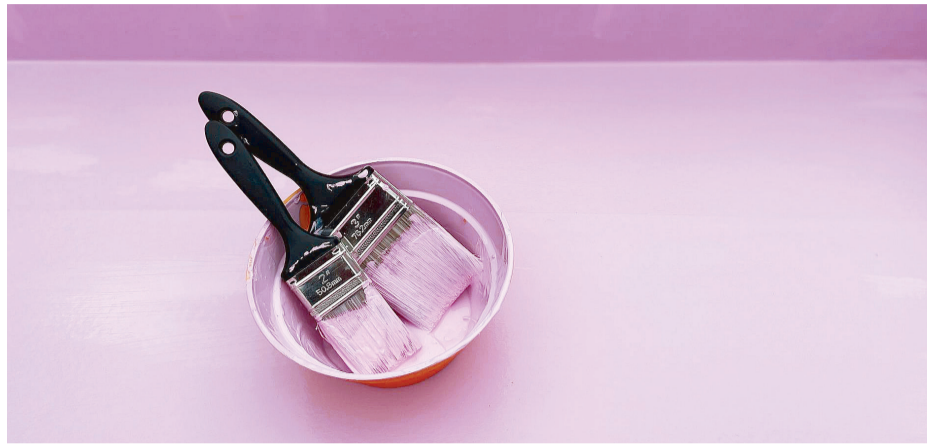
You will need a Glass votive or vase, Spray bottle filled with water, Krylon Looking Glass Spray Paint and Newspaper or paper plate.

■ Step 1 - Wash your glass votive or vase with soap and water

Dry, then spritz water on the inside of the glass.

■ Step 2 - While still wet, lightly spray the inside of the glass with mirrorlike spray paint

Holding onto the outside of the glass, swirl the paint around the inside until the entire interior is coated.



■ Step 3 - Place the glass upside down on newspaper or a paper plate; let dry

Repeat the process with water and paint four to five times, or until satisfied with the effect.

■ Step 4 - Complete

A new set of faux mercury glass for the dining table.

CLOSET DOOR UPGRADE

Upgrade your closet door without having to empty your wallet for high end doors with some simple upholstery.

All that is needed is fabric, quilt batting, a staple gun or adhesive and a screw driver or drill and adhesive.

■ Step 1 - Choose your fabric

There are many options such as textiles, artificial leather, velvet, tartan or sateen.

■ Step 2 - Prep the doors

First, remove any existing hardware, then remove the doors from the hinge (this can be done with a Phillips head screwdriver or a drill) before separating each bi-fold door individually and laying the door panels on a flat work surface.

■ Step 3 - Upholster the panels

Use the quilt batting to give the doors a bit of padding then attach it with an adhesive or staples.

Be sure not to add batting to the sides or the bi-folds won't close flat once doors are reassembled.

Then measure the fabric and measure



the length and width of the padded doors to allow for the extra loft of the batting.

Then cut the fabric and wrap it around the doors then secure it to the back with a staple gun.

For added decoration to the edges, you could apply nailhead trim, passementerie braiding, or decorative taping.

■ Step 4 - Replace hardware

Once the upholstery is secure, replace the door hinges and knobs.

For an additional customization option, consider swapping in new knobs.

■ Step 5 - Complete

A fancy new set of doors for the closet.



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Extending life outside

A garden can be a second living area which can incorporate a child's play area, pet haven, retreat or outdoor entertaining area, so planning is important.

Changing or establishing a garden is not as easy as people may think.

Planning the space is the first step in preparing a well designed area - whether the garden is prepared by you or a landscaper or gardener.

Soil will be a major factor in the decision-making process, as it is the foundation of the garden and is essential for its good health.

Make a list of what is needed and also a list of wants - these will help with planning and pricing.

When making decisions one of the most important factors is a lawn area.

Children and pets need room to move and play and a lawn provides space where they can do so.

Decide if an outdoor entertaining area is a must or if a quiet space is needed where you can sit back and relax.

Find out where your shade falls and if the garden will receive the morning or afternoon sun which can affect the



Candle and throw rug with courtyard view
Picture: Ivan Kemp

selection of plants.

Also remember to leave room for a clothesline, rubbish bin storage and garden shed if they are needed.

It will be tempting to rush out and buy plants before considering all of the growing conditions for your area, so try to leave the selection of plants as one of the

final decisions before you get started.

When planting trees check there is no above or below ground wiring or pipes which could be affected.

Consider deciduous trees if you want

to let in the light during winter and provide shade in summer.

When purchasing plants look at the size, colour and form as they should complement each other and achieve the design you want.

A hedge is a great choice if you want to surround the property boundary without having to put up a fence, especially for the front garden.

A composting system will benefit the home and garden by reducing general waste.

Once set up it is easy to maintain and is beneficial for garden health as feed for fruit trees, spring bulbs, roses and almost all plants.

Composting can include grass clippings, tree leaves, newspaper, most disease free garden waste, straw, cardboard and vegetarian animal manure.

Green materials such as fruit and vegetable scraps, tea leaves, coffee grounds and eggshells can also be added.

Whatever the plans for your garden, it should be a place where the family can have some fun, enjoy the outdoors safely and relax and take a break.

IN THE GARDEN

- Organise your tools and give them a good clean and sharpen, which is essential to stop the spread of disease
- Mulching is important to help conserve water and hydrate plants for longer, especially in hot weather, and to prevent weeds from easy growth
- Pruning will give a manicured look to the garden but is also a must in a natural setting to remove dead, broken or diseased foliage and limbs
- Using fertiliser provides nutrients and minerals to boost health and growth - using an all-round one will make it an easier application
- Natural or chemical remedies can be used in pest control, as well as using plants to attract beneficial insects which eat pests.



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Get yourself the right tradies

By Queensland Building and Construction Commission

FINDING the right person to carry out your building project is essential.

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission make the process easier by providing examples of questions to ask and the best places to search for trade contractors, builders, plumbers and certifiers.

Why should you always use a licensed contractor?

When you're getting building work done it's important to use a licensed contractor, as they have the relevant qualifications and experience to complete your job.

With all the do-it-yourself programs around, people can be forgiven for believing anyone can deliver an award-winning home renovation in a weekend.

The reality is very different, as are the potential pitfalls of using someone unlicensed.

Using an unlicensed contractor increases the likelihood of defective and unfinished work.

It may void your access to Queensland Home Warranty Insurance, a scheme designed to assist home owners when these issues occur.

Licensed contractors have proven they have the skills and experience to perform the work they are licensed for, so they are the obvious choice for your next construction project.

How to spot an unlicensed contractor?

One telltale sign of an unlicensed contractor is the lack of detail provided in their advertising.

They may also promote a low price for their services to help disguise this fact.

All licensed contractors in Queensland are required by law to provide specific details in any advertising for their services.

These details are:

- contractor's name - a contractor can be a person or a business. This must match the name the QBCC licence is registered under.
- the QBCC licence number - this is



unique to that contractor.

If you are after general maintenance work under \$3300, the contractor must state in their ad that they can only do work up to this value (this work generally does not require a QBCC licence).

So, if you see an ad without these details, there's a chance they may be unlicensed.

Find a licensed contractor

The easiest way to find a licensed contractor is using the QBCC's free find a local contractor online search.

It allows you to select the type of work you want done, as well as a location and radius.

Your results will be a list of all contractors in that area, along with their licence class and contact details.

If you have a licensee's licence number or name you can look them up on the QBCC licensee register.

This function offers more information,

including a complete licence history.

You may find this helpful to narrow down the licensed contractors you're considering.

Referrals

One of the most effective ways to find a contractor is to get referrals from family or friends.

You'll get insight into the quality of the builder's work, and the standard of their customer service.

Internet search

If you don't know anyone who has recently built, you can go online and search for contractors in your local area using your browser.

Advertisements

If you're looking through the ads in your local newspaper, a tip to make sure you get the right person for your job is to look at their speciality.

A contractor who is doing only one type of construction work is likely to have more experience and knowledge

in that area.

Other options

Another way of finding a contractor is to take note of any building work going on in your neighbourhood.

There will always be a sign on display, which should contain all the builder's contact details.

You can also contact industry associations, like the QMBA or HIA, as well as building material suppliers and hardware stores.

Find a licensed certifier

Generally, your builder will organise a building certifier to approve building work.

However, if you want to engage the certifier yourself, you can find one using the QBCC's free search function find a local contractor.

Select Building Certifier in the drop down menu and then enter your town or suburb for a current list of all licensed certifiers available in that location.



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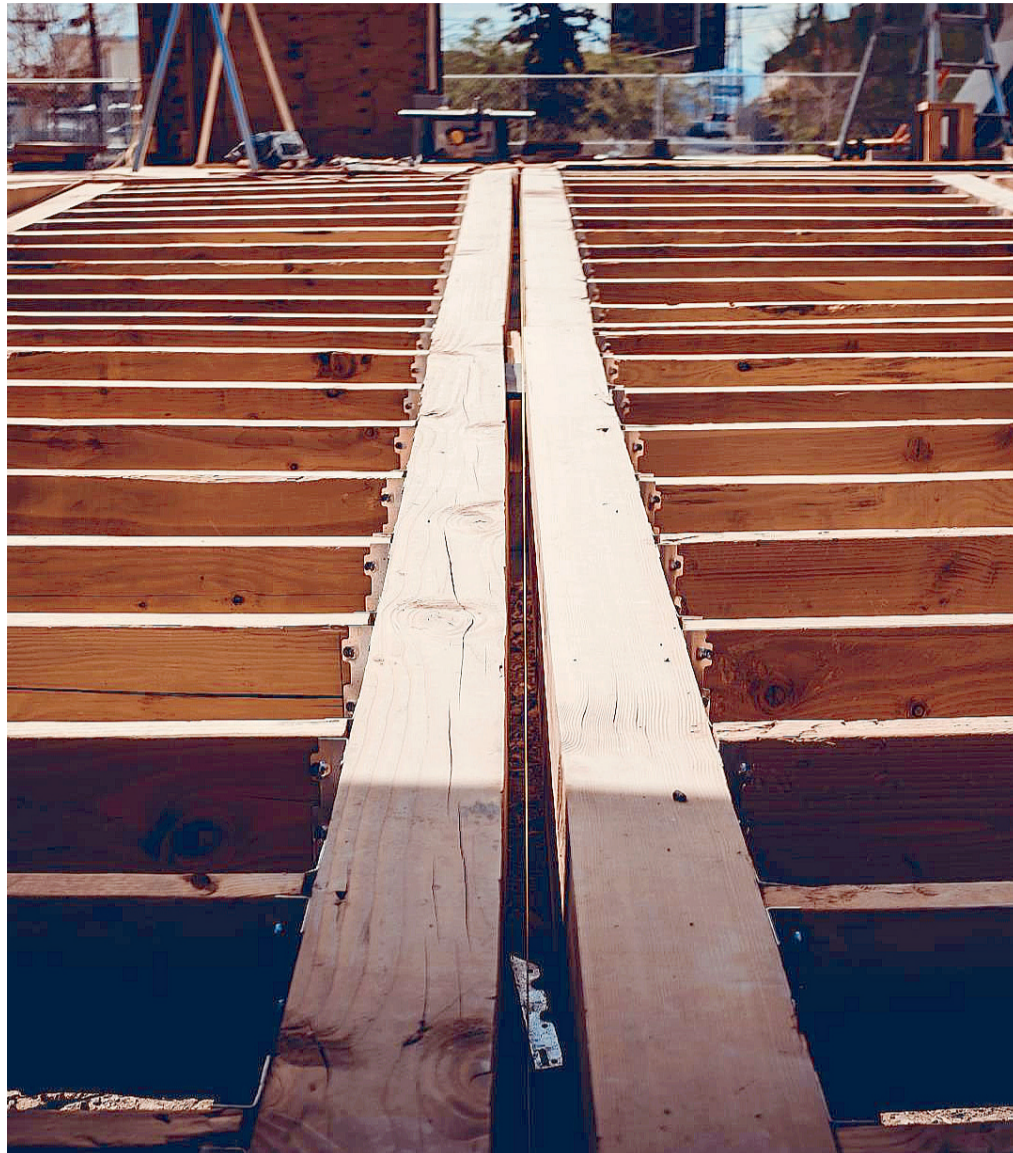
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If you engage a building certifier, all relevant parties must be aware of the certifier's engagement, role and responsibilities.

You can also check a certifier's licence details using the QCC licensee register.

How to check a QBCC licence

To find out more about a licensee you can use the QBCC licensee register.

They can give you information about the type of work the licensee does, as well as their history (any disciplinary action).

You can also call them on 139 333 with the contractor's name, business address and licence number.

Find a licensed plumber

It is important to ensure the right people with the right qualifications and

practical experience are performing your plumbing work.

By engaging a licensed plumber and/or drainer you minimise unnecessary risks to your family's health and safety.

What licence should a plumber hold?

In some instances, it may be necessary for a plumber to hold both an occupational and contractor licence to carry out work, regardless of the value.

An occupational licence enables the person to physically carry out the work, a contractor licence allows the person to engage in a contract for the work.

To find out more about a licensee you can search the QBCC licensee register or search the occupational plumber or drainer register.

Head to www.qbcc.qld.gov.au for more information.

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Find a Quick Fix

By Hollie Harris

WE don't all have the money or time to do a major overhaul of our homes but there are a few things you can do to freshen things up without blowing the budget. If you are handy on tools, why not have a crack at some of these ideas to breathe new life into your place.

Enhance the entry

First impressions matter. Invest in a new front door or paint your old one, it can dramatically change the look of your home and enhance curb appeal. Try other easy DIY fixes like repainting the exterior trim, replacing the house numbers or installing new outdoor lighting.

Install a new back splash

You don't have to go for the expensive tile back splash, try something simple and inexpensive like tin ceiling tiles, or wooden bead board, wallpaper, stainless-steel, chalkboard or magnetic paint.

Illuminating ideas

New kitchen lighting or a new fixture over the dining table is sure to brighten up any holiday meal. Try one of these projects: Make a fabric covered drum shade to match your decor. Install a



dimmer switch to make your current lighting more versatile. Use a few cans of spray paint to give an old chandelier new life. Replace or paint the blades on a ceiling fan.

Update the taps

A new fixture in the kitchen or bathroom can add that extra shine you're looking for. New kitchen taps have a lot more functionality, so the

upgrade can be more than just aesthetic. This is a good first time DIY plumbing project to try. Just make sure you shut off the water valves and follow the directions carefully.

Landscaping

Trim the grass and make sure all flowerbeds are freshly mulched and free of weeds. Prune overgrown shrubs, especially if they're hiding windows or blocking the entryway.



Gutters and fences

Reinforce sagging gutters and straighten crooked fences. Make sure the gutters are cleared of obstructions and the soil isn't washed out around downspouts. A quick power washing will brighten fences. Don't forget once you've done a bit of a freshen up, bringing some indoor plants into the house can really breathe life into it again, help to filter the air and fill empty spaces

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Cool tips for your air-con

By the Australian Government

AIR-CONDITIONERS are available as portable, wall, window, split, multi-head, or ducted systems. Fixed systems need to be installed by a licensed refrigeration mechanic or electrician.

Purchase costs vary depending on the size and type of air conditioner, and efficiency varies widely between units and models. Choose a high efficiency model of the correct size. Systems using inverter technology and advanced design can show energy savings of up to 40% over standard units. You may also consider the type of refrigerant used in your air-conditioner – the majority of new split systems are charged with a refrigerant (Hydrofluorocarbon; HFC-32) that has lower global warming potential (noting that those units are also generally more energy efficient).

Air-conditioners have an energy rating label which tells you how efficient the appliance is, relative to other models of the same size. The Zoned Energy Rating Label gives an efficiency rating for different seasons for 3 Australian climate zones, so you can see how the appliance will perform in your region. For more information refer to the Energy



Remain cool in your own home with these helpful tips.

Rating website. Air-conditioners also have to meet Minimum Energy Performance Standards, set by the Australian Government.

Ensure your air-conditioner is correctly sized. You can use the Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air

conditioning and Heating's online calculator or get quotes from air-conditioning installers to ensure you are getting a system that is correctly sized for your space. A technician who holds a Refrigerant Handling Licence needs to install the air conditioner, and can offer

advice on the right sized appliance.

For efficient air-conditioning, the house or room should be well sealed and highly insulated with bulk and reflective insulation. The outdoor compressor, as well as your windows, should be shaded from direct sun.

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