

New Home Checklist

Getting started

Our family's 'must haves':

Our family's 'wish list':

Number of bedrooms:

Number of bathrooms:

Other important features for us:

Our budget range:

Tips:

Make sure your 'must have' list includes features that save on running costs and enhance resale value, like good insulation and an efficient hot water system.

Think about how often your family might use a formal living or dining area before you add them to your 'must have' list.

Choosing where to live

Suburbs or estates our family is considering:

Will we be close to everything we need—shops, schools, parks, public transport, etc?

Our location 'must haves':

Best location for us would be:

Will we be able to position a home on our block so it has good access to sun, ideally with the long side or back facing north (or close to north)?

Will any neighbouring buildings have an effect on our block's privacy, views or access to winter sun?

Best block for us:

Tip:

Check the bus and train routes near your preferred location—how long will it take to walk to the nearest bus stop or train station?

Choosing our new home

Homes our family is considering:

Our preferred home:

Is it a functional floor plan without wasted space and with plenty of storage?

What would we change about this plan?

Will our preferred home fit well on our block with living areas facing north (or close to north)?

Tips:

Talk to your builder about making no cost or low cost changes—for example, can you flip or rotate the plan?

If you have a steeply sloping block, choose a split-level or raised floor design.

Choosing our new home

Is there good insulation under roofs, in ceilings and in walls?

Do our windows predominantly face north?

Are our north-facing windows shaded by eaves or overhangs?

Are our east and west-facing windows shaded by adjustable shutters?

Do we need to consider double glazing? Where?

Will we use curtains with pelmets to help keep in heat? Where?

Comments, things we'd like to change about our home design:

Tips:

Consider adding extra doors to close off rooms for ease of heating and cooling—this will also reduce your electricity costs.

Ask your builder whether your ceilings will be high enough to accommodate fans—this can help save on cooling costs.

If you have views to the west, east or south, use small picture windows to capture the view while minimising unwanted heat loss or gain.

Make sure your eaves are wide enough to provide good shade.

Working with our builder ... Our living areas and kitchen

The living areas we need are:

Can our living areas be divided up as needed, for economical heating and cooling?

Will our living areas get plenty of sunlight in winter?

Will our living areas be shaded in summer?

Can windows be opened on more than one side of living areas to let cooling breezes through?

Comments, things we'd like to change:

Is our kitchen set out so there is easy reach between different activities?

Comments, things we'd like to change:

Tips:

Think about including a multi-bin sorter and compost container when you're choosing your kitchen garbage system—this can make recycling much easier for the whole family.

Working with our builder ... Our bathrooms, laundry, bedrooms and home office

Will our bathrooms and laundry have a window for natural ventilation?

Have we chosen fixtures that will save water? For example, do our bathrooms and laundries have 3-star showerheads, 4-star toilets and 3+ star taps?

Comments, things we'd like to change:

Can we swap some rooms around so the bedrooms will be cooler in summer?

Comments, things we'd like to change:

Will we use the home office a lot?

Will it be a sunny, pleasant place to work?

Comments, things we'd like to change:

Tips:

Consider features that make your home safe and easy to live in as you get older.

Our heating and cooling

Do we have a north-facing roof for solar hot water?

Do we have a gas connection?

Type of hot water system we're looking for:

Have we locked in good design features to avoid or reduce our heating and cooling needs?

Can we use fans or evaporative coolers instead of air conditioning?

Would a solar air heater work for us?

Does our gas heater have a high star rating?

How can we save further on heating and cooling?

Will we use electricity from renewable sources?

Tips:

Consider fans or evaporative coolers instead of air conditioning.

If you're planning to use gas heaters or air conditioners choose one with a high star rating.

If you're planning on central heating or air conditioning make sure it's zoned and not oversized.

The compressor unit of an air conditioner can be noisy so think carefully about where to locate it.

Our fittings and appliances

Does our home design make good use of natural light?

Our lighting requirements:

The costs of running our lighting per year:

How we can save on lighting costs:

The energy star rating of our fridge:

The water star rating of our washing machine:

Our other major energy-using appliances:

Tips:

Work with your lighting consultant to choose energy saving lighting. Don't go overboard on downlights. Lighting a room with many energy saving downlights can still use more energy than a single inefficient light.

Install an outdoor clothesline—let the sun dry your clothes for free instead of paying to run a dryer.

Our colours and finishes

The types of flooring in our home:

The timbers used in our home:

The paints and varnishes used in our home:

Examples of colour schemes that we like:

Have we specified materials that are either low emission or natural products?

Tips:

Make sure timber used in your home comes from certified sustainably managed forests—ask your builder to get assurances from suppliers.

Consider alternative options like bamboo or recycled timber flooring—these are stylish, durable and environmentally friendly.

Our outdoor living

Will our alfresco areas get sun in winter and be cool and shady in summer?

Will we use local native plants, drought-resistant plants and mulch in our garden, to save water?

Will we grow our own vegetables and herbs?

Comments, things we'd like to change:

How many litres will our rainwater tank hold?

What will our rainwater tank be plumbed in to?

Will we reuse our wastewater? If so, where will we collect it from and where will we use it?

Tips:

If you don't want one big rainwater tank you could try a series of smaller, connected tanks.

If you have a pool, use a pool cover to reduce evaporation.

When planting trees take care to place them so their roots won't damage walls or footings.

Choose 'permeable' paving that allows rain to soak through or between pavers.