

Create an outdoor oasis

The Outdoor Living Showcase at the Home, Renovate & Build Expo will show you how easy it is

There's no doubt that Queensland enjoys an enviable climate so it's no surprise that we are beginning to embrace alfresco living at home all year round. While verandas and decks are already popular features of many Brisbane homes, outdoor living areas today can include *all* the comforts of indoors, with everything from digital multimedia equipment to kitchens, bars, and flexible enclosure options available to create versatile entertaining spaces.

The Housing Industry Association (HIA) Outdoor Living Showcase will display the diversity of outdoor rooms at the Home, Renovate & Build Expo from 30 July until 1 August at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre at South Bank.

To show just how blurred the boundaries between indoor and outdoor living have become local patio and screened room supplier Apollo Patios will display a purpose-built contemporary outdoor entertaining room at the Expo that includes a weatherproof outdoor kitchen, furniture from Domayne and audio-visual media equipment from Videopro. But there are a number of factors to consider before you

take the leap outdoors. Paul Skews, from Apollo Patios, shares his tips for creating the perfect outdoor room, whether it's a patio, outdoor entertaining area, an enclosed sunroom, or parent's retreat:

Plan ahead

Before you begin, consider what the outdoor living area or room will be used for. For example, a play area for a large family will be different to an area used for entertaining friends and business associates. Direct access to the house is vital, which may require adding sliding doors to the room attached to the outdoor living area. Check where services such as water and power supply are in the walls before remodelling.

Council checks

The size of your land is important when positioning the structure relative to property boundaries, sewer lines, stormwater pipes or easements. These need to be thoroughly checked in planning and will require a set of house, site and drainage plans from the local council.

Year round longevity

For all year round use of the area, consider the aspect with regard to the direction of the sun, wind and prevailing weather.

Private oasis

Use screening or blinds to allow maximum privacy from neighbouring houses while also creating another liveable area of the home. Screen or glass enclosures can provide protection from winter conditions and be opened up for cool breezes in the summer months. For flexibility, Skews says geared and motorised blinds can be used to open or close up an outdoor living area as required.

Vent the fumes

The outdoor barbie is iconic for Queenslanders but there's no need to choke guests with smoke. Skews recommends placing the barbeque to one side of the outdoor living area so smoke doesn't blow into the house. "A fixed louvre system will help with ventilation, allowing the breeze to

flow while blocking out the rain," he says. Barbeques are a social magnet so don't forget to plan for adequate standing room around the cooking area.

Lights and security

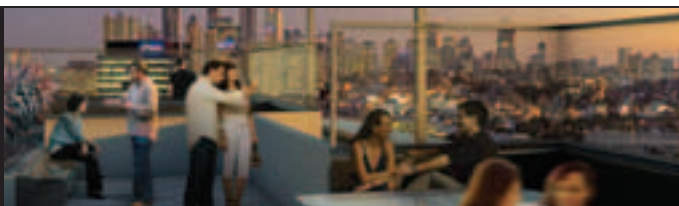
Lighting will need special consideration if the outdoor room is going to be used for night-time entertaining. Skews says there are a number of products available to address security concerns, such as Crimsafe screening or lockable sliding doors.

Add the Wow factor

Impress guests by adding something unusual to the outdoor area such as a water feature in the entertaining space or on view in the garden.



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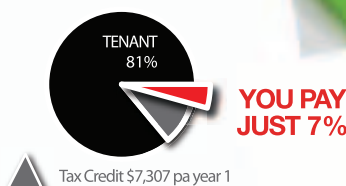
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