

MAKING SPACE ON SITE:

A guide for new home buyers and renovators during COVID-19



Buying a new home or deciding to undertake a home renovation, such as updating the kitchen, the bathroom or the outdoor areas of your home, is always a big decision. Making that decision now, while the COVID-19 restrictions are in place, is likely to feel even more challenging.

This Guide has been prepared to answer some of the questions you may have about visiting a display home, a builder's showroom or a supplier's selection centre, during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Builders and suppliers are rapidly finding new and innovative ways to provide you with the opportunity to view their home designs, learn about the unique features they offer and explain the benefits and quality of their products.

New homebuilders and renovation builders recognise how important it is that you have the opportunity to make an informed decision and they are working hard to provide you with the ways and means to understand the products and workmanship they offer.

By providing you with this guide, and the *HIA Making space on site guidelines* for your home building project should you proceed with a home building project, a builder is showing you they are committed to making safety the highest priority for you, their workers and the public.

This Guide sets out how the you can confidently work with a homebuilder or product supplier to make this important decision.

Home building work is permitted to continue

The Federal and State governments have agreed the home building industry is an essential service and it is not subject to the current restrictions on non-essential public gatherings. This means that homebuyers or renovators are permitted to attend meetings, visit a display home, showroom or selection centre to make home buying decisions, product selections or attend required inspections of completed building work.

Renovation and repair work

If you are undertaking renovation or repair work in your home during this period, the builder or trade contractor will need to work with you and your family to manage how you continue living in the house.

Your renovation builder will work with you to minimise the potential exposure to COVID-19 for all parties. Renovation builders have extensive experience in carrying out work in existing dwellings and can managing the unique challenges this presents.

Managing pre-construction

The early stages of a new home or renovation project requires a range of people to complete a number of steps prior to construction starting. This can range from having someone come to your home to measure and prepare preliminary designs, through to taking external site measurements, visiting display homes to choose designs, materials and products, signing contracts and making initial payments. These steps may involve building designers, engineers, building surveyors and other professionals that help your builder prepare the necessary approvals and paperwork to commence a project.

As home building work is permitted to continue under the COVID-19 restrictions, the associated activities in pre-construction and during construction are all considered to be essential and therefore are permitted to take place.

Our priority is to keep our workers, our clients and our community safe.

Builders, trade contractors and building product suppliers are working to manage your safety and to support you in making your home building or renovation decisions.

If you are considering starting a new home building project or a renovation project, taking these steps can help you work with your builder to start and finish your project.

1 Home owners can work with the builder or sales consultant by:

- Making contact with the builder or showroom consultant to arrange a **personalised visit**. They will provide you with the opportunity to view the display in a **safe, hygienic and well managed way**. A personal tour can assist you in seeing the features first hand. You may also need to supply some contact details.
- Discussing the **measures in place** to ensure your safety during your visit to a display home or showroom. This might include the business providing gloves and/or hand sanitizer for you and cleaning surfaces in the home or showroom before and after each visit.
- Discussing if there are **other ways** to view or proceed with your research and selection via **online platforms**.
- Sharing any **concerns or questions** you have about how COVID-19 could affect your visit to the display home or showroom or affect your future new home or renovation project should you proceed.

2 Builders, sales staff and pre-construction professionals will comply with Government health and hygiene requirements by:

- Ensuring all parties follow current **Government guidelines for COVID-19 social distancing and cleaning by:**
 - **limiting access** to any site to people directly involved in the activity of display, design or contract administration.
 - adopting the **1.5 metre social distancing** requirement at all times.
 - applying the **1 person per 4 square metre rule** for any enclosed or internal work spaces.
- Making contact with the client to arrange suitable times for **appointments and site visits**.

3 Builders, sales staff and pre-construction professionals will maintain a clean workplace for customers by:

- Ensuring all high-touch areas including counters, benches and amenities are **cleaned before and after** any client visit.
- Wiping down door handles, taps and cupboard handles before and after viewings with an **anti-bacterial cleaner**.
- Promoting **healthy air flow** within the home or showroom by opening windows, using air conditioning or other ventilation options.
- Where possible **limiting the need to touch anything** but door handles.
- Providing the opportunity to use **hand-wash facilities, hand-sanitising or gloves** upon entry and exit to the workplace or display home.

These measures, are recommended in the interest of the health and safety of the consumer, the staff and the community. If you are interested in viewing a builder's display home or showroom, please reach out to the builder or showroom directly, they will be only too happy to assist you.

The residential building industry is still operating and everyone can play a role in assisting to make your new home building or renovation project a reality by working together to follow the actions recommended in this Guide.

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