



Modern Homes Forecast 2025

Discover what's shaping modern lifestyles and
new directions in contemporary home design.



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Welcome to the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2025—our second annual report created to inspire homeowners and trade professionals with the latest home design styles.

James Hardie has commissioned a comprehensive study on the evolving future of modern home design in Australia. Led by research experts Fiftyfive5, the study integrates desktop research, advanced AI technology and insights from trade professionals.

The James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2025 highlights four influential lifestyle themes shaping home design and explores how these themes are reflected in popular, enduring and emerging modern home styles. It details the evolution of seven home styles including Box Modern, Modern Farmhouse, Modern Heritage, Barn, Japandi, Modern Coastal and Mid-Century Modern, and unveils a new eighth home style—Modern Classical.

Whether you or your clients are dreaming of an extension, planning a renovation or embarking on a new build, this forecast will guide and support you every step of the way.

It's time to build your modern life.

Cover
The Box Modern house, designed by Rebeka Morgan of BuildHer Collective, uses Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding with Hardie™ Axent™ trim to reimagine classic board and batten application in a modern context.

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Foreword

James Hardie is proud to partner with design expert and lifestyle television personality Neale Whitaker to present the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2025. As a trusted design authority, Neale has captured audiences with his expertise and passion for turning design dreams into reality.

‘For years I’ve worked with the design and building industries as an editor, interior design expert and judge, dedicated to championing elegance, aesthetics and thoughtful design. I’ve always been fascinated by how people want to live and the profound connection between our homes and quality of life. Homes should be sanctuaries that restore our health and wellbeing, spaces of creativity and self-expression, built for resilience and longevity.

The James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2025 is the result of new research that explores how homes can meet these needs while addressing rising costs of living and construction. Flexible and resilient homes that serve more people and more purposes, homes designed for every budget, and spaces that inspire creativity and are at the forefront of this vision. James Hardie just keeps revolutionising home design and construction with their innovative product portfolio the Hardie™ Architectural Collection, which I used in my own renovation. These Hardie™ fibre cement products empower homeowners and professionals to create durable, beautiful and resilient homes.

The Modern Homes Forecast 2025 leads the charge in rethinking how we build homes—responding to changing lifestyles and ensuring that design remains accessible and aspirational for everyone.’



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Scan to explore the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2025 online.



About the forecast

At James Hardie, we are driven by our purpose of Building a Better Future For All™ and continue to invest in industry-leading research to understand the evolving dynamics of modern lifestyles and modern home design.



Through an extensive research piece combining advanced AI-driven analytics, comprehensive desktop research and insights from leading architects and designers, we have identified four key lifestyle themes that are influencing contemporary design.

This year, we're placing a deeper focus on building efficiently, with the goal of creating resilient and flexible homes that adapt to the changing needs of homeowners. This forecast aims to inspire homeowners to bring their visions to life and empower trade professionals to confidently build modern dream homes.

- 1 Axon™ Cladding and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture are the base for this Mid-Century Modern material palette, curated by MIRA Residential.
- 2 Stria™ Cladding Smooth painted in a bold rust colour provides the inspiration for an earthy palette used in the iconic Barn style home, designed by Julian Brenchley.



James Hardie

We are the #1 cladding brand in Australia producing high-performance building products. Our goal is to empower homeowners and building professionals to achieve their dream home, with quality solutions that enable endless possibilities for design and aesthetics, while also delivering trusted protection and long-lasting beauty.

Australian Made for Australian Homes

James Hardie has proudly provided Australian-made building products to the market for over 100 years. Our vision is to inspire how communities design, build and grow. To achieve this, we are committed to ensuring that homeowners and trade professionals can always rely on the quality of our products. By making our fibre cement in Australia, we proudly support and grow local manufacturing capability, help create jobs, strengthen local industries and bolster surrounding communities.



Hardie™ Fibre Cement

- Design versatility**
Provides contemporary clean lines and pared-back aesthetics for homes with simple, bold forms.
- Durable**
Engineered to endure, resistant to fire, rot and damage from termites and moisture.
- Flexible colour**
Pre-primed and ready to paint in any colour.
- Low maintenance**
Easy to clean and holds on to paint well.
- Made in Australia**
Choose Hardie™ fibre cement to support local manufacturing.



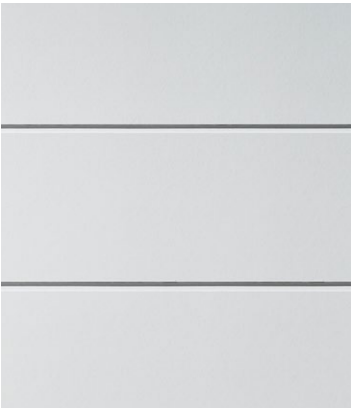
Hardie™ Architectural Collection

With Hardie™ Architectural Collection, It’s Possible™ to make modern like never before.

We’ve taken design versatility to a new level. The Hardie™ Architectural Collection combines the renowned durability and product performance of our existing exterior cladding portfolio, with new distinctive textures and profiles, to transform the way Australia builds modern homes. Created to complement each other, this curated collection offers endless design possibilities, so you can build modern homes from the ground up, with confidence. The Hardie™ Architectural Collection offers a modern, simple integrated solution of selected Hardie™ fibre cement products and Hardie™ accessories to deliver modern looks with the trusted protection and lasting beauty of Hardie™ fibre cement technology. As architectural trends evolve, this collection empowers homeowners and trade professionals to design and build modern, resilient homes that meet today’s demands for style and performance.



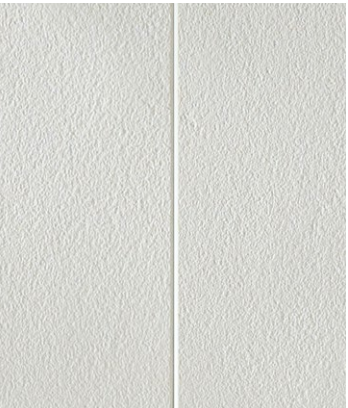
Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture



Stria™ Cladding Smooth



Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding



Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding



Axon™ Cladding



Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding



Linea™ Weatherboard



Matrix™ Cladding

Drivers of change

Global and local factors are playing a significant role in shaping how housing design is evolving across Australia.

The drivers that shape the direction of modern home design are in a continued state of flux. There are significant global forces influencing the Societal, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political (STEEP) drivers of change on a local scale.



Global Drivers

Our 2025 research reveals a broad range of global shifts shaping our world. From the rapid rise of Generative AI to increasing climate risks and the global epidemic of loneliness, these forces are reshaping how people want live. According to Accenture's Global Disruption Index¹, disruption has surged by 183 percent from 2019 to 2023, with a 33 percent increase in the past year alone. This ongoing turbulence highlights the importance of safety, security and the protection of our homes and livelihoods. There is a renewed awareness of the stability we once took for granted—clean air, fresh water, a secure home and meaningful connections. Homes are being designed with this in mind, offering a sense of stability and comfort in an ever-changing world.

¹ Accenture, *Five Key Forces of Change*, <https://www.accenture.com/au-en/insights/five-key-forces-of-change>, accessed 19 January 2025.



Societal

With one-third of Australians feeling lonely often or most of the time¹, our homes are evolving into spaces that foster social connection and counteract isolation.

Thoughtfully designed environments can encourage meaningful interactions and help people feel more connected. As anxiety and burnout become increasingly common, connection and joy are no longer seen as luxuries—they're essential to a good quality of life. The home is now seen as a place that has the potential to restore our wellbeing. More than ever, our homes are our sanctuaries, designed to nurture us in every way.

The research shows an increased focus on wellbeing at home. This can include advanced filtration systems, connection to outdoor spaces, improving thermal performance and integrating sustainability measures, all of which help to enhance our comfort and wellbeing.

1 Ending Loneliness Together, *New Research Finds One in Three Australians Feel Lonely*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-07/ending-loneliness-together-finds-33-per-cent-australians-lonely/102678790>, accessed 19 January 2025.

Technological

Technology is transforming the way we design and experience our homes, with AI leading the charge at incredible speed.

Today, 70 percent of architects are incorporating AI into their practices², creating a revolution in how we imagine and personalise our dream spaces. Homeowners now have access to tools that bring their visions to life—exploring 3D designs in real-time and customising every detail with greater ease.

AI isn't just about personalisation; it's unlocking creative solutions for architects and designers, combining materials in new ways to tackle challenges in climate, cost and design. These breakthroughs are making design more accessible, empowering more Australians to bring their dream homes to life.

These advances are also helping us reimagine how our homes function. By the end of 2023, 7.6 million Australian homes were equipped with at least one smart device³, paving the way for smarter, more energy-efficient and secure living. Technology is empowering us to create homes that are precise, creative and sustainable—ready to meet the needs of tomorrow.



2 *The State of AI in Architecture Survey 2024*, https://www.chaos.com/state-of-ai-architecture?itm_source=Chaos-Blog&itm_medium=news-article, accessed 18 January 2025.

3 Telsyte, *Australia's Smart Home Market Set to Crack \$2.5B*, Driven by AI, Energy Savings, and Security, <https://www.telsyte.com.au/announcements/2024/3/20/australias-smart-home-market-set-to-crack-25b-driven-by-ai-energy-savings-and-security>, accessed 19 January 2025.

Economic

Cost of living pressures and a growing housing crisis are reshaping how Australians live.

For many, the dream of home ownership feels further out of reach, while the 'bank of mum and dad' has become a lifeline for others looking to secure their own home.

Australians are deeply concerned about rising costs—from childcare, to housing, to aged care—accelerating a shift towards shared living arrangements. Multi-generational living is now the fastest-growing household type, with one in five Australians already living this way and projections suggesting it will rise to one in three by 2041¹. This shift is creating both challenges and exciting opportunities for how we design homes to meet changing needs.

Granny flats and prefabricated housing solutions are emerging as practical, affordable ways to support multi-generational living. Features like outdoor rooms, private spaces, soundproofing and accessibility modifications are increasingly essential to create harmony in shared living spaces.

Environmental

The impacts of climate change are becoming more difficult to ignore, driving change across legislation, the construction industry and consumer preferences.

Australian homes, however, remain underprepared for what lies ahead, with rising temperatures and extreme weather events projected to intensify faster here than in most other parts of the world. More heat, more rain and more energy usage will drive a need to create more 'resilient ready' homes that can withstand environmental forces and comply with star energy rating requirements.

Energy efficient design is more front of mind as the impacts of climate change become more evident. Research shows that 87 percent of buyers are prepared to pay more for green features like solar panels, battery storage and efficient insulation².

In addition, Indigenous architects and professionals are leading the way in designing homes that respect and acknowledge Country. By incorporating sustainable and ecologically aligned principles, they are shaping homes that connect more deeply with their surroundings, demonstrating how tradition and innovation can come together to create truly future-ready designs.



Political

Australia's housing policies are embracing liveability, with a focus on delivering thoughtfully designed homes at a faster pace to meet the growing demand.

High-density living and prefabricated homes are emerging as innovative, affordable solutions to create stable and sustainable housing options for communities across the country.

In August 2023, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced an ambitious plan to build 1.2 million new homes over five years, beginning in July 2024³. This landmark initiative, agreed upon by the National Cabinet, aims to tackle the nation's housing crisis by increasing supply and improving affordability. To support this effort, the Federal Government has committed \$3 billion in incentive payments to states and territories that exceed their housing targets, accelerating construction and driving essential reforms to boost housing availability.

Australia is leading a new wave of productivity and innovation with the multi-billion-dollar *Future Made in Australia* Act⁴. This initiative is advancing the transition to a net-zero economy by supporting natural reconstruction, upskilling the workforce, and investing in domestic manufacturing of batteries, solar panels, hydrogen technologies and green metals. Together, these efforts are paving the way for a more sustainable and secure future.

¹ Real Estate Business, *Could co-ownership revolutionise home buying?*, <https://www.realestatebusiness.com.au/tech/27050-could-co-ownership-revolutionise-home-buying>, accessed 18 January 2025.

² SolarQuotes, *87% of Homebuyers Willing to Pay More for Sustainable Features*, <https://www.solarquotes.com.au/blog/home-buyers-survey-solar-mb2549>, accessed 18 January 2025.

³ ABC News, *Anthony Albanese Speaks After National Cabinet*, 16 August 2023, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-16/anthony-albanese-speaks-after-national-cabinet/102735634>, accessed 18 January 2025.

⁴ Australian Government, *Future Made in Australia*, <https://futuremadeinaustralia.gov.au/>, accessed 18 January 2025



Lifestyle themes influencing modern home design

Global and local changes are reshaping how people live, and our homes are evolving to reflect these shifts. At James Hardie, our work in Australia is focused on understanding these evolving needs, helping to guide our design codes and product portfolio to create homes that not only meet today’s demands but are ready for whatever the future holds.

The research has uncovered four influential lifestyle themes that are shaping the way homes are designed and built: cost-effective solutions to ease rising living expenses; spaces designed to improve wellbeing; flexible homes that adapt to changing living norms; and resilient designs that are energy-efficient and built to withstand environmental challenges.

01 Building efficiencies

The race to rethink how homes are built

While indications show the cost of materials are stabilising, the housing and skills shortage in Australia will keep demand consistently high for the coming years. Despite this demand, an average of 247 building and construction companies became insolvent every month in Australia in the 2023-2024 financial year.¹

Costs for building a new home increased by 2.6 percent in 2024, marking the smallest annual rise in the national Cordell Construction Cost Index (CCCI) since March 2002, yet construction costs remain 27.6 percent higher than at the start of 2020.²

Interest rates, rental prices and building costs continue to escalate, driving a need for homes that deliver more for less. As budgets tighten, rethinking how we build becomes essential. Homes that fit every budget aren’t just a preference—they’re a necessity for today’s homeowners.

Building efficiency is at the heart of this shift, with a growing demand for smaller yet smarter designs. Space-saving layouts, multi-storey solutions and modular or prefabricated housing are gaining popularity for their ability to address both affordability and faster build times. Architects, designers, builders and homeowners are embracing these innovative approaches, paving the way for homes that are as practical as they are beautiful.

Prefab is the new fab

Prefabrication promises to reduce the time, cost and environmental impact of new builds. Design features of prefabricated homes include floor cassettes, wall panels, a facade system with Hardie™ products and roof cassettes that all work together as an integrated structural system acting as a diaphragm. In contrast to traditional masonry construction, all these elements work together to carry the structural load, as well as create the envelope. This dual function allows the home to be lighter, more efficient and cost effective. Some prefab homes can be manufactured and delivered to site in just 12 weeks³.

Multi-storey living

Space efficiency means more than optimising floor space. Maximise vertical space, especially when it is not possible to build separate wings, to create flexible, efficient homes that cater to individual and future residents’ needs. Building up, not out, is a smart way to utilise the existing land and stay within budget. Multi-storey homes can be designed with thoughtful features like stacked plumbing to reduce construction costs and clever layouts to save on materials. Use vertical space for storage or mezzanines and opt for cost-effective materials like Hardie™ cladding products for a durable yet beautiful facade. By focusing on flexibility and efficiency, you can create a stunning, functional home for years to come.

This two storey Mid-Century Modern home makes the most of vertical space with a cantilever deck and living area over the yard, designed by Happy Haus and clad using Linea™ Weatherboard Cladding.

Repair and recycle

Recycled materials are reducing build costs and carbon footprints. As the construction industry examines its circular impact, experts are mining 'anthropogenic' materials—waste from buildings and human sources—for reuse. Architects increasingly view waste as a design flaw, focusing on recycling and rebuilding with existing materials wherever possible.

Space-saving design solutions

Owning a smaller block doesn’t mean compromising on style or functionality. Built-in storage maximises every corner, while compact layouts ensure efficient use of space. Multi-functional rooms—like a guest bedroom doubling as a home office—add versatility. Clever features such as fold-away desks, wall beds and retractable partitions create flexibility without clutter. With smart design, even the smallest home can feel spacious, practical and beautifully tailored to modern living.



¹ Australian Securities and Investments Commission, *Annual Insolvency Statistics for 2023–24* (2024) <https://asic.gov.au/about-asic/ne1ws-centre/news-items/annual-asic-insolvency-data-reveals-increase-in-companies-failing/>.

² CoreLogic, *Residential Construction Costs Rising at the Slowest Annual Pace in Over 20 Years* (2024) <https://www.corelogic.com.au/news-research/news/2024/residential-construction-costs-rising-at-the-slowest-annual-pace-in-over-20-years>.

³ James Hardie Builder Insights interview with MIRA Residential, 2025

02 Wellbeing

Homes that support our wellbeing

Our wellness routines have become a necessity, and the home is now a vital space for improving and protecting our mental, physical and social wellbeing. Australians are increasingly prioritising wellbeing within their homes, reflected in property search trends. Domain, one of Australia’s leading real estate platforms, has identified top keyword searches such as ‘pool,’ ‘view’ and ‘waterfront,’ highlighting the growing demand for features that enhance lifestyle and connection to nature.¹

Australians are investing more in all aspects of wellness. According to the Global Wellness Institute's 2024 report, Australia ranks as the 11th largest wellness market globally, with a market size of \$110 billion. Additionally, Australia holds the 7th position in wellness spending per capita, averaging \$4,218 per person annually.²

Global events like the pandemic, coupled with environmental challenges like bushfires, floods and extreme weather, have intensified feelings of anxiety and burnout. These disruptions to daily life have led to a renewed focus on creating indoor spaces that provide comfort, reduce stress and support emotional resilience. To find more space and a better way of life, many city dwellers are on the move, with regional migration hitting a 12-month high, now sitting 20 percent above the pre-COVID average.³

Today’s homes are designed to be true havens—where we can slow down, recharge and connect meaningfully. From improving thermal performance, reducing noise and fostering a connection with nature, wellbeing is truly at the forefront of design. Features like biophilic elements, which bring the outside in through natural light, as well as ventilation, organic shapes and natural-look materials, help create a sense of calm and vitality.

As smart home technologies and WELL-certified buildings become more popular, homes now actively support healthier lifestyles. Innovations in air and noise pollution reduction, along with designs that prioritise productivity and creativity, ensure that modern homes are not just where we live—they’re where we thrive.

Connection to nature

Connecting to nature doesn’t necessarily require a backyard—it’s about bringing nature indoors through natural materials, greenery and integration with the surroundings. Architects enhance this connection with elements like water features, plants, internal light wells and systems making the most of sunlight, fresh air and rainwater. Bright flowers, soothing scents, sensory landscaping and curved, nature-inspired materials create visually pleasing, harmonious spaces that nurture wellbeing and bring the outdoors inside.

Acoustics

While blocking external noise is key in residential design, internal acoustics are equally crucial. Thoughtful acoustic design transforms homes into calm, harmonious spaces suited to individual work, rest and play. Acoustic engineering can tailor soundscapes to specific spaces, balancing the buzz of family life with private, quiet areas.

Natural light and ventilation

Daylight enhances energy efficiency in our homes, as well as our mood and sleep by regulating circadian rhythms. This is achieved through skylights, clerestory windows and light wells. Innovative designs soften Southern Hemisphere sunlight into warming energy. Advanced insulation, indoor gardens and smart ventilation systems maintain fresh air, purify spaces and adjust to occupancy, ensuring our air quality and comfort year-round. Together, these elements create healthier and more energy-efficient homes.



Curves and colour

Curves and colour play vital roles in stimulating the senses and creating wellbeing. Curves, historically used to evoke grandeur, are preferred by the brain and can be used to enhance geometry in exteriors and functionality in interiors. Colour influences mood—bold palettes boost creativity and focus, while natural tones promote tranquility. Trends are shifting from neutral shades to vibrant, vivid colours, transforming homes inside and out into energising, harmonious spaces.

¹ Domain, *Top Property Search Trends in Australia*, 2025, <https://www.domain.com.au>
² Global Wellness Institute, *GWII Country Rankings 2024*, <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/press-room/press-releases/gwi-country-rankings-jan2024/>

³ Regional Australia Institute and Commonwealth Bank of Australia, *Regional Movers Index: September 2024 Report* (2024) <https://regionalaustralia.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Files/2024/Regional%20Movers%20Index/RMI%20September%202024%20Report.pdf>



03 Flexibility

Flexible homes to serve more people and purposes

Flexibility and adaptability in the home have never been more important as households evolve to meet new demands. In Australia, economic pressures are driving a resurgence in multi-generational living. Housing shortages, rising rental costs and an ageing population are bringing family members—young and old—together under one roof.

While the average block size has shrunk by an average of 10 percent over the last decade¹, the homes being built on them remain the same size, as we look to squeeze in as much ‘house’ as possible. Councils and governments are making it easier to build granny flats and outdoor studios.

This shift is challenging us to rethink our living spaces to make them work harder and smarter. Modern homes are now designed to serve multiple people and purposes, evolving with changing needs and living norms. From multi-generational living situations to hybrid workspaces, granny flats, outdoor studios, play areas and interconnected yet separate living zones, flexible designs ensure homes can adapt to whatever life brings.



Granny pods

With reviewed permit laws in many states, relocatable, efficient and cozy pods are increasingly popular. These versatile structures, perfect for home offices, teenage retreats or self-sufficient tiny homes, combine functionality with aesthetics. Built to various sizes and purposes and in record time, with many completed in just 10–12 weeks, pods are a quick and appealing solution for contemporary multi-generational living.

- 1 ‘The Breeze’ pod concept, designed by MIRA Residential, is an ancillary dwelling that complements the main house by creating a seamless indoor-outdoor living space perfect for poolside relaxation.
- 2 This Japandi home uses sliding doors to expand the living area out into the garden for indoor-outdoor connection, framed by Axon™ Cladding.

Changing rooms

Sliding doors offer versatile solutions, concealing spaces or expanding and shrinking areas as needed. Soundproof options create quiet zones, while others bring the outdoors in. Inspired by Japanese architecture, they divide or open the kitchen, living and dining areas seamlessly. New modular designs eliminate walls entirely, enabling truly flexible spaces where furniture transforms and items like televisions or kitchens remain hidden, redefining how we live and adapt our homes.



Accessible spaces

Townhouses and multi-story homes now feature separate entrances, self-contained kitchens and living spaces to accommodate Airbnb guests, adult children or elderly residents. Accessibility modifications rose by 20 percent for older family members in 2024² and updated construction codes across Australia mandate wider hallways and step-free entries, enhancing accessibility for all. These thoughtful designs balance functionality and inclusivity, making homes more adaptable to evolving family needs and modern lifestyles, while providing comfort and independence for diverse occupants.

Internal courtyards

Internal courtyards provide privacy and seamlessly break up living areas, creating tranquil, functional spaces. Acting as connectors between rooms, they are ideal for fostering interaction while maintaining separation—perfect for people cohabiting at different life stages. With versatile designs, courtyards enhance natural light, airflow and greenery, blending practicality with aesthetics to create inviting and harmonious homes suited to miscellaneous family needs.

1 & 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *New Houses Being Built on Smaller Blocks* (2024) <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/new-houses-being-built-smaller-blocks>.



04 Resilience

Resilient homes are the new must-have

Resilient homes are becoming less of a luxury and more of a necessity. With increasing pressure from insurance companies, evolving building codes and the growing visibility of extreme weather events, homes need to do more than just shelter us. Climate change is bringing more rain, more heat, higher energy usage and rising bills. Currently, 1.6 million Australian homes are at moderate or high risk from climate impacts—a number projected to climb to 2.6 million by 2050, with one in 25 homes becoming uninsurable by 2030¹.

It’s no surprise that resilient and passive features are at the top of homebuyers’ wish lists, with the number of passive homes and apartments in Australia doubling.

Modern homes are being designed to be 'resilient ready,' adapting to environmental changes and technological advancements. From meeting 7-star energy requirements, to embracing all-electric designs with no gas, these homes are built to withstand environmental forces and enhance efficiency.

'Country Centred design' is also emerging as Indigenous architects and professionals look to contribute to building design to make it more sustainable and ecologically true to its location.

By incorporating innovative materials, efficient supply chains and value-adding features like high-performance insulation and passive cooling, today’s homes aren’t just more sustainable—they’re ecologically aligned with their surroundings, designed to endure and thrive in a changing world.



Passive passion

Originating in Germany, Passivhaus (Passive House) principles have evolved and are now widely adopted in Australia for residential and commercial buildings. These principles include super-insulated envelopes, airtight construction, high-performance window glazing and heat recovery ventilation. The benefits are significant—no drafts, consistent comfortable temperatures, improved energy efficiency, cleaner air and superior soundproofing—creating healthier, more sustainable and comfortable living and working environments.

Resilient ratings and materiality

With climate disasters on the rise, resilience is becoming more of a priority for homeowners. Hardie™ fibre cement offers a durable solution, engineered to withstand Australia’s harsh environment—fire and rot resistant, and resistant to moisture damage and termite damage. The Resilient Building Council of Australia’s National Bushfire Resilience Rating system helps homeowners improve safety while earning insurance discounts. In high-risk zones, bushfire protection measures are becoming mandatory, driving demand for robust building materials like Hardie™ products.

Water savers and rain makers

Today’s architects face the challenge of managing water—allowing its flow through structures or preventing it entirely. Building above flood zones is one solution, but material selection is crucial when water and humidity take hold. Innovative modular homes are also emerging, designed to float as waters rise, offering a forward-thinking response to the increasing threat of floods, ensuring resilience and adaptability in changing climates.

Cool changes

With increasing temperatures year-on-year, home designers are under pressure to find innovative ways to cool down such as e-coating and paint that reflects heat. Screens that open and close serve the dual purposes of allowing both ventilation and protection from the sun. Additionally, low lying buildings benefit from more stable thermal conditions. The ground temperature remains relatively constant, allowing these buildings to maintain cooler internal temperatures compared to taller structures, which are more susceptible to fluctuating.



1 James Hardie’s cladding products and wall systems contribute to the overall performance of the building envelope by providing thermal resistance. They can be used externally as well as internally—as seen in the Blewitt Springs residence by Das Studio, using Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding throughout the living areas.

2 Hardie™ cladding products met this Northbridge home’s site bushfire requirements—achieving BAL 29 compliance required for traditional heating and cooling—it is fully airtight with cross laminated timber walls and Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding encapsulating high-performing thermal insulation. Image: Builder - Urban Core | Architect - Aileen Sage | Photographer - Murray Fredericks

1 Climate Council, *Uninsurable Nation: Australia’s Most Climate-Vulnerable Places* (2022) <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/australian-homes-uninsurable-2030-climate-risk-map>.



01

Box Modern

The Box Modern style is characterised by cube-shaped volumes that are stacked, intersecting or arranged to form contemporary residences with a focus on simple design.

The Box Modern home has evolved to feature mixed materials and singular, streamlined box shapes in board and batten cladding. Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding boards with Hardie™ Axent™ Trim battens delivers on the need for convenience and privacy without compromising on style.

Designed by Rebeka Morgan of BuildHer Collective.





Symmetrical, simple & versatile

Box Modern continues to grow in popularity due to its potential for flexibility in both new builds and renovations.

The design has evolved to feature mixed materials, bold colours and varying heights, with more focus on multi-functional spaces. Advances in technology have introduced curves to highlight geometric shapes, often seen in walkways and landscaping. The box shapes have simplified, moving away from complex forms to singular, streamlined designs, favouring modular and prefabricated construction. Interiors maintain a luxurious, achromatic palette, but now include natural textures for warmth and comfort, balancing minimalist modernism with practical living.

- 1 Box Modern facades combine clean lines, bold geometric forms and a mix of natural and industrial materials.
- 2 Backyards embrace architectural lines integrating pools, manicured grass and minimal landscaping to create a seamless connection between outdoor spaces.
- 3 Indoor and outdoor spaces are connected through expansive glass windows, sliding doors, and cohesive materials, creating a harmonious flow that invites nature into every-day living. Pod featuring Axon™ Cladding.

Designed by Rebeka Morgan, BuildHer Collective.

Box Modern plays with the infinite possibilities of modular design, using bold and sharp geometric shapes to create a striking yet simple facade.

In the Box Modern style, the simple box shape takes on new meaning. Australian design has given the box character through mixing materials, playing with colour and height. It has maintained its popularity due to its versatility. Low boxes stay cool and are more cost-effective, while stacked boxes create modular flexibility for multi-generational living.

Box Modern design features bold, sharp geometric shapes to form a visually striking facade. These designs include the stacked box style, the cube and the box with angles. The stacked box gives the appearance of multiple shapes stacked on top of one another. The cube emphasises clean, straight lines and is the ultimate form of minimalist modernism. Lastly, the box with angles uses angled windows and sloped roofs to define a visual spectacle.

The Box Modern style delivers on the need for convenience and privacy. This easily identifiable look is characterised by its sparsity and lack of ornamentation, creating a blank canvas to suit individual preferences.

Theme insight Flexibility

The upstairs-downstairs configuration of stacked boxes makes second entrances, privacy and accessibility easier to manage. Also, the modular design allows homeowners to adjust spaces like bedrooms, living areas or fitness zones to suit evolving needs.



Theme insight Wellbeing

An ancillary dwelling can be used as a home office, Pilates studio or granny flat, and can be interchangeable to meet differing lifestyles and life stages.

Theme insight Resilience

Box shapes are ideal for resilient design, as they can be lifted off the ground with sturdy yet light frames, helping to protect against flood or fire.

02 Modern Farmhouse

Modern Farmhouse blends rustic style with modern convenience, with pitched roofs and large windows that create a sense of openness and connection to the landscape.

Balancing grandeur with traditional charm, the Modern Farmhouse, clad here with Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding in alternating 200mm and 300mm widths, combines clean lines, gabled rooflines, and a mix of natural textures like timber and stone. Designed by Three Birds Renovations.





Cohesive, classic & comforting

As the idea of a tree-change remains popular, Modern Farmhouse is a slice of rustic charm for inner city living. Modern Farmhouse style has shifted to focus on simplicity and practicality, embracing more relaxed designs that prioritise family and multi-generational living.

Modern Farmhouse style blends rustic style with modern convenience to create a harmonious blend of indoor and outdoor living. It has become a mainstay of Australian home design. As the style has evolved, it has become a simpler, more relaxed design with an emphasis on function and family. Multiple buildings are often connected, facilitating multi-generational living and the style itself creates charm and nostalgia for simple times in urban locations.

Theme insight
Resilience
 Modern Farmhouse design lends itself to passive design principles. The house can be orientated to maximise natural light and ventilation and the style embraces features including wide eaves, covered porches or awnings to shield windows from excessive heat while allowing winter sunlight.

Natural-look materials like textured or timber-look cladding, stone pathways and steel window frames play a key role in creating texture and complimenting the natural surroundings.

Verandas, board and batten cladding and large windows on the exterior combine with open-plan living areas and soaring ceilings to balance grandeur with traditional charm. Expansive windows and open-concept living spaces strengthen the connection between indoor and outdoor areas. This evolution merges traditional appeal with contemporary enhancements, creating an atmosphere of comfort and togetherness.

Theme insight
Flexibility
 Modern Farmhouse designs often feature multiple interconnected buildings facilitating multi-generational living.

Theme insight
Wellbeing
 The Modern Farmhouse style aims to capture a nostalgic feel delivering on warmth, cosiness and togetherness, combined with modern upgrades.



- 1 The Modern Farmhouse facade is made up of two pavilions connected by a breezeway, with nods to traditional farmhouse design in the garage door detailing and landscape design.
 - 2 To the rear of the house, the living area, primary suite, and the ancillary dwelling all open up to views of the garden with large windows and sliding doors.
- Designed by Three Birds Renovations.

03

Modern Heritage

Modern Heritage is a renovation style that merges old with new, providing a unique glimpse into the past combined with contemporary contrasts through colour, shapes and materials.

Modern Heritage homes have the benefit of achieving contemporary indoor/outdoor living through an extension, as seen here with Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding and Linea™ Weatherboard Cladding.

Designed by Dean Dyson of Dean Dyson Architects.





Timeless, creative & contrasting

In 2025, Modern Heritage design has advanced to more effectively merge traditional and contemporary elements. This style continues to blend modern design principles into classic structures, enhancing natural light and outdoor connectivity, but now features more daring contrasts in colours, forms, and materials.

Modern Heritage is a renovation style that merges old with new, providing a unique glimpse into the past combined with contemporary contrasts through colour, shapes and materials. Adding an extension either out the back or as a second storey is growing more popular in Australia, where these homes are being reinvented in a new format. Barn and box shapes are natural extensions to existing roof lines.

Theme insight Resilience

A Modern Heritage home blends traditional architectural styles with contemporary, sustainable features that make it more resilient to environmental challenges. Popular additions to the renovation include greater energy efficiency, durable exterior materials, solar integration, water efficiency, storm/flood resilience, eco-friendly landscaping and smart technology.

Theme insight Wellbeing

Small, terraced houses often have a sheltered area or courtyard at the back for modern living, bringing the outside in, while larger homes can feature multiple verandas or patios for a deeper connection to nature.

Modern Heritage is experimental in many ways, introducing contemporary architecture and materials to offset the traditional style of the original building, and bring light and nature into the home.

Contrast is the defining element between the old and the new, both in the junctions of architecture and in the use of colour. Modern Heritage is enjoying a renaissance of creativity as colour, curves and new materials add playful nostalgia to both interiors and exteriors.

A timeless code, Modern Heritage homes are usually adopted as an extension to a classic style. The style allows for revelation of the existing building and celebrates the original materials and the history of alterations. A modern extension should complement the character of the home whilst blending into modernity.



Theme insight Building Efficiencies

Modern Heritage designs can provide contemporary, open-plan, multi-purpose living arrangements while preserving traditional charm through thoughtful modifications and updates. Flexibility is key, allowing these homes to meet the needs of modern lifestyles while respecting their historical roots.

- 1 Updated Linea™ Weatherboard Cladding, enhanced with meticulously restored original features, creates an inspiring Modern Heritage street facade.
- 2 Large-scale windows facing internal courtyards flood interiors with natural light, seamlessly integrating the beauty of the outdoors with interior details.
- 3 The introduction of modern design principles and materials transforms the rear of this home into a modern masterpiece, with all the benefits on indoor/outdoor living. A dramatic sloped roofline is enhanced by Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding and Linea Weatherboard Cladding.

Designed by Dean Dyson, Dean Dyson Architects.

04 Barn

Barn continues to be a well-loved, flexible code that is evolving through the addition of bold colour and creative applications of materials to challenge the traditional roof line. There is some merging of Barn and Modern Farmhouse elements as the styles continue to grow in popularity.

The Barn has bona fide street appeal. Stria™ Cladding Smooth painted an earthy rust colour, and a timeless peaked-roof silhouette are symbolic of the heritage of the design.
Designed by Julian Brenchley of Group Architects.





Easy, flexible & cosy

New interpretations of the Barn play with roof lines to create asymmetry and use bold colours to stand out. The interiors remain warm and uncluttered, with natural-look materials and soft textures providing a sense of calm and wellbeing.

Combining dramatically high ceilings with flexible floor plans, the Barn offers rural charm in urban surroundings. As the style has evolved, the Barn design has become illustrative of simple, relaxed design with an emphasis on function and family.

Theme insight
Wellbeing

At its roots, the Barn style is inspired by the Danish word ‘hygge’ (pronounced hoo-gah) and is derived from the Norwegian word for wellbeing and refers to a feeling of cosy contentment and happiness that comes with enjoying simple pleasures.

This code continues to grow in popularity due to its potential for flexibility and cost-effective structural profile in both new builds and renovations.

Australian Barns have evolved from their Nordic predecessors to suit local climates and surrounds. The Barn also taps into our desire for simplicity in busy, complex times with its agricultural heritage offering a sense of authenticity.

A sense of calm, comfort and wellbeing is at the forefront of design. While the peaked roof is symbolic of the heritage of this design, modern interpretations play with the roof lines to create asymmetry and use bold colours to stand out from the crowd. The Barn silhouette is consistent as a simple diagrammatic form. Adopting clean lines, the style mimicking the look and feel of craftsmanship from early settler homes ultimately fulfilling a heritage feel without sacrificing modern convenience.

Theme insight
Flexibility

Barn architecture is inherently adaptable to various modern needs while retaining its rustic charm. The key flexible qualities of the Barn style include open floor plans, multi-purpose living spaces, indoor-outdoor integration and energy efficient upgrades.



Theme insight
Resilience

The Barn style prioritises sustainability through light, insulation and eco-friendly materials and can be an ideal Passive House choice.

- 1 Dramatic ceiling heights offer vertical opportunities for space to be utilised through mezzanine levels to squeeze in separate living or working areas.
- 2 Large barn-style windows can be used to great effect for bringing light and better ventilation into the home.

Designed by Julian Brenchley of Group Architects.

05

Japandi

Japandi is hybrid architectural style combining Scandinavian functionality and Japanese rustic minimalism to deliver comfort and a connection to nature.



With indoor-outdoor living principles, moveable screens and accents of timber and stone, Japandi is built to deliver a connection to nature. The threshold from outdoor to indoor living is framed here by board and batten cladding using Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding and Hardie™ Axent™ trim.

Designed by Steph & Gian of Japandi Estate.



Serene, simple & minimalist

From a clear interior blueprint to an expanding exterior design, our love affair with Japandi is growing exponentially.

Japandi design has progressed to further highlight adaptability and harmony with the environment. The minimalist approach remains, but with a stronger focus on integrating natural-look materials and creating seamless indoor-outdoor connections. The use of darker, earthy tones has increased, reflecting a deeper connection to nature. Additionally, the design now includes more versatile living spaces that cater to modern lifestyles, blending Japanese and Scandinavian influences harmoniously.

Theme insight Building Efficiencies

Japandi design can ensure building efficiencies through simplified construction methods, water-efficient features and the choice of durable materials that reduce waste while maximising functionality.

Japandi is a hybrid architectural style combining Scandinavian functionality and Japanese rustic minimalism to deliver comfort and a connection to nature.

Japandi continues to grow in popularity in Australia, delivering flexibility through clever zoning and a sense of wellbeing with its dedication to bringing the outside-in.

Both Japanese and Scandinavian design styles are characteristically minimalist in their approach whilst also prioritising comfort, making them an ideal pairing. Similarities extend to how both styles draw inspiration from local pioneering principles—Wabi-Sabi in Japan and Hygge in Scandinavia. The Wabi-Sabi worldview appreciates the imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete beauty of the natural world. Hygge (pronounced hoo-ga) is an obsession in Scandinavia encompassing a feeling of cosy contentment and well-being through enjoying the simple things in life.

Theme insight Resilience

Japandi's focus on efficiency and thoughtful simplicity creates spaces that are not only beautiful and functional, but also environmentally conscious and resource-efficient, aligning with modern priorities in resilient architecture and design.

- 1 The Japandi home facade heroes the vertical profile of Axon™ Cladding, and is enhanced by contrasting stonework and vertical timber screening for privacy and light management.
- 2 Two cladding applications are used to distinguish the forms throughout this design—the robust feel of board and batten cladding using Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding and Hardie™ Axent™ trim contrasts and complements the fine vertical profile of Axon™ Cladding used on the connecting corridors and breezeways.

Designed by Steph and Gian of Japandi Estate.



Ultimately, the shared aesthetics create a style that is both easy-going and sophisticated. Natural-look materials take pride of place, promoting a simple home environment filled with quality items. Where the two approaches diverge, their differences complement each other. Where Japanese interiors are sleek, Nordic ones are rustic. The richer colours of Japanese design help to keep the stark, crisp palettes of Scandinavian homes from feeling clinical or cold. Japandi homes are built for wellbeing, with neutral colours, simple layouts and indoor-outdoor connection, providing a sense of tranquility.

Theme insight Wellbeing

Japandi-style homes are built for wellbeing, providing a sense of tranquility and calm via the biophilic benefits of feeling closer to nature.

06

Modern Coastal

Modern Coastal design provides a fresh twist on classic coastal style with a sleek aesthetic and indoor-outdoor living, built to withstand the Australian climate.

A vibrant, fresh facade in Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding and Linea™ Weatherboard Cladding exudes contemporary elegance.
Designed by James Foley of Folar Architecture.





Spacious, light & laid-back

The prevalence for beachside, coastal living in Australia means Modern Coastal design maintains its popularity. The style has transformed to highlight regional distinctions and environmental resilience.

Bright white elements are prevalent in sunny areas like Queensland, while darker facades are more typical in southern regions. Modern Coastal homes now merge sleek lines with natural-look materials, fostering a relaxed, luxurious ambiance perfect for multi-generational living and leisure. There is a heightened focus on environmental resilience as Passive House standards and durable materials are more frequently adopted to stand up to harsh coastal conditions.

Theme insight Flexibility

Modern Coastal is a perfect style for multi-generational living with the potential for upstairs-downstairs living and private retreats.

- 1 Split-level formats of this design with wrap-around verandahs and balconies create mini private spaces or open the opportunity for separate entrances for upstairs/downstairs living.
- 2 Seamless indoor-outdoor connections and luxurious pool amenities create a serene oasis that blends relaxation, style and the beauty of natural light.

Designed by James Foley of Folar Architecture.

Modern Coastal design provides a fresh twist on classic coastal style. It continues to grow in popularity as a resilient style built to withstand our climate. It's also the perfect style for multi-generational living with the potential for upstairs-downstairs living and private retreats.

Ultimately, the pared back, effortless coastal design epitomises laid-back luxury ideal for entertainment and relaxation.

Modern Coastal homes are foundationally open-plan beach house designs and lend themselves to laid-back, luxurious lifestyles. Large overhangs create shading across the extensive glass used for natural lighting, and open floor plans promote natural ventilation. On the facade, flexible roof styles range from a bold gable, flat roof or skillion roof to create a designer look. Generous windows are enhanced with hoods or vertical screens to provide additional shade and frame any beach views or native landscaping.

Theme insight Resilience

Modern Coastal continues to grow in popularity as a resilient style built for our climate; large overhangs create shading, extensive use of glass for natural lighting, while open floor plans promote natural ventilation.



Theme insight Wellbeing

The pared back, effortless coastal design epitomises laid-back luxury ideal for entertainment and relaxation. Indoor/outdoor flow and coastal views ensure an uninterrupted connection to nature.

07

Mid-Century Modern

Mid-Century Modern remains timeless and relevant thanks to its practicality, simplicity and sense of optimism. The style harmonises modern simplicity with the nostalgia of Mid-Century Modern architecture.





Practical, chic & timeless

Mid-Century Modern lives on as an enduring style, building on its nature-loving roots by embracing resilience. The design retains its iconic features like flat or raked roofs, expansive windows and open-plan layouts, but now with a stronger focus on energy efficiency.

The updated style features Passive House design principles, fluid indoor-outdoor transitions and elevated designs, ideal for the Australian climate and lifestyle. This evolution blends contemporary simplicity with nostalgic elements, offering a practical, efficient and nature-connected living experience that remains timeless and relevant.

Theme insight Building Efficiencies

Mid-Century Modern designs embrace technology and mix new materials together to create lighter, more streamlined and affordable forms with a stronger focus on energy efficiency.

- 1 Skylights and lightwells are a feature of mid-century design, as well as multiple access points to the outdoors.
- 2 Clever, functional zoning and efficient use of space ensures the design caters to the demands of the modern family.

Designed by Daniel Thake of MIRA Residential.

Mid-Century Modern remains timeless and relevant thanks to its practicality, simplicity and sense of optimism.

The style harmonises modern simplicity with the nostalgia of Mid-Century Modern architecture. It meets all the practical requirements of a home with efficiency and purpose, while making you feel like you've been transported to a calm oasis.

Today's interpretations embrace technology and a mix new materials to create lighter, more streamlined, affordable forms, highly compatible with modular design and construction techniques, with a stronger focus on energy efficiency. Passive House design principles, indoor-outdoor spaces and raised structures are typical features of Mid-Century Modern architecture in Australia—optimal not only for our climate, but also for our easy-going, outdoorsy way of life.

Theme insight
Flexibility
Mid-Century Modern homes are celebrated for their flexibility—features include open floor plans, indoor-outdoor integration, strategic window placement and flexible zoning.



As a more experimental style, Mid-Century Modern design often rebels against aesthetic traditions. It has found new meaning in Australia, where it is best characterised by flat or raked roof lines, floor-to-ceiling windows, open-plan living and great indoor-outdoor flow, many of the qualities in a home that we now recognise as quintessentially Australian.

Theme insight
Resilience
Solar passive design and raised structures are typical features of Mid-Century Modern architecture. Simple, modular forms are easy to replicate, repair or expand, making a more resource-efficient style.

08

Modern Classical

Putting a modern twist on the elegance of a neoclassical exterior, combined with the softer curvature and natural tones typical of Mediterranean style homes, Modern Classical creates balance between traditional and whimsical.

The contemporary grandeur of this Modern Classical facade shines through with its striking curved window features and mix of material details. The ground floor clad with Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture and the upper floor in Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding, results in a truly elegant exterior that blends timeless sophistication with modern refinement.

Designed by Maarty Hollebrandse of Ziel Design for Orton Haus.





Elegant, warm & whimsical

Modern Classical is emerging in the Australian design landscape as it reflects our ideals of leisure and sophistication while exuding warmth and relaxation. The style's use of neoclassical forms updated with curves, soft textures and greenery, creates a resort-like ambiance that resonates with our laid-back lifestyle.

The combination of classic elegance with whimsical elements, like archways and carved doors, offers a unique aesthetic that stands out in the architectural landscape. Practical features like awnings and balconies not only provide shade but also enhance the aesthetic appeal of outdoor living spaces, which are essential for entertaining in Australia's climate.

Theme insight Wellbeing

Spacious, harmonious interiors, connection to nature, spa-like bathrooms, fitness and recreation rooms, as well as abundant entertaining areas are hallmarks of the Modern Classical design.

This style reflects the ideals of leisure and wealth and is designed to make a statement while exuding warmth, relaxation and ease.

Theme insight Resilience

Modern Classical design combines the elegance of classical architecture with contemporary techniques and materials, making it inherently adaptable to environmental challenges such as flood zones or bushfire prone land.

- 1 Designed to make a statement, the Modern Classical exterior also creates a welcoming frontage of greenery, elegance and tranquility.
- 2 Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding allows for the arches of this style to become a feature with the addition of curved window hoods.
- 3 Curves, soft textures and greenery feature both inside and outside with the biophilic elements connecting the architecture with the surrounding landscape.

Designed by Maarty Hollebrandse of Ziel Design for Orton Haus.



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