

— R.S. —



Property Buyers Australia
GROUP

INVESTOR WITH A LAPTOP BACKPACK

— BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CONSTRUCTING A NEW HOME



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Chapter 1 – House Construction Journey – The ‘Summary’

The very first step is to buy 'land' or a 'house and land package' ('house and land' follows a similar process, the only difference is that you deal with a single builder).

A quick revision on things to consider while buying a land (or land as part of 'house and land' package) is in the next chapter (chapter 2).

Once you have bought the land or 'house and land' as a package, you started exploring the build 'process'. You started going to the 'homeworld' or started talking to a few builders. You consult a few friends who have built in the past and have started picking up the 'knowledge base'. Then, you search the internet for a few relevant terms and start to book appointments with a few builders. Additionally, you have also started your 'homework' phase as discussed in another chapter of this book (chapter 3).

Please note that the below steps are very 'generic' and to give a general idea of what is involved in building a home. It may vary from builder to builder. It may also vary from state to state. The summary of the journey is as per below:-

- ✓ After meeting a few dozen builders, you narrow down on one of them. You liked their floor plan, and their 'dealing'
- ✓ They may have a set floor plan or you may have to engage with their architect to finalise a floor plan
- ✓ Getting the rough floor plan takes some time. Once the floor plan is 'tentatively' ready, you go further in the process and ask for a rough quote/tender.
- ✓ After a few meetings, a rough quote/tender of the price is sent.
- ✓ It mentions rough site costs and few approximate details of the inclusions
- ✓ In case it 'looks good', you usually sign this proposal and pay the necessary money to engage with the builder.
- ✓ Consequently, the builder asks you to do the selections. Depending upon the builder, it may take a few days to a few months to finalise these selections. It involves the following:
 - Guttering and downpipe selections.
 - Roofing type and colour selections, Colourbond or cement tiles.
 - Tiling selections – floor, bathroom, outdoor, alfresco, porch tile type, size, colour, design tile strip in shower.
 - Bathroom selection – Shower screen selection, frame or frameless, bathtub selection.
 - Electrical selection – Number of power points required, alarm type, any 'smarts' required, TV point, Video intercom, Antenna, Datapoint, Internet/NBN point, LED's type and quantity, additional wiring, outdoor wiring, special lights to the kitchen.

- Kitchen selection – Number of slabs, laminate, or stone, 20mm/40mm/80mm. Waterfall edges, taps, sinks, overall design of the kitchen, splashback.
- General selection – Garage door colour, carpet/laminate selection, handles to door, door designs, main door design, laminate/stone to vanities, type of vanities, 'extras', tap selection, shower head selection, where to put the soap selection (niche is usually a structural change)
- Brick selection – Colour and type of the brick, whether normal or upgraded, any rendering requirement.
- Façade selection.
- Air conditioning selection – type, make, power, split, ducted, filter, zones, ducts, etc.
- ✓ Depending upon the builder and your proactiveness(since it is a teamwork), the above may take from 1 week to 6 months to get finalised. Some of the above may require 'back and forth' quotes/negotiations which may consume up most of your time
- ✓ After the above process is done, then variations of the proposal come back. This may add/subtract a few thousand dollars to the rough proposal that you received earlier
- ✓ Once things reach a consensus, a standard contract is drafted, and you are called in to sign the contract. Most of the cost (usually apart from the site costs) is approximately fixed at this stage. Usually the builders don't do landscaping, driveway, blinds, flyscreens, fencing and other things as mentioned in another chapter (chapter 15).
- ✓ Once this standard building contract is signed, everything will proceed as per the contract.
- ✓ The architecture plans then go for the council/CDC approval.
- ✓ As far as the timeline goes for all the above, it depends upon the following:
 - How proactive and responsive you are in doing/finalising all the selections?
 - How proactive and responsive is your partner in doing/finalising all the selections?
 - How proactive and responsive the builder is in working with you in finalising all the variations?
 - Processes that are undertaken by the builder
 - How busy the builder is during that time?
 - How busy are you in your day job?
 - How busy is your partner in the day job?
 - Ultimately, it is a teamwork
- ✓ Once the above is done and after the approvals, the builder will schedule you into their construction pipeline and then add the time to construct a single/double storey on your land.

The process is summarised below:

- **Buying Land**
- **Land Registration**
- **The 'homework' phase**
- **Meeting few builders**
- **The 'mindset' phase**
- **Finalising a floor plan**
- **Finalising a builder**
- **Signing a tender**
- **Finalising the selections**
- **Signing the building contract**
- **Council/CDC approval**
- **The builder scheduling you into the pipeline for the build after the approvals**
- **Waiting for the build to finish**
- **Getting the building inspections done**
- **Getting the handover of your house**
- **Post handover tasks.**

Chapter 2 - Things to consider while buying land – The ‘Land’ component

Let us quickly revise and assume that you have bought a land and are now looking to build a new home.

Many people buy land and then construct a house.

Following are the things to consider when buying land:

- ✓ **Shapes**

Land comes in many different shapes. While rectangular is the most popular shape, other shapes are also possible. These include triangular and other irregular shapes.

- ✓ **Slopes**

Generally, 0.5m sloping is considered fine. However, more slope means more digging and filling and this results in a considerable increase in the site cost.

- ✓ **Covenants and easements**

Both easements and covenants can be affirmative or negative. However, easements are typically affirmative, giving the holder the right to use the land, whereas covenants are typically negative, limiting what the burdened party can do on her own land.

- ✓ **Electrical substation on land**

Sometimes there is an electrical substation near the land.

This type of land is generally cheaper than the adjoining land. However, some people consider it a health hazard to be close to an electrical or telephonic substation/ tower. At the same time, some people are fine with it.

- ✓ **The frontage of the land**

Generally, 12.5 is considered as the standard frontage to build a property. Some lots have narrow frontage, which means that you may save it on land. However, you may have to build a double-storey on it due to the narrowness of the land. For instance, say your front has a double garage and formal lounge for a single-storey. In that case, the double garage is 5.5m and the formal lounge is 5m. You are generally required to leave 1m on each side (some estates have different guidelines). Therefore, the total may be $5.5 + 5 + 1 + 1 = 12.5$. If the lot is narrow then you can't build a single-storey on it or you have to compromise by having a single garage on it. You may do the rest of the math yourself.

✓ **Zero lot**

You may leave mandatory 1m on each side from your neighbour(s). For some lots, leaving 0m is allowed from one or both sides. These are generally called zero lots

✓ **Subdivision potentials**

There are council guidelines as to what frontage and land area(sqm) are required to build a duplex, free-standing houses or other types of development potential

✓ **Facing**

East/north/south/west facing orientations may be considered for sunlight and other purposes

✓ **BAL rating**

You may want to check the BAL rating, bushfire and flood zone rating.

✓ **Additional guidelines and set back requirements**

Please check the estate guidelines, sometimes there are additional setback requirements on the lot, sometimes only single or double is allowed, there may be additional landscaping requirements or guidelines from the estate.

- ✓ Sometimes the garage is not allowed in the front as the land faces the main road. As such, the garage may be from the back

- ✓ Irregular shapes are sometimes cheaper than rectangular ones

- ✓ Sometimes the shape is so strange or unusual that you cannot get a project builder to build on it. In such cases, you may have to get a custom builder for it

- ✓ Sometimes the developer guide is such that you build a double-storey. In other instances, a single-storey is more convenient(if allowed by developer, council and other offices)

- ✓ Sometimes you may be building a single, but your adjacent neighbours are building double storeys.

- ✓ Generally it is good practice to ask everything rather than to assume a few things.

How to find land to buy?

You may find by:

- ✓ Searching online
- ✓ Via our website or by filling the 'Contact Us' form or via the chatbot on our website www.propertybuyersaustraliagroup.com.au

Chapter 3 – Bought the land and wondering what to do now? – the ‘homework’ phase

Let us imagine that you have already bought your land. Your initial tendency will be to go and visit display homes.

Any builder will ask you whether you have done your ‘homework’ or you are just running around aimlessly. It is important to note that this initial phase is not the time to run around but to sit with your partner and decide what you want for the house. This initial phase is named as the ‘homework’ phase. It involves a lot of intricacies and decisions regarding your new home. During this time, you should ensure that there is a mutual agreement between you and your partner. Only then, you may go to a display home or meet a builder. The phase involves the following:

- ✓ Single storey or double-storey. There is a chapter dedicated to it (chapter 5)
- ✓ 3 bedrooms, 4 bedrooms or more
- ✓ Home theatre room, media room, rumpus room.
- ✓ Walk-in pantry or butler’s pantry.
- ✓ Ceiling height – 2.4m, 2.7m, 3m or more.
- ✓ Façade-traditional façade or modern rendered façade.
- ✓ Lounge in the front or bedroom in the front
- ✓ Rough floor plan in mind.
- ✓ Single garage or double garage
- ✓ Whether you need a balcony or not
- ✓ Swimming pool, splash pool, jacuzzi, small kids pool (optional)
- ✓ Outdoor kitchen (optional)
- ✓ Will the builder make the driveway and do the landscaping?.
- ✓ How many bathrooms?
- ✓ If you want a double-storey house, do you want a room and shower downstairs?
- ✓ Solar panels (optional)
- ✓ Colorbond roofing or tiled roof
- ✓ Whether you need LEDs throughout
- ✓ Caesarstone benchtop or laminate in the kitchen– 40mm or 20mm
- ✓ Ceiling Fans in the house
- ✓ Bathroom fully tiled or half tiled
- ✓ How many bathrooms?
- ✓ Do you want two master bedrooms?
- ✓ Caesarstone in bathrooms or laminate
- ✓ Wardrobe storage in laundry or garage
- ✓ Kitchen splashback - tile, caesarstone or glass
- ✓ Appliances - brand and whether the width should be 600mm or 900mm wide

- ✓ Kitchen cabinets with handles or not
- ✓ Kitchen drawers soft close or not
- ✓ Flooring - laminate, tiles, carpets
- ✓ What type of alfresco area?
- ✓ Any decking in the backyard?
- ✓ Upgraded bricks or normal
- ✓ Ducted AC or split system
- ✓ Dual occupancy or with a 'granny' flat (STCA)
- ✓ Budget constraints
- ✓ Constraints imposed by design guidelines of the estate
- ✓ Constraints imposed by the slope or the shape of the land
- ✓ Project builder or custom builder

Chapter 4 – Few general points – The ‘Mindset’

I would like to mention a few general points at this stage:

- ✓ As mentioned in one of the earlier chapters, building a home is a teamwork
- ✓ It is teamwork between you and the builder
- ✓ It is teamwork between you and your partner
- ✓ It is an exhaustive exercise as it involves several appointments, selections and coordination.
- ✓ It is crucial that you are in sync with your partner throughout the processes, and even when the selections are done and dusted. Syncing in a proactive manner (before) saves more time and money when compared to syncing in a reactive manner (after)
- ✓ All of this may turn out to be the most fulfilling experience or the most nightmarish experience.
- ✓ Thinking that all the builders out there in the market will dupe you is generally not a very good mindset to have. After all, there will always be good or bad parts to everything
- ✓ Not doing your due diligence is generally not a good mindset
- ✓ Assuming a lot of things and not cross-checking is generally not a good mindset either.
- ✓ Going purely on online reviews may not be a good mindset as a lot of people tend to not put a good review even if their experience was actually good
- ✓ A builder may learn from past mistakes and may have already fine-tuned their processes
- ✓ Not involving a competent building inspection company will usually cost you more in the long run
- ✓ Consider that there is a cost price associated with building a house. Assuming the builder will build below the cost price is generally not a good mindset.
- ✓ Not having enough experience and by signing on a lower price, you will generally end up paying more afterwards
- ✓ You will be required to take time out of your day job and involve yourself in the building and selection processes. Saying that you are very busy will generally cost you more time and money (and needless to say, an unpleasant experience)
- ✓ Thinking that you, your partner and your builder are three separate components, not working as a team and not valuing relationships will generally cost you more time and money (and an unpleasant experience)

How to find a competent building inspection company?

You may find by:

- ✓ Searching online
- ✓ Via our website or by filling the 'Contact Us' form or via the chatbot on our website www.propertybuyersaustraliagroup.com.au

Chapter 5 - Single storey vs double storey – The ‘Level’

A single-storey/double-storey is also known as a single level/ double level home.

Single-storey homes

Pros:

- ✓ Less time required to build a single storey (around 6 months)
- ✓ Approx. 100k cheaper than a double-storey home.
- ✓ For young children and elderly family members, stairs can be dangerous and may eventually become a burden for the residents
- ✓ Smaller spaces may also work to encourage families to spend more time together

Cons:

- ✓ Single-storey homes do not have nearly as much space as double-storeys have to offer, which is most likely to impact growing families who may be after a larger home.

Double-storey homes

Pros:

- ✓ More space
- ✓ Might attract more tenants in future.
- ✓ Can provide enough space for enough bedrooms, living areas, outdoor rooms, studies, and storage for a family.
- ✓ By building double-storey you are maximising your investments rather than chewing off space from the outskirts of your land. This gives room for larger front gardens or backyards
- ✓ It is easier to create privacy in a double-storey home rather than a single as you can have all bedrooms located on one level and the living areas located on the other, or alternatively have the bedrooms be more spread out across the home.
- ✓ In the case of investment property, you have the advantage of being able to charge significantly more rent, increasing your weekly and monthly yield.

Cons:

- ✓ With all the space which a double-storey home provides, you are left with more areas to clean, both internally and externally
- ✓ A lot of time and energy is spent in maintaining the home, particularly for hard-to-reach areas such as top-storey gutters and windows

- ✓ More time required by a builder to build a double-storey home. (around 12 months)
- ✓ If you are investing and building a two-storey home, you are narrowing down your future target market to groups and families. Often single people, empty nesters and elderly people do not require two-storey homes and as such are unlikely to show interest in renting your property
- ✓ Around 100k more expensive to build a double-storey home compared to a single storey home

Chapter 6 – Finalising the builder and the floorplan – The ‘Builder’ phase

Once you have done your homework and have decided upon building a single-storey or a double-storey, and whether you are going for a project/custom builder, it is the time to head out and look at some of the display homes and floor plans out there. It is worth noting that these days, all this can be done online as well.

It involves the following:

- ✓ Going to a few display homes and checking the layout of the few designs
- ✓ Check what suits your needs
- ✓ Project builder or custom builder (as explained in chapter 7)
- ✓ Checking how a 22 squares single-storey feels versus a 30 squares home
- ✓ Comparing single-storey with a double-storey
- ✓ Comparing the outdoor area
- ✓ The street appeal of the home: the façade and roof pitch.
- ✓ Checking the height of the home, the difference between 2.4 m and 3.0 m height
- ✓ Checking a few floor plans
- ✓ Talking to the sales staff of the few builders
- ✓ Keeping your mindset under control as explained in an earlier chapter.
- ✓ Being realistic and keeping things under your budget
- ✓ We all have limited time only. That's why it is crucial that this time is put to good use
- ✓ Finalising the rough floor plan and checking what all is allowed to be changed in it (if going via a project builder).
- ✓ Working with the architect (and usually paying their fees) to finalise the custom floor plan (if going via a custom builder)
- ✓ Keeping copyright laws and legal obligations in the mind as you cannot just copy someone's design and utilise it for your needs. It may have legal implications.
- ✓ Some considerations for the floorplan:
 - The sunlight coming into the house
 - Whether a formal lounge is desired in front of the house or not
 - Whether the master bedroom is at the front or the back of the house
 - Whether the home theatre/media room is required
 - Whether the balcony is required
 - Type of façade required
 - Whether butler pantry/walk-in pantry required
 - What type of landscaping is required?
 - Outdoor space/decking requirement
 - What type of flooring is required?

- Usually, 3m by 3m rooms are considered fine. However, do you require bigger rooms?
- Do you require 2 master bedrooms?
- Whether you want 3 bedrooms and a media room, or 4 bedrooms registered as a part of the floor plan
- Whether you want to designate a room as the prayer room/media room or call it the bedroom and utilise it as a prayer room/media room

How to find a competent builder?

You may find by:

- ✓ Searching online
- ✓ Via our website or by filling the 'Contact Us' form or via the chatbot on our website www.propertybuyersaustraliagroup.com.au

Chapter 7 – Project builder or custom builder – The ‘Builder choice’ phase

The world seems to be divided into two types of builders:

Project builders – who build several houses on a relatively fixed floor plan in a generally fixed manner

Custom builders – who build custom houses on a relatively flexible floor plan in a generally flexible manner

Let us try to find a few more similarities or differences between the two.

Display Homes:

Display homes are vital for buyers as it provides a real-life interpretation of their future house.

Project builders generally have display homes within a display village. This makes it ideal for you to view the homes made by several project builders and accordingly differentiate between them. Additionally, this provides the opportunity to view the quality of the design layout and finishes.

On the other hand, custom builders do not tend to have display homes. However, these days you can come across some custom builders having display homes to showcase.

Design and layout:

When it comes to project builders and their design and layouts, they have set plans and usually only allow a small leeway for change. This is perfect for those who do not want to design their own home and are happy to select from a brochure.

Custom builders build precisely as per your needs and acquire the professionals needed. You can select whatever you like and put it together to make your house.

Price and cost of building:

The price is comparable between project and custom builders. For instance, project builders have a fixed price before you start choosing their extra inclusion of various packages. If you decide to choose a base package, keep in mind that these commonly do not include driveways, flooring, carpets etc. Other packages may also only include basic finishes such as thin stone benchtops, not to ceiling tiling and laminate and other cheaper quality products. Overall project builders have a narrow range for you to choose for your finishes. This is attributed to the builder's bulk-buying nature.

In contrast to project builders, custom buyers tailor everything to suit the client. They have a wide range of unique and specially designed house layouts that are ideal for anyone. And if you wish to save your budget, you can easily tell them upfront and the custom builders can give you several options to consider from.

However, the general cost of the build for each builder will be expensive no matter which way you decide. But the main concern to be aware of are the costs outside your direct line of vision such as electrical, plumbing, council fees. Some project builders will have a team of staff who will ensure that these are taken care of. Furthermore, custom builders can acquire many quotes from different subcontractors to make sure you are getting your money's worth.

Inclusions/Exclusions:

The base overview of a project builder is that they would essentially provide a base/standard house for which you will have to pay for additions such as landscaping, driveways etc. This will be great if you wish to finish your home yourself. However, be wary of the fact that you need to use the project builders' contract to include all the major trade-based items in your house and see if a cheaper option is available. Project builders usually have a base package and then an upgraded/inclusion package which one can select on top of the base package.

Custom builders are fully flexible and adjustable, willing to do as you wish. If you want to complete some of the remaining tasks such as painting, landscaping you can simply request to cut these costs from your custom builder and save yourself some extra money.

The Complexity of the Build

It is a common event wherein some project builders have disagreed to build on a certain land which may have slopes and are not generally facilitated for such scenarios.

On the other hand, a custom builder usually embraces the added complexities of such work and the variables in the quote, in order to give the customer a true price indication. The custom builder can engage an architect and engineer to design an acceptable and suitable home in a land of any condition and ensure that it complies with the various building codes

How to find a competent builder?

You may find by:

- ✓ Searching online
- ✓ Via our website or by filling the 'Contact Us' form or via the chatbot on our website www.propertybuyersaustraliagroup.com.au

Chapter 8 – Selections/appointments – The ‘Selection’ phase

Once you have finalised the builder, there will be a number of appointments required to do the selections. While some builders expect you to come to their display home or office for all the selections, others expect you to go to third party warehouses/offices to complete all the selections.

With some builders, all this can be done on a single day and with others, it will take a few days/months to complete all the appointments. It goes without saying that teamwork is the key and it depends on yourself and your partner. No matter how fast the builder is, if you/your partner are slow/indecisive, then it will delay the entire process.

Few appointments that may be required are the following:

- ✓ Brick selection.
- ✓ Fascia/guttering
- ✓ Roof selection
- ✓ Air Conditioning selection
- ✓ Colour selection – internal and external
- ✓ Kitchen selections
- ✓ Tile selection
- ✓ Flooring selection
- ✓ Façade selection
- ✓ Electrical selection
- ✓ Bathroom selection

Chapter 9 - Checklist for the construction of the house – Rooms

Rooms

- ✓ Usually, 3m by 3m is considered fine for the size of the room
- ✓ Usually, 600mm is reserved for the wardrobes
- ✓ You may need 2 master bedrooms
- ✓ You may need fans installed in the rooms
- ✓ Some people put highlight windows in the room to make it look bigger
- ✓ Height of the ceiling must be considered. 2.4m is a standard measure but some people may prefer more height
- ✓ Data points to the room
- ✓ Additional wiring may be required if it is a media room
- ✓ Different colour and paint schemes may be required if it is a media room.
- ✓ Consider putting a TV point
- ✓ The projector may be require wiring
- ✓ Double power points may be required

Chapter 10 - Checklist for the construction of the house - Bathrooms

Bathrooms

- ✓ Fully tiled or half tiled
- ✓ Tile strip
- ✓ Soap recess/niche
- ✓ Standalone bathtub
- ✓ Hanging Vanities
- ✓ Frameless shower screens
- ✓ Caesarstone in bathroom
- ✓ Cabinets in laundry
- ✓ Non-white cabinets or coloured
- ✓ Shower rail

Chapter 11 - Checklist for the construction of the house - Kitchen

Kitchen

- ✓ Splash screen
- ✓ Shining cabinets or matte finish
- ✓ 20mm or 40mm or 80mm Caesarstone slab or laminate
- ✓ Shelves in pantry
- ✓ Sometimes people go with non-white colour cabinets
- ✓ What type of appliances: 600mm or 900 mm?
- ✓ Microwave space
- ✓ Fridge provision for a bigger fridge
- ✓ Consider the height of cabinets
- ✓ Three hanging lights point to make it look flashy
- ✓ Waterfall edge
- ✓ Soft-close drawers
- ✓ What type of appliances are included and what is the warranty on it?

Chapter 12 - Checklist for the construction of the house - Garage

Garage

- ✓ Timber look garage door
- ✓ Matched with entrance door
- ✓ Wide internal access door from garage to house
- ✓ Tube light in garage
- ✓ Window in garage
- ✓ Tiles on the step of the garage.

Chapter 13 - Checklist for the construction of the house - General

General

- ✓ High ceiling. 2.4 m is the normal height for a ceiling
- ✓ 65mm wide skirting
- ✓ Alarm system
- ✓ Antenna
- ✓ Video intercom
- ✓ Downlights throughout
- ✓ How many downlights are included?
- ✓ How much money to install each extra downlight?
- ✓ Power of ducted AC – Sometimes 14kw may not be enough, some people go with at least 20 kW
- ✓ Some people prefer to have separate AC units for down and up
- ✓ How many ducted zones?
- ✓ Which façade is included?
- ✓ Rendering in façade
- ✓ Wide entry door in front
- ✓ Flyscreens particularly doors
- ✓ No carpets
- ✓ 600mm tiled floors
- ✓ Designer cornice
- ✓ Feature walls
- ✓ Three coating paint and can small stains are wiped
- ✓ Tiled alfresco flooring

- ✓ BBQ gas point outdoor
- ✓ Sensor lights
- ✓ What type of hot water system included?
- ✓ Fan and lights to alfresco
- ✓ Stacked door to alfresco
- ✓ Double power points in the rooms.
- ✓ Junction box in the front façade
- ✓ Glass railing to the staircase
- ✓ Any decking requirement
- ✓ Floor lights in alfresco

Chapter 14 - Checklist for the construction of the house - Outside

Outside

- ✓ Landscaping
- ✓ What type of grass is included and what is the cost to upgrade to a better-quality grass?
- ✓ Any plants included with it.
- ✓ Consider getting the concreting done to the two sides of the house
- ✓ Letterbox
- ✓ Clothes dry rail
- ✓ Blinds
- ✓ Fencing
- ✓ Patio tiles
- ✓ Tiles on steps to the front house
- ✓ What type of driveway - is it stencil, bricks, normal?
- ✓ External lights to front and sides
- ✓ Whether to have downlights in the front wall of the house
- ✓ What type of fencing
- ✓ Is a retaining wall required?
- ✓ Rainwater tank slimline
- ✓ Pebble stones and garden bed
- ✓ Which roof: Colourbond or tiles?
- ✓ Which brick is included or upgraded?

How to find a competent landscaper?

You may find by:

- ✓ Searching online
- ✓ Via our website or by filling the 'Contact Us' form or via the chatbot on our website www.propertybuyersaustraliagroup.com.au

Chapter 15 - Things to consider after the handover of a newly constructed house

Most people buy a house and land package, or buy land and get a house built on it.

The expectation is that the house is ready to be available right after the handover. However, that is not always the case.

Below is the checklist to consider for the work required after handover:

- ✓ **Driveway:** It is not always included in the contract and therefore, you may have to get it done after the handover. It can be done as a brick driveway, concrete coloured driveway or stencil concrete driveway
- ✓ **Landscaping:** It is not always included in the contract. This is due to the fact that different people have different expectations from landscaping work. So, it is best left to be done by the customer themselves. Going for landscaping makes the land reasonable enough for topsoil to be put on it. Additionally, the grass comes at various prices and also goes on top of it. Letterbox, house number sign, few white pebbles and bark mulch and few plants are perfect for the grass. Furthermore, pavers can also be used in some places
- ✓ **Sideways:** When constructing a house, consider the two sides of the house and speculate on whether you will get concrete done on them (which should be done along with a driveway to save cost) or if you want pebbles or pavers there. The cost will come out to be pretty much the same
- ✓ **Steps to the porch:** Steps to the outside of the laundry and steps from the garage to inside the house. Find a tradie to set up the desired steps
- ✓ **Tiles to steps of the porch:** tiles on steps of the outside of laundry, tiles on garage to inside the house. Where will you buy tiles from and who will do it?
- ✓ **Retaining wall at the front/back/sides of the house:** If the house is below or above ground level, there is a risk of water going inside or water coming outside of the house when it rains. So you may have to consider putting retaining walls. Who will build it? How will you find a trade to build it?
- ✓ **Clothesline:** You will have to measure and find a handyman to put the clothesline.
- ✓ **Downlights:** Some people get downlights on their own after the handover. These downlights are usually for the areas which have access to the roof. For example, a single-storey house or the first floor of a double-storey house

- ✓ TV Antenna.
- ✓ Fancy lights outside the house.
- ✓ Sensor lights to the sides and back of the house.
- ✓ Doorbell or video intercom.
- ✓ Shelves in the cupboard.
- ✓ Making a fixed study table in the study area.
- ✓ Blinds to the house.
- ✓ Fencing-whether timber or Colourbond.
Also, you must make good relations with at least your surrounding neighbours as they are required to pay half of the cost.
- ✓ Flyscreens to windows and doors.
- ✓ Any irrigation requirements in the backside so that rainwater can flow smoothly from the backyard to the stormwater connection at the front
- ✓ Security door to the front.
- ✓ Alarm or security camera systems.
- ✓ Epoxy flooring to the garage.
- ✓ Outside the kitchen: The outside gas point may be required to make it possible.
- ✓ Additional TV points
- ✓ Light coverings to all inside batten light holders.
- ✓ Tiles to the outside alfresco area

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