

## **Abstract**

Renovating your home is an exciting achievement, but the process is not truly complete until you take the necessary steps to prepare your space for daily living. After the contractors have left and the construction work is done, your home still needs attention to ensure it is safe, clean, and fully functional. This guide will walk you through the essential steps to take after a renovation. You will learn how to check the quality of the work, reconnect and test your utilities and appliances, improve indoor air quality, organize your furniture and layout, update your safety systems, and finally add personal touches that make your space feel like home. Whether you have renovated a single room or your entire house, this guide offers practical advice to help you move from construction zone to comfortable living space with confidence.

# **Getting Started**

Now that your renovation is complete, you may feel eager to relax and enjoy your new surroundings. However, before you begin unpacking boxes or decorating your freshly updated space, there are a few important steps you should take. Preparing your home after renovation is a vital part of the process that ensures everything is working correctly, clean, and ready for everyday life. It is your chance to confirm that the work meets your expectations, to address any remaining issues, and to make the space feel safe and welcoming. Taking the time to complete this final stage will help you avoid future problems and allow you to fully enjoy the results of your renovation. In the sections that follow, you will find a clear and helpful path to getting your home ready for living again.

# Check the Quality of the Work



The National Construction Code (NCC) is Australia's primary set of technical design and construction provisions for buildings. As a performance-based code, it sets the minimum required level for the safety, health, amenity, accessibility and sustainability of certain buildings.

It primarily applies to the design and construction of new buildings and plumbing and drainage systems in new and existing buildings. In some cases, it may also apply to structures associated with buildings and new building work or new plumbing and drainage work in existing buildings.

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB), on behalf of the Australian Government and each State and Territory government, produces and maintains the NCC.

#### **Volumes**

The NCC provides the technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures and plumbing and drainage systems.

NCC Volume One focuses on the design and construction of multiresidential, commercial, industrial and public assembly buildings and some associated structures.

NCC Volume Two focuses on the design and construction of smaller scale buildings including houses, small sheds, carports and some associated structures.

NCC Volume Three covers the design, construction and maintenance of plumbing and drainage systems in new and existing buildings.

#### Each volume contains:

- Governing Requirements
- Performance Requirements
- Compliance options to meet the Performance Requirements, and
- State and Territory variations and additions.

# Legislative arrangements and the NCC

The NCC is given legal effect through State and Territory, or other statutory authority, building and plumbing legislation. These Acts and

Regulations set out the legal framework and administration mechanisms for the NCC to support the design and construction of buildings.

The dates of adoption of the NCC are determined by State and Territory building and plumbing administrations.

## Use Licensed and Insured SA Tradespeople

In South Australia, all builders and most trades must be licensed through CBS (Consumer and Business Services). This includes carpenters, electricians, plumbers, gas fitters, and others. You can check a tradie's licence status for free using the CBS public register on the SA government website.

Hiring a licensed professional helps ensure that the work is done to a professional standard and offers legal protections under South Australia's Building Work Contractors Act 1995. Always confirm that contractors carry public liability insurance and, where applicable, builder's indemnity insurance for jobs valued over \$12,000.

### Understand Your Rights as a Property Owner in SA

As a homeowner in South Australia, you are protected under consumer laws and building regulations. Builders and contractors are legally required to complete work to a professional standard that complies with current building codes. If a problem arises, you have the right to request rectification during the statutory defect liability period, which usually lasts several years depending on the type of defect.

Keep all contracts, receipts, approvals, and inspection reports in a safe place. These documents will be important if you ever need to make a claim or pursue a dispute through the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

# Ongoing Maintenance After Renovation

Quality control does not end once the renovation is completed. Regular maintenance helps preserve the integrity and appearance of your renovated space. Check seals around windows and wet areas, ensure drainage systems are working correctly, and inspect painted or rendered surfaces for early signs of wear.

By taking these extra steps, Adelaide homeowners can protect their investment and ensure their renovated property remains safe, functional, and compliant with South Australian regulations.

# **Reconnect and Test All Utilities and Appliances**



After an electrical, gas or plumbing tradesperson completes work on your property, by law they must issue you with an electronic certificate of compliance (eCoC).

eCoCs are emailed to you. If you don't have access to email, the tradesperson must print the eCoC for you.

The tradesperson, and any contractor involved in the work, must both sign off on the eCoC. These certificates confirm that:

the tradesperson is correctly licensed the completed work:

- has been tested
- is safe
- meets the Australian Standards

the contractor has informed you of any existing safety concerns.

You must receive an eCoC (once the job is completed) within:

30 days - electrical or gas 7 days - plumbing.

### **Electrical**

Electricians must give you an eCoC for most of their work. This includes any electrical tests and checks.

Certificates aren't required for minor maintenance, such as replacing lightbulbs.

All electrical work must be completed by a licensed electrician. This includes installing power points, lighting, circuit breakers, and any rewiring required during the renovation. After installation, the electrician must perform a full safety test to ensure the system complies with South Australian electrical standards. You should also receive a Certificate of Compliance, which confirms the work has been tested and meets all legal and safety requirements.

#### Gas

Gas fitters must give you an eCoC for:

- work on gas pipes
- installing or replacing appliances, such as hot water units and stove tops
- converting to an alternative gas, for example from LPG to natural gas.
- Certificates aren't required for repairs or maintenance on an existing appliance.

Gas appliances must only be installed by a licensed gas fitter. This includes ovens, cooktops, heaters, and hot water systems. Gas leaks or poor combustion can cause carbon monoxide build-up, which is a serious health risk. Proper ventilation is critical, especially in kitchens and enclosed spaces.

Make sure all gas appliances are installed with adequate airflow and are tested for safe operation before use. You should also be provided with a compliance certificate for all gas fitting work.

By ensuring all utilities are connected and tested by qualified professionals, homeowners in Adelaide and across South Australia can avoid safety hazards and ensure their home remains compliant, efficient, and secure.

### **Plumbing**

Plumbers must give you a plumbing eCoC for:

- pipework and fixtures from the mains water supply or sewer
- sanitary plumbing and drainage
- installing or replacing a water heater
- work on a backflow prevention device
- installing an alternative water service

### Certificates aren't required for:

- changing tap washers
- clearing blocked drains
- installing domestic tapware

installing stormwater systems.

Without an eCoC for these works, insurance companies could refuse claims if the related works cause a fire or damage.

Contact the Office of the Technical Regulator if a tradesperson is refusing to provide you with an eCoC.

Licensed plumbers are required for any plumbing work, such as connecting new sinks, toilets, showers, or hot water systems. Improper plumbing installation can lead to leaks, water damage, and mould growth. Once connected, your plumber should test all systems for water pressure, drainage, and sealing to prevent future issues.

# **Enhance Indoor Air Quality and Ventilation**



It is generally recognised that Australians spend 90% or more of their time indoors. Despite this, relatively little research has been done on the quality of air in our homes, schools, recreational buildings, restaurants, public buildings, offices, or inside cars.

Before addressing indoor air quality, it's essential to remove renovation residue properly.

Nothing is more tedious and time-consuming than clearing the mess post-construction. Whether you are constructing a house from scratch or renovating an existing one, ensure you get rid of concrete debris, masonry fragments, metal waste, loose screws, paint stains, and loose dust particles.

This can help you prevent injuries, slips, dust allergies and hay fever when entering your new space. That's why attention to detail post post-construction cleaning holds great importance. It allows you to achieve a clean, shiny and pleasant living environment, especially when moving into a new home for the first time. Post-construction cleaning requires all the necessary supplies, a proper checklist and proven strategies to prep the space for safe and sound occupancy.

Here are the 10 most useful post-construction cleaning tips to help you tackle dirt, debris, and grime from every nook and cranny. It is good to strictly follow safety tips when cleaning difficult-to-reach areas.

## 1. Arrange Necessary Cleaning Supplies

First things First! Stock up on all the necessary supplies that you may need during the cleaning process. Professionals also carry all tools, machines and products for a budget end of lease cleaning Adelaide. All you need is:

- Trash bags for trash disposal
- Microfiber cloths and towels
- Telescopic Dusters
- Brooms
- Rubber gloves
- A Pressure Washing machine and hoses
- HEPA-filtered vacuum machine
- Mops and wringers
- Putty knife
- Scrub pads
- Assorted brushes
- Sponge
- White vinegar
- Dishwashing liquid soap
- Baking soda

- Hot water
- Lemon
- Essential oils
- Bucket and other necessary products

This way, you can target construction dust and messes efficiently.

## 2. Prep The Space: Remove Large Construction Waste

Remove large chunks of construction waste and debris before eradicating finer dust particles and stubborn stains. This can help reduce the chances of accidents and falls, preventing serious injuries.

Thoroughly inspect the interior and exterior area to pick and toss wood blocks, staples, bolts, loose screws, drop cloths and plastic traps.

### 3. Dust Surfaces like a Pro

Major construction and home renovation projects often settle dust on surfaces. This can pollute the indoor air, leading to respiratory disorders and breathing problems. So, start by dusting surfaces, including your ceiling walls, mouldings, shelves, countertops, cabinets, baseboards and door frames.

Elevate dusting efficiency by using a damp microfiber cloth for hard surfaces and telescopic dusters for ceiling walls, light fixtures, and fittings.

### 4. Vacuum Surfaces to Remove Embedded Dust



Use a heavy-duty vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter to trap 99.9 per cent of airborne allergens and dust particles from floors and carpets. Use it to clean your window blinds, sliding door tracks, rugs, and under heavy appliances. This step is crucial for your family's health and hygiene.

### 5. Wash the Windows Inside and Outside

During construction, Windows usually get coated with dust, paint splatters, and other stubborn grime. So, it is good to wash your windows properly. First, remove the loose dirt and debris from window sills, frames, panes and glass surfaces using a vacuum machine or a dry cloth.

Next, prepare a homemade window cleaner using white vinegar and warm water solution and gently scrub using a sponge. Clean all nooks and crannies and pay more attention to paint stains. In the final step, run a rubber squeegee to get rid of excess water and achieve a streak-free glass surface. A professional end of lease cleaning Adelaide service also includes windows inside and outside because they can enhance the house's overall curb appeal.

### 6. Remove Stains From Baseboards and Walls

Cleaning Walls and baseboards is essential in the post-construction cleaning session. After tackling loose debris and dust, tackle stubborn residue, such as paint splatters and adhesives. Use a wet magic eraser to clean painted walls and baseboards. Be gentle, and don't use harsh or abrasive products. If required, do the final touch-up to make it look new and fresh again.

# 7. Deep Clean the HVAC System

Your HVAC system will automatically collect airborne dust and debris during construction. This can affect the efficiency and durability of your appliance. So, it is good to replace the air filters or vacuum clean them to remove stuck gunk. Soaking them in hot, soapy water can do wonders to maintain air quality.

# 8. Sweep & Mop the Floors

Make sure you sweep and mop the floors after construction to restore them to their former glory. Do not use abrasive tools or harmful chemicals on your hardwood or laminate floors. Instead, prepare a DIY floor cleaning mix of dishwashing liquid soap, warm water, and a few drops of your favourite essential oil. Spot-clean your floors to get rid of stains and prepare the property for occupancy.

# 9. High-Pressure Wash Driveways

Remove construction residue and stubborn stains from your driveways and other concrete surfaces outside your home. Pressure washing is one of the best techniques for achieving sparkling results with ease. It will also help you remove paint residue and gunk without leaving any signs behind.

### 10. Hire Professionals

While self-cleaning strategies might seem affordable, hiring professionals for a detailed post-construction cleaning can help you achieve better results. A reliable company offers varied services, including an expert end of lease cleaning Adelaide, detailed house cleaning, carpet cleaning, pressure washing, etc. You can ask relevant questions and interview the company before making the final decision.

They often have the expertise, advanced tools, and products to ensure quality cleaning without a hint of stress. So, hire them for a post-construction cleaning session and stay relaxed throughout the process.

# Plan and Execute Interior Layout and Furnishing



# Key points

- Your household, activities and needs may change over time. It is a good idea
  if your home can easily accommodate those changes.
- A liveable home is designed to meet the changing needs of most occupants throughout their lifetime. An adaptable home is a liveable home that can be easily adapted to become accessible for wheelchair users.
- Think about the design features that will allow your home to be easily changed over time. For example, can room uses be easily changed to accommodate a ground floor bedroom? Are doorways and passageways wide enough for wheelchair use? Are entries level or are steps easily replaced with ramps?

- Think about including fixtures that can be used by someone as they age. For example, low wide cupboards may be more accessible than tall thin versions, and lever door handles are easier to use than knobs.
- Kitchens, bathrooms, and laundries are areas to pay particular attention to, to ensure they can be used safely.
- If you are designing a multilevel home, ensure it can be adapted to the needs
  of less mobile occupants. Include a wheelchair-accessible bathroom, and
  bedroom (or room that can be converted to a bedroom) on the ground floor,
  and build in capacity for a lift or staircase lift.

## Understanding liveability and Adaptability

Many people, when buying or building a new home, anticipate spending many years, if not decades, living in it. The home is therefore likely to have to accommodate changing needs over its lifetime. For example, as your family grows and changes over time, the home may need to accommodate play areas for children, teenage retreats, and new entertainment and hobby spaces. It may also need to suit people working from home, and people living independently in their later years. A single space may have a variety of functions over the life of the home.

Household needs can also vary over time in relation to physical capabilities. Most people can expect temporary or permanent variations in their physical capabilities during their life due to injury, illness, or age. Longer life spans and higher proportions of older people in our society make it more likely that every home at some time will need to accommodate the needs of a person with a physical limitation, whether they are the primary resident or a visitor. The design of a home can affect the ability of occupants with limited mobility, reduced vision, or other physical limitations to perform common tasks such as carrying shopping into the home, cooking a meal, using the bathroom, or getting items from high shelves.

A liveable or adaptable home is easy and safe to live in for people of all ages and abilities, and able to respond effectively to changing needs without requiring costly and energy-intensive alterations. 'Liveable' and 'adaptable' mean slightly different things:

- A liveable home is designed to meet the changing needs of most home occupants throughout their lifetime. A liveable home follows the design guidelines set out by Liveable Housing Australia.
- An adaptable home is a liveable home that also meets Australian Standard AS4299-1995 Adaptable housing, which means it can be easily adapted to become accessible for wheelchair users, if the need should arise. An accessible home should be designed to meet the needs of the all the home's occupants, including older people and those with mobility-related disabilities.

#### The liveable home

The liveable home is based on the principles of 'universal design' — defined as the design of products and environments so that they are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. The intention is to simplify life for everyone by making more housing usable by more people at minimal extra cost.

A liveable home uses a combination of building features, fittings and products to promote ease of use and independence, benefiting people of all ages and abilities. It ensures that rooms and services within the home are of a size and type suitable for as many people as possible.

For example, slightly wider doorways or passageways are more easily navigated by users of mobility devices such as walking frames, wheelchairs or a child's pram. Designing an entry without steps removes the need for later addition of a ramp and handrails, while improving access for children's prams. Easy-to-use taps, handles and electrical switches can benefit everyone, especially those with limited hand function. Incorporating these fittings during construction reduces the need for retrofitting.

A liveable home does not necessarily accommodate the higher access needs of occupants who require an accessible home. However, the inclusion of liveable design features may reduce or eliminate the cost of retrofitting a home to improve access in the future.

In May 2023, the National Construction Code (NCC) introduced mandatory requirements for liveable housing design based on the Silver Level of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines. These requirements apply to single residential dwellings and apartments.

### Interior

The interior of the home should allow easy movement between spaces. Often, this simply means slightly widening internal doors and passageways. Ideally, access should be easy throughout the entire home, but it may be considered necessary only in some parts such as between living spaces, kitchen, bathroom, and one bedroom. At entry level there should be a toilet with easy access, plus a bedroom or a space that could be later used as a bedroom.

Internal doors should have a minimum clear opening width of 820mm and passageways a minimum of 1000mm, but any additional width is beneficial. Doorway width is measured from the face of the open door to the opposite frame. The door handle may encroach into the minimum clear opening width. Circulation space

around doors is required to allow wheelchair access, with special attention given to providing enough space to reach and operate the door lever.

Electrical outlets are best placed at a minimum of 600mm above the floor; for light switches and other controls the ideal height range is 900–1100mm. Switches and controls should be placed no less than 300mm from an internal corner (in plain view) to allow easy access by wheelchair users. The use of 2-way switches is desirable at each end of corridors and where spaces have more than one entry.

Window sills should be low enough to allow unobstructed views to the exterior from standing, sitting and lying positions where appropriate. Window handles should be located no higher than 1200mm from floor level. Where different floor surfaces meet, they need to be level and fitted with cover strips to prevent tripping. They should be similar colours or tones to avoid the perception of a step or height difference.

## **Living Spaces**

Living spaces should be comfortable and accessible to all residents and visitors. To accommodate a range of activities and tasks, it is advisable to install air-conditioning and other services to suit a variety of furniture layouts. Australian Standards recommend:

- a minimum of 4 double electrical outlets
- a telecommunications outlet adjacent to an electrical outlet
- 2 TV antennae outlets, all located at appropriate heights
- clear circulation space within the room of at least 2250mm diameter for wheelchair manoeuvrability.

# Update Home Security and Safety Measures

Fire alarms and systems have been designed to give early warning to building occupants in the event of a fire.

Early fire detection can mean the difference between a manageable fire incident and a disastrous one. In today's environment fire alarms and active fire suppression systems are commonly known as life safety systems.

We respond to buildings with installed commercial life safety systems. These systems can be monitored by the Fire Service or by a third party private monitoring company.

# Only working smoke alarms save lives.

A working smoke alarm increases the chances of you, your family and your home surviving a house fire. This guide contains important information about installation and maintenance of smoke alarms, to keep Canberrans safe in the event of house fire.

### Why do I need a smoke alarm?

Working smoke alarms are compulsory in the ACT. They beep loudly when there's a fire, waking residents and giving them time to escape from a burning house and call ACT Fire & Rescue.

### Did you know?

When we sleep, we can lose our sense of smell and may not be aware of smoke.

### Where should smoke alarms be fitted?

Smoke alarms should be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions and the National Construction Code, on or near the ceiling in bedrooms or in the corridor that leads to bedrooms. If you have a multi-level home, smoke alarms must be installed on each level, and be interconnected.

Where possible, your smoke alarms should be connected to each other so that when one sounds, they all sound. This is called 'interconnected'. Interconnection means that the smoke alarms communicate with each other so that if one smoke alarm activates all the smoke alarms in the home go off, giving all residents the best chance of getting out safely before they are overcome by smoke.

Please consult with a licensed electrician if required and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

### Did you know?

Electrical fires and faults cause 40% of house fires.

## How do I know if my smoke alarm is working?

Smoke alarms should be tested monthly. Smoke alarms with Lead or alkaline batteries need to be replaced each year. The end of daylight savings is a good reminder.

### Did you know?

If you have an ionisation smoke alarm that is approaching its expiry date (usually 10 years) or it has become faulty, ACT Fire & Rescue encourages you to replace it with a photoelectric smoke alarm.

### Which smoke alarm should I have?

There are three common types of smoke alarms:

- Hard-wired alarm (240V)
- 10-year embedded lithium-lon battery

Replaceable 9V battery

ACT Fire & Rescue recommends wherever possible, hard-wired and interconnected smoke alarms are installed. Alternatively, alarms with a 10-year embedded lithiumion battery are a great choice for DIY, as the battery lasts until the entire smoke alarm should be replaced.

#### Hard-wired smoke alarms

- Legally required in houses built after 1 November, 1994.
- A 240-volt smoke alarm connected to a home's electrical system with a battery back-up power supply.

### Battery operated smoke alarms

- Homes built before November 1994 can have battery or wired alarms.
- 10-year lithium batteries last as long as the smoke alarm.
- Lead or alkaline (9V) batteries need to be replaced yearly.

Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10-years, regardless of the power source.

### Did you know?

All rental properties must legally have a smoke alarm compliant with the Australian Standard AS3786.

Do I need to maintain my smoke alarm?

#### Once a month

Test your smoke alarms every month by pressing and holding the test button for at least five seconds until you hear the beeps.

#### Every 6 months

Vacuum dust off your smoke alarms every six months. Keeping your smoke alarms free of particles to help reduce false alarms and ensure smoke can easily reach the internal sensor.

### Every year

Replace lead or alkaline batteries every 12 months.

### Every 10 years

Replace all smoke alarms with new 10-year lithium powered smoke alarms every 10 years, or earlier if specified by the manufacturer. A hard-wired alarm must be replaced with a hard-wired alarm.

### What if I am hearing impaired?

A specialised smoke alarm is available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

For information about accessing financial assistance for this device, visit the ACT Deafness Resource Centre www.actdrc.org.au

What should I do if the smoke alarm activates? If safe, identify what has triggered the alarm and if there is a fire, evacuate your home and call 000.

# Personalize the Space and Settle In



Ask anyone who's renovated and they'll no doubt tell you it can turn certain parts of your life upside down particularly if you happen to be doing it while also living in your house.

From living out of boxes to surviving without functioning kitchens or bathrooms, these are the nuggets of wisdom from a few couples on what saved their sanity during the process.

Sponge baths and takeaway food

Roísín and Zac Tarrant are no strangers to renovations, having done up two houses and building a following online by documenting their DIY adventures on Instagram.

They first had a crack at renovating their Brisbane home and more recently worked on a cottage in Toowoomba.

Zac said one of the difficult parts of their Toowoomba renovation was "making provisions" during their bathroom makeover.

"I think the tricky one is when you have one bathroom, and you're renovating a bathroom, and you then have no bathroom while it's being gutted," he said.

"We had an outhouse that had a toilet, and we would live here (inside) and we would have the toilet out in the outhouse, and we would sponge bath ourselves."

"That sounds so gross it was only for, like, two nights I swear," Roísín clarified.

"We literally used our newborn's portable bath, it'd be like 'OK, now it's my turn to get in the baby bath'."

The pair added that if you're facing more than a couple of nights without a bathroom, hiring a portable ensuite might be a good option, or shacking up with family if you can.

Bathrooms are one hurdle; the other is kitchens.

Lucas MacLean and his wife Mackenzie are in the middle of their latest renovation, including dealing with a non-operational kitchen.

"I think it's easier to not have a bathroom than to not have a kitchen, or we've struggled with not having a kitchen," Lucas said.

"Cooking, everything's 10 times harder, so it's like, I'll just have cereal because that's easy."

When it comes to other food, takeaway was another popular option, so too was using camping equipment if you're keen on a 'home-cooked' meal.

Fridges in the lounge room

Though not entirely practical, one piece of common advice was to embrace the disorder and remember it won't be forever.

"I think the key is you've got to be prepared to live in chaos," Mackenzie said.

Be prepared to know that in the morning, it's going to take five or 10 minutes to make a coffee because you've got to unplug this cord, move this thing, just to find your coffee cup.

"Our fridge is in the lounge room, our pantry is in the walk-in robe and our kitchen sink is in the ensuite, so it takes a while to get around the house and find things."

She also recommended not unpacking anything prematurely.

"Once we do a room, then we can unpack things in that room, but right now we're living bare minimum and we're just trying to keep things dust-free with the plastic shaving everywhere," she said.

Memories of living in a building site aren't too distant for interior designer Tamiko Gleeson and her husband Daniel.

They renovated and extended their two-bedroom, one-bathroom 1960s house in NSW while living there, doing some of it themselves and getting professionals in for the more substantial build.

"For a while we had scaffolding inside, like we would put all our furniture into, say, the living room, and there would be no furniture," Tamiko said.

"We'd just eat dinner like that it was takeaway dinners; it was scaffold inside.

"Yeah, everything was dusty, but I think you just need to know that it's not forever and you just need to roll with it."

### Conclusion

Preparing your home after a renovation is key to enjoying the space safely and comfortably. Start by checking the quality of the work to ensure it meets professional standards. Reconnect and test all utilities and appliances using licensed trades for safety. Improve indoor air quality and ventilation to create a healthier living environment. Plan your interior layout and furnishing to suit your lifestyle and maximise comfort. Update home security and safety features for added peace of mind. Finally, personalise the space and settle in by adding your own touches and making it feel like home. These simple steps will help you make the most of your renovation and enjoy your refreshed space with confidence.

### References

1. Check the Quality of the Work <a href="https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/practitioners">https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/practitioners</a>

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