

## Green Kitchens & Bathrooms Design Tips

When we think of a 'green' kitchen our thoughts usually turn to recycled materials, low or no VOC finishes and energy efficient appliances. Often overlooked is the benefit of good design, longevity and usability. So when you're next building or renovating a kitchen or bathroom, give the following some consideration as well.

Sustainable design elements (and this applies to kitchens, bathrooms and laundries) include keeping the area compact and functional, while allowing for ease of movement. See the Livable Housing Design Guideline for practical details like door widths, space to allow between walls and cabinetry and so on. This useful and easy to follow guide is free to download from <http://www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au> .



Other general items include good ventilation and natural light, both are necessary to ensure the areas remain healthy spaces to be in. When considering flooring, extend the floor finishes to go wall to wall, yes that's under the cabinetry. This allows the space to be redesigned in the future and cupboards to be moved without having to replace the flooring.

For kitchens, everyone loves a decent pantry so include one if you can. From a sustainability perspective they're a good addition as they take up less floor space, use fewer materials and can maximise storage for the space. Using drawers, instead of cupboards, is a better option as drawers are more accessible and easier to use, particularly as we age. And include a recycling station close to the food preparation area, this makes it easy to separate waste for recycling, organics for worm farms and the rest for landfill.

Bathrooms should include slip resistant flooring and ideally a shower in a corner with a hobless (no lip) recesses (or a screen that can be easily removed in the future when better accessibility is required). If you happen to have the walls around a bath, toilet or showers open when renovating, include some reinforcement to facilitate the installation of grab rails in the future.

Combining recycled or low impact building materials, energy efficient appliances and low VOC finishes with the good design tips above is likely to result in the creation of very livable spaces that are healthy, light on environmental impact and a pleasure to be in.

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