



Modern Home Look Book

Inspiration and design hallmarks to help describe and define the clean, contemporary home of your dreams.

Most Australians want a Modern home

A survey of 13,000 Australian homeowners in the process of building or renovating showed that the majority want a modern home.

Interestingly, this 2018 research by James Hardie reveals that modern design is difficult to describe. Modern homes are undefined and there are few words to describe the style.

To help, James Hardie has unearthed five Modern Looks which exist in Australia. This book describes each look in terms of design hallmarks which help homeowners determine which look, or combination of looks they like.

Browse this book. As you do, save the images and descriptions of the things you like. Create a vision board with them. That should create a clear brief for designers, builders and trades so you can achieve the home you dreamed of.



Some handy definitions:

Modern. To a homeowner this means contemporary. The now. But to a designer this could mean “mid-century modern” a style from the 1930-1970’s. The past. See how it can go wrong?

Contemporary. This book uses Contemporary interchangeably with Modern to mean designs in present or future styles.

Minimalist. This can be a look itself, but it’s more of a design principle present in all the Modern Looks. It’s about simplicity and pared-back aesthetics.

Form. This is the overall shape of the building. Think scale and proportion.

Looks. These are exterior design themes. They’re not exclusive. Feel free to mash-up modern coastal with mid-century modern for example. The only thing that matters is that it helps explain your vision.



Joe Snell



Joe Snell is an expert on Modern Design and an ambassador for James Hardie. Find out more at studiosnell.com/joe-snell

Joe Snell is James Hardie’s ambassador for Modern Looks. Joe is passionate about improving Australian homes and the happiness of their occupants by making good design accessible.

Joe grew up in an architect household. By the time he was 20 he’d lived in 17 different houses renovated by his father.

When studying in Copenhagen Joe saw a society that appreciated the value of good design in a grass roots way. Danish design is not for elites who can afford architects, it’s for everybody.

“My reason for writing a book, becoming a judge on House Rules and partnering with James Hardie is to teach the community that they have the power to make their homes better. And it doesn’t need to be expensive.” - Joe Snell

Joe holds a B.Arch and a B.Sc(Arch) and was educated at the University of Sydney and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen.

James Hardie has collaborated with Joe to bring you these five Modern Looks.



JOE SNELL
YOUR BEST HOME
5 SPACES x 5 DESIGN STEPS = A BETTER LIFE



Project: Suffolk Park, NSW
Look: Modern Coastal
Product: Linea™ Weatherboard 150mm
Designer: Snell Studio
Builder: JEB Build

The Five Modern Looks

Modern homes are contemporary in design. They stay on trend into the future. Homeowners are resisting the dated, inefficient, brick-clad, hip-roof homes many builders have stuck with since the 1980s. Today's home buyers and renovators prefer the simple, clean lines of a modern home and a light and airy open plan lifestyle it can bring.



1. Scandi Barn Look

Barn style homes are loved for vaulted ceilings, open plan living spaces and bold street presence. A steeply pitched gable roof with no eaves is a must.



2. Mid-Century Modern Look

Modernism emphasises function over design. The look reveals the structure. Large openings to connect with the outdoors. There's a resurgence in this style.



3. Box Modern Look

The box shape is foundational in modern design. A single box creates little interest. The arrangement and treatment of distinct box shapes makes it compelling.



4. Mixed Cladding Look

Mixing cladding styles add design diversity to similar buildings. It creates interesting façades and streetscapes. Up-scale textures to create interest.



5. Modern Coastal Look

The look is reflective of Australia's beach shack history. Crisp white weatherboards and styled outdoor living areas portray a luxe laid-back beach lifestyle.

Scandi Barn Look

Modern farmhouse designs have been on-trend for a while. It connects well with the Scandinavian style which is characterized by the minimalist philosophy that encourages simplicity. It creates a strong relationship between the design elements and nature. Barn style homes are loved in Australia for their vaulted ceilings, open plan living spaces and bold street presence.

Steeply pitched gable roof

A beautifully symmetrical gable roof should be elevated. It should be high set with a pitch of 35 to 45 degrees using corrugated steel sheets, not tiles.

A pure barn shape

Homes should be designed to make the barn shape appear separate from other parts of the house. This can be done by allowing it to sit forward from other parts of the house. Use a projecting gable, defined by dark paint, that continues down the wall. The result should be a simple diagrammatic form. Like something a child would draw.

Clean lines and craftsmanship

Cladding detail is a must for a feel of craftsmanship. Nordic countries have many forests, and a timber look plays a key role. Use fibre cement vertical joint cladding or weatherboard cladding that's uniform and can handle dark colours.

Matrix™ Cladding



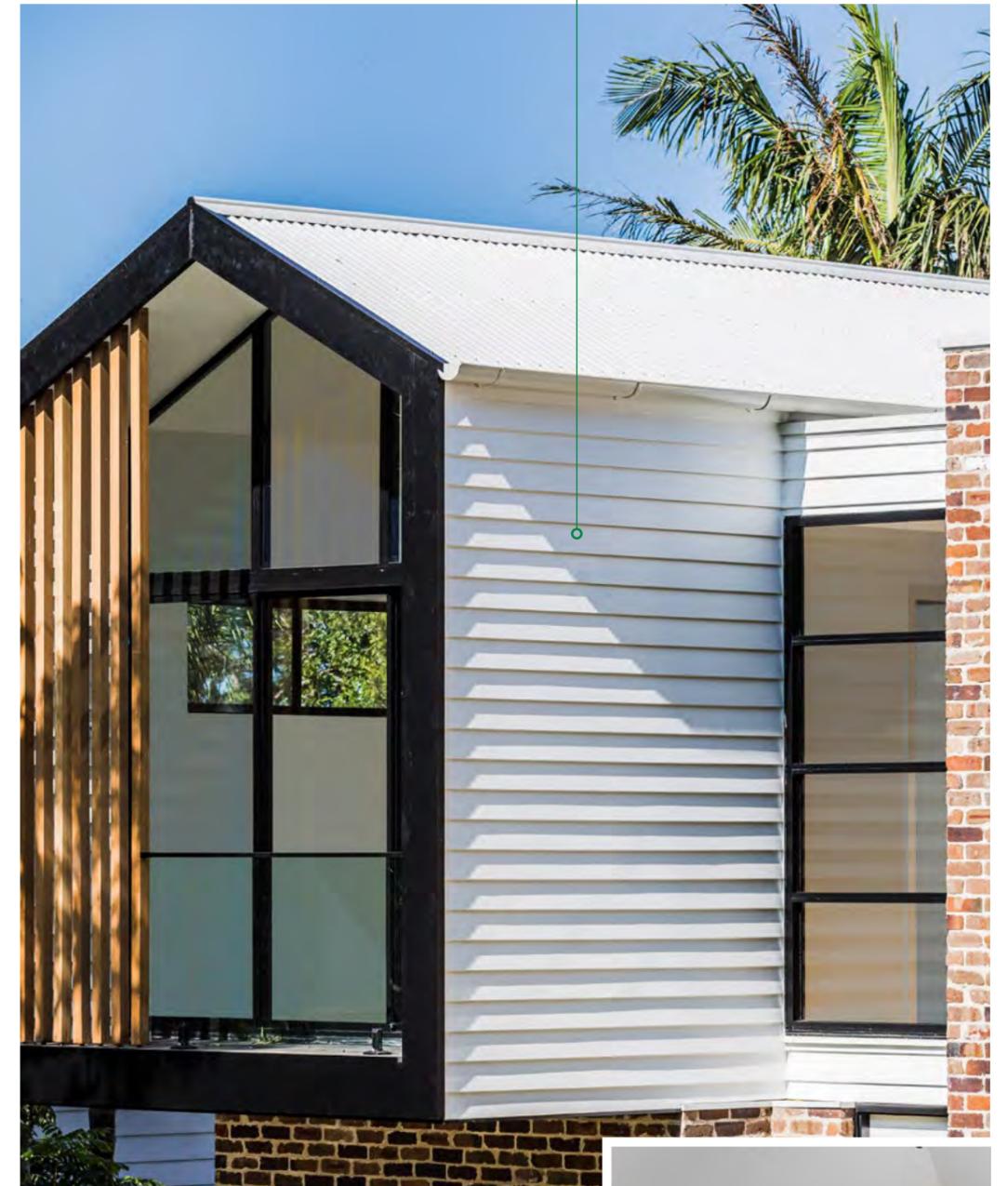
Stria™ Cladding



Axon™ Cladding

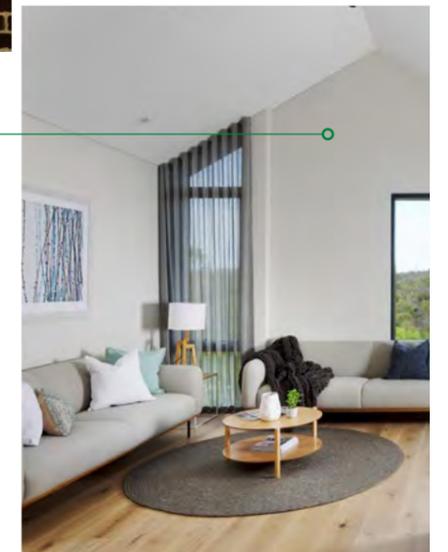


Linea™ Weatherboard 150mm



Scandinavian interior design

The Scandinavian style is about having a flow that allows easy living in an open airy setting. Include skylights in the vaulted ceilings. Choose built-in furniture to reduce clutter. Create a calm simplicity with timber floors, neutral colours, simple lines and natural materials like leather, wool and linen.



Mid-Century Modern Look

Originating in Europe, modernism influenced housing and furniture design from the 1930s through to the 1970s. It was delightfully optimistic and experimental. One of the main principles is “form follows function” meaning that purpose comes before design indulgences.

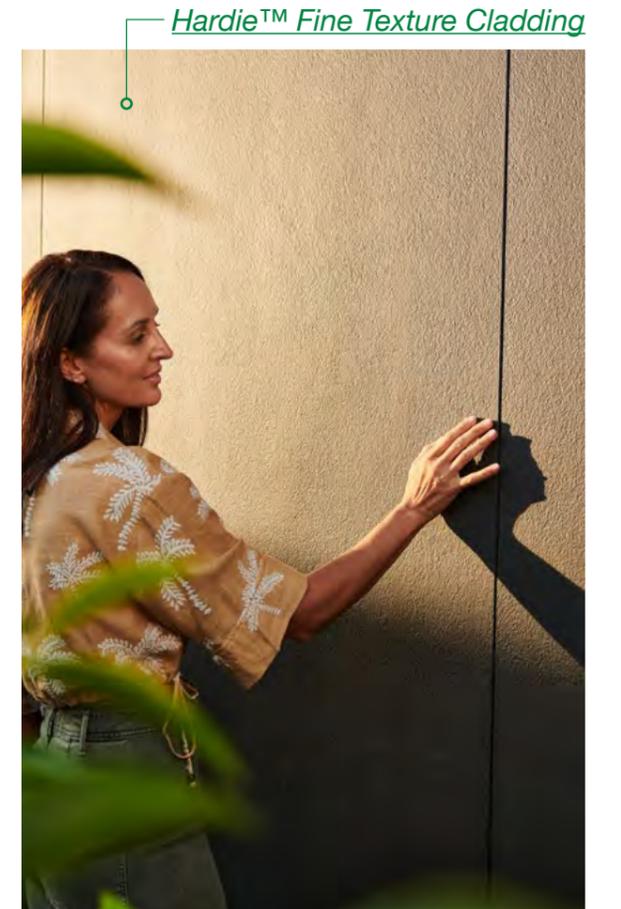
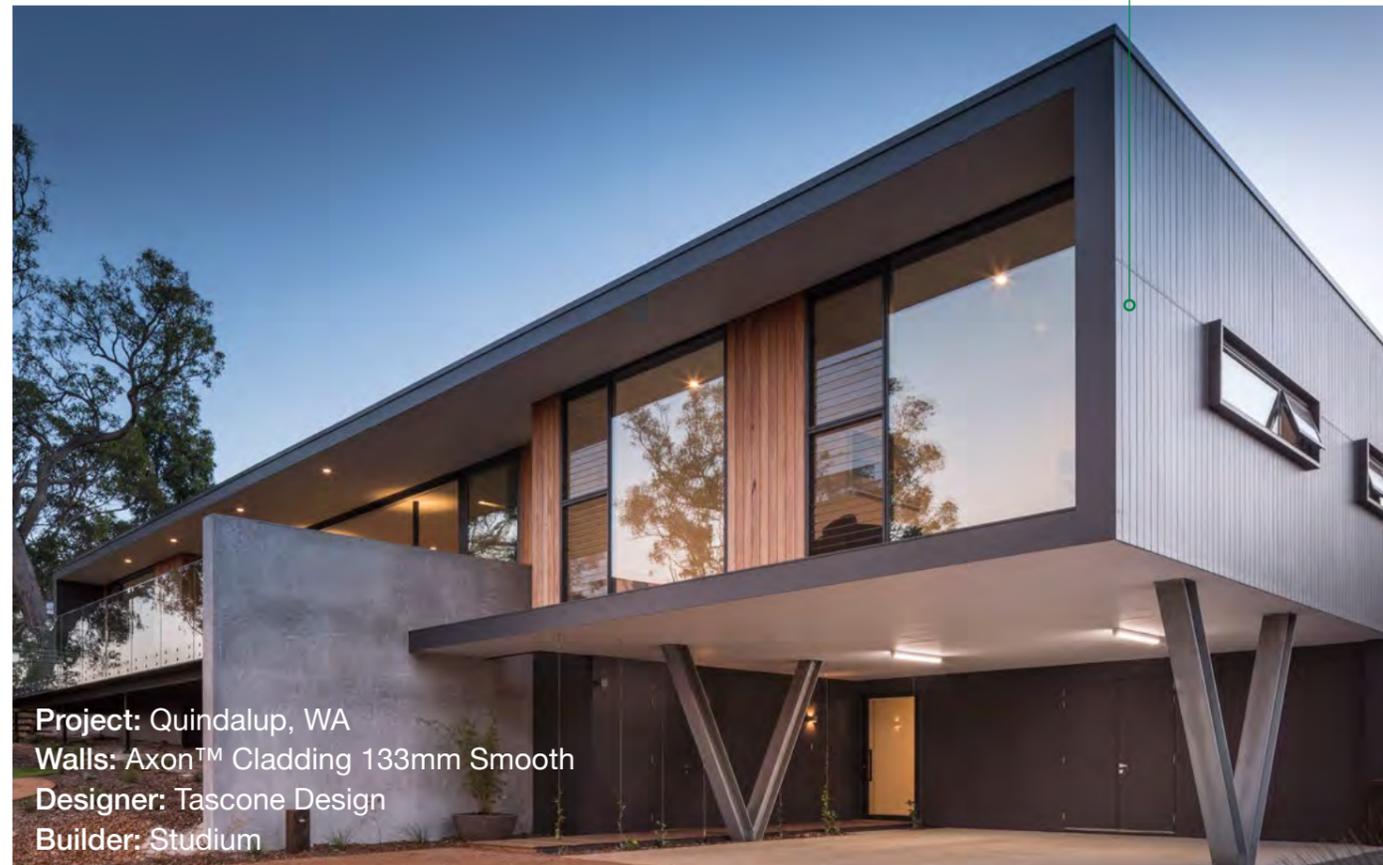
Palm Springs, California has the most bold modernist architecture thanks to the Hollywood stars of the 1950’s who built homes there. Australia, on the other hand, embraced the Mid-Century Modern Look to build practical homes. Architects like Robin Boyd and Harry Seidler were proponents of the International Modern Movement and its influence on Australia.

Openings dominate cladding

Floor to ceiling windows and wide openings capture views, fill rooms with light and connect the indoors and outdoors. The front and rear of the home typically have more glass than cladding.

Open plan living

We can thank the modernist home design for the combined living, dining room and kitchen areas which are common-place in today’s homes. It’s good for entertaining guests and connects family members during meal preparation.



Flat or gently sloped roof profiles

Roofs are hidden behind parapet walls or are gently sloping in skillion, butterfly and gable styles. They often feature large overhangs.

Exposed angular structures

The MCM Look is minimalist and honest. Buildings reveal their structure with exposed beams. The bolts that attach structures together are often exquisitely detailed.

The Box Modern Look

The box shape is foundational in modern architecture. It's driven by the principle that "form follows function" where design is stripped back to pure form. A single box creates little interest. The arrangement and treatment of distinct box shapes is what makes the look compelling.

A hidden roof line

Parapet walls hide the roof line and make it appear flat removing the roof material from the aesthetic. The capping or guttering can blend with the cladding or be used to create a dark outline to accentuate the shape against the sky.

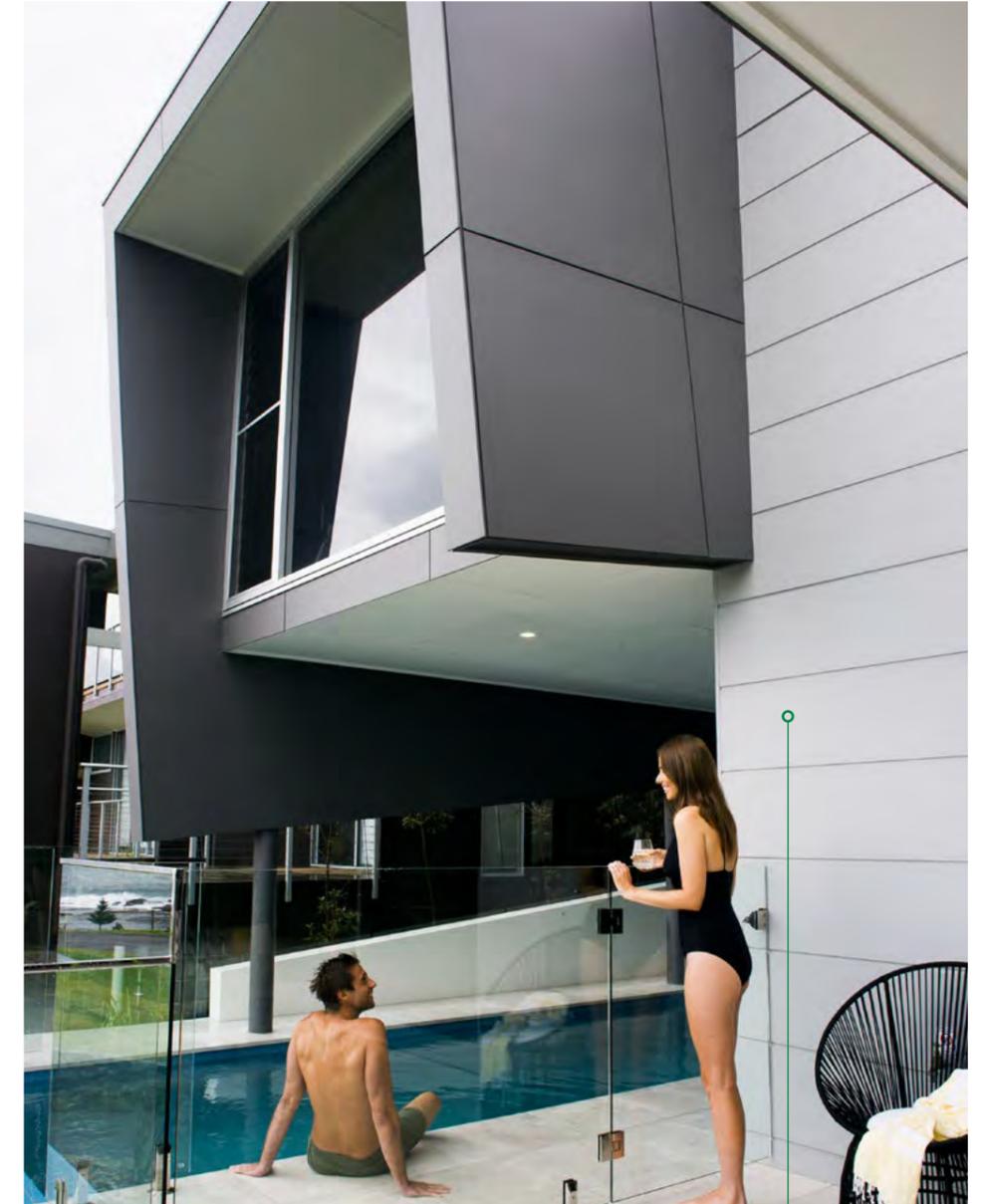
Arranged box form

A minimum of two distinct boxes, or cubic forms, should be arranged so that they're offset left to right and front to back to create interest. This can be a great way to distract from an ugly garage dominating the facade.

Achromatic palette

White colours project and dark colours recede. So painting one box white and the other dark grey amplifies façade articulation to dramatic effect. The use of black, white and grey is also a sophisticated colour palette which gives a high-end feel.

Linea™ Weatherboard 150mm



Cladding dominates openings

With box modern homes the cladding plays a more important role in the aesthetic than the windows. Use the clean lines of vertical or horizontal cladding or even panel layouts to further distinguish each box shape.

Axon™ Cladding

The Mixed Cladding Look

Mixing materials and layering is a popular interior design technique. There's freedom in being able to mix complimentary or contrasting textures. When design moves to the exterior, mixed cladding breaks up the homogenous designs which are a symptom of narrow lot housing. Alternatively, it provides an opportunity for the decisive to play and create something unexpected.

Hide the roof material

Choose a flat or a skillion roof so only a profile faces the street. That way the roofing material won't clash with delightful cladding combinations.

Mix two or more cladding styles

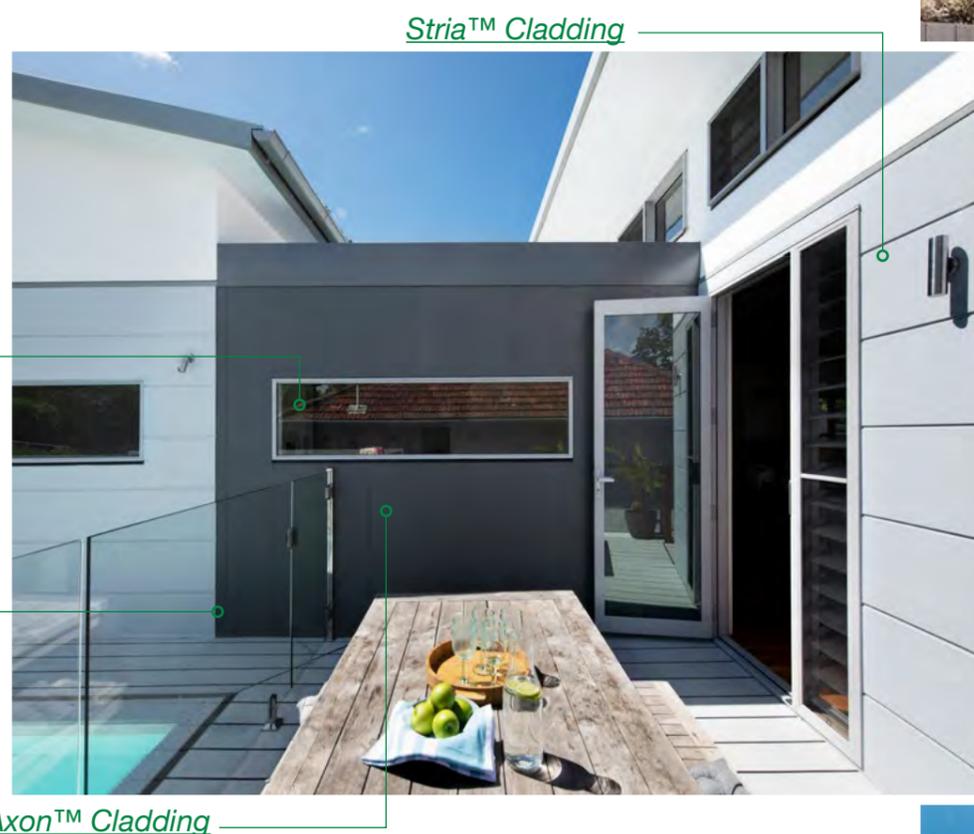
Mix weatherboards with express joint panels. Mix vertical joint cladding with shiplap boards. If it gets too busy, use Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding for some visual relief from the distinct lines of the other cladding. The fine render texture creates clean lines and gives colour a matt finish that feels calming. It allows other cladding to feature or simply puts the focus back on the form.

Well considered windows

Poorly placed windows can make designs look haphazard. Well placed designer windows make cladding combinations look purposeful.

Colour freedom with caution

With the cladding shadow lines and textures creating interest it's hard to go wrong with a sophisticated variety of white and grey shades and black window frames. Finish off the last 10% with timber tones or an unexpected pop of colour like a pink door.



Modern Coastal Look

The Modern Coastal Look is reflective of Australia's beach shack history. Crisp white weatherboards combine with contemporary clean lines. Indoor and outdoor living areas are carefully styled in a coastal theme with laid-back luxury.

Linea™ Weatherboard 150mm



Crisp white Linea™ Weatherboards

With a smooth texture, uniform shape and deep shadow lines, Linea™ Weatherboards by James Hardie provide the clean lines that suit a minimalist style. Paint them in a cool white and reminisce about childhood summer holidays.



Flexible roof styles

The Modern Coastal Look can work with any roof style that provides a designer look. Keep it simple though and avoid boring hip roofs. This could be a bold gable, a flat roof or a skillion roof with clerestory windows to catch the sun or ocean breeze.

Well chosen windows

Invest in large, impressive windows and place them carefully in the façade for an architect-designed look. Window frames should be white to match the weatherboards or black to blend with the glass. They can be enhanced with shading hoods or vertical screens.



Relaxed coastal styling

Wide stacking doors encourage an indoor-outdoor lifestyle. Style with deck chairs, outdoor lounges, cushions and beach umbrellas in neutral colours and natural textures. Add some warm stained timber tones and plant frangipanis and palms to give a luxurious resort feel.





Modern Essentials

Modern design is the opposite to ornate classic design. It's all about simplicity. Here are the four essential ingredients to get a modern or contemporary looking home.

Bold Forms

Form refers to the shape or configuration of a building. It's like a three-dimensional version of the floor plan. Your choice of roof shape and how rooms sit forward or backward in the façade largely determines the look.

Add detail to bold forms with vertical groove *Axon™ Cladding* in a contemporary colour tone.



Atlas Architects - Footscray, VIC

Clean, Sleek Lines

Modern homes have clean lines achieved by an absence of eaves and hidden downpipes and guttering. Window style and placement is more important to the exterior look.

Façade Articulation

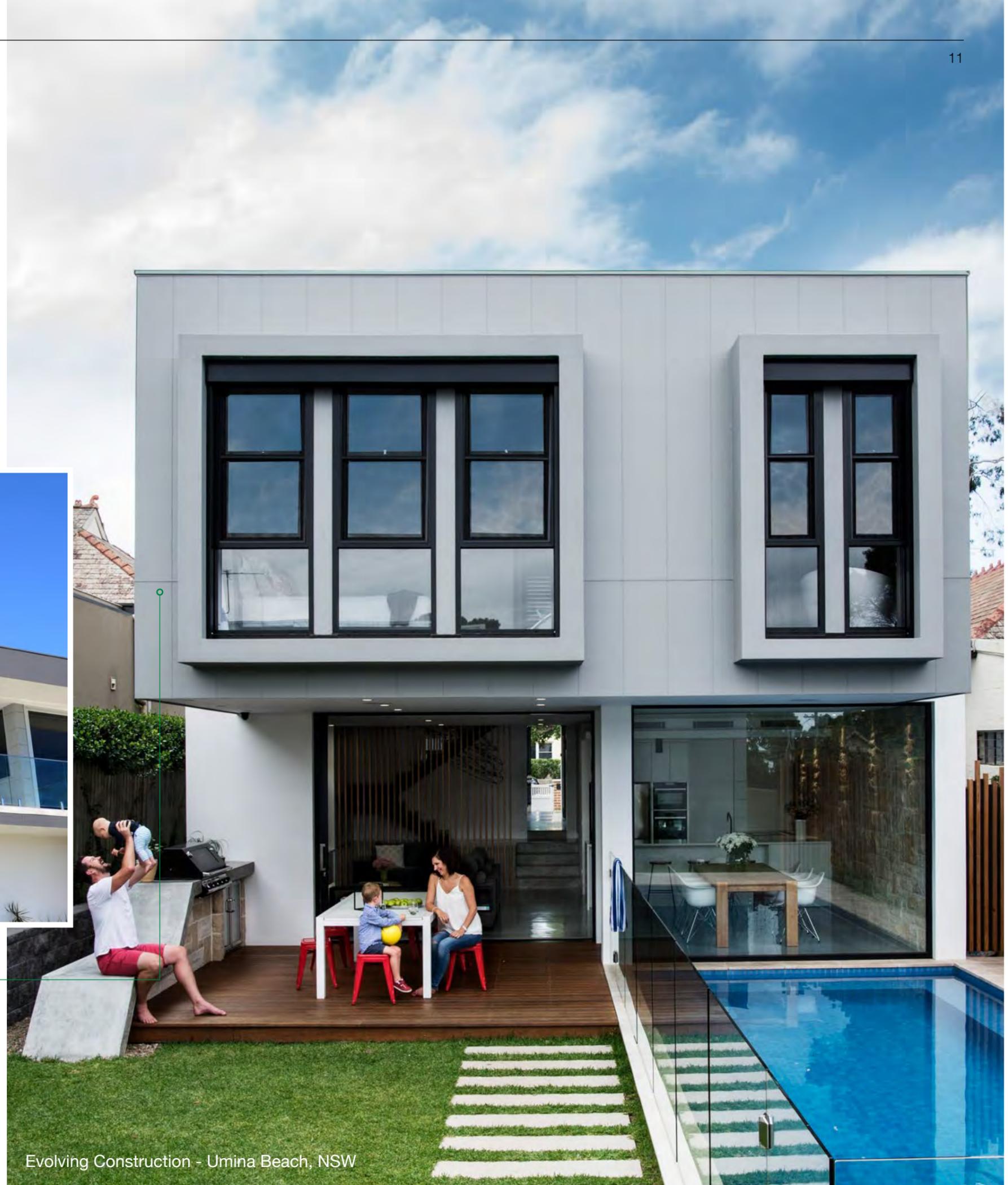
If every house on the street was a homogenous flat walled square box it would be depressing. Façade articulation creates design diversity. Vary depths on the front of the house. Australian homes are built with frames. When cladding follows the frame design options are limitless. Cantilever upper levels. Make a grand entrance forward of the garage and use projecting windows and awnings.

This cantilevered room, gives the facade articulation.



Achromatic Colour Palette.

Form and shadow lines from cladding require careful consideration with a limited colour palette. Stick with black, white and grey. Add small pops of colour with plants and timber features.



Flat roof architecture is timeless and the greatest hallmark of modern and minimalist design.



Flat Roofs

Flat Roof

Flat roof architecture is timeless and the greatest hallmark of modern and minimalist design. It is a space saving style that provides headroom below and the opportunity for a rooftop garden above.

Parapet Wall

A parapet, wall extends above the roof. In ancient design it was a defensive feature for soldiers to hide behind if their castle was under attack. In modern times it can be an aesthetic feature to hide a sloping roof and give the impression of a flat roof. Or it can be used as a fire wall to help protect neighboring properties from flame spread.

A facade with *Linea™ Weatherboard* parapet wall

Concealed Guttering

To maintain the clean lines of contemporary homes it makes sense to conceal gutters and down pipes. It's important to include this in the early stages of design rather than leave it as an afterthought which could turn ugly.



Project: Gold Coast, QLD
 Look: Box Modern meets MCM
 Walls: Linea™ Weatherboard 150mm
 Colour: Dulux® Ploughed Earth
 Designer: Jamison Architects

Sloping Roofs

Skillion / Shed Roofs

Skillion roofs provide a bold design choice. Orient the high side North and include windows and an overhang and they're great for catching Winter sun and shielding Summer sun.

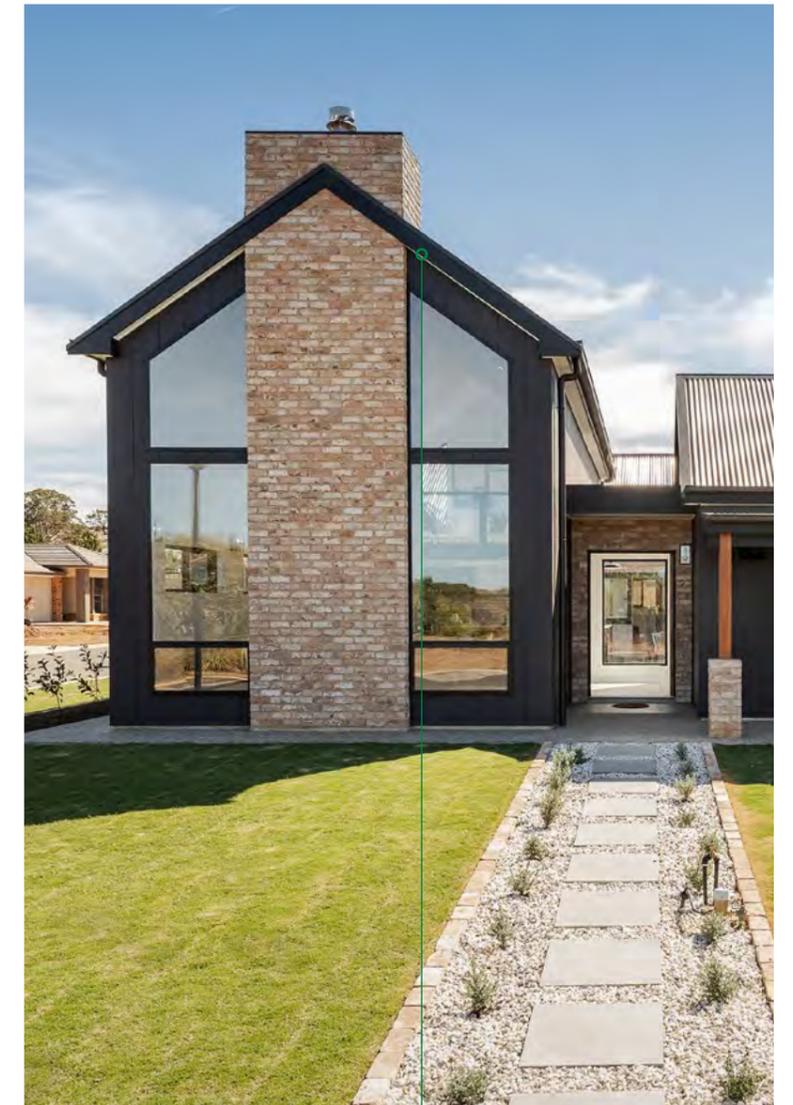
Salt Box Roofs

A salt box roof provides a different form with it's asymmetrical sloping roof. The first salt box houses were probably brought about by ground floor additions to double storey homes where the roof was extended down one side.

An asymmetrical salt box roof



Atlas Architects - Footscay, VIC



Gable Roofs

Symmetrical gable roofs are common and economical to build. Steeply pitched roofs which feature on Scandi Barn homes work well in coastal areas exposed to high wind and heavy rain to stop water ingress. Shallow gables suit low, flat mid-century-modern modern houses.



Window Styles

Oriel Window

Modern facades need carefully considered windows like oriel windows. They're a form of bay window which protrudes from the main window of the building.

Oriel window in Wild Bulldog House



Projecting Window Frames

Another way to make windows a feature is to create frames or surrounds that projected out from the cladding to give the facade depth and interesting shadow lines that add to the facade.

Projecting window frames make a great feature

Evolving Construction - Umina Beach, NSW



Modern Hoods

Window hoods are a shading device over windows. Often made from powder-coated metal they protrude from walls creating bold and interesting window treatments that suit modern design.

Acromatic Colour Palette

Australian's are conservative when it comes to using colour. In the harsh yellow sun we prefer black, white and grey colour palettes.

Light Grey

Light greys ('greige' is the new beige) are a popular easy fit on contemporary Australian Homes. They're soft, relaxed and contrast elegantly with cool whites.

Malay Grey half is used with *Stria™ Cladding 405mm*



Black and White

For a sophisticated Modern Look choose a warm white and contrast it with near-black trims.

Dramatic white *Axon™ Cladding* with black trims



Dark Grey

Recently Australians have fallen in love with dramatic, dark moody greys which create a dramatic contrast with white elements, the sky and foreground greenery. Add timber decking or soffits (outdoor ceilings) to bring warm tones to the design.

Dark moody grey is used on this carbon neutral WA home



Modern Additions

Discover that old and new can work together and bring your vision to life. In suburbs close to cities and town centres home owners, and often councils, want to retain the suburb character and street appeal of heritage homes. On the flipside home owners want to live a modern, open plan indoor outdoor lifestyle. As a result contemporary additions to heritage homes are common.



Drummoyne NSW, a 1902 home with Box Modern addition

Matrix™ Cladding



Matrix™ Cladding



Connecting Indoors with Outdoors

Australia has the perfect climate for indoor outdoor living. Its desirable to create a close connection between your house and a garden, private courtyard or well styled deck. Modern urban life is associated with chronic stress. Greenery and glimpses of sky can provide psychological relaxation, stress alleviation and stimulate social cohesion. The more the merrier. Promote connection to the outdoors with large windows and openings.

Laser cut screens allow privacy and security when required yet still allow a cooling breeze.



Joe Snell's 5 Design Steps

The basics of home design rely on five key concepts; light, sound, space, view and air. Building a new home or adding an extension offers the opportunity to harness these concepts to improve the experience of living in the home.



1. Space

Ceiling height can help people be more creative and improve their mood.

By breaking down the walls, contemporary design facilitates better family connections.

Think about how each space is used and direct people subconsciously to an obvious destination, such as the lounge in the family room.



2. Light

Orientation is the key to maximising natural light. Put living areas in the northern end of the floorplan for all-day light and bedrooms toward the south that need less natural light. You can retrofit orientation to your home with sky lights or second storey extensions.



3. Air

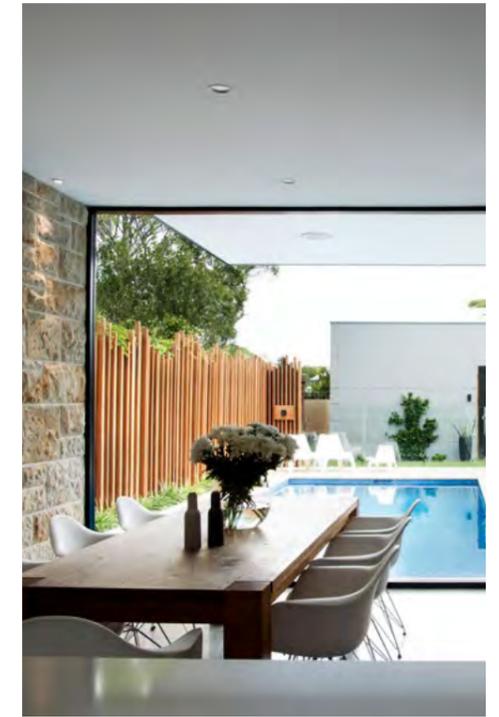
Feeling a cool breeze on a hot day is relaxing. Yet a draught in winter is annoying. Air flow and temperature are vitally important to enjoying your abode.

Create a breezeway so air flows through the house by placing doors and windows on opposing sides of the structure. Place windows adjacent to concrete floors to catch the winter sun and soak up warmth.



4. Sound

Rooms placed at the rear, away from the street are generally quieter. Insulation shields external noise as well as temperature. Battened-out internal walls can provide audio insulation. Textured surfaces like carpet and ceiling finishes stop sound bouncing around..



5. View

It's important to understand what view lines are into your home from surrounding buildings and the neighbourhood. For privacy, block lines of sight with greenery or architectural features. If you don't have an appealing view, create one with a well placed large format mirror with a considered reflection.

Modern Cladding

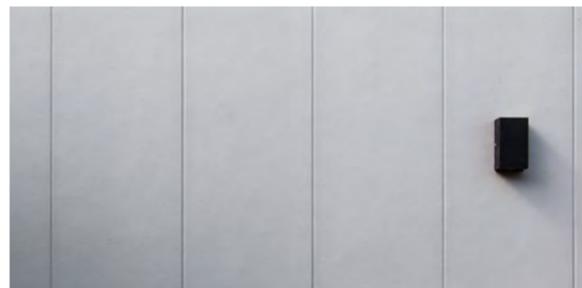
Fibre Cement looks like vertical joint timber and weatherboards yet it's fire resistant and resistant to damage from moisture and termites.



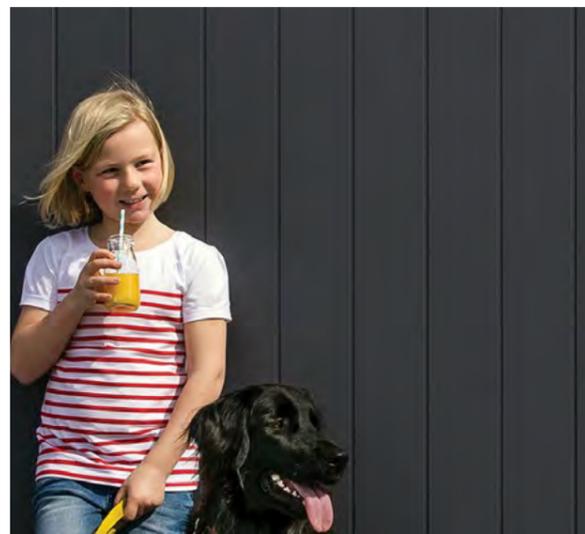
Linea™ Weatherboard 150mm
16mm thick Scyon™ Formulation.



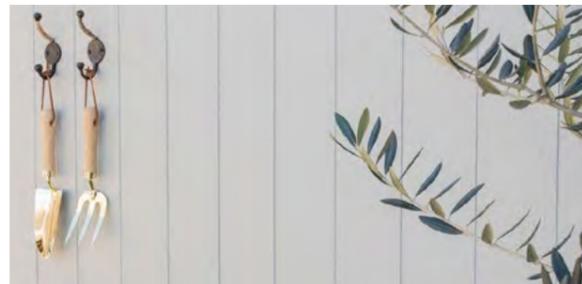
Linea™ Weatherboard 180mm
16mm thick Scyon Formulation.



Axon™ Cladding 400mm Smooth
400mm groove spacing. Smooth texture.



Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth
133mm groove spacing. Smooth texture.



Axon™ Cladding 133mm Grained
133mm groove spacing. Wood grain texture.

Visit the [External Cladding](#) page for sizes, pictures & installation guides.

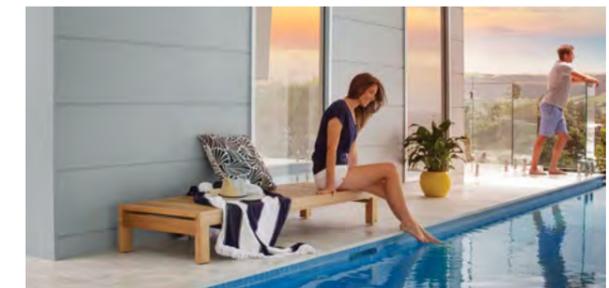
It can also look like panels or a rendered brick wall without the need for a bricklayer and cement render tradesmen.



Stria™ Cladding 325mm
15mm grooves 300mm apart.



Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding
Pre-finished with a fine grain render.



Stria™ Cladding 405mm
15mm grooves 380mm apart to look like raked rendered masonry.



Matrix™ Cladding
Horizontal layout with joints painted black.



Stria™ Cladding 255mm Splayed
A beveled groove 230mm apart for a shiplap weatherboard look.

Product comparison table

 Find out more about [Fibre Cement](#).

James Hardie's range of fibre cement products

Got the look? Now get the products and specs you need to make it happen

James Hardie designed fibre cement products	Thickness	Exterior	Interior	Eaves or Soffits	Timber Look	Render or Cement Look	Panel Look	Hamptons or Traditional Look	Modern Contemporary Look
Linea™ Weatherboard 180mm & 150mm	16mm	•			•			•	•
Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth & Grained	9mm	•	•	•	•				•
Axon™ Cladding 400mm Smooth	9mm	•			•				•
Stria™ Cladding 325mm & 405mm	14mm	•	•			•			•
Stria™ Cladding 255mm Splayed	16mm	•			•			•	
Matrix™ Cladding	8mm	•					•		•
ExoTec™ Vero™ Facade Panel & System	9mm	•				•	•		•
Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding	8.5mm	•				•	•		•
HardieTex™ System	7.5mm	•				•			•
EasyLap™ Panel	8.5mm	•					•		
HardieFlex™ Sheet	4.5 & 6mm	•		•			•		
HardieGroove™ Lining	7.5mm		•	•	•			•	•
PineRidge™ Lining	6mm		•	•					
Villaboard™ Lining	6 & 9mm		•	•					
Versilux™ Lining	4.5 & 6mm		•	•			•		•
HardieDeck™ Decking	19mm	•							•
Secura™ Flooring Interior & Exterior	19 & 22mm	•	•						



Copyright © 2021 James Hardie Australia Pty Ltd
ABN 12 084 635 558™ and ® denotes a trademark or
registered mark owned by James Hardie Technology Ltd.

For information and advice
call 13 11 03 | jameshardie.com.au

