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PLUMBING**
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Renovating Your Bathroom

So you're ready to renovate your bathroom. Congratulations! As you probably already know, you've got some tasks ahead of you. Even with the help of Hinchcliff Plumbing, it's going to be up to you where you want things to go, how much you want to spend, what you want it to look like and how you want it to function.

This step-by-step guide will help you navigate the process through the planning and conceptual phases. Remember to keep your eye on the prize, and seek help and guidance if you need assistance.

What Are You Trying to Achieve?



It seems like a simple enough question that should have a simple answer: "Well, I need a new bathroom."

When embarking on a journey that will take a good chunk out of your time and bank account, you want to get it right. And, importantly, you want to be happy with the end result.

Before you do anything, think about what your ideal bathroom would be. Forget constraints of money and space; just imagine what you want and what the intended purpose will be. Who is this bathroom for? Is it a master bathroom? An ensuite? A kid's bathroom? How often will it get used and what will the function be?

Other considerations are:

- How many people will use it?
- How much time do you spend in the bathroom during the morning, afternoon and night?
- What's your routine — how does your current space hinder it and how could a new space improve it?
- Do you plan to grow old in this house?
- Do you have medical issues like poor eyesight or arthritis to consider?
- Do you just want something that's easy to clean?

- Is storage the catalyst?
- How about relaxation?
- Or do you just want to update the look for resale?
- Would your dream bathroom include towel warmers or even a bidet?

All these things will help guide you in your decisions.

Why Are You Remodelling?

There are three main reasons people want to remodel a bathroom. (For some, it's a combination of these or all three.)



1. Updating the look

If you're happy with the layout of your current bathroom but feel it just needs a refresh, then you'll be focusing your attention on material selection and perhaps new cabinetry and/or plumbing fixtures. Perhaps new tiles or paint.

Pay attention to the age of your home and the remodels done by previous homeowners. Putting new tile over a foundation rife with dry rot, or severely outdated / junky plumbing is only delaying a potentially huge problem down the road.

2. Better functionality and more storage

Perhaps you've always hated how the door swings open and hits the vanity, or you're tired of stacking toilet paper on the toilet cistern and seeing make-up scattered on the counter. Maybe you never use the bathtub and long for a larger shower. Or you crave two sinks instead of one or more natural light.

This level of remodel will likely have you demolishing the space, and possibly rearranging the elements within it with plumbing changes. This would result in an all-new bathroom. However, it would also be on the higher end in regard to cost.



3. Resale value

If you're updating your bathroom to sell, you'll want to look at what potential buyers might want. While it's hard to anticipate what a potential buyer is looking for, you can do a little research on what appeals to the majority of homeowners. Internet trends are a good place to start, as well as checking new display homes and other real-estate properties currently on the market.



Research and Budget

Before you get ahead of yourself know how much you will be able to spend. You probably already have an idea of what you can afford, so the first thing you'll want to understand is how much a bathroom remodel is going to cost. The median spend on master bathroom remodels in Australia is \$10,000, depending on the extent of your makeover.

Tip to remember: To keep costs down, see if you can make your updates without moving any of the existing plumbing or wiring.



Find a professional or tackle the job yourself ?

A professional bathroom renovator like Hinchcliff Plumbing may be able to think of things you may not have considered — like rearranging the space in a creative way to maximise functionality and efficiency.

There are different ways you can work with your renovator. A little guidance from a consultant or a more developed vision with a design plan may be all you need to get started. For particularly complicated jobs, full design services are probably best.

If you're comfortable tackling the demolition, construction and installation yourself, you may not need a general contractor. But it's a project that can quickly get out of your grasp. If you lack experience, a renovation could take you several times as long as a professional to complete, and the result — and quality — may not live up to your expectations.

The complexity of plumbing, laying tiles and flooring, installing vanities and toilets, and more allows much room for error. Repairing mistakes can be costly so you could end up with a bathroom that's full of flaws (that's not even taking into account the time, mental strain and frustration of chasing up trades and materials when you could be doing other things).

For major structural changes, you will need to hire an architect. A DA will also need to be submitted and approved by local council. All plumbing and electrical work is required by law to be carried out by qualified technicians. So when in doubt, hire a professional such as Hinchcliff Plumbing to help.



Refine Your Plan

Gather images of bathrooms you like. Keep photos of layouts, styles, finishes and more. For example, you may like how the toilet, vanity and shower are laid out in one particular photo, but don't necessarily like the style, colour or materials in that space. You can pick features from different photos that you like, which makes it easier to explain what you are looking for in a bathroom

If your dream bathroom doesn't seem as though it could ever fit in the space you have, think about what's on the other side of the bathroom walls. Can you steal space from an adjacent cupboard, bedroom or other unused area? Is it possible to punch out from your home to create more room?

Other options to consider are whether or not you want the toilet in your main bathroom or in its own separate room. What kinds of special storage do you need — for the hair dryer, make-up, shaving kit

and more. How can you get more natural light ? Or even how to incorporate sinks and vanities to fit your height and that of your spouse or partner.



Do you want a transitional area that connects different entries to the bathroom so you don't have to wake your spouse or partner while getting ready in the morning? There's almost no end to what you can dream up and execute, so think ahead and plan accordingly to get everything you want.

It may seem mundane, but something as simple as where the PowerPoints will go can have a huge impact on your morning routine. Do you charge your phone in the bathroom? Use a hair dryer or other devices?

Now is when you will want to make a plan for how you'll access the power source. Other considerations may include things like where you should put the toilet or even where you will keep the toilet paper.

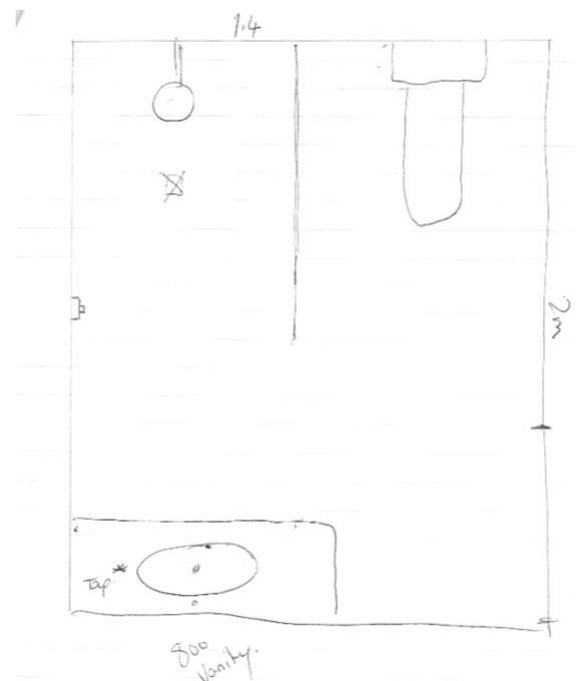
Map out your design

You will need to draw sketches and preliminary floor plans and elevations that show the layout of your planned bathroom and the size of its components, like the vanity and any cabinetry.

The point here is to get the major elements and spacing down before moving forward, not to have a complete picture of how the finished bathroom will look in terms of colour and materials.

Once the measurements and sizes are nailed down, you will then know how many square feet of tile you'll need to order or how big the marble slab for the countertop should be. You or your designer can use this info to start shopping around for prices on materials.

These drawings, sketches and scope of work will also be used to speak to contractors when obtaining quotes.



Choose Your Materials, Finishes and Colours

It's likely you've been planning for this remodel for quite some time and already have your ideas with inspirational photos breaking down how you want your space to look.

Now's the time to research materials so you'll have some idea of costs and options available so you can have a good conversation with your designer or supplier. For example, marble looks great, but it's a pain to maintain and expensive. Maybe you want to look at easy-to-clean options? Maybe you didn't know that wood can indeed work in bathrooms or weren't aware of the great stone possibilities.



Though the selections in this phase seem endless, here's a general rundown of what you'll be choosing:

- Bathtub
- Colour
- Countertops
- Tapware
- Flooring
- Lighting
- Mirrors
- Shower
- Basins
- Storage
- Tiles
- Toilet
- Vanities



Design Development and Construction Documents

At this stage, you should be actively reviewing the floor plan, elevations, tile layout and any other relevant drawings associated with your project.



If you're working with a knowledgeable professional, they will take this up, as they are skilled at navigating the process and working with local council, suppliers and trade professionals.

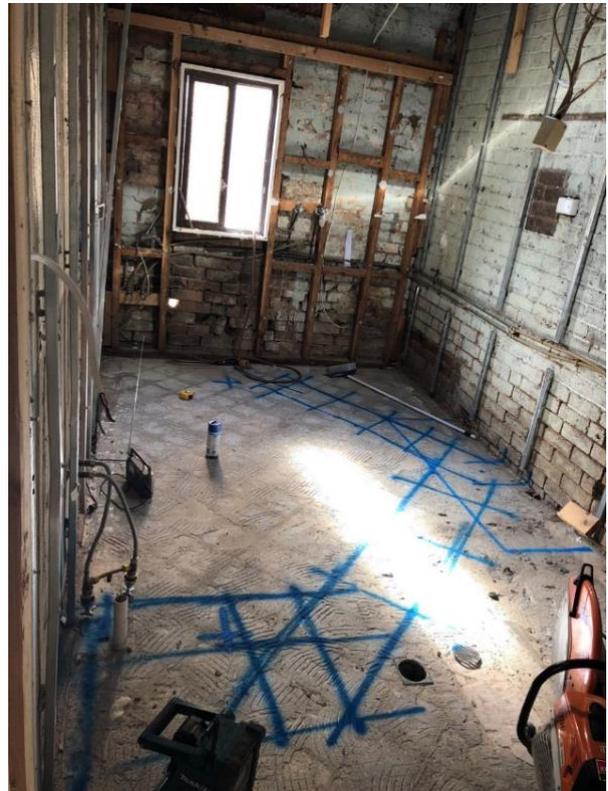
If you're doing a lot of the work yourself, you'll need to brush up on what permits you'll need, and where and how to submit drawings.

Plan for Installation and Get Ready for Demo

As mentioned, there's a lot that goes into a bathroom remodel, especially if you are doing the work yourself. Depending on the size and scope of your project, the process can take six weeks to eight months (or more). And while some of it can be done on the fly, you're much better off the more prepared you are.

If you are doing the renovation yourself, it's ideal to have every last detail planned, and every material picked out and ordered, before construction starts. The last thing you want is to get halfway through your remodel and have to tell your construction crew to take a two-week break while you wait for that back-ordered marble to arrive from Italy.

You'll want to nail down the nuts and bolts of how things will flow and where things will generally be placed. If you are doing it yourself you will need a dry space to store your materials, so you'll need to plan on where you're going to keep everything while construction is underway. Can you make space in your garage or on the side of your house?



Are you prepared for the project and disruption? What time will the workers be there, and will



someone be on-site to answer questions and oversee the construction? Will it affect your work schedule or any trips? Where will you shower during construction? Who in your family will be available should something come up? Think about how long the crew will be there and if the materials will arrive in time. Any last-minute decisions need to take top priority to ensure a smooth-running project.

Consider what to do if unexpected issues arise, such as the plumbing not matching the plan from the construction of the house.

Cheaper is not always better

If you are doing the work yourself, it is recommended you obtain quotes from each individual trade ie: electrician, joiner, glazier, plumber etc. It helps to know a little about what's in a contractor's bid. Don't let the highest bid scare you, and don't immediately jump on the lowest bid. Usually the lowest bid can mean shortcuts in the job, or cheap products used.

A local resident got three bids from contractors for their master bathroom. The first bid came in at \$27,000, which elicited an "Are you kidding me?" and "That's ridiculous" from the resident. The second bid, at \$24,000, was equally shocking, mostly because she and her husband offered to do the demolition and painting themselves. The third bid came in at \$9,000, and they thought that was more like it.

Once they demolished the bathroom, things looked different. The plumbing inside the house was from 1960, and nothing could be done unless it was brought up to code. The pipe had seen better days and needed to be moved. That added an additional \$4,800 just in plumbing costs.

There was also electrical wiring that needed to be replaced, which added another \$2,000. By this point, they were already at \$15,000, not including materials. When the dust had settled, or rather, when the dust had been cleaned up and the bathroom was complete, the total cost came to about \$19,000.

They saved a little but had to put in a lot more work. The resident had to find the materials herself, go to showrooms and purchase everything, and coordinate with installers and other subcontractors to get things done. What she had anticipated would take a couple of months turned into five months.

If the local resident had decided to go with a contractor who offered a higher bid, it would've cost a little more, however it would have saved them a lot of stress and arguments, not taking into account the time they spent doing legwork and physical labour.

Which professional to hire ?

Hinchcliff Plumbing can help manage the renovation process, saving you the time and stress of chasing trades, suppliers not returning your calls and how to coordinate workflow to minimise delays.

We'll come to your home to discuss your needs, measure the space and draw up a plan for your renovated area. We can also meet you at the suppliers in town to provide advice about choosing fixtures.

Do you want a complete demolition and a whole new look? From moving toilets and showers to maximise your space to installing a new bath, vanity, shower and tapware and updating the tiles and paint, Hinchcliff Plumbing can handle all the specialised areas to deliver your bathroom fully renovated.

Or perhaps you would like to keep your bathroom as it is? Hinchcliff Plumbing can show you how updating the tapware and a new coat of paint can transform and lift a bathroom dramatically.

Whether the scope of your renovation is big or small, we'll help turn your bathroom vision into reality.

So give Hinchcliff Plumbing a call. We have an excellent reputation for quality work, professional service and friendly advice, but especially reliability... We will return your call!