

NEW Homes

YOUR COMPREHENSIVE WEEKEND GUIDE



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Creating a cosy common area

TAMRA CARR

With Seven Network's *Better Homes and Gardens* reporting that Aussies are spending roughly 3.3 hours a day – or 50 days a year – sitting on their couches, it's no wonder living rooms are often among the home's most comfortable spaces.

Complete with a squishy sofa, a coffee table, a television and perhaps a crowded bookshelf, living rooms are largely designed to promote rest and relaxation, while also serving as the ideal backdrop for conversation, scrolling through streaming services or reading a bestseller.

Atrium Homes Sales Manager Rod Dawes described the Australian living room as most important and said it was typically designed to marry well with other critical spaces in the home.

"It's probably the most important room in the home all year-round," Mr Dawes said.

"It is generally in partnership with the kitchen and meals area and is typically where homeowners spend most of their time together as a family," he said.

With the living room such a



The Long Island by Atrium Homes.

frequently visited part of the home, Mr Dawes said buyers had a variety of design expectations in order to maximise the potential of the space.

Among the choices showcased by the custom and luxury builder in its displays are its use of a neutral aesthetic, with whites, creams, beiges and soft greys dominating preferred colour palettes.

In Atrium Homes' The Long Island, the living room is bright, large, captures plenty of light, features a fireplace and TV and beautifully flows through to the alfresco.

The link between the living room and outdoor dining space is also highlighted in The Edge and The Gables display homes via an open-plan layout which includes the kitchen.

Mr Dawes said these designs exemplified what people wanted from their living rooms.

"Most living rooms are the stepping off point for the outside living or alfresco," he said.

"The living room will generally have a door to the outside and have lots of windows to capture sunlight.

"Inside, the living area needs to be bright and airy, making it a pleasant area for sitting, talking, reading, relaxing and general interaction."

While most other rooms in a home will likely be designed with comfort in mind, the living room uniquely serves as a multi-use space and will often need to be flexible enough to adapt to dynamic purposes.

The room differs from laundries, bathrooms, bedrooms or kitchens, which are typically single-use and often require a far more utilitarian approach to design that reduces their ability to be versatile.

While Mr Dawes said these overarching ideas were typical living room needs, each homeowner was different and should engage a reputable builder to discuss just how their living room would suit their lifestyle.

"The design of the living room and the position of the other interacting rooms depends on the individual family and their desired lifestyle, which often depends on the age of the children," he said.

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Space-saving tips for a clutter-free home

BEN ASHLEY

The thing with things is they have a tendency to accumulate, filling every bit of available space in our homes. In order to deal with the never-ending array of stuff that somehow sneaks into our lives, the secret is clever storage.

Webb & Brown-Neaves Interior Design Consultant Melissa Redwood listed a few of her favourite space-saving ideas to ensure your home remained tidy and uncluttered.

"When choosing a bed, opt for one with built-in storage. This could be in the headboard or drawers underneath the bed," she said.

"Save space in your bedroom by storing things such as handbags, shoes or bed linen within your bed."

Chances are, there are walls in

your home sitting bare and almost begging to be utilised.

"Free up floor space by adding a few floating shelves to the walls throughout your home," Ms Redwood said.

"This is a great way to store extra bits and bobs that would usually take up desk, bench or floor space, and can be a great addition to enhance the design of your home."

Everyone has that miscellaneous drawer – the lucky dip you reach into when all other options have been exhausted – but Ms Redwood said it didn't have to be this way.

"Maximise your drawer storage by adding drawer organisers," she said.

"These are commonly used for cutlery in the kitchen, but they can also be a useful tool for your bedroom and bathroom drawers,

to prevent them from getting overfilled."

Whether you're a folder or a scruncher, rolling your clothes is the most space-effective way to store them, according to Ms Redwood.

"For any soft items you have in shelves or drawers, you can save space by rolling rather than folding them.

"Rolling up your linen and clothing can allow you to store up to 33 per cent more items in the same space, and it's also a great way to prevent fold lines and crinkles."

Few things are more unsightly than a wild tangle of cables, and Ms Redwood believed bulky chargers could take up more space than you might think.

"Arrange your cords using small cord holders or binder clips and label them with stickers or even plastic bread tags – you'll never unplug the wrong thing again," she said.

Hanging items on hooks, such as on the backs of cupboard doors, are another great way to make use of empty space.

"Think purses, jewellery or even coats," Ms Redwood said.

"By keeping items that you reach for often on hooks behind doors, you can save space and make them easily accessible.

"Pots and pans take up a lot of drawer space, so why not hang these up too? Take some inspiration from the kitchen in our display home The Casa."

Organisation is arguably more important in your kitchen than anywhere else, and Ms Redwood had a novel idea for eliminating dead corner space.

"Use small lazy Susans in your fridge and pantry," she said.

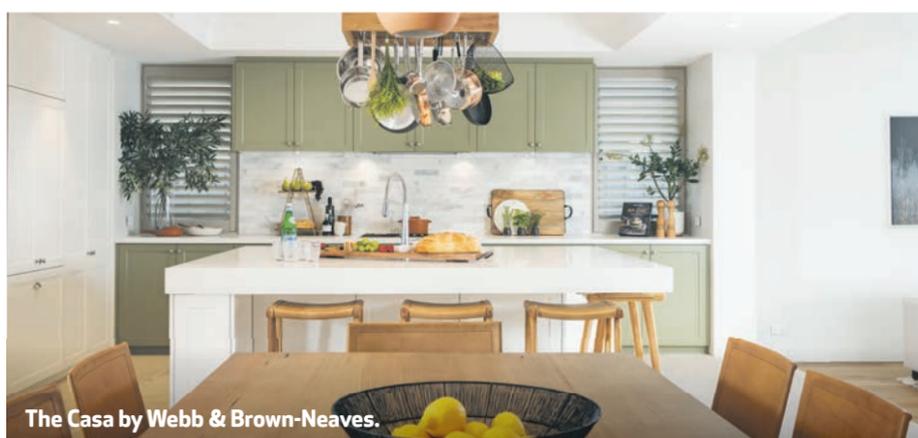
"These work great for spices and sauces, and allow you to find everything with ease.

"Hiding away your rubbish inside your kitchen cabinets is another great way to ensure your kitchen feels clean and tidy, and keep smells at bay.

"Look for underutilised space throughout your home and think outside the box."

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The Casa by Webb & Brown-Neaves.

Free up floor space by adding a few floating shelves to the walls throughout your home.