



Old Bathroom Renovations for Established Melbourne Homes

Your bathroom has served you well for years. Now the tiles look dated, the layout feels tight, and it no longer suits how you live. A [bathroom renovation](#) can change that, though updating one in an older home brings its own questions.

We wrote this guide to help. Our designers and builders at The Kitchen Design Centre know older bathrooms inside out, so the advice stays practical and honest.

Is it time to renovate your older bathroom?

If you keep patching the same problems, it is probably time. Persistent leaks, mould that keeps returning, and worn or dated fittings are clear signs. A layout that no longer works only adds to it.

Since 1994, we have renovated established Melbourne homes, so we know how to read these signs. Some are purely cosmetic and easy to fix. Others point to something bigger behind the walls, which is when a full bathroom remodel makes sense.

What should you know before renovating an old bathroom

A few decisions matter most before any work begins. Get these right, and the rest of the renovation runs far more smoothly.

- Decide what to keep and what to replace, whether that means saving a feature or swapping a tired tub for a walk-in shower.
- Rethink the bathroom layout if it no longer suits how you live, using space-savers like a pocket door where rooms are tight.

- Plan the order of work early so trades follow in the right sequence.
- Allow for the hidden issues that come with an older home, which is where many bathroom design mistakes start.

Our renovations follow a clear [six-step process](#), from your first showroom conversation through to installation. Knowing each stage in advance keeps the project feeling manageable rather than overwhelming.

Do you need council approval to renovate a bathroom?

In most cases, no. A like-for-like bathroom update rarely needs council approval, as long as you are not moving walls or altering the structure. Even so, waterproofing must meet Victorian compliance standards every time.

As [registered builders](#), Michael Simpson and Peter Schelfhout know exactly what needs certification. So compliance is handled correctly from the start, with nothing left to chance.

What problems are common in old bathrooms?

Older bathrooms often hide more than they show. Years of daily use take a toll, and the worst problems sit out of sight until the work begins.

- Failed waterproofing lets moisture seep into walls and floors, often without any visible sign.
- Asbestos can lurk in older wall sheeting, so it needs careful testing before anything is removed.
- Perished sealant around the bath and basin allows slow leaks to spread.
- Corroded pipework reduces water flow and risks bursts down the track.
- Poor ventilation traps moisture, which feeds mould and damages surfaces over time.

This is why we strip a bathroom back properly. Demolition often brings these faults into the open, so our qualified cabinet makers and certified tradespeople fix them at the source instead of covering them over.

How much does it cost to renovate an old bathroom in Australia?

The honest answer is that it depends. Every old bathroom is different, so the cost shifts with the size of the room and the condition behind the walls. Hidden repairs and relocating fixtures both add to the work.

Size matters too. A compact powder room costs far less than a full family bathroom. Instead of guessing, [our designer](#) visits your home, assesses the space, and gives you an accurate Project Costing built around your bathroom.

What are cost-effective ways to update an old bathroom?

The smartest updates last. Spend where it counts and save on the finishing touches.

- New floor tiles lift the whole room for a modest spend.
- A round mirror updates the look without touching the layout.

- Fresh towel rails refresh the finish quickly.
- New toilet roll holders tidy up the small details.

Put your money where it lasts. Custom cabinetry built in our [Melbourne factory](#) fits the space exactly. A made-to-measure vanity top outlasts any flat-pack replacement, so the spend holds its value.

What's involved in renovating an old bathroom?

An old bathroom renovation follows a clear order of work. Each stage sets up the next, so the right sequence matters more than anything else.

Hidden faults often surface once the old fittings come out, and these get sorted first. Rerouting pipework and removing old materials safely come next. The waterproofing membrane then needs to cure properly before any tiling begins.

We give you a single client manager who guides you through each stage. You always know what happens next, so the work stays predictable, and the disruption to your home stays low.

What's the best way to update the plumbing in an old bathroom?

Start beneath the surface, well before the finishes. Old bathrooms often hide aged or corroded pipework that a cosmetic update leaves untouched. Replacing it now prevents leaks and weak water pressure later.

This is also the time to relocate fixtures so the room works better for you. New tapware and shower heads finish the job and improve daily comfort.

Because we handle design, build and installation in-house, the plumbing and trades stay coordinated. Fewer handovers mean the work is sequenced correctly, with nothing missed between stages.

How do you modernise an old bathroom without losing its character?

The goal is balance. Keep the character that gives an old bathroom its charm, while adding the function modern life needs. A frameless shower screen, for example, updates the space without fighting its period feel.

Some original features are worth restoring rather than removing.

- A clawfoot tub becomes a striking centrepiece once restored.
- Original wall tiles can be cleaned and patched to keep their patina.
- Period cornices and skirting boards hold the room's proportions.
- Leadlight or timber-framed windows add warmth no reproduction matches.

Before any building starts, we show you the modernised design in a 3D walkthrough. You see the new finishes beside the character details you want to keep, so you can confirm the balance is right before committing.

Which colours work best for a timeless bathroom?

Choose colours that age well. Soft whites, warm neutrals, and muted greens suit older homes and rarely date. Bold colour schemes can work too, as long as you keep them to features you can change easily.

Mosaic tiles are a smart way to add personality without overwhelming the room. Our founders draw on more than 60 years of combined experience to steer you toward finishes that still look right years later.

Does renovating an old bathroom add value to your home?

Yes, a quality bathroom renovation adds real value. Buyers notice a well-built bathroom, and it lifts how the whole home feels day to day. In an established home, it can be one of the strongest returns you make.

Poor-quality work does the opposite. Low-grade finishes and hidden faults can lower a home's value and put buyers off.

The same quality that makes us a [trusted builder](#) for leading Victorian home builders protects the long-term value of your own home. Lasting materials and proper construction hold their worth for years.

Plan your old bathroom renovation with us

Renovating an old bathroom should feel manageable from start to finish. We guide you through every stage, keep you informed, and plan the work around your daily life. The result is less stress and a home you can keep living in while the work happens.

The hardest part is starting, and we make that easy. Visit our [Blackburn](#), [Essendon](#) or [Eltham](#) showroom any day you like, no appointment needed, or [book a Discovery Call](#) to take the first step.