

LOCATION? LOCATION? LOCATION!

The location where you decide to build could have a big bearing on who you choose to build your new home. Master Builders director Michael McLean explains.

AS Australia's largest state, Western Australia occupies a huge land mass of more than 2.5 million square kilometres, which equates to roughly one person per square kilometre. Nearly 75 per cent of our population lives in the Perth metropolitan area, which means most of our state is sparsely populated, with limited access to builders in some areas.

When deciding on a builder to build your new home or renovation there are a lot of factors to consider. The location you would like to live is one of the most important.

Location will often have a bearing on the type of house you're likely to build and the range of builders available to build it or renovate it for you.

If you're thinking of living in a regional town, you might find the best or only option is to choose a local builder with good connections with the local specialist contractors and suppliers of building materials.

In the South West and Great Southern, however, there are several renowned project builders with regional offices based there, which increases your choice.

Likewise, if you're relocating from a regional area to Perth you'll probably find your local builders won't be inclined to build your dream home – even though some have special favours to their good friends or business associates in the past.

The other thing to note is that the style of building and design of new homes can be very different in some areas. For example, in the north-west all new homes need to be built to withstand cyclones and capitalise on air flow.

In some parts of Perth's hills suburbs and the Great Southern, the hilly terrain lends itself to pole homes, which are unusual in flatter terrains. The clay soils in eastern areas like Darlington, the Swan Valley and the Avon region require a solid base to avoid cracking of the structure, which some builders are more experienced in dealing with.

Building a new home in the Perth metropolitan area provides you with the greatest choice because of the number of builders to

choose from and the variety of dwelling types available, which include:

- display homes with template designs which are built by project builders;
- contract or individually designed homes;
- granny flats which can be built on the same property as an existing home;
- group dwellings such as duplexes, triplexes or multiple dwellings on the same area of land;
- townhouses, which are generally two or three levels on a sub-divided or narrow block of land;
- apartments, which are generally in a multi-storey complex with or without a balcony;
- modular or pre-fabricated homes, which are generally assembled on your chosen site or transported there from a factory or storage area;
- and a heritage-listed home, which will restrict your options to demolish or renovate it in certain ways.

Location has a bearing on town planning schemes, the number of levels a building can comprise and the number of dwelling units that can be built within an area of land.

The trend towards in-fill developments and medium-density housing will suit some builders more than others based on their expertise and experience. Your preference to have proximity to public transport, schools, parks, the beach, forests, entertainment precincts and/or shopping centres will also have a bearing on your housing options.

All registered builders in WA are qualified and capable of building any type of home in any location in our vast state. However, some are better equipped and skilled than others to build certain types of new housing.

As a prospective homebuyer, I encourage you to check out the credentials and experience of your builder very carefully and thoroughly. It is worth the effort to do your homework. The Master Builders website (www.mbawa.com) is a good place to start your research – after you decide where you might like to build or renovate.

