

# Future proof your residence

**FRANCES COSWAY**

WHEN you're building a home you anticipate being in for a long time, you can expect your needs will change as your family grows, and as you become older.

This means you need to think about future proofing your home to ensure it meet your needs today, as well as in 15-20 years time.

One of the best ways to do this is to create flexible spaces and rooms that are multifunctional.

The ideal approach requires you to have rooms with doors — they can be double sliding doors that retract back into the wall so they create a sense of space when open, but allow for privacy and noise reduction when closed.

It also means you don't need to heat or cool these rooms when not in use.

For example, a room may act as a playroom for younger children, a study for teenagers, a spare room when the kids leave home, or a mix of both with a desk and sofa bed so it can be a study by day, and spare room by night.

Even though open-plan retreats are popular at the moment, they need to be considered carefully.

It's difficult to close these open plan retreats off for heating and cooling, and noise also travels from these spaces.

They generally can't be used as an office or bedroom as they are not able to be closed off for privacy.

My suggestion is to create as much flexibility as you can with your floorplan, so you have choices and options for when things change later on.

If you have a double-storey home, think about access to key



A sliding door can be an easy way to add flexibility to your floorplan.

areas for when you are older and don't want to climb stairs.

Consider the placement of the master bedroom.

Having it downstairs allows easy access to the main living areas of the home, kitchen and a bathroom.

The objective is to have everything you need on one level.

This will allow you to stay in your home as long as possible, while still being able to have older children and guests stay on the upper level.

**Frances Cosway is an interior designer at White Pebble Interiors and author of *Your Forever Home*. Visit: [whitepebbleinteriors.com.au](http://whitepebbleinteriors.com.au)**

## TIPS FOR FUTURE PROOFING DESIGN

- Create multifunctional rooms. Your goal should be to configure spaces around your home so they can do more than one thing at any given time
- Create flexible rooms. It is possible to design rooms so that they can have one purpose now, and suit another purpose later on when your family situation changes
- Minimise inflexible spaces. Any rooms that aren't able to be closed off will be limited in terms of the flexibility they can offer, both today and in the future
- Think about access. There are key areas of the home that you will always want to be able to access and having them conveniently grouped will help you continue to enjoy your home when you are older. Aim to have everything on the one level



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