

# Features that get better with age

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**There's a lot to consider when designing homes for people in their golden years.**

Oswald Homes Principal Designer Brook Leber said generally older homebuyers wanted to maintain their independence while remaining in the suburb they called home.

"People are looking at building homes that will cater for their needs in retirement instead of being forced to move into an aged care facility or lifestyle village," he said.

"The cost to design and build a home that is adaptable for future needs is substantially less than having to retrofit an existing home."

Mr Leber said when designing a home for seniors, it was key to ensure it was easy to enter, move around and live in, with many older homebuyers opting to have at least one bedroom on the ground floor with an ensuite for ease of access.

While practicality and looks don't always go hand in hand, Mr Leber said designing a house for residents' later years could be a plus on the aesthetic front as well.

"Wider passages and doors look amazing, and also cater for wheelchairs or walking frames," he said.

"Level doorways with recessed sills are stylish and make entering and moving around easier, and creating larger bathrooms with hobless, screenless showers is more elegant, but also allows for grip rails and facilities to be retrofitted for

occupants with limited mobility."

Mr Leber said building new also enabled homeowners to embrace the modern convenience of home automation.

Summit Homes Design Manager Peter Wilkinson said when it came to pre-start, retirees needed to consider how simple features, such as door levers over doorknobs, could help accessibility.

"A hobless shower floor is functional for everyone, including grandchildren and grandparents," he said.

"With a low, flat surface, this is also ideal for those who need wheelchair access."

Mr Wilkinson said LED lighting could also lend a contemporary feel to a home and promote healthy sleeping patterns and anxiety reduction.

"Hard-surface flooring also provides easier mobility for anyone using a wheelchair or an assistive device," he said.

"A wide front entry door, preferably with no steps, also allows for easy access in and out of the home.

"Installing handrails and a bench seat in the shower will also offer additional safety."

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Summit Homes' Nordic display includes a hobless shower; a feature across all of its display homes.



Residential Attitudes, a sister company of Oswald Homes, incorporated a handrail in the spacious shower of its Barnhaus display.



A hobless shower and floating cabinets in Residential Attitudes' Warehouse display.