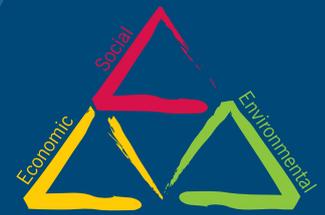


FACT SHEET: Bathrooms



smart&sustainable HOMES



Smart decisions at the initial design stage of the bathroom can avoid common design flaws which significantly reduce the cost of future renovations as well as ongoing running costs. The benefits of this include cost savings and a positive impact on the environment.

Importantly, a smart and sustainable home has a bathroom that incorporates the three elements of sustainability:

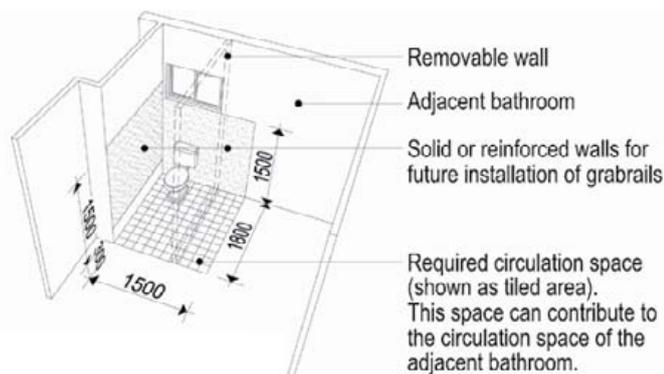
- **Environmental**—water and energy efficient
- **Social**—safer because it reduces the likelihood of injuries from slips, trips and falls
- **Economic**—save money on energy (water heating, lighting), water and future modifications.

Design

If you are building a new home or renovating an existing bathroom, consider how user-friendly it can be at the initial stages of design and how adaptable it can be to meet changing needs into the future.

A **flexible bathroom design** can be used by people of diverse ages and abilities and when modifications are needed they can be completed easily and cost-effectively. For example, a bathroom which can be accessed at ground level and that has reinforced walls to allow installation of fittings (eg grab rail) at a later date.

For example, in homes with a separate bathroom and toilet, plan for adaptability by locating them side by side. This will allow for a wall to be removed in the future if needed. Plumbing and electrical services should not be placed in the adjoining wall.



Accessible toilet

Natural ventilation and lighting

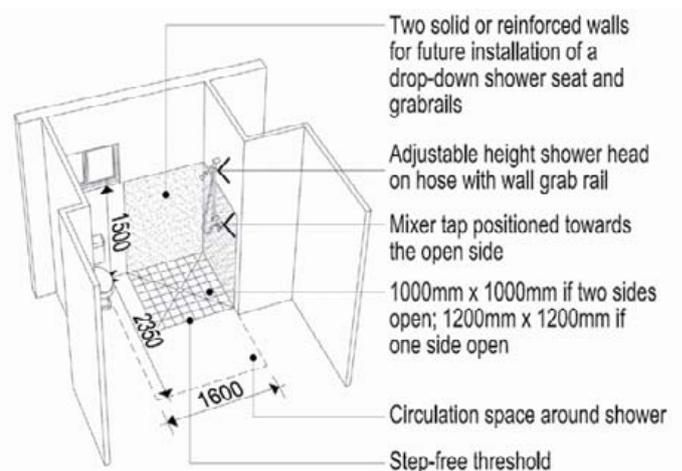
Design the bathroom to access **natural ventilation** and **lighting**. This will help the bathroom stay dry and deter growth of mould as well as save money on energy for lighting.



Place **windows** at an elevated level or above eye-level to provide **security, privacy, light and ventilation**. The window should be easily reached for opening and closing, for example without having to climb/step into the bath tub.

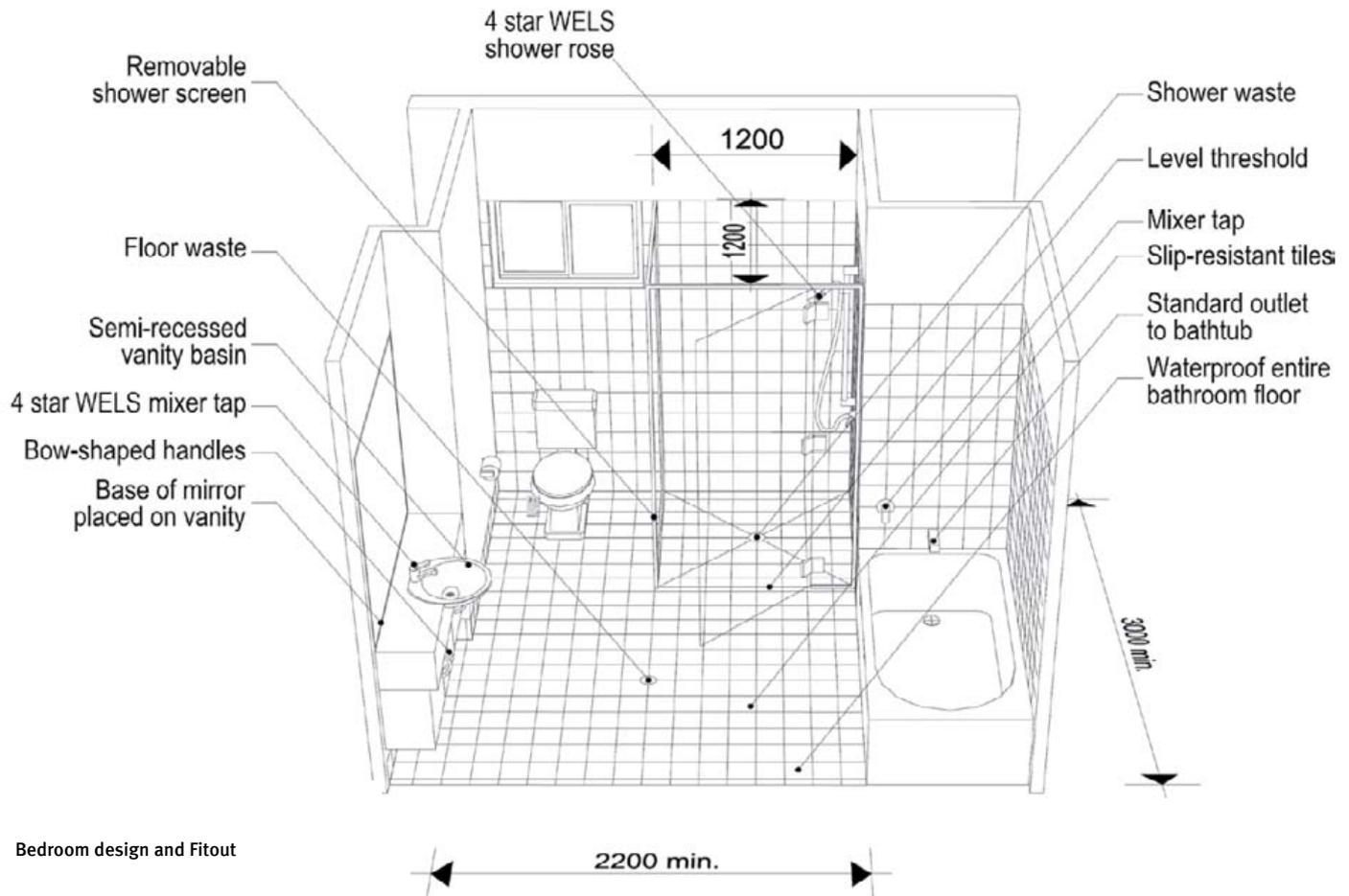
Showers

Showers built with a level, **step-free threshold** (hobless) are safer and more flexible as they minimise the risk of tripping and are suitable for all ages and abilities.



Accessible shower





► Construction

It is recommended that the entire bathroom floor be **recessed and waterproofed** and screed the height of the floor to a **level door threshold**. This will ensure there is no tripping hazard at the door to the bathroom.

Fix structural plywood to the wall framing adjacent to the shower and toilet before fixing the wall lining. This is a low cost option which can be carried out at the time of construction, and will allow for cost-effective fitting of grab rails in the future if needed.

Locating the **vanity waste pipe** in the wall behind the basin will free up storage space beneath the vanity and allow for the installation of a wider range of vanity units, such as the semi-recessed style.

It is recommended that the vanity bench have **rounded edges** to prevent injuries in case of a fall and a contrasting colour splashback to easily discern it from the vanity.

Mirrors that extend down to the vanity bench top prevent children climbing on furniture or fittings to see themselves.

► Finishes

It is best to lay a **slip-resistant, hard wearing floor**. Install the cupboards over the tiles.

D-shape or bow handles on the vanity unit are easier for people of all ages and abilities to use.

► Fittings

Installing mixer taps throughout the bathroom will make them easier for everyone to use. They should be a minimum of **4 star WELS** (Water Efficiency and Labelling Standard) for the shower and vanity with a standard fitting for the bathtub.

Taps should be easy to reach. Locate the shower mixer tap on the door or opening side to reduce the risk of scalding when turning the shower on and off.

If you are renovating, install a hot water **temperature control device** as a safety feature. This is mandatory in new homes.

A **child-proof or lockable cupboard** will provide safe storage for medicines and poisons.

The bathroom is a common place for people to collapse if unwell. In the interest of safety and accessibility in the event of an emergency, it is preferable to install **privacy latches** on the inside of the bathroom door instead of a lock.

For further information:

www.smarthousing.qld.gov.au
www.sustainable-homes.org.au

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