

WARNING: **10 Things** to be Aware of **Before Purchasing a** **Granny Flat**

The simple guide to help you save thousands of dollars



TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Granny flat	1
What Makes a Granny Flat a Great Investment?	2
◆ House an aging family member	2
◆ Generate additional income.....	2
◆ Reduce your cost of living	2
◆ Increase your livable space	3
◆ See your family more often	3
Beware!!! Many Granny Flat Builders Take Shortcuts... ..	4
10 Things to Be Aware of Before Purchasing a Granny Flat	5
◆ #1 - Only One Coat of Waterproofing	5
◆ #2 - No Proper Approvals (aka 'Council Nightmare')	5
◆ #3 - No Termite Barriers	7
◆ #4 - Failure to Use Structural Timber	8
◆ #5 - Zero Luxury Interiors	9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

◆ #6 - No Rubbish Removal	10
◆ #7 - No Insurance or Home Warranty (aka 'You're on your own')	11
◆ #8 - Low Quality Building Materials	12
◆ #9 - Lack of Finishing Touches	13
◆ #10 - Poor Practical Design.....	14
What Should the Construction Process	15
Look Like Once You Decide to Build?	15
◆ Design: Weeks 1 and 2	15
◆ Compliance and Approvals: Weeks 3-5	15
◆ Construction & Hand-Over: Weeks 5-14	15
BEFORE YOU GO...	16

WHAT IS A GRANNY FLAT?

Otherwise known as an accessory dwelling unit, a granny flat is essentially a detached living space that you can add to your property. Don't let the name fool you. A granny flat isn't just for grandparents. In fact, a granny flat can be used for a variety of reasons, including:

- Live-in space for a nanny or carer
- Live-in space for parents or other relatives
- Temporary accommodation for visitors, friends and family
- Secondary income in the form of paying tenants

Unlike buying another property or building another home, a granny flat is generally compact, small, versatile, and extremely functional. It can also be constructed without requiring special permissions or additional travel to and from the construction site.

What Makes a Granny Flat a Great Investment?

✓ House an aging family member

If you're worried about the health or the wellbeing of a parent or an unwell relative, building a granny flat on your property can be a great way to keep an eye on them and ensure they're within arm's distance of a helping hand. By housing a family member in a granny flat, you can also help stay on top of their medication and make sure that there is always someone available in case of an emergency.

✓ Generate additional income

If you use your granny flat to house a paying tenant, it can be a great way to generate passive and consistent income. Looking more broadly, a granny flat also adds to the retail value of your property, which means that you will make more money if and when you decide to sell your home. With granny flats generating between \$350 to \$500 a week in rent, there's money in your unused backyard space.

✓ Reduce your cost of living

If you decide to live in a granny flat instead of a home or an apartment, your living costs will undoubtedly decrease. This can be beneficial if you want to save money or if you're looking for more financial freedom and fewer bills.



✓ Increase your livable space

Have you noticed less and less space in your home? Over time, possessions and belongings can fill your home and leave you craving a little extra room for your hobbies, storage items, or clothing. If you build a granny flat for personal use, you can have more livable space or storage space. You can also turn your granny flat into a dedicated office space, an art studio, a boy's club, or any other room you've always dreamed of.

✓ See your family more often

If you have family members who live far away, it can be hard to see them regularly or for an extended period of time. After all, hotel prices are not cheap, and you may not have the extra space in your main home for them to stay comfortably. A granny flat can resolve all of these concerns, helping you spend more time with your nearest and dearest.

Beware!!! Many Granny Flat Builders Take Shortcuts...

Intrigued by the benefits of building a granny flat? You should be!

That said, many businesses in the granny flat industry will take shortcuts, leaving you with a less-than-stellar granny flat that you'll have issues with down the line. From cutting corners during construction to leaving you vulnerable against termites and the elements, knowledge is your best weapon.

To help you avoid partnering with a dodgy backyard builder, we've listed the top ten concerns to be aware of when comparing vendors and moving on to the next steps of your purchase.

Make sure your granny flat builders can safely say they won't leave you exposed to any of the 10 problems on this list, and you'll have a stunning, cost-effective new granny flat to enjoy in no time.



10 Things to Be Aware of Before Purchasing a Granny Flat

#1 - Only One Coat of Waterproofing

Many builders will cut corners by applying only one coat of waterproofing to bathrooms and laundries in your granny flat. This can compromise your surfaces and prevent them from having full waterproofing or water resistance. Over time, this can lead to water damage, mould, and even structural damage in your granny flat -- which, in turn, will lead to costly repairs or health risks.

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Make sure that your builder applies more than one waterproofing coat if you want durable, strong, long-lasting, and seamless waterproofing.

#2 - No Proper Approvals (aka 'Council Nightmare')

Some builders promise you the world, then fail to seek the proper approvals or pay attention to requirements before building a granny flat. This can leave you in trouble with local authorities.

1. Must be a residential homeowner or property investor.
2. The existing house must be 450 metres squared or more.
3. Must have a minimum of 12 metre street frontage.

However, you may need approvals for your connections and utilities. You don't want to be halfway through a construction project only to realise you can't connect any plumbing. Additionally, it's important to know which residential zones are approved for your granny flat. The following residential zones are approved for granny flats:

Zone R1 - General Residential

Zone R2 - Low-Density Residential

Zone R3 - Medium-Density Residential

Zone R4 - High-Density Residential

Zone R5 - Large Lot Residential (via DA only)

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BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Make sure that your builder knows about local Sydney council rules and seek proper approvals before you begin construction.

#3 - No Termite Barriers

It's also important that your builder incorporate pest barriers into your granny flat, including termite protection under your timber framing. This will help prevent a termite infestation down the line while protecting the foundation of your granny flat.

Failure to add a termite barrier during construction can (and will) leave your new granny flat exposed. Whether a chemical or physical barrier, your granny flat builder must offer a form of protection, otherwise you'll be pulling down a destroyed and timber-eaten granny flat before you know it.

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Ask your granny flat builder what type of termite barrier they recommend. Any builder worth their salt will want to examine the soil, consult their granny flat plans, and come up with a tailored solution to meet your needs.



#4 - Failure to Use Structural Timber

This one takes it back to basics -- the basic structure of your granny flat, that is.

We prefer a timber foundation for granny flats because timber is:

- Environmentally friendly, with the lowest CO2 cost of any building material
- Less time consuming to erect than other framing materials
- Lighter than steel alternatives -- without compromising structural integrity
- A renewable resource
- A material that offers more sound insulation and thermal insulation

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Not all timber is created equally. A granny flat should be built using structural timber that conforms to Australian Standards AS1684. More than aesthetics, structural timber is used for residential building framing and ensures your new granny flat is built to last, so check with your builder to make sure they conform to all relevant standards.

#5 - Zero Luxury Interiors

Look out for builders that don't offer luxury or high-quality inside materials like:

- Stone benchtops
- Smart wardrobe compartments
- Floor to ceiling bathroom wall tiles
- Mirrored closet doors



BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Request a full break-down of what's included before you commit to a deal or sign on the dotted line. When you know what you're getting, it's easier to connect with a local granny flat builder.

Cutting corners in this way will instantly have a negative impact on the value of your granny flat. It will also lead to a more negative experience for the person staying in the flat. Finally, these issues can make your granny flat seem smaller and more crowded. Lack of mirrors or poor construction of cabinets, for example, can make storage a consistent problem.

#6 - No Rubbish Removal

Watching a granny flat go through each stage of construction is a thrilling feeling. Being left with a backyard full of hard waste and construction debris...not so much.

Your granny flat builders aren't just tasked with creating your new space - whether you plan on using it to extend your family's living room or generate passive income. They're also responsible for leaving your home the same way they found it.

Imagine waking up as a new granny flat owner and finding out you're also the proud owner of twisted metal, broken glass, unused timber, and mounds of soil left behind after the excavation process. That's not how you want to start your journey into granny flat ownership (and with Bellcast Granny Flats, you won't have to).

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Ask your granny flat builder what their process is to dispose of construction debris. You can also ask if they are committed to disposing of hard waste responsibly to ensure your new granny flat is a sustainable addition to your home.

#7 - No Insurance or Home Warranty (aka 'You're on your own')

You will want to ensure that your granny flat builder will, at the very least, organise your Home Owners Warranty Insurance policy for you. Many builders do not include this service, and it can lead to lots of paperwork, headaches, and confusion down the line.

Having this warranty, on the other hand, can help make sure that your granny flat will remain structurally sound -- and that you will be taken care of should any issues arise.

There is other insurance you can ask about as well, including:

- Builder's All-Risk Insurance, which covers the granny flat and house during construction
- Public Liability Insurance, which protects you from damage to the property
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Management Insurance

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

At Bellcast Granny Flats, we organise the Home Owners Warranty Insurance Policy for you. We are also members of the Housing Industry Association, and we are fully compliant with all rules and regulations.

#8 - Low Quality Building Materials

Many builders will also skimp on building materials and fail to use materials like sturdy concrete slabs. This can be a major problem, leading to structural issues in your home. That's why it's important that you're aware of the building materials that your builder is using.

Specifically, you should look for the following building materials and features:

- External walls fitted with R1.5 batts, and Ceilings/roof fitted with R3.0 batts
- Concrete slab, according to structural engineering plans
- Duratuff Vinyl Cladding
- Water, Sewerage, Stormwater, Gas, Electricity & Phone services, connected from main dwelling where available
- Wall & Ceiling Linings
- 10mm plasterboard to all internal walls & ceiling. Villaboard lining to bathrooms
- 90mm coved cornices throughout

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

The right materials will help ensure that your granny flat is sustainable, durable, and long-lasting. Don't let a flashy catalogue distract you from what's under the surface. Take the time to ask what each room, feature, and inclusion is made from.



#9 - Lack of Finishing Touches

The easiest way to cut corners is when no one is looking, and this is a problem with many backyard builders and granny flat construction companies who think you won't notice if they forget to include a few finishing touches.

This could be a lack of paint. Or it could be conveniently leaving off extra coats of paint that don't appear obvious on day #1, but as the months pass by your new granny flat is exposed to extra wear and tear because it lacks proper protection. From custom finishes to utility connections, you're entitled to a certain level of customer service.

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

Prevention is better than a cure. Make sure you get your list of inclusions in writing so there's no scope for cutting corners. At Bellcast, we offer 3 x coats of paint on all internal walls for lasting durability as well as aesthetic value.

#10 - Poor Practical Design

In a granny flat, you're already dealing with less space and less area to move around. You'll want your internal features -- and the layout -- of your granny flat to combat this issue. Otherwise, it will feel like you're living in a bit of a cave.

Look specifically, then, for builders that offer internal features like high ceilings and multi-use furniture. This will open up the space while bringing more light and air into your granny flat.

Translation? You won't feel like you're in a tiny space at all.

BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS TIP:

A gorgeous design on a catalogue or website is awesome. But getting specific details and measurements will feel even better. Ask about ceiling heights specifically to ensure your new space isn't made for Hobbits instead of people.



What Should the Construction Process Look Like Once You Decide to Build?

Once you decide to build your granny flat, you'll also want to make sure that the builder has clear and compact construction plans. At Bellcast Granny Flats, we offer a nine week timeline.

Design: Weeks 1 and 2

At Bellcast Granny Flats, we offer an array of floor plans and design options ranging from one to three bedrooms. With so many options, you can be sure that the granny flat that we build will be perfectly suited to your individual needs. You can also add features that are specific to your use.

Compliance and Approvals: Weeks 3-5

Next, we focus on compliance and approvals. There are many regulations and town-planning laws that must be considered to ensure that the building process is completed quickly and efficiently. At Bellcast Granny Flats, we are well-versed in these regulations -- after all, we have over 15 years of experience designing and building quality homes. In other words, we'll be there to make sure that your compliance and approval process is a breeze.

Construction & Hand-Over: Weeks 5-14

The entire building process will be completed in the first 14 weeks.

BEFORE YOU GO...

Thanks for reading our free resource, '10 Things to Be Aware of Before Purchasing a Granny Flat'.

You're now equipped with all the info you need to find the right granny flat builder without fear of being ripped off, undercut, or taken for a fool.

If you'd like to know more about our range of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom granny flats, use the booking link below to organise an obligation-free chat with a Bellcast Granny Flats expert and discover just how simple and affordable it is to transform your property with a stylish, income-generating granny flat.

[CLICK HERE TO SPEAK TO A BELLCAST GRANNY FLATS EXPERT](#)



Bellcast Construction Group prides itself on providing over 15 years of excellence in residential granny flat design and construction within Sydney, and therefore you can rest assured knowing you are dealing with a reputable company. Our work speaks for itself and we make sure that all of our construction projects provide complete customer satisfaction.

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