

Converting a Patio into a Habitable Room

Information to be submitted for a Building Licence

What do I need to know and do to convert my existing patio or flyscreen enclosure into a habitable room such as a family room, games room, sunroom or bedroom?

The primary requirement for a habitable room is to ensure moisture does not enter into the structure through the floor, the walls and the roof. The Building Code of Australia specifies the manner by which this can be achieved and will normally necessitate modifications and additional works to be carried out to the existing patio or enclosure.

Most existing patios and flyscreen enclosures do not achieve many of the requirements. It is usual that major modifications are necessary to achieve the requirements of the Building Code of Australia for a room to be used for habitable purposes.

Use the following information as a checklist to assess how your existing patio or flyscreen enclosure compares to the minimum requirements of the Building Code of Australia for habitable rooms.

What is required?

1. The level of the new floor may be required to match the level of the existing floor of the residence.
2. The floor is to be steel reinforced concrete, 100mm thick, with thickening at the edges of the slab or have a separate concrete strip footing.
3. A waterproof membrane on compacted clean sand fill is to be placed under the floor slab.
4. A complying termite barrier is to be installed under the concrete floor and around the perimeter.
5. Wall construction can be double brick, brick veneer, timber or steel stud wall lined externally and internally.
6. A complying ceiling is to be installed under the roof cover with a minimum 2.4 metres finished floor to ceiling height to be achieved.
7. Plumbing waste pipes and stormwater downpipes are to be redirected outside the new room.
8. Toilet, laundry and bathroom windows are to be sealed and mechanical ventilation systems (exhaust fans) installed.
9. Smoke alarms will need to be installed.
10. The habitable room will need to comply with current energy efficiency requirements of the Building Code of Australia.

A building licence is required prior to the commencement of any construction work for the conversion of an existing patio or patio enclosure into a habitable room. A building application is to be completed and is available from the Building counter at the council offices.

