

A Window Of Opportunity

BY AMELIA MANSELL



OPEN WIDE, COME INSIDE

The choice of where and how to maximise natural light within your home is an important one. While some may be able to go to the extreme, opening their house to the stunning views or entertaining spaces, others are more restricted by onlooking neighbours and the need for privacy. In Melbourne's more urban areas, large roof windows are being increasingly used "to improve light on small blocks with limited views". While for rooms that do not have a window due to placement within the home, such as a bathroom or butler's pantry, adding a skylight can provide welcome natural light and ventilation, while also expanding the sense of space.

In existing homes, or more traditional-styled new builds, the inclusion of flat roof skylights, such as those by Velux, can allow the home to be opened up to additional natural light without disrupting the aesthetic of the home. While, if it can be included, Hedger highlights that an angled skylight "can provide better use of the morning sun and shade in west facing areas".

The quest for a light-filled home is not always as simple as adding an extra window or skylight to your design. There are many external considerations and features that should be taken into account and planned for, from the placement and style of the window or skylight to the materials used. For any and all seeking to open up their home to include statement windows or skylights into their design, it is always advisable to seek out the aid and assistance of experienced and professional builders, such as Hedger Constructions, to ensure your build or renovation incorporates natural light to its fullest potential.

Images courtesy of Hedger Constructions

THE DESIRE TO INTRODUCE AND MAXIMISE NATURAL LIGHT WITHIN THE HOME IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE VALUED AND UTILISED; LARGE WINDOWS AND SKYLIGHTS ALLOW THE CREATION OF OPEN, LIGHT-FILLED AND ENERGY EFFICIENT HAVENS THAT ESSENTIALLY BREAK THE FOURTH DIMENSION OF THE BUILD AND BRING THE OUTSIDE IN. AMELIA MANSELL SEEKS OUT THE WISDOM AND ADVICE OF STEVEN HEDGER, DIRECTOR OF VICTORIA'S RENOWNED MULTI-AWARD-WINNING CUSTOM HOME BUILDER HEDGER CONSTRUCTIONS, TO UNCOVER HOW HOMEOWNERS CAN OPEN UP THEIR HOME AND CREATE STUNNING LIGHT-FILLED DESIGNS.



The strategic placement of windows and skylights within a home is not a new concept and have been used for centuries. From the roman compluvium, an opening in the roof to allow rainfall and light into the home, to the stunning glass ceiling in Versailles' Galerie des Batailles, constructed in 1830, there has been clear intent behind incorporating natural light into the home for both function and aesthetic for centuries, and these advancements have not slowed down yet.

SHINE ON THROUGH

The rising popularity of large windows and skylights within home designs has taken the trend of open-plan living a step further, maximising natural light and revolutionising how the interior and exterior can work

together to create a cohesive, and welcoming design from the inside out. "Currently we are seeing increased interest in circular skylights and skylights in external undercover alfresco areas. Large frameless window panels are very popular for clients wishing to showcase views and maximise natural light," Hedger says.

Going beyond the mere function of providing light, skylights and windows are being utilised to transform how function and form are blended within builds to create stunning statements that maximise light, views, and create an aesthetic in and of themselves. Another current trend, Hedger explains, is the use of clerestory windows, "which are installed at the roofline in an interior living space. Clerestories can be used for natural ventilation strategies, delivering extra daylight and providing a method of heated thermal mass in north walls that would normally be in shade."

To add a touch of drama and dimension to the build, circle skylights or cut-outs can offer the modern intrigue you've been looking for, while Hedger suggests that "large sections of glass and angled panels can make a dramatic statement to the external appearance of the home". Combining large frameless window panels with skylights can open up the house even further, enhancing the appearance raised ceilings or creating a greater sense of space for smaller builds.

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

Not stopping at their aesthetic value, windows and skylights have continued to advance to make their incorporation within house designs more efficient and user-friendly. Electric skylights are a fantastic option for homes with high ceilings, Hedger explains,

which can also include "a curtain inside the units for additional thermal benefits". Another fantastic option that Hedger recommends is Rylock's push out windows for second storey application. "This innovation allows you to tilt and turn windows for easy cleaning," Hedger affirms. Self-cleaning glass is another innovation which minimises the upkeep of all large windows and allows you to enjoy the natural light maintenance free.

The use of windows and skylights has numerous benefits, the simplest being the introduction of natural light and minimising the use of electricity within the home. Taking this benefit even further, double-glazed windows have gained a firm hold in energy efficient home, with the glass offering thermal protection and insulation from temperature changes and aiding in the creation of energy efficient homes. "Double-glazing and open frameless window panels are very popular

choices for clients," Hedger explains, with steel window frames rising in popularity. However, Hedger continues, "Clients need to be aware of some issues regarding energy ratings with this design. Aluminium frames are still popular and provide an accessible price point."

In an answer to the concern about the energy efficiency of window frames, Hedger explains that there has been increasing interest in thermally broken windows. Designed to give the same benefits as double-glazed glass, thermally broken windows are designed with a reinforced polyamide strip to protect the home from temperature shifts and strengthen energy efficiency. This product is perfect to use alongside double-glazed glass, as each feature strengthens the other and unlocks their full potential.