

07 Modern Coastal

Design Handbook 2026

Modern Coastal is expanding beyond its beachside roots to become an elevated, joyful and effortless style for any location. The look now embodies a refreshing coastal state of mind that is calm, playful and open, whether by the sea or in the city.



Meet your team of experts

Guided by leading experts in architecture, design, lifestyle and global trend forecasting, this handbook draws on deep experience and distinct perspectives in creating homes that are thoughtful, relevant and future-focused.



Cover
The Modern Coastal facade presents a simple, modest silhouette clad in Linea™ Weatherboard and Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth. With symmetrical roofline, screened entry with semi-circular reinforcing and a crisp square geometry, this home balances privacy with an easy coastal personality.



Neale Whitaker
Interior Design Expert
Neale is a renowned Australian design expert recognised for his thoughtful approach to residential architecture and interior home design.



Justin Logan
Architect/Founder, OBI Office
Justin's residential architecture is recognised for creating connection, wellbeing and a strong relationship between interior and exterior spaces.



Rebecca Caratti
Editor-in-Chief, VOGUE Living
Rebecca leads Vogue Living, recognised globally for its design authority, creative and cultural reach and rigorous curation.



Jenny Li
Trend Specialist, WGSN
Jenny analyses global data and trends shaping design, lifestyle and consumer behaviour and contributes as a researcher and writer for WGSN content.



Matt Leacy
Creative Director, Landart
Through Landart, Matt designs landscapes connecting nature and architecture, creating outdoor spaces that restore and inspire.

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Lifestyle themes

Guided by elevated, creative and multigenerational ways of living, the Modern Coastal home responds to contemporary life with effortless style and warmth—balancing joyful expression, relaxed comfort and adaptable, light-filled spaces that support connection, autonomy and uplifting everyday living.

01—Evolved Living

Evolved Living in Modern Coastal celebrates flexibility and ease, pairing light-filled layouts with adaptable zones, breezy connections and tactile finishes to support comfort, longevity and evolving family life.



House 15 by Three Birds Renovations.

02—Creative Living

Modern Coastal infuses everyday living with coastal optimism through sun-washed palettes and breezy forms, encouraging emotional uplift and relaxed expression.



Milan Design Week photography by Paul Barbera.

03—Multigenerational living

Adaptable layouts support multigenerational households with ease. Upstairs-downstairs living, private retreats, and shared zones allow families to co-exist comfortably while maintaining autonomy and connection.



House 15 by Three Birds Renovations.



04—Autonomous Living

Modern Coastal homes increasingly support self-directed lifestyles. Smart zoning, intuitive layouts and integrated technologies enable residents to personalise their routines, manage energy use and enjoy seamless indoor-outdoor transitions.

Modern Coastal home by Oak & Orange. Photography by Villa Styling.



Elevated, joyful & effortless



The feel-good style moves beyond the charming beach house aesthetic to encompass considered comfort, bringing coastal warmth into cities and suburban settings. This year, the palette shifted from airy light tones to warm pastels and citrus accents, deepening the emotional warmth of the style.

Modern Coastal is a relaxed yet elevated interpretation of coastal living, reimagined for life beyond the coastline. This look extends the lightness, calm and conviviality of seaside spaces into more dynamic urban settings, swapping stereotypical seaside styling for a more emotive, expressive approach. The result is a home that radiates warmth, optimism and ease. The design allows for light-filled interiors, playful forms and sun-washed colours that encourage connection—creating spaces that evoke comfort, familiarity and a true sense of belonging.

Modern Coastal is all about embodying refreshing coastal goodness, no matter the location. Open layouts, light-filled spaces and bright, inviting accents balance laid-back joy with refined textures and profiles.

Open, adaptable layouts support shared family life and personal routines, while bold forms, playful details and surprising colour contrasts add a spirited twist to structures. Natural light and airflow are prioritised through thoughtful windows and doors, creating coastal lightness and calm. Gathering areas are designed with a lived-in warmth that encourages lingering and fosters shared ease.

Tactile surfaces with soft reliefs and imperfect finishes create visual interest and gentle stimulation. These, alongside natural colours and subtle imperfection, convey a grounded, lived-in narrative. Warm pastel tones meet unexpected citrus, creating a confident and optimistic environment. This vibrancy is balanced by muted gradients and chalky matte finishes, providing a calming counterpoint. Modern Coastal is a celebration of relaxed luxury, playful energy and the enduring appeal of the coast—wherever you are.

- 1 At the rear, blush pink painted Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding contrasts with classic coastal white Linea™ Weatherboard above the window height, complemented by clean white trim.
- 2 A TimberTech decked walkway leads to a courtyard-style garden and blush pink door behind the facade screen, hinting at the home's playful coastal character and indoor-outdoor flow. Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth and Linea™ Weatherboard wrap around the side of the home.



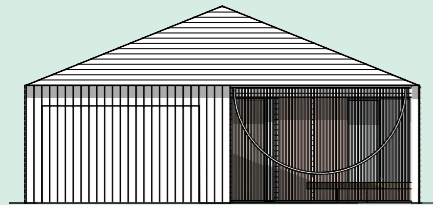
Floorplan

This floorplan blends relaxed living with durable, future-focused design. Referencing the charm and effortless indoor-outdoor flow of Queenslanders, it's designed for families seeking sun, breeze and long-term coastal ease.



From Justin:

'Modern Coastal living is about softness, light and airflow—breezy transitions, gentle curves and materials that feel at home beside the sea.'



The brief

Site & location context

Northern NSW / Qld coastline. Flat-efficiency site. Warm climate with strong sun, sea breezes and seasonal rain.

Homeowner profile

Couple with grown family, planning for retirement.

Intended use

Holiday / retirement residence with room for guests.

The layout

4 bed | 3.5 bath | 2 car

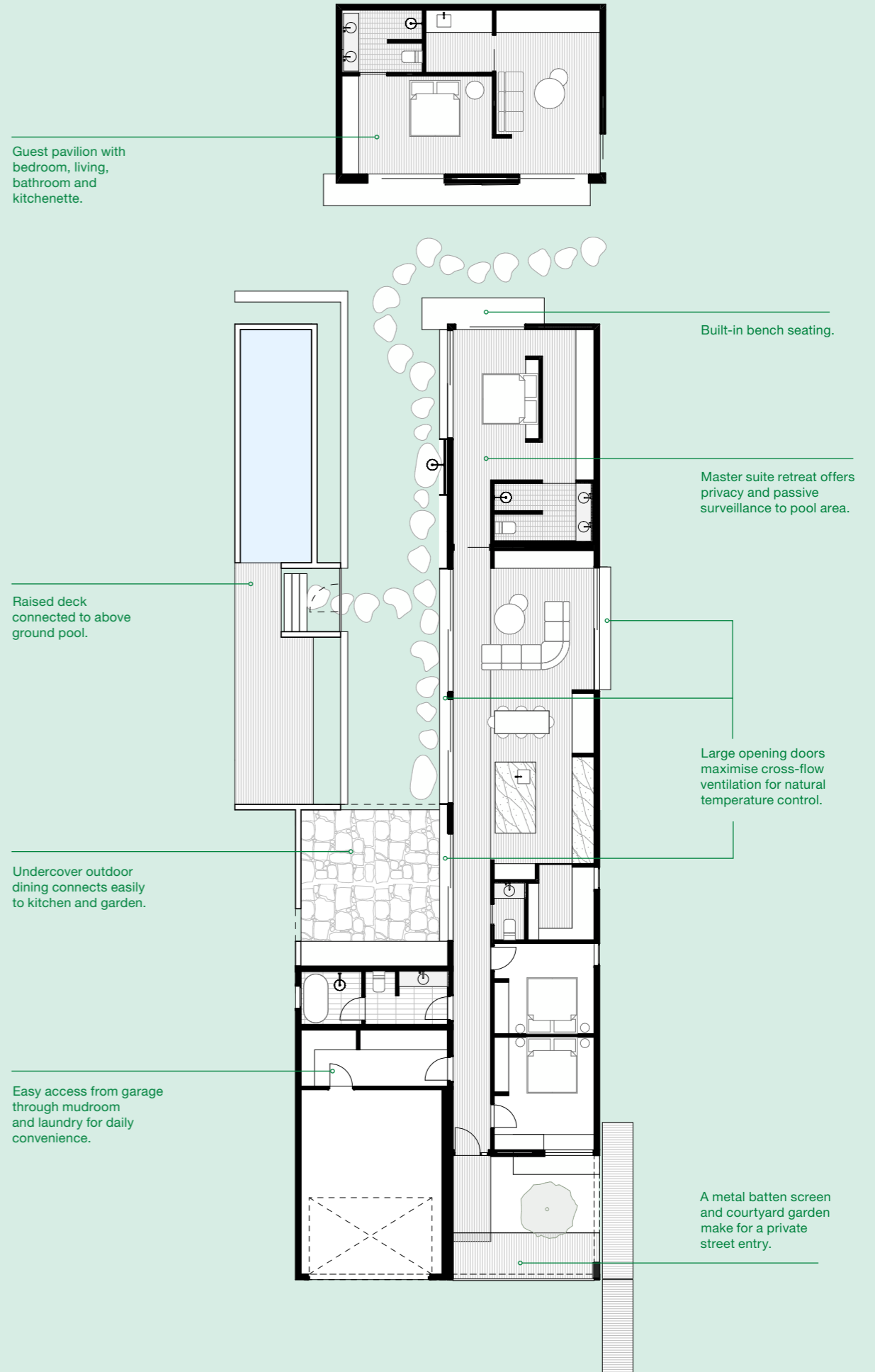
This modern coastal plan divides the frontage into two zones—a garage to one side and a private courtyard screening the home's entry point. Kids' bedrooms sit toward the front, while a long hallway opens into the sunlit entertaining zone and pool terrace, allowing breezes to flow through when the home is opened up. The master suite is similarly oriented to overlook the pool for passive surveillance and easy indoor-outdoor living. A detached 60sqm pavilion sits to the rear—often easier to approve as a secondary structure—and flexible enough to operate as a guest suite, teen retreat, studio or gym.

Why it works

This plan is calibrated for coastal living—aligned openings and architectural apertures draw light and breezes through the home, maintaining natural temperature comfort. Breezy screens create seamless transitions between indoors and out, supporting relaxation and social flow in a layout that combines climate response, family functionality and a serene coastal character that feels both contemporary and enduring.

Adaptations

Adaptability is built in—the guest pavilion can shift between rental accommodation, multigenerational suite, office or wellness studio. Courtyard and pool placement can adjust to different orientations or block shapes and the garage can flex into a teen hangout or additional living area, ensuring the home evolves with family needs while retaining its modern coastal identity.



Design features

1—Architectural apertures

Windows and openings are designed to maximise natural light and airflow, using expressive framing and shading elements that add architectural character and coastal calm.

2—Weatherboard exterior

The facade typically features weatherboard cladding with deep shadow lines to add coastal charm without the maintenance of traditional timber.

3—Warm colours

A palette of warm whites for the exterior, accented by muted pastel and citrus tones, evokes coastal optimism and is balanced by chalky matte finishes for a calming counterpoint.

4—Connected living zones

Wide-sliding doors, sliding glass panels and breezy screens create seamless transitions between indoors and out, encouraging connection and a resort-like sense of ease.

5—Interiors

Interiors layer natural textures, playful forms and expressive colour contrasts to create a spirited, lived-in atmosphere that radiates warmth and optimism.

Modern Coastal home by Oak & Orange.
Photography by Villa Styling.



Cladding solutions

Modern Coastal cladding layers breezy weatherboards with smooth and textured contemporary profiles, enabling expressive exteriors that capture coastal optimism while supporting durability, airflow and relaxed indoor-outdoor living.

Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth

The narrow groove spacing of Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth delivers a v-shaped groove detail for crisp vertical lines. Its clean profile captures classic beach house charm.

Linea™ Weatherboard

Linea™ Weatherboard delivers clean horizontal lines and deep shadowing, adding coastal charm with minimal maintenance. Its Hardie™ fibre cement durability suits coastal climates, while its crisp finish enhances light-filled, breezy Modern Coastal exteriors.



Geometric curves define the cantilevered sections of the upper level, mirrored in the windows and doors to frame views from inside the home to the pool outside.

Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding

Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding brings an organic, flowing texture and adds depth and character to any home, creating a natural look that is perfect for coastal environments.



James Hardie has provided Australian-made building products for over 100 years, with a wide range of our fibre cement products being GreenRate™ Level A certified including Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding, Linea™ Weatherboard and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture. All Hardie™ residential exterior cladding has a standard 25-year warranty period.



Introducing **NEW** Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC)

Build modern mixed-material homes with one trusted brand.

The introduction of Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel marks an important evolution in how modern Australian homes can be built with Hardie™ products. By bringing autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) and fibre cement exterior wall solutions together under one trusted brand, James Hardie offers a complete exterior wall solution for builders, installers, designers and architects delivering modern mixed-material homes.



Dulux Acratex® Coventry® Coarse Steel Trowel Applied



Dulux Acratex® Mediterranean Classique Coarse



Dulux Acratex® Super Trowel 2mm



Dulux Acratex® Contempo Advance® Coarse

James Hardie provides an integrated exterior approach to deliver speed, efficiency and contemporary design. Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel works seamlessly with Hardie™ fibre cement cladding to enable modern, mixed-material designs, delivering energy-efficient performance, design versatility and streamlined installation backed by a 25-year warranty.

Featuring Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC) finished in Dulux Acratex® Mediterranean Classique Coarse below the window head-height, and Linea™ Weatherboard above.



Featuring Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC) finished in Dulux Acratex® Contempo Advance® Coarse on the ground floor, and Linea™ Weatherboard on the upper storey.



Colour palettes

These colour palettes blend soft coastal neutrals with warm pastels, balanced by subtle citrus accents. Gentle hues and chalky finishes enhance natural light and relaxed elegance while creating a joyful, effortless coastal atmosphere.



From Jenny:
 'Expressive and playful, the palette evokes coastal optimism, balancing emotional uplift with calm, grounded sophistication.'

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Roof	Zincalume® steel	Colorbond® steel Surfmist®	Colorbond® steel Dover White™
Main Walls	Dulux® Colorbond® Surfmist® Watty! Solagard® Colorbond® steel Surfmist® Taubmans® Colorbond® Surfmist®	Dulux® Colorbond® Surfmist® Watty! Solagard® Colorbond® steel Surfmist® Taubmans® Colorbond® Surfmist®	Dulux® Colorbond® Dover White™ Watty! Solagard® Colorbond® steel Dover White™ Taubmans® Colorbond® Dover White™
	Dulux® Delicate Bloom Half Watty! Warm Sand Taubmans® Soft Coral	Dulux® Oyster Linen Watty! Jest Taubmans® Vellum Smoke	Dulux® Shell Haven Quarter Watty! Soft Siamese Taubmans® Ocean Pearl
Trim	Dulux® Colorbond® Surfmist® Watty! Solagard® Colorbond® steel Surfmist® Taubmans® Colorbond® Surfmist®	Dulux® Colorbond® Surfmist® Watty! Solagard® Colorbond® steel Surfmist® Taubmans® Colorbond® Surfmist®	Dulux® Colorbond® Dover White™ Watty! Solagard® Colorbond® steel Dover White™ Taubmans® Colorbond® Dover White™
Front Door	Natural Timber	Natural Timber	Dulux® Gold Rush Watty! Pharaohs Gold Taubmans® Rise and Shine



Style variations

While the relaxed coastal language anchors Modern Coastal, variations respond to lifestyle, site orientation and climate. Layouts, material palettes and indoor-outdoor detailing adapt to context, enabling breezy homes that balance comfort, flexibility, connection and long-term performance across evolving family needs.



Hamptons Coastal

Classic coastal style, double gable roof, all white, light timber accents.

Featuring Linea™ Weatherboard cladding.



Box Modern Coastal

Cubic forms, flat roof, simple footprint, ideal for economical modular or pre-fab design and construction.

Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 200mm.



Pavilion Coastal

Angled rooflines, timber accents, nature-connected pavilion living.

Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding in 200mm and 300mm.

Modern Classical Coastal

Clean, contemporary lines softened by signature classical archways, blend coastal ease with graceful symmetry.

Featuring Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding on the ground floor and Linea™ Weatherboard on the upper storey.



Get the Look

Materials & textures

A layered material palette combines timber, stone and limewashed surfaces with woven fibres and brushed metal accents. Smooth finishes meet textured elements, creating depth, tactility and a relaxed, refined coastal atmosphere.



From Rebecca:

‘To create the spirited, lived-in feeling of Modern Coastal, think of layering materials and textures like weathered timbers, matte renders and stone tiles. This will perfectly balance the breezy coastal aesthetic with a more refined, enduring interior.’



Exterior

- 1 [PVC Decking, Vintage Collection®](#), Coastline, **TimberTech®**
- 2 [Premium Bluestone Stepping Stone](#), **RMS Traders**
- 3 [Newport Matte White Small Square Tile](#), **Tilecloud**
- 4 [Green Sukabumi Blai Stone Pool Mosaic](#), **RMS Traders**



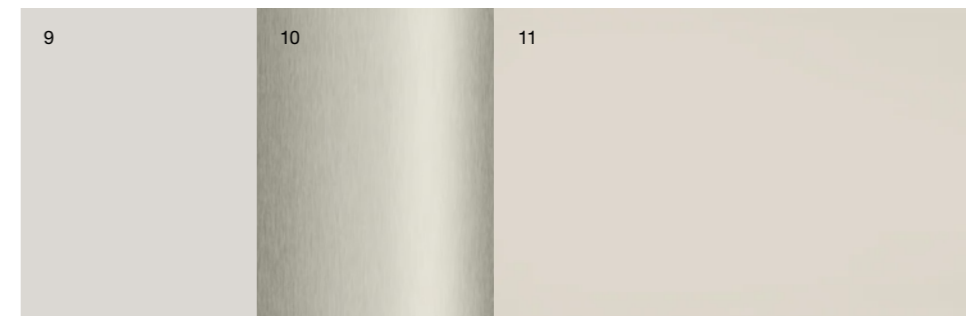
Flooring

- 5 [Alta Engineered Floorboards](#), Kustom Timber
- 6 [Graphite Sisal](#), The Natural Floorcovering Centre
- 7 [Nueve European Oak Floorboards](#), Tongue & Groove
- 8 [Insernia Natural Stone Tiles](#), Artedomus



Walls / Windows

- 9 [Bone Limewash Interior Paint](#), Bauwerk Colour
- 10 [Brushed Nickel Trim](#)
- 11 [Cashmere Interior Paint](#), Porter's Paints



Cabinetry

- 12 [Laminex Whitewashed Oak](#), Laminex
- 13 [Laminex Porcelain Blush](#), Laminex
- 14 [Laminex Coolum Sand](#), Laminex



Tiles

- 15 [Newport Matte White Small Square Tile](#), **Tilecloud**
- 16 [Clovally Travertine Look Crazy Paving Tile](#), **Tilecloud**
- 17 [Materia Gesso Mosaic](#), Di Lorenzo Tiles



Textiles

- 18 [Ovis Onyx Upholstery](#), Warwick
- 19 [Hampstead Linen Upholstery](#), James Dunlop Textiles
- 20 [Sardinia Curtain](#), Dune, James Dunlop Textiles
- 21 [Salento Curtain](#), Whitewash, James Dunlop Textiles



Landscaping

Landscaping extends the relaxed, sun-washed character of Modern Coastal homes, layering breezy planting, textured paths and shaded outdoor rooms. Gardens foster connection and ease, unfolding as restorative retreats that celebrate light, airflow and seamless indoor-outdoor living across changing seasons.



From Matt:

‘What I love about Modern Coastal gardens is their breezy informality—layered planting, soft textures and shaded outdoor rooms designed to suit the climate while celebrating light, airflow and effortless indoor-outdoor living.’



Bluestone steppers lead through this rear garden of lush lawn and low-lying shrubs which work to soften hard edges around the pool and raised deck.

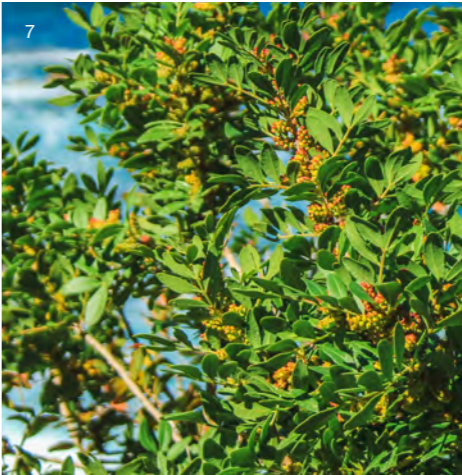
Warm Climates

- 1 Cotton Lavender—a hardy, aromatic, evergreen shrub known for its distinctive silver-grey foliage and bright yellow, button-like flowers
- 2 Old Man Banksia—a hardy native tree with serrated grey-green leaves and large cylindrical flower spikes, commonly used as a feature tree in naturalistic and coastal landscapes.
- 3 Prostrate Rosemary—a low, spreading evergreen shrub often used to cascade over retaining walls, soften garden edges or provide dense, aromatic groundcover in sunny areas.
- 4 Stepping stones—bluestone or limestone stepping stones provide a natural, durable pathway over lawns or through gardens and courtyards, adding texture, structure and a subtle contrast to planting.



Cool Climates

- 5 Coast Wattle—a fast-growing native shrub or small tree often used for screening and erosion control, with silvery foliage and bright yellow flower clusters that add seasonal colour to coastal and informal landscapes.
- 6 Dwarf Naative Myrtle—a compact evergreen shrub commonly used for low hedging, borders or mass planting, with fine foliage and small white flowers that create a neat, textured finish in garden beds.
- 7 Sea Box—a dense coastal shrub commonly used for low hedging and screening, with glossy green leaves and small star-shaped white flowers suited to exposed and seaside gardens.



Get the Look

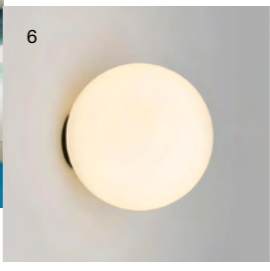
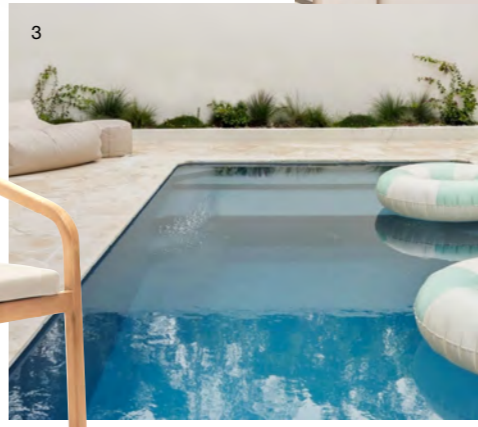
Styling

Modern Coastal styling centres on a light-filled, relaxed environment. Natural-look materials, sun-washed colours and playful, coastal-inspired details layer warmth, optimism and effortless charm into every space, inside and out.



Outdoor

- 1 Core Series Window Hood 300mm, **Heka Hoods**
- 2 Malart Outdoor Chair, **Kave Home**
- 3 Plungie Max Plunge Pool, **Plungie**
- 4 Miara Outdoor Table, **Temple & Webster**
- 5 Akdsal Outdoor Coffee Table, **Temple & Webster**
- 6 Forte Outdoor Wall Light, **About Space**
- 7 LED Stainless Steel Mail box Front Plate, **Bungalow Signs**
- 8 White Mahalo Outdoor Fibrestone Planter, **Temple & Webster**



Interior

- 1 Povel Coffee Table, **Temple & Webster**
- 2 Darce Stoneware Vase, **Country Road**
- 3 Montauk Sofa, **Temple & Webster**
- 4 Oban Linen Cushion, **Citta**
- 5 Braided Basket, **Ferm Living**
- 6 Watson Hand Woven Jute Rug, **Temple & Webster**
- 7 Ripple Glasses, **Ferm Living**
- 8 Franklin Floor Lamp, **Temple & Webster**





Explore the Hardie™ AI Visualiser

Visualise, customise and communicate your design vision with Hardie™ products and the latest modern home styles from the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2026.

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