

Higher ground

An ingenious plinth design takes
a back yard pool and lawn up, up
and away in flood-prone Rosalie





BREEZE IN ... The galley kitchen is the hub of the home, bridging the old and new.

Above and beyond

A clever rethink lifts a flood-prone Rosalie cottage to higher ground and a bigger brighter future

Michelle Bailey

The transformation of this Rosalie home designed by architect Matt Kennedy is proof that even a modest cottage on a small flood-affected site can become something very special.

"Given the constraints of the property and the elaborate brief, it is amazing what Matt has managed to achieve," says the owner, Eliza.

"It was very much about creating light (filled spaces) and a feeling that we could bring the outside in and I think that has been done beautifully."

To ensure the property would not be affected by floods like the one in 2011, both the timber worker's cottage and back yard were raised before the house was extended.

"The thinking was to get it (the house) high and dry," Matt says.

"We decided to create a 'plinth' in the back yard that would allow us to create an 'anchor' for the house."

The 'plinth' includes a raised lawn and above-ground pool that ensure the back garden is only half a level lower than the new extension.

"Without raising the lawn and pool, the concept of the house would not have worked," Eliza says.

"For me that is a big part of what makes this house (become) a home

that can engage with the landscape."

The new spaces of the house – the kitchen, living space and deck – extend from the rear of the original cottage, with a new bedroom and ensuite above.

A courtyard garden on the northern side of the house ensures that, regardless of how neighbouring houses develop, ample natural light is available to illuminate the interior.

Acting as a "bridge" between old and new is the galley kitchen.

"It brings the whole house together, in a way," Eliza says.

"And the cabinetry under the staircase is just such a great efficient use of space."

High ceilings, large openings and built-in seating and storage contribute to the house achieving a sense of spaciousness that exceeds the

All the spaces really are used and lived in, in different ways. That is what is so clever about the design



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physical dimensions of the interior. To optimise spatial efficiency, the living room and deck work in tandem to accommodate the daily demands of living and dining.

"Most days those sliders are peeled all the way back so it feels like that whole space is almost one," Eliza says.

"In winter we can shut it off, but winter is so short. For most of the year we can eat outside."

A half staircase connecting the deck and lawn ensures the garden always feels close by. "There's something reassuring about being able to see grass," Matt says. "You wouldn't engage with the backyard as much if it was down a whole level."

Sitting nooks created at the bottom of the stairs and at the living room window have become favourite spaces to gather and play.

"The window seat that leans on to the back yard doubles as a (child's) stage," Eliza says.

"It's also where we can have breakfast beside the window.

"All the spaces really are used and lived in, in different ways.

"That is what is so clever about the design."

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Pictures: Scott Burrows



UPLIFTING ASPECT ... A plinth incorporates the raised lawn and above-ground pool.

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