

Finding your Haven

2024



# HEALTHY HOME BUYERS GUIDE



@HAVEN\_DEIGNED

# INTRO

## BEFORE YOU START

When it comes to finding a new home, many times, our home choices are driven by the emotional connection we feel. Falling in love with a house can make it difficult to employ reason or logic when considering its suitability. Approaching house hunting with a more logical mindset could prevent a lot of time, money and potential heartache.

While house hunting is exciting, it can be overwhelming without some educated thinking. Having a clear idea of what you're looking for before making an offer is essential, considering that aspects are often overlooked during the initial walkthrough before committing to a purchase.

Beyond their bones and location, houses are intricate systems with parts working together to create a protective and comfortable environment.

Unfortunately, many focus on cosmetic beauty over functionality or health when evaluating homes.

While the emotional feel is essential, it shouldn't be the sole factor when making an offer.



# HOME INFO

ADDRESS:

---

ASKING PRICE:

---

AGENT:

---

NOTES:

# SITE

Before you visit the house in person, do some online due diligence to find out any history of flood, fires, crime rates, school zones, underground creeks or wells, zoning, nearby cell phone towers, and most importantly - water damage. This is where talking to the neighbours can also be invaluable!

Are any of the following nearby?

- Airport** within 8km
- Cellphone tower** within 400m
- High Voltage** power lines within 600m
- Pesticide drift** from farms, vineyards, golf course etc. within 2kms
- Street power line** within 5m (upper floor)
- Radio and Television tower?** within 5m
- Substation** transformer (pole mounted) within 10m
- Substation** transformer (large metal box) within 200m
- Underground** power lines within 10m
- Tramlines** within 5m
- Major road or idling traffic** within 500m
- Susceptible** to flooding or bushfires?

# WATER DAMAGE & MOULD

When inspecting houses for mould, check walls, ceilings, bathrooms, kitchens, sinks, plumbed appliances and attics for signs of discolouration, water stains, odours, warping, bubbling, cupping or visible moisture or growth. Not all mould is visible however, and if you suspect mould it is always advised to have environmental testing done by a building biologist.

**Visible mould**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Water stains**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Damp, musty odours**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Warping & bubbling**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Rising damp**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Patch jobs / repairs**, Indicator that often signals some form of water damage within the wall or ceiling. If yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaks**, check inside cabinets (always check near the braided water hose from the dishwasher as these often leak).  
If yes where \_\_\_\_\_

**Baseboards** Separating from the Floor: If wood buckles and warps, it typically indicates water or moisture damage. resulting in the wood often separating from the wall.  
If yes where \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# WATER DAMAGE & MOULD CONT.

- Is the site on a slope?** These are more at risk of water ingress
- Is stormwater drainage away from the home**
- Does water pool around the home,** if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- Are all downpipes connected,** if no where \_\_\_\_\_
- Gutters blocked,** (or prone to be blocked from overhanging trees), if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- Damp proof course damaged or missing**
- Garden beds** against the side of the house
- Roof, gutters or flashing in need of repair,** if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- Subfloor ventilation,** if yes what type (mechanical, vents) \_\_\_\_\_
- Condensation,** if yes where \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# ALLERGENS

1 in 4 people suffer from allergens so it is important to check the property for potential allergy triggers. Homes in warm and humid climates (where relative humidity is regularly over 70%) are at higher risk for mould-related issues. It is also helpful (if possible), to get the health history of the previous owner / tenants.

- History of water damage**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- Pets previously allowed inside the home**, what rooms \_\_\_\_\_
- Smoking previously allowed in the home**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- What type of HVAC system is used?** \_\_\_\_\_
- When was it last maintained**, date \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there a pest problem**, if yes what & where \_\_\_\_\_
- Pest treatments** done in last 3 years, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- How old are carpets**, last replaced \_\_\_\_\_
- Renovations by last owners**, what work did they do and when was it completed \_\_\_\_\_
- Ventilation types** (ducted, open vents, whirly birds) \_\_\_\_\_
- Subfloor vents?** If yes, are they unobstructed \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# ALLERGENS CONT.

- History of water damage**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- Pets previously allowed inside the home**, what rooms \_\_\_\_\_
- Smoking previously allowed in the home**, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- What type of HVAC system is used?** \_\_\_\_\_
- When was it last maintained**, date \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there a pest problem**, if yes what & where \_\_\_\_\_
- Pest treatments** done in last 3 years, if yes where \_\_\_\_\_
- How old are carpets**, last replaced \_\_\_\_\_
- Renovations by last owners**, what work did they do and when was it completed \_\_\_\_\_
- Ventilation types** (ducted, open vents, whirly birds) \_\_\_\_\_
- Peeling paint or wallpaper?**
- Open, operating fire places**
- Exhaust fans ducted to outside**
- All windows are operable**, if no which ones are not \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:



# HEATING & COOLING

In a healthy home, the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system is carefully chosen to prioritise efficient ventilation, excellent indoor air quality, and effective temperature control.

- Is** there existing heating & cooling? If yes, what type (ducted, split) \_\_\_\_\_
- If** there is ducted, how is it zoned \_\_\_\_\_
- How** often is it maintained? \_\_\_\_\_
- When** was it last cleaned? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is** there visible dust or mould? \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS

This is a touchy subject and each individual should assess their own risk tolerance for EMF radiation and the potential health impacts when assessing a potential purchase. The aim in the location assessment is to have bedrooms situated away from large electrical panels and appliances

- Power** to property, where does it connect \_\_\_\_\_
- Meter** panel/ smart meter location \_\_\_\_\_
- Network** types (nbn, wireless, wired) \_\_\_\_\_
- WiFi** security system? \_\_\_\_\_
- Solar** panels? If yes, where is inverter \_\_\_\_\_
- Appliances**, solar inverter, hot water service (electric), pool pump, HVAC unit, smart meter, near or on other side of a bedroom wall  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How** many neighbours WiFi networks do you pick up? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is** there a cell phone tower within 400m of bedrooms? \_\_\_\_\_
- What** type of lighting is used (LED, energy efficient) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# MATERIALS & FINISHES

When looking at a potential home look closely at the quality of finishes, as higher quality materials often have fewer toxins. Certainly, not all homes will feature every material, but the presence of any of these suggests quality materials and craftsmanship in a house.

**Flooring:** The most desirable homes have smooth surface flooring, particularly hardwood or tile. Additionally, high-quality laminate or composite flooring can be considered a second-best option.

**Solid Wood Cabinetry:** is a preferred material. It is advisable to check doors, cabinets, and trim to ensure these components are made of solid wood, as cheaper alternatives like laminate, MDF, and hollow core are often used in home building.

**Tile & Stone in Bathrooms:** High-quality bathrooms feature surrounds made of tile, stone, or solid surface enameled steel. Tubs should ideally be cast iron or enameled steel for durability and quality.

**Exterior materials:** such as natural wood, fibre cement, timber metal, and stone are often considered good choices for cladding due to their durability, sustainability, and minimal impact on indoor air quality.

**Window frames:** Aluminum-clad wood windows are often regarded as the highest quality window frames. Following closely, fiberglass windows are another high-quality option.

NOTES:

# WINDOWS

Given the large costs of replacement, it is always wise to check windows during an inspection; look for materials, thickness of glass, number of panes, ease of operation, signs of condensation fly screens and any other damage.

- Material:** Ideally these are a high quality like aluminium-clad timber but poor quality frames are not a deal breaker, just worth noting\_\_\_\_\_
- Operation:** is it easy to open them and is there screening on the outside? Do they lock?\_\_\_\_\_
- Condensation:** look for signs of condensation on windows, such as water stains on the window, mould growth, or stains on the window sill.
- Performance:** while it wont be possible to tell during a short inspection, check how many panes are in the frame (single, double or triple) as this will indicate thermal performance (and energy efficiency).\_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# AROUND THE HOME

There are some general things to keep in mind when walking through the home.

**Electrical:** Test the light switches, ceiling fans and AC units, Are the power outlets conveniently located? In older homes they are few and far between.

**Water:** Check if there is space where the water line enters the property to ensure a whole home water filter can be installed. Test all hot and cold taps. Consider having a water test done

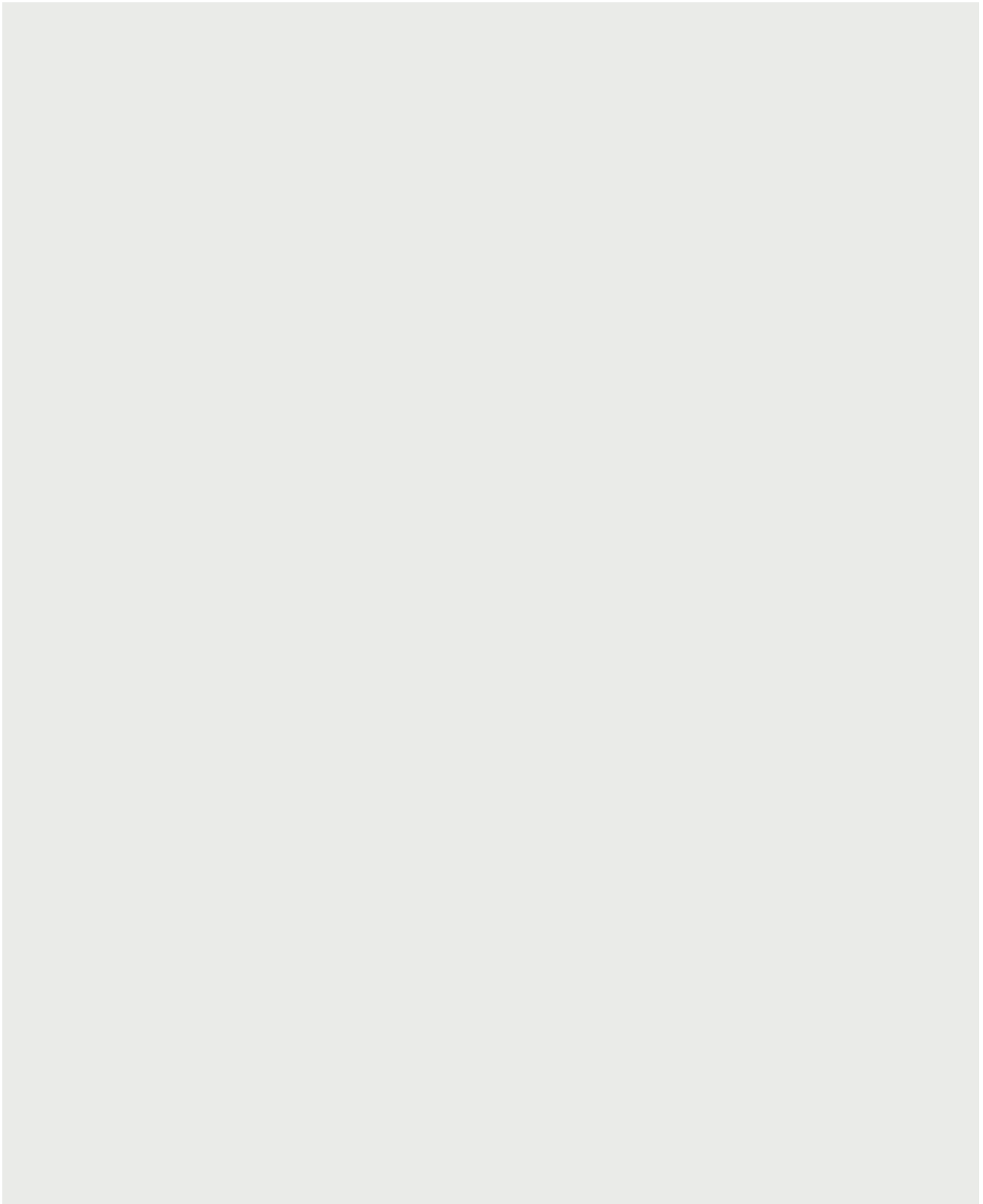
**Odour:** This is important to do within the first few minutes of entering the home, as our noses adjust quickly to any smells. Damp and musty odours usually indicate water issues.

**Check all areas:** including attics and crawl storage areas, be sure to bring a torch (or use your phone's torch) to inspect for mould, dirt floors, odours, water leaks, and signs of pests.

NOTES:

# NOTES

NOTES:



hey there!

I'M

**PIPPA  
LEE**

ARCHITECT &  
HEALTHY HOME DESIGNER

Since discovering non-toxic living in 2016, I've slowly been transforming my own spaces into non-toxic havens. I believe our health begins at home, with indoor environments profoundly affecting our health and well-being.

If you think your home is impacting your quality of life or you're overwhelmed by information, I am here to help. [pip@havendesigned.com.au](mailto:pip@havendesigned.com.au)

