



# Selecting your builder

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The best way to find the right builder is to ask around for a recommendation, but what else should you look for?

## Licensing

First they should be members of HIA or Master Builders Association, and fully licensed with the NSW Department of Fair Trading. They should also be able to supply you with testimonials and pictures of finished builds to show that they have a good reputation for quality and hassle-free projects.

## Communication

When you make contact with a builder, check out their manners. Can you get hold of them easily? Do they call back when they say they will? Do they seem to have information you've already told them to hand? Do they answer your questions clearly and honestly? If they can't get the basics of good communication right before you sign with them, chances are it's not going to get any better!

## Choice

Once you've established the basics, you need to make sure the builder can build the house you want. If you're choosing a project home builder, they should have a range of homes to suit different land sizes, or the ability to adjust their standard plans to suit your needs or block size.

Look carefully at their inclusions lists too – some builders have very basic and even poor quality fixtures and fittings as standard, and some consider essential items to be 'extras'.

## Fixed price

Many builders will offer 'free tenders' which can appear tempting, but these tenders tend not to be very specific and the price given will not be fixed. Not only does that mean you don't know what the final cost will be, it's unlikely that the bank will release your loan – they will usually want to see the price fixed. Paying a fee for the tender process allows your builder to conduct thorough investigations into your block, like contour surveys and soil tests. This enables them to draw up a precise and comprehensive plan and schedule for your build, so there should be no surprises either during the build or in the final cost.

All in all, cheapest is not always best, especially if the price keeps going up because of lots of things that were never included but really should've been. It's better to go with a builder that will give you a realistic, fixed and all-inclusive quote. It might be a higher quote at the outset, but you can be confident that it's realistic.



## BetterBuilt Tips

- Check the basics first, like good reputation, professional membership and warranties.'
- Check the builder's licence with the Department of Fair Trading
- Look for a builder that specialises in the kind of home you want to build – they will have more experience, which should make for a smoother project
- Check the quality and range of the inclusions
- A project home builder with a wide range of basic house styles is more likely to have a house you will like as standard
- Ask about things you might want to include in the build, like solar panels or extra insulation – a good builder should be able to incorporate these extras
- Make sure the tender is fixed and realistic – it's better to know exactly what you will spend than to pay more unexpectedly



## Useful Links



[www.housing.nsw.gov.au/  
Home+Buying+and+Building/Building/  
Buying+Land+and+Building+a+Home.htm](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Home+Buying+and+Building/Building/Buying+Land+and+Building+a+Home.htm)



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