



Outdoor spaces are increasingly being used as a selling tool. This space was designed by Dean Herald and constructed by Rolling Stone Landscapes.

## It's all about portraying a lifestyle

DEAN Herald, managing director of Rolling Stone Landscapes says agents and vendors are looking out the back to draw buyers in.

"It would probably be a good eight to 10 years of real estate marketing where the hero shots have focused on the alfresco space, or the lounge doors opening up to a yard with maybe an infinity edge pool, outdoor kitchen and pizza oven," he said.

"These sorts of components definitely lead marketing campaigns today because they portray a lifestyle. We've gone past the days of selling houses, we're selling a lifestyle now," he said.

Mr Herald said even homes in built-up neighbourhoods, or properties with a small footprint, can benefit from selling the outdoor dream.

"Buyers are going to be drawn to any breakout space as they can make the internal architecture feel bigger," he said.

# Our love affair with great outdoors

SELLERS ARE TAPPING INTO AUSTRALIA'S RELAXED LIFESTYLE BY PUTTING BACKYARDS FRONT AND CENTRE OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS, WRITES KIRSTEN CRAZE

SELLING Sydney real estate is no longer about just bricks and mortar — putting a property on the market is about selling a lifestyle that starts in your own backyard.

Agents and vendors are increasingly tapping into Australia's outdoor lifestyle by putting what's out the back front and centre of a property's marketing campaign.

"In a twist to the old saying 'kitchens and bathrooms sell houses', it is clear from our data that Aussies love their outside spaces, so any one thinking about selling should consider if an upgrade to this area might help them appeal to more buyers," said David Smith, the chief customer officer at Aussie.

The nationwide broker recently collected data from almost 8000 customers to find out what features people love most about their homes. Close to half, 46.7 per cent, of respondents said they loved their own outside spaces the most, with backyards topping the list, followed by gardens, verandas, views and pools.

The survey found 22.3 per cent of

Aussies naming the backyard as their favourite part of their home, followed by the living area at 18.4 per cent. The kitchen, which has long been considered the heart of the home, only represented 7.6 per cent.

"There is no doubt that Aussies' love affair with the great outdoors continues, with backyards the clear favourite when we asked our customers what they love most about their homes," said Mr Smith.

Scott Thornton, selling agent with The Agency Neutral Bay, agreed the backyard is now considered an extension of the living space.

"People are investing a lot more money into landscaping their gardens now and realising the importance of them. The reality is buyers are becoming a lot more sophisticated in what they want," he said.

**“ People are investing a lot more money into landscaping their gardens now**

Whether a backyard is staged for sale through a professional stylist, or the vendor prepares the property themselves, Mr Thornton said special focus should be given to creating a private haven for prospective buyers.

"You can use landscaping to create more privacy, which is important. I think in Sydney now that it's becoming more congested through development, more and more people are seeing their gardens as a space to enjoy privacy and a little tranquillity from their busy lives," he said.

"Depending on the size of the back garden we would definitely make sure we staged so people can see how it can be used, and reinforce the lifestyle that the garden space offers."

Justine Wilson, the director of Vault Interiors, said styling outdoor spaces can add significant value to a property.

"The outdoor zone is what sells properties these days. It's worth making the most of this valuable real estate," she said.

These are the key factors to consider to appeal to buyers:

### YARDS AHEAD

46.7

Per cent say outside spaces rule

22.3

Per cent say backyards are their home's best feature

7.6

Per cent say the kitchen is their favourite spot

### ENTERTAINING

An outdoor kitchen is a fantastic addition as it adds more function to the zone. If budget allows, try to tie the design to flow from your indoor kitchen, whether it's the cabinetry, the bench top material or even the pendant lighting.

### FURNITURE

Stackable outdoor furniture is ideal if you need a multifunctional space as items can be stored. Outdoor lounges are very popular.

### GREENERY

For our weather, hardy low-maintenance plants such as succulents or agaves are great. You don't need real plants to get the look either, consider high-quality Astro turf instead of grass or install a fake green wall.

### LIGHTING

Think votives with candles that project nice shadows, over scale lanterns, or add some solar fairy lights. Twinkling ambient lighting will always make a space look pretty.