



Images

Retire Australia Units

How much will my refurbishment cost?

We have become experts in full refurbishments, particularly in the small unit category when done in a budget conscious way. We can take an outdated and worn interior and make the interior look brand new in six weeks. Over the years we have perfected what we call the six week refurb and systemised every stage to ensure that when it comes to timing and quality, neither are compromised.

The number one question...

Price

When it comes to refurbishing, the budget can sometimes go out of the window very quickly if you're not careful. Every trade and material has to be thought of prior to starting, and a scope of works prepared, itemised and costed. As the scope of work grows, so will the price. It is important when refurbishing to not scrimp on finishes and to look at middle of the road price points for materials so you get quality that doesn't cost the earth. I'll take you through each trade and give you some rough costings for each.

As we mainly renovate units that are between one and three bedrooms and are normally between 50 and 120m², I will base this scenario on a two bedroom unit that is 80m². Normally a two bed unit would be a single bathroom with a small laundry. It is important to note the following prices are an indication only and everyone needs to consult a local builder to get an accurate fixed price.

Demolition

If a full renovation is required we start with demolition works. The first job that needs to be done before all others is a services disconnection. Both the plumber and the electrician will attend to perform a disconnection and make sure it's safe. We first take all the joinery out and remove all bathroom fixtures and fittings. Then floor coverings are removed and in wet areas we remove tiles from walls and floors and remove floor screeds to get down to bare concrete.

This process normally takes around three days and costs between \$1,500 and \$2,500.

Items that can make demolition more expensive are the amount of joinery that is to be removed, how much tiling is on the walls, how big wet areas are and therefore how much tiling/screed that needs to be removed. Whether there are any tiles on the floor in living areas or unusual items that need to be taken care of.

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Putting Back

We summarise the next stage of works as simply 'put back.' It signifies the end of the demolition and the start of putting the unit back together. In this stage we replace plasterboard that has been removed with wall tiles and flush the joints in. We repair damaged walls, ceilings and any timber work that needs repair or replacement. During this time we change any doors and hardware that require replacement and also carry out any first fix alterations. This stage really can vary depending on the scope of works as it sets the project up through to completion.

So what can raise the price here? Replacing doors doesn't have to be done but it can really change the look of the finished unit. If you have plain flush panel doors it's worth upgrading to a four panel or other decorative finish door for a higher quality feel on the end product.

Other more general things that will put up the budget are basics such as how much plasterboard has to be replaced, whether skirting boards and architraves are damaged and need to be replaced or whether cornice/coving needs to be replaced.

Average costs for this section for putting back: between \$2,000 – \$3,000.

Tiling Works

As we remove the floor screed at demolition stage, re-screeding floors and waterproofing the wet areas has to be done before re-tiling. General areas we tile as part of our units are bathroom floors, laundry floors and kitchen splashbacks. We install 300mm high skirting tiles around the perimeter of the wet areas in places that do not get higher tiling. We normally go to 2.1m high in the shower cubicle and 1.2m high in the laundry. We also lay a 1.0m square inlay of floor tile inside the entry to protect the carpet.

Tile prices can really change the price. We pay around \$30–\$40 for our tiles which gives a wide range of choice from Australia's biggest suppliers. Again, you can get tiles for cheaper and more expensive prices but we have found \$30–\$40 is the sweet spot for quality and budget.

Our 80m2 example unit with two wet areas and a kitchen, plus the tile inlay, would be costing around \$5,000 – \$7,000.

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Painting Works

Giving the unit a full internal paint makes a huge difference. We use either quality Dulux or Taubmans paints that give great coverage when applied.

As the units are usually quite old and tired when we go in to refurb the prep work involved is quite extensive. But it's all in the prep. We are exceptionally fussy when it comes to the finish of the painting, if the walls are prepped well they really can make the unit look near new again.

We usually look toward an off white for walls and trim such as Antique White USA or Whisper White. We use low sheen on the walls and a semi-gloss or gloss on the woodwork.

Cost for a 80m2 paint would be around \$3,000 – \$3,500.

Fit Off – Second Fix Works

In this section of works we fit off new plumbing and electrical items. Pricing for this stage is the most expensive as this is where the most expensive materials and labour come together.

Plumbing consists of new sinks, basins, mixer taps, showers etc. We use quality Caroma and Clark items throughout the refurbs, this ensures that they not only look great when complete but come with great performance and lifespan. A plumbing package for our example unit will be around \$5,000 – \$6,000. Expenses will go up depending on if we have to re-plumb any first fix work, move any waste/ feed pipes due to changing a lay out or just tidying pipe work up.

Electrical works consist of new light fittings, replacing all GPOs and light switches. Adding heat fan lights to bathrooms and ceiling fans to bedrooms.

We install new appliances to the kitchen, normally a Fisher and Paykel package of oven, electrical hot plate and a pull out range hood. Electrical packages including appliances will be between \$4,000 – \$6,000. Costs go up here if we have to rewire layouts or upgrade circuits and cabling to meet new standards. If we need to upgrade out of date switch boards this can add \$500 – \$750 too.

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A full package of joinery is installed in one of our full refurbishments. This consists of a new kitchen, laundry trough cabinet and linen/broom combo, new vanity cabinet to the bathroom with a mirrored shaving cabinet and normally an additional storage cabinet somewhere in the unit. We also replace any walk in robe shelving or if the unit does not have a walk in robe we install a built in robe.

We use white gloss laminate doors as a go to with laminate benchtops throughout. However if you want a wow factor we recommend upgrading to stone benchtops or Corian benchtops (see our article on Caesarstone vs Corian for more details).

Joinery packages can cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 depending on the amount of work. This comes down to how many cabinets are going in, how tall they are etc. Keeping the joinery simple will be budget friendly but some items are key to have, e.g. a drawer tower in the kitchen or a broom cabinet in the laundry, built in robe shelving and drawers etc.

Minor works done at this stage include cleaning and re-siliconing window frames, replacing door hardware and door stops, carrying out any touch up works etc. Sometimes we will also replace old wall mounted air conditioning units. We use a Daikin system and the size of the unit will depend on the room/s size it is heating or cooling.

Carpentry/general works: if we assume we are replacing doors and hardware as well as installing new door stops throughout and new external weather seals, the cost for this section would be around \$2,000 – \$2,500. Depending on how many doors, whether we replace external hardware as well as internal door hardware and whether external doors need replacing.

Floor Coverings

The last thing to go down is the floor coverings. Laying a good quality carpet and underlay is a must if you want the project to have an upmarket feel. We lay a thick pile carpet on a quality Dunlop underlay in our projects.

We lay carpet in the bedrooms and vinyl planking in the living areas and kitchen. Vinyl plank is great as it is waterproof, easy to clean, looks great and also individual planks can be replaced easily if damaged. Carpet is a bit cheaper per square metre than vinyl plank but when considering carpet for the living area consider that vinyl plank is harder wearing and in the long run vinyl plank may not need to be replaced for 10 years, whereas carpet can look worn after only a couple of years in high traffic areas.

Cost for flooring in our 80m2 example is approximately \$4,000 – \$5,000.

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Other items to consider

Along the way, to ensure the units we refurb come up new, we also undertake minor items of work.

There are some items that cannot be forgotten when budgeting such as cleaning the units ready for handover and removing rubbish from site.

Other items might be pressure cleaning the outside areas or small bits of external painting. If units have outside areas like pergolas or verandahs they too might need some works done to them.

Company overheads like project management and admin fees have to be covered as well.

Overall Costing

As mentioned before, each unit can vary when carrying out refurbishment works and pricing can vary depending on the scope of works. It is always important to set the scope of work at the start of the project and get a fixed price quote from a local builder.

Our two bedroom 80m² example unit would be costing between \$40,000 – \$50,000 for a full refurbishment leaving the unit looking brand new in six weeks.

If you want any more information on this subject or another subject altogether, feel free to email us at hello@croudaceconstructs.com

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