



# making AN IMPACT

STORY BY LAUREN BROOMHAM  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHAN PALSSON  
STYLING BY GREG SUKENDRO

When this Manly apartment was in need of an overhaul, innovative design-and-build company Urban Impact came to the rescue with a layout that's bright, modern and takes advantage of the stunning beachside location.

Looking around this contemporary, light-filled, three-bedroom flat located in The Crescent in Sydney's sunny, seaside suburb of Manly, it's hard to believe it was once a dark, dingy and poky space which failed to maximise its spectacular views of the water. However, that's exactly how it was when Carl Hinton, director of Urban Impact, first laid eyes on it. The three-storey apartment block dated back to the 1960s – and it certainly showed in the dim and drab interiors. The

couple living there were keen to create a unique, open-plan space with a better orientation to the water, and Carl and his team were only too happy to help them achieve their dream.

## STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Urban Impact specialises in unique, high-end building solutions and much of the inspiration for the design came from Carl's design experience with the modern, spacious

apartments of Europe. After listening to what the owners were looking for in their new home, and with input from Urban Impact, the whole unit was gutted and new walls were constructed to help facilitate the innovative new design. "The only room that was retained was the original laundry," says Carl, "and this was converted into the ensuite."

The new hallway was built on an angle to give a feeling of increasing space and openness as you move towards the lounge room, while a



Stylish chocolate-brown timber-veneer cabinetry blends seamlessly with the CaesarStone Snow benchtops and stainless-steel appliances.



Glass-front cupboards allow lovely glassware to be always on display.



The sinks are strategically placed so the owners can cook while enjoying the spectacular views.



## REAL-LIFE RENOVATION

*The lighting in the apartment is controlled by a C-Bus system, with floor lights minimising the need for downlights.*



contemporary colour scheme of warm white, cream and chocolate-brown tones was chosen to enhance the look of the stylish, light-filled area. A C-Bus system was installed to control the lighting, with floor lights used in the hallway to minimise the need for downlights. Concealed LED lighting was also utilised to highlight different features, and individually controlled floor ports were included so the freestanding floor lamps could still be controlled using the main switches.

### AWARD-WINNING STYLE

The main living areas were re-tiled with large format porcelain tiles, the bedrooms were re-carpeted and even the balconies were given a makeover for a sleek, new look. But it's in the new bathrooms and kitchen that the changes have really been felt. The main bathroom was winner of the HIA CSR NSW Bathroom of the Year in 2009 and it's evident the accolade was very well deserved.

While the external windows had to stay in place because of strata restrictions, opaque glass panels were fitted in front of them internally for an eye-catching effect and the

*[RIGHT] The apartment's location offers enviable views of the Manly waters.*

*[OPPOSITE PAGE] Sleek appliances and furnishings all add to the modern, minimalist feel of the apartment.*



windows were motorised to allow for natural ventilation. "These panels were then backlit," explains Carl, "so in the daytime, sunlight shone through, but at night they could be lit to give the same subtle effect."

An above-head rain shower and a wall-mounted showerhead were also fitted. "Both are individually controlled and we manufactured the base plates so the shower controls, basin taps, bath taps and push buttons for the toilet all had matching ones," says Carl. In addition, the towel rack was made from the same material as the luxurious Villeroy & Boch bath to give the room an integrated look.





The budget was \$200,000 and we actually came in under this.

*Clear glass panels on the new balconies allow for unimpeded views of the water from the living areas.*





A colour palette of whites, cream and browns was carried through the apartment, creating a stylish, streamlined look.



BEFORE



AFTER

[LEFT] The apartment overlooks the beautiful Manly beaches and the owners were keen to maximise its scenic location.

The pick of the bathroom however, and Carl's favourite feature in the apartment, must be the striking vanity unit. Designed by Urban Impact, the top of the vanity glows to create mood lighting for the space, while the unit is supported by hidden structural steel for a solid, well-built design. "It looks stunning and is totally unique," says Carl, "and to my knowledge has not been replicated in the marketplace."

### ROOM TO MOVE

The award-winning look of the main bathroom carries through to the new ensuite, which was a finalist for the 2009 HIA CSR NSW Bathroom of the Year award and was designed on an angle of 30 degrees to make the most of the space. The vanity here was also designed and built by Urban Impact; it has automatic-opening doors and is mounted

on the wall, increasing the sense of space. "The tiles chosen have a mix of matt and gloss finish to give a textural difference on the walls," Carl says, "and the feature tiles are hand-cut glass mosaics."

The new kitchen, a finalist in the HIA CSR NSW Kitchen of the Year award for 2008, also has a unique look thanks to its self-supporting glass shelves which are edge lit with LEDs so they glow, and the wall-hung units that have LED underlighting. CaesarStone benchtops in Snow contrast beautifully with the Brandy Santos timber veneer used throughout the cabinetry, while glass/aluminium up and over doors and sleek Miele appliances add to the streamlined new look.





### RENOVATING TIPS

- Select a towel rack that's made from the same material as the bath to give your bathroom an integrated look.
- Install floor lights in the hallway to minimise the need for downlights.

[ABOVE] Built-in towel racks and shelving are another great space-saving idea.

[BELOW RIGHT] Opaque panels for the windows improve the aesthetics of the bathroom, while motorised windows allow for natural ventilation.

The new ensuite was built in the area formerly occupied by the laundry and makes the most of the smaller space.



### COUNTING COSTS

All in all, the renovations took five months to complete, and the owners couldn't be happier with the outcome. "Seeing the look on their faces when they first saw the completed project was the most satisfying part of the process," says Carl. He also estimates the property's value has been increased dramatically for much less than was anticipated. "The budget was \$200,000 and we actually came in under this due to finding some existing structural beams that we could utilise to save the client money." And the final result? "The goal for the apartment was to create a modern, minimalist and functional space and we have most definitely achieved this," says Carl.

Urban Impact, phone (02) 9960 0015 or visit [www.urbanimpact.com.au](http://www.urbanimpact.com.au)

**RECOMMENDED  
RESOURCE**

