

Ten Design & Money-Saving Tips for Glass Pool Fencing and Pool Design

Tip 1: Good design starts with a well-thought-out plan

Beautiful and safe pool fencing is never cheap, but it can be cost effective if designed well.

Too many pools are built or renovated without any thought for the fencing requirements mandated by local councils, state governments and Australian Standards.

Government regulations are often an afterthought, and their requirements not included as a key design and function element of the fence.

As a result, the pool fence too often becomes expensive and difficult to install, forcing you to compromise on price, design, aesthetic and/or functionality.

Too often a “finished product” needs to be changed when the pool inspector refuses to issue a pool safety certificate.

Starting off with a **clear plan and a great design** means that you can expect your pool fence to be beautiful, functional, safe, compliant, and cost effective.

You can save a time, money and a lot of frustration by consulting with a qualified pool fence designer at the outset.

Tip 2: Use your boundary fence

Your back yard boundary fences can be used to form **part of your compliant pool fence**, providing you ensure that:

- the boundary fence is at least 180cm high;
- there are no climbable objects beside the boundary fence (allowing kids to gain a foothold to climb the fence);
- horizontal rails are at least 90cm apart;
- the fence is soundly constructed and in good condition; and
- no gap in the fence is greater than 10cm.

Believe it or not, if your pool is very close to the boundary you are also required to ensure that no water can splash from the pool into the adjacent property!

Tip 3: Design the fence to meet electrical earthing requirements

Another often-overlooked element of pool fencing is electrical earthing of metal components surrounding the pool.

Australian Standard 3000 requires that certain metal objects – including some of those used in pool fencing and installed close to the waterline of the pool – must be **connected to an earth bond** installed by a qualified electrician.

It's heart breaking to rip up beautiful new tiles and lay electrical cables for an earth bond when it could have been planned before the area was tiled.

There are often workaround solutions but they almost always involve compromises that are best avoided where possible.

Correct planning of the total pool layout can often eliminate the need for electrical earthing.

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Your Pool Builder and an Aqua Vista Glass Design Consultant can guide you through solutions that will meet the requirements of the Australian Standards.

For further info, check out our webpage on [Electrical Earthing](#).

Tip 4: Avoid windows and doors opening into the pool zone

Recent changes to Pool Safety laws mean that self-closing **doors to/from your house cannot be used** as part of the pool safety barrier.

Where you can design the fence around these limitations, great – it limits any barriers you need to install on your windows or doors.

Of course, sometimes there's nothing you can do about where your windows and doors are!

One thing you can do is ensure that windows adjacent to the pool zone have a permanent mesh fly screen installed.

Tip 5: Know the height of your finished fence

Under Australian Standards, pool fences are required to be a minimum of 1.2 metres high.

However, please don't think that your pool fence height will be exactly 1.2 metres.

Most fencing panels – particularly glass – are 1.2 metres high to start with. Those panels are normally mounted a little above ground level to allow easy cleaning of leaf litter and debris, meaning that the **overall height of the fence is a little higher** (say 5–7cm, and anything up to 10cm) than the required minimum of exactly 1.2 metres.

Landscapers and pool builders often build items like water features to a finished height of exactly 1.2 metres, which then causes hassles when the pool fence is a couple of centimetres higher!

It's another example of just how important planning and design is when achieving the attention to detail that makes for a professional end result.

Even more so when you're dealing with multiple companies and multiple trades...

Tip 6: Plan around climbable objects and uneven ground

Planter boxes, window sills, pot plants, trellises, retaining walls, garden taps and raised timber decks are all examples of climbable objects that can render your pool barrier non-compliant and potentially unsafe.

Why? Because kids might be able to use the objects to climb over the fence.

In some cases it's a simple matter of moving the pot plant. Ten seconds work and you're done.

However, in many cases, the fence needs to be **designed with specific fixed objects in mind** (eg. taps, steps, walls, decks, etc...) to ensure that the end result is a safe pool fence that complies with all of the requisite regulations.

Uneven or sloping ground brings similar issues. Any change in the gradient can affect the way the area needs to be fenced, potentially creating additional costs or difficult areas to fence.

There's very rarely a problem that can't be fixed, providing that a skilled pool fence designer is involved to deal with the issue at the start. Planning is beautiful, and a good designer can save you money at the same time as giving you a pool fence which looks great.

Tip 7: Optimise your space to play

It's a critical and often overlooked question: **how much area should I have in my pool enclosure?**

We Queenslanders spend a lot of warm summer months in our backyard retreats, and it's important to ensure we've got the right balance of shared space between our fenced-in pool area and our outdoor living area.

On one hand, it's important to have enough space around your pool for the kids to be able to move around inside the pool enclosure and enjoy themselves. Space to bask in the sun on your banana lounge and sip a cocktail while the kids are at school is also critical!

On the other hand, we still need room for the backyard cricket and BBQ and so forth. Taking too much space for the pool can hamper your enjoyment of the rest of your outdoor and entertainment space.

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So any time you and your designer spend thinking about the optimal balance between pool and non-pool area is time well spent.

Tip 8: Ensure you've got sufficient access to and around your pool

Make sure that you've got **easy access to or through your pool area**, particularly where you need access for more than just a quick swim.

For example, many people choose to simply divide up their whole backyard with a single fence running from one side of the block to the other. It's a simple approach, normally quite cost effective, and can look great.

However, if you need to go through your pool area regularly to get access to other parts of your yard or house, or you need access to the pool area for wheelbarrows or mowers, think about specifying a wider-than-standard gate to allow easy access.

Also consider where to place the gate so that you have easy access but don't have the gate opening directly into seating areas or walkways.

Tip 9: Take care when installing timber decking

Timber decking is a really attractive way to surround pools, and it's becoming more common. But too often the deck installer forgets that a fence needs to be securely installed on and through the decking.

Wooden decks are often designed badly (not enough room for the fence) or installed badly (no structural support for the fence).

Fencing of all forms should be solidly connected to the structural frame of the decking, not just the surface boards. **Glass fencing can't just be bolted onto the decking boards** – it's simply not secure.

Further care needs to be taken where there is limited access underneath the deck or where decking boards are nailed instead of screwed.

Good design and planning from the start once again comes into play again.

It's also important to be aware that decking with a fall of more than one meter on one side must meet the requirements of a balustrade, not just a pool fence.

One of the key differences is that the fence must also incorporate a handrail to meet glass balustrade regulations.

This can contribute significantly to the cost of an installation, even moreso if not planned for at the design stage.

Tip 10: Ensure paving and concrete slabs are suitable

Specifying the right foundations (concrete ground works, pavers) at the outset can save you thousands of dollars.

Pavers that are laid on crushed rock and sand are not suitable for glass pool fence installation and require the paving be removed, a concrete foundation installed and the paving reinstated.

This workaround is not hugely difficult, but it can be time-consuming and expensive, and therefore not ideal!

So, when you're putting in new concrete ground works and pavers around the same time as your pool fence, you can save a lot of money by ensuring that the **right foundations are laid** for your pool fence.

Once again, a qualified pool fence designer is the right person to give you advice here.

More questions? Need some advice?

The Aqua Vista Glass team has installed literally thousands of pool fences. We can guide you through the process of choosing the right product, designing the right solution to meet your individual needs, and helping you create your backyard oasis.

We have a dedicated team of experienced staff who work together to ensure we deliver on our promises.

Check out our video that shows [who we are and what we do](#), drop in and see us in at 57 Yarraman Place, Virginia, or call one of our friendly team on 07 3861 9977.

We also have a lot of information on our website: www.aquavistaglass.com.au

Please get in contact – we'd love to hear from you!

Tom & the Team at Aqua Vista Glass