Poolside Partners

Everything but the Pool.

01 Start with life outdoors.

Write a few words under each prompt. Circle the three priorities you want the design to protect.

Project / address:

Date:

Prepared with:

What do you want to do here?

Swimming, play, quiet time, meals, entertaining or exercise.

Who will use the space?

Your household now, visiting family and changing needs.

How do you want it to feel?

Private, social, sheltered, open, restorative or lively.

What already matters to you?

Trees, outlooks, favourite places and features to keep.

What would make the biggest difference?

The one change that would improve everyday life outdoors.

My three priorities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

02 Understand your backyard.

Walk the site at different times. Tick an item when you have recorded what you know; note anything needing professional advice.

- [ ] **House, boundaries and access**

  How will people, machinery and materials reach the site?

- [ ] **Trees and existing features**

  What should stay? What needs assessment before work begins?

- [ ] **Sun, shade and wind**

  Where will water, seating and planting work through the seasons?

- [ ] **Privacy and outlook**

  Which views need screening and which should remain open?

- [ ] **Levels, drainage and services**

  What is known about slope, water movement and underground services?

- [ ] **Planning constraints**

  What easements, approvals or specialist input need checking?

Useful records to gather: site plan or survey; photos; service information; previous approvals. Record who will obtain anything missing.

What needs checking next?

03 Make the design practical.

Take these prompts to the builder or designer. Record preferences first, then confirm what suits your site, budget and needs.

Which pool purpose comes first?

Refreshing plunge, shared family use, exercise or a wellness retreat.

How will people move through it?

House-to-pool routes, gate position, steps and level changes.

What will everyday care involve?

Covers, cleaning, running costs, equipment access and noise.

What could change later?

Household needs, shade, spa or sauna, outdoor cooking and extra seating.

Compare finishes with real samples

Finish	Preference / sample	Questions to confirm
Coping and paving		Wet-area suitability, heat and edge detail.
Timber or decking		Maintenance, drainage and installation.
Tiles and pool finish		Colour in water, texture and maintenance.
Laying pattern		Stack bond, staggered bond or herringbone.

Ask how the selected materials work together and request examples of similar completed work.

04 Plan the complete investment.

Add every work package, including items outside the pool contract. Mark each amount as an estimate, allowance or confirmed quote.

Work package	Estimate / quote	Who arranges it?
Pool and specified equipment		
Site access, excavation and spoil		
Barrier and gate		
Coping, paving and surrounds		
Planting and landscaping		
Lighting and outdoor living		
Services and trade connections		
Permits, inspections and advice		

Decide what happens now and what can follow

Priority	Your items
Required for the initial project	
Comfort and everyday use	
Possible future additions	

Contingency provision: $_____ Basis discussed with: _____

Ask about uncertain site costs and service upgrades. If staging work, confirm what must be prepared before paving and other finished surfaces go in.

05 Compare scope before totals.

Use the same items for each builder. Enter I, A, E or ? in each quote column. Record the detail, responsible person and extra cost separately.

I = Included A = Allowance E = Excluded ? = To confirm

Item to confirm	Quote A	Quote B	Question / action
Pool shell and installation			
Pump, filter and equipment specs			
Circulation pipework: pool to equipment			
Equipment mounting provisions			
Excavation, access and spoil removal			
Backfill and clean-up			
Barrier and gate			
Coping, paving and drainage			
Landscaping and feature planting			
Heating, lighting and optional extras			
Electrical and regulated plumbing work			
Permits, inspections and certification			

Confirm where the builder's scope ends

Pool-to-equipment circulation pipework is distinct from licensed electrical work and regulated plumbing. Ask what the pool builder provides, including any equipment mounting board or other mounting provisions.

- Who supplies power and completes switchboard work, equipment wiring, isolators and bonding? Confirm the licensed electrician and cost.
- Who connects backwash to the approved discharge point? Confirm whether a licensed plumber is required, the agreed route and cost.

06 Close the open questions.

Tick only when you understand the answer and have the agreed detail in writing. Record anything unresolved in the action table.

- [ ] The quote records scope, specifications, inclusions and exclusions.
- [ ] Allowances state what they cover and how final costs are calculated.
- [ ] Each approval, service and trade has an identified responsible person.
- [ ] Site conditions, access, drainage and known constraints are recorded.
- [ ] Barrier, gate and inspection responsibilities are clear.
- [ ] Payment stages, milestones and the variation process are understood.
- [ ] Start date, completion expectations and delays have been discussed.
- [ ] Warranties, maintenance information and aftercare contacts are provided.
- [ ] Important verbal promises have been added to the written agreement.

Agree the follow-up before committing

Outstanding question / action	Who?	By when?

Next conversation: _____ Date: _____ Ready to proceed: [ ] Yes [ ] Follow up first

Quote Comparison Tool: poolsidepartners.com.au/quote-chart
More guidance: poolsidepartners.com.au/guides