

NORTHSIDE JOINERY INSTALLATION

The Melbourne Joinery Trap

7 Questions to Ask Any Cabinet Maker
Before You Hand Over a Deposit

After 16 years in the trade and more than 500 Melbourne projects, these are the questions that separate a cabinet maker worth trusting from one who will cost you more than their quote.

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BEFORE YOU READ

Why This Guide Exists

Every year, Melbourne homeowners spend thousands on joinery that arrives late, fits poorly, or falls apart within 12 months.

It is not always because the cabinet maker was dishonest. Sometimes it is because the homeowner did not know what questions to ask, and the cabinet maker did not volunteer the answers.

This guide gives you the 7 questions that professional renovators and builders ask before they engage any joinery company. Ask them in your first conversation. The answers will tell you everything you need to know.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- + Kitchens, walk-in wardrobes, bathrooms and laundries
- + Both residential renovations and new builds
- + Victorian terraces, weatherboards, and modern homes
- + Solo operators and larger joinery companies

This guide takes approximately 4 minutes to read. We recommend reading it before your first meeting with any cabinet maker, including us.

QUESTION 01

Do they manufacture in-house or subcontract the build?

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is the single most important question. Many cabinet makers present themselves as manufacturers but are actually project managers. They take your money, design the job, and send the manufacturing to a third-party workshop they may never have visited.

GOOD ANSWER

We build everything in our own workshop. Every carcass, every door, every component is cut, assembled, and quality checked before it leaves our premises. Our address is Lalor VIC 3075 — you are welcome to visit.

RED FLAG ANSWER

We work with trusted manufacturing partners. Or: We use a network of specialist suppliers.

QUESTION 02

Will they commit to a completion date in writing with a financial consequence for missing it?

WHY THIS MATTERS

Verbal timelines are worthless. Every cabinet maker in Melbourne will tell you they are pretty good with timing. That sentence costs them nothing and protects you nothing. A professional operation commits to a date in writing and stands behind it.

GOOD ANSWER

We guarantee 8-week completion on all residential projects. If we are late we pay you \$1,000 per week. This is documented in the contract before we start.

RED FLAG ANSWER

We usually get it done in about that time. Or: It depends on how busy we are.

QUESTION 03

Can you see and approve all drawings before a single panel is cut?

WHY THIS MATTERS

Once material is cut it cannot be uncut. Changes after manufacturing starts cost money, cause delays, and create tension. A properly run joinery project produces detailed drawings showing every dimension, finish, and hardware selection. You approve them in writing before anything is ordered.

GOOD ANSWER

We provide full 3D renders and elevations for every project. Nothing is manufactured until you have signed off on the drawings. Every selection is locked in writing.

RED FLAG ANSWER

We do not usually do drawings for smaller jobs. Or: We can do a sketch but it is not detailed.

QUESTION 04

Have they worked on Melbourne homes specifically?

WHY THIS MATTERS

Melbourne has a housing stock unlike anywhere else in Australia. Victorian terraces, Edwardian weatherboards, post-war brick homes. None of them are square, level, or plumb. A cabinet maker without specific Melbourne experience will produce beautiful work in their workshop that fits nothing in your home.

GOOD ANSWER

We have completed more than 500 projects across Melbourne including Victorian terraces, post-war homes, and new builds. Tolerance planning for walls that are out of square is built into our drawings from day one.

RED FLAG ANSWER

We work on all kinds of homes. Or: That should not be a problem.

QUESTION 05

Who actually does the installation and will they leave before the job is finished?

WHY THIS MATTERS

The person who built your kitchen in the workshop is rarely the person who installs it. Many cabinet makers use separate installation crews. Ask specifically who will be on site and whether they are the same people who built the cabinets.

GOOD ANSWER

James installs every job personally or directly supervises every installation. We do not use subcontracted installation crews. We do not leave until the punch list is complete.

RED FLAG ANSWER

Our installation team handles that side. Or: We will send our guys around.

QUESTION 06

What is their process if something goes wrong on site?

WHY THIS MATTERS

Unexpected conditions happen on every renovation. Walls in the wrong place, plumbing in unexpected locations, structural issues behind plasterboard. How a cabinet maker handles surprises tells you everything about how they run their business.

GOOD ANSWER

If we discover an unexpected condition we stop, document it, and notify you in writing before doing anything that would affect the price or timeline. Nothing changes without a signed variation order.

RED FLAG ANSWER

We just work around it. Or: We will sort it out on the day.

QUESTION 07

Can they provide contact details for three recent clients you can call?

WHY THIS MATTERS

Google reviews are useful but anyone can collect five star reviews from family and friends. What you want is the ability to call a real person who had a similar project to yours and ask them directly how the experience went.

GOOD ANSWER

Absolutely. Here are three clients from the last six months with similar projects to yours. Call any of them.

RED FLAG ANSWER

Check our Google reviews. Or: We get a lot of referrals so we do not really keep track.

NORTHSIDE JOINERY INSTALLATION

Melbourne's Most Accountable Cabinet Maker.

16 years in the trade. 500+ Melbourne projects. Every job measured, built, and installed in-house by James. Guaranteed in 8 weeks or we pay you \$1,000 per week we are late.

GET A QUOTE	northsideinstalls.com.au/pages/contact.html
CALL JAMES	0403 369 117
EMAIL JAMES	info@northsideinstalls.com.au
VIEW OUR WORK	northsideinstalls.com.au/pages/projects.html
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