

This bathroom, by Melbourne firm Joy Design, matches modern style with sleek storage solutions.

BATHROOMS: INTO THE FUTURE

THE BATHROOM IS NOW SMARTER, SAVVIER AND MORE INNOVATIVE THAN EVER

Words JOANNE HAWKINS

Technology is moving at rapid pace in 2019, and our homes are at the forefront of these advancements. For the bathroom, new features and smart devices are being designed to make our lives easier, cleaner and more efficient. However, with myriad technological trappings coming on to the market each year, it's important not to be blinded by the bells and whistles of them all. So, turn the page for a zone-by-zone breakdown on what's available, what's to come and what is worth investing in. >

MIRROR MAGIC

Your bathroom mirror is about to get a lot smarter. So far, we've seen developments that include LED lighting and defogging abilities, but imagine a mirror that can read you the news or run the bath. Bathroom retailer Kohler has designed 'Verdera' to do just that. Yet to launch in Australia, the smart mirror is equipped with Amazon Alexa, so it can be controlled by voice commands or via the Kohler Konnect app. "These are truly exciting developments," says Rachael Biggs, design consulting manager at Kohler Australia. "They'll make their way here soon." Elsewhere in the vanity zone, innovations such as Vola's 'HV1E' hands-free basin mixer, paired with the 'RS10' electronic soap dispenser, are bringing hygienic innovations from commercial washrooms into a domestic setting.



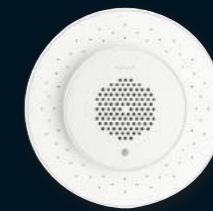
light the way
Switch your lighting between make-up ready and bath-time ambience with the 'Adore' lighted bathroom mirror from Philips. It's part of the 'Hue' smart lighting range and can be controlled via the Philips Hue app or the ready-to-use wireless dimmer switch. Available at Bunnings, \$388.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE FROM TOP) TIZIANO SARTORIO / BRAVACASA RCS/AUSTALSCOPE (OPPOSITE) SHUTTERSTOCK



MAKE A SPLASH

It won't be long before asking Alexa, Siri or Google to start running a shower - at your preferred temperature - is as normal as using an electric toothbrush. (In the US, shower systems such as U by Moen already do just that.) For now, shower technology in our homes allows us to set the mood through the use of LED lighting (try the 'Nikles Techno 300' LED showerhead from Reece), as well as personalise and also "elevate" the shower experience, explains Kelly Huglin, Reece Bathrooms brand manager. "In Australia, we need to be quite conservative with our water usage and brands have to be accountable on delivering on a WELS rating," she explains. "Technology has allowed us to add air into the water droplets so showers feel richer and more enjoyable, while not using much water." Shower innovations are also transforming the shower screen. "I recently looked at designing a bathroom that featured Polyvision smart glass that changed from clear to opaque at the touch of a button," says Olivia Cirocco, designer at GIA Bathrooms and Kitchens.



sneaky shower system
Keen to stream music or listen to one of your favourite podcasts as you shower? That's possible with a Bluetooth-enabled showerhead such as Kohler's 'Moxie' showerhead and wireless speaker, from \$343.

"UNDER-TILE HEATING, INSTALLED WITH A TOUCHSCREEN THERMOSTAT, IS A POPULAR INCLUSION"

~ Olivia Cirocco, GIA Bathrooms and Kitchens

FANCY FLUSH

Even the humble toilet is continuing to evolve. "Today's toilet has become a lot more user-driven in how they lessen the pain points of cleaning and hygiene, for example, while elevating the experience of using them," says Kelly from Reece. Think heated seats and self-cleaning. Kohler's 'Veil' has all of that as well as an advanced bidet controlled by a one-touch remote. "This is next-generation hands-free technology, whereby a sensor positioned underneath the lid of the cistern is activated by simply passing a hand over the top of it," explains Kohler's Rachael Biggs. Most smart toilets available today will also help you reduce water usage.



off the wall
Roca's 'In-Wash Inspira' smart toilet combines the functions of a toilet and a bidet with smart washing and drying functionality, as well as temperature and positioning adjustment via remote control. From \$3400, Reece Bathrooms. **HB**

