

ANOTHER MITEK ADVANTAGE

# ATTACHING PATIOS TO HOUSES

**A** growing popularity in outdoor living has led to a rising trend of adding new patios to existing homes in renovation plans.

The importance of making sure that the overhang is capable of supporting this new extension cannot be understated.

The Australian Standard, AS 4440 states that "Loads other than the standard loads shall not be imposed on the trusses without being approved".

Hence, whether it is a solar hot water system or an attached patio, provision must be made for the trusses to support these additional loads.

Whilst this is easily done in the design of trusses for new houses, for existing homes it has to be done retrospectively.

Approval for existing trusses to carry new loads must be obtained and not conveniently ignored.

It means that a truss engineer has to be called upon to ascertain if the existing roof structure is strong enough to support the new patio or whether further strengthening measures have to be carried out.

Failure to do this can lead to problems such as a sagging roof and subsequent water ponding in gutters, breaking something when a person climbs on the roof, or total collapse during a severe storm.

The damage may even propagate into the existing roof and house.

## MAKING PROVISIONS IN NEW HOMES

In plans for new houses, architects and designers sometimes box and label an area "Future Patio" beside the building.

It may give some indicative dimensions but rarely any other specifications.

This can cause uncertainty for the truss fabricator - are they expected to allow for the weight of the patio in the design and quote for the roof trusses or not?

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If an allowance is made at the time it may add a few hundred dollars to the quote and cause the job to be lost.

Conversely, if the allowance is not made, then at a later date they may be unjustifiably accused of not supplying trusses according to the drawings.

It is normally understood that such remarks on plans are non-binding architectural concepts for possible future development of the property.

eventuality as it would be more economic in the long term.

But unless the specifications or customer makes it abundantly clear that the building design must make immediate provisions for the future extension, it is reasonable for the truss supplier to ignore it.

Nevertheless, some may find it prudent to tag the quote accordingly.

## MAKING PROVISIONS IN EXISTING HOMES

New patios are commonly attached onto metal fascias on the eaves of an existing home.

Several modification steps are



■ *Patio supported overhang.*

These are included for the discretion of the home owner at the time, and implementation may be years or decades away.

If acted upon at a later date the specifications may also then be varied depending on prevailing architectural styles and conditions at the time, or as in many cases, the patio may not eventuate at all.

If the customer is confident of building a patio in the foreseeable future, it would be wise for him to request the roof design allow for this

usually necessary to support the additional load from the new extension: the truss overhang has to be strengthened; the truss tie down has to be reinforced to resist additional uplift; and the metal fascia has to be supplemented.

Most metal fascias are non-structural and so a backing timber member is required for fixing the patio.

There are many traps for the unwary; so if in doubt, ensure that a truss engineer is consulted to provide the necessary details.

TTN