Are you summer ready?

AS we approach the warmer months and the summer festive season, you may notice that your outdoor area is looking a little worse for wear. Perhaps the deck is a bit dull or your paved entertaining area is a bit shabby - now is the time to get on top of refreshing these outdoor areas.

Refresh paved areas

Visit your local hardware store and find a paver or concrete cleaner suitable for your pavers at home. You can use a brush and a bit of elbow grease, but for best results a pressure cleaner should be used to blast away dirt, mold, grime and other nasties.

Pick the first of a few sunny days to clean your pavers and then let them dry for a day or two. You can also purchase paints or sealants for your pavers to keep their colour vibrant and clean, and extend the longevity of the outdoor area. Refilling gravel or sand in between pavers or around your entertaining area will also keep it looking polished and fresh.

Stain or paint your deck

If your deck and railings are looking a bit dull or shabby, you may need to recoat them with either a stain or paint. When deciding on the colour and finish, it is important to consider the products previously used on the timber. Oil-based stains will sink into the timber and fade away with time, as opposed to acrylic or water-based stains that sit on the surface and peel or flake away.

Preparation is key when restaining or painting a deck - the surface must be clean and stripped back of any previous product or dirt to ensure a pristine, lasting finish. Scrub or pressure clean your deck, or use a timber stripper to remove past products. The type of stain you use will determine the application method, but your local hardware experts will be able to advise you on the tools and techniques required to get your desired result.

Install an outdoor awning

Whether you're upgrading your existing awning or installing a completely new setup, outdoor blinds and awnings are practical and attractive ways to maintain sun safety for your family and your outdoor area.

Replacing an existing awning will likely be more straightforward than installing a new one, as all you have to do is safely remove it, measure the size of the awning, decide on a colour, density and style, then purchase and install it.

If you are installing a brand new outdoor blind or awning, you may have a little more work on your hands. To begin, you should decide the style of awning or blind you'd like - it may be a fixed awning, or perhaps a retractable or roll-up blinds. You then need to measure the size of the space to be covered, and decide on a density of material for your blind if it is a fabric blind, such as those available for purchase from Coolaroo. Depending on the thickness and density of the material, more or less light and UV rays will be able to get through.

You're then up for a trip to your local hardware store to select a colour and appropriate size of blind or awning, and all the required fittings and fixtures. It is likely that you'll need some power tools such as an impact driver or drill, so if you don't already own one, consider purchasing one or borrowing one from a friend or family member. The instructions included in the blinds should be fairly straightforward, and the blind company will often have a video-tutorial available should you face any difficulties.