



National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines – Summary of feedback

This document provides an overview of the feedback we heard from stakeholders to develop and refine the National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines (Principles and Guidelines).

Consultation

In July 2024, the Principles and Guidelines were introduced following extensive consultation with older people, their families and carers, the aged care sector and design experts.

Stakeholder feedback has helped us to refine, improve and finalise the Principles and Guidelines.

Initial consultation outcomes

In response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, we consulted with older people and the aged care sector to inform the development of new Principles and Guidelines to guide the design of residential aged care accommodation going forward to help improve quality of life for older people.

The first public consultation opened in November 2021. Two discussion papers were released inviting feedback from peak bodies, service providers, carers, and technical experts. We received 59 submissions from stakeholders who shared a wide range of issues and ideas from diverse perspectives.

A survey for older people, their families and carers opened in March 2022, asking about the physical design, social and lifestyle characteristics they wanted the new Principles and Guidelines to consider. We received 734 responses to this survey.

This broad representation has helped us capture diverse views on a wide range of issues and ideas. Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey or responded to the discussion papers.

What we heard

We received valuable feedback about what people think is important in residential aged care. This included:

- **Dementia-friendly design** that meets the needs of all residents, not just those people with dementia, and should be incorporated in any design principles
- **A meaningful experience of 'home'** where residents feel understood, have choice and control, and can personalise their own spaces
- **Gardens and outdoor spaces** that are safe, appropriately sheltered, attractive and freely accessible
- **Home-like meals and snacks** that are tasty, culturally appropriate, and accessible
- **Access to kitchens** so residents can assist in meal preparation if they wish
- **A sense of community** in the home with a variety of smaller and larger shared spaces for activities, socialising, and family visits
- **Maintaining community connections** through visits from family and friends, access to transport, and proximity to other community services and facilities
- **Inclusive environments** with flexible spaces that can be used for cultural or religious activities
- **Ageing-in-place** with options to stay in the same room or location in the home as care needs change
- **Staying together** with options for couples, siblings, or other pairs to stay together, including where care needs differ
- **Pets** being able to stay or visit
- **Consultation and co-design** to ensure aged care homes meet the needs and expectations of senior Australians and the community
- **Smart / assistive technologies** to enhance safety and accessibility, provide entertainment and promote community connection
- **Good ventilation** including access to fresh air with opening doors and windows
- **Infection prevention and control** with touchless handwashing facilities, easy clean surfaces, and spaces that enable people to be separated if needed to prevent transmission

The findings from these initial public consultations informed the next phase of targeted consultations and helped us develop a detailed understanding of what was required in the Principles and Guidelines.

The University of Wollongong was engaged to provide additional expertise to assist with the development of the Principles and Guidelines.

Feedback on the draft Principles and Guidelines

In September 2023, we released the draft Principles and Guidelines and an online form seeking feedback from stakeholders including aged care providers, design professionals and older people, families and carers.

Thank you to everyone who shared their views.

What we heard

Feedback was largely positive. People found the Principles and Guidelines useful, well-structured and easy to understand.

Areas that needed more consideration in the draft Principles and Guidelines included:

- balancing resident autonomy and staff safety
- the feasibility of some recommendations, such as:
 - monitoring and control of air quality, temperature and noise
 - openable windows and cross ventilation
 - minimising the use of handrails in corridors
- diversity and inclusivity of examples and images
- costs of retrofitting and upgrading buildings
- alignment with the Aged Care Quality Standards and the accreditation process
- resident health in relation to climate change and sustainability
- flexibility to meet changing needs and preferences
- research methods and evidence base.

What we're doing

We used the feedback to refine the final [National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines](#). We are also using insights from the consultation to help make sure the Principles and Guidelines are widely adopted.

For more information, visit [improving accommodation in residential aged care](#).

Learn more

For more information about aged care:



Visit myagedcare.gov.au



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