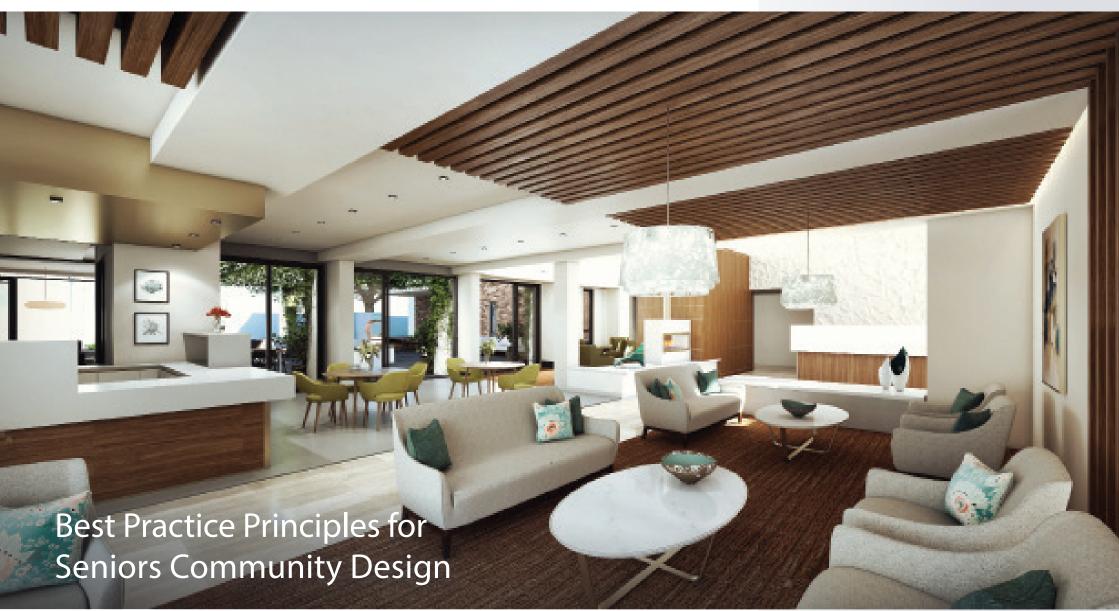




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Establishing
best practice in
community design
for the retirement
living sector and
ensuring seniors
have a quality
accommodation
and community
experience.

### **Executive Summary**

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Nearly 200,000 Australians now call a retirement village home, and this number is expected to increase sharply over coming years and decades as we experience a 'silver tsunami' – an ageing population boom.

Research across the world is demonstrating the health and social benefits that can be realised by living in well-designed communities. That's why planning and developing properly designed housing in purpose-built retirement communities is an increasingly important way of ensuring senior Australians can fully enjoy their older years.

To help ensure that older Australians have the best housing options, the Retirement Living Council, as part of the Property Council of Australia, has partnered with world renowned architecture firm ThomsonAdsett to identify and document best practice principles to guide the design and refurbishment of retirement communities.

Through close engagement and consultation with retirement living operators, designers, developers and planners, the Best Practice Principles for Seniors Community Design has been able to look beyond the physical characteristics of a village, to capture the dynamics of a thriving community, and especially those elements that promote social connectedness and better wellbeing.

This publication has been created with communities of all kinds and sizes in mind; the principles can be brought to life in a high-rise apartment tower, or a conventional broad acre village; by large companies, not-for-profit organisations and start-up ventures. It is intended for developers, builders, architects, designers, service providers and any organisation interested in creating great housing and community solutions for senior Australians.

On behalf of the Retirement Living Council, I thank
Wayne Schomberg and Matthew Flynn from
ThomsonAdsett for leading the development of the
Best Practice Principles for Seniors Community Design,
as well as their many colleagues, and our steering
committee of passionate members who provided
content and feedback: Daniel Milentijevic (Stockland),
Warren Harris and Bianca Blair (Blue Care), Lorraine Calder
(Australian Unity), Laurice Elhaj (Lendlease), Andrew
Hahn (IRT), Craig Muir (GHDWoodhead), Kylie Simpson
(RetireAustralia), Jonathan Gibson (Ingenia Communities)
and Nicholas Playoust (AEH Retirement Living).

The hard work of all contributors will ensure that the principles of great design for senior Australians can be a feature of every new retirement community.

Ben Myers Executive Director – Retirement Living Property Council of Australia Good design creates appropriate space for us to work and live, and can lead to a whole range of beneficial health outcomes.



#### Introduction



The importance of good design in creating great environments to live simply cannot be underestimated. Good design creates appropriate space for us to work and live and can lead to a whole range of beneficial health and wellbeing outcomes.

This is especially true for the growing population of seniors (people aged 65 and over). Put simply, good design extends people's ability to live independent lives, and there can be no greater positive impact on a person's health and wellbeing than that.

Over the past couple of decades there has been a rapid improvement in design thinking relating to building great homes and environments for senior Australians. The retirement living sector has been at the forefront of that, with nearly 200,000 Australians now calling a retirement village home.

This evolution in thinking is set to continue and has led to the formation of this publication, the Best Practice Principles for Seniors Community Design.

This publication has been created in conjunction with ThomsonAdsett, a leading international architecture and design firm with studios throughout Australia and Asia, and a group of retirement living industry representatives, who devised a set of principles that all believe are applicable to good design for seniors.

The principles contained within this publication are in no way meant to be restrictive or limiting; for example, they do not mandate minimum room sizes. Instead they ensure that the design – or redesign – of seniors housing occurs with best practice in mind, while continuing to allow operators and designers to innovate and evolve.

With an ageing population leading to higher demand for retirement living and other forms of more specialised seniors housing, it's vital that homes and facilities are designed with these key principles in mind. These principles will ensure residents can maintain and extend independence, retain privacy and maximise the potential health and wellbeing benefits of village living.

#### Scope

This publication has been developed as a tool for retirement living developers and operators, stakeholders and consultants for delivering best practice seniors housing design. It is deliberately principles based – the set of principles conceived are intended to act as shared values held by operators, providing guidance in the design of their communities. While providing guidance, the publication aims to encourage innovation and evolution, always keeping in mind best practice outcomes.

The best practice principles are intended to achieve multiple objectives, including:

- Assisting operators in establishing or reviewing their own visions / values / philosophies;
- Forming part of an operator's briefing package to a consultant;
- Assisting operators to establish or review their own prescriptive guidelines, i.e. act as a check and balance as to whether the principles are addressed in some way;
- Develop market recognition for the retirement living sector through increased consumer confidence in improved design outcomes;
- Assisting operators to communicate the value of their design to the consumer.

#### Description

The principles focus on the components of the physical environment (internal and external) that a resident has access to. No reference is made to the mix of services that should be delivered into a seniors community or to any staff or support areas that a resident has no access to.

It is acknowledged that a building reflects the services delivered from it and the publication is based on four simple concepts that support the principles articulated.

### Introduction (continued)





These concepts are: -

## Concept One Innovation



The publication is a principles-based document with a focus on the shared values that industry believes should be addressed and incorporated in all purpose-designed seniors communities.

The purpose is to allow innovation in creating solutions, and not to set a physical standard or minimums that may not be relevant to a situation or market condition.

Providers and designers are encouraged to deliver new, innovative and creative solutions that are appropriate for the market they work in and deliver great outcomes for the resident.

## Concept Two Characteristics of a Seniors Community



A seniors community, including a 'retirement village', are communities that have the following characteristics:

- It is a managed community for seniors (people aged 65 and over);
- The organisation that manages the community is regulated by law;
- It is a community with a range of lifestyle options, assets and amenity provided to residents or clients;

- A range of accommodation options are provided for seniors, their spouses and sometimes their dependents;
- Safe and appropriate access and connectivity is provided at a physical, social and community level;
- A range of care options may be provided for residents either on site or through access to home care programs funded by the private sector and/or government;
- Access to assistance with living and hospitality options may be provided for residents;
- Access to emergency and security options may be provided for residents.

## Concept Three Purpose Design



A seniors community is to be purpose designed to deliver the services or features that are marketed by a provider as being available on site.

## Concept Four Service Ready



A Community for Seniors is to be purpose designed to be service ready to deliver the evolving range of lifestyle and support services that a resident may require over their tenure. Seniors communities need to be designed so they can evolve with their residents.

#### **Principles**

The principles articulated within the publication are a group of shared values that support a provider to deliver a quality physical environment to their specific market segment. The publication is drafted in the following format:

- Principle type Principles are divided in to three types; being principles related to the consumer expectations, residents' emotional responses to their environment and the actual environment itself
- Principle Each principle is related to a specific aspect in the physical environment
- Vision Each principle is defined by a vision statement
- Approach How each principle may be addressed is identified by an approach. The publication is drafted in such a way that the approaches are general in nature and providers are encouraged to innovate.

### Introduction (continued)



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#### **Principle Types**

- Expectations are the range of principles that are focused on the consumer's expectations of what a seniors community should be. These expectations are considered common to potential residents and their families and are:
  - Independence;
  - Social and lifestyle;
  - · Connectedness and linkages;
  - · Diversity;
  - Sustainability;
  - · Enabling and evolving;
  - Affordability.
- Place and Identity are the range of principles related to the resident's emotional connection to the physical environment. The principles focus on what a resident wants their home and community to be. These emotional connections are considered common to potential residents and their families and are:
  - · Home;
  - · Community;
  - Authenticity.

- Enabling Environments are the range of principles
  that are focused on providing a physical environment
  that addresses the physical and emotional needs of a
  resident, and overtime evolves to address their future
  requirements. Theseenvironmentsmustaddressall
  physical, social and emotional requirements over
  time to be appropriate. Issues directly related to the
  physical environment are:
  - Age friendly design;
  - Access and wayfinding;
  - Flexible environments;
  - · Safety and security;
  - · Communications and innovation;
  - · External environment.

Ensuring that the design of seniors housing occurs with best practice in mind, while continuing to allow operators and designers to innovate and evolve.



## **Expectations**Independence

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#### Vision

The creation of a physical environment empowers residents through supporting a person's independence and lifestyle choices. The physical environment is to be purpose designed to address an individual's evolving needs through the provision of a physical fabric that provides positive support and choice.

#### **Approach**

All residents of retirement communities make an independent choice to enter a village, for a variety of reasons – most commonly, to rightsize while they can, to maximise their lifestyle opportunities, or to access extra support for themselves and/or their spouse.

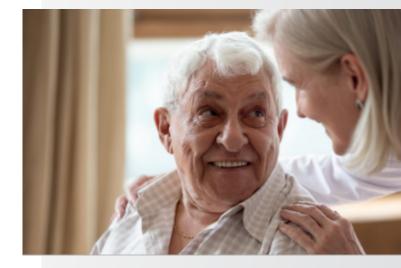
Previous research by Grant Thornton¹ confirms retirement village residents enter residential aged care an average of five years later than people in the general community, due to the age-friendly design of retirement housing, plus the support of a like-minded community and access to on-site or visiting health and wellbeing services. They also have shorter hospital stays on average and are less likely to require mental health services².

The desire to remain and extend independence has always been and will continue to be a main driver behind an older Australian's decision to move to a retirement community.

This goes beyond the design of the immediate physical environment – the resident's own villa, apartment or unit – and encompasses the design of the entire community, including shared buildings such as clubhouses, libraries and swimming pools, as well as communal gardens, walkways and roads. The design of these communities facilitates choice and allows the resident to take part in as many – or as few – of the village's activities as he or she wants.

While many retirement communities also provide or facilitate the provision of formal home care services, this is in fact designed to further enhance independence through supported living. This further delays the need for individuals to need to enter formal residential care.

Facilitating independence can be done through the creation of environments that support the concepts of privacy, dignity and respect.



The physical environment is to be purpose designed to address an individual's evolving needs through the provision of a physical fabric that provides positive support and choice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Grant Thornton, National overview of the retirement village sector, 2014

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> McCrindle Research and Villages.com.au, The McCrindle Baynes Villages Census Report 2013, 2013

## Expectations

## Social and lifestyle



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#### **Vision**

The physical environment is to be designed to allow residents to make social and lifestyle choices and supports them to fulfil these expectations. It should provide appropriate physical access, spaces and amenity that encourage residents to maintain an active and fulfilling life.

#### **Approach**

Lifestyle and accommodation share a 'hand-in-glove' relationship. It is essential to design retirement living solutions around resident social and lifestyle expectations.

A portion of retirement living residents are working into their later years (e.g. consulting, part-time and home business operations) and design outcomes should provide flexibility for residents who seek the flexibility and opportunity to work from home. Retirement living outcomes could incorporate facilities to support this function (e.g. multi-purpose meeting areas).

Creating an environment where opportunities exist for people to make new connections and friendships is vital to meet people's social expectations. It is also equally important to respect people's privacy and understand that not all residents seek out or desire new connections and friendships. Provide residents with the flexibility to ensure they can fulfil individual desires to be independent and/ or be a part of a community, and where social lifestyles

can thrive and develop organically. Forethought and planning of facilities, spaces (both inside and outside) can encourage the organic socialising of residents (e.g. men's sheds, community gardens, etc.). Communal areas provide opportunities for resident families and friends to gather and catch up. This encourages families and residents to feel welcome and a part of the community.

Social expectations are changing, in part due to a shift in the Australian way of life and technological advancements. People can be connected both through face-to-face communication and via online opportunities. It is important that retirement living solutions promote a variety of connection avenues as this is becoming the 'norm'.

It is essential to understand that a resident's move to a retirement living home may be their final move. Furthermore, residents are likely to appreciate the 'creature comforts' that they are familiar with. It is imperative to facilitate a smooth transition, with an aim to normalise the process, and provide residents with similar creature comforts and expectations (e.g. pet-friendly environment).

Residents do not want to be made to feel old, so, hand grab rails and similar aids should not be prominent for residents who do not require this. Provisions should be put in place for such aids to be incorporated; at a point in time when this is required by the resident. This should fit with the evolving desires of the ageing population.





### **Expectations**

### Connectedness and linkages

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#### Vision

The creation of a community that supports residents maintaining a meaningful social connection with their friends, family and the broader community by providing linkages with those who live on and off site.

#### **Approach**

The main driver of social connectedness and linkages is 'inclusion', without urban barriers that isolate residents from their village neighbourhoods or the broader community. Linkages enable an integrated network of social spaces working within the context of the site.

Opportunities for connectedness arising from linkages will foster social capital through the sharing of urban spaces and access to recreation spaces.

- Connectedness should facilitate an integration of lifestyle and care choices in order that residents can have various options for social contact within spaces that are activated and safe.
- Linkages should form part of legible urban planning, providing sight-lines or wayfinding to the community's social nodes.
- Operators will retain management of matters concerned with accessibility and security.
- External community partnerships that promote greater visibility of residents are encouraged.

- Provide residents with flexibility so travelling to services and amenities can be minimised and are within easy-reach (e.g. located close to amenities and services).
- Homes and environments should be planned and designed in a discreet manner to assist mobility.
   Design in a way so that ease of mobility becomes subconscious and is not an obvious or noticeable element.

Opportunities for connectedness arising from linkages will foster social capital through the sharing of urban spaces and access to recreation spaces.





## Expectations

## **Diversity**



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#### Vision

The creation of a physical environment that acknowledges and supports the democratic and multicultural nature of modern Australian society through the positive support of social, cultural and ethnic diversity.

#### Approach

Individuals develop beliefs, traits and characteristics based upon their life experience and cultural upbringing which defines them within their social grouping and society. A growing proportion of Australians who are becoming seniors were not born, brought up or educated in Australia.

Australian society is based upon shared values and a belief in tolerance. Groups of seniors also have views and beliefs that are shaped by their upbringing and specific values, beliefs or cultural heritage that define them as unique in a social context.

Ageing is a lifelong process where people and their families acquire or develop health issues. This creates a diverse range of physical and mental abilities in the people who live in seniors communities. The design of the physical environment should accommodate this diverse range of needs.

The richness and diversity of the broader community should be considered when designing a seniors community to ensure the needs and requirements of seniors from diverse backgrounds are identified and addressed.

Diversity takes many forms and the following should be considered when locating a seniors community within a well-established broader social framework:

- · Cultures, ethnic backgrounds, languages;
- Shared interests, life experience, expectations, aspirations;
- Religious beliefs;
- Socio-economic background, education level, work experience, income stream or savings;
- Age, gender, marital status;
- Sexual orientation;
- · Geographic location;
- People with varying physical and mental abilities.



The richness and diversity of the broader community should be considered when designing a seniors community to ensure the needs and requirements are identified and addressed.

## Expectations<br/>Sustainability



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#### Vision

The creation of a physical environment that supports the community to be socially, ecologically and financially sustainable in the long term.

#### Approach

A key indicator in measuring the health of a community is determining how it incorporates sustainable practices into its everyday activities, including sustainable design.

Sustainable design is intrinsically linked to affordability and can incorporate everything from home insulation to windows or appliances. In a seniors community setting, affordability is as important as it is in at any other stage in life, if not more so, considering the high percentage of village residents who receive an age pension.

Older people are more likely to feel cold during winter and want to turn their heating on, but sustainable design can reduce the need for artificial heat by incorporating elements that retain heat and warmth inside the home.

Sustainable design leads to improved health outcomes for village residents. Examples include accessible outdoor spaces within the village which encourage outdoor activity; and ensuring the presence of natural light in the home is directly felt by occupants.

Sustainability-friendly communities also actively promote improved wellbeing, by providing attractive and friendly environments for residents to meet, mingle and be physically and/or mentally active.

Environmental or ecological sustainability completes the traditional triple bottom line equation, and increasingly villages are adopting practices to reduce their carbon emissions and use of non-renewable resources.

Many seniors communities are decades old, but it is important that even if their existing design wasn't as ecologically friendly as it would be now, sustainable practices can be built in to the operations of their village. Measures such as recycling and water conservation features like rainwater tanks and retrofitted water saving tapware are relatively simple to introduce to existing villages. Any introduction of these measures should be accompanied with relevant resident education.

While popular perception may indicate that sustainability is a younger person's issue, research shows retirees and older people are just as receptive to sustainable practices that are meaningful and don't adversely affect their cost of living.



Sustainable design is intrinsically linked to affordability and can incorporate everything from home insulation, windows or appliances.

# Expectations Enabling and evolving

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#### Vision

Ageing is a natural process that requires the physical environment to adapt to a person's evolving social and physical needs. Physical environments need to be flexible enough to evolve over time to meet the constantly changing needs of existing and future residents, as they become more susceptible to conditions like dementia and arthritis.

#### **Approach**

Enabled environments consider the impact and benefit that technology, design development and physical and psychological research advancement can have on residents' day-to-day lives and the quality of experience within their home and community. Through a considered design approach, flexibility can be established to enable dwellings to be modified or customised to fit a resident's personal requirements, which will be varied and change as they continue to age in place.

Design considering residents' evolving needs is required to ensure an appropriate approach to adaptability is delivered through the design and construction phases of the project, allowing the community to evolve from inception.

The homes and environment will evolve over time as the residents age and their needs change. To have a sustainable and vibrant seniors community, it is vital to ensure division is not created between those who can and those who can't, either physically or emotionally due to a physical environment which cannot evolve and adapt.

Designs focused on principles targeted at supporting the natural development of a person in an appropriate environment, utilising elements like signage, door/ house numbering, corridor wayfinding and other similar elements, support an evolving environment. Physical environments need to be flexible enough to evolve over time to meet the constantly changing needs of existing and future residents.



# Expectations Affordability

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#### Vision

Seniors in retirement are generally on fixed incomes and their capacity to meet escalating costs may diminish over time. Affordability needs to address the cost of delivering services to residents efficiently; the cost of utilities and the cost of maintaining the physical environment to deliver appropriate levels of amenity.

#### Approach

When designing the physical environment, a designer must acknowledge prospective residents need to meet the cost of entry. Typically this will be determined by the value of housing in the area and further their level of home ownership. This is primarily the case as most people prefer to live near their current home, which enables them to maintain community connections with family, friends and local services.

Residents need to meet the ongoing cost not only of the services delivered to them but also the costs of utilities and maintenance for the duration of their tenure often on limited fixed incomes. Environmentally sound design which incorporates low maintenance finishes and employs sustainable features that reduce recurrent costs should be considered in design decisions.

Environmentally sound design which incorporates low maintenance finishes and employs sustainable features should be considered in design decisions.



## Place and Identity Home



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#### Vision

The home is the domain of the resident in which services are delivered. A resident should feel they belong in their home. They should feel safe and secure. Their environment should be flexible enough to evolve over time to meet their needs. Residents should live normal lives, with a high level of amenity and support a variety of lifestyle choices.

#### Approach

To engender a sense of home in a dwelling by creating emotional responses to:

- Privacy;
- Belonging;
- Safety;
- · Retreat;
- · Relaxation;
- · Family and friends.

#### → Privacy

Privacy is needed between the public realm and the space of the home but also within the home itself. Privacy between the home and the outside realm requires a threshold. There needs to be a clear point of entry that delineates that which is outside the home and that which is in. This point of entry needs be in the full control of the occupant of the home.

Privacy in the home can be achieved through the organisation of spaces from private (bathrooms) to semi-private (bedroom, laundry) to public (living, dining, kitchen, balcony). Consideration should be given to:

- Transition between a bedroom entry and the more public areas of the home;
- Views between spaces; particularly views directly into bathrooms from kitchen and dining spaces.

#### → Belonging

A sense of belonging is created in a resident when they can individualise their space and adapt it to suit their needs. As with a sense of privacy, to create a sense of belonging, residents need to be able to give permission to enter the space through:

- Doorbells;
- · Peepholes;
- · Front door intercom;
- Security doors.





# Place and Identity Home





#### → Safety

Safety in the home is asserting control over who enters the home as well as a resident's personal safety within their home. A home should be planned to be safe for a resident with a broad range of abilities and allow a resident to perform their daily tasks without fear of slips, trips and falls. This should be kept in mind when choosing fittings, fixtures and materials.

A resident should feel safe from their neighbours, which can be achieved with privacy screens and a lockable front door. A resident should be able to call for help for both medical and security emergencies. This can be achieved with:

- A personal panic/medic button;
- An intercom system in the house;
- A smart house system that recognises a resident under duress and alerts appropriate external sources.

#### → Retreat

To create a sense of retreat in a home a resident must be able to be audibly, visually and physically alone. They require privacy and an aspect through a window or open private space giving them the opportunity to rest their gaze and reflect. The home should not be in a main thoroughfare as it will be difficult to reach the level of noise reduction required for a sense of retreat.

#### → Relaxation

For a resident to have the ability to relax in their home the environment needs to be well lit, comfortable and at a temperature that suits them. It must be flexible enough in its spatial and loose furniture arrangements to allow the pursuit of a broad range of hobbies. The zoning of a home regarding noisy and quiet areas is an important aspect of the planning to consider.

#### → Family and friends

A home needs to be able to host family and friends. It should be flexible enough to accommodate the different nature of peoples visit and increase the incidental visitation of intergenerational visitors. Furniture should be able to be moved into several different arrangements to suit a range of social activities. When planning the spaces, consideration should be given to the zoning of formal and informal spaces.



A resident should feel they belong in their home. They should feel safe and secure. Their environment should be flexible enough that it can evolve over time to meet their needs.

## Place and Identity Community



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#### Vision

A community provides physical and emotional support to residents, family, friends and staff. The physical environment is integral in creating a strong sense of community. The design and layout should foster social connectedness on site, strengthening linkages to family, friends and the broader community.

#### Approach

Engender a sense of community in a seniors community through creating the following emotional responses to the physical environment:

- Belonging;
- Engagement;
- · Activity and activation;
- Interaction and meetings;
- · Excitement;
- Connection;
- Neighbourhood;
- Inclusion.

#### → Belonging

A sense of belonging is created in members of a community when they feel they have rights and responsibilities to that community. To create this, community spaces need to be culturally relevant and residents need to be able to have a high level of participation in the activities that are carried out in these spaces.

#### → Engagement

Engagement is needed in a community to create and sustain it. It is a resident's willingness to commit a level of time and energy to a group, activity or task. Residents should be able to determine the level at which they want to be engaged and at every level receive a measure of satisfaction and contentment from the exchange. To create resident investment and engagement in community spaces:

- There should be a range of activities that give residents many options in terms of how much of their time and energy is committed to the task;
- · It is easy to participate in these activities;
- The activities take place in pleasant spaces suited to the task and happen near each other to allow interaction between them.

#### → Activity and activation

Activity and activation is required in common spaces to foster a sense of community. Nodes of similar activities should be clustered together with major circulation routes connecting them.

Consider the position of food and drink areas and their proximity to activities to allow residents passive observation and interaction.



## Place and Identity Community





#### → Interaction and meetings

The interaction that needs to be facilitated in these community spaces is serendipitous mingling and engagement. Residents should have the opportunity to make connections with old friends and new. Residents should be able to observe others quietly and unobtrusively in the public area, passively participating in the sense of community.

#### → Excitement

Excitement can be created through activity and movement. Community spaces need to have a transitive quality to them. They are both a transition and destination space, and this dual function can create a sense of excitement in a participant. It needs to be a place where events are held as well as have a high amount of foot traffic. To encourage this, consider:

- Locating community spaces close to or as part of the key circulation nodes;
- That some of the community space is large enough to accommodate a range of different events;
- · Planning regular and frequent activities in that space;
- The inclusion of permanent activation areas in the space, such as a café, playground, etc.

#### → Connection

Community space has a high level of connectivity physically, visually and thematically. Community spaces need to look like they belong together and are suitable for the public realm. Connection to the broader community outside of the site should be fostered through ease of transportation as well as intergenerational events and activities that invite the broader community to participate.

Connection should be fostered between friends and family; community spaces should provide a range of opportunities to meet new people as well as opportunity to re-establish old connections.

#### → Neighbourhood

A neighbourhood should be created between groups of residents as well as connecting to the greater neighbourhood established outside of the seniors community. When residents feel connected to each other by proximity, culture and community, a neighbourhood is established. Connection is achieved by having community spaces that residents can mingle in as well as activities that residents can participate together in, fostering a sense of camaraderie. To create a link to the greater community context, there needs to be provision for participation in some activities from individuals outside the community. An example may be a community cafe or coffee shop that the general public can also visit within the community.

#### → Inclusion

To create a sense of inclusion in community spaces, there needs to be a high amount of transparency and visibility into areas of activity. Activity areas should have appropriate physical linkages and be designed for the use of a range of generations and residents with differing abilities. There should be no barriers physically or psychologically to stop a resident from participating in the community. A community space should encourage participation from both residents and visitors.



# Place and Identity Authenticity



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#### Vision

Authentic environments reflect a resident's life experiences, culture, socio-economic background, lifestyles and expectations. They are familiar, comfortable and understandable.

#### **Approach**

Designers can engender a sense of authenticity in the physical environment through considering the following elements in their planning:

- Identity;
- Cultural understanding;
- Richness and vibrancy;
- Distinct character;
- Responsiveness and contextuality;
- Materiality and scale;
- · Connection to natural environment;
- Lifestyle.

#### → Identity

Identity is established when the function of the space is distinct and clear. A resident approaching the space should immediately be able to recognise, without the aid of signage, what the space is for. The identity of the space is separate from the identity of other spaces, there should be no confusing overlap even if the space is used for functions other than the one described by its identity.

#### Cultural understanding

Culturally understandable environments respond to the greater cultural context the space is situated in. They respond to a demographic's expectation of daily life including language, access to amenities, prayer and reflection, food preparation, cultural holidays and our relationship with animals and nature.

#### → Richness and vibrancy

To create a rich and vibrant space, the size of the space should be appropriate for its function. It should use materials with a texture and finish that is culturally appropriate for the residents. It should have appropriate lighting and temperature control for the activities being performed in the space. The level of noise in the space should be appropriate for the function of the space. (Quieter in a library, noisier in a café.)



## Place and Identity Authenticity



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#### → Distinct character

Distinct character and identity are similar in that they describe what distinguishes a space from other spaces. Not every space requires an identity, but every space requires a distinct character. Character is determined by culture, context and provider. Its character should be congruent with a resident's expectations for a space.

Its character should be clear and understandable to its demographic. Common spaces or spaces where it is appropriate, should have a character that is amenable to anintergenerational demographic of visitors and residents.

#### → Responsiveness and contextuality

For the environment to be responsive and contextual, the position of the spaces needs to make sense within the project site as well as the greater cultural context. Spaces should respond through their fabric. Spaces should be respectful to both physical and cultural context yet retain an appropriate character and identity.

#### → Materiality and scale

The scale and materiality of an authentic space should be appropriate to its character and identity. It should respond to the local context within the site and in the broader community. It should be relevant to the resident's demographic and cultural background.

### → Connection to natural environment

Connection to the natural environment is important on a human level. It gives spaces grounding in the reality of the world by providing insight into the time of day, the season and a resident's location on site. A physical and visual connection is optimal, however in more vertical communities a visual connection may be sufficient.

Consideration needs to be given to what type of activities will take place in the landscape and how residents will experience them. The type and size of roofed structure in the landscape should be determined by the lifestyle needs of the residents. For instance, shaded seats can provide rest stops on exercise paths.

#### → Lifestyle

Authentic environments should cater to the lifestyle choices of the residents. They should have characters and identities that respond to residents' cultural background and afford them the opportunity to continue to pursue their interests and hobbies. These spaces should also provide residents with the familiar spaces they use in their day to day public life, giving residents the freedom to live their lives uninterrupted.



Authentic environments should provide residents with the familiar spaces they use in their day to day public life, giving residents the freedom to live their lives uninterrupted.

## Enabling Environments

### Age friendly design





#### Vision

The physical environment should be designed to support a person to continue living comfortably and independently as they advance through the ageing process. This principle focuses on needs associated with physical and cognitive aspects of ageing.

Every person's experience of ageing will be different, and how these differing needs are met is part of the challenge of appropriate design. The changing nature of a person's needs through the ageing process are to be considered. The principle of flexible environments looks at this aspect specifically.

#### **Approach**

Design to support the needs of the client group to changing physical and cognitive capabilities. Elements that may be appropriate to consider include:

- Mobility;
- Frailty;
- Sensory impairment (vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste);
- Ageing;
- Physical activity;
- · Environmental control;
- Ergonomics.

#### → Mobility

Reduced mobility may affect a person's capacity for reaching and bending in normal daily activities. It may have impacts on dexterity, particularly if a person suffers from arthritis. Reduced mobility in terms of walking will have an impact on appropriate distances of travel (walkability) both within and outside of the residence and may result in use of mobility aids. Fall risk is associated with reduced mobility. Aids that can mitigate reduced mobility yet encourage continued use can include walking frames, wheelchairs, and powered mobility scooter; the potential impacts of which need to be considered in the design of the spaces and elements of the building such as basins and benchtops.

#### **→** Frailty

Reduced strength may compound issues associated with reduced mobility, such as difficulty lifting objects, or using hands, for example to open and close taps. Frailty includes issues associated with reduced tensile strength in the skin and tissues, with greater risks of tears or abrasions than the general population. A major issue associated with increased fragility is increased risk in the case of a fall. To assist in addressing this fragility material selection and design of building elements such as joinery should be carefully considered.

#### → Sensory impairment

Sensory impairment can take many forms, from prevalence of short-sightedness to degrees of blindness; cataracts and other diseases; as well as various forms and degrees of hearing loss, and other hearing issues including tinnitus. The impacts of impairment should be considered as well as the use of aids such as glasses, hearing loops and sensory gardens.

#### → Ageing

Whilst in an independent living environment, residents are seeking accommodation which suit their requirements at that time in their lives. They must not feel a need to compromise resulting from an ageing process.

Examples of those design features include:

- Provision of resting points between a lift and an apartment allowing residents to continue routine grocery shopping, albeit at a slightly slower pace.
- Toilets located near communal spaces removes the fear of not gaining access in time, hence encouraging continuing use of those spaces.
- Forsecurity, passive surveillance from a partments and communal areas is often sufficient to deter intruders without the need for structures or technology which may be more confronting.

That same environment needs to discreetly adapt to the resident's evolving needs as they likely become partially dependent.

# Enabling Environments Age friendly design



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#### Examples include:

- Apartments with sufficient spaces for carers to assist a resident;
- Features for additional support and mobility may be installed only when required;
- Design which considers physical limitations such as bending, stretching or climbing;
- Physical health impacts from the diseases of ageing.

Diseases of ageing result in various impacts, many of which will overlap with the categories above. An area of consideration not mentioned elsewhere are changes to cognition and memory. These can be of varied forms and can also impact the social and emotional life of an individual and their partner, friends and family.

#### → Physical activity

Appropriate physical exercise is part of the health and wellbeing of any individual, and seniors communities should facilitate easy access to exercise opportunities. The Australian Department of Health and Ageing has published recommendations for adults aged 65 and over, which includes 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity exercise, as well as occasional higher intensity exercise, and a generally active lifestyle. What constitutes moderate-intensity exercise will vary depending on the individual, and the appropriateness of various activities will be impacted by the issues listed previously.

Opportunities for physical activity should be considered, such as access to informal opportunities in conjunction with purpose designed external or internal facilities.

#### → Environmental control

Items which can be controlled include lighting, sound, tactility, temperature and humidity. Adequate consideration of these items provides residents with amenities to continue regular routines.

Consideration may be given to the following:

- Higher lighting levels and greater contrasts are often necessary, largely to minimise the fear of falling.
   Similar consideration needs to be given to signage.
- A balance between sound transmission and reverberation is essential to the comfort level of a person with some hearing loss.
- Slip resistant floor surfaces are essential. Selection of materials affecting tactility may impact sound attenuation.
- There is often preference for slightly higher temperatures, particularly in areas which are used for resting, relaxing and quiet enjoyment.
- A choice of heating and cooling methods is greatly encouraged. When temperatures do not require air conditioning or ducted heating, fans which do not reduce natural humidity are often preferred.

#### → Ergonomics

Elements should be ergonomically designed for use within the capacity of the greatest number of people. Selection of fixtures (such as tapware), fittings such as light switches, furniture and equipment is to be appropriate to this cohort for use without assistance.



## **Enabling Environments**

### Access and wayfinding





#### Vision

Physical environments should allow residents and visitors to understand and move through them in a safe and dignified manner. This requires consideration of those with different life experiences, from diverse backgrounds, and with changing or differing abilities.

#### **Approach**

The three main components to consider when designing for wayfinding are knowing where you are, knowing how to get somewhere and recognising when you have arrived. The access and wayfinding systems both within and outside the buildings are important to visitors and residents and intuitive wayfinding techniques and cues should be used including:

- · Logical understandable planning;
- Orienting landmarks or views;
- Clear destinations;
- Connectivity between spaces;
- Personalisation;
- Understandable signage;
- · Day and night distinction;
- · Eliminating the need to seek directions;
- Removal of physical barriers to access.

#### → Logical understandable planning

Planning must be legible with a layering of wayfinding cues to help people orientate themselves. This includes the hierarchy of spaces such as widths and heights of hallways, corridors and doorways suggesting primary and secondary arterials. Secondary spaces (for specific activities) may be positioned around primary communal spaces thus providing clear sight lines without the need for wayfinding along corridors or signage. The overall layout should minimise wayfinding choices, which can help reduce potential confusion and disorientation.

#### → Orienting landmarks and views

Visual continuity between indoor and outdoor spaces is greatly encouraged. It is important to provide occupants with a clear sense of their location within the site as well as the time of day. Age friendly environments need to be the antithesis of a casino where customers are encouraged to lose track of time and location.

Wayfinding through a building is assisted by creating views to destinations or to the external environment. When combined with the placement of unique orientating landmarks at decision-making points internally and externally, residents are enabled to orientate themselves both within the building and the wider site. Additionally, colour, texture and different materials may be used to define destinations and create a deeper orientation for the residents.

#### → Clear destinations

Spaces are to be designed with the level of ambience so that the residents consider them rich, desirable and active destinations with a clear and understandable purpose. Circulation is to be clearly separated from social spaces to ensure that the space is clearly defined as a destination for a resident. To reinforce the concept of destination, spaces are to contain socially meaningful furniture arrangements and have a rich and engaging atmosphere supported by a strong design personality, which is residential and understandable in nature.

#### → Connectivity between spaces

Connectivity should be directly from one space to another, minimising the need for hallways or corridors. Circulation routes must be easy to travel with minimal distances and appropriate places to stop and rest. Circulation routes must accommodate mobility devices, while lighting and flooring must be designed to be age friendly and accessible.

# Enabling Environments Access and wayfinding



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#### → Personalisation

When seeking a new dwelling in an independent living environment, prospective residents are likely to be vacating their current homes to which they have become extremely accustomed. Though willing to accept some change, the extent of those changes should ideally be limited. Ideal designs provide convenience without loss of amenity. This may be addressed by some of the following:

- A variety of dwelling designs within a development;
- A range of pricing of dwellings;
- · Choice of finishes, equipment and fittings;
- Flexibility in space usage within dwellings;
- Sales strategy which allow some customisation at point of sale.

#### → Understandable signage

Signage and numbering should be well considered to ensure that it is in context and socially understandable. Street numbering, for example, should be even numbers one side of the street and odd numbers on the other, which is consistent with the way house addresses are identified in an urban context.

Where text is used, font type shall be familiar and understandable to residents. Font size and contrast of the overall sign shall allow for diminished vision of most residents. In culturally diverse communities it may be

appropriate to provide dual language signage suitable for people from non-English backgrounds.

Where pictograms are used, the message needs to be immediately recognisable and not ambiguous. Symbols in pictograms need to be relevant and meaningful to all ages.

#### → Day and night distinction

Seniors communities function 24 hours a day and both the day and night time experience need to be considered as an integral part of the design approach. Seniors communities by their nature are safe communities and one of the common issues encountered during ageing are sleep disorders, including insomnia. This means the physical environment may be used at times which would not generally be considered the norm in a broader community context.

Dusk and dawn can create potential hazards for seniors with poor eyesight as during times when day is transitioning to night a person with poor eyesight may struggle with low light levels until their eyes physically adjust to the external environment. Well-designed and located lighting, where issues of glare are considered, are a critical element used to address these issues.

When designing spaces and circulation, the specific needs of the residents should be considered always of the day and night.

### → Eliminating the need to seek directions

The need to seek directions may be eliminated with unobstructed sight lines between orientation nodes. Nodes may include reception, lift lobbies, open plan spaces and circulation routes to specific line of sight destinations. Sounds and smells may also be used as cues to assist with way finding without the need to seek directions.

### → Removal of physical barriers to access

In designing spaces and circulation, it is imperative that equity of access is considered as a paramount objective and any barrier (either perceived or real) be eliminated to create equity of access for all. Equity of access should be considered as a universal objective. Being able to use the facilities within the space without assistance where a person is physically able to do so creates equity.

The focus on providing independent living and enabling environments means that delivering outcomes that encourage independence reduces a person's focus on their personal disabilities while creating a feeling of independence.

## Enabling Environments Flexible environments





#### Vision

The ageing process is one of change over time and is different for every individual. Even within one household, a couple are unlikely to experience similar changes in a similar timeframe. Flexibility of spaces and elements of the physical environment enables those spaces to be adapted to best fit their occupants.

#### **Approach**

This may mean day-to-day flexibility, where a space can be changed quickly and easily, or may mean the capacity for adaptations to be made in the future, in a more permanent capacity. The following should be considered:

- Storage;
- Day-to-day flexibility (short term);
- · Long term flexibility;
- Evolution (adaptability).

#### → Storage

Storage areas should be suited to the activities and needs of seniors enjoying an independent lifestyle but also appropriate to the future physical limitations of those residents. By way of example, there may be a strong preference in kitchens to involve under-bench drawers rather than cupboards as these are easier for the resident to access contents without requiring as much physical bending. Likewise, any overhead cupboards should consider appropriate height-of-reach and be functionally accessible.

The amount of wardrobe space in master bedrooms need to be realistic for couples. Other storage spaces and joinery should be maximised where possible.

There may in certain circumstances be storage zones external to the immediate living area. If located in shared garages, these should provide a secure and well-lit position that provides residents the opportunity to 'lock and leave'. In some communities which attract seniors seeking opportunities for regional travel, it may also be appropriate to provide specific zones for storage of caravans, recreational vehicles and boats.

#### → Day-to-day flexibility

Consideration should be given to opportunities to better meet the needs of a person or couple through changes that can be made quickly and easily, and typically may be reversed with similar ease. These may be changes that are made daily, or only occasionally but with ease. The adaptations may target age-friendly design outcomes or may meet other needs.

#### Examples include:

- Use of loose furniture rather than joinery in areas where additional space may be required to improve access and mobility;
- Sliding partitions that enable spaces to be used as public or private zones, depending on the configuration;
- Moveable componentry such as variable height benchtops or desks.

## Enabling Environments Flexible environments



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#### → Long term flexibility

A balance is expected between a broad offer to all seniors at their various points in the ageing cycle and an enabling environment that remains attractive to those who wish to feel independent and active without being reminded of ageing in their living environment.

With the average lifespan of residents continually increasing, there should be consideration given to future lifestyle needs and how these might change from both a physical and cognitive perspective. If a new community involves a relatively young seniors cohort then future changes in lighting or colour contrast may inevitably be required to sustain a better living environment for those with diminishing eyesight. Multiple visual clues in conjunction with way-finding signage might need to be planned to assist those starting to exhibit signs of memory loss.

An important aspect to maintaining an optimum quality of life in later years is the ability for seniors to 'age in place' in a socially cohesive environment. Consideration should be given to;

- Changing resident needs due to the process of ageing;
- Changing market;
- Changing community expectations;
- Changing technology (communications, automation, electric vehicles);
- Selection of building fabric and structure (cost effective remodelling).

#### → Evolution (adaptability)

Design should support the evolving needs of residents and families. Where future needs are anticipated, allowances may be made to facilitate adaptability.

#### Examples include:

- Allowing additional space to improve access and mobility, where that space is put to another purpose in the first instance, such as storage or shower screens which can be removed later;
- Continuous flooring below joinery to allow future modification;
- Provision of support points within finished walls that enable future secure fixing of handrails or grabrails;
- Ensuring appropriate size of space for communications and IT back of house facilities, and additional hardware requirements to support IT solutions;
- Construction of wall and ceiling cavities to support additional hardwired cabling if required in the future;
- Ensuring adequate power supply to charge electric scooters/cars/mobility and sensory devices;
- Structural support for retrofit of ceiling hoists in bedrooms and bathrooms;
- Bathrooms designed to consider people who are mobility impaired, use mobility aids or requiring assistance.-



# Enabling Environments Safety and security



#### Vision

Independence is supported by environments appropriate for residents to go about their day-to-day activities where the likelihood of injury should be no greater than they would consider appropriate within their own home or in the broader community.

Environments should provide a level of security that allows residents, staff and visitors to engage in daily life with confidence and a sense of safety – without fearing for personal safety or worrying about theft or damage to their personal property or possessions.

#### Approach

Providing a physical environment that supports residents to feel and be safe and secure within the physical built and external environment of a seniors community. The security solution is always a mix of operational, physical, technological and personal measures that residents, family, visitors and staff can rely upon to be safe in the place they are using.

Elements that may be appropriate to consider include:

- Feeling secure;
- · Security of persons and property;
- Physical hazards;
- Vehicles and pedestrians (motorised and mobility vehicles);
- Support personnel and resident interface.

#### → Feeling secure

Consideration should be given to aspects of the physical environment that influence a person's sense of security. Approaches which are multi layered are often most successful as they cover people's differing perceptions of what feeling secure means to them.

#### Examples include:

- Fencing where appropriate;
- Locks and screens;
- Lighting;
- Promoting passive surveillance of the public realm through appropriate overlooking opportunities;
- Delineating public and private spaces (with landscaping, fences or other devices).

#### → Security of persons and property

The security of persons and property should be addressed through designing an environment incorporating measures that create a physical environment that is secure from those intent on criminal activity. Elements that may be appropriate to consider include:

- · High level of passive surveillance;
- · Identification and securing of the perimeter;
- Definition of common space that can be secured from external influences;
- Clear definition of the home that can be secured by the occupants;
- Physical securing of entry, doors and windows;
- External and internal lighting;
- A means of communication if a threat is identified.

Providing spaces that allow those using the physical environment to make safe choices, allows them to visually identify threats. This allows people to take measures to ensure their personal safety and means they can be safe while waiting for assistance, if required.

# Enabling Environments Safety and security



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#### → Physical hazards

Physical hazards take many forms and can be exacerbated by the changing physical and cognitive capabilities of residents. What may seem minor hazards can in fact be major hazards to residents. Examples include:

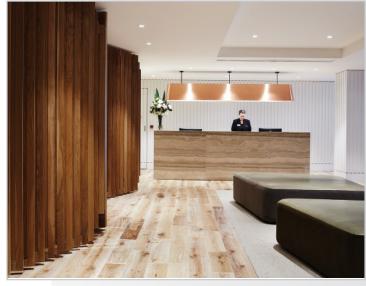
- Trip hazards, threshold barriers, slight level differences and surface finish changes should be limited or eliminated where possible;
- Stairs and ramps should be minimised but, where necessary, be appropriately designed to consider level differences, gradients, surface finishes and handrails;
- Eye height hazards;
- Lighting is to be adequate for residents to discern obstacles and promote wayfinding;
- Vegetation should be appropriately selected to avoid species that are poisonous or produce a large amount of leaf litter and/or seeds:
- Storms and adverse weather can increase short term hazards, such as localised flooding and wind damage, in turn increasing debris across sites;
- Natural hazards on site should be considered: waterways and significant level differences are potentially major hazards;
- As an interface to sites, built hazards such as freeways and poorly constructed neighbouring footpaths need to be considered.

#### → Vehicles and pedestrians (motorised and mobility vehicles)

Vehicle and pedestrian interfaces are important to the success of sites. Cars, mobility vehicles, service vehicles and pedestrians need to be able to interact in a safe and efficient manner. Each network should be carefully considered and overlaid to allow all networks to operate both individually and together.

### → Support personnel and resident interface

The interface between support personnel and residents should be defined and clear. This interface may vary from almost invisible to highly visible depending on the operator's philosophies and their intended resident groups. For this to be safe and successful, due consideration needs to be given to defining the services which will/may be available and planning how they will interact through a site.





## **Enabling Environments**

### Communications and innovation



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#### Vision

The growth of the web and social media allows residents to remain socially connected to the broader community that supports an individual to maintain their social independence.

The physical environment should support a framework that allows technological innovation to occur over time. Services and telecommunications continue to evolve creating more intuitive and useful solutions for residents to embrace and maintain a higher level of independence. The physical environment needs to be flexible enough to embrace opportunities as they emerge over time.

#### **Approach**

Providing technology or planning for technological innovation supports residents' desire to remain independent through support and connectivity. Elements that are appropriate to consider include:

- Communications and connectivity;
- Wi-Fi and wireless;
- Enabling technology.

#### → Communications and connectivity

Telecommunications and other technologies supporting connectivity between those on site or with those in the broadercommunitycreateopportunities for engagement, as well as the potential to have personal and health monitoring capacity engaging with people and professionals from both on and off site.

Communications and connectivity for domestic purposes are becoming internet based due to the increased use of mobile phones replacing fixed line telephones. Infrastructure capable of providing the maximum bandwidth and fastest possible speeds should be considered to future proof developments and enable these to embrace new technologies.

Communications and connectivity which remain in print media are largely promotional material. A space to display such material may be a hub for limited social activities and interactions. There is benefit in locating spaces where assistance with additional information is available.





## **Enabling Environments**

#### Communications and innovation

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#### → Wi-Fi and Wireless

Wireless technology is a consumer expectation. Improvements in technology are creating the potential for Wi-Fi to replace components of data cabling by allowing the use of mobile devices to input and receive data. The following should be considered in addition to traditional hard cable devices:

- Mobile technology;
- Bring your own device (BYOD);
- Locating and tracking technologies;
- Wearable technologies.

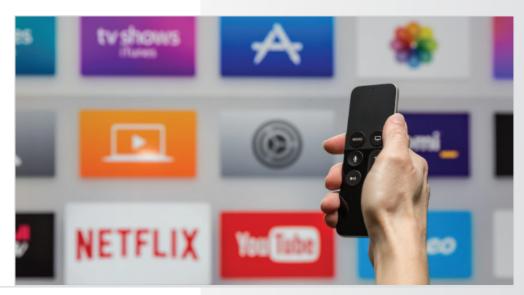
#### → Enabling technology

Enabling technologies allow residents to achieve a better lifestyle through increased connectivity, mobility, communication and access to information. This is an emerging trend and a number of these technologies remain under development, however designers should make allowance and provide appropriate infrastructure to support new technologies as they emerge. The following elements should be considered:

 Control of fixtures and fittings within the physical environment remotely or using technology that is more sophisticated than the simple switching currently used in most circumstances;

- Connectivity and technological immersion (the Internet of Things) and the facilitation of 'on demand' entertainment;
- Smart services linking communication, information and diagnostics;
- · Smart equipment;
- Automation of processes:
  - The movement and delivery of food services, stores and refuse to appropriate locations within the planning to reduce staff time.
  - The potential to support mobility of residents.
- Electric and autonomous vehicles:
- The creation of integrated solutions where communications and technology support operational and lifestyle outcomes in a meaningful way.

The growth of the web and social media allows residents to remain socially connected to the broader community that supports an individual to maintain their social independence.







#### Vision

The external physical environment is a mix of landscape and physical structures that provide a framework for buildings and support resident independence through the creation of meaningful external space used for exercise, recreation and visual/sensory stimulation.

#### **Approach**

The outdoor environment is a positive place that engages all a resident's senses and supports the needs of the resident group through providing a dynamic and changing physical landscape.

Elements that may be appropriate to consider include:

- · Social relevance;
- Outdoor experience;
- · Place making;
- Security;
- Physical and cognitive capability;
- Mobility.

#### → Social relevance

- Activities: consider the possibility for activities which engage the broader community of schools and community groups through activities such as education programs, garden clubs etc
- Exercise: consider the many social forms that exercise can take and with whom through:
  - intergenerational play spaces which can be enjoyed by residents, their families and visitors to allow people of all ages to combine play and exercise;
  - providing play and exercise space for groups as well as individuals;
  - ensuring exercise and play areas and types are demographically and ethnically relevant and appropriate.
- Recreation: create landscape and external built environments which engage and resonate with residents' recreational needs through:
  - integrating sporting functions which may engage both the seniors community itself as well as those from the broader community (e.g. bowling greens, croquet lawns, pools);
  - engaging residents in the care of gardens through activities such as gardening and cooking clubs, providing raised garden beds.



Providing a framework for buildings to support resident independence through the creation of meaningful space used for exercise, recreation and visual/sensory stimulation.



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#### → Outdoor experience

Endeavour to create rich and diverse outdoor experiences. Not all outdoor environments will be rural or suburban in nature. Creating rich, diverse and engaging environments inurbanenvironments will most likely posegreater challenges and the need for greater innovation in design thinking.

- Activities: design of landscape and structures which provide a broad range of activities and levels of engagement through:
  - consideration of light and shade requirements;
  - considerations of social and intergenerational aspects;
  - consideration of degrees of shelter from sunlight and rain;
  - designs which promote purposeful, chore-based activities.
- Visual/sensory stimulation: consider the visual and sensory nature of the environment through:
  - providing a selection of plants which collectively provide the full range of sensory experiences through types, colours, fragrances, textures, etc;
  - choice of plants which respond to the changing seasons;
  - consideration of plant types which provide memory cues and sentimental references;
  - management of light, shade and dappling of light.

- Gardening and planting is a uniquely outdoor experience. Consider the full range of ways that these experiences can occur through:
  - consideration of shelter required so that gardening can occur during all seasons and all daily weather patterns;
  - gardens created at a height residents can tend
  - providing for the broad range of mobility needs;
  - creating journeys through the landscape with experiences, both restful and interactive, along the way as well as destinations;
  - resident directed edible gardens.
- Where residents may have pets, both shared and communal, consider how pets engage with the landscape and design pet friendly spaces. Ensure external environments are petfriendly, by considering:
  - whether pets are shared (e.g. chickens) or individually owned (e.g. dogs) and what types of structures and areas will be appropriate;
  - the social aspects of pets (e.g. many people caring for chickens or the daily gathering of residents at the off-leash area);
  - how pets are managed both in residents' private outdoor spaces or in communal outdoor areas.





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#### → Place making

Placemaking is a people-centred approach to the planning, design and management of outdoor and predominantly public spaces. It is a response to the needs and aspirations of the people who will live, work, recreate and play in an area. According to Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit organisation at the forefront of the global Placemaking movement, successful places have four key qualities in common:

- They are accessible and have linkages
  - connected with its surroundings both visually and physically;
  - visible:
  - easy to get around for all physical capabilities.
- They are comfortable and with a good image
  - key to whether a place will be used;
  - safety;
  - cleanliness:
  - proximity to buildings both belonging to the seniors community and outside the community;
  - character or charm:
  - places to sit comfortably and engage comfortably;
  - choice.

- They are sociable
  - residents meeting and interacting with friends, family, and strangers in a place promotes a stronger sense of place and attachment to their community;
- They are engaging in terms of uses and activities
  - these are the reasons why people want to interact with the place at all. Activities make a place special or unique and instil a sense of community pride.

#### → Security

The external environment must be safe and secure allowing residents, families, guests and staff to use the external spaces, during day and night, in a manner they would consider appropriate in the broader community. Eliminating trip hazards, removing obstacles and creating clear paths and circulation to understandable destinations combined with designing for security and appropriate lighting is essential to creating an external environment suitable for a seniors community.

#### → Physical and cognitive capability

Consider the broad range of physical and cognitive capabilities of all residents and their guests, of all age groups.



Place making is a peoplecentred approach to the planning, design and management of outdoor and predominantly public spaces.



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#### → Mobility

The external environment must, through its design, allow residents and their guests the greatest potential to move through and engage with the external environment.

- Paths and walking
  - curving paths will be more user friendly than straight with right angle intersections;
  - ensure path widths permit groups of two with walking aids to pass other groups of two with walking aids;
  - ensure paths aren't overly slippery or overly rough, do not pose a trip hazard and do not have confusing patterns or contrasting colours;
  - provide resting places at regular intervals which provide opportunities to engage (e.g. drinking fountains, feature planting, shading, exercise equipment etc);
  - provide shade and rain protection;
  - provide destinations;
  - group activities together;
  - give thought to how residents collect their postage, providing weather protection where possible and ensuring safe pathway access as well as opportunity for serendipitous social engagement.

- Vehicular access and parking (residents, visitors, staff, servicing)
  - provide easily understandable drop off points,
     resident parking, visitor parking and staff parking;
  - lay out the planning such that servicing is hidden and does not conflict with other vehicular and pedestrian movement.
- · Under cover drop off
  - provide resident and guest drop off that is sheltered from both sun and rain;
  - consider groups gathering for excursions.
- Pedestrian access (mobility aids and vehicles)
  - consider discreet and weather protected parking of external mobility aids which do not get housed in the residents' units;
  - reduce safety risks by separating pedestrian and vehicular movement as much as possible.



### Checklist





Establishing best practice in community design for the retirement living sector and ensuring seniors have a quality accommodation and community experience.

### Checklist





	Design response
Place and Identity	
Home	
Community	
Authenticity	

Good design creates
appropriate space for
us to work and live,
and can lead to a whole
range of beneficial health
outcomes.

### Checklist





	Design response
Enabling Environments	
Age friendly design	
Access and wayfinding	
Flexible environments	
Safety and security	
Communications and innovation	
External environment	

Planning and developing properly designed housing in purpose-built retirement communities is an increasingly important way of ensuring senior Australians can fully enjoy their older years.

## Suggested Further Reading





The following is a list of documents which provide general information that may be of interest. It is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive - it is however intended to encourage further understanding around the topic and to continue the drive for high quality design outcomes for seniors community design.

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (2006) National physical activity recommendations for older Australians: Discussion Document. Canberra.

Centre for Universal Design Australia http://universaldesignaustralia.net.au/

Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation (2007) Wayfinding Design Guidelines. Brisbane.

Fleming, Richard, Bennett, Kirsty A (2017) Environmental Design Resources, Parts 1-6. Dementia Training Australia, University of Wollongong, Wollongong.

Handler, Sophie (2014) An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook. UKUrban Aging Consortium, The University of Manchester Library, Manchester.

Livable Housing Australia (2017) Livable Housing Design Guidelines. Forest Lodge, NSW

NSWDepartment of Planning and Environment (2015) Apartment Design Guide: Tools for improving the design of residential apartment development. Sydney.

NYC Department for the Aging (2016) Aging in Place Guide for Building Owners: Recommended Age-Friendly Residential Building Upgrades. New York.

Standards Australia (2009) AS1428.1 Design for access and mobility, Part 1: General requirements for access – New building work. Sydney.

The State of Queens land (2007) Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Guidelines for Queens land, Part A: Essential features of safer places.







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