Physical, social and green design for people with dementia in residential aged care

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Department of Health
• People with dementia
• Design for people with dementia
• Policy context
• Environmental imperatives
• Developing the guide
• Promotion and distribution
• Conclusions
Design for people with dementia

A building and an environment can have a significant effect on a person with dementia.

It can support them or it can hasten their deterioration.
People with dementia

It is difficult for people with dementia to interpret and understand the environment:

- sensory losses
- decreased mobility
- functional decline
- cognitive and perception deficits
People with dementia

- Decline in sensory function
  - sight
  - touch
  - smell
  - hearing
  - taste
- Temperature and air quality
- Forgetful about “essentials”
- Need safety while maintaining independence
- Need different environmental cues
For example, glare ...
For example, perception ...
For example, perception ...
For example, touch ...
For example, taste ...
What is the Victorian policy context?

- Victorian public sector residential aged care policy 2009
- Dementia Policy 2006 and beyond
- Residential aged care regulatory framework
- Capital Development Guidelines
- Environmentally Sustainable Design
- Victorian Climate Change – Green Paper
- Occupational health and safety
- Universal design
What are the environmental imperatives?

Compatible, complementary ‘green’ design for dementia

- lighting/glare
- contrast
- surfaces
- temperature
- exterior
- social and health needs
- refuse, reuse, recycle
Design for light and temperature
Developing the guide - method

- Review literature, good practice
- Identify critical components of dementia friendly design
- Consultation (reference group)
  - Carers
  - Architect
  - Alzheimer’s Australia
  - Landscape architect
  - Residential aged care
Guide approach

- Perspective of living with dementia
- Quick reference (dip in/dip out) style
- Web and hard copy formats
- Suggestions for
  - maintaining/improving
  - renovating
  - building from scratch
- Social, physical and green environments
Dementia-friendly environments: a guide for residential care

Part A: Understanding dementia-friendly design

Life and design for people with dementia
- Experiencing dementia
- Designing for dementia

Changes you can make and why
Changes you can make and why

- Assistive technology
- Bedrooms: privacy and personalisation
- Eating, dining areas and kitchens
- Family and community
- Gardens and outdoor areas
- Personal enjoyment
- Self-presentation
- Staff: culture change, education, support
Providing familiar environments of personal enjoyment can promote social activity.
Eating and dining experiences are part of daily living for us all.

Kitchen design to support activity.
Bedrooms need to provide privacy and include personal belongings.
Doors to gardens and outdoor areas need to be unlocked ...
... for freedom of movement and access to the outside
Outside areas of meaningful activity can encourage family and community involvement in residents’ lives.
Part B: A-Z of strategies, checklists & tools

- Activities: living with meaning and purpose
- Bathroom design checklist
- Colour strategies
- Dining room essentials
- Dressing
- Eating: positive experiences
An outdoor area providing meaning and purpose in people’s lives
Another outdoor activity providing meaning and purpose
Bathroom design checklist for dementia friendly care

- Toilet visible from bed
- **Colour contrasted toilet, floor and walls**
- **Colour contrasted toilet seat to toilet**
- Climate control
- Additional heat sources for extra comfort
- Mirrors over basins for viewing by people sitting or standing
- Controls easy to reach either sitting or standing
Colour contrasting is important for people with dementia
Promotion and distribution

- Web site
- Professional networks
- Residential aged care services
- Peak bodies
- Conferences
Conclusions

- **Learnings**
  - Consult and engage
  - Don’t necessarily need a lot of money

- **Challenges**
  - Maintaining up-to-date information
  - Transferring info into practice/reality
  - Not an add on but an approach
  - Policy connections
Information into practice - is this dementia friendly?
What does our future hold?

Would you choose to live here if you built it this way and had dementia?