C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
69. There are views to outdoors and where possible there is outdoors access. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Access to natural elements, including views to trees and access to gardens, has been shown to have a restorative effect and improve recovery from illness [9] • Doors leading into courtyards and gardens need to be easily opened by residents to encourage outdoor activities. • Outdoor areas with activities such as raised garden beds, barbeque areas should be clearly visible from areas that have access in order to encourage socialisation. **Resources**: [9, 33]
70. Doors can be opened by residents when sitting or standing.	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Check push down levers on fire doors for ease of use. • Lever type door handles are recommended for ease of use, but other types may need to be considered for Aged Persons Mental Health requirements [1]. • Ensure access pads or buttons located close to the doorway • Place them at a height that users can access whether sitting or standing - remembering that older people tend to look down rather than up**.** **Resources**: [1, 6, 20] • Resource [20]: Refer Section 4 Access, mobility & OHS.

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
71. Doors with release mechanisms close slowly. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tip**: Be aware if the fire alarm goes off that fire and smoke doors will automatically close – this could be an issue if someone is walking through them at the time. **Resource**: [15]
72. Full-length glass panels or doors are avoided or clearly marked for visibility. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Glass that cannot be avoided should be replaced with regulation safety glass. • Half glass doors may be fitted with blinds at the top. • Aim for clear markings at shoulder height as residents tend to look down rather than up. 📷 **Resource:** [5] • Resource [5]: Refer Section Part C, sections 760.12–760.13 and section 770.
73. All doorways are wide enough for equipment and furniture (e.g. wheelchairs, beds) to comfortably pass through. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Standard**: Refer AS 1428.1 – 2001. • AS 1428.1 – 2001: The minimum clear opening of a doorway on a continuous accessible path of travel shall be 800 mm. **Resources**: [1, 5, 6, 10-13, 20, 30] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C, section 760. • Resource [20]: Refer Section 4 Access, mobility & OHS. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Doors and door openings for recommended doorway clearances.
74. Doors are in a contrast colour to their architraves, walls and floors. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tip**: Highlighting doors aids in wayfinding. Exception is for doors leading to area where residents are not to enter (for example, cleaners' cupboards, and storerooms). See Rec 75. 📷 **Standard**: Refer AS 1428.1 - 2001. **Resources**: [16, 24]

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
9bj]fcba YbhU`fYW`a a YbXUh]cb	Achieved?	Useful tools/tips
75. Areas where residents are not to enter (for example, cleaners' cupboards, storerooms) are kept locked or camouflaged Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: Some of the strategies are: • Painting the door in the same colour as the wall; • Having a hidden door handle/ removing the door handle and replacing with key lock; • Hanging curtain over the door to make it look like a window. NB – not applicable to fire exits which must be kept clear. • A contrasting strip of flooring in front of cupboard may act as a perceived barrier **Resources**: [6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 23, 28]
76. Windows are easily opened but the extent to which they open is restricted to prevent entry or exit. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Window handles low on window for ease of operation. • Sliding windows have an easy to grip handle and glide easily **Resources**: [5, 7, 15, 16]
77. Flooring is free of clutter and hazards, such as cords and loose rugs. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Reduce the use of cords by using cordless equipment where possible. • Consider placing more than one power point in each space. **Resources**: [8, 27, 28, 30, 31] • Resource [8]: Refer Tools Supplement Section 3 environmental audits. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Floors and floor coverings.
78. Floor surfaces are slip resistant. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tip:** Overly slip resistant floors and thresholds between smooth and slip resistant floors can be a hazard. **Standard**: Refer AS 4586 2004 for slip resistant requirements on wet areas. **Resources**: [1, 5-8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 28, 30, 31] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C, section 780. • Resource [8]: Refer Tools Supplement Section 3 environmental audits. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Floors and floor coverings.

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
79. Flooring is in good condition and firmly attached. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Ensure floor is sealed effectively before laying any floor covering. • Check joins for signs of weakness- these allow spills which cause odours to penetrate beneath the floor covering. Research whether sheet flooring is preferable to carpet tiles, vinyl tiles or vinyl planks. **Resources**: [5, 8, 15, 17, 19, 26, 30,42] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C, section 780. • Resource [8]: Refer Tools Supplement Section 3 environmental audits. • Resource [26]: Refer Solution Sheet 3, Choosing safe floor coverings for workplaces in health and aged care. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Floors and floor coverings.
80. Floor surfaces have a matte finish. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: Shiny surfaces can appear to be wet surfaces and should be avoided. • Check the effect of natural light at different times of the day. • Check reflected light on different floor surfaces. • Check that floors do not have shadows or light reflected patterns that may cause confusion to the residents throughout the day. 📷 **Resources**: [5, 8] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C, section 780. • Resource [8]: Refer Tools Supplement Section 3 environmental audits.
81. Carpets are low pile and tightly woven. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Some carpets can cause trips for older people who may shuffle their feet, some carpets are difficult for older people to self-propel wheelchairs, and some reduce battery life for electric wheelchairs due to increased resistance. • If carpets are used, push/pull forces for wheeled equipment are within acceptable limits. • Carpets that have tracking (equipment veers off) issues should not be used **Resources**: [1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 26, 30] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C, section 780. • Resource [8]: Refer Tools Supplement Section 3 environmental audits. • Resource [26]: Refer Solution Sheet 3, *Choosing safe floor coverings for workplaces in health and aged care*. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Floors and floor coverings.

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
82. Flooring colours and patterns are discreet. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Check a sample pattern of flooring in a resident area. • Patterns may create the illusion of holes or steps and trigger mobility or balance problems in people with vision or cognitive impairment. 📷 **Resources**: [2, 8, 12, 24,42]
83. Changes in floor surface are clearly defined. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • A change from one floor surface to another, such as carpet to vinyl, can be a hazard if residents are not aware of it. • Make sure the adjacent floor materials are different colours and patterns BUT are tonally similar (check 'tonality' by viewing the carpets, vinyls and joining strips in black & white- take a photo) • Restrict changes to 'expected' locations such as thresholds, archways, doors and changes in floor level (e.g. stairs and ramps) 📷 **Resources**: [2, 7, 19, 30, 42] • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Floors and floor coverings.
84. Joining strips between different floor surfaces are as smooth as possible to reduce hazards. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tip**: • Make sure that the adjacent floor materials are 'tonally' similar regardless of their colour and pattern • Make sure the joining strip is 'tonally similar to both of the adjacent floor materials • A joining strip that is not tonally similar can be perceived as a barrier or a step 📷 **Resources**: [5, 7, 12, 15, 19, 28, 30, 42] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C , section 780. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 4 Floors and floor coverings.
85. Walls are in a contrasting colour to floors. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Select colours that allow for ageing vision and vision impairments [2]. • To check colour visibility of furniture, doors, etc, move around the facility looking through a piece of yellow cellophane [2]. • Use non-glossy light colours on walls to enhance available light [31]. • An exception is in some wet areas where the floor covering might be raised up the wall to prevent leakage. 📷 **Resources**: [1, 2, 7, 8, 15, 17, 19, 24, 31]

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
86. Lighting in all areas is at a consistent level so residents are not moving from darker to lighter areas and vice versa. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Make use of natural light where possible. • Increase level of illumination to greater than 100 cd/m2 light reflected from reading surfaces. Photometers (luminance meters) can be used to assess light levels [4]. • Seek advice from lighting engineers for specific issues. 📷 **Standard**: Refer AS 1680.1:2006 for specific requirements on luminance. **Resources**: [2, 4-6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 19, 20, 28, 31] • Resource [5]: Refer Part E, section 2.11. • Resource [2]: Refer Section 27 for recommended light levels. • Resource [20]: Refer Section 6 Lighting & Ventilation.
87. Glare is avoided. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Be aware the position of glare may change throughout the day. • Reduce glare by moving light sources as far away as possible from the resident's line of sight. • Avoid bare bulbs, e.g. down lights can produce excessive glare. • Check skylights have a covering option. • Keep lighting clean. • It is preferable to have several low-intensity lights than one high-intensity light. • Shield light sources or use diffusers. • Use non-glossy materials on walls, floors and ceilings • Ensure there are appropriate coverings on windows to shield surfaces from direct sunlight [4]. • Install dimmer switches on lights to enable control of lighting levels [24]. 📷 **Resources**: [4, 7-9, 15, 18, 19, 23, 24, 28, 31]
88. There are points of interest (landmarks) to assist residents in finding their way. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Artwork can be relevant to the location such as pictures of food in dining areas. • Decorative ornaments placed beside entry points. • Furniture placed at strategic points eg a sideboard with photos outside a recreational area. **Resources**: [1, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 22, 24]

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
89. Artwork creates interest and attention and contributes to wayfinding and orientation	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Lighting focussed on the artwork can draw attention – be careful it does not create glare – consider using non reflective glass • Consider placement of art so that residents who tend to gaze downwards or have stooped posture can still see it • Art with textures • Abstract art may be difficult to interpret and have limited meaning for residents [24]. 📷 **Resources**: [24]
90. Items to assist residents with memory loss or poor vision are on display. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Large clocks (not digital) and calendars are displayed. • Be aware of overhead digital displays as older people tend to gaze downwards. • Pictures of food identify the dining room. **Resources**:[2,4]
91. Rooms are fresh-smelling. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Having indoor plants and windows that open can help to refresh the air • Food aromas from open kitchenettes can increase appetite. **Resource**: [24].
92. Rooms are kept at a temperature comfortable for residents. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Ensure air conditioning vents are not directly above, or blowing on residents when seated**.** • Doors leading to the outside may create an issue with air blowing in when they are opened **Resources**: [1, 5, 15, 20, 24, 28] • Resource [5]: Refer Part E Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning. • Resource [20]: Refer Section 5 Heating & Cooling.

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool:	Part 1. Audit tool table:	C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**

93. There is an acceptable level of background noise.
 	
Comments:
	☐ Yes
	☐ Action required
	☐ Not applicable
		Tips:
		• Hearing impairment and effectiveness of hearing aids are affected by background noise, such as:
		   — Public address systems or piped music, and
		   — Dishwashers in use while residents are still in dining room.
		• Sound absorbing materials such as carpets and window coverings can assist in reducing background noise [1].
		• Consider sound absorbing ceiling tiles in communal areas that have vinyl or hard floors.
		
		Resources: [4, 15, 16, 18, 24, 28]

94. Residents can see toilet signs from areas they frequently occupy. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • A number of strategies have been found to be effective in promoting continence, such as painting the toilet doors a different colour from other doors in the area, or increasing the contrast between the door frame and the wall [7, 24, 34]. • Avoid having toilet door visible opposite dining room. Consider the use of a half-screen between the dining room and toilet which does not cover the toilet sign. **Resources**: [1, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 23, 24, 34]
95. Access and seating are available in different areas to encourage participation in everyday life Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Chairs around the breakfast bar in a kitchen environment • Avoid lining chairs against a wall in a row, this discourages participation **Resource:** [1, 23]
96. Comfortable well maintained seating is available. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Avoid square and sharp corners on furniture. • Chairs have slip resistant easily cleaned fabric. • Bold patterns are best avoided for residents with dementia • Increase colour contrast between furniture and surrounding walls to increase visibility [2]. **Resources**: [1, 2, 6, 7, 10,41]

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
97. Furniture is secure enough to support a resident should they overbalance. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Wheeled furniture should have lockable brakes. • Avoid tables with a middle pedestal or 3 legs only • Arms on chairs are secured and sturdy. **Resources**: [7, 8, 19, 27, 35,41]
98. Height adjustable chairs or chairs of variable heights are available in communal areas so residents can rise and sit with ease. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Ambulant people tend to seek out the chair that suits their height. • Have access to chairs with armrests for those who need assistance rising to their feet. • Armrests should be wide enough for leaning support. • Avoid chairs with low backs. • Seek advice from an occupational therapist or physiotherapist about optimal height for individual residents. **Resources**: [8, 11, 27, 31, 35,41] • Refer Appendix 3 'Individual seating assessment tool'.
99. Different communal areas are clearly identified and separated from each other. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Use of colour and signs, different physical layout and partitions can help residents find and concentrate on activities. • Avoid creating separate areas by different floor coverings unless they are tonally similar. **Resources**: [9, 12, 13, 17]
100. In lounge or sitting areas, chairs are arranged to encourage social interaction. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Consider placing TV sets in smaller rooms as they can impair social interaction. • Placing chairs around the walls discourages participation 📷 **Resources**: [7, 23, 24]

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool:	Part 1. Audit tool table:	C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)
Environmental recommendation	**Achieved?**	**Useful tools/tips**
101. Dining rooms provide a social and enjoyable eating environment	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	Tips: • Provide views to outdoors and other activities Creating an inviting dining environment can be quite simple: • Use tablecloths – these also help minimise glare from windows. • Contrasting crockery and cutlery make it easy to see • Table decorations such as flowers or fruit baskets. • Furniture displaying ornaments eg old crockery • A communal dining area can promote social interaction but may also be overwhelming. Residents may prefer smaller dining areas that are more consistent with home dining experiences. Large dining rooms can be partitioned off to encourage people to eat in small groups (such as two to six people) [7]. • Be aware that televisions and radios create echoes in areas with vinyl or wooden floors, and are best avoided in dining areas. **Resources**: [7,9,12,13,17,23, 24]
102. Adequate storage space is provided for equipment, mobility aids and furniture so that it is easy to access when required. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Modify storage space to reduce staff walking time to access equipment. • Have designated spaces for parking wheelchairs, hoists and so on that are located close to the area of use. • Walking aids can cause safety risks if they remain with residents in crowded dining rooms. If aids are removed from dining areas, ensure that residents can access them as required. 📷 **Resources**: [1, 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, 19, 30] • Resource [5]: Refer Part B, section 90.21, 90.23, 90.76 and 90.78. • Resource [30]: Refer Section 5 Storage.
103. Dining tables and chairs are suitable for resident requirements	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Dining chairs have arms which fit under the tables. Arms are secured, wide enough and sturdy. This includes wheelchairs fitting under tables. • Is the table big enough to fit four wheelchairs? • Useful to have height adjustable tables. • Avoid single pedestal tables which may overbalance if leant on. • Dining tables have distinct borders and rounded corners. eg cloverleaf design • To avoid glare, tables should have a matte surface or be covered by tablecloths. **Resources**: [41]

Residential aged care services built environment audit tool: Part 1. Audit tool table: C. Communal areas (dining, kitchen, lounge, alcoves)		
	Achieved?	**Useful tools/tips**
104. Kitchenettes next to dining rooms create a social and enjoyable dining experience	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips:** • Open kitchenettes with breakfast bars allow interaction between residents and staff in food preparation. • Ensure the kitchenette is well ventilated, and open windows do not affect the dining room. • Be aware of the noise from kitchens dishwashers –these should only be used after dining time is over. 📷 **Resources:** [1,2,18,24]
105. There is a room available for residents to be alone, or in a quiet area. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Use sound-absorbing materials on walls, floors and ceilings [4]. • Alcoves – particularly at the end of hallways may need doors in order to create a quiet area. • Lubricate squeaky wheels on equipment [24]. **Standard**: Refer AS/NZS 2107:2000 (AS2107) for requirements on sound levels. **Resources**:[4, 5, 7, 9, 15, 22-24, 28] • Resource [5]: Refer Part C, section 785 Acoustics.
106. Small, comfortable and quiet rooms or areas are available for private social interaction between residents and visitors, and residents and staff. Comments:	☐ Yes ☐ Action required ☐ Not applicable	**Tips**: • Alcoves are common at the end of hallways, but may need a door to encourage private interaction. • Incorporate a spiritual space adaptable to the needs of different religions and cultures, especially when residents are nearing the end of life. • Include space for family counselling, sitting or resting or time out. • Create a dining room for private family functions • Ensure private social areas have tables and chairs for meals and tea/coffee facilities. 📷 **Resources**: [2, 16-18, 22, 23, 29] • Resource [2]: Refer Section 4.
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