

Important factors to consider when selecting windows & doors for Aged Care facilities



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In our retirement years, we hope to relax, catch up with old friends, pick up new interests and hobbies and be comfortable in our surroundings. Some of us will want to live at home, while some will prefer to go to an aged care facility. Over the last 10 -15 years there has been an increase in our aging population Australia-wide. With this increase comes increased pressure on support services and a greater need for aged care facilities. Unlike other commercial projects, aged care facilities must be built according to stringent requirements to accommodate the specific needs of its elderly residents and ensure their comfort and safety. Architects and designers are under increasing pressure to design facilities that are functional but also easy to navigate, safe, and allow residents a certain level of independence.

The National Construction Code (NCC) sets out the requirements for access and egress provisions in all new buildings. The NCC references AS1428.1-2009 Design for Access and Mobility – which outlines the minimum design requirements for new building works and provides guidelines for elements including continuous path of travel, door openings, communal living spaces, threshold ramps, visual indicators, and many more elements. There are several factors that impact the selection of window and door systems for aged care facilities, including:

- Accessible paths
- Air Ventilation
- Ease of operation
- Acoustics -Flyscreens
- Bushfire ratings

Accessible Paths

Under the aged care requirements set out in AS1428.1-2009 – a continuous and uninterrupted path of travel must be provided in all aged care facilities.

Thresholds

Where possible thresholds at doorways should be eliminated. A flush threshold between internal and external environments is an important feature in complying with the standard. By including a flush sill in the sliding door system, not only does it provide wheelchair access but also reduces the risk of potential trips and falls by elderly residents.

Darley's new flush drain sumps (TJ400 & TJ600) and new flush sill (SD408 & SD608), can provide the solution – log onto the online customer portal <https://darleyaluminium.com.au/> to view the product bulletins.

Air Ventilation

The recent covid outbreak has made us more conscious of providing our elderly residents with good ventilation and air quality. A large number of aged care residents spend a great deal of their days indoors and providing access to operable windows is not always a possibility, especially for residents with dementia.

Air purifiers have been installed in a number of facilities to increase natural flow and maintain optimum air quality. Another practical option is installing louvre windows. Easy for residents to operate, with a modern aesthetic that comes in a range of colours and styles. Louvre windows can be installed as a fixed window system or motorised.

Another solution for maintaining air quality is to install a passive trickle ventilation system. Darley's Ventient – trickle ventilation system is a low-cost, energy-efficient option that is perfect for aged care facilities. A trickle vent is a small opening in a building envelope component, that allows small amounts of fresh air in spaces when major elements of design, like windows or doors are otherwise closed.

Ease of Operation

When selecting window and door systems for aged care facilities, operability is an important consideration. Opening a sliding door or a double hung window may seem like an easy task, but for a resident with arthritis and coordination issues, it can be quite a difficult task. Hardware also plays an important part with regard to the operability of windows and doors. Installing door handles and hardware that can be unlocked and opened with one hand is recommended. 'D' pull handles, and lever handles are suitable options and are required to be installed onto sliding doors to accommodate elderly and disabled residents. According to the requirements of AS1428.1-2009, the clearance between the handles and the back plate must not be less than 35mm and not more than 45mm. Darley has a number of compliant door handles available, from well known hardware brands including Allegion, Brio, ASSA ABLOY and Anthony Innovations.



Acoustics

The last thing residents in an aged care facility need are the interference of outside noise. Installing window and door systems with superior soundproofing is of high importance. The sound reduction performance of an aluminium window or door system is measured in Rw. Darley has tested the acoustics performance of a number of residential, commercial, and framing systems; [Click here](#) to view an article with all the ratings. The CityView, HarbourView, and commercial framing systems all provide adequate soundproofing in aged care facilities and comply with the requirements set out in the BCA.

Flyscreens

Architects and designers need to ensure there is adequate circulation spaces in communal living environments. These spaces, where elderly residents congregate, need to maximise natural light and ventilation throughout the aged care facility. Under the BCA, all operable windows must be fitted with flyscreens to facilitate natural air flow and also protect against insects and vermin. Darley's CityView and ClassicView ranges can all be fitted with flyscreens providing ventilation and

integrating seamlessly with these residential and commercial, window & door systems.

Bushfire Ratings

According to the requirements of AS1428.1-2009, all windows and doors installed in aged care facilities must be bushfire rated. Several window and door systems in our CityView commercial range are BAL40 rated – [Click here](#) to find out more.

As you can see, Darley offers a range of window and door systems that cater to the specific needs of older residents. Whether it be flyscreens that provide increased airflow and ventilation or flush sills & drain sumps for flush thresholds - Darley provides the complete solution when it comes to window and door systems for aged care facilities.