

## Health Facility Guidelines - Australasian Health Facility Guidelines in NSW

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**Functional Sub group** Corporate Administration - Asset Management  
Corporate Administration - Governance

**Summary** The guideline provides information on the NSW Health requirements regarding the application of the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines to capital developments in NSW.

**Replaces Doc. No.** Health Facility Guidelines - Use of Australasian Health Facility Guidelines (AUS HFG) [GL2007\_003]

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**Applies to** Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Affiliated Health Organisations - Declared, Public Health System Support Division, Community Health Centres, Dental Schools and Clinics, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Dept of Health, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals

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## AUSTRALASIAN HEALTH FACILITY GUIDELINES (AUS HFG)

### **Purpose:**

This guideline has been developed to provide information on the NSW Health requirements regarding the application of the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines (AusHFGs) to capital developments in NSW.

### **Background:**

Health Facility Guidelines have been used for many years to guide capital developments in NSW. The guidelines project commenced in NSW in 2005 and was adopted by other jurisdictions in 2006 creating the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines. The AusHFG were endorsed for use in NSW on 22 December 2006. Within NSW their use is not mandated and they act as a starting point for design consultation.

The AusHFGs are an initiative of the Health Capital and Asset Management Consortium (HCAMC). HCAMC includes representatives from all jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

In recognition that the purpose of capital investment is to support and facilitate the provision of health services, the Guidelines promote the importance of clearly defining a service plan, model of care and operational policies for the facility before embarking on the capital planning process.

Integral to the AusHFG is a continuous review process to ensure that the content reflects contemporary models of care and health planning practice. Comment and contributions concerning the guideline usage, references and policy updates are considered an essential component of their development. The AusHFG responds to Post Occupancy Evaluation feedback, project variations and informed comment to ensure the latest state specific information and policy references are incorporated. There is a clear process whereby the AusHFGs are updated and new guidelines developed - see attached NSW Health Facility Guideline - Governance Structure and Review Process document for detail.

The AusHFGs enable public health facilities throughout Australasia to be designed from a common set of base elements. They provide a range of Hospital/Health Service Unit models comprised of standard and unique components. This enables individual clauses, modules and components of the Guidelines to be readily assembled for individual projects or jurisdictions, updated and new models of accommodation to be configured to meet the different needs of ever evolving services, operational policies, new models of care, workplace safety standards and technology.

Components of the AUS HFG provide examples or notes regarding contemporary practices in facility design that help achieve recommended performance requirements. They may be used as normative (deemed to

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*Title: Australasian Health Facility Guidelines (AusHFG)*

satisfy), but are more commonly used as informative (examples that may be used as a starting point in the design process).

Closely aligned to the AusHFG has been the development of the Health Facility Briefing System (HFBS). This is a web-based tool kit that provides access to the AusHFG “Standard Components” for use by planners in the briefing and specifying of Health Projects. It contains room data and room layouts that can be downloaded for use in project planning and documentation.

## **Australasian Health Facility Guidelines application in NSW:**

It is NSW Health recommended practice that the components contained in the AusHFG are used as the starting point when new facilities are being planned and designed, or existing ones, refurbished. The AusHFGs are to be included in the project brief, which is to be provided as part of the Project Definition Plan (PDP). The AusHFGs are a tool to assist in identifying acceptable standards for facilities and should form the basis from which planning progresses. Good project planning requires consultation, review and testing with stakeholders including service managers, clinicians and consumers to ensure the delivery of appropriate and safe physical environments that support and enhance the delivery of high standards of patient care. It is therefore essential that there is appropriate consideration and consultation regarding the models of care and operational policies for the facility. The AusHFGs are guidelines that need to be rigorously tested and confirmed as appropriate for each specific project by the Project Team.

The primary objective of the Guidelines is to achieve a desired performance result or service. Prescriptive limitations, when given, such as exact recommended dimensions or quantities, describe a condition commonly recognised as a practical standard for normal operation. Where specific measurements, capacities or other standards are described, equivalent alternative solutions may be deemed acceptable if it is demonstrated that the intent of the standards has been met and the specific service can be safely and appropriately delivered.

It is important to note that the AusHFGs do not intend to restrict innovation that might improve performance or outcomes, or to be prescriptive where clinical service circumstances can validate an alternate configuration. Although regularly reviewed and updated, they cannot include every technological innovation for either building design or health services delivery. It is the role of the project teams to identify specific project requirements including innovative practices of relevance to that project and its impact on achievement of the service model and operational policies. Issues such as the geographic location of the facility, particular site factors and refurbishment versus new build solutions, will also impact on how the Guidelines should be interpreted and applied. Information contained in the guideline, such as room data sheets and room layout sheets, are to be used as a guide with appropriate review and consultation with users to ensure that requirements for the individual project are well considered. The design process should also seek out cost effective

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*Title: Australasian Health Facility Guidelines (AusHFG)*

solutions. Examples include efficient design through minimising circulation, travel and engineering, sharing of support spaces, overflow design and modular design. These are addressed in detail in 'Physical Planning' section of the AusHFG's.

Consultations with user groups may therefore result in variations or departures from the guidelines. Where the project brief has been amended to meet the requirements of the particular project, the project manager must ensure that statutory requirements, ie those that are legally required such as through the Building Code of Australia or relevant OHS legislation, are met.

The NSW Health Facility Guidelines Variations Process is to be followed for project specific changes to the Guidelines. Clearly documented justification and appropriate sign off consistent with individual project governance arrangements is required. A copy of the Variation Process, when the Process is to be applied and relevant documentation is available on the AusHFG website.

Where a guideline does not exist for a particular area, it is recommended that recent projects that have developed facility specifications consistent with the project be sourced to provide a starting point. This will involve a comparison of models of care to ensure the reference design and schedule of accommodation are appropriate and align with the project.

While recognising the process of continual improvement and the timeframes for the planning and construction of a health facility, the timely and cost-effective delivery of projects on budget necessitates a point at which the schedules of accommodation (SOA) must become "fixed". NSW Health has nominated the approval date of the PDP for the project as the point where the SOA becomes fixed. The AusHFG officially released for industry use at that date is the reference point as retrospective application of future versions is not appropriate. The revision and development process enables the version of a Guideline that has applied to an individual project at a specific point in time to be clearly identified. If there is a material delay between PDP approval and the commencement of project procurement, NSW Health will, on a case-by-case basis, consider whether all or part of a later version of the AUS HFG should be applied to the project.

#### **The AUS HFG:**

- Website <http://www.healthfacilityguidelines.com.au>
- comment <http://www.healthfacilityguidelines.com.au/contact.htm>
- questions can be emailed to [HFG@doh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HFG@doh.health.nsw.gov.au)
- contact Health Infrastructure, Ken Liddell on (02) 49267801

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