South Australia’s Communities for All: Our Age-friendly Future

Age-friendly Living
Guidelines for Residential Development
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South Australia is undergoing significant demographic changes to its population.

South Australia has a faster ageing population than other mainland states and by 2031, there will be more than 440,000 people aged over 65, making up more than 1 in 5 of South Australia’s total population.
1. Introduction

In 2002, the World Health Organisation defined active ageing as “the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.”

Global trends in urbanisation and population ageing require the development of strategies to ensure our communities and environments remain accessible for people at every stage of their lives and especially as they grow older.

South Australia is undergoing significant demographic changes to its population. South Australia has a faster ageing population than other mainland states and by 2031, there will be more than 440,000 people aged over 65, making up more than 1 in 5 of South Australia’s total population.

People are living longer and more people want to continue living in the community of their choice for as long as possible. This has significant policy and planning implications, and presents great opportunities for our state.

The South Australian Government’s vision is to ensure that all people can lead active lives and access their community, easily and safely. Part of this vision is to plan and build physical and social environments that will optimise health and wellbeing and opportunities to participate in the workforce, civic and community life, as South Australians age.

South Australia’s Communities for All: Our Age-friendly Future responds to changing demographics and a growing awareness that the environments and communities in which we live significantly influence our health, wellbeing and happiness.

The initiative strengthens the state’s vision that all South Australians, including older people, are socially included and participate in active and independent lives.
More recently, active ageing has been framed by the four pillars of security (dealing with vulnerability), activity (participation), health, and continuity of education.
There are three age-friendly guidelines booklets in South Australia. Each guidelines booklet is targeted to the agency with primary responsibility for delivering age-friendly outcomes, while recognising the roles of other key stakeholders in each case. Across all three guidelines booklets, the not-for-profit and private sectors and academic institutions have key roles to play in achieving age-friendly communities and environments.

Age-friendly Living: Guidelines for Residential Development are focused on the physical environment and communities created in new Greenfield and Brownfield projects. These guidelines utilise and build on examples of existing best practice such as the Housing SA House Design Guide, Design Criteria for Adaptable Housing and Design Guidelines for Site Layouts. The guidelines are aligned to relevant WHO criteria for the provision of age-friendly housing, such as those relating to the design of outdoor spaces and provisions of safe access.

Age-friendly Neighbourhoods: Guidelines and Toolkit for Local Governments are designed to contribute to age-friendly communities – our urban and suburban areas and rural townships where we live, work and recreate. These guidelines are targeted to those areas for which local government has a primary responsibility, either as a direct provider, partner or facilitator of the outcomes associated with age-friendly environments and communities. This document addresses a variety of social services and programs provided by local government in addition to guidelines relating to the physical environment. The Toolkit aspect of this document provides some practical tools to assist local governments in taking the next steps in the implementation of the guidelines.

Age-friendly South Australia: Guidelines for State Government are designed to inform age-friendly policies, plans, programs and services. A mechanism is being established to integrate the age-friendly principles across various state government departments, to achieve age-friendly cities and regions.
Each of these guidelines booklets supports the implementation of the following WHO age-friendly principles:

1. design and maintenance of public spaces and buildings
2. transportation
3. housing
4. social participation
5. respect and social inclusion
6. civic participation and employment
7. communication and information
8. community support and health service.

Each section in each guidelines document contains South Australia’s age-friendly guidelines and practice measures, along with links to the WHO Age-friendly Cities Checklist. Each section also identifies sources of further information and technical specifications.

It is envisaged that South Australia’s Communities for All: Our Age-friendly Future will contribute to the achievement of the following three outcomes:

Provide comprehensive and practical ways to develop and implement the eight age-friendly principles across residential developments and local and state government.

Strengthen and integrate an active ageing focus that influences design and planning of built environments, and enhances the value and contributions of seniors to the economic vitality and greater social cohesion of our state.

Build communities for independence, health and wellbeing through planning and designing both accessible and inclusive social and physical environments that enable opportunities for active citizenship, regardless of age and ability.
3. Relationship with existing guidelines, plans, standards and requirements

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It is recognised that many of the attributes of age-friendly environments and communities are also the attributes of great places for children and young people, people with disabilities, and the broader population.

There are many synergies between the age-friendly guidelines and other guidelines, initiatives, standards and legislative requirements. The following table demonstrates the way in which an age-friendly approach to state government policies, plans, programs and services will contribute to the achievement of other guidelines, initiatives, standards and requirements.

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One tick (✓) indicates that the initiative/guidelines/standards/requirements are aligned with the age-friendly guidelines to some extent, while two ticks (✓✓) indicates that the age-friendly guidelines are addressed. Alignment does not necessarily indicate the complete fulfilment of outcomes sought by the age-friendly guidelines, and detailed reference to the guidelines is encouraged.
4. Age-friendly Living
Guidelines for Residential Development
4.1. Site location

**WHO Criteria**

All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well marked routes and vehicles.

Services are situated together and are accessible.

Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained and safe.

**Guidelines**

Sites selected for age-friendly residential developments should provide easy access to:

- regular public transport services
- local shops and services
- public open space.

**Practice**

Development sites leverage off existing public transport and local shopping facilities.

Public transport services, local shops and open space are located within 400m of all dwellings.

Where retail facilities are not available locally, developers subsidise early provision of basic facilities.

Public open space is developed prior to occupation of the dwellings to facilitate individual and group activities, physical activity, play and reflection.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

Healthy Spaces and Places

EnviroDevelopment – Community
4.2. Movement networks that promote safe walking and cycling

**WHO Criteria**

Pavements are well maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.

Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.

Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.

Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped kerbs to road level.

**Guidelines**

Pedestrians can easily walk around the neighbourhood along footpaths, designated pedestrian paths, shared-use paths and shared use zones.

Road design promotes low speed vehicle movement and safe pedestrian and cycle movements.

Pedestrian crossings are provided and designed to match the level of vehicular traffic and pedestrian activity.

Infrastructure is provided in the public realm that supports pedestrian safety and ‘way finding’.

**Practice**

Footpaths, ramps and walkways are constructed to be useable by people of all ages.

Footpaths are provided to at least one side of the street at the same time as road construction.

Pedestrian-only paths are a minimum of 1500mm wide on minor routes and 1800mm wide in areas of moderate pedestrian traffic.

Shared use paths are wide enough to allow different users to safely use the path at different speeds. Local access shared paths and local commuter paths should be a minimum of 2500mm wide, while arterial shared paths and recreational paths should be a minimum of 3500mm wide.

Pedestrian safety and ‘way finding’ is supported through pedestrian activated lights with longer crossing times, tactile and audio indicators, changes in pavement texture and colour, island refuges, maps and signage.

External paving and paths are smooth and non-slip.

Seating is provided at regular intervals along the path.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

Healthy Spaces and Places

EnviroDevelopment – Community

Australian Standards 1428.1 (paths, ramps) and 1428.4 (tactile)

Austroads Guide to Road Design Park 6A: Pedestrian and Cyclist Paths

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
4.3. Design of open space areas

**WHO Criteria**

Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained and safe.

Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well lit and easily reached by public transport.

Public toilets, outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well maintained and accessible.

**Guidelines**

Centrally located public and private spaces support a variety of events and activities, and facilitate informal social interaction.

Pedestrian networks include shaded and comfortable resting places that support strolling and sitting.

Adult recreation facilities are provided in or adjacent to shared spaces.

Conflict between users in public open space is minimised while fostering appropriate intergenerational activity.

**Practice**

Public and private spaces, such as parks and local shopping centres, are designed to be attractive, safe and convenient. Infrastructure, such as seating, shade, bins, water fountains and toilets, is provided to encourage people to use these spaces.

A variety of open spaces (parks, gardens, plazas, reserves) each with its own distinctive program of uses, are evenly spread around the community with all dwellings within a short walk to at least one active and one passive public open space.

Public spaces are located where they reinforce existing significant physical nodes such as shopping centres and transport hubs, and assist in defining a sense of place.

Seating with backs and armrests is provided in sheltered locations in parks and adjacent to pedestrian paths at 200 – 400 metre intervals.

Areas of open space are deliberately designed to separate active areas and places to sit and observe by well designed pathways and planting.

Spaces that support children’s predictable play behaviour are provided in ways that minimise potential conflict while allowing older people to watch children at play.

Fitness circuits, age-friendly play equipment, barbeques, picnic tables, seats and tables at heights that accommodate people in wheelchairs and gophers are provided in parks and open space.

Partnerships with private organisations or businesses can contribute to age friendly infrastructure, such as bus stop shelters or seating.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

Healthy Spaces and Places

EnviroDevelopment – Community

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
4.4. Provision of affordable housing

**WHO Criteria**

Sufficient affordable housing is provided in areas that are close to services and the rest of the community.

Sufficient and affordable housing for frail older people and people with disabilities with appropriate services is provided locally.

**Guidelines**

Affordable housing is provided in excess of legislative requirements.

Affordable housing is located in close proximity to public transport, open space, shops and community services.

Affordable housing in large developments is not concentrated in a single location.

**Practice**

All residential projects providing eight or more units include a minimum of 15% affordable housing as defined by the Affordable Housing Innovation Unit.

Developers enter into partnership agreements with providers of funding and/or social housing to achieve affordable housing provision.

Special needs affordable housing is provided in association with appropriate support services to facilitate security of tenure and integration with the surrounding community.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

Affordable Housing Innovations Unit/Housing SA
4.5. Design of environmentally sustainable housing

**WHO Criteria**

**Guidelines**

The street and allotment layout supports passive solar orientation, thereby making living spaces more comfortable and reducing energy costs.

Energy costs are reduced through the provision of open air and undercover clothes drying options.

**Practice**

Majority of individual dwelling lots have an east-west orientation to support passive solar orientation techniques.

Protected private and communal outdoor areas allow people to sit outside and enjoy the sun.

Dwelling design facilitates passive solar heating through correct orientation and use of eaves, cross ventilation for cooling and avoids overshadowing of living areas.

Clothes lines are located to avoid overshadowing from dwellings.

Open air and undercover clothes drying options are available to all dwellings, including apartments.

Dwelling design facilitates the efficient use of photovoltaic cells and solar hot water systems.

Dwelling design maximises conservation, minimises consumption and encourages reuse of water resources.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

EnviroDevelopment

Housing SA Design Guide 2.4

Building Code of Australia
4.6. A safe and secure living environment

**WHO Criteria**

Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.

Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.

Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.

**Guidelines**

- Sight lines are preserved from streets, footpaths and walkways in paths and reserves.
- It is easy to find your way to entry of dwellings, commercial and community facilities.
- Car parking areas are safe, secure, well lit at night and convenient for all residents and visitors.
- There is a clear transition from semi-public (or shared) spaces to public zones defined by visual and/or physical boundaries.

**Practice**

- Entries to all buildings are easy to identify, well signed and designed to be distinguished from each other.
- Street number and letterboxes of dwellings are clearly visible from the street.
- Carports and garages are constructed under the main roof of the house or at least linked to the main roof.
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design techniques are applied in site layout, landscaping, lighting and provision of visitor parking.
- There is a strong relationship between living spaces and private spaces, shared spaces and the public realm which creates passive surveillance, access opportunities and a sense of place.

Car parking is located to provide a clear, direct and safe route to the dwelling entrance. Visitor parking is provided in easily identified designated locations.

Designated parking for residents and visitors with disabilities is located close to dwellings. Indented bays are provided with accessible kerb design and are designated and signed for ‘disabled access’.

Lighting is provided to all car parks, common areas, shared spaces and public areas.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

- Housing SA Design Guide 1.1
- Housing SA Design Guide 2.2
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles
- Australian Standards 2890.1 and 2890.6 for parking areas
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
4.7. Dwelling design is appropriate for all ages and abilities

**WHO Criteria**

Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.

**Guidelines**

Housing meets the six core design elements for new dwellings in the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines developed by the Commonwealth Government:

- A safe and continuous path of travel from the street entrance and/or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level.
- At least one level entrance into the dwelling.
- Internal doors and corridors that facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces.
- A toilet on the ground (or entry) level that provides easy access.
- A bathroom that contains a hobless (step-free) shower recess.
- Reinforced walls around the toilet, shower and bath to support the safe installation of grab rails at a later date.

**Practice**

There is a safe and continuous pathway from the street entrance and/or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level.

Level entrances are provided to dwellings and paths provide access to the rear yard.

A covered porch area is provided at the entry to each dwelling.

Where the parking space is part of the dwelling access it should allow a person to open their car doors fully and easily move around the vehicle.

Internal doors and corridors facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces.

The ground (or entry) level has a toilet to support easy access for home occupants and visitors.

The bathroom and shower is designed for easy and independent access for all home occupants, including stepless showers and nonslip floor tiles.

The bathroom and toilet walls are built to enable grab rails to be safely and economically installed.

The kitchen space is designed to support ease of movement between fixed benches and to support easy adaptation.

The laundry space is designed to support ease of movement between fixed benches and to support easy adaptation.

There is a space on the ground (or entry) level that can be used as a bedroom.

Where installed, stairways are designed to reduce the likelihood of injury and also enable future adaptation.

Light switches and power points are located at heights that are easy to reach for all home occupants.

Home occupants are able to easily and independently open and close doors and safely use tap hardware.

The family/living room features clear space to enable the home occupant to move in and around the room with ease.

Window sills are installed at a height that enables home occupants to view the outdoor space from either a seated or standing position.

Floor coverings are slip resistant to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls in the home.

Lift off hinges are provided on inward opening doors.
4.8. Future modifications

WHO Criteria

Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable. Providers understand the needs of older people.

Guidelines

Future modifications are able to be made easily and in a cost effective way.

Practice

Internal doors and corridors facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces.

The bathroom and toilet walls are built to enable grab rails to be safely and economically installed.

The kitchen space is designed to support ease of movement between fixed benches and to support easy adaptation.

The laundry space is designed to support ease of movement between fixed benches and to support easy adaptation.

There is a space on the ground (or entry) level that can be used as a bedroom.

Where installed, stairways are designed to reduce the likelihood of injury and also enable future adaptation.

Further Information and Technical Specifications

Housing SA Design Guide 2.3
Commonwealth Government Liveable Housing Design Guidelines
Australian Standards 1428.1 and 2890.1
Building Code of Australia
4.9. Design that facilitates social interaction

**WHO Criteria**

Do not specifically address design that facilitates social interaction.

**Guidelines**

Casual social interaction between residents and people passing by is facilitated by the design of the front yard.

Communal spaces in apartment buildings are designed to support social interaction.

**Practice**

Front fences are designed to be waist to chest high to allow people to see over them. They can be screened by planting, provided that this is not more than 600mm high when mature.

Front verandas and porches are provided to facilitate interaction with passersby from a ‘safe’ distance.

Front verandas and porches are large enough and have appropriate dimensions to be useable.

Seating is provided next to mailboxes and near communal entrances and stairwells to allow casual social exchanges and “neighbourliness”.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

Housing SA Design Guide 2.3

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles

Healthy Spaces and Places
4.10. Design that meets the specific needs of older residents

**WHO Criteria**

Do not address detailed housing design issues related to the specific needs of older residents.

**Guidelines**

If the building is to be occupied by older people, careful consideration is given to interior design.

**Practice**

If the building is specifically used by older people, space is provided for the storage and recharging of gophers and scooters.

Interior fit out is undertaken in consultation with older people.

If the building is specifically for older people consideration is given to warm colour schemes, domestic scale interiors, and adequate opportunities to display and/or store prized possessions.

Additional storage is provided under a carport or a roofed verandah within an enclosed private space adjacent to an external doorway.

**Further Information and Technical Specifications**

Housing SA Design Guide 1.1