Office Accommodation Management Framework

Guideline 3: Fitout

Office Accommodation Workspace and Fitout Standards

Queensland Government

Contents

1.0 Introduction

These standards form part of the Office Accommodation Management Framework (OAMF) suite of documents, which covers the end to end process for Government agencies, from establishing office accommodation needs, acquiring and fitting out suitable space, then utilising, adapting and disposing of that space effectively.

The Queensland Government Accommodation Office on behalf of the Minister Housing and Public Works administer these guidelines to ensure that accommodation usage across the Queensland government sector supports whole-of-government objectives and complies with the accommodation standards.

Projects that are outside the scope of these guidelines should be referred to HPW for advice prior to commencing project planning or design.

For additional assistance, contact details can be found here: http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au

2.0 Objective

To promote and support the provision of government office accommodation that is:

- safe, healthy and legislatively compliant.
- functional and cost-effective.
- consistent, equitable and sustainable.
- adaptable to new ways of working and evolving technology.

3.0 Scope

The standards in this guideline apply to all Queensland Government departments as defined in s8 of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009 https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-009#sec.8*. This includes all Queensland State Budget funded Statutory Authorities as well as commercialised business units(referred to as Agency within this guideline).

They do not apply to Queensland Government corporations and to purely operational workplaces such as police stations and health clinics unless more than 20 percent of the area is office space.

Agencies are to apply these fitout guidelines to all new or upgraded office accommodation on government owned and leased assets.

4.0 Legislation

Office fitout design and construction is subject to a range of legislation, regulation and codes, which includes the following.

- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* including all amendments*;*
- *Building Act 1975;*
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992;*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991;*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (C'wlth);
- *Disability Services Act 2006* (Qld);
- Building Code of Australia The National Construction Code,
- Queensland Government policies, directive and guidelines,
- *Australian Standards, and*
- *Australian/New Zealand Standards.*

Depending on the project, other requirements may apply and so professional advice is necessary to ensure compliance.

4.1 Application

Both new buildings and fitouts, as well as those undergoing significant alterations, must be made to comply with the current access legislation — in particular the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (C'wlth), the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) and the *Disability Services Act 2006* (Qld).

4.2 Fitout design approach

Persons with disabilities from a broad range of categories must be able to enter the building and the workplace and be able to use its amenities with opportunity equal to that of able persons. While mobility impairment is most often considered, the less apparent categories are: Physical, Sensory, Intellectual, Psychiatric, Neurological and Learning.

The most comprehensive design approach is termed 'Universal Design' and aims to design for the widest possible range of ability with as few barriers or constraints as possible. Every opportunity must be taken to meet the needs of the broadest range of users and specifically when special needs have been identified.

Requirements regarding building accessibility are prescribed in the Building Code of Australia, which states that new building work is to be designed to the *Australian Standard AS1428.1:2001: Design for Access and Mobility Part 1* and *Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1428.4:2002: Design for Access and Mobility Part 4.*

The BCA also requires that any associated carparking for people with disabilities is to be designed to the *Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2890.1:2004: Parking Facilities Part 1*. These standards are not limited in their coverage to people with mobility impairment, but cover a range of disabilities, including sight and hearing impairment.

5.0   Approvals for office accommodation projects

Four approval processes apply to office fitout projects as follows:

Agency design approvals are required as part of the fitout project design and documentation process and are generally required at the schematic design, design development and contract documentation stages of fitout projects.

Technical fitout approvals are required under the Approval Process for Government Office Accommodation Projects initiated by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and administered by the Department of Housing and Public Works (HPW). For details, see practice note: *Approval procedures for government office accommodation projects*.

Building-owner approval. The funding agency is responsible for ensuring that building owner approval is obtained for all fitout projects, whether in owned or leased office buildings prior to any works occurring on site. HPW will obtain building-owner approval for projects that they manage and fund.

Financial approvals are required according to the funding source. Agency-funded projects require funding approval according to each agency's procedures and delegations. Projects funded jointly by agencies and through the Office Accommodation Program require similar approvals by each agency and approval by HPW according to its procedures and delegations. HPW will assume responsibility for project submissions that require Executive Council financial approval when funded from the Office Accommodation Program.

6.0 Benchmarks

6.1 Workplace density benchmark

The office accommodation workplace density benchmark target for agencies is a maximum of 12m² per person *assuming a 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to 1 desk occupancy ratio*. This benchmark applies to each separate office tenancy. A tenancy can consist of a part floor, a whole floor or several floors in a building.

In certain circumstances, this benchmark can be exceeded. For example, small individual tenancies of fewer than 10 people might require more than 12m² per person and some tenancies in heritage buildings might require more space due to planning inefficiency or structural constraints.

The fitout of an office tenancy should not exceed 12m^2 per workpoint regardless of the occupancy density achieved.

6.2 Project cost benchmarks

HPW has set maximum benchmark targets for the cost of office fitout projects. These are based on the accepted industry rates published annually in the *Rawlinson's Australian Construction Handbook*.

The benchmark costs include all physical construction costs, incorporating demolition, services and furniture. They do not include the associated professional fees, statutory charges or GST which must be included in budget planning.

There are three levels of benchmark targets depending on the extent of work:

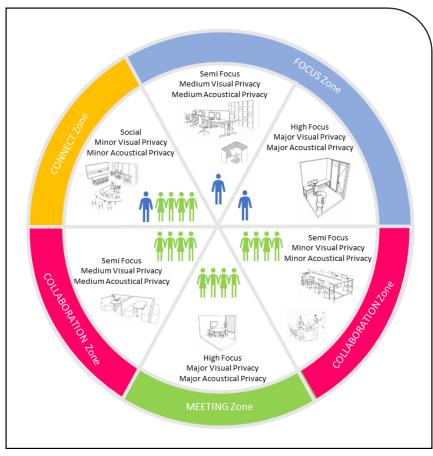| Fitout type	Maximum cost rate or range per m^2	Fitout cost range per person**
New – complete fitout with new furniture, fittings, and services	$1,174*	$8,453 to $14,088
Alterations – amendment to fitout including partition changes	$310 to $597*	$2,232 to $7,964
Minor refurbishment – changes to loose furniture, workstations, and finishes	$414 to $797*	$2,981 to $9,564

*Cost rates based on a comparable "A" grade fitout standard as advised in the *Rawlinsons Australian Construction Handbook*, 2018

** Range from 1.4 person per 1 desk to 1 person per 1 desk @12m^2 per desk.

7.0 Design principles

Government office accommodation work spaces need to easily adapt to changes brought about by new technology, cultural shifts and organisational churn. Whole-of-government office space strategies are developed to minimise Government's office space footprint and vacancy, and provide office space that supports collaboration, flexibility, skill development, and service delivery. Best practice design inspires enhanced service delivery to Queenslanders and work spaces that perform effectively for all agencies and their staff.

The contemporary work place prioritises increased choice in settings to **connect, focus, meet,** and **collaborate**. Different workplaces will make this transition at different speeds and so workplaces need to both support existing practices and be adaptable to these future opportunities.

Government office space is moving towards a definition of space and fitout design based on users' work practices, while remaining within area and cost benchmarks. The following six principles can be used to support government agencies to achieve a successful and adaptable design:

Design principle 1: Standardisation

- Incorporate generic planning, modular space standards, generic workstation footprints and generic furniture profiles, finishes and characteristics.
- Plan layouts for consistency with a building's structural grid and the modular dimensions of ceilings and facades.

Design principle 2: Connectivity

- Design fitout elements as separate components that interconnect and can be disconnected and replaced/upgraded.
- Modularity in built zone components, furniture and fittings combined with mobile ICT solutions support maximum flexibility at minimum cost.

Design principle 3: Optimise hubs, nodes and zones

- Plan layouts in functional zones. Restrict built fitout (partitioning extending to the ceiling) to the zone adjacent to the building's core. Collocate built fitout to maximise adaptability to changing needs. Use the building's perimeter zone for open plan areas

to maximise natural light and outlook.
- Provide alternative work settings for different types of work and work styles.
- Design spaces and rooms to support and/or adapt to multiple uses.

Design principle 4: Minimise impact on the base building

- Minimise built-in furniture and equipment that is fixed to floors, ceilings, core walls and external walls.
- Avoid facilities and functions that are inappropriate for office buildings such as printing shops, photographic darkrooms and archival storage.
- Design fitouts which are within a building's design floor loading, electricity capacity, heating/ cooling capacity and cabling capacity. Avoid functions or processes that affect a building's classification or compromise safety systems.

Design principle 5: Compliance

- Design to meet legislative obligations such as workplace health and safety and accessibility, and comply with government policy.
- All new fit-outs for office accommodation must meet or exceed the space utilisation target maximum of 12m² per work point and QGAO will prioritise whole-of-Government savings when considering agency fitout design.
- Agencies must actively pursue and develop plans for office accommodation that are suitable for activity based working and flexible working arrangements. Occupancy of fitouts to range from 1 staff to 1 desk allocation up to 1.4 staff to 1 desk allocation.
- Agencies must actively pursue opportunities that enable office accommodation to be accessible and shared by other government agencies.

Design principle 6: Sustainability

- Design for ecological sustainability (community, energy, material, water).
- Design for organisational sustainability (cost effectiveness, culture and values).
- Incorporate and formalise ecologically sustainable practices for fitout maintenance and fitout in use (e.g. energy management, waste management, sustainable cleaning products and procedures and sustainable maintenance practices).

8.0 Workspace areas

8.1 General layout

Fitout design must enable future flexibility to accommodate changing Agency requirements and/or machinery-of-Government changes, to ensure fitout longevity and minimise fitout changes (churn) where possible.

Providing a choice of settings, that support a variety of work activities, empowers employees to choose the optimal setting for their current task. To work well, settings need to be positioned within zones of amenity that have similar acoustic levels and privacy requirements, as per the layout examples below.

FOCUS spaces are used for contemplation, concentration and quiet work. These areas are typically acoustically isolated and/or spatially separated from more active spaces.

MEET spaces are used for smaller groups of focussed review of ideas and work. These areas are typically acoustically isolated but can act as a buffer between focus and collaboration spaces.

COLLABORATION spaces are active areas where people meet, talk, build relationships and present to groups. They are equipped with multimedia to share and record ideas. Best located to be readily accessible and designed and positioned so as not to disturb focussed work.

CONNECT spaces stimulate conversations and the exchange of ideas and enable employees to socialise across disciplines. These are best located in a centralised area with acoustic separation from quieter zones.

SUPPORT spaces accommodate shared equipment and tools that support the operation of the workplace. They should be located to be accessible and not disturb focussed work.

8.2 Enclosed Offices

Enclosed offices are not supported in office fitouts, with the exception of Directors-General and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs).

If an individual office is assessed as necessary to be provided, after all open plan configurations and arrangements have been considered first, Directors-General and CEOs are responsible and accountable for authorising and providing this authorisation to the Queensland Government Accommodation Office.

8.3 Workstations

Separating groups of workstations with enclosed rooms should be avoided because it can constrain future changes to the sizes of team groupings and create physical barriers to effective communication between and within groups.

Workstation systems should consist of separable components that can be reconfigured and reused without requiring multiple trades to disconnect and reconnect services. Soft-wired workstations made up of separate free-standing components are highly preferable to integrated, panel-based systems furniture that involves significant disruption whenever workstations need to be rearranged.

Desks ranging in size between 1500mm and 1800mm long will be sufficient for most office based activities.

Enclosure of workstations can be provided using modular, free-standing screens individually or by group at a maximum height of 1,200mm to maintain visual privacy when seated, but not impede the flow of light or vision when standing.

An allowance for sit-to-stand workstations is recommended to be 10 per cent, unless medical assessment warrants the provision of sit to stand for specific officers.

8.4 Work setting alternatives

The following work settings and related practices can be considered in place of traditional enclosed meeting rooms and offices or single 'owner' work stations.

Flexible desks

As desks are not restricted to a single occupant, workers are able to choose any available desk. For this to work well:

- Desks need to incorporate equipment that allows anyone to use them.

- Personal storage is not at the desk but provided in a central location (see right).

- Mobile technology and minimising reliance on paper storage is required.

- Adjacent settings that allow for a higher level of focus or confidentiality than the focus work area provides. These can be quiet pods (bottom right) and/or quiet rooms.

Reduces the waste of a traditional, single occupant desk, being unused when its 'owner' is away. As less desks are needed, space and funds previously dedicated to unused desks can go toward providing more inspirational choices of enabling work settings, such as the collaborative settings below.

FOCUSED

Flexible Collaborative Settings

A variety of options are recommended, to suit a range of acoustic, equipment and technology needs for group tasks.
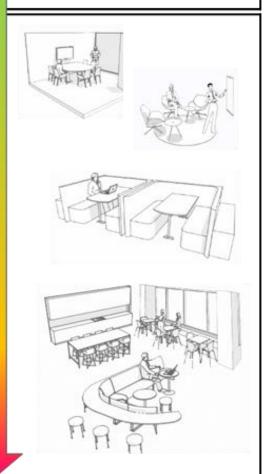
Standing height tables (below) adjacent to workstation zones are useful for layout space and impromptu team meetings, allowing teams to quickly group together, slightly away from the focused work area.

Meeting Pods (top right) provide the next level of acoustic privacy away from the workspace.

Some fully enclosed meeting or collaboration rooms (centre right) should be provided for the highest level of acoustic containment or privacy.

Office amenity is increased by affording spaces multipurpose functionality. As examples, waiting areas and lunch rooms can also be used as meeting, collaboration or presentation areas (see right).

QUIET COLLABORATION & MEET

SOCIAL NOISY & MULTIPURPOSE

The success of new types of work settings, is contingent upon the provision of:
- Effective supporting technology
- Appropriate acoustic privacy, and
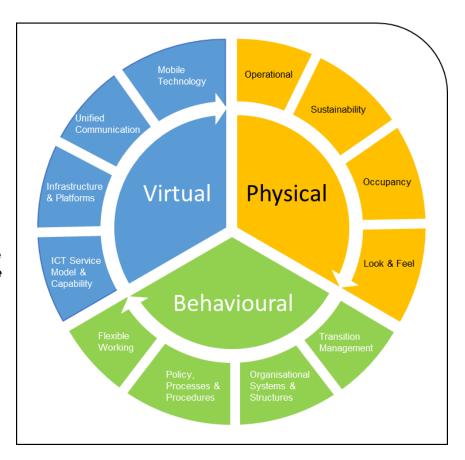- User education on how these spaces can be used to their advantage.

When implementing work practices that are significantly different, a critical success factor is the application of a well-considered change management process that encompasses the Virtual, Physical, and Behavioural factors that impact on staff, individually and as a collective (refer **Practice Note** *Churn and Change Management*).

In these cases, it is recommended that agencies engage professional designers and change managers with experience in new ways of working.

8.5 Conference, meeting and training rooms

Strategies to maximise their utilisation should be considered. Large conference and training rooms should be multi-purpose and able to be subdivided into smaller spaces for alternative uses.

Shared within agencies and among agencies is encouraged and should only provided within an office tenancy if used frequently enough to offer better value than hiring external facilities when needed.

If a need is demonstrated to construct these facilities within an office tenancy, the recommended maximum areas are:

Type	Maximum area (m^2)	Notes
Meeting room (up to 8 persons)	15	
Conference room (12 persons)	25	The need for conference rooms seating 12 or more must be carefully considered and are limited to one per 1,000m2 of office area.
Conference room (18 persons)	32	

These areas are to be included in calculating overall workplace density and incorporated within the benchmark density targets. As a guide, the total seating

capacity of all meeting and conference rooms and interaction areas should not need to exceed 50 per cent of the total staff number in each tenancy.

Training rooms must be formally approved by each agency's Director-General or CEO and must be consistent with the intent of these guidelines.

8.6 Ensuites and kitchenettes

New ensuites (bathrooms and/or toilets) are not to be provided in new office fitouts.

Kitchenettes involving wet points (water supply and drainage) should be restricted to lunchrooms or servicing large multi-agency conference rooms.

8.7 Lunchrooms

Dedicated lunchrooms are not required under the Work Health and Safety Act if a worker is able to eat in their work area, however, the following must be provided as a minimum:

- a sink with draining board and reticulated hot and cold water;
- cupboards for storage of foodstuffs;
- a chair with back support;
- a refrigerator to suit the capacity of staff in the tenancy.

The requirements listed above can generally be addressed in the form of a tea room.

Larger lunchrooms are supported if they have multi-purpose amenity and can be used for meetings, workshops, training sessions or other work activities in lieu of built zones.

8.8 Support spaces

Other areas that support operational requirements can often have multipurpose amenity. Where areas are highly specialised, opportunities to share with other agencies are encouraged to reduce duplication and waste.

Utility, filing and mail processing areas. Consider minimising these areas and/or designing them to be readily converted to other uses in the future.

Storage. Off-site storage is encouraged in accordance with record keeping and disposal policies. Storage is classified into active, intermediate and archival types:

Active storage needs to be accessed frequently and so located near the user.

Intermediate storage is accessed frequently so can be in a central location.

Archival storage is needed infrequently and can be located elsewhere.

Registries and customer service areas should be designed to incorporate and/or adapt to new technology and new ways of delivering services.

Reception, waiting and display areas. If required, these areas should be compact, functional and shared whenever possible.

Reference libraries should be limited to operational libraries (day-to-day use). Archival materials or rarely used reference material should be stored off site.

Special-purpose areas refers to spaces required for non-administrative functions such as clinical, counselling, parole and rehabilitation functions and special equipment rooms.

Facilities such as photographic darkrooms, biological storage, laboratories and printing shops are not supported in office buildings. Advice should be sought from HPW if non-standard inclusions are under consideration. Each agency's Director-General or CEO must formally endorse the inclusion of these spaces

Circulation space must be consistent with fire safety legislation and anti-discrimination legislation. Any change to the office layout that affects the designated fire safety circulation must be resubmitted for new *Building Act* approval and expert advice must be obtained before any such changes are made.

A generally accepted percentage for total circulation space is approximately 30 to 35 per cent of the net lettable area (NLA).

9.0 Privacy

In office terms, a workplace needs to achieve a balance between providing:
- Appropriate levels of confidentiality but without isolation.
- Opportunities for interaction while limiting visual, acoustic or territorial intrusions.
- Fitout material selection as well as the office layout are key factors. The concept of privacy zones is covered in Section 6. Acoustic and visual privacy measures need to work together to be successful.

Visual privacy (Lines of sight) can be managed through layout design and visual barriers can be incorporated as partitions, screens, furniture elements and landscaping. The choice of material for visual barriers also affects acoustic privacy.

Acoustic privacy is increased by managing ambient sound levels, speech intelligibility and sound paths. Some techniques for controlling these three components are:

Sound blocking uses high density panels to reduce noise penetration. Sound will still bounce off nearby glass or ceilings, and travel through permeable ceilings, to reach the other side of an acoustic panel, no matter how high.

Sound absorption 'soaks up' sound by reducing reflected sound waves. Porous, fibrous materials trap sound waves in a maze of air pockets and absorb sound energy.

Sound masking to cover distracting noise. Introduces sound at specific frequencies and levels to mask unwanted sounds (particularly speech) without becoming distracting.

10.0 Finishes, fixtures and fittings

10.1 General

All government office fit out components should be assessed for appropriateness in terms of :
- **Value for money.** Consider capital, operating and lifecycle costs as well as durability in terms of physical, technical and churn resilience. For more information see *Section 13.0 - Value Management*;
- **Ecological sustainability** and avoidance of waste. See *Section 16.0 – Ecological Sustainability*;
- **Community expectations and perceptions.** Is it considered an "appropriate standard" for government office space; and
- **Local or Australian content** in line with Government procurement policy.

10.2 Partitions

Where partitions are a functional necessity they should be constructed from standard 64mm steel studs with a single layer of taped and set plasterboard on each side and a painted finish. Complex partition detailing and special finishes should be avoided.

Acoustically treated partitions should be used only for conference and meeting rooms, and offices where sound containment is important to minimise unnecessary costs.

Bulkheads above the ceiling should be avoided unless absolutely necessary because of their high initial cost, the cost of removal when the tenancy is vacated and the high cost of modifying air conditioning services to suit.

Glazed partitions should be considered for rooms that require light transmission, visual awareness or have a supervisory function.

10.3 Door locks

Locks and hardware must be consistent with the building's standards and master keying system. Locks should be provided only to rooms requiring security, otherwise, latch sets should be used for economy.

10.4 Ceilings

A modular suspended ceiling will normally be installed as part of the building. The existing ceiling is to be modified only if functionally necessary as it will need to be reinstated to its original condition at the cost of the tenant when the tenancy is vacated.

Plasterboard ceilings are not encouraged where suspended ceilings exist.

10.5 Flooring

The floor finishes provided by the building's owner must be retained wherever possible. Exceptions may be areas requiring special finishes due to functional needs (e.g. kitchenettes, equipment rooms) or public interface areas where a corporate/business colour scheme is required and endorsed by the agency's Director-General or CEO. Customisation of flooring finishes is not supported.

10.6 Lighting

The building's standard lighting system should be used, but fitting numbers and positions may be modified to suit the layout and/or meet legislative compliance.

Specialty lighting should be avoided unless functionally necessary to minimise both initial cost and the ongoing costs of replacing non-standard lamps and accessories.

11.0 Furniture

11.1 General

Existing furniture should be reused unless it is functionally obsolete, or is uneconomical to refurbish or adapt to new uses.

Built-in furniture and joinery items should not be used unless stability is required, as in utility areas and/or the joinery items include fixed services such as hydraulics in kitchen areas.

When new items are required, they should be selected based on economy, durability and sustainability criteria.

Imported materials and products must not be used if an equivalent material or product is manufactured in Australia.

11.2 Chairs

Work chairs should be ergonomically sound and fully adjustable, of standard commercial quality and consistent with the work function.

11.3 Storage furniture

The extent of storage in commercial office space should be kept to a minimum, see *Section 8.8 Support spaces – filing and storage.*

Where it is necessary, compactus units are generally efficient and cost-effective for large volumes of centralised intermediate storage. These benefits should be weighed against the following considerations:

- Mobile storage systems are heavy and floor loading needs to be checked by a structural engineer installation costs are substantial and of a specialist nature.
- Systems must be professionally removed at the tenant's expense when the tenancy is vacated (unless otherwise agreed).

11.6 Ergonomics

Furniture must be ergonomically suitable for the task and the people performing the task. To suit the widest range of tasks and users, substantial degrees of adjustability will be required. The requirements of persons with special needs must be met and this might require furniture customisation and/or acquisition of special equipment.

12.0 Equipment

12.1 Building equipment

Basic office building infrastructure will include: air conditioning; a legislative compliant lighting system; a nominal number or power outlets, primary cabling and centralised connection facilities for data and communication; and generic fire safety systems.

Each fitout design will require some modifications or additions to the above services to suit the configuration. Additional capacity may also be required to supplement air conditioning in local areas such as large conference rooms. Any such modifications form part of each fitout project and must be installed at the tenant agency's cost and also removed at the end of the tenancy (unless otherwise agreed by the landlord).

The installation (and later removal) of secondary cabling for information technology and communications purposes (from the primary connection point to the wall/floor outlet or socket) forms part of the fitout project and is the responsibility of the tenant agency.

Office Accommodation Program funding (when approved) can be used for alterations and additions to building services as part of a fitout project. Office Accommodation Program funding cannot be used for the reinstatement (make good) of building services. This cost remains the responsibility of the occupying agency.

12.2 Office equipment

The supply and installation of office equipment (multi-function devices, computers, routers, servers, and the like) is the responsibility of the tenant agency.

Office Accommodation Program (OAP) funding cannot be used for the procurement or installation of any new office equipment. Depending on the status of warranties or other contracts relating to the equipment, the relocation and reinstallation of existing equipment may be able to be included in the scope of a project and covered by OAP funding. However, it cannot be used for personnel costs related to setting up or reconfiguring office equipment during or after relocation.

13.0 Value management

13.1 Project delivery savings

Value management is a project review process to identify ways to both to save money and add value without compromising functionality or quality. Continuous evaluation of both procurement options and fitout design, during project delivery can result in up front and ongoing savings.

13.2 Designing for churn savings

Churn is defined as: the relocation of people within an agency, undertaken in response to changing service delivery and functional requirements. Churn is measured by: the number of people relocated per year, expressed as a percentage an agency's total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

Effective fitout design approaches for churn management include:
-   designing fitouts that will readily support reconfiguration with minimum alterations to partitions and building services
-   designing workplace layouts and fitout generically for maximum flexibility and
-   interchangeability
-   constructing a centralised core or zone of multi-purpose, shared support spaces for the longer-
-   term in preference to specialised spaces that become functionally-obsolete in the short term
-   maximising the use of mobile and/or transformable (multi-purpose) furniture.

Opportunities for best practice churn management arise in the earliest stages of the design process. Refer Practice Note *Management of office churn and management of change*, which is a supporting document included with *Guideline 4: Occupancy*.
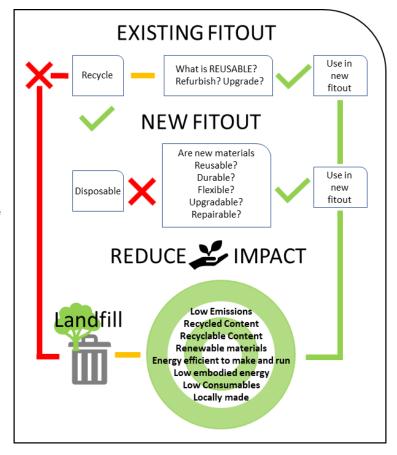
14.0 Ecological sustainability

Office fitouts incorporating ecologically sustainable principles minimise environmental impacts and provide a healthier workplace.

Office fitout sustainability can be improved by a strategic approach to the selection of fittings, fixtures and equipment. The diagram on the right can be used as a guide to making decisions that prioritise outcomes with low environmental impact. It ranges from the best case of reusing existing components to the worst case where new components with wholly unsustainable content are purchased.

The Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star Tools can be used as a guide, irrespective of whether formal Green Star ratings are to be targeted.