

Providing Quality of Life to the Aged Care Sector

Impact on Design and Development





Things are moving quickly throughout the aged care sector in Australia. The industry landscape is shifting, and the ways in which the industry responds today will have a major bearing on what happens in the years ahead.

The Ageing Mind Initiative from the University of Queensland has identified a number of social, demographic and economic trends that will combine to create a massive change in the way aged care will be delivered across Australia.

Two of the biggest issues identified that will affect the way aged care evolves in the near-future, and particularly the facilities provided are:

The Resident as a Consumer

In addition to the rapidly ageing proportion of the population, of particular focus in the findings are the higher expectations of the “baby boomer” generation and future self-funded retirees in regards to the level of care they will receive.

With the “Living Longer, Living Better” reforms changing the paying structure for aged care in Australia¹, the “get what you pay for” mentality becomes more prevalent. This will see potential residents and their families increasingly viewing

themselves as consumers, and as such, will shop around for the best facilities available.

The Rise of Dementia Diagnosis

The growth in the number of people who will be diagnosed with dementia will greatly affect the care and facilities required to manage their needs².

Today, over 50 per cent of permanent aged care residents in Australia have had a diagnosis of dementia recorded³. Throughout the country there are more than 342,000 Australians living with dementia. This number is expected to reach almost 900,000 by 2050⁴.

For those involved in the creation of these facilities this means reassessing many of the conceptions held previously in regards to the ways in which they are designed and developed.

No truer is this than in the kitchens of these facilities.

With many researchers seeing the kitchen as the main hub of a care facility⁵, the functionality and practicality of the kitchen and its components becomes central to quality of life afforded to the residents within.

Addressing the impact on design and development

In its guidelines for the planning and design of health and aged care facilities, the Department of Human Services identifies a number of areas as “functional zones” – areas with specific design standards with special consideration of purpose, capacity, required relationships and other relevant issues⁶.

As one of the core living areas and one of the most frequented sections of aged care residences, the functionality of the kitchen comes under special consideration. It specifies the importance of the design of the kitchen to enable residents to actively participate in daily routines such as food preparation, cooking and cleaning, while providing a functional relationship with the main living and meals area⁷.

This is especially important for residents who experience dementia. For these residents, having a kitchen gives a sense of familiarity, many state design guidelines dictate that kitchen areas must provide a home-like environment⁸.

Achieving a functional kitchen that provides the high-quality features expected from the consumer, while still addressing the unique needs of aged-care residents is a difficult challenge for designer and developer, but one that is not impossible.

“ Many state design guidelines dictate that **kitchen areas must provide a home-like environment⁸.** ”



AGE EXPLORER

In Australia, 18.5% of the general population lives with a disability. For aged care this number rises significantly, to 40% for people aged between 65 and 69, and 88% for those aged 90 years and over. Add to this the 12% of the population who provide care to elderly or someone with a disability and you have over eight million Australians dealing with reduced capabilities⁹.

As age and disability will restrict a person's mobility and range of motion, a kitchen design should accommodate for these changing requirements. Providing residents with the ability to perform tasks and participate in productive activities such as utilising the kitchen helps to increase independence, reduce the level of care required and promote a sense of self-worth and actualisation¹⁰.

To address these evolving requirements, Blum identified the opportunity to make use of a tool that is used across various industries globally, such as the health industry (Hospitals) and Consumer goods that simulates various physical limitations. The AGE EXPLORER suit was developed over 4 years by the Meyer-Hentschel Institute in Saarbrücken (Germany) together with doctors and geriatric researchers.

The AGE EXPLORER suit enables people to feel what physical limitations are like such as stiff joints, arthritis, muscle fatigue, and impaired vision and hearing. This allows for the best placement and usage of storage products in the kitchens of aged-care facilities.

The full range of Blum products can be experienced using the AGE EXPLORER suit, including:

Lift systems: Wall cabinets with lift systems to give easy access to cabinet interiors and provide a better workflow. They are easy to open and glide up and out of the user's way, with no bending back to avoid doors.

Pull-outs: Pull-outs are more ergonomic to use and provide enhanced user convenience. They reduce bending by providing clear visibility and access to the drawer contents.

Full Extension Drawers: Cabinets with greater depth to create extra space and at the same time allow users to access items at the back of the draw easily.

Motion Assist: High-quality fittings bring enhanced user convenience and top quality motion to kitchens. Kitchens with furniture that open with ease and close softly and effortlessly regardless of how much force is used.







DYNAMIC SPACE

For over sixty years Blum has been at the forefront of ideas and innovations for improving the quality and functionality of kitchens throughout the world. This experience and knowledge around the creation of a functional kitchen places Blum in an excellent position to partner those involved in the design and development of aged care facilities, helping to satisfy the changing needs of the residents within.

Key to Blum's relationship with the aged-care sector is the concept of DYNAMIC SPACE.

Blum is driven by the desire to provide products that positively impact the way end users work in their kitchen. End user observations, the use of the AGE EXPLORER suit and commitment to adhering to extensive and qualified product testing, provides insights to Blum that has led to the development of the DYNAMIC SPACE concept.

DYNAMIC SPACE consists of the three essential features of a functional and practical kitchen: simple workflows, optimal space usage and top quality motion. In short, workflow, space, motion.

WORKFLOW: A practical interior and well thought-out solutions ensure that workflows are smooth and ergonomic. The concept takes into consideration the five kitchen zones of consumables, non-consumables, cleaning, preparation and cooking and how they are positioned within the kitchen. Providing easy-access to all zones is especially crucial to aged care residents.

SPACE: Kitchen furniture should have enough storage space and be easily accessible. For aged care facilities where canes, walking-chairs and wheelchairs are common, making the most of storage space and maximising space to move throughout the kitchen is vital to its use.

MOTION: Quality of motion is the driving force behind the entire development and manufacturing process of Blum products, resulting in functional kitchen furniture that guarantee high quality of motion for the lifetime of the furniture.

This guarantee ensures easy use of the kitchen for residents and staff, and the confidence of providing the highest-quality facilities available.



A Blum Partnership

With applications for Aged Care Approvals at an all-time high¹¹, and increased competition for residents, the importance of creating a facility that offers premium comfort and features to potential residents, their families, and carers becomes increasingly important.

For the designer and developers creating the aged care centres of the future, it is vital to form a partnership with an experienced, industry leading supplier that can provide the knowledge and innovation to inspire.

The decades of research and development which have culminated in DYNAMIC SPACE and the use of the AGE EXPLORER have made Blum the first choice for aged-care kitchen design.

A Blum partnership assists designers through every step of the planning process, and with showrooms in every Australian state provides the opportunity to experience first-hand principals required for creating the aged-care facilities of the future.



REFERENCES

1. Living Longer Living Better Legislation – Questions and Answers pg.10
<http://www.agedcarevic.org.au/resources/documents/questions-answers-re-legislative-changes>
2. The Wave of Changing Expectations in Aged Care – The Ageing Mind Initiative, The University of Queensland
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ami/the-wave-of-changing-expectations-in-aged-care>
3. Residential aged care in Australia 2010-2011, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Government pg.58
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=10737422896>
4. Fight Alzheimer's Save Australia, Fightdementia.org.au, February 2015
<https://fightdementia.org.au/about-dementia-and-memory-loss/statistics>
5. Supporting people with dementia and their families and carers – Victoria dementia action plan 2014-18, Department of Health pg.8
[http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/FAF0A42650E6A45CCA257D790080B10E/\\$FILE/Victorian%20dementia%20action%20plan2.pdf](http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/FAF0A42650E6A45CCA257D790080B10E/$FILE/Victorian%20dementia%20action%20plan2.pdf)
6. Aged Care Residential Services Generic Brief, Department of Human Services, pg.29 Functional Zones and Relationships
http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/605923/ssa_asdg_guidelines1.1.pdf
7. Disability Services: Accommodation Standards and Design Guidelines for the Provision of 1.1 Shared Supported Accommodation, Department of Human Services pg.31
http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/605923/ssa_asdg_guidelines1.1.pdf
8. Design Guidelines for Queensland Residential Aged Care Facilities, Queensland Government
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qhpolicy/docs/gdl/qh-gdl-374-8.pdf>
9. 4430.0 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, Australian Bureau of Statistics, December 16 2010
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/4430.0Main%20Features22009?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4430.0&issue=2009&num=&view=>
10. Mobilit, vigour and self-care, Victorian Government Health Information September 3 2014
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/older/toolkit/05Mobility/index.htm>
11. Results of the 2014 Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR) Australian Government Department of Social Services, 27 January 2015
<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ageing-and-aged-care/aged-care-funding/aged-care-approvals-round-acar/results-of-the-2014-aged-care-approvals-round-acar>

Blum Australia Pty. Ltd.
P.O. Box 1615, Green Valley NSW 2168
Toll Free: 1800 179 186 | E-Mail: info.au@blum.com

www.blum.com

 [®]