DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Office Accommodation Management Framework

Guideline 3: Fitout
Office Accommodation Workspace and Fitout Standards

Queensland Government

Contents

1.0 Introduction and scope

These standards form part of the Office Accommodation Management Framework (OAMF) suite of documents. They apply to all government departments and entities (as defined in the OAMF policy overview) that occupy government owned or leased office accommodation. They do not apply to Queensland Government corporations and to purely operational workplaces, such as police stations and health clinics, unless more than 20 per cent of the area is office space.

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 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 2011*, including all amendments
- *Building Act 1975*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*
- *Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)*
- *Building Code of Australia, The National Construction Code*
- *Australian Standards*
- *Australian/New Zealand Standards*
- Queensland Government policies, directives and guidelines

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

4.0 Approvals for office accommodation fitout projects

Four approval processes apply to office fitout projects as follows:

- **Agency design approvals** are required as part of the design and documentation process, commonly at the schematic design, design development and contract documentation stages of fitout projects.
- **Technical fitout approvals** are required for government office accommodation fitout projects. This process was initiated by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and is administered by the Queensland Government Accommodation Office (QGAO). For details, see the OAMF 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 QGAO owned or leased office buildings, prior to any work starting on site. QGAO will obtain building-owner approval for projects that they manage and fund.

- **Financial approvals** are required according to the funding source. Agency-funded projects should comply with that agency's policies, procedures, and delegations. Projects that are jointly funded by the agency and the Office Accommodation Program require approval by both the agency and QGAO, according to each entity's policies, procedures and delegations. QGAO will assume responsibility for project funding approvals when funded from the Office Accommodation Program.

5.0 Operating principles

5.1 Workplace density benchmark

The office accommodation density target is a maximum of 12m² per work point. This applies, regardless of the ratio of desk allocation ratios, for example, whether 1 desk per person or 1 desk per 1.2 persons applies. The measure applies to each separate office tenancy whether it occupies a part floor, 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 due to the increased ratio of shared space per person. Some tenancies in older style buildings might require more space due to planning inefficiency or structural constraints.

5.2 Fitout cost benchmarks

The table below provides the maximum cost benchmarks for new fitout, as well as those to alter or refurbish existing fitout, to an appropriate standard for Government administrative functions. It also shows the cost differences between a *1 person per desk* utilisation model and a shared, *1.2 persons per desk*, model.

Extent of fitout work	Maximum cost rate or range per m^2	Fitout cost rate or range per person**	
	1 person per desk	1.2 persons per desk	1 person per desk
Complete new Inclusions: - medium quality built-in fitout, - high quality workstations, - basic loose furniture and fittings. - meeting rooms - a reception area - kitchen amenities - construction and demolition work - alterations to in-tenancy services	$1,800*	$18,007	$21,608
Alterations Inclusions: - moderate adjustments to existing fitout, including partitions, workstations, furniture. - minor adjustments to in-tenancy services. - Minor refurbishment (as below)	$635 to $1,222	$6,352to $12,224	$7,623 to $14,669
Minor refurbishment Inclusions: - changes to loose furniture, workstations, and finishes only.	$475 to $915	$4,751 to $9,153	$5,702 to $10,984

* Costs are based on the accepted industry rates published in the Rawlinson's Australian Construction Handbook.

** Per person calculations = $1,800 x (12 ÷ number people per desk) and so are based on a fitout that achieves 1 x desk for every 12m² of office space. The 12m² rate is calculated over the entire tenancy area and not just workstation areas.

All the above benchmark costs exclude:

- contingency sums
- professional and statutory fees
- goods and services tax
- regional index costs.

Note that costs may vary if specialised fitout is required to meet operational needs.

6.0 Design principles

Best practice design enhances our service delivery to Queenslanders by providing workspaces that that perform effectively. The aim is to provide spaces that support collaboration, focus and the wellbeing of all users while also being able to adapt to new technology, cultural shifts and organisational change.

The following principles can be used to achieve a quality fitout that is efficient and adaptable:

Design Principle 1: Standardisation

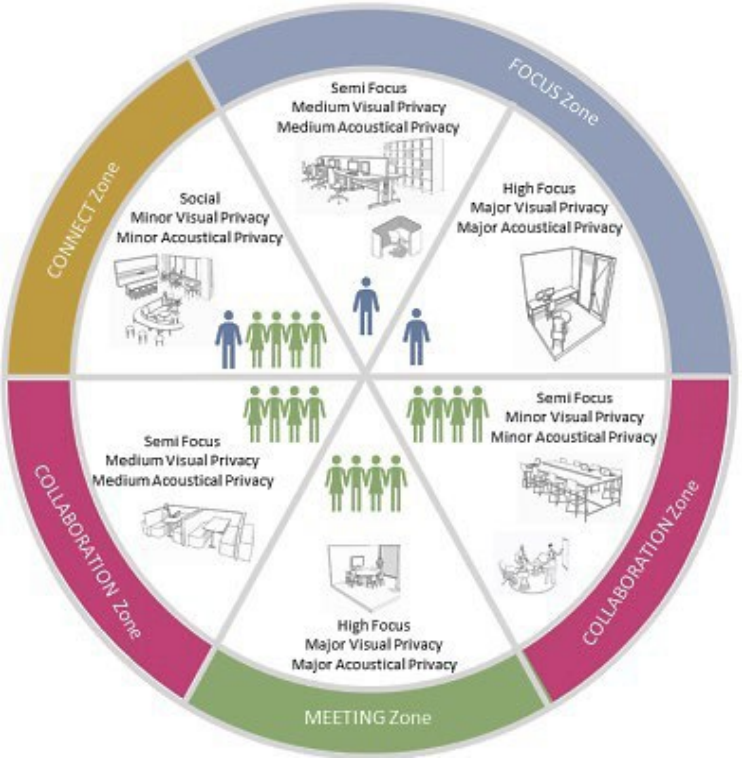
- Plan workstation layouts, room shapes and sizes, and furniture sizes for consistency with a building's structural grid and the modular dimensions of ceilings and facades.
- Where built partitions are necessary, standardise room sizes and group together to allow flexibility for future use changes.
- Apply generic and consistent finishes and design elements.

Design Principle 2: Connectivity

- Design fitout elements as components that interconnect and can be disconnected to replace or upgrade.
- Ensure that integrated ICT components can be replaced or upgraded without impacting fitout.

Design Principle 3: Optimise hubs, nodes and zones

- Establish zones based on functional needs to connect, focus, meet, and collaborate (see diagram at right).
- Provide furniture, spaces and rooms that can adapt to multiple uses.
- Think beyond your agency's needs and space to pursue design outcomes that enable facilities to be shared between government agencies.
- Cluster high focus areas that require full heigh partitions close to the building's core to reduce cost and increase effectiveness.



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, wet labs and archival storage.
- To ensure that proposed fitouts remain within a building's capacity, consider: floor loading, electrical, mechanical, toilets, lifts and cabling capacities.
- Ensure that changes do not affect a building's classification or compromise safety systems.

Design Principle 5: Compliance

- Design to meet all legislative obligations including those listed at *Section 3* of this guideline.
- Design to comply with government policy, as per the guidelines in this framework.

Design Principle 6: Design for all abilities

- Persons with disabilities, from a broad range of categories, must be able to enter the building and the workplace and use its amenities, including car parks, 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.
- Office space is to be designed to meet the requirements of *AS1428 Australian Standard: Design for Access and Mobility:*
  - Part 1 (2021): General requirements for access – New Building work, for general office area; and
  - Part 2 (2022): Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and Facilities, for Kitchen joinery
- Broader application of the following parts of *AS1428* are encouraged to provide enhanced access for everyone who works in our office space:
  - Part 2 (2022): Enhanced and additional requirements, such as lower bench height sections in lunchroom areas
  - Part 4.1 (2014):Tactile Ground Surface Indicators, to help orient people with vision impairment
  - Part 4.2 (2018): Communication for people who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired, such as hearing augmentation systems, and signage layout.
- 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, particularly where special needs have been identified.

Design Principle 7: Sustainability and wellbeing

- Design for ecological sustainability (community, energy, material, water).
- To minimise the waste of fitout changes and support fitout longevity, the fitout must be able to readily adapt to changing requirements.
- 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).
- Design for organisational sustainability (cost effectiveness, culture, and values).
- Use the building's perimeter zone for open plan areas to maximise natural light and outlook.

7.0 Application of design principles to spaces

7.1 General layout zones

The contemporary workplace provides a choice of settings to suit the task at hand; it provides spaces to connect, focus, meet, and collaborate (see floor plan below). Providing a choice of settings, empowers employees to choose the optimal setting for the work they need to do. 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.

Designing zones around similar acoustic amenity means that built components can be minimised, with full height partitioning only being needed for high focus areas. A reduction in fixed, built elements means that changing requirements, such as machinery-of-Government impacts, can be responded to without the cost, disruption and waste of demolition and construction.

Example of a layout with functional zones:

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.

7.2 Work setting alternatives

The following work settings and related practices support a contemporary, zoned layout as described above.

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.

Flexible Collaborative Settings

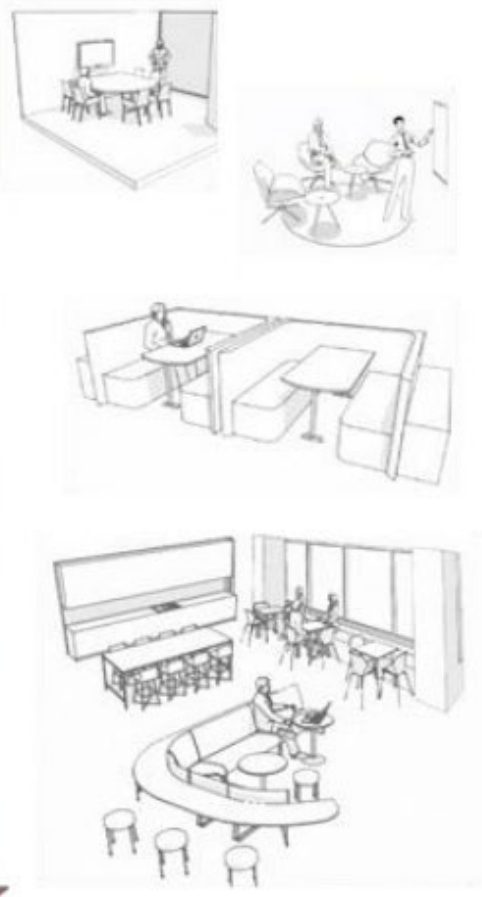
A variety of options are recommended, to suit a range of acoustic, equipment and technology needs for group tasks.

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).

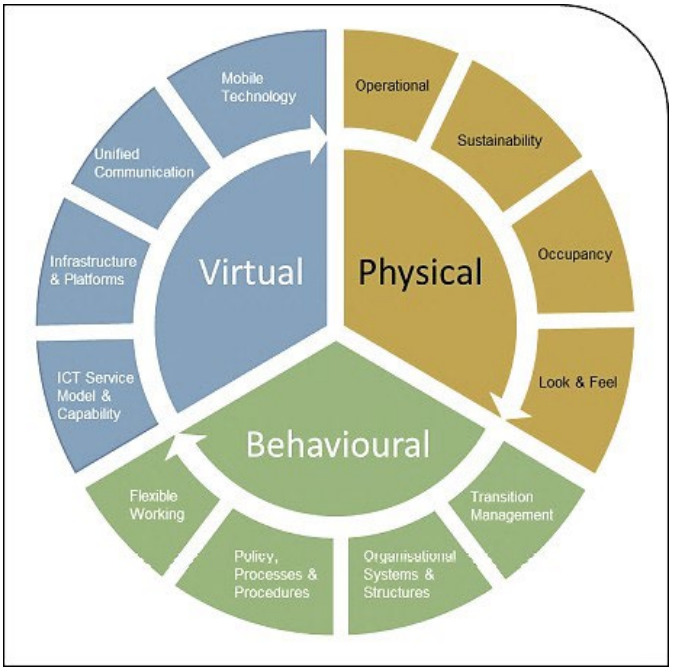


7.3 Changing to new workplace styles

The success of new types of functional layouts and work settings, is contingent upon the provision of:

- Effective supporting technology
- Appropriate acoustic privacy
- Educating users on how these spaces can be used to their advantage.

It is important, when implementing work practices that are significantly different, to implement a well-considered change management strategy. This should encompass the virtual, physical, and behavioural factors that impact staff individually and as a collective (see diagram at right).



Transition to this type of workspace should be in line with the pace of the organisations change and if existing practices need to continue, fitouts should be designed to be adaptable to these future opportunities. For any significant change, it is recommended that agencies engage professional designers and change managers with experience in new ways of working. (For more information refer to the OAMF Practice Note - *Churn and Change Management*.)

7.4 Enclosed offices

Enclosed offices are not supported in office fitouts, except for Director's-General and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). This is due to the costs and sustainability impacts of constructing walls and then potentially demolishing and rebuilding them in response to organisational change. If an individual office is deemed operationally necessary, after all open plan arrangements have been considered, agencies are to provide QGAO with authorisation from their Directors-General or CEO, who are accountable for this decision.

The size of offices is to be interchangeable with enclosed meeting room sizes to minimise the cost of future change of use of the room. Electrical and mechanical fitout is to accommodate the specifications of the associated meeting room capacity.

7.5 Conference, meeting and training rooms

Large conference rooms should only be provided within an office tenancy, if used frequently enough to offer better value than hiring external facilities as needed. Strategies to maximise the use of large conference and training rooms should be considered, including designing them to enable:

- multipurpose functionality
- subdivision into smaller spaces for alternate uses
- sharing within an agency and with other agencies.

If it is demonstrated that value can be achieved from providing these facilities within a tenancy, the recommended maximum areas are:

- 15m^2 for an 8 person meeting room
- 25m^2 for a 12 person conference room
- 32m^2 for an 18 person conference room

Large, specialised training rooms must be consistent with the intent of these guidelines and be formally approved by the requesting agency's CEO or Director-general.

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. These areas are to be included in calculating overall workplace density to achieve the benchmark target.

7.6 Ensuites, bathrooms, and toilets

New ensuites, bathrooms or toilets should not be constructed in office fitouts except under specific circumstances. In these cases, QGAO and building owner approvals must be sought prior.

Examples of where it may be acceptable to install additional facilities are:

- to increase floor density or other compliance reasons
- there are employees or visitors requiring non-binary facilities
- there are employees or visitors with physical requirements not met by existing facilities
- probation and parole reporting offices.

7.7 Kitchenettes

Due to the high cost and inflexibility of these facilities, kitchenettes involving wet points (water supply and drainage) should be restricted to lunchrooms or servicing large multi-agency conference rooms.

7.8 Lunchrooms

Larger lunch areas are supported if they have multi-purpose amenity and can be used for meetings, workshops, training sessions or other work activities.

- 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.

7.9 Support space

To make the most of these spaces, the design should consider opportunities for multipurpose amenity as well as for sharing these facilities with other agencies to reduce duplication and waste.

Utility, filing and mail processing areas. Consider minimising these areas and designing them to be readily converted to other uses in the future as paper usage reduces.

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 adapt to emerging technology and new ways of delivering services. These should be shared with other agencies where practical.

Sick rooms, breast-feeding rooms, wellness rooms and prayer rooms can be included in fitouts when not provided as part of the base building design and are to be designed to meet relevant legislative requirements, and cultural requirements.

Reception, waiting and display areas. Consider whether they are required. If so, these areas should be compact, functional and shared whenever possible.

Reference libraries should be limited to items that are required for day-to-day operations. Archival materials or rarely used references should be stored off site.

Circulation space must be consistent with fire safety and anti-discrimination legislation and consider any performance solutions that may be in place for the overall building. Any change to the office layout that affects the designated fire safety circulation must obtain *Building Act* approval and expert advice must be obtained before any such changes are considered. Total circulation space is usually 30 to 35 per cent of the net lettable area.

7.10 Special purpose areas for non-administrative functions

Before planning to use an office building for any non-administrative functions:

- advice should be sought from DHPW
- the building classification must be checked to ensure that the proposed activity is compliant
- building owner should be consulted.

In some cases, the Agency's Director-General or CEO must formally endorse the inclusion of these spaces

The types of activities that are usually acceptable are those not requiring highly specialised fitout such as clinical consultation or counselling rooms.

Activities that may not be acceptable involve the storage of non-administrative items or the running of equipment. This is due to potential health and safety risks (e.g. create fumes or noise) and/or the risk of damage to the building. Facilities such as photographic darkrooms, biological storage, laboratories, and printing shops are usually not suitable for office buildings.

8.0 Workspace privacy

Both visual and acoustic privacy should be considered in a workplace for focus areas. A balance is required between meeting confidentiality requirements and providing opportunities for collaboration. A zoned layout design (See Section 7, above), as well as appropriate materials and finishes can be employed to achieve this.

Visual privacy (lines of sight) can be managed through layout design and barriers in the form of partitions, screens, furniture elements and landscaping.

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 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) so that they are not distracting.

9.0 Finishes, fixtures and fittings

9.1 General

All finishes, fixtures and fittings within a government office fitout should:

- **Achieve value for money** not only in terms of the initial expenditure but in relation to: operating and maintenance, durability and the ability to be adapted rather than replaced. For more information see *Section 13.0 – Value Management.*
- **Consider sustainability** in the production and delivery of the components, their longevity and their capacity to be reused or recycled at end of life. See *Section 16.0 – Ecological Sustainability*.
- **Align with community expectations and perceptions**. Ensure that the fitout quality and amenity would be generally considered to be of an appropriate standard for government office space.
- **Maximise local or Australian content** in line with government procurement policy.

9.2 Partitions (built walls)

Where partitions are deemed a functional necessity (see *Sections 8.1 General Layout* and *8.4 Enclosed offices*), they should be constructed from standard 64mm steel studs with a single layer of taped and set plasterboard on each side with a painted finish. Complex partition detailing and special finishes should be avoided.

To avoid unnecessary costs:

- Acoustically treated partitions should be used only for conference, meeting, and hearing rooms, and offices where sound containment is an important business requirement.
- Glazed partitions should only be considered for rooms that require light transmission, visual awareness or have a supervisory function.

9.3 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 such security, otherwise, latch sets should be used for economy.

9.4 Ceilings

A modular suspended ceiling will normally be in place as part of the base building. To avoid cost and waste, the existing ceiling should only be modified if functionally necessary. Plasterboard ceilings and bulkheads are not supported as they costly to install and to remove when the tenancy is vacated, as is modifying air conditioning services to suit.

9.5 Flooring

The floor finishes provided by the building's owner is best retained wherever possible to minimize cost. Exceptions may be areas requiring special finishes due to functional needs (e.g., kitchenettes, equipment rooms, improved contrast for diversity and inclusion needs). If custom floor finishes are deemed necessary, they require approval by the agency's Director- General or CEO.

9.6 Lighting

- The building's standard lighting system should be used, but the number of fittings and their 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.

10.0 Furniture

10.1 General

- 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 may require furniture customisation and/or purchasing of special equipment.
- Existing furniture should be reused unless it is functionally obsolete or is uneconomical to refurbish or adapt to new uses.
- When new items are required, they should be selected based on economy, durability and sustainability and meet the Queensland Procurement policies and guidelines.
- Imported materials and products must not be used if an equivalent is manufactured in Australia.

10.2 Chairs

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

10.3 Workstations

- 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 better able to achieve this than integrated systems that incur more cost and disruption when they need to be rearranged.
- Desks between 1500mm and 1800mm long will be sufficient for most office-based activities.
- When planning new office fit-outs, it is recommended to prioritise the inclusion of sit-to-stand desks over static desks.
  - Given the minimal cost difference between sit-to-stand and static desks, adopting 100% sit-to-stand desks is the preferred standard.
  - This approach not only supports employee health and well-being by promoting ergonomic flexibility but also ensures equity in workplace design.
- Enclosing groups of workstations within rooms should be avoided because it limits the ability to cost effectively adapt to changing team sizes. It also creates barriers to effective team communication.
- If necessary, workstations may be enclosed using screens to a maximum height of 1,200mm. These will achieve visual privacy for seated work but not impede the flow of light or vision when standing.

10.4 Storage furniture

The extent of storage in commercial office space should be kept to a minimum by implementing paperless or paper-lite practices where practical. This not only reduces the space needed for paper but for all the associated stationery items. See information on filing and storage in Section 8.9 Support spaces.

Where it is necessary to have larger volumes of centralised storage within a tenancy, compactus units can be efficient and cost-effective, however, these benefits should be weighed against the following:

- Floor loading needs to be checked by a structural engineer, prior to installation, which will incur costs.

- Specialist removalists will be required, at the tenant's expense, when the tenancy is vacated (unless otherwise agreed).

11.0 Equipment

11.1 Building equipment

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

New or altered layouts may require modifications or additions to the above building infrastructure to suit the configuration, particularly when there are changes to full height partitions. These changes form part of a fitout project and components may need to be reinstated or removed at the end of the tenancy (unless otherwise agreed by the landlord).

Secondary cabling (from the primary connection point to the wall/floor outlet or socket), for information technology and communications, also 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 infrastructure that is part of a fitout project. The make good of building services, however, is funded by the vacating agency.

11.2 Office equipment

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

The relocation of existing equipment may be included in an Office Accommodation Program (OAP) funded project provided there is no conflict with warranty conditions or service contracts. Costs for technical personnel to set up or reconfigure office equipment during or after relocation is the responsibility of the tenant agency.

12.0 Value management

12.1 Project delivery savings

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

12.2 Design for savings

Government organisations frequently experience significant change due to the Machinery of Government and, the need to remain agile to respond to new government initiatives. Significant savings can be made by designing fitouts that are able to accommodate this inevitable change with minimal cost and business disruption.

Refer to *Sections 7.0 – Design principles and 8.0 – Application of design principles to spaces*, within this guide as well as the *Practice Note - Management of office churn and change* within *Guideline 4: Occupancy.*

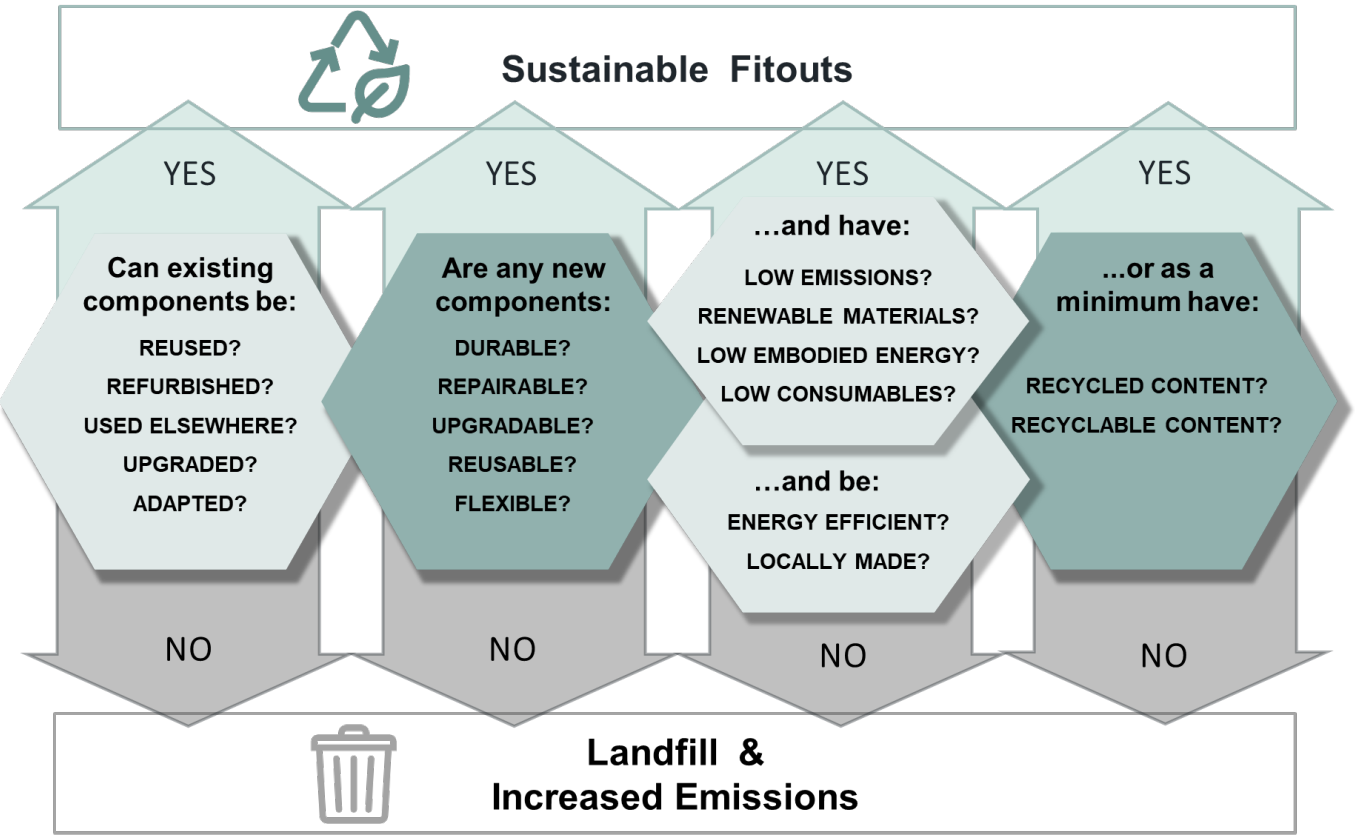
13.0 Ecological sustainability

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 make decisions that prioritise outcomes with low environmental impact. It ranges from the best case of reusing existing fittings to the worst case of new fittings with no recycled, reusable or recyclable content.

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.

13.1 Sustainable fitout guide



For more on sustainable office fitouts refer to the OAMF on ForGov at:
https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/property-land-and-infrastructure/manage-government-buildings-and-assets/office-accommodation-management-framework/guideline-4-occupancy/8.-sustainability