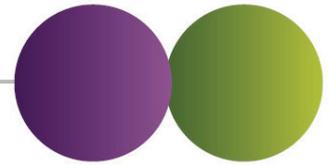


# **Government Office Accommodation**

## **Standards**

**March 2018**



## **Enquiries**

### **Government Office Accommodation**

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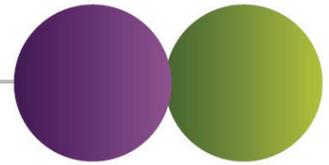
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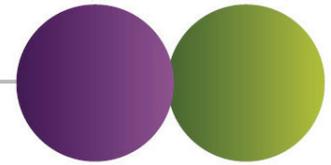
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## **CONTEXT**

Consistent with the key principles of the Government Office Accommodation Policy (the policy), the Department of Finance has developed the Government Office Accommodation Standards (the Standards) to define best practice in the procurement and management of office accommodation, which will assist agencies in achieving value-for-money and sustainable outcomes.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Standards is to set out requirements, benchmarks and guidelines to assist agencies with planning and establishing office accommodation, acquiring and fitting out suitable office space, and utilising and maintaining the space effectively.

## **DEFINITION**

Government office accommodation is the space used to accommodate staff who deliver government services by performing functions classified as executive, administrative or clerical.

Government office accommodation can be located in either leased or government-owned buildings.

## **AUTHORITY**

On 28 September 2017, the revised Standards were endorsed by the Government Office Accommodation Steering Committee.

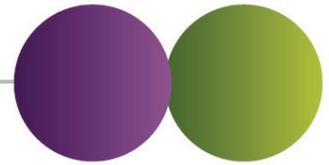
## **SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

In accordance with the policy, the Standards apply to government office accommodation occupied by all general government agencies.

The Department of Finance encourages all other agencies to adopt the Standards to assist in achieving best practice and value-for-money in the management of their office accommodation.

The Standards do not apply to agency specific operational facilities, such as hospitals, schools or police stations. However, the Standards apply to the office accommodation within these facilities.

The Standards do not apply to parliamentary electorate offices and ministerial office suites, which are managed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.



## SECTION 1: PLANNING FUTURE WORKSPACE

Office accommodation is one of the largest operating expenses incurred by agencies. Therefore, it is of utmost importance this significant financial commitment is carefully managed to maximise funds available for the delivery of core services of government as a whole and of each agency.

### **Standard 1.1: whole of government planning**

Strategic office accommodation planning is guided by the Department of Treasury's *Strategic Asset Management Framework* and the related office accommodation planning module. The shared objective is to ensure agencies' corporate and strategic asset planning and whole of government planning are aligned to efficiently and cost effectively deliver high quality services to the public.

To ensure effective whole of government planning, the Department of Finance requires agencies to complete an annual 10-year strategic office accommodation plan survey for each owned or leased premises.

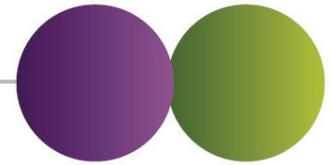
Agencies are required to provide information on all office buildings and operational facilities where a portion of the premises is used for office accommodation and could be used by other staff from the same, or a compatible, agency. The Department of Finance uses the information provided to inform whole of government<sup>1</sup> planning and ensure the optimal use of existing government assets.

Agencies will be required to carry out a utilisation survey before the procurement of new premises, or a major fit out renewal. Utilisation surveys are used to determine agencies' actual use of current space and challenge assumptions about future needs.

The Department of Finance also works with agencies in the development of funding submissions for individual agencies' future office accommodation and takes the lead in the preparation of whole of government funding submissions, particularly for multi-agency accommodation.

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<sup>1</sup> Whole-of-government approach to the management of office accommodation portfolio also applies to office space that may be part of an operational facility, such as medical clinics, schools, warehouses or depots.



## SECTION 2: PROCUREMENT OF WORKSPACE

The Department of Finance manages the procurement of office accommodation on behalf of the Government. This includes the evaluation of available options and application of open and transparent procurement processes, to ensure best use and value for money are achieved across the portfolio.

### **Standard 2.1: environmentally sustainable designed base buildings and tenancies**

Any leased space above 1,000 sqm in new buildings and developments with a term over two years, will be procured with the following sustainability rating targets:

- Green Star<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Star Design and As Built for new buildings
- 4 Star Design and As Built for existing buildings<sup>3</sup>
- National Australian Built Environment Reporting System (NABERS)<sup>4</sup>
- 4.5 Star Energy rating for new and existing buildings
- 4 Star Water rating for new and existing buildings.

In existing buildings, it is desirable that new leases be procured in accordance with the above sustainability target ratings. However, it is recognised existing buildings cannot always achieve these targets.

Achievement of the above sustainability ratings can be supported by:

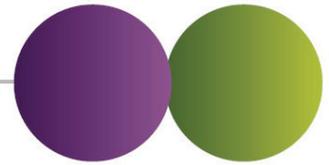
- certified ratings
- a NABERS commitment agreement
- sufficient documentation demonstrating equivalency to the rating requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> Green Star is a comprehensive, national, voluntary environmental rating system that evaluates the environmental design and construction of buildings and communities. Green Star Design and As Built were released in October 2014.

<sup>3</sup> A 4 Star Performance rating can be sought for projects that did not previously receive a rating.

<sup>4</sup> National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) is a government initiative to measure and compare the environmental performance of a building. Under this rating tool a 5 Star rating signifies 'Excellent Performance' and a 4 Star rating signifies 'Good Performance'. NABERS applies to base build and tenancy performances.



## **Standard 2.2: lease incentive**

If leased space is procured, any negotiated lease incentives will be managed by the Department of Finance. The lease incentive may be used to fund any fit-out required, applied against the rent payable or returned to the Consolidated Account.

## **Standard 2.3: environmentally sustainable designed fit outs**

New fitouts for office accommodation over 1,000 sqm in size should be procured with the following target sustainability ratings:

- a 5 star Green Star Office Interiors v1.1
- a minimum of 4.5 Star NABERS Energy Tenancy.

Agencies must contact the Department of Finance for consideration of exemptions to these requirements.

## **Standard 2.4: acquisition of fit out**

Under the policy, the Department of Finance is responsible for the procurement of fit out works in accordance with approved business cases and project definition plans. Fit outs valued at \$100,000<sup>5</sup> or greater will require the approval of the agency's responsible minister.

The Department of Finance, in conjunction with agencies, will determine an appropriate scope, quality and cost for fit out. This will be based on whole of life value for money outcomes including the estimated life of the asset, length of tenure, location, agency operational needs and minimization of maintenance.

The Department of Finance will review and approve plans to ensure the fit out proposal meets the policy and Standards. It is the agency's responsibility to prepare and submit a fit out proposal, including the identification of any special operational requirements in sufficient time to gain approval before the design is finalised.

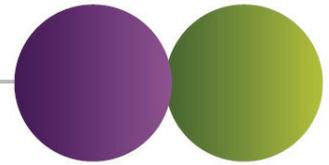
## **Standard 2.5: universal access**

The requirements of people with disabilities, as both employees and clients, will be considered and addressed in accordance with the *Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the *Disability Standards AS1428 (2012)* and the *National Construction Code*.

The percentage of ACROD bays in a car park, as specified by the National Construction Code, is dependent on the class of the building.

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<sup>5</sup>This is the total project cost



It is at the discretion of chief executive officers (CEOs) to determine the allocation of these ACROD car bays. Subject to availability and funding, CEOs may provide additional priority parking to ACROD permit holders.

Agencies should contact the Department of Communities' Disability Services to ensure they are fully aware of their obligations for people with disabilities, and office accommodation is considered in the preparation of their disability access and inclusion plans.

### **Standard 2.6: car parking bay allocation**

Car bays within commercial premises are often limited and usually allocated according to the size of the tenancy (for example, the net lettable area leased dictates the number of bays available). For this reason, it will not always be possible to accommodate all vehicles.

Subject to the availability<sup>6</sup> of car bays and funding, the agency's CEO may make car bays available for government-owned or leased vehicles. Any surplus car bays may be allocated in accordance with individual agency policy.

### **Standard 2.7: bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities**

Office accommodation should include bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities, including showers, change rooms and storage facilities. When planning for bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities, the following minimum provisions<sup>7</sup> should be considered:

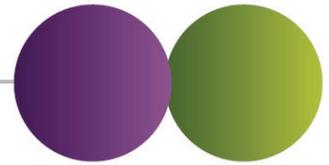
- secure bicycle storage space (1:200 sqm per gross floor area<sup>8</sup>)
- accessible showers and change facilities (1:10 bicycle storage spaces or part thereof)
- personal storage facilities for each bicycle storage space.

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<sup>6</sup>The number of car bays allocated to agencies is based on the proportion of net lettable area the agency occupies in a building.

<sup>7</sup>Aligns with Green Star Design and As Built 2014: Active Transport Facilities.

<sup>8</sup>Austrroads' publication – Cycling Aspects of Austrroads Guides. Section 11 Bicycle Parking and end-of-trip Facilities.



## **SECTION 3: WORKSPACE DESIGN AND EFFICIENCY**

Government workspace should be flexible and able to adapt to changes in work practices and technology, while supporting agencies' key activities.

### **Standard 3.1: office designs**

Advances in information technology and evolving ways of working are shaping the workspace of the future. The following elements should be incorporated in the design of new workspace:

- efficiency
- flexibility
- functionality
- social interaction
- communication.

The traditional cellular office layout is being replaced by open plan layouts and the use of flexible workstation furniture to enhance communication between staff, improve efficiency and productivity and enable organisational change.

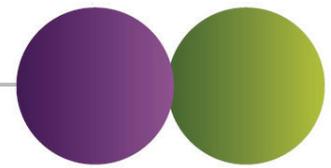
#### **Open plan**

Open plan design is a widely accepted modern interior design philosophy. An open plan environment promotes the easy flow of communication and knowledge sharing, and it accommodates different ways of working such as autonomous, individual work, to collaborative work based on the immediate exchange of information and quick decision-making. Meeting rooms and collaboration or breakout areas, or even shared kitchen spaces, promote flexible meeting opportunities. Flexibility is a key feature of this design and the removal of physical walls and large storage areas will allow for the adaptable use of space.

#### **Activity based workplace**

Supported by enabling technologies and business practices, an agile, flexible or activity based workplace design enhances collaboration and can improve productivity. These designs and practices will also ensure the workplace is scalable to meet future agency growth or contraction and avoid the need to procure additional, or dispose of surplus space.

The Department of Finance will work closely with agencies to explore opportunities to adopt more flexible workplace designs that deliver benefits to staff as well as potential reductions in area and cost.



### Standard 3.2: workpoint to person ratio

At the time of procurement and/or the fit-out of new workspaces, no more than one workpoint per person will be provided.

The number of people will be based on the headcount figure<sup>9</sup> reported by the agency as per the Public Sector Commission Commissioner's Instructions No. 6 workforce data reporting obligations.

### Standard 3.3: workspace density benchmark

To achieve the value-for-money principle in office accommodation, the Government has set an office accommodation workspace density benchmark of 13 sqm per workpoint or below, across the total net lettable area<sup>10</sup> of each tenancy<sup>11</sup>, excluding special operational requirement areas<sup>12</sup>. This benchmark applies to the procurement of new office accommodation or to fit-out works in both new and existing premises<sup>13</sup>.

$$\text{workspace density} = \frac{\text{total net lettable area minus special operational requirement areas}}{\text{total number of workpoints minus workpoints in special operational requirement areas}}$$

The 13 sqm per workpoint density target may not always be achieved. Where an accountable authority believes exceptional circumstances exist that will impact on that agency's ability to meet the requirements of the policy or associated standards, sufficient justification must be documented and submitted to the Department of Finance for consideration.

The Department of Finance will work with the agency, in consultation with design professionals, to ensure the area allocated in the workspace meets the agency's functional requirements.

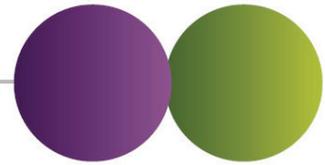
<sup>9</sup>This refers to the number of employees that are paid directly by the entity (for example, on the entity's payroll). Please refer to the inclusions and exclusions in the Human Resource Minimum Obligatory Information Requirement Data Definitions, available from the Public Sector Commission website.

<sup>10</sup>The net lettable area is the floor space that may be rented to tenants, upon which rental payments are based and is measured in accordance with the Property Council of Australia: Method of Measurement for Lettable Area.

<sup>11</sup>A tenancy can consist of a part floor, a whole floor or several floors of a building.

<sup>12</sup>The total net lettable areas is the aggregation of all the floor space that the tenant occupies in the building and includes individual workspaces (in either open plan or enclosed spaces) or support workspaces.

<sup>13</sup>The total number of workpoints includes the number of workpoints in open plan and enclosed offices. The number of workpoints in special operational requirement areas is excluded from the workspace density calculation. A workpoint includes a desk in open plan or an enclosed office or section of a counter or reception at which it would be reasonable to expect one person to carry out ongoing office work.



## **Special operational requirement area**

Special operational requirement (SOR) areas accommodate and support an agency specific operational requirement. These areas are deducted from the calculation of the workspace density of the tenancy.

SOR areas include, but are not limited to:

- operational or agency specific requirement areas (for example, laboratories, tribunal and hearing rooms, publication and printing rooms)
- general public areas of an operational nature (for example, press conference and media rooms, public galleries, training rooms used to facilitate external training programs, client interview rooms and customer service areas, such as licensing centres, retail counters and associated public reception and waiting rooms)
- storage areas for non-standard office items and long-term onsite storage as required by legislation (for example, armoury, marine research equipment and publications for sale).

Special types of office accommodation, such as call centres, are not considered special operational requirement areas and are therefore included in the calculation of the workspace density.

Agencies should discuss the classification of SOR areas with the Department of Finance.

### **Note:**

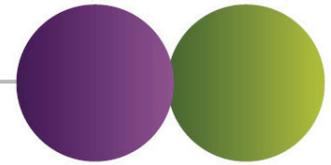
Agencies that adopt a workspace design that outperforms the two workspace benchmarks (Standards 3.2 and 3.3) will be eligible for an incentive, under a scheme approved by the Treasurer. The extent of this incentive will be determined in consultation with the Departments of Finance and Treasury.

## **Standard 3.4: enclosed workspaces**

### **Enclosed offices**

Enclosed offices are rarely needed for the best service delivery outcomes or value-for-money for agencies.

Open plan design should be maximised, and enclosed offices provided only where an officer's function requires an exceptionally high level of privacy and confidentiality and must be continually protected from the unauthorised presence of other officers in the same organisation.



Enclosed offices may also be provided for officers of the following classification:

Officer classification <sup>14</sup>	Maximum office size
Chief Executive Officer	30 sqm
Senior Executive Service (SES) Officer –Class 1 and above	12 sqm

Most executive officers' roles require significant interaction with staff, colleagues and other stakeholders. If they do occupy an enclosed office, it should be located in close proximity to meeting rooms.

A CEO may be provided with a six person meeting table in their enclosed office, if required. Where an officer's role requires a degree of confidentiality, or includes the management of staff, agencies will need to explore value-for-money alternatives, such as:

- the provision of confidential meeting rooms
- the provision of secure storage
- locating officers with a higher need for confidentiality in areas with limited foot traffic.

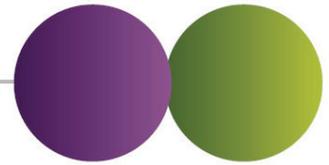
The Department of Finance will work with agencies to identify and manage possible exceptional circumstances in accordance with the policy application guidelines where agencies are proposing to accommodate other officers in enclosed offices.

### **Acoustic comfort**

Acoustic comfort is an important element in any office accommodation. When designing a workspace, the impact of acoustic ratings on the functionality of the space should be considered and adjusted to meet the agency's requirements. Effective workspace designs need to coordinate ambient noise controls with appropriate internal surfaces and office joinery in conjunction with unique workspace layouts and staff groupings.

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<sup>14</sup>Officer classification in accordance with the Public Service and Government Officers General Agreement (PSGOGA). Officer classifications under other awards and agreements used in the Western Australian Public Sector will be considered in line with the PSGOGA officer classification based on the strategic function of the role, not salary.



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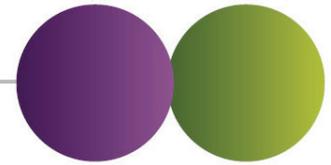
Privacy requirements<sup>15</sup> are classified as:

- normal
- confidential
- sensitive.

The majority of meeting rooms should target the normal privacy requirement level. Enclosed workspace and meeting rooms will be built to meet the normal privacy requirement. Where agencies have other privacy requirements, this will need to be agreed with the Department of Finance.

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<sup>15</sup>Privacy requirements and ratings report prepared by Herring Storer Acoustics (2012).



## **SECTION 4: OCCUPANCY AND BEYOND**

### **Standard 4.1: sustainable practice**

In accordance with the Government Office Accommodation Policy Principle 6: sustainability, agencies are encouraged to maintain and improve the sustainability of their tenancies by:

- developing strategies to reduce energy consumption, costs and emissions, including monitoring and obtaining their NABERS energy tenancy rating and procuring the highest energy star rating computers, printers and appliances
- developing strategies to minimise water consumption
- developing waste management practices to minimise waste and encourage recycling
- participating in sustainable transport by developing and implementing workplace travel plans.

### **Standard 4.2: occupancy reviews**

In accordance with Government Office Accommodation Policy Principle 5: value-for-money, the Department of Finance may conduct occupancy reviews 6-12 months before and after the completion of office accommodation projects over 1,000 sqm. These timeframes are considered sufficient for occupants to become accustomed to their new surroundings and new ways of working.

A follow-up review may be required to establish if occupants' perceptions have changed after becoming more familiar with the accommodation.