Australasian Health Facility Guidelines Variations Process

Summary This updated policy is to outline the process for documentation and endorsement of project specific variations to AusHFG.

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Audience Area Executive, Asset Management, Capital Works

Secretary, NSW Health
This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is mandatory for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.
AUSTRALASIAN HEALTH FACILITY GUIDELINES VARIATIONS PROCESS

PURPOSE

It is NSW Health policy that the components contained in the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines (AusHFG) are used to inform the planning and design of new and refurbished facilities. NSW Health GL2018_024 Australasian Health Facility Guidelines – Use in NSW describes how the AusHFG are to be applied to capital developments in NSW.

This policy details the process for:
- Identifying where NSW capital projects deviate or vary from the AusHFG (these deviations are known as variations);
- Classifying the variation as minor, major or material; and
- Submitting a variation request and the associated governance arrangements.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The NSW Health Facility Guidelines Variations Process is to be followed for project specific changes to the AusHFG. Clearly documented justification and appropriate sign off consistent with individual project governance arrangements are required.

A variation is described as:
- A change in the square metres allocated to a room;
- A change to the engineering services;
- A change to fittings, fixtures, furniture and/or joinery; and/or
- A change to the circulation or travel and engineering (T&E) allocation.

Variations are categorised as minor, major and material.

A minor variation is considered to be a change to the area or fit-out that does not affect the intended clinical and/or operational function of the room. These changes might include:
- Relocation or substitution of furniture/ fixtures within a standard component; and
- Spatial variations to a standard component of less than 10%.

A major variation to the AusHFG is considered to be a change that does affect the intended clinical and/or operational function of the room or related functional spaces. These changes include:
- Introduction of an additional room/area not specified in the relevant AusHFG Health Planning Unit (HPU);
- Removal of a room/area specified in the relevant AusHFG Health Planning Unit;
- Spatial variations of more than 10% in comparison to the relevant recommended AusHFG room size;
- Inclusion of an additional major FFE item or engineering service not specified on the Room Data Sheet (RDS) for a standard component;
- Exclusion of any major FFE item or engineering service not specified as optional on the Room Data Sheet (RDS) for a standard component; and
- Non-conformance with a key recommendation of the AusHFG in relation to access, safety, security and infection prevention and control.

A **material deviation** is a variation that has an impact on the budget, service scope and/or program, or is likely to impact on the guidelines and/or is applicable to other projects (i.e. not project specific).

Variations relating to the briefed allocation or measured design area of intra-departmental **circulation or travel and engineering (T&E)**, in comparison to the recommended allowances included in the AusHFG (Part C), should be managed at the project level. The Planning & Development Committee (PDC) or Project Control Group (PCG) is responsible for the endorsement of any proposed variations to briefed allowances and for advising corrective actions for deviations in the design from the briefed allowance.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The process for submitting AusHFG variation requests in NSW is detailed in Figure 1 of Attachment 1: Procedures. The ‘Request Form for Major/Material Variation to the AusHFG’ can be found in Appendix 1 of Attachment 1: Procedures.

Variation requests should be submitted as early as possible during the planning and design process, ideally in parallel with development of the business case, so that the outcomes of the variation request, including any impact on scope, capital and recurrent cost and program, can be incorporated.

**REVISION HISTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Amendment notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2018 (PD2018_041)</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary</td>
<td>Updates to the governance arrangements and terminology associated with the AusHFG and NSW Health Process of Facility Planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2009 (PD2009_035)</td>
<td>Deputy Director – General Health System Support</td>
<td>New Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Australasian Health Facility Guidelines Variations Process: Procedures
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1 BACKGROUND

It is NSW Health policy that the components contained in the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines (AusHFG) are used to inform the planning and design of new and refurbished facilities. NSW Health GL2018_024 Australasian Health Facility Guidelines – Use in NSW describes how the AusHFG are to be applied to capital developments in NSW.

This policy details the process for:
- Identifying where NSW capital projects deviate or vary from the AusHFG (these deviations are known as variations);
- Classifying the variation as minor, major or material; and
- Submitting a variation request and the associated governance arrangements.

2 DEFINING VARIATIONS

As the planning and design process progresses for new or refurbished facilities, requirements may vary from those detailed within the AusHFG. This is referred to as a variation.

A variation is described as:
- A change in the square metres allocated to a room;
- A change to the engineering services;
- A change to fittings, fixtures, furniture and/or joinery; and/or
- A change to the circulation or travel and engineering (T&E) allocation.

Variations are categorised as minor, major and material.

A **minor variation** is considered to be a change to the area or fit-out that does not affect the intended clinical and/or operational function of the room. These changes might include:
- Relocation or substitution of furniture/ fixtures within a standard component; and
- Spatial variations to a standard component of less than 10%.

A **major variation** to the AusHFG is considered to be a change that does affect the intended clinical and/or operational function of the room or related functional spaces. These changes include:
- Introduction of an additional room/area not specified in the relevant AusHFG Health Planning Unit (HPU);
- Removal of a room/area specified in the relevant AusHFG Health Planning Unit;
- Spatial variations of more than 10% in comparison to the relevant recommended AusHFG room size;
- Inclusion of an additional major FFE item or engineering service not specified on the Room Data Sheet (RDS) for a standard component;
- Exclusion of any major FFE item or engineering service not specified as optional on the Room Data Sheet (RDS) for a standard component; and
- Non-conformance with a key recommendation of the AusHFG in relation to access, safety, security and infection prevention and control.
A material deviation is a variation that has an impact on the budget, service scope and/or program, or is likely to impact on the guidelines and/or is applicable to other projects (i.e. not project specific).

Variations relating to the briefed allocation or measured design area of intra-departmental circulation or travel and engineering (T&E), in comparison to the recommended allowances included in the AusHFG (Part C), should be managed at the project level. The Planning & Development Committee (PDC) or Project Control Group (PCG) is responsible for the endorsement of any proposed variations to briefed allowances and for advising corrective actions for deviations in the design from the briefed allowance.

Not all design changes are variations. The following changes do not need to be noted as AusHFG variations:

- The inclusion of a room or item noted as optional in the AusHFG (e.g. optional WC, optional chair, optional gas outlet), subject to its inclusion being appropriate to the service level of the facility.
- The inclusion of engineering items not typically identified in the AusHFG standard components (e.g. thermostatic mixing valves, thermostats, backflow prevention devices etc.).
- Scaling of rooms where a room allowance is provided in the AusHFG, e.g. sizing of a sterile stock room in an Operating Unit based on the ‘per Operating Room’ allowance for these spaces in the AusHFG.
- Deletion of a room that the AusHFG notes can be shared with an adjacent department or unit (however this action should be documented in the project’s Schedule of Accommodation against the room that is retained).
- Area deviations and minor layout changes resulting from the constraints of existing space within a refurbishment, unless these have an impact on the clinical functionality of a room.
- Changes to reflect AusHFG updates published prior to the end of the project’s Schematic Development (Final Business Case) phase.
- Changes made as a result of NSW Health policy, to include Health Infrastructure standards, policies, guidelines and Design Guidance Notes, albeit the policy source should be noted in the project documentation.
- Changes made to enable compliance with the National Construction Code and relevant ISO or Australian/New Zealand Standards.

3 PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING A VARIATION

The table below describes the process to be followed for submitting AusHFG variation requests in NSW. The process is summarised in Figure 1 and the ‘Request Form for Major/Material Variation to the AusHFG’ can be found at Attachment 1.

Variation requests should be submitted as early as possible during the planning and design process, ideally in parallel with development of the business case, so that the outcomes of the variation request, including any impact on scope, capital and recurrent cost and program, can be incorporated.
### Table 1: Process for Submitting a Variation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Request for variation is generated</strong></td>
<td>The variation request should be logged by the Health Facility Planner or Architect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verify that the variation is aligned with the CSP, approved models of care and Business Case</strong></td>
<td>The Health Infrastructure Project Director should ensure that the request is evidence based and is aligned with the objectives of the Clinical Services Plan (CSP), approved models of care and Business Case before proceeding with the steps below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify the type of variation request and associated review and endorsement process</strong></td>
<td>Minor variations and all variations relating to circulation and travel and engineering are to be approved by the Planning &amp; Development Committee (PDC) or Project Control Group (PCG). The Executive Steering Committee, User Group and AusHFG Project Team is to be advised of the outcome by the Project Director/Manager. Major/material variation requests require review by the Executive Steering Committee (ESC). If the ESC supports the variation request the Project Team are required to complete the attached variation request template for submission to the AusHFG Steering Committee. The request must include a clear justification for the variation based on clinical and/or operational drivers, and assessment of capital and recurrent cost implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assess variation for project specificity, impact on budget, service scope and/or program</strong></td>
<td>The completed major/material variation request is to be submitted by the Project Director/Project Manager to the AusHFG Project Team. The AusHFG Project Team will assess the variation and if, after further analysis, the variation is deemed to be minor, the Team will refer the variation back to the Executive Steering Committee for approval. If the AusHFG Project Team assess that the variation request has implications for the relevant AusHFG, an impact on budget, service scope or program, the request will be forwarded to the NSW AusHFG Steering Committee for consideration. The AusHFG Project Team may request additional supporting information from external experts (e.g. infection prevention and control, work health and safety). Variation requests should be submitted as early as possible. Response by the AusHFG Steering Committee may take up to two months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variation review by NSW AusHFG Steering Committee</strong></td>
<td>The NSW AusHFG Steering Committee will review the variation and provide recommendations back to the ESC via the relevant Project Director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final review and direction by the Executive Steering Committee</strong></td>
<td>The ESC will formally approve or reject the variation request following consideration of the NSW AusHFG Steering Committee’s recommendations. The Project Director will then advise the User Group, other relevant governance committees and the AusHFG Project Team of the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor variations and advise NSW AusHFG Steering Committee and AHIA of trends</strong></td>
<td>The AusHFG Project Team will monitor all variations occurring within NSW and monitor trends. The AusHFG Project Team will provide advice to the AusHFG Steering Committee and the Australasian Health Infrastructure Alliance (AHIA) regarding a submission to consider a change to the relevant guideline or standard component when it is next updated. Variations affecting safety in design will be considered by the AusHFG Project Team as a matter of urgency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1 - NSW Health AusHFG Variation Process

Summary of NSW Health Facility Guidelines Variations Process:

Variation request is generated by User Group and logged by Health Facility Planner/Architect

Variation request is assessed by Project Team:

- **Circulation/ T&E Variation**: Departures from AusHFG Intra Departmental Circulation (DC) and/or Travel and Engineering (T&E) benchmarks.
- **Minor Variation**: Movement, relocation or substitution of items of fit out that do not affect intended function.
- **Major Variation**: Changes that affect intended function, e.g., introduction of non-service related spaces in the Schedule of Accommodation, variation in standard room size (+/- 10%), inclusion/exclusion of non-optional items.
- **Material Variation**: Changes that affect budget, service scope and/or programme, or may impact on the AusHFG/other projects.

Planning & Development Committee (PDC) assesses variation request:

- Note that the PDC transfers this responsibility to the Project Control Group (PCG) during the delivery stage.
- Minor Variations are accepted or rejected. PD advises User Group and AusHFG Project Team of outcomes.
- Project Team provides justification for IDC and T&E benchmark rate departures in the context of the project. PDC advises mitigation actions.

Executive Steering Committee (ESC) assesses variation request:

- If the Variation request is supported by the ESC, the PD and team use the template attached to back of PD2009_038 to prepare a Variation Request submission to the AusHFG Steering Committee.
- Supporting documentation including evidence and capital/recurrent cost information is required. Paperwork is submitted to the AusHFG Project Team.

AusHFG Project Team reviews Variation request submission:

- Further expert advice is sought as necessary.

NSW AusHFG Steering Committee assesses Variation request submission:

- Recommendations are made back to the ESC.

ESC determines Variation Request:

- Determination is made in the context of the NSW AusHFG Steering Committee recommendations. PD advises User Group, Governance Groups and AusHFG Project Team of outcomes.

The AusHFG Project Team uses information on variation requests provided by projects to assess trends and inform future revisions of the AusHFG.
## 4 ATTACHMENT 1

Request Form for Major/Material Variation to the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines

| **AUSTRALASIAN HEALTH FACILITY GUIDELINES AND RELATED SERVICES**  
| **REQUEST FOR MAJOR/ MATERIAL VARIATION** |
| SMRS No: |
| Local Health District: |
| Project Name: |
| Submitted by: |
| Project Status: |

**Component/ Item for Variation:** (e.g. Proposed change to spatial requirement or standard component. Include AusHFG document and where appropriate relevant clause number or reference)

**Variation applicability:** *(please tick)*
- [ ] This project only*
- [ ] For all Health projects (i.e. amendment to AusHFG)

Note: All requests for variations must be supported by *qualitative and quantitative* evidence.

**Principal Reason for Variation:**
*(Please provide summary here and detailed evidence in next section of form)*
COMPLETION OF THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS ESSENTIAL FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIATION REQUEST:
The following information must be provided for assessment of the requested variation:
*(please tick item supplied or issue addressed)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Please list supporting documentation provided:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. **Safety of patients, staff and community**

   **Please comment on how the proposed variation:**

   1.1 Improves the safety of patients, staff and community. Where relevant, this include a formal WHS and/or infection prevention & control assessment.

   *Evidence/justification:*

2. **Efficiency or effectiveness of service delivery**

   **Please comment on how the proposed variation:**

   2.1 Improves the efficiency or effectiveness of service delivery

   *Evidence/justification:*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Quality of service delivery</th>
<th>Please comment on how the proposed variation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1 Improves the quality of service delivery</td>
<td>Evidence/justification:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Quality of facility design</th>
<th>Please comment on how the proposed variation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1 Improves the design of the standard component/item (e.g. may improve flexibility of use/future proof/streamline construction of this facility).</td>
<td>Evidence/justification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Direct financial benefit</th>
<th>Please comment on if, how and to what extent the proposed variation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1 Impact of variation on the allocated capital budget (estimated cost variation for component/item of &gt; 10%)</td>
<td>Evidence/justification:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SUMMARY OF IMPACT OF PROPOSED VARIATION

Please address the potential for this variation to improve the quality of facility design and/or service delivery and provide details of all significant net time and cost impacts for this project.

Where a change to the AusHFG standard component/item is sought, please provide as much information as possible regarding the resulting impact of this variation on all future NSW Health projects should it be approved.

Where a variation is being requested for application in a specific project, please indicate how the financial impact on the project has been calculated and where this involves additional cost, indicate how this variation will be funded.

*Please attach additional pages as required.*

### IMPACT ON PROGRAM:

*Please comment on the impact of the variation on the project program.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of person co-ordinating variation:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Phone:</td>
<td>Email:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Group Chairperson:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signature:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Director:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
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<td>Signature:</td>
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<tr>
<td>LHD Chief Executive:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair Project Executive Steering Committee or Planning and Development Committee:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Signature:</td>
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</table>

**FOR NSW HEALTH USE ONLY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review initiated:</th>
<th>Review completed:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/____</td>
<td><em><strong>/</strong></em>/____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ Referred for advice to:  

___/___/____