



Building design in residential care



Residential care is a state-wide program in Victoria, Australia, which aims to provide a placement option for children and young people who cannot live with family, kinship carers or foster carers.

12 years

or older, up to
4 per home

24/7

support by
paid staff

~500

in residential care
at any given time

30%

Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

To ensure the design of residential care homes is evidence-based, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) contracted ISCRR to conduct research on the building design of residential care homes.

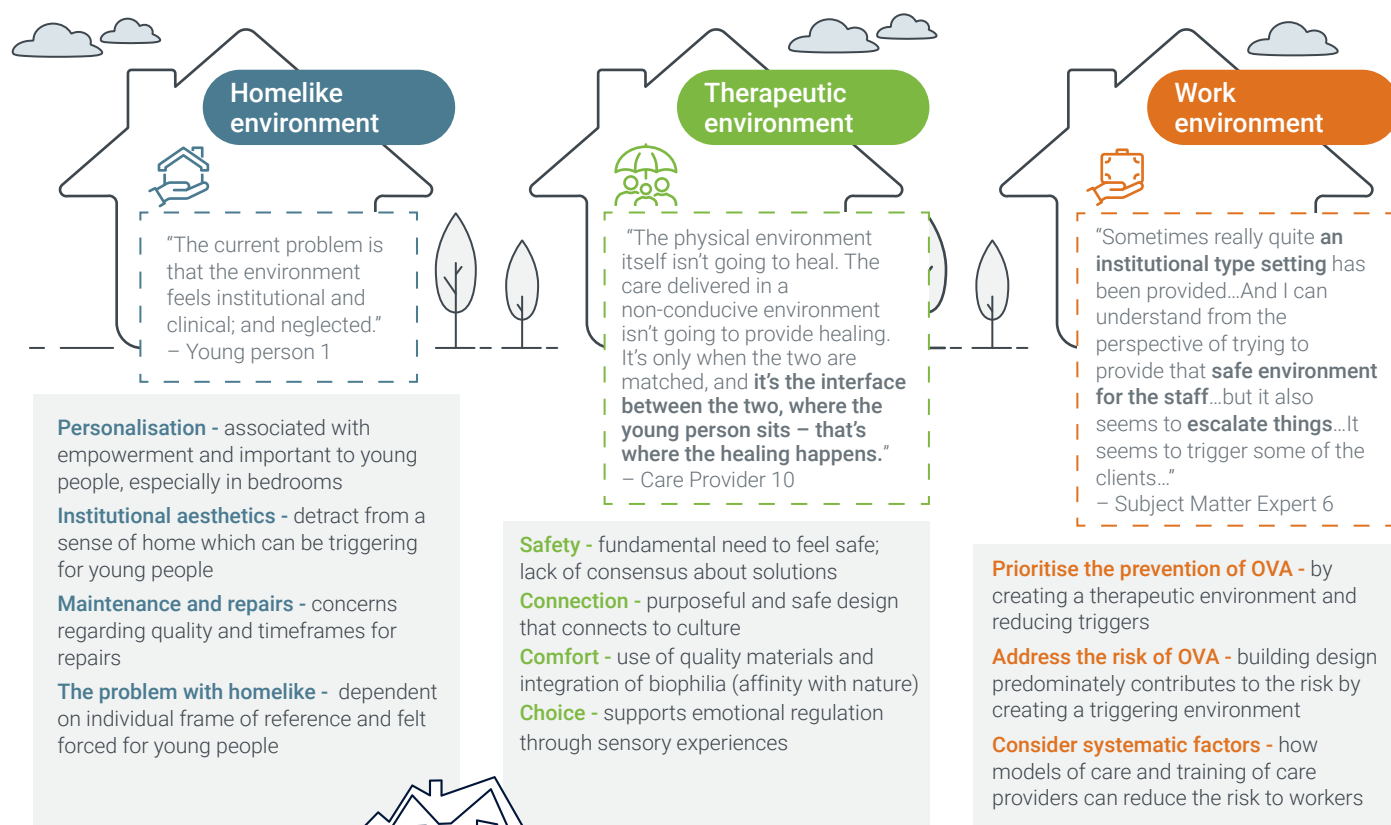
The research focussed on three design considerations that underpin the delivery of residential care:

1. **Providing a homelike environment**
2. **Providing a therapeutic environment**
3. **Providing a safe work environment**



Research involved a literature review of published academic and grey literature, and qualitative focus groups and interviews with three participant cohorts - young people with lived experience, care providers with lived experience, and subject matter experts (SMEs).

What did ISCRR find?



Key findings

Importance of designing for one environment with multiple functions

Homes to be considered as one environment where everything is interconnected.

Build on effective design solutions

Care providers and SMEs noted improvements in new builds and specific updates to existing builds - mostly focused on layout and the safe design of kitchens and communal areas.

Need for improved data and monitoring

Opportunity for greater embedding of data, monitoring and evaluation to support building design.

Benefits of the two-bedroom model

Reducing the number of young people per placement was associated with improved therapeutic outcomes and reduced risk of OVA.

Triggers in the built environment hinder therapeutic outcomes and contribute to OVA

Prioritising trauma-informed design could balance the competing functions and stakeholder preferences.

Design solutions

Various design solutions for the interior and exterior layout and fittings were identified.

Challenges and limitations

Literature review

Lack of replicable or scalable practice examples

Engaging young people

No young people with contemporary lived experience participated

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations

Could not be engaged within timeframes

Care providers

The majority of care providers had extensive experience but may not be representative of the population

SME = Subject Matter Expert

OVA = Occupational Violence and Aggression

Please contact ISCRR (info@iscrr.com.au) for more information regarding ISCRR Project 338 which informed this summary



ISCRR

Institute for Safety,
Compensation and
Recovery Research

A joint initiative of WorkSafe Victoria and Monash University