



‘Moving to modular’

How do you transform a very tired but fully-occupied multi-storey 49-year-old aged care facility to meet current market expectations, improve the overall amenity and create individual ensuites for each resident?

This was the dilemma faced by Grindley Interiors when they were engaged to undertake extensive renovations for ARV at Farrer Brown Court located in Castle Hill in New South Wales. The significant renovation scope included transforming a shared ensuite facility to a 136-single-room-ensuite offering, upgrading all community spaces and reconfiguring some administration and retail areas, all whilst minimising disruption to the daily activities of staff, residents and their families.

Part of the answer lay in modular innovation, says Andrew Sanderson, general manager of Grindley Interiors. In line with the architect’s design and specifications, a local bathroom pod manufacturer was engaged to construct 62 bespoke bathrooms pods offsite. The delivery of a prototype at the inception of the project allowed ARV’s operations team to resolve layout, dimensions and finishes in line with the project’s goals and budget. Importantly, it offered the opportunity for residents to experience the new ensuite and to provide feedback to the team, resulting in adjustments to the design, thus minimising any expensive redesign and refabrication costs.

Each alternate verandah was then reclaimed making room for the 62 bathroom pods to be “bolted” onto the outside of the building.

There were several benefits of the modular solution, says Sanderson. “The pods were manufactured and fully-fitted out locally, which allowed for tight quality control and implementation of Australian codes and standards,” he says.



Andrew Sanderson

“The number of trades on site was reduced, as was the overall construction program and the risk associated with inclement weather.”

Grindley Interiors took an average of 15 rooms offline for a period of three weeks at a time, allowing ARV to maintain close to 90 per cent occupancy throughout the program.

The result of the project is a completely refreshed home including 62 new bathrooms and 75 renovated bathrooms, a new café and

refurbished community areas with updated finishes and fittings throughout, he says. An additional lift was installed to reduce travel distances and the original 1960’s lift was replaced.

“It’s never easy building in an occupied aged care home. Collaboration, communication and cooperation were fundamental to the success of the project and it would not have been possible without the amazing commitment of the ARV team and the support of the residents of Farrer Brown Court, who would ultimately benefit from the upgrade,” says Sanderson. ■

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