YARRABEE & CASTLEMAINE STONE

TERRAZZO CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

NATURAL STONE PAVING & WALLING

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1. General Advice Notice

This guide has been prepared to assist customers, builders, installers and property managers in the care and maintenance of cement-based terrazzo products supplied by Yarrabee & Castlemaine Stone.

Terrazzo is a manufactured material containing natural stone aggregates within a cement-based binder. Its appearance and long-term performance can be influenced by installation methods, environmental conditions, cleaning practices, sealing and ongoing maintenance.

Every installation is different. The suitability of any cleaning product, sealer or maintenance method must be assessed against the particular terrazzo product, its surface finish, intended use and exposure conditions.

The information in this document provides general guidance only. It is not project-specific advice and should not replace the assessment of qualified installers, stone-care professionals or other relevant specialists.

This guide should be read together with:

- Relevant Australian Standards and building regulations.
- Manufacturer instructions for cleaning and sealing products.
- Project-specific installation and waterproofing documentation.
- Current Work Health and Safety requirements.

Nothing in this guide is intended to exclude, restrict or modify any rights or remedies that cannot be excluded under Australian Consumer Law.

2. Scope of This Guide

This guide addresses the general care, cleaning, sealing and ongoing maintenance of cement-based terrazzo supplied by Yarrabee & Castlemaine Stone.

Yarrabee supplies two primary terrazzo finishes:

Honed Terrazzo
A smooth, honed surface predominantly intended for indoor flooring applications.

Textured Terrazzo
A textured surface intended for suitable outdoor paving applications.

The maintenance requirements of these finishes differ according to their surface texture, level of use and exposure to environmental conditions. This document does not provide detailed installation instructions, structural engineering advice, waterproofing certification or project-specific compliance advice.

Specialised applications, including swimming pool surrounds, commercial environments and areas exposed to chemicals or elevated moisture levels, may require additional technical assessment.

3. Responsibility for Installation

Yarrabee & Castlemaine Stone supplies terrazzo products but does not control their installation, cleaning, sealing or ongoing maintenance.

Unless separately agreed in writing, Yarrabee does not control:

- Site conditions and substrate preparation.
- Drainage and waterproofing design.
- Installation workmanship.
- Selection and application of adhesives and grouts.
- Selection and application of sealers.
- Cleaning methods and chemical treatments.
- Ongoing maintenance practices.

The performance of an installed terrazzo surface depends on the interaction of the product, installation system, environmental conditions and maintenance practices.

The installer remains responsible for selecting suitable installation materials and methods.

Property owners and those responsible for maintenance should follow appropriate cleaning and care procedures throughout the life of the installation.

4. Third-Party Products

Yarrabee does not manufacture the adhesives, grouts, waterproofing products, cleaning chemicals or sealers generally used with terrazzo installations.

The performance and suitability of these products remain the responsibility of their respective manufacturers.

Cleaning and sealing products should only be selected after confirming their compatibility with cement-based terrazzo and the intended application.

Always follow the manufacturer's latest technical instructions.

5. Understanding Cement-Based Terrazzo

Cement-based terrazzo is manufactured by combining natural stone aggregates, such as marble, limestone or other suitable materials, within a cement binder.

The surface is processed to expose the aggregates and achieve the desired finish.

Although terrazzo is a durable flooring material, its cement binder and certain natural stone aggregates can be porous and sensitive to chemicals.

Several characteristics should be understood before installation and maintenance begins.

Porosity and Absorption

Cement-based terrazzo can absorb water, oils and other liquids. The level of absorption depends on the material's composition, manufacturing process, surface finish and protective treatment.

Appropriate sealing helps reduce absorption and makes everyday cleaning easier.

Sensitivity to Acids
Cement-based terrazzo is sensitive to acidic substances. Acids may react with the cement binder and certain natural stone aggregates, causing permanent surface damage. This can occur even when the terrazzo has been sealed.

Surface Wear
Terrazzo is suitable for ongoing use, but repeated contact with dirt, grit and abrasive materials may gradually alter its appearance. Smooth honed surfaces may develop scratches or changes in sheen, while textured surfaces may accumulate dirt within their surface profile.

Colour and Appearance
Terrazzo contains natural aggregates that may display differences in colour, shape and distribution. Minor variations in tone, aggregate distribution and surface appearance may occur between individual tiles or production batches.

The appearance of terrazzo may also change temporarily when wet.

Products should be inspected before installation to confirm that their appearance and finish are suitable for the intended project.

6. Production Inspection, Storage & Handling

All terrazzo should be inspected before installation begins. The customer, installer or project manager should confirm:

- The correct product and quantity have been supplied.
- The colour and surface finish are suitable.
- The material is suitable for the intended application.
- Any visible damage or unusual characteristics have been identified.
- The product has been correctly positioned and prepared for installation.

Any concerns regarding the supplied material should be raised with Yarrabee before installation proceeds. Installation constitutes acceptance of visible product characteristics, except where otherwise provided by law.

Terrazzo should be stored in a clean, dry and protected environment before installation. Crates and pallets should remain stable on firm, level ground and should not be placed in standing water or areas exposed to excessive moisture.

Avoid leaving the following materials in contact with uninstalled terrazzo:

- Soil, mulch and organic debris.
- Rusting metal objects.
- Oils, grease and chemicals.
- Fertilisers and other staining substances.

Care should be taken when unpacking and handling terrazzo to reduce the likelihood of chipping, scratching or breakage.

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6. Care During and After Installation

All Yarrabee cement-based terrazzo is supplied unsealed. As a result, special care should be taken during installation to minimise the risk of staining or contamination before the final protective treatment is applied.

Terrazzo should be protected from:
Adhesive and grout contamination.
Paint, oil and other building materials.
Dirt, sand and construction debris.
Acidic or aggressive cleaning chemicals.
Unnecessary foot traffic and follow-on trades.

The installer should determine if a compatible pre-grout treatment is appropriate to reduce the risk of staining during grouting.

Any pre-treatment must be suitable for cement-based terrazzo and compatible with the installation system.

Initial Cleaning

Once the installation materials have cured sufficiently, the terrazzo should receive a thorough final clean.

We recommend:

- Remove loose dirt, dust and construction debris with a soft broom or suitable vacuum.
- Clean the surface with a pH-neutral cleaning product specifically suitable for cement-based terrazzo.
- Gently agitate the surface using a soft, non-abrasive brush or cleaning pad.
- Remove dirty cleaning water and residues before they dry.
- Rinse thoroughly with clean water where required by the cleaning product.
- Allow the terrazzo to dry thoroughly before sealing.

Any stubborn grout haze, adhesive residue or construction staining should be assessed by an experienced stone-cleaning contractor.

Acidic grout removers and conventional acid-washing methods must not be used on cement-based terrazzo.

7. Sealing and Surface Protection

Yarrabee strongly recommends sealing cement-based terrazzo following installation. As terrazzo is supplied unsealed, applying a suitable protective treatment is an important step in preparing the surface for ongoing use.

A high-quality penetrating sealer can help:

- Reduce water absorption.
- Improve resistance to oil-based and other common stains.
- Make everyday cleaning easier.
- Reduce the penetration of contaminants into the material.
- Maintain the appearance of the terrazzo.

Penetrating sealers work within the pores of the material rather than creating a thick coating over the surface.

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Selecting a Sealer

The sealer should be specifically approved for cement-based terrazzo and selected according to the surface finish and installation environment.

For honed indoor terrazzo, a suitable penetrating sealer should provide stain resistance while maintaining the intended appearance of the surface.

For textured outdoor terrazzo, a suitable external-grade sealer should provide protection without adversely affecting the intended texture or slip resistance.

Natural-look sealers are generally preferred where the original appearance of the terrazzo is to be retained.

Any colour-enhancing treatment should be assessed and tested before application, as it may permanently alter the appearance of the material.

Sealer Application

Before sealing:

- Confirm that installation materials have cured sufficiently.
- Thoroughly clean the terrazzo.
- Allow the material to dry according to the sealer manufacturer's requirements.
- Confirm compatibility with the terrazzo and any previous treatments.
- Test the product in an inconspicuous area.

Apply the sealer strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, including coverage rates, application methods, removal of excess product and curing periods.

Yarrabee recommends engaging an experienced stone cleaning and sealing contractor for the initial treatment.

Important: Sealers do not make terrazzo waterproof, stain-proof or resistant to acid etching. Spills should still be removed promptly, and regular maintenance remains necessary.

8. Routine Maintenance: Honed

Honed terrazzo is predominantly used for internal flooring, where it provides a smooth, low-sheen surface.

Regular cleaning helps maintain the surface appearance and prevents dirt and grit from causing unnecessary wear.

Recommended Cleaning Procedure

- Sweep or vacuum the surface to remove loose dirt, sand and grit.
- Prepare a pH-neutral cleaner suitable for cement-based terrazzo, diluted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean the surface using a microfibre mop or suitable non-abrasive cleaning pad.
- Allow the cleaning solution to loosen dirt as directed, without letting it dry on the surface.
- Remove the dirty cleaning solution.

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Rinse with clean water where required. Remove excess moisture and allow the surface to dry.

For normal residential use, weekly cleaning is generally appropriate, with more frequent attention where required.

High-traffic residential and commercial environments may require daily removal of loose dirt and more regular wet cleaning.

Protecting Honed Surfaces

To reduce surface wear:

- Place suitable entrance mats at external doorways.
- Use protective pads beneath furniture legs.
- Avoid dragging heavy objects across the floor.
- Remove sand and grit before wet cleaning.
- Avoid abrasive scrubbing pads and cleaning equipment.
- Clean spills promptly.

Honed terrazzo may gradually develop changes in sheen in areas exposed to repeated foot traffic.

Professional maintenance may be necessary where surface wear becomes noticeable.

9. Routine Maintenance: Textured

Textured terrazzo is intended for suitable external applications and requires maintenance appropriate to its exposure to weather and environmental contaminants.

Outdoor surfaces are more likely to accumulate dirt, leaves, organic matter and mineral deposits.

- Recommended Cleaning Procedure
- Remove leaves, loose dirt and other debris using a soft-bristle broom.
- Apply a pH-neutral cleaning solution suitable for cement-based terrazzo.
- Gently agitate the surface using a soft or suitable non-abrasive nylon-bristle brush.
- Rinse thoroughly using clean water and a low-pressure hose.
- Remove dirty water and cleaning residues.
- Allow the surface to dry naturally.

Cleaning frequency will depend on the location, surrounding vegetation, weather exposure and level of use.

Additional External Maintenance

Particular attention should be given to:

- Leaves and mulch that may release tannins.
- Soil and fertiliser residues.
- Rusting outdoor furniture or metal objects.
- Standing water and poor drainage.
- Organic growth in damp or shaded areas.

Organic debris should be removed regularly to reduce the likelihood of staining.

Pressure Cleaning

High-pressure water cleaning is not recommended for cement-based terrazzo. Excessive pressure may damage the surface, remove protective treatments, erode grout joints or introduce water into the installation

A low-pressure hose and suitable cleaning brush should be used for routine maintenance.

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10. Spills, Staining and Acid Etching

Even properly sealed terrazzo may be affected by spills or prolonged exposure to contaminants. Prompt cleaning is the most effective way to reduce staining.

Substances requiring particular attention include:

- Wine, coffee and tea.
- Cooking oils and grease.
- Food residues and coloured beverages.
- Lemon juice, vinegar and acidic liquids.
- Cosmetics and personal care products.
- Cleaning chemicals.
- Leaves, mulch and organic material.
- Rust and mineral deposits.

Cleaning Spills

Spills should be removed as soon as possible. Use a clean, absorbent cloth to blot the affected area. Clean using a suitable pH-neutral terrazzo cleaner, rinse with clean water and dry the surface. Avoid aggressive scrubbing or applying unapproved stain-removal products.

Understanding Staining

Staining generally occurs when a substance penetrates or discolours the terrazzo. The type of stain and its depth will determine the appropriate treatment. Some stains may require specialist cleaning methods.

Understanding Acid Etching

Acid etching occurs when an acidic substance reacts with the cement binder or susceptible natural stone aggregates.

The affected area may appear dull, lighter in colour or different in texture. Etching is a form of chemical surface damage rather than a conventional stain. Routine cleaning and re-sealing will not remove etching. Professional mechanical restoration may be required.

Where the cause of a mark is uncertain, obtain advice from an experienced terrazzo cleaning contractor before applying chemical treatments.

11. Cleaning Products and Methods to Avoid

Cement-based terrazzo should only be cleaned using products suitable for its composition and surface finish. Inappropriate chemicals may damage the cement binder, natural stone aggregates, grout or protective sealer.

The following should be avoided:

- Hydrochloric acid and other acidic cleaning chemicals.
- Vinegar, lemon juice and acidic household cleaning solutions.
- Acidic grout-haze removers.
- Bathroom cleaners and limescale removers.
- Strong alkaline or caustic cleaning products.
- Bleach and ammonia-based cleaners.
- Abrasive cleaning powders.
- Steel wool, wire brushes and harsh scouring pads.
- High-pressure cleaning equipment.
- Unapproved solvents and stripping agents.
- Wax-based or oil-based products that leave surface residues.

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Steam cleaning should only be considered where the method has been confirmed as compatible with the terrazzo and its protective treatment.

Do not assume that a product described as suitable for tiles, concrete or natural stone will also be suitable for cement-based terrazzo.

Always confirm product compatibility and test unfamiliar cleaning treatments before widespread application.

12. Moisture, Drainage and Water Management

Moisture management is an important consideration for cement-based terrazzo installations. Water that becomes trapped beneath or within an installation may contribute to staining, efflorescence, discolouration, adhesive problems or long-term surface deterioration.

These problems cannot necessarily be corrected through surface cleaning or sealing.

Drainage

External terrazzo installations should have suitable drainage and falls to direct water away from the surface. Water should not be allowed to remain trapped within the bedding system or accumulate for prolonged periods. Drainage outlets and surrounding areas should be inspected periodically and kept free from debris. The design of falls, drainage and waterproofing remains the responsibility of the installer and relevant project professionals.

Efflorescence

Efflorescence may appear as white or powdery mineral deposits on the surface of cement-based terrazzo. It commonly occurs when moisture moves through cement-based materials and transports soluble salts to the surface.

Efflorescence is generally associated with moisture movement rather than an issue that can be resolved through ordinary cleaning alone. Acidic efflorescence removers should not be applied to cement-based terrazzo.

Persistent mineral deposits should be assessed by a qualified cleaning or installation professional.

Wet and Salt-Exposed Environments

Swimming pool surrounds, water features, coastal areas and other environments exposed to salts or chemicals place additional demands on terrazzo.

Product suitability, waterproofing, installation methods, sealing and ongoing maintenance must be assessed for these environments before installation.

Not all terrazzo products or finishes are suitable for every wet-area or salt-exposed application.

Contact Yarrabee to confirm product suitability before specifying terrazzo for these conditions.

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13. Re-Sealing and Ongoing Surface Protection

Sealers are not permanent and may gradually lose effectiveness due to foot traffic, cleaning, moisture and environmental exposure.

Periodic re-sealing may be required to maintain appropriate stain resistance.

The required frequency depends on:

- The type and quality of the original sealer.
- Indoor or outdoor use.
- Foot traffic.
- Sunlight and weather exposure.
- Cleaning practices.
- The condition of the existing surface.

Rather than relying solely on a predetermined re-sealing interval, the condition of the surface should be assessed periodically.

Signs that professional assessment may be appropriate include:

- Increased absorption of water or other liquids.
- Greater susceptibility to staining.
- Difficulty removing ordinary surface contaminants.
- Uneven performance of the existing protective treatment.

Re-sealing should only occur after the surface has been properly cleaned and prepared. Any new sealer must be compatible with the existing treatment or applied following appropriate preparation by a professional contractor. Re-sealing does not repair scratches, acid etching or physical surface damage.

14. Professional Maintenance and Restoration

Some terrazzo installations may benefit from periodic professional maintenance. This is particularly relevant for high-traffic internal flooring, commercial environments and outdoor areas exposed to significant environmental contamination.

Professional services may include:

- Deep cleaning.
- Specialist stain treatment.
- Removal of accumulated cleaning residues.
- Assessment and treatment of efflorescence.
- Grout and joint maintenance.
- Re-sealing.
- Surface restoration.

Honed Terrazzo Restoration

Honed terrazzo may be suitable for professional mechanical honing or refinishing where scratches, acid etching or surface wear have developed.

The appropriate treatment depends on the thickness, composition and condition of the terrazzo.

Restoration should be undertaken by an experienced terrazzo or natural stone restoration specialist.

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Textured Terrazzo Restoration
Textured terrazzo requires particular care during restoration.

Mechanical grinding, honing or polishing can permanently change the intended surface texture and affect slip resistance.

Any proposed restoration should be assessed before work begins.

Cleaning or re-sealing should not be treated as a substitute for repairing damaged or deteriorated installations.

15. Common Problems and Prevention

Surface Staining
Staining may result from oils, organic matter, rust, coloured liquids or inappropriate cleaning products. Appropriate sealing, prompt spill removal and regular cleaning can reduce staining risk.

Acid Etching
Etching is caused by chemical reactions involving acidic substances. Avoid acidic cleaning products and remove acidic spills promptly. Existing etching may require professional restoration.

Efflorescence
White mineral deposits may appear where moisture transports soluble salts through the material or installation system. Good drainage, appropriate waterproofing and correct installation practices reduce the likelihood of efflorescence. Persistent deposits should be professionally assessed.

Uneven Colour or Dark Patches
Moisture, contaminants, sealers or installation materials may cause areas of uneven colour. Allow the surface to dry before assessing changes that appear to be moisture-related. Persistent discolouration should be investigated before applying additional cleaning chemicals or sealers.

Surface Dulling and Scratching
Abrasive dirt, inappropriate cleaning equipment and general wear can change the appearance of honed terrazzo. Regular grit removal and the use of suitable cleaning equipment help minimise surface deterioration.

Grout and Joint Deterioration
Movement, moisture exposure, inappropriate cleaning or installation defects may contribute to grout deterioration. Inspect grout and movement joints periodically and arrange repairs where necessary.

Surface Deterioration
Surface deterioration may result from trapped moisture, aggressive cleaning, unsuitable chemical treatments, excessive abrasion or unsuitable exposure conditions. The underlying cause should be identified before attempting restoration or applying further protective treatments.

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16. Recommended Maintenance Schedule

Maintenance frequency will vary according to the finish, location, environmental exposure and level of use. The following schedule provides general guidance.

Daily or As Required

- Remove spills promptly.
- Remove loose dirt, sand and abrasive debris.
- Clear leaves and organic matter from outdoor areas.
- Attend to obvious staining or contamination.

Weekly

- Sweep or vacuum honed indoor terrazzo.
- Clean using a pH-neutral terrazzo cleaner.
- Inspect textured outdoor surfaces and clean as required.
- Remove accumulated dirt from high-traffic areas.

Periodically

- Undertake a more thorough clean where required.
- Inspect the surface for staining, wear or unusual discolouration.
- Check grout and movement joints.
- Assess the condition of protective sealers.
- Confirm that external drainage continues to function correctly.

Long-Term Maintenance

- Re-seal when required based on the condition and performance of the original treatment.
- Arrange professional deep cleaning where routine cleaning is no longer effective.
- Seek specialist advice regarding scratches, etching or surface deterioration.
- Review maintenance practices as environmental conditions and usage change.

17. Conclusion

Cement-based terrazzo is a durable architectural material that can provide long-term performance when correctly installed, sealed and maintained.

The most effective maintenance practices are straightforward:

- Protect terrazzo from contamination during installation.
- Apply a suitable penetrating sealer once the installation is ready.
- Use pH-neutral cleaning products.
- Remove spills and abrasive debris promptly.
- Avoid acidic chemicals and aggressive cleaning methods.
- Maintain appropriate drainage in external applications.
- Inspect protective sealers and re-apply when required.
- Seek professional advice for persistent staining, damage or unusual surface changes.

By following these recommendations, owners and property managers can help maintain the appearance and performance of their terrazzo over time.

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