



Merri-bek
City Council



Public Toilets in Merri-bek

Principles guiding provision, design and operation

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Replacing the 2012 Public Toilet Strategy, this DRAFT document contains Council's guiding principles for the provision, design and operation of public toilets. Consultation on this draft with key stakeholders and the community will allow it to be finalised and used in the planning, design, maintenance and operation of public toilets and information about them. Consultation will also include seeking feedback on specific toilets and gaps in toilet provision.

Context

Provision of public toilets is a core Council function. When people are out and about in the community, the length of time they can spend out can be limited by access to suitable toilets. For some, ability to access a toilet is directly related to their ability to venture outside their home. For others, it is the design, designation and facilities

available at the toilets that determine their comfort with using them and associated levels of participation in community life.

Council is responsible for decisions to provide public toilets, their construction and upgrade, their hours of operation, their cleaning, supply of consumables and waste removal.

Have your say

Online

[Go to Conversations Merri-bek](#)

In person

[At reference group and advisory committee meetings](#)
[Specific consultations among certain user groups](#)
[At a customer service centre](#)
[Over the phone on 9240 1111](#)

More information

bpu@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914
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普通话 Chinese (Simplified) 9280 0750

National Relay Service:

13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au

Strategic drivers

Public toilets are assets that receive people’s attention when they are not working, closed, or there isn’t one when needed. Access to public toilets is a universal need and Council plays a key role in meeting that need.

Along with Council’s own adopted plans, there are several pieces of legislation, regulations and standards related to provision, design and operation of public toilets.

A full list of the relevant documents is provided under the ‘Associated documents’ heading. Below is a list of the values and requirements that have been reflected in the setting of the principles that follow.

The Merri-bek Community Vision was set in 2021. It reiterates care for people and celebration of diversity. It values a community that is

- vibrant
- safe
- healthy
- resilient
- innovative
- regenerative

Under Commonwealth disability discrimination legislation, it is unlawful to fail to provide equitable access to public toilets. This is reiterated in the National Construction Code and various standards relating to people with disabilities. This is consistent with Council’s Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, which states that Council will ‘go beyond principles of Universal Design whenever possible, so [buildings] can be accessed by everyone’.

Merri-bek’s LGBTIQA+ Action Plan commits to develop new public toilet technical guidelines that consider safe and accessible all gender facilities.

The Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy links the provision of facilities, which includes public toilets and drinking fountains, to encouraging active transport.

Merri-bek Open Space Strategy Action Plan envisages an action to ‘Investigate creating new consistent wayfinding guidelines for open space across Merri-bek, including distances by foot and by bike and nearby communities’ facilities such as public amenities.’

The Climate Risk Strategy identifies the need to ensure all assets delivered by Council (including public toilets) are highly efficient, provide safe spaces for residents and are able to withstand the impacts of climate change.

Roles and responsibilities

Public toilets are provided by Council on Council land including road reserves, open space and associated with community buildings. Public toilets are available during designated operating hours only. Internal facilities in community buildings are only available when the buildings are open.

Sometimes public toilets are made accessible by other government bodies, for example toilets at railway stations for public transport users, and toilets at service hubs such as Centrelink or public health facilities. These are complementary to Council-provided facilities.

When people are out and about, they often also make use of toilets provided for public use connected to retail, hospitality and fuelling premises, generally as customers but in some cases (such as shopping centres) with open access during operating hours. The availability of these toilets is also a factor in planning Council facilities.

Guiding principles

There are five key principles driving the provision, design, and operation of public toilets. Public toilets should be:

- Available
- Welcoming
- Accessible
- Functional
- Sustainable

These principles each encompass user needs, which in turn translate to implications for design and designation of toilets, their location, the operating arrangements applying to them and the availability of information about them.



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Available

Public toilets that are available:

- Are located where they are most needed
- Are delivered as part of other projects where this fills a need
- Have an adequate number of stalls for usual usage
- Are not regularly closed due to blockages and damage for sustained periods
- Account for likely users when setting opening hours
- Account for those who rely on public toilets 24/7
- Account for the needs of field-based Council staff
- Publish their opening hours and facilities

Welcoming

Public toilets that are fully welcoming:

- Are clean and graffiti free
- Feel safe and do not attract illegal activity
- Are child and family friendly
- Feel inclusive for male, female, trans, non-binary and gender diverse people
- Are friendly to all social and cultural groups
- Add to the amenity of the local area
- Look good

Applying the principles

The guiding principles should be applied to decisions made about the location, provision, upgrade, design, designation and operation of public toilets and information sharing about them.

The need for Council to allocate resources responsibly means that it will not be possible for public toilets to be provided by Council everywhere they are needed, nor will it be possible for them to all be fully equipped.

In meeting the principles of being welcoming and available, there will be a diverse range of preferences and needs to consider that will not always all be able to be met but approaches that consider all needs can be adopted. For example:

- It may not be possible to achieve 'all gender' toilets as well as toilets having 'male and female' gender designation in the same toilet block, however it may be possible to have wash basins contained within stalls and external access doors to remove the need to share a washing / waiting facility.
- It is not possible to achieve 24/7 opening hours for toilets due to vandalism and sensitive nearby uses, but understanding the specific needs of homeless people in the area could result in tailored opening arrangements.
- Special features for child and family friendly toilets may be given higher priority in areas where the need can be readily demonstrated.
- While it is great to have vegetation around toilets to limit urban heat and discourage graffiti, this can also lead to issues of people feeling unsafe, if vegetation creates hiding places.

Accessible

Public toilets that adhere to Universal Design principles are equally accessible for everyone including for:

- A person who uses a wheelchair
- A person who is frail or uses a walking aid
- A person with vision impairment
- A person with a hidden disability
- A person wheeling a pram
- A person who is a carer

Functional

Public toilets that are fully functional allow for:

- Access to drinking fountain
- Changing nappies
- Sanitary disposal
- Sharps disposal
- Changing of continence products
- Other needs people have

Sustainable

Public toilets that are environmentally sustainable:

- Are energy efficient and 100% renewably powered
- Minimise potable water use
- Manage biowaste responsibly
- Minimise waste and pollution
- Enable sustainable transport
- Are resilient to climate-related impacts

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The following tables are sorted by principle and they identify the implications of adopting these principles across the different domains of identifying where to locate toilets and upgrade them, how to design them, implications on their operating arrangements and upon information about toilets.

Toilets that are Available

Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
Are located where they are most needed	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Understand the key gaps in availability of public toilets (accounting for private and other government facilities) and target new toilet facilities in those locations, including an understanding of the level of demand to determine number of stalls
		Understand the key geographic gaps in quality of existing toilets to prioritise upgrade of toilets including whether additional stalls required
		To maximise the facilities able to be provided, look to deliver cost effective solutions such as locating new toilets near existing power, water supply and sewerage or have them operate 'off grid'.
		Consider publicly accessible toilets as a planning requirement for major private developments.
		At sites where events are regularly held, consider this in planning for toilet capacity and in particular consider additional accessible toilets
		Also at event sites, identify suitable sites for introduction of portable toilets during events
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Explore design features that allow best use of available space and most flexibility in the designation and number of stalls.
		Investigate innovative design options for conversion of community facility toilets to external facing to provide higher levels of access, where there is a business case for this.
		Where provided within a community facility, such as a sporting pavilion or childcare centre, the facility should be tailored to the specific needs of the target users in consultation with them.
	Information about toilets	Provide directional signage at key decision points in a 200m radius of toilet.
		Provide wayfinding signage for toilets in areas of high activity
Are delivered as part of other projects where this fills a need	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Assess gaps in provision of public toilets to determine whether to add new, externally accessible public toilets with new facilities (independent of facility operation) and/or provide for facility users.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
		Provision of toilets in parks and open space should be based on park hierarchy. They may include stand-alone facilities, or facilities externally accessible connected to pavilions or other community buildings. As a general rule:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional and District parks should have toilets, with number of toilet blocks and stalls to reflect level of usage.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local parks (over 0.5 ha) would have toilets associated with BBQ facilities and picnic shelters.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood parks (0.1 to 0.5 ha) would only have toilets if their primary catchment was not residents within walking distance, and they had BBQs and picnic shelters.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pocket parks would not have toilets.
		There may be sites in open space where linear reserves converge and there is justification for a toilet based on a long distance to the nearest toilet.
Have an adequate number of stalls for usual usage	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Provide greater priority to upgrade of public toilets with known regular queueing for toilets and include new stalls as part of upgrade (or look for supplementary sites).
		Estimate demand for new public toilets using comparable land use information and right-size new facilities accordingly.
Are delivered as part of other projects where this fills a need	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Involve project stakeholders early on the public toilet vs facility toilet conversation to maximise opportunities to include public toilets in the project scope.
Have an adequate number of stalls for usual usage	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Guideline – 1 stall per 30 daily users.
		Consider the diversity of users when determining the number and designation of stalls.
Are not regularly closed due to blockages and damage for sustained periods	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Consider carefully before introducing new toilets to areas with known community safety concerns.
		Consider decommissioning and/or relocating toilets with intractable problems relating to vandalism and graffiti
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Ensure durability in design against vandalism and theft.
		Supply common brand and fit fixtures so that they are readily replaceable / repairable when damaged or end of life.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
		Toilets should be of stainless-steel construction and depending on location, have a wider edge so that a separate seat (subject to breakage) is not needed.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Contact details clearly displayed to enable reporting of damage or usage problems (Council phone number provided)
	Information about toilets	Develop mechanisms to update online public toilet information when there are changes or when unavailable due to works or repairs.
Account for likely users when setting opening hours	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Understand the target user group and ensure the locations selected are suitable for the hours, including consideration of the needs of nearby residents.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Toilet operating hours set with the following defaults:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council buildings – when the building is open
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space including publicly accessible pavilion toilets - daylight hours
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pavilions (internal access toilets) - when the pavilion or sports facilities are being used
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity centres - when there is activity in the street
		Where an open space reserve has gates that are unlocked and locked each day, toilet opening times may be aligned with gate opening times.
Account for those who rely on public toilets 24/7	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Consider opening toilets in areas with high levels of rough sleeping work and with housing agencies to identify options for night-time provision of public toilets.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Exercise design innovation to account for rough sleepers in design.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Automatic locks can be used to lock and unlock toilets, accompanied by information indicating times.
Account for the needs of field-based Council staff	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Identify gaps in available toilets for staff and consider staff-only stalls being added to larger or most challenging toilet blocks and out of the way locations.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Consider options for design solutions to support staff-only toilets and/or staff access to community facility toilets.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Consideration should be given to strategically located toilets having keyed access for Merri-bek field staff (whether public toilets that are closed, or dedicated staff toilets).
Publish their opening hours and facilities	Information about toilets	Provide searchable information about the location, stalls and their designation, special use facilities and hours of operation at each public toilet site on:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek website (expanding on the park search facilities)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Public Toilet Map
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internally on Council's MyMaps platform for planning purposes

Toilets that are Welcoming

Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
Are clean and graffiti free	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Design with easy to clean and graffiti-disincentivising surfaces
		Design with taps and drain to the sewer that allows hosing of the floors within a toilet block.
		Design and position to reduce the number of obvious and inviting surfaces for graffiti on the exterior.
		Consider proactive mural art and/or appropriate vegetation on exterior walls to reduce tagging
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Schedule of cleaning and replenishing consumables responds to needs of individual sites. Default cleaning frequencies are:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Council civic buildings, libraries – Daily
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquatic Centres – Daily with more regular checks on high use days
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional parks – Twice daily
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Parks – Daily
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other parks – 3 times per week

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The above also apply to public access toilets in pavilions in these parks.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pavilions (building user toilets) – cleaned after training and game days by the allocated sporting club
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major activity centre – Twice daily
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood and local activity centre – Daily
		Any site with self-cleaning functionality to have manual cleaning at half the frequency of the above.
		These cleaning frequencies are tailored to individual site needs. They may be altered seasonally and when there are events held in the vicinity of the toilets.
		Information posted at each facility indicating the cleaning schedule.
Feel safe and do not attract illegal activity	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Consider carefully before introducing new toilets to areas with known community safety concerns.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Position so that there is active surveillance of entrances
		Design to minimise areas a person could be concealed (other than toilet stalls themselves).
		Plan location of vegetation around the facility with crime prevention principles in mind (e.g. species below 1m high).
		Maximise natural light within the facility through orientation and windows / skylights / openings and also through using light and reflective surfaces for finishes.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Consideration given to installation of CCTV if there are sites with regular antisocial behaviour.
	Information about toilets	Similarly, information made available in brochures, on websites, etc, about the toilets should indicate facilities rather than gender allocation, except when there is a specific gender allocation, and it should allow searching by filtering for specific facilities.
Are child and family friendly	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Consider needs of families needing to access public toilets when determining priority locations for new or upgraded toilets.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	As well as considerations under Welcoming, Accessible and Functional, consider whether children-sized toilets are suitable to be provided
Feel inclusive for male, female, trans, non-binary and gender diverse people	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Designate new toilet stalls with facilities included rather than gender
		In multiple-stall facilities some stalls may indicate gender
		Do not rely on an accessible toilet as the sole all gender facility unless it is the only toilet provided
		Toilets with open urinals are not provided in new facilities.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Sanitary bins should be provided in every stall to the extent able to be justified by budget, and should always be provided in stalls indicating they are equipped with a sanitary bin.
		Appropriate temporary signage should be set out when cleaning is underway, as per current practice
	Information about toilets	Signage should demonstrate the facilities behind the door rather than the gender of the person using them. Where there is a deliberate intent to limit to one gender, gender indication can be included but facilities should still be indicated.
Are friendly to all social and cultural groups	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Design new toilet blocks not to have shared wash basins in an enclosed area – include within stalls where possible, or common external wash basins.
		Consider provision of female and male only stalls in locations with high numbers of people with cultural and/or religious heritage that make shared gender facilities unsuitable.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Cleaning where there are individual stalls is simplified as long as there is good access to taps, etc.
	Information about toilets	Infographics should be used wherever possible to maximise the proportion of the community that can understand the information, including those who don't read English.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
Add to the amenity of the local area	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	In retail areas, toilets should be sited with care given competing demands between demand for the toilets and possible adverse amenity associated with toilets.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Position toilets with consideration of adjacent land uses so that the direction of doors and proximity to picnic tables and outdoor dining account for nearby activities and businesses
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Cleaning schedules (above) may need to be more frequent depending on the adjacent land use and activity.
	Information about toilets	Where toilets are provided in retail areas, work with trader associations to ensure their promotional material also includes references to the facilities.
Look good	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Design toilets so that they are sympathetic with the local environment and are attractive
		In high profile locations, consider using quality materials and designs that complement the surrounding area
		In high profile locations, consider providing toilets that are an architectural feature

Toilets that are Accessible

For...	Domain	Implications for this domain
A person who uses a wheelchair	Information about toilets	Information about any toilets that have existing accessibility limitations.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Maintenance checks need to include checking handrails are not loose in wheelchair accessible and ambulant toilets.
		Locks should also be checked and when broken responded to quickly, as there are often no other options for a person needing to use an accessible toilet.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Position so near accessible paths including to and from disability parking and any other facilities specifically for people with disabilities (e.g. seniors exercise equipment, playgrounds with all abilities equipment in it).
		Designate and design accessible toilets including signage in alignment with Australian Standards and go beyond principles of Universal Design whenever possible.

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For...	Domain	Implications for this domain
		Provide RH toilets as the predominate requirement. Where possible provide a second, LH toilet.
	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Ensure a continuous accessible path of travel can be provided from the surrounding area
A person who uses a walking aid	Information about toilets	Information about any toilets that have existing accessibility limitations.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Any signage that needs replacing needs to retain the braille indications.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Ambulant toilets must be provided wherever there are multiple toilets including one accessible toilet
		It is good practice to design stalls to have outward swinging doors wherever the geometry allows it without creating a hazard for passers-by.
		Ensure designations for ambulant toilets are signed.
	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Ensure a continuous accessible path of travel can be provided from the surrounding area
A person with vision impairment	Information about toilets	Information about the toilets to be itself accessible (including interactive maps).
		Signage to conform to or be better than accessibility requirements in Australian Standards.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Ensure Australian Standards are followed for use of braille signage, standard sign symbols and colours.
		Ensure tactile tiles are used at access points.
		Provide braille signage for dog bowls where provided with drinking fountains for use by assistance dogs as needed.
A person with a hidden disability	Information about toilets	Occasional reminder posters "Not all disabilities are visible" near the entrance to accessible toilets.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Most disabilities are hidden or non-physical.
		Consider these disabilities when designing toilets. For example, people with autism can feel overwhelmed due to unfamiliar sounds, smells, colours and bright lights.

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For...	Domain	Implications for this domain
		People with mental illness can feel intimidated or anxious in public toilet settings.
		People with gastro-intestinal disabilities may require frequent or extended toilet visits.
		People with hidden disabilities, as well as people with temporary ailments, may need to take medication using public toilet facilities.
A person wheeling a pram	Information about toilets	Information about any toilets that have existing accessibility limitations.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Consider the needs of people wheeling prams in the layout of toilets
	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Ensure a continuous accessible path of travel can be provided from the surrounding area
A person who is a carer	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Consider the needs of carers (including of children) who might themselves have a disability

Toilets that are Functional

Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
Access to drinking fountain	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Consider whether the site is in need of a drinking fountain and if so include in scope for the public toilet project
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Include external water bottle refill, dog bowl and drinking fountain taps with every new toilet and as part of upgrades unless there are already facilities within 100m or unless the facility is recycled (non-potable) water only. (Can be separate but nearby).
		Design drinking fountains so access to the fountain and access to the tap are wheelchair accessible
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Where a drinking fountain is installed, a new check meter should be provided to ensure it is not connected to the sewer line.
	Information about toilets	Map information about locations of drinking fountains (including those not associated with public toilets)

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
Changing nappies	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Include a nappy change table as the default design in all accessible toilets, meeting the Australian Standard, and sign accordingly.
		Consider design solutions that reduce the attractiveness of the change table for antisocial behaviour.
		Consider a design that doesn't render the table non-repairable if an adult sits on it, especially for sites with known misuse.
		Depending on likely demand, include nappy change facilities in more than one stall.
		Benches and shelving should be provided in conjunction with baby change facilities.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Nappies and continence product disposal are generally not provided for even if there are changing facilities. Signage needs to be clear regarding expectation of taking these used products away for disposal and consideration given to implications for nearby landfill bins.
	Information about toilets	Signage and information made available in brochures, on websites, etc, about the toilets to indicate what the toilets are equipped with, and to allow searching by filtering for these features.
Sanitary disposal	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Provide space for sanitary disposal in all stalls. Ensure signage on the door indicates where sanitary bins are provided.
		Consider design options that reduce the likelihood of sanitary bins being removed or vandalised.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Sanitary bins are often not provided due to vandalism resulting in their removal and discard elsewhere. Consideration should be given to bins that can be fixed within stalls.
	Information about toilets	Signage and information made available in brochures, on websites, etc, about the toilets to indicate what the toilets are equipped with, and to allow searching by filtering for these features.
Sharps disposal	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Design for sharps disposal in each stall.
		Ensure signage for sharps disposal is included where facilities allow for this.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Each additional fixture or waste service results in additional operating costs and / or maintenance costs, so these costs need to be accounted for in decisions to implement these items.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
	Information about toilets	Signage and information made available in brochures, on websites, etc, about the toilets to indicate what the toilets are equipped with, and to allow searching by filtering for these features.
Changing of continence products	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Specialised facilities for changing of continence products should be considered in the context of a regional view of need and trip attractors
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Smaller continence products may be disposed of in sanitary bins.
		Where a Changing Place is to be incorporated into a toilet block or as a stand-alone facility, the design and location should be undertaken in consultation with likely users – people with disability and their carers.
		Consideration should be given to making them accessible only via Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK) issued to people with eligible disabilities on request.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Guidance on standards and best practice for Changing Places should also be consulted.
		Nappies and continence product disposal are generally not provided for even if there are changing facilities. Signage needs to be clear regarding expectation of taking these used products away for disposal and consideration given to implications for nearby landfill bins.
	Information about toilets	Signage and information made available in brochures, on websites, etc, about the toilets to indicate what the toilets are equipped with, and to allow searching by filtering for these features.
Other features	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Provide one coat hook in each stall.
		Look for fire resistant toilet paper dispensers and not jumbo dispensers as these are flimsy and vandalised frequently, with excess paper becoming a blockage in the pan.
		Provide paper towel, hand dryers and landfill waste bins depending on the location and level of usage, noting that efficient hand dryers are preferred over paper towel.
		Include tamper proof soap dispensers.
		Wash basins should include stainless steel mirrors where practical.

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Toilets that are Sustainable

Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
Are energy efficient and 100% renewably powered	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Where possible, solar panels with a battery or daylight-only facilities may make it possible not to have the toilet connected to mains electricity.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Designs should comply with Council's Sustainable Buildings policy.
		Construction should be with recycled, reused, or low embodied energy materials where possible.
		Solar panels should be installed with batteries and facing north, for power to supply the facility where after-dark access is required
		Lighting should be activated by sensors where possible.
		Only install hot water at large sites and where showers are also installed. Where installed, all-electric hot water systems should be specified, with a preference for electric heat pumps (where demand is high) and electric instantaneous (where demand is low).
		Designs should ensure provision of natural cross-ventilation (where possible) to reduce the reliance on mechanical ventilation and improve indoor amenity.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	In order to track power consumption and for account administration where a new independent site is being implemented (including in reserves), a new metered connection is needed. Where part of a community building the power should be integrated with the building.
		Where publicly accessed facilities are provided at a pavilion, etc, this should be separately metered to allow separation of water and electricity accounts or built into leasing agreements.
		Where solar panels are provided, the cleaning and maintenance of these needs to be accounted for.
	Information about toilets	Information about sustainability features to be reported as part of achievement of the Sustainable Buildings Policy and Building Asset Management Plan.
Minimise potable water use	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Opportunities for capturing runoff in tanks that serve the facilities may also affect toilet location.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Plumbing fittings and fixtures (urinals, toilets, taps, water fountains) should be low water usage. For example, cold water basins should be fitted with flow regulators and spring loaded or time-controlled taps to avoid water wastage.
		Consideration should be given to maximising the use of recycled water (including rainwater tanks)
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Tracking of consumption of water and waste is recommended where this can be achieved, and benchmarking against other facilities to determine performance.
	Information about toilets	Where superior design outcomes have been achieved, promote these with signage on the facility and in maps.
Manage biowaste responsibly	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Locating toilets near rainwater harvesting schemes can also allow water re-use for toilet flushing.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Consideration should be given to treating wastewater and composting biowaste.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Where recycled water is used, it should only be used for toilet flushing and signage needs to be clear and maintained to warn people that it is not potable.
	Information about toilets	Where superior design outcomes have been achieved, promote these with signage on the facility and in maps.
Minimise waste and pollution	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Encouragement should be provided for people to make use of reusable nappies, sanitary products and continence products.
		Efficient hand dryers reduce paper towel waste and disposal costs.
	Operating arrangements (cleaning and maintenance)	Maintenance of water tanks, biowaste facilities, etc needs to be considered as part of initial decision to provide these facilities and maintenance contracts need to include these items.
		Tracking of consumption of water and waste is recommended where this can be achieved, and benchmarking against other facilities to determine performance.

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Feature	Domain	Description of implications for this domain
	Information about toilets	Where superior design outcomes have been achieved, promote these with signage on the facility and in maps.
Enable sustainable transport	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Understand public toilet gaps in common bike routes and walking routes to encourage these forms of transport to feed into location decisions.
		Understand gaps facing public transport users (e.g. at bus interchanges) where other facilities are not available to feed into location decisions.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Bike hoops or racks should be provided where options do not already exist for bike parking.
	Information about toilets	Where superior design outcomes have been achieved, promote these with signage on the facility and in maps.
Are resilient to climate-related impacts	Selecting location of new toilets, number of stalls and upgrade priority of existing toilets	Locations for new toilets should consider surrounding canopy cover and vegetation that can assist with urban heat island mitigation.
		Locations for new toilets should consider overland flow and stormwater risks during heavy rainfall events.
	Positioning, design of new toilets and upgrading of existing toilets and designation of stalls.	Consider locating new public toilets within proximity to canopy trees and incorporating greening for shading and urban heat island (UHI) mitigation benefits.
		Consider locating services (such as rainwater tanks, heat pumps etc.) along the western facade to minimise afternoon heat gain and improve the thermal performance of the building.
		Roofing and external cladding materials and finishes should have a Solar Absorptance value less than 0.60
		Consider increasing roofing areas to create additional shaded spaces for residents and users during heatwave events.
	Information about toilets	Where superior design outcomes have been achieved, promote these with signage on the facility and in maps.

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Scenarios for designating toilets

New / replacement single stall toilet

Where a single stand-alone toilet is being installed, it will be accessible, include an internal washbasin, sanitary disposal facilities and a nappy change facility.

Where an accessible toilet is not required (e.g. there is one nearby) an ambulant toilet (hand rails and higher pan) should be provided, containing an internal washbasin and sanitary disposal facilities.

Upgrading a 'male and female' toilet block

Where a toilet block with 'male and female' separate facilities with multiple stalls is being upgraded, consideration should be given to, to the extent permitted by budgets and with respect to the local context, providing individual stalls all with external access, with the designation of the stalls to be based on the equipment contained with the stall. For example a toilet block with 3 female stalls and wash area, 2 male stalls, a urinal and wash area and an accessible toilet may be converted to individual, external access stalls each designated as one of the following:

- Toilet pan and a wash basin.
- Toilet pan, a sanitary bin and a wash basin.
- Ambulant toilet pan and handrails, a sanitary bin and wash basin.
- Wheelchair RH (or LH) accessible toilet pan, sanitary bin, wash basin and nappy change facility.

Cultural considerations may lead to one stall being identified as female and/or male, however remaining stalls should not designate gender.

Upgrading 'male and female' toilets within a community building

Where there are male, female and accessible toilets within a building that may not be adjacent to one another, upgrading these toilets as a stand-alone project may be considered to provide a more inclusive experience for users. Specific engagement with the users of the building may be required to determine the optimal configuration and designation of toilets, scenarios may be:

- Providing at least one independently accessed stall designated with a toilet pan, sanitary bin and wash basin in addition to an independently accessed accessible toilet meeting disability requirements.
- Repurposing the space occupied by the toilets to provide individually accessed stalls each with a wash basin.
- Male toilets being converted to individual stalls, some incorporating urinals and re-designated by the equipment not gender, while the female toilets remain as female toilets as they are.
- Where community facilities are specifically for children's services, the configuration of toilets will need to account for Child Safe arrangements and might be quite different. This may also apply to community facilities that children visit while supervised by carers.

It is recommended that in considering design options, examples where these sorts of changes have been implemented should be reviewed to consider their applicability to this situation.

Making minor changes to existing toilets

Where existing toilets are able to have minor upgrades only, consideration should be given to ensuring signage indicates the facilities provided over gender designation, care is given in the placement of sanitary bins and urinals and the use of 'all gender' indications introduced where needed for clarity.

Planning and building requirements for new toilets or toilet upgrades

Ahead of confirming the stall designation, it is important that new toilets or alterations to existing structures are subject to the appropriate planning and building considerations.

Where needed, in order for building permits to be issued, certain numbers of toilets of different types are required under the National Construction Code. At present, the National Construction Code requires that both male and female toilets be provided, however a private building surveyor can advise on ways to obtain approval to vary from the guidance in the Code.

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Sometimes planning requirements dictate what is possible, even at the early stages of project design. For example:

- A planning permit may be required to construct new toilets within existing open space
- A planning permit may be required where toilets are within a particular planning overlay
- Where heritage considerations are at play, there may be restrictions on what stall configuration is possible
- When public toilets are part of the scope of a larger building project, there are also planning requirements to be met.

It is also possible that building regulations will impact on the level of flexibility of existing toilets to be reconfigured – or at least require additional changes to achieve compliance.

Associated documents

Companion documents

In order to realise the principles outlined in this document, a number of other reference documents have been developed and will continue to evolve over time. These documents are:

- Design Guidelines for Building Projects (featuring the top five most common types of building, including public toilets, and including guidance on meeting statutory planning and building requirements for public toilet projects)
- Merri-bek City Council database of public toilets, available on Merri-bek's website and also interfacing with the National Public Toilet Map
- 5-Year Capital Works Program, documenting proposed public toilet upgrade projects in the immediate future and the budget envelope for public toilet projects within the 5 years.
- Public Place Service Plan – Document that outlines, among other things, Council's service levels related to public toilet cleaning, waste disposal and operating hours and response to damage, vandalism and graffiti.

Reference documents

Further, a number of documents are source and reference documents. These have informed the preparation of the principles.

- Environmentally Sustainable Development Policy
- Merri-bek Sustainable Buildings Policy
- Climate Risk Strategy and Foundational Action Plan
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Australian Standards 1428.1 & 1428.2 - Design for access and mobility
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Merri-bek Community Vision 2031
- Merri-bek Human Rights Policy
- Merri-bek LGBTIQ+ Action Plan
- Merri-bek Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Merri-bek Children, Young People and Families Plan
- National Construction Code (NCC) 2022
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan

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