

M I T C H E L L



S H I R E C O U N C I L

PUBLIC TOILET

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND POLICY

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FEBRUARY 2008

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Public Toilets should be clearly visible and easily accessible to all users

All Public Toilets in the Mitchell Shire are placed on a program of retrospective Disability Discrimination Act upgrade consistent with these guidelines.

TOILET LOCATION

Toilet location is the most important factor in toilet management. Design or management techniques may be ineffective, if toilet location is inappropriate.

Toilets should be located in the following areas:

- Where high traffic and pedestrian volume exists
- In areas where there are “Activity Generators” such as BBQ’s and tables
- Opposite a building or facility that provides opportunity for casual surveillance, and usually having activity around it
- Highly visible from all or most directions/ open sight lines.
- Located over or as near to existing sewage lines (where possible)

Visibility

For public safety reasons, public toilets should be located in positions that are easily visible for patrons and passers by. By placing toilets in activity areas, the constant movement of pedestrian and vehicle traffic will reduce unsafe and inappropriate activity.

It is recommended that public toilets be placed in the following areas:

- High traffic and pedestrian volume areas
- Picnic areas or sporting areas where there is frequent activity
- Opposite or adjacent to buildings that offer casual surveillance
- Highly visible from all or most directions.

Access

Access to public toilets should comply with all Disability Discrimination Act requirements. This should include parking facilities, walking paths, ramps and clearances. Access should, as a minimum, comply with AS 1428 and AS 2890.

Signage

Signage should involve both directional signage and labelling signage.

Directional signage should provide users with a clear indication as to the location of the toilet and if it is not clearly visible, an indication of distance.

Labelling signage should clearly display the international symbols for male, female, unisex and disabled and include consideration for people with vision impairment and language other than English.

Labelling signage should also clearly indicate the opening hours of the public toilet.

Co-location

It is generally beneficial to consider locating a public toilet with another facility.

This is considered a benefit as activity is likely to be higher and more constant than a stand alone facility. In such instances, the toilet should not be located to the side or rear of the building as this may present dangers and management problems.

Performance criteria to be considered and if possible, achieved when assessing the suitability of a collocated facility include:

- That the co-location of the use is compatible
- Location is visible

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- Toilet only open during operating times with auto-locking outside of operating hours
 - The managers are able to exercise guardianship over the toilet
 - The toilet can be seen by staff/ occupants
 - The entrance is not obscured
 - The toilet is orientated to an active and visible aspect.

PROXIMITY ISSUES

Proximity refers to the conditions and features around the building and surrounding area such as lighting, vegetation and access

Lighting

It is preferred that natural lighting be used wherever possible. The toilet design should incorporate the use of skylights and other passive design features to allow as much natural light as possible.

Where natural lighting needs to be supplemented, solar lighting should be considered.

Lighting in the immediate proximity should be sufficient to allow people to access the facility in safety. Lighting that is too bright will create dark areas outside its influence which provide locations for hidden activities.

Lighting should be installed to comply with the appropriate Australian Standard.

Signage

Directional signage should be provided to users with clear visible directions which indicate toilet location. Distances should be indicated if the toilet is not clearly visible.

Signage should be clear and consider people with impaired vision.

Vegetation

Public toilets should not be located near thick vegetation as this provides a concealment opportunity for loitering and impedes clear sight lines.

Shrubs and garden beds around the toilet block should not exceed 700mm high.

Mature trees can remain around public toilets however they should be maintained to ensure that their branches and foliage are kept above 2000mm to maintain sight lines.

Vegetation selection criteria should also consider the likelihood of root invasion of footings and pipes and the higher maintenance requirements of deciduous trees.

Loitering Cues

Built features that can support loitering include seating, notice boards, telephones and carparks. Whilst removal of these items around public toilets can disadvantage some patrons, designers should consider their placement to minimise their loitering potential.

Grade and Access

Access to toilets should be easy for both able bodied and disabled users. Steps and steep ramps should be avoided. Access should be safe and meet the Australian Standard requirements. In busy locations or in carparks, consideration should be given to providing a clearly defined, accessible and safe pedestrian path to the toilet.

Car Parking

Public toilets should be located in close proximity to carparks where appropriate. It is recommended that at least one disabled parking bay be provided close to the public toilet.

In instances where there is a high proportion of cyclist expected to use the facility, provision for locking of cycles should be provided.

Consultation

The installation of a public toilet has an impact on the surrounding environment. Characteristics such as its aesthetic appearance to the patrons that use the facility will have an influence on how nearby residents will view the facility. Community consultation and engagement provides an important input into any consideration regarding the location, appearance and operation of a new public toilet.

It is important that the community that will use and be impacted by the installation be consulted during the design phase of an installation.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Council has a policy to employ Environmentally Sustainability Design principles where ever possible

Energy

Toilets should be designed to minimise their energy needs. It is recommended that the following design items be considered.

- A high degree of natural lighting
- Low energy light fittings
- Use of solar power
- Lighting fixed to timing mechanisms
- Use of light coloured and reflective internal materials
- Passive ventilation where possible
- Source materials that are recycled, recyclable and renewable
- Locally sourced materials
- Source materials that have used the least energy in manufacture
- Self cleaning where possible

Water

Toilets should be designed to minimise their water needs. It is recommended that the following design items be considered wherever possible.

- Dual flush systems
- Spring loaded tapware
- Grey water flushing
- waterless or low-flow urinals
- Recycling of stormwater for flushing
- All fittings to be used (cisterns, taps, etc) shall be rated no less than 4 stars under the new Water Efficiency Labelling & Standards scheme (WELS) (www.waterrating.gov.au)

Lifecycle Considerations

Designs should factor in lifecycle issues. The structure should be durable and robust, not be adversely affected by high levels of cleaning and vandalism and not readily depreciate. The policy is to consider low lifecycle cost installations in all locations and in high use locations, factor in the option of self cleaning to the lifecycle cost benefit analysis.

EXTERNAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The building exterior should be well presented, clean, well managed, welcoming and will ensure that users feel safe.

When a toilet is first considered, the number of cubicles (Capacity) and gender designation should be determined. Preference should be given to providing multiple unisex/disabled toilet cubicles to separate male/female cubicles. These aspects should again be considered with public safety and future management in mind.

Appearance

Public toilets are part of the built form of the area. They can be designed to support the sense of place. Opportunities should be taken to create an aesthetically pleasing structure which integrates within the character of the area.

Key considerations include graffiti management, maintenance, access, image and security.

Entrance Orientation

Stand alone toilet facilities should face public areas such as footpaths, roads or ovals with high usage. Entry to the toilets should be from the publicly oriented face.

Security

The toilet should be able to be locked to prevent access. The entire structure should be fully enclosed with either a roof or security mesh and gates and doors should be able to be secured in both the locked shut and open positions.

Toilets should be provided with clear sight lines for casual surveillance around the toilet. Shrubs and plants should not be allowed to grow greater than 700mm in height.

Lighting

Where after dark use is provided, adequate lighting must be provided to the toilets and along all access paths. Lighting should be consistent and even to enhance safety. It is not recommended to provide lighting when after dark use is not proposed.

Wall Continuity

In the case of building refurbishment, traditional external envelopes and maze entries should be removed. The entrance walls should be built of a semi-translucent material to increase visibility and natural light.

Water

A water bubbler, and drinking facility for pets should be provided in close proximity to the public toilet to avoid people unnecessarily having to enter the toilet.

Graffiti Management

Where external brick walls are to be painted they should be painted with a bright attractive colour that is easy to match to paint over graffiti.

Where the external walls are of feature brickwork or have community art work attached, they should be treated with a protective coating that will hinder graffiti attempts.

Graffiti resistant materials should also be considered.

Irrigation

External garden beds should be developed using native vegetation of varieties that have low water needs and have extensive mulching. Irrigation systems should be designed with micro sprays or dripper systems and where possible fed from a stormwater system such as a rainwater tank rather than reticulated potable water supply. Subject to compliance with Health and EPA requirements, grey water should also be considered to support the irrigation of garden beds and vegetation adjacent to the toilet block.

Information

The toilet gender should be clearly identified by the use of internationally recognised symbols for male, female and disabled. Information should also be provided in Braille. Signage should be manufactured and install to Australian Standards.

Opening, closing and cleaning times should also be provided along with Council's contact number to report problems.

Signage should be resistant to graffiti.

INTERNAL DESIGN

Configuration Alternatives

There are three common ways in which public toilets are configured.

- Enclosed building with common access
- Self Contained cubicles
- Enclosed cubicle or building with wash facilities outside

Enclosed building with common access

This is the traditional style of public toilet. Generally they have separate gender entries, maze style entry, a larger shared internal area for hand basins and the like and a number of separate cubicles off the internal common area. A disabled toilet is usually built into the facility which has a separate external entry.

This traditional design usually has a lack of clear sight lines and hidden internal corners which is not considered safe by contemporary standards. Preference should dictate that this design form be avoided in future new toilet construction or refurbishment.

Self Contained Cubicles

The emerging preference for public toilet design is for self contained cubicles that face onto active space. The features of this toilet design are:

- Toilet and wash facilities are within the one cubicle
- Individual cubicle lighting
- Door locked from the inside
- Door opens outward onto open space.
- Ambulatory entrance

The safety aspects of this design are that there is no need for shared space and users can feel confident when occupying the toilet.

Enclosed building with wash facilities outside

The design intent of this form is to remove the requirement for an enclosed communal space. Features of the design are:

- Visible cubicles
- A form of screening (could be translucent) to provide discretion for users
- Visible and external wash facilities
- An ability to secure the facility

This structure is visible and users are accountable

Interior Design

Design intent should be to maximise patron visibility and minimise opportunity for collision and conflict. There should be open sight lines and no blind corners. Use of colour contrast is recommended for people with low vision.

Cubicles – should be spacious, vandal resistant, well lit and easy to clean.

Doors – Should be solid and have gaps from the floor and from the ceiling to the door. Be easy to clean, scratch resistant, have locks securely fitted and sprung so they return to the closed position after use. External steel gates where building is being locked.

Walls – Should be light coloured and bright. Solid and vandal resistant.

Ceilings – Light coloured and vandal resistant. Preference for no exposed beams to be within reach.

Sharps Disposal – Should be provided in each cubicle which opens onto open space and fitted at least 1600mm from floor out of reach from children.

Fittings and Services – Should be solid, robust and securely fitted. Preferably metal. Vandal proof lighting

Pans – Should be stainless steel, securely fixed with no exposed piping. Cistern should be contained within a service duct with only a vandal resistant dual flush button visible.

Urinals – Stainless Steel, wall hung, and where possible fitted with waterless disposal fixtures.

Basins – Preference for metal, securely fitted to wall. Metal pipework if exposed.

Tapware – Metal, spring loaded to regulate water use.

Ventilation – Passive ventilation is preferred.

Fire Prevention – Materials selected should not be flammable.

Automated Fittings – Where usage volumes are high, consideration should be given to installing automated fittings as a water conservation feature.

Water Conservation – Where practicable, grey water or rain water from tanks should be used for flushing of toilets.

Accessibility

Access for mobility impaired or wheel chair users must be considered. Cubicles that conform to Australian Standard 1428.2 need to be provided. The cubicles must be directly accessible from the outside activity area.

ALTERNATIVE DESIGN OPTION

Composting or waterless toilets use technology which could be considered at appropriate locations. Of the sites considered in this report, it is not recommended that these types of toilets be used.

These toilets rely on the natural composting processes of organic waste to treat the effluent. They have buffer distance requirements from watercourses and are generally located at remote sites where usage is usually low.

In the urban environment within Mitchell Shire Council which are away from water a course, these toilets would be susceptible to vandalism and graffiti and are therefore not recommended for installation.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS FOR PUBLIC TOILET DESIGN GUIDELINES & POLICY

1. Toilet Design Process	2. Toilet Management Process	3. Decommissioning Process
Requirement Confirmed Assessment of need Community consultation	Risk Management Enhance safety	Formal Audit Refurbish and/or Replace Close & demolish
Location Site Access Proximity issues Passive surveillance Open sight lines Close to activity Consultation Accessibility Signage Access to natural light & ventilation	Access Management All abilities Access	
External design Entrance orientation Approach Clear line of sight Accessibility consideration Lighting (natural & solar) Aesthetically pleasing CPTED(Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles - (CPTED is the proper design and effective use of the built environment which may lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement of the quality of life.)	Security Measures Lighting Surveillance	
Internal Design Configuration Designation Vandal resistant surfaces Ventilation Light coloured and reflective surfaces CPTED(Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles	Cleaning Frequency	
Materials & Fittings Durability Vandal resistant Consideration of people w	Maintenance Preventative Scheduled Urgent & Essential	

disability Low energy and water requirements Automated fittings		
Alternative Design Composting/waterless toilet Grey water use Stormwater collection	Information and Reporting Procedures	
	Regular Auditing Feedback	

Reactive Category	Maintenance	Actions	Target Performance
Urgent & Essential (Immediate risk to the safety of the community)		Make safe & organise temporary repairs	4 Hours
Urgent (Risk to the safety of the community)		Inspect, make safe & schedule repairs ASAP	COB Same Day
Standard Request (All other categories)		Inspect & evaluate urgency. Place on future programme	Within 3 Days from time of request
Specified Request (As agreed to by citizen, officer or Councillor)		Inspect & place on future programme	Within time-frame specified in agreement