



# Public Toilet Strategy

2023 - 2033



# Havelock St



↗ High Country Rail Trail  
300m, 4mins walk

← Public toilet  
200m, 3mins walk



← High St  
250m, 3mins walk

## CITY CENTRE



Walking

map

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# VISION

To provide safe, clean and accessible public toilets for Wodonga residents and visitors.

# SUMMARY

Everyone has used a public toilet at one time or another. Yet it's easy to overlook the important role that public toilets play in supporting community health, inclusion and access to public spaces. Public toilets contribute to the livability and appeal of cities for residents and visitors alike. Inadequate public toilets can be detrimental to businesses and tourism, can affect the wellbeing of residents and the health of the environment. Inadequate facilities and poor access can also impact on social and recreational activity.

For some people - such as older people, families, pregnant women, workers whose job involves driving, or those living with certain health conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome or incontinence, the location and amenity of public toilets can be an important consideration when leaving the home. For people with disabilities or high support needs, accessible public toilets and changing facilities enable them to enjoy daily activities many of us take for granted, such as shopping, working, studying, or socialising.

Public toilets also play a role in supporting community resilience and safety, by providing sanitation and dignity for people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, or emergency situations or disasters.

The *Public Toilet Strategy 2022-2032* (the strategy) adopts current best practices for the development of new public toilets and for the refurbishment and maintenance of existing facilities. The objective of the strategy is to:

- prioritise the safety and wellbeing of users;
- enhance the public toilet facility user experience;
- provide a comprehensive network of facilities in key locations;
- ensure compliance with legislation; and,
- provide equitable access to facilities through universal design principles.



## LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The right to water and sanitation is a universal human right (United Nations, 2010). Although no federal or state legislation mandates the provision of public toilets, there is a long history and precedence for councils to do so. The provision, safety and access of public toilets is guided by various state and federal acts, policies and strategies, such as the *National Construction Code 2019*, *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023*.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Wodonga Council has established a set of guiding principles to inform the approach set out in the *Public Toilet Strategy 2022-2032* that align with objectives set out in Wodonga's *Council Plan 2021-2025* and *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*. The principles include the following:

## 1. CONVENIENTLY LOCATED

Public toilet facilities should be located in convenient areas to improve useability and access for all users. Facilities should also be well distributed and appropriately located across the municipality.

## 2. ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

Facilities must provide a level of functionality and service that meets the needs of all, while adhering to best practice accessibility guidelines. Facilities must comply with legislation, recognising that everyone has the right to equitable access of public facilities.

## 3. EASY TO FIND

Facilities should be easy to find and clearly show important information, including gender or disability availability, contact details, opening hours, and location of alternative facilities.

## 4. SAFE AND CLEAN

Facilities should incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to enhance user safety. Facilities should offer a high level of functional amenity and be secure, well maintained and regularly cleaned.

## 5. CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Ensure design features of public toilet facilities improve user experience, enhance safety, and meets the needs of the community today, and into the future.

## 6. SUSTAINABLE

Consider the future of facilities by ensuring good designs and best value, use of robust materials, effective management and servicing to meet community needs and expectations. Economic viability and environmental sustainability are also considered.







## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

With a growing population and increasing demand for public toilets in Wodonga's activity centres and open spaces, this strategy considers the challenges and opportunities in delivering public toilet facilities that meet the diverse needs of the community.







Providing contemporary designed facilities that are safe, clean and accessible can be challenging. Wodonga Council strives to deliver public toilet facilities that are conveniently located across the city so residents can go about their day-to-day lives, whilst also ensuring public toilet facilities are economically and environmentally sustainable.

By implementing the opportunities identified in Figure 1, the Wodonga community will have improved access to facilities that are clean, safe and sustainable. The inclusion of strategically located Changing Places facilities in the city, for example, would further enhance resident access and support visitor attraction in the region.





Figure 1

PRINCIPLE	COUNCIL PILLARS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Conveniently located</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy, safe and resilient community</li> </ul>	<p>Facility supply versus population growth and visitor movement.</p>	<p>Support adequate facility supply as part of urban growth area planning.</p> <p>Facility audit for proximity between facilities in CBD and key activity nodes.</p>
<p>Accessible for all</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy, safe and resilient community</li> <li>• Connected and engaged community</li> </ul>	<p>Maintaining compliance with current codes and standards.</p>	<p>Provision of more accessible facilities, including Changing Places and all-access toilets including Changing Places, all-access and gender inclusive toilets.</p> <p>Utilise Universal Design principles in facility builds and refurbishment.</p>
<p>Easy to find</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy, safe and resilient community</li> <li>• Connected and engaged community</li> </ul>	<p>Toilets are hard to locate and information on alternatives such as all hours' facilities not available.</p>	<p>Upgrade wayfinding and information signage.</p> <p>Support data sharing to ensure toilet locations are available on national toilet maps.</p>
<p>Safe and clean</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy, safe and resilient community</li> </ul>	<p>Standards of cleanliness not consistent across facilities and soap often not available.</p>	<p>Regularly audit facilities, review the cleaning and maintenance schedules.</p> <p>Establish soap access.</p>
<p>Contemporary design</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thriving and vibrant community</li> </ul>	<p>Varying ages and designs of facilities across the city and non-standardised fixtures.</p>	<p>Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), gender inclusive design, and Universal Design principles in planning of new facilities and renewals/maintenance lifecycle.</p>
<p>Sustainable</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable and forward thinking</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing maintenance required and recurring expenses.</p>	<p>Use Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles in facility features, such as robust building materials and renewable energy.</p> <p>Monitor use and align opening hours.</p>



# 1. CONVENIENTLY LOCATED

Public toilets serve the community best when they are located in places where people need them. Public toilets should be provided in precincts which are a destination for residents and visitors and where gathering is encouraged for multiple reasons, including economic presence and activity, passive recreational and leisure use, play spaces, or precincts frequented by older people, families and children.

Public toilet facilities provide an opportunity to strengthen community engagement and facilitate social connections. Without adequate facilities, people will stay in a precinct for less time, or will not go there at all. On the other hand, the provision of adequate facilities allows people to visit an area and stay for longer periods of time. Not only does this benefit the individual and the community, but also enhances economic opportunities for nearby businesses.

## CHALLENGES:

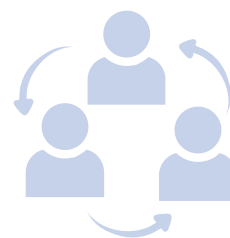
- Matching facility supply with population growth and usage.
- Accounting for the demographic characteristics of users in different locations.
- A geographically expanding city with the majority of residential growth in outer suburbs.
- Maintaining an audit of locations of non-council owned public toilets (eg. shopping centres).

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Support the development of facilities in growth areas.
- Ensure suitable supply of facilities in places of high pedestrian volume and close proximity to the CBD, activity venues, community and cultural facilities, sport and recreation facilities, shopping centres, etc.
- Consider proximity to carpark and walkways when selecting locations.
- In Wodonga's urban areas, provide facilities in high traffic areas where there are high volume of visitors and two or more reasons to visit a precinct
- In the CBA, provide facilities within 10 minutes walk or 500m of popular activity nodes and destinations, including regional playgrounds and parks







## 2. ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

Up to half of older residents are impacted by mobility limitations and almost one in five Wodonga residents have a disability. The council recognises that everyone has the right to access services and facilities, including public toilets.

The council acknowledges the impact that toilet access and amenity can have on all community members, particularly older persons, gender-diverse people, families, those with certain health conditions, people with disabilities, vision impairment or high support needs.

### CHALLENGES:

- The ability for older facilities to be adapted and ensuring compliance with current building codes and standards.
- Ensuring the diverse needs of all community members is catered to, such as older people, people with disabilities, and all genders, in the design and access of facilities.
- Synchronising priorities eg. safety, access, sustainability, etc.
- Inconsistent approach to toilet design and access features across the city.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Align the upgrading and planning of new facilities with council's *Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan*, *Disability Action Plan* and *Gender Equality Action Plan*.
- Incorporate Universal Design planning principles to all facility renewals and new builds.
- Preference the provision of all access or gender-neutral toilets, over gendered toilets.
- Ensure toilets are as close as practical to streets, footpaths and car parking.
- Install sealed, continuous paths to and from accessible toilets to allow wheelchairs to pass each other or for a carer to walk alongside.
- Increase the availability of baby change facilities across the municipality.
- Build adult change facilities including Changing Places accredited facilities.
- Expand the number of all hours and/or Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) facilities.
- Ensure sanitary bins are available.
- Expand public access to shower facilities, including the Dry Access Shower Program.



### Adult change facilities

Adult change facilities are important to ensuring public toilet facilities cater to the needs of people with a disability or high care needs. Accredited Changing Places facilities, for example, are designed for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets, and differ from standard accessible or disabled toilets as they often include additional features such as an adult change table, hoist, shower, screens, and large circulation spaces.

### Baby change facilities

Baby change facilities cater for all parents, including both men and women, and are important to ensuring families with infants and children can comfortably and hygienically access public toilets. A functional changing unit (table) would allow for ease of movement, access to a nappy disposal bin, and enable bags, prams and changing materials to be within reach. Parents may also have additional children, so wall-seats should be included.

### Master Locksmith Access Key facilities

The Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) system allows people with a disability to access designated public toilets throughout Australia. MLAK keys can be purchased or borrowed to enable certain community members to access certain toilets at any time, especially after hours.

### All access toilets

All access, also known as all gender or gender neutral toilets, are facilities designed to be used by anyone. All access toilets do not have gendered signage, including those who don't feel comfortable using a toilet that is designated as either male, female or unisex. All access toilets also benefit parents and guardians accompanying children and people requiring the assistance of a carer, regardless of gender.

### Dry Access Shower

The Dry Access Program provides public shower and change room access for those experiencing hardship.

### Signage

Any new or replacement signage is to comply with council's signage strategy and guidelines, with consideration to gender-neutral toilets in all new buildings, as per below.



Toilet  
TOILET







### 3. EASY TO FIND

Being unable to find toilets easily while being in public is not only an inconvenience but also detrimental to health. Ensuring public toilets are easily identified by residents and visitors is an important principle.

#### CHALLENGES:

- Inconsistent or inadequate wayfinding signage/information.
- Unavailability of nearby toilet facilities, including all hours facilities.
- Insufficient recognition of non-council owned public toilets.

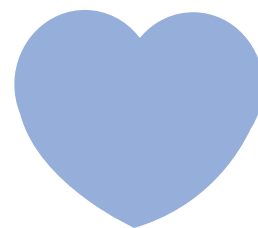
#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide clear and easy to read information and wayfinding signage to improve accessibility.
- Ensure signage meets the needs of people with vision impairments, and communication barriers (such as braille, text and symbols.)
- Provide signage with opening hours, gender availability, and contact details for cleaning and maintenance.
- Provide information about other services, such as where vulnerable community members can access sanitary products.
- Provide wayfinding indicating the location of the nearest all hours facilities at public toilets that are not open during the night.
- Distribute toilet locations in council communication platforms and publications.
- Update maps of toilet availability and share data with national and state-wide websites.
- Provide incentives for private facilities to expand access to the community.

#### All hours facilities

Providing all hours public toilet facilities delivers a higher level of convenience for users and is important in protecting people's dignity. It can also help in the prevention of public urination and defecation. All hours facilities cater for different groups of people, including workers on night shifts, rough sleepers, people engaging in night-time activities and travellers.





## 4. SAFE AND CLEAN

Council prioritises the safety, health and wellbeing of all residents and visitors. The community expects toilets to be maintained to a high level of cleanliness. It also expects facilities are designed in ways that minimise the occurrence of anti-social behavior, such as graffiti, loitering and crime.

### CHALLENGES:

- The perception of poor cleanliness of toilets among the community.
- Inconsistency of standards of toilet hygiene across the city.
- The threat of graffiti, loitering and other criminal behaviour occurring near public toilets deterring user access.
- Provision of safety and hygiene features not consistent across facilities.
- Ensuring high standards of non-council operated facilities.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Ensure public toilet facilities are visible from all or most directions without compromising user privacy.
- Improve casual surveillance by locating facilities opposite or adjacent to high traffic buildings, thoroughfares, activity spaces.
- Ensure there are no fixtures near public toilets that encourage loitering, such as payphones, tables, seats, bins or notice boards.
- Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles when upgrading or planning new facilities.
- Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of toilet supplies that ensure cleanliness, such as toilet paper and hand soap.
- Optimise natural light and add lights where necessary to improve visibility.
- Ensure artificial lights are used inside and outside facilities to enable adequate lighting during early mornings, evenings, and night times (all hours facilities).
- Consider the use of external CCTV to minimise anti-social behaviours, such as graffiti.
- Orientate facility entrances, where possible, towards well-lit areas with casual traffic to enhance casual surveillance, improve user safety and reduce crime.
- Enhance user safety and experience through features, such as slip-resistant flooring, automatic taps, soap dispensers and hand dryers.
- Provide contact details on facilities so that safety and hygiene concerns can be reported.
- Record and monitor anti-social behaviour at facilities to identify hot spots.

### Hygiene

Public toilet facilities should be designed to minimise hand contact as much as possible to improve hygiene and reduce the spread of germs. Where possible, automatic soap dispensers, taps and hand dryers should be supplied. Sanitary bins should be available in female toilets with information about local organisations that supply sanitary products for vulnerable women and girls. A container for the safe disposal of sharps should also be considered.





## 5. CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

As a progressive and vibrant city, Wodonga's public toilets should incorporate a contemporary approach to design to meet the expectations of the community today while also having the versatility to meet future needs. Contemporary designed public toilets are aesthetically pleasing, safe and accessible for all users.

### CHALLENGES:

- The varying ages and designs of public toilet facilities across the city.
- The presence of graffiti or damage.
- Non-standardised fixtures and fittings across the network of facilities.
- Environmental barriers to access and universal design.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to interior and exterior wall design to reduce graffiti.
- Ensure landscaping does not obstruct public toilet facilities.
- Keep public bins and furniture at least 10 metres away from facilities to discourage loitering.
- Optimise natural light inside public toilet facilities while protecting the privacy of users.
- Consult with community and residents prior to the development of new facilities to ensure toilets meet the immediate needs of community.

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

CPTED is a crime prevention theory focused on tactical design and the effective use of the environment to help reduce crime (and fear of crime).

### Universal Design

Universal design is a philosophy all about creating an inclusive society. It relates to the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible and aesthetically appealing to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors.



## 6. SUSTAINABLE

As a sustainable and forward-thinking council, the future of public toilet facilities in Wodonga will be delivered through an integrated approach to design and management that considers the long-term impact on the environment and the wellbeing of residents. Sustainability in public toilets is about using good designs and robust materials, as well as effective management and servicing to meet community needs and expectations.

### CHALLENGES:

- Ongoing maintenance resulting in recurring expenses, including costs related to cleaning and disinfection, replacement or repair of equipment and replenishment of consumables (such as toilet paper).
- Management of waste and sewage.
- Shifting to renewable energy.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Use Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles in builds and refurbishments, including using renewable energy and reducing water use.
- To help reduce costs, use building materials that are robust and easy to clean.
- Provide automatic equipment, such as energy-efficient hand dryers, where possible.
- To ensure low water use, plants should be drought-tolerant and garden beds should be mulched.
- Maximise natural lighting where possible.

### Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles aim to improve the health of facility users while also reducing negative impacts on the environment. ESD includes such things as promoting renewable energy, reducing water consumption, inclusion of environmentally-friendly building materials, and reducing consumables waste.







## SUPPLY OF FUTURE FACILITIES IN WODONGA

Public toilet facilities provide an opportunity to strengthen community engagement and facilitate social connections. Without adequate facilities, the time that people can stay in an area is limited or they will not go there at all. Meanwhile, the provision of adequate facilities allows people to visit an area and stay for longer.

Wodonga's new public toilet facilities are to be prioritised in precincts which are a destination for residents and visitors and where gathering is encouraged for two or more reasons, including any of the following.

- Economic presence and activity
- Passive recreational, social, cultural and leisure use, in situ or passing through
- Regional play spaces;
- Frequented by seniors and/or children and families.

Future decision making around the inclusion of toilets will also consider the following.

- Visitor and patronage numbers
- Duration of stay
- Visitor movement and passing through of a precinct
- Attraction of visitors from across suburb boundaries
- Proximity to other available services and facilities;
- Availability of nearby toilet facilities.

Wodonga's CBA and large recreation spaces are frequented by many residents and visitors and as such, access to public toilet facilities in these spaces are a priority for the council. The proximity between facilities in the CBA and regional play spaces will be no more than 10 minutes walk.

Across the broader city, precincts that are highly frequented for two or more reasons will also be prioritised for future public toilet facilities to ensure a facility is available.



## EXISTING FACILITIES IN WODONGA

A safety and accessibility audit checklist was developed to assess existing facilities against key elements of this Strategy. This has informed recommendations for improvements across council's public toilet facilities.

Public toilet facilities in Wodonga were audited in 2022 to identify capital works required to refurbish or replace existing facilities. This informed a five-year implementation plan for recommended works across council's public toilet facilities, excluding public toilets that are provided inside council-owned facilities (such as The Cube Wodonga) or privately owned public toilets (such as at shopping centres).



