

**Submission  
No 8**

## **INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC TOILETS**

**Name:** Mr Gokulan Gopal

**Date Received:** 9 September 2024

---

# A. Importance of Public Toilets

Public toilets are a fundamental component of urban infrastructure, playing a crucial role in fostering community participation and ensuring public health and hygiene. Here are some key points highlighting their importance:

## 1. Facilitate Community Engagement:

- Public toilets enable people to spend extended periods in public spaces, such as parks, shopping areas, and community centres. This encourages social interaction, community events, and overall civic engagement.

- Accessible public toilets are essential for inclusive participation, allowing everyone, including families with young children, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities, to comfortably use public spaces.

## 2. Promote Health and Hygiene:

- Proper sanitation facilities help prevent the spread of diseases and maintain public health. They provide a safe and clean environment for individuals to attend to their personal hygiene needs.

- Public toilets also support the management of menstruation, which is crucial for the health and dignity of women and girls.

## 3. Support Economic Activity:

- Well-maintained public toilets can boost local businesses by attracting more visitors to commercial areas. People are more likely to shop, dine, and participate in local activities if they know there are clean and accessible toilets available.

- They also create job opportunities in maintenance and sanitation services, contributing to the local economy.

## 4. Enhance Social Inclusion:

- Public toilets are vital for social equity, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their socio-economic status, has access to basic sanitation facilities. This is particularly important for vulnerable groups, such as the homeless and low-income individuals.

- Gender-neutral and accessible toilets promote inclusivity, providing safe spaces for transgender and non-binary individuals, and reducing the risk of discrimination.

## 5. Environmental Benefits:

- Proper waste management through public toilets helps protect the environment by reducing pollution and maintaining the cleanliness of public spaces.

- Sustainable toilet designs can also contribute to water conservation and energy efficiency, aligning with broader environmental goals.

## B. Need for Gender-Neutral and More Female Toilets

### - Reduce Queues and Promote Equality:

The addition of more female toilets and gender-neutral toilets can significantly reduce wait times, particularly for women, and promote gender equality.

### - Inclusive Spaces:

Gender-neutral toilets provide a safe and inclusive environment for everyone, including non-binary and transgender individuals, reducing the risk of discrimination and discomfort.

## C. Renovation of Old-Style Toilets

### - Modernization and Hygiene:

Renovating old-style toilets can improve hygiene standards and make them more welcoming and user-friendly. This is crucial for maintaining public health and safety.

## D. Accessibility Improvements

### - Standard Accessibility Features:

Ensuring all public toilets are equipped with standard accessibility features is vital for inclusivity. This includes features like ramps, handrails, and adequate space for wheelchair users.

### - Support for All Users:

Accessible toilets support not only people with disabilities but also parents with young children, elderly individuals, and others who may need additional assistance.

## E. Additional Points

### - Community Well-being:

Accessible and well-maintained public toilets contribute to the overall well-being of the community by providing essential facilities that support health and hygiene.

### - Policy and Planning:

Advocate for clear policies and strategic planning to ensure the consistent provision and maintenance of public toilets across NSW.

## F. Submission for the Improvement and Increase of Public Toilets in Western Sydney:

As a resident and an active community member of Western Sydney, I am writing this submission to advocate for the enhancement and expansion of public toilet facilities in Wentworthville, Pendle Hill and Toongabbie. These areas have seen a significant increase in weekend visitors and economic activities, making the need for adequate public amenities more pressing than ever.

### Current challenges:

1. Insufficient facilities to meet the growing demand, especially during weekends and community events.
2. There is often a significant queue outside female toilets, highlighting the need for more female and gender-neutral toilets.
3. Many existing public toilets are outdated, less user-friendly and less hygienic.
4. Not all the public toilets are equipped with standard accessibility features.

### Recommendations:

1. Increase the Number of Public Toilets.
2. Renovate existing facilities.
3. Install safer & gender-neutral toilets.
4. Enhance accessibility.

In conclusion, public toilets are not just a convenience but a necessity for vibrant, healthy, and inclusive communities. Investing in their provision, maintenance, and modernization is essential for fostering community well-being and ensuring equitable access to public spaces.

Submitted by,  
Mr. Gokulan Gopal.