

1.6 PUBLIC TOILET STRATEGY

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes the summary of community feedback and proposed responses to submissions outlined in Attachment 1: Draft Public Toilet Strategy Community Consultation Report.*
2. *Adopts the draft Public Toilet Strategy inclusive of the changes made in response to the community consultation.*
3. *Notes the indicative Implementation Plan acknowledging its delivery is subject to consideration as part of Council's annual budget process.*
4. *Noted that there is the opportunity to open up, and plan for a refresh/refurbishment of existing facilities as identified in the implantation plan in the public toilet strategy, noting the need to negotiate a change to the terms of the existing licences/leases with the licence/lease holder.*
5. *Allocates the following budget amounts within the current years budget to facilitate the opening up, or investigation/design of existing facilities:*
 - a) *\$22,500 (for a 6-month period) to facilitate the opening of the Category 1 facilities as identified in implantation plan from the 21/22 financial year and accommodate an ongoing \$45,000 p.a for security and cleaning costs and minor maintenance costs;*
 - b) *\$25,000 to facilitate the feasibility required for refresh of these facilities;*
 - c) *\$30,000 to facilitate the feasibility required to refresh/refurbishment for the Category 3 facilities and those facilities identified in point 6.4.*
6. *Notes that Council will receive an update, following completion of discussions for the Category 1 locations, a report at its February 2022 Council meeting regarding the Category 2 facilities and a report at its April 2022 meeting on the Category 3 facilities as well as those identified in point 6.4. These reports will identify the scope of works, associated costs and officer recommendations with regard to each category of facility.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present the outcome of the community consultation of the draft *Public Toilet Strategy*, inclusive of officers responses and recommended changes. An indicative implementation plan that is subject to Council's annual budget process has been included in the strategy. The report recommends that Council adopt the draft public toilet strategy.

BACKGROUND

The draft *Public Toilet Strategy* outlines the issues and challenges in public toilet service provision, identifies a strategic vision and proposes a number of strategic objectives and actions to address the current gaps in public toilet service provision.

The draft *Public Toilet Strategy* was approved for community consultation at the March 2021 Council meeting.

In the course of the consultation period (3 May to 15 June 2021), a total of seven hundred and thirty-two responses (732) responses were received.

Refer Attachment 1: Draft Public Toilet Strategy Community Consultation Report.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Survey responses

A detailed report into the feedback received and the officers responses is attached to this report.

Some notable information has been included below.

Survey respondents were largely Monash residents (88%), female (65%) and 35-65 years of age (64%).

In the course of the consultation period, a total of one hundred and eighty-six (186) respondents contributed seven hundred and thirty-two (732) responses as follows:

Question No	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q14	Direct email	Total responses
Responses	138	139	64	139	44	138	31	1	35	3	732

The responses received to the four open questions were categorised as follows:

Feedback source Feedback category	Q3	Q5	Q7	Q14	Direct email	Open question responses by category
Facility design & fit-out	16	28	18	7	1	70
Management & maintenance	12	11	10	4		37

Site specific	22	0	1	17	2	42
Service provision & capacity gaps	12	2	2	4		20
Security & safety	0	2	0	0		2
Invalid responses*	2	0	0	2		4
Information & communication	0	1	0	1		2
Responses by question	64	44	31	35	3	177

* Received responses which were unrelated to the subject or difficult to interpret (single word or indecipherable phrases) were deemed to invalid.

Key Issues

Key issues identified by the community are:

Facility design & fit-out

- Facilities should be clean and feel safe, easy to find, easy to access and use. Have a good quality fit-out, natural lighting and ventilation and be environmentally sustainable designed.
- A preference for touchless operations with some comments requesting showers and culturally inclusive toilets.
- Women rated places to put things, and touchless operation as the most important. Men rated touchless operation and suitability for people with a disability highest.
- Parents and carers of young children under 5 years valued facilities suitable for babies and small children, touchless operational facilities suitable for disability access, and places to put things. Parents of older children valued touchless operation, sanitary bins, facilities suitable for people with disability, suitable for babies and small children and places to put things more highly.
- Seven (7) respondents opposed unisex only public toilets due to safety and hygiene concerns, preferring gender segregated toilets with or without unisex toilet provision at same location.

Management & maintenance

- Respondents frequently (23 submissions) raised maintenance related issues, including:
 - defective or damaged equipment (door locks, taps, cistern leaks)
 - inadequate regular cleaning e.g., sanitary and non-sanitary bin overflow

- short of supply of consumables (soap, toilet paper)
- graffiti & rubbish dumping

Site specific feedback

- Public toilets at commercial and retail premises are used weekly by 30-60% of respondents, public facilities at Council buildings, activity centres and reserves are used by 30-40% of respondents on a weekly basis.
- Site specific feedback was received in relation to twenty-four (24) locations. Refer Attachment 1: Community Consultation Report.

Service provision & capacity gaps

- 'There are not enough toilets in places where I use them' (54.3%)
- Respondents who sometimes require toilets that are accessible for people with disabilities were the most dissatisfied with the availability of toilets.
- Respondents who are caring for children tend to be more dissatisfied with the availability of toilets

Draft Strategy Revisions

Key revisions to the draft strategy comprise:

- *6.0 Strategic Priorities:* Identify service provision priorities (high, medium, low) based upon service gap analysis and community feedback
- *6.3 Open Pavilion facility:* Consider opportunity to open Tally Ho and Wellington reserve pavilion toilets to public with improved cleaning regime.
- *6.4 Further investigation:* Investigate service provision improvement opportunities at Warrawee Park.

Many of the comments and feedback received had already been accommodated in the draft policy. As such significant changes to incorporate these suggestions were not needed.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The draft Strategy service gap analysis together with feedback from the community consultation process has enabled the allocation of priorities to proposed service provision improvements. Refer to 6.0 Strategic Priorities.

6.1 Provision of New Standalone Public Toilets (High Priority)

- Galbally reserve
- Holmesglen reserve
- Napier Park reserve
- Glen Waverley North reserve
- Fairway reserve

- Waverley Road Basin

6.2 *Provision of New Public Toilets within New Pavilion in line with pavilion program*

- Gardiners reserve
- Carlson reserve
- Fregon reserve
- Ashwood reserve

Note: Based upon the current pavilion upgrade program

6.3 *Opening up Existing Facilities to Public & 6.4 Existing Facilities require further Investigation to scope Refurbishment required to enable Public Access and/or to address increased demand.*

Discussed in further detail in the Implementation plan section of this report below.

Council as part of its 21/22 budget process allocated money to the design of both Galbally and Holmesglen reserve, with new toilets proposed in the 22/23 financial year.

Implementation Plan

The Public Toilet Strategy includes an indicating multi-year capital works implementation plan that can be considered year on year as part of the annual budget process. Refer Attachment 3, Appendix 2.

Provision of New Standalone Public Toilets

The indicative program provides for the provision of new public toilets at all high priority locations by years 4-5 should Council as part of its annual budget process resolve to allocate this funding. Should Council maintain this funding year on year all new standalone facilities could be delivered by years 8-9. Noting that the program may become longer or be reordered as priorities change, if additional locations from the opening up category are added or is budget is not allocated.

Opening Existing Facilities to Public

There are three categories of facilities as shown in the tables below that are able to be opened to public in the more immediate period subject to certain matters being attended to.

Common to all are the following:

- The need to negotiate a change to the terms of the existing licences/leases, with the licence/lease holder.
- Allocation of \$15,000p.a per facility for security and cleaning costs and minor maintenance costs.

Each of the categories are discussed in further detail below, as well as what may be required to facilitate their opening on a permanent or temporary basis.

- or with a refresh (refit of existing interior components) or a refurbishment which includes consideration for accessibility DDA compliance.

Facilities fall into three categories:

- Openable without substantial investment 2021-22
- Refresh – Allocate \$20,000 to undertake the feasibility for a refresh of the facility with a report being presented to Council for consideration by April 2022.
- Refurbishment - Allocate \$20,000 to undertake the feasibility for refurbishment of the facility with a report being presented to Council for consideration by April 2022.

Category 1 includes the following locations.

Location	Scope
W A Scammell Reserve	Openable without significant investment
Gardiners Reserve	Openable without significant investment
Ashwood Reserve	Openable without significant investment

These are able to be opened in the short term subject to the overarching requirements above, with only minor changes required.

An ongoing budget allocation of \$45,000 is required for security and cleaning costs and minor maintenance costs.

Category 2 includes the following locations:

Location	Scope
Fregon Reserve	Refresh
Lum Reserve	Refresh
Batesford Reserve	Refresh
Tally Ho Reserve	Refresh
Federal Reserve	Refresh

They are known to require refresh to bring to expected standard as per the PTS and expectation of the community. A feasibility for these can be undertaken at an approximate cost of \$25,000, with a report to Council on what is required, and the cost of the refurbishment works, by its April 2022 Council meeting.

The opportunity exists to investigate opening these more immediately in their current condition as an interim measure (understanding that they will be closed for a period when

the refresh occurs). Officers will report back to Council by the February 2022 meeting on the outcome of these investigations along with a recommendation on how to proceed. Undertake the inspections of the refresh with a report to be presented to Council in April 2022.

Category 3 require additional investigation to determine if they require a refresh or refurbishment.

Location	Scope
Southern Reserve	Refurbishment
Mount Waverley Reserve	Refurbishment
Wellington Reserve	Refurbishment

The opportunity exists to investigate these more immediately to determine the level of intervention as well as whether they can be considered for opening in the short term in their current condition. A budget allocation of \$15,000 is required to undertake this assessment and identify and scope the interventions needed. A report will be presented to Council by its April 2022 meeting on the outcome of these investigations along with a recommendation on how to proceed.

Investigating and Scoping Refurbishment Required by Existing Facilities

6.4 Existing facilities require further investigation to scope refurbishment required to enable public access and/or to address increased demand

Location	Proposed Action	Priority
Davies Reserve	Consider opening of external access pavilion toilets to public with improved cleaning regime. (Note: Interim action, refer 6.1 Provision of New Standalone Public Toilets for long term solution)	High (If this interim solution cannot be achieved in near future, the priority of proposed new standalone public toilet at Davies Reserve should be elevated.)
Gladeswood Reserve	Consider opening of pavilion toilets to public with improved service provision, cleaning regime and associated accessible path to DDA compliant parking.	High
Warrawee Park, Oakleigh	While there is limited opportunity to provide for additional toilets at the current location, a refit of the existing (male and female) toilets to operate as gender-neutral, unisex facilities would contribute to addressing the identified service gap at this site.	Medium

These facilities are known to require more significant refurbishment. A budget allocation of \$15,000 is required to undertake this assessment and identify and scope the interventions needed. A report will be presented to Council by its April 2022 meeting on the outcome of these investigations along with a recommendation on how to proceed.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Feedback from the community consultation process confirms that Monash residents expect an adequate level of public toilet provision at destinations across the city as a necessary support to daily life.

Service provision improvements at identified locations will enable more people to spend more time at key Monash destinations. The resultant increase in patronage and pedestrian activity at these locations has the potential to deliver significant and positive impacts upon physical and mental health and perceptions of safety.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The Public Toilet Strategy is in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 as it seeks to ensure equality and participation in public life.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

The Public Toilet Strategy is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community and a gender impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this work.

Changes were made to the community consultation survey to ensure it was inclusive and accessible for all genders. These included asking demographic questions, adding playgrounds as a site (as young children and carers, especially women, are likely to need toilet services here); including sanitary bins as a key facility; including hooks on the backs of doors and a shelf (for bags, medications) as an option.

The changes made in the community consultation survey were reflected in the results by breaking down the responses by gender and parents/carers of young children under 5 years. Key findings include:

- Women rated places to put things, and touchless operation as the most important.
- Men rated touchless operation and suitability for people with a disability highest.
- Parents and carers of young children under 5 years valued facilities suitable for babies and small children, touchless operational facilities suitable for disability access, and places to put things. Parents of older children valued touchless operation, sanitary bins, and facilities suitable for people with disability, suitable for babies and small children and places to put things more highly.

These recommendations have been incorporated into the Strategy and also the development of the public toilet design standards.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- The implementation and delivery of public toilets in each of the categories will be considered as part of Councils annual budget process. At a high level and in current dollars the following is relevant. A new standalone public toilets will require a budget allocation of approximately \$400k.
- Provision of new public toilets within a new pavilion will add cost to the delivery of a pavilion and will be considered as of the Pavilion Upgrade Program.
- Opening of identified standalone and hosted toilet facilities currently closed to public access will vary on condition and required works.
- To facilitate the opening of the Category 1 facilities, Council would need to allocate \$22,500 (pro-rate for the 21/22 financial year) and \$45,000 on an ongoing basis for security and cleaning costs and minor maintenance costs.
- To facilitate the feasibility for the Category 2 facilities, Council would need to allocate \$25,000 in the current financial years budget.
- To facilitate the feasibility for the Category 3 and those facilities identified in point 6.4, Council would need to allocate \$30,000 in the current financial years budget.
- With each public toilet in each of the categories there will be additional ongoing budgetary implications and costs such as cleaning, security routine maintenance costs, \$15k plus per facility per annum on an ongoing basis. These costs as well as the additional operational maintenance costs will be assessed and reported as public toilets are considered during each annual budget process.
- The cost estimate of delivering a new facility could increase as a result of specific site conditions and constraints and additional measures such as services, paths, landscaping, lighting and access to the nearest sewer.
- Costs will also increase year on year in line with CPI and contractor costs.

CONCLUSION

The draft Public Toilet Strategy has been developed with reference to a comprehensive service planning and community engagement process.

Proposed revisions to the draft strategy are recommended in response to the community consultation process.

It is recommended that Council endorse the revised Public Toilet Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Public Toilet Strategy Community Consultation Report
2. Public Toilet Survey Brochure
3. Public Toilet Strategy (Revised)