



Adopted 5 July 2010

# Public Toilet Plan 2010 - 2014

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*Tarwin Street, Boolarra*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this plan is to-

- Develop asset management plans for Latrobe City's public toilets
- Develop a management plan for whole-of-life maintenance requirements for public toilets
- Develop means to provide flexibility in the provision of public toilets to cater for changing demands of the community
- Promote and support the development of public toilets that enhance the social and economic well-being of the Latrobe Valley
- Develop a public toilet renewal program

This is in accordance with:

- Latrobe City publication "*Latrobe 2021, The Vision for Latrobe Valley*" (2nd edition 2006), particularly the Strategic Actions for Liveability and Sustainability (for both Built Environment and Economic Sustainability)
- Latrobe City Council Plan 2009-2013 Strategic Objective for Liveability "*To promote and support social, recreational, cultural and community life, by providing both essential and innovative amenities, services and facilities within the municipality*".

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Provision of Public Toilets has changed since many of those in Latrobe City were built. In the past, toilets were intentionally designed to

be out of the public view, and were designed for robust functionality, often without sufficient forethought for safety, aesthetic or accessibility concerns. However, toilets have now gained a greater degree of "respectability" and are the focus of much attention from designers, technicians and the general public.

Toilet facilities are now required to fulfil the increasing expectations of the people who use them, and be close to focal activities, clean and functioning properly, and most importantly, configured so that people of all ages and physical abilities can use them without encountering threatening or antisocial behaviour.

To fulfil these expectations, toilet facilities need to be designed in accordance with a range of principles, such as:

- Environmentally Sustainable Development
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design ("CPTED")
- Equity of Access and
- Efficiency.

The application of these principles has seen the development of toilet configurations that feature self-contained cubicles, some of which can have various stages of automation for cleaning and security. However the configuration of individual public toilet facilities is very dependent on the type of activity and mix and number of people to be served.

The application of CPTED and Equity principles in particular make significant impacts on how the existing public toilet network should be treated and demonstrate the need for many changes to be made.

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CPTED has been defined “*The proper design and effective use of the built environment that can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement of the quality of life.*” (National Crime Prevention Institute)

Over the last 20 years designers and architects worldwide have begun to see the need to plan and build with the (real or potential) threat of crime in mind. As a result some communities that have adopted CPTED principles have seen a marked decrease in criminal behaviour and at the same time an encouragement for people to keep an eye out for each other.

With regards to Equity of Access, Latrobe City’s Disability Action Plan (DAP) provides strategies for changing any current Latrobe City practices that may result in discrimination against people with a disability. The DAP is designed to meet Council’s obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

While all of Latrobe City’s new and renovated toilets comply with the strategies set out in the DAP and are compliant with the DDA, further studies have found a need for ‘Super Toilets’ for people who have high support needs or who use larger mobility devices. These toilet facilities contain a hoist and an adult change table and are much larger than an accessible toilet specified in the Australian Standards for Disability Access.

The cost of construction has yet to be determined and Council has no obligation under the DDA to construct ‘Super Toilets’ but it is recommended that it be considered when Council constructs a new major facility or is renewing an existing facility. It is also recommended at this stage to limit the

‘Super Toilets’ to one in each major town.

Additionally the provision of parenting rooms has been identified by Latrobe City as desirable to encourage and allow families to participate in community life.

Parenting rooms are designed to offer a relaxed, child friendly environment for the use of carers to attend to the personal needs of babies/toddlers, such as breastfeeding, feeding fluids and solids, changing of nappies and the like.

Latrobe City currently provides parenting rooms at the Churchill Community Hub, Latrobe City Corporate Headquarters in Morwell and the Traralgon Maternal & Child Health Centre.

It is recommended that Latrobe City investigate and plan for the development of one parenting room in each major town and these should be considered when major developments are being proposed.

### 3.0 GENERAL

Although there are a number of providers of public toilets throughout the municipality the perception of the public is that (with the exception of perhaps a few facilities provided by or under the control of State Government departments), Latrobe City Council generally exercises some control over the provision, cleanliness and functionality of all toilets available to the public in its district.

For this reason, Council has a responsibility to establish and maintain a reasonable standard for toilets used by the public. The following strategies

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enable Latrobe City to do that for its own facilities and also enable it to educate, advise and enforce (where necessary) other providers to do the same.

In achieving this, Council will greatly enhance the liveability and attractiveness of the City, for residents and visitors alike. In the interests of sustainability, this Plan will set out a way of managing the current network, providing improvements where needed and the justification for any rationalisation of the current asset stock.

This is the first review of Council's Public Toilet Strategy with the Strategy originally adopted by Council in December 2006. As part of the review, the 'Public Toilet Strategy' will now be known as the 'Public Toilet Plan'.

Since the first Strategy was adopted, an annual program of replacement, upgrade and decommissioning has taken place. This review will continue with a further plan but many remaining facilities are subject to location master plans and strategies that are yet to be implemented or developed or will require negotiation with relevant sports clubs. The outcomes of this plan will eventually be incorporated into an Asset Management plan for the entire Buildings asset stock of Council.

On 20 June 2005, Council considered and adopted the key definitions, principles and service standards upon which this Plan is based. These same key definitions, principles and service standards have been used when undertaking the review of the Public Toilet Plan.

### 4.0 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PUBLIC TOILETS

During the asset life cycle, Latrobe City has a number of responsibilities and opportunities when managing the provision of a public toilet

These are:

#### Strategic Planning

- To establish the need for toilets on the network
- To determine the level of service
- To carry out Strategic network planning processes
- To consult with the public and other providers of Public Toilets

#### Safe Design & Construction

- To assess safety issues in accordance with CPTED principles
- To choose suitable locations, orientations, access & materials
- To carry out Building Approval processes

#### Whole-of-Life Maintenance Management

- To establish a cleaning regime
- To repair structures and fittings
- To provide security measures
- To carry out regular condition surveys

#### Upgrade, Renewal & De-commissioning Programming

- To prioritise works
- To obtain funding for works
- To carry out works

#### Information Collection, Analysis & Distribution

- To record asset statistics
- To record incidents
- To survey user opinions

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- To publish data for mapping and information services

These aspects have been incorporated into this Plan.

### 4.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning was successfully used in the initial Strategy to examine the existing network of public toilets and reshape it in terms of modern requirements. This has been partially achieved through the initial four year Capital Works Program and will continue with a further four year program.

#### 4.1.1 Establishing Need for Toilets

Many buildings located at activity centres are obliged to have adequate toilet facilities to cater for their patrons in order to comply with the Australian Building Code. The code prescribes the sanitary fixtures to be provided for a full range of building types as follows-

- Department Stores and Shopping Centres
- Restaurants, Cafes and Bars
- Health Care Buildings, Schools and Early Childhood Centres
- Theatres and Cinemas
- Sporting Venues
- Art Galleries and the like
- Churches and Chapels
- Public Halls, Function Rooms (and Transport Stations)

As a consequence modern activity centres that have associated buildings should *already have* adequate toilet facilities to cater for their patrons, and *separate* public toilets (as such), should only have to be provided by Council:

- At activity centres that have no focal buildings; or
- In situations where the prior planning activities of Council did not ensure that the focal buildings (whether owned/managed by Council or by others) included provision of adequate Public Toilets, and where this is unlikely or unable to be rectified in future; or
- Where Council desires to provide access to Public Toilet facilities outside those periods when the toilet facilities within a focal building are available – such as ensuring that one facility is available at all times in each town. Care must be taken in applying this principle to ensure that sites for loitering are not created, and that doubling up of service provision does not occur.

### DEFINITION OF PUBLIC TOILETS

Given the principle whereby focal activity buildings are expected to provide adequate facilities for their patrons,

**Public Toilets are defined as “*the separate public sanitary facilities provided at activity centres that have no focal buildings or to cover periods of closure of focal buildings.*”**

Examples of sites for public toilets (by this definition) would include-

- CBD shopping areas with street-frontage-shops and no focal building
- Small Sporting Venues without pavilions or without public access to toilets in pavilions
- Tourist/Passive Recreation Venues with no focal building



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- Parks with no focal building

Whether a toilet will actually be provided (or continued to be provided) in such locations will depend upon the “warrants” (or minimum usage level criteria) for public toilets being satisfied, and consideration of proximity to other facilities.

Note that activity centres associated with major events like street parades/parties and markets have not as a general rule been included here, because it is proposed to treat them as Major Events that will normally require the use of temporary public toilet facilities to cater for the numbers of patrons involved.

### WARRANTS FOR PUBLIC TOILETS

The Australian Building Code suggests a level of attendance threshold of 100 patrons or spectators should be reached before provision of public sanitary facilities is needed at a building used as a sporting venue, theatre, cinema, museum, art gallery or the like. The threshold is reduced to 20 patrons for buildings used as a Restaurant, Café, Bar, Public Hall, Function Room or the like if the building accommodates more than 20 persons.

**A minimum threshold of 100 patrons or spectators normally attending an activity centre is needed as the general warrant for the provision of Public Toilets with a reduced threshold of 20 patrons or spectators should apply at venues such as places where BBQ facilities are the main focal point.**

In the past, there has been a tendency for Council to construct barbecues (or other facilities that result in the need for a Public Toilet, such as

Playgrounds) without an overarching strategy. A number of sites exist where such facilities/activities lack an adjacent public toilet. However, as stated earlier, the mere existence of a focal activity will not automatically mean that a Public Toilet must follow – the warrants for thresholds of use and proximity considerations also need assessing in each situation. For example, barbecues that do not (upon surveying at expected usage times) *regularly* have in excess of 20 patrons will not qualify for a Public Toilet under this Strategies’ principles.

There are also some toilets (with or without barbecues) that have been superseded by the development of other toilets, such that the pre-existing ones have very minimal usage, and their continued existence and cost to the community is hard to justify.

### 4.1.2 Level of Service

The Level of Service to be provided is determined by hours of operation, the distance between toilet facilities, the capacity of facilities and the frequency of cleaning.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

CPTED principles determine that toilets should only be available to users *whilst activities that provide safety & surveillance are occurring*. Accordingly the hours of operation for public toilets should coincide with appropriate levels of activity and at other times the facilities should generally be closed.

Given the vision of Latrobe 2021 is to “*promote active living and participation in community life*”, and the application of Equity principles, it is appropriate that a 24 hour level of service should be provided in all the town centres.

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In adopting this principle in 2005, Council has agreed that in the larger towns that one of the centrally located public toilets will be open during the hours that the remaining public toilets are closed, in order to achieve the 24 hour level of service. Council's preference is for these to be at the "Transit Centred Precincts" in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon. Note: the "24 hour toilets" do not need to necessarily be Council owned or managed, but they do need to be genuinely accessible to the public – not linked to patronising a facility at cost.

### DISTANCE BETWEEN FACILITIES

When the Public Toilet Strategy was first adopted in 2006, there appeared that there were no published standards for the maximum or desirable distance between public toilet facilities, and this continues to be the case. However, since Council adopted the Strategy, Melbourne City Council has also adopted a Public Toilet Plan using the same principles as Latrobe City when it comes to the distance between facilities. So now even more so, the evolving standard among the industry for distance between facilities is settling on a distance of 500m.

**Council has adopted this principle, so that Public Toilets that meet the usage warrants should not be more than around 500 metres apart.** This will in effect generally mean a maximum walking distance of 250m to reach a toilet where there is more than one in a town centre/CBD or focal activity centre.

In towns or locations with fewer toilet facilities (or only one), or where the activity centres that meet warrants for provision are greater than 500m apart, walking distances may be greater than 250m or even 500m, and this is

acceptable. Also, where there are a number of toilets within the maximum distance of a focal activity centre, this tends to indicate an oversupply of facilities exists.

### CAPACITY OF FACILITIES

The capacity of a facility is its ability to service clientele, once they have arrived at it. The Australian Building Code Table F2.3 sets out the number of sanitary fixtures required for various activities and types of patron. It is considered appropriate that the same schedule be used for Public Toilets.

Many statistics are now available concerning the capacity needed for toilets to satisfy the needs of patrons. A developing standard is to limit the queues during peak periods to 7 people so that the longest waiting time is around 15 minutes based on an average occupancy period of 2 minutes.

In Latrobe City, queuing to this maximum is expected only to occur at major events.

Council has adopted the principle that the **capacity of facilities be designed to cope with normal levels of activity.**

When the occasional major event takes place the additional capacity needed can (in terms of life cycle cost) most economically be provide using properly designed temporary facilities - especially if service points (featuring a hard standing, power, water and sewer connection) have been prepared in advance.

### FREQUENCY OF CLEANING

The need for cleaning can arise after any occupancy and it is known that the

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need for cleaning increases with an increase in the percentage of small children, people affected by substances and/or frail patrons.

It is often common practice at activity centres with buildings (i.e. other than any stand alone Public toilet building) that the management operating the building/activity arranges for regular inspections and a system to receive complaints from the users, so that cleaning efforts can take place on an as-needs basis, as well as the programmed minimum basis. A similar system of inspections, reporting and cleaning efforts is currently being achieved on Council's network of Public Toilets. The current level of cleaning provided by Latrobe City throughout the network is shown in Appendix 3.

Council has also improved signage at all toilets, showing:

- Opening hours;
- Location of nearest toilet and 24 hour facilities;
- Number to call for emergency cleaning response; and
- Number to call for emergency maintenance response.

### 4.1.3. Strategic Network Plan

The proposed network of toilets for use by the public has been divided into four groups:

- Town Centre Precincts
- Sporting Venues
- Tourist/Passive Recreation Venues
- Parks

The current network, and to a certain extent locations for potential facilities are shown in Appendix 1 (Inventory) and with regards to the main town

centre facilities, in Appendix 4 (Maps). Where relevant to network analysis, privately owned facilities are also shown. The general concepts and issues are discussed in the section below, and the detailed plan set out in sections 5.0.2 to 5.0.5, and 5.0.10.

### TOWN CENTRE PRECINCTS

The main factors to be considered are-

- To provide one 24 hour service per town
- To limit maximum walking distance between *warranted* toilets to 500m, where practical.
- To account for all providers of toilets for use by the public, whether public or private
- To remove any duplication or over capacity of facilities.
- To remove any existing facilities in unsatisfactory locations.

As recommended in the original strategy, 24 hour toilet facilities are now available in all towns, with the exception of Churchill, where further investigation is needed to establish a suitable location for the service.

Shopping centres also provide for both major activity and public toilets and whilst designed for shopping centre patrons, such facilities become common knowledge and members of the public will gravitate there to use the shopping centre toilet facilities, if they are unaware of others, or occasionally in preference to known, stand alone facilities.

Latrobe City Service Centres in Churchill and Traralgon, as well the City's Headquarters in Morwell, supplement the availability of public toilet facilities during their normal office hours Monday to Friday. Additionally the libraries in Moe, Morwell and

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Traralgon open for varying times during the weekend which also allows for additional public toilet access.

These major centres of activity serve the public well in terms of the provision of toilets and there is no need to duplicate the service with "Public Toilets" during the hours that they are open (in their vicinity).

Typical hours for the shopping centres:

Mon – Wed	9.00am – 5.30pm
Thu	9.00am – 6.00pm
Fri	9.00am – 9.00pm
Sat	9.00am – 5.00pm
Sun	10.00am – 4.00pm

Typical hours for the Railway Stations:

Mon – Fri	5.00am – 9.00pm
Sat	6.00am – 9.00pm
Sun	8.00am – 4.00pm

These opening hours cover the peak activity times during the day and the remaining hours at off peak times are covered by Council by providing the required 24 hour service in these town centres.

The current 24 hour service sites within the three major towns that have provided adequate service to date are located at -

Moe – Currently located at Apex Park, it is envisaged that the 24 hour service will be located in the Railway/Transit Cities Precinct when that area is developed.

Morwell – Commercial Road:  
Railway/Bus Station Complex

Traralgon - Hotham Street: Seymour Street Car Park.

These toilets are all new buildings that have been constructed since the

adoption of the original Public Toilet Strategy and were designed using principles and recommendations of the strategy.

**It is recommended that these locations continue to be the preferred locations for the 24 hour public toilets.**

There are two toilets remaining in town centres that were recommended to be de-commissioned in the original strategy as they were classed as an over provision of public toilets when walking distances were taken into account, along with the fact that they are considered to be located in unacceptable locations as determined by CPTED principles. Therefore it is still **recommended that the following existing "town centre" public toilets be de-commissioned –**

Moe – at the Town Hall, when there is a replacement built in the railway precinct.

Morwell – Rotary 'wayside stop'

### SPORTING VENUES

The main factors requiring consideration are-

- To account for toilet provision at pavilions and other buildings
- To remove any duplications or over capacity of facilities
- To remove or relocate any facilities that are in unsatisfactory locations
- To provide for major events
- To provide for casual use (eg. walking/cycling) on non-sporting event days. *This will only occur where an identified need or potential exists and the facility regularly has in excess of 20 patrons (in line with the*

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*usage warrants) otherwise it will not qualify under this Strategies' principles.*

The misuse of toilet facilities at sports venues between times of activity has been reduced significantly by the implementation of the original strategy recommendation that these facilities be closed during times of no activity at the venue.

However, when applying CPTED principles, best safety and security is achieved by co-location of toilet facilities with focal buildings, rather than the former practice of building isolated toilet blocks separated from pavilion buildings.

Co-location enables the management of cleaning and monitoring of the facilities to be coordinated with activity periods and for the facilities to be locked at other times.

Most sports venues with pavilions and clubrooms etc are expected to already comply with the Australian Building Code for crowds attending at normal activity levels. To illustrate-

Fixtures required for a crowd with –

100 men and 100 women	
Men	1WC* 1 HB* 1U*
Women	2WC 1 HB

250 men and 250 women	
Men	1WC 2HB 3U
Women	4WC 2HB

\*WC = Closet Pan, \*HB = Wash Basin  
\*U = Urinal

As urinals are the main cause of odour issues, these should be replaced (where possible) with an equivalent number of closet pans. *At some sporting venues this will not be*

*appropriate, and facilities with urinals will still be used.*

Note that in determining the number of sanitary fixtures to be provided, a unisex facility required for people with disabilities may be counted once for each sex. A unisex facility comprises one closet pan, one hand basin and means for the disposal of sanitary towels.

These facilities need to be considered separately (i.e. in addition) to any facilities provided for players or umpires, for obvious privacy/security reasons. Some pavilions have part of their patron-use provision as part of their 'social club' section, which would not be available to casual users at any time. Therefore the distribution of the Australian Building Code requirement needs to be done in such a way as to meet all four needs:

- Players/umpires
- Event spectators (for a "normal match' level of attendance)
- Social room users
- Casual users, outside event days.

For the latter (where justified), as well as for event spectators, this would mean toilets built into the pavilion (ideally so as to maximise use of plumbing infrastructure) but accessed from the outside, securely independent of social room/player access/egress routes. Working out the specific combination at a given site will require extensive consultation with relevant clubs.

An example of where NOT to have provision for casual users would be the Yallourn North sports ground – the reserve is isolated and not on any obvious "activity trail". By way of contrast, a reserve that could possibly

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justify such provision would be the Ronald Reserve pavilion in Morwell, which is in close proximity to the Waterhole Creek walking/cycling trail.

Council has an adopted Recreation Liveability Strategy which sets out the high level strategic goals for such recreation precincts and that adopted strategy should guide pavilion upgrades. Casual use facilities then need to be considered where warranted. Other relevant strategies and plans carry out detailed analysis of each site.

Where done, this analysis must be consistent with the principles of this Public Toilet Plan – i.e. account for proximities of facilities (avoiding doubling up) and warrants for provision. If the warrant for providing a public toilet is 100 persons attending an event, then a given activity trail would need to demonstrate at least this level of use *per day* in order to justify the cost of such an upgrade – whether “stand alone” or attached to a pavilion.

Although at many Latrobe City sporting venues the “isolated” toilet blocks do come into use during major events, the majority, if not all, are no longer considered acceptable when applying the CPTED principals and often do not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. These facilities are also subject to incidents involving misuse such as-

- Sexual Activity and Loitering
- Vandalism
- Drug-taking and Drug Dealing
- Use by the homeless

**It is recommended that isolated toilet blocks at Sports Venues be de-commissioned and service points constructed to enable the**

**use of well-designed temporary toilets when finals and events attracting high patronage take place.**

As discussed, this would need to be done in a planned manner, *following analysis of needs, consultation with clubs, and where required, construction of modifications to pavilions*. Clubs/users should not be left by a demolition program that precedes identified upgrades.

### TOURIST STOPS/PASSIVE RECREATION VENUES

Tourist Venues play an important role in promoting Latrobe City and the facilities encountered by visitors can have a lasting impact on their perception of the City.

The main issues for Council to address for these facilities are-

- To assess the provision of toilet facilities at Tourist Stops/Passive Recreation Venues
- To remove any duplication or over capacity of facilities
- To remove or relocate facilities in unsatisfactory locations

Tourist Stops/Passive Recreation Venues in Latrobe City are subject to seasonal factors of the Victorian South Eastern weather zone. Tourists expect that the facilities provided for them will cope with the changeable weather conditions experienced here. Accordingly the toilet provision should be designed for all weather conditions (i.e. be weatherproof) and be located close to parking areas for long vehicles (such as tourist buses).

Also, Council is not always the owner or manager of Tourist/Passive

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Recreation Venues, some are managed by Committees of Management (often on Crown Land auspiced by the Department of Sustainability and Environment), and these groups will need to be consulted and respective roles determined/clarified.

### PARKS

Council currently has or has had a historical role in the management of certain parks in the municipal district, particularly along rivers and streams, or at certain urban community parks which have a focus other than (though sometimes including) general passive recreation or tourism. Some of these have Public Toilet facilities, or may have none, but may have a need for them.

For example, currently toilet facilities are provided at Martin Walker Park on Middle Creek and Billy's Creek Reserve at Jeeralang Junction. These sites involve Crown land and other agencies, so Council should not assume responsibility for them *automatically*, but work with the other agencies and local communities to develop appropriate strategies for the sites.

These toilets may also have waste treatment systems that do not meet current standards and may be located in isolated places, far from reticulated sewerage systems.

The Environmental Protection Authority has indicated that they have approved waste systems that use composting, for use in environmentally sensitive areas. The compost produced has to be disposed of at approved locations. Where Council is responsible for a Public Toilet at one of these locations, it should consider installing composting systems (where

warrants are met), subject to consideration of:

- Whole of life costs, including any additional maintenance/cleaning issues.
- Waste disposal locations/volumes/frequencies
- Odour issues

**It is recommended that the provision of Public Toilets in Parks along river trails (including maintenance and cleansing arrangements and responsibilities) be determined as community management plans are developed for rivers and streams.**

#### 4.1.4 Town Planning Issues

In the past a number of Town Planning permits have required developers to provide public toilets as a separate consideration to the requirements of the Australian Building Code. *Where those public toilets are no longer required on the network the Town Planning permit conditions need to be modified to enable de-commissioning to take place.*

#### 4.1.5 Consultation

It is clear that there are many providers of toilets for use by the public and that many of them will be unaware of the CPTED principles that would make a large impact on such facilities, were they to be taken into account. These include both private sector companies and other government authorities.

Many of them will be surprised by the risks they could be taking as more and more facilities comply with the CPTED principles and community standards (i.e. what is considered acceptable) change.

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An overall improvement in the standard of public toilet provision can be expected to improve Council's image, as well as the image of the region.

### 4.2 SAFE DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION

Safe Design and Construction involves the application of CPTED principles which should be applied to public toilets as follows-

#### 4.2.1 Co-location

The key factor with co-location is that the facilities are only open when the activity that provides safety and proper surveillance is operating (e.g. in libraries, shopping centres). Managers of the combined facilities are then able to exercise guardianship over the toilets.

#### 4.2.2 Orientation

It is important for safety that the entrance to toilets faces the most active and visible space.

#### 4.2.3 Access

The approach to the toilets should avoid the use of steps and have gentle grades in accordance with AS1428.2 (1992) so people with disabilities are not at a disadvantage.

#### 4.2.4 Signage

Signage (both too, at and within public toilets) should be clear and legible and be in accordance with AS 1428.

#### 4.2.5 Lighting

Proper lighting of the area around and within public toilets is essential for

users to have confidence when approaching and using the facilities.

Night time audits may be needed from time to time, in case members of the public fail to report repair issues, as well as to identify locations where lighting is simply inadequate even if working.

Also, use of ultraviolet light (used as a means of making intravenous drug use difficult) should be discouraged, as this reduces the visibility/safety level for legitimate facility users.

#### 4.2.6 Vegetation

Vegetation should not obstruct visibility of the facilities and should be designed to avoid dark areas and/or hiding places.

Clearance under trees should be at least two metres.

#### 4.2.7 Loitering

Users of public toilets can feel threatened if people loiter around or indulge in "horseplay" at the facilities.

Council has powers under local Laws to deal with loitering, and can where necessary invite Police support for specific issues or locations. Other options include installation of real security cameras (subject to the Electronic Surveillance Policy 09 POL3 on this issue) and other 'demand management' tactics, such as the use of recorded music.

#### 4.2.8 Configuration

Modern design calls for cubicles that face directly towards activity areas: sometimes with see-through external screens and wash basins (e.g.



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Newman Park Traralgon, Commercial Road Morwell).

The most modern trend is towards self-contained accessible unisex cubicles and provide for baby changing and have an internal wash-basin.

The older designs of an enclosed building with common access is no longer acceptable. Users cannot be certain of the situation they might find themselves in when they enter. This is especially concerning where young or frail people enter isolated facilities alone.

### 4.2.9 Fixtures

It is common practice to provide only stainless steel fixtures with proper guards fitted to avoid damage by vandals.

The use of Urinal Stalls and even Wall Hung units is now considered to be the main cause of odours at public toilets. The use of unisex facilities has shown that closet pans are an acceptable substitute for urinals.

**It is recommended that closet pans be installed instead of urinals except in situations of regular, very high demand (such as some sportsground facilities).**

Closet pans should not have plastic seats or lids because of the damage done when they are set alight or melted. Plastic that has melted onto a surface is almost impossible to remove without damaging the surface it has adhered to. Alternatives include stainless steel lids or even no lids at all. It may be possible to source modern alternatives, but these are likely to be far more expensive than the standard cheap plastic seats/lids.

Ceramic and wooden seats/lids are also too prone to vandalism. However, once CPTED principles are in place, vandalism at a given toilet may reduce to the point where less robust and less expensive fixtures may again be feasible.

The use of Skylights is recommended in modern facilities to reduce lighting costs and maximise visibility, but it is important to design them so that cobwebs can be cleaned away to avoid the collection of litter in them, and that leaf debris etc does not easily gather on the exterior.

With different architects being engaged on different design projects, it is possible to have a range of fixtures and finishes being specified. In order to maximise ease of maintenance, choices should be limited to commonly available, proven materials.

### 4.2.10 Interior Design

The layout should be open, without blind corners, minimise the chance of a collision or conflict between users and have colours suitable for people with poor vision.

Walls should be light coloured to improve lighting and impress users. They should have very durable surfacing and be easy to clean.

Floors should be graded to stop pooling and aid cleaning, and have a non-slip finish.

Doors should be sprung to remain open when not in use, and have locks to indicate usage. Whilst outward opening external entry doors are desirable, they can be impractical due to the resulting width of multiple cubicle toilet blocks (if fully open) or trip hazard creation where door stoppers are used. They are also

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more prone to wind or vandalism damage.

Inward opening doors need to ensure modern clearance requirements for accessibility are achieved, in terms of both door opening width and interior space. This is particularly important for retro-fitting situations.

Plumbing should not be exposed, in order to avoid vandalism (e.g. use in-wall cisterns, not wall hung, and use concealed rather than exposed piping). Tap ware should be spring loaded to reduce wastage of water and be suitable for people with disabilities, or utilise infra-red sensors to trigger activation.

Baby change and durable electric hand drying facilities should be provided (in lieu of paper towel dispensers), and provision for the disposal of sanitary napkins should be made.

Sharps disposal units should be provided where needed and located 1600mm above the floor but not over the closet pan or behind doors so that doors impact them.

Materials used for construction should not be flammable. This is especially so in the case of composting toilets.

### 4.2.11 Accessibility

Latrobe City's DAP requires that people with disabilities are not discriminated against.

Therefore access for mobility impaired persons or wheel chair users must be provided at new and renovated facilities. Self-contained cubicles have to conform to AS 1428.2 and be fitted with grab rails.

### 4.2.12 Security

All public toilets should have a means to lock the facilities as the need arises.

Entry to public toilets should be at least 4 metres from parking bays and/or the nearest vehicle access point to give users a chance to react to threats.

Lighting should be provided both internally and externally, and any timing mechanisms should continually adjust for varying hours of darkness. A combination of natural and artificial light sources can overcome problems caused by power outages.

Walls (including all internal partition walls) should be made of robust, vandalism-proof materials (e.g. masonry, not plasterboard), and rendered and/or tiled where relevant for aesthetic reasons and ease of cleaning. All facilities require a roof, for both security and all-weather use (some are currently open-air). Given the potential for toilets - even those designed with CPTED principles in mind - to become a focus for illegal or unwanted activity, other design features to be considered include:

- Gaps above or below doors
- Semi translucent wall materials, so silhouettes can be seen
- Special lighting designs.

See section 4.2.7 also.

### 4.2.13 Temporary Toilets

Council have two temporary toilet facilities specifically designed for use at major events and that can also be used as an alternative at the site of an existing facility that is being upgraded or replaced.

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These temporary toilets are made available by Council, or other facilities sourced by event organisers, at times when the normal levels of activity at venues is exceeded, as can occur during occasional major events such as sports finals/competitions, concerts and festivals.

A concept plan of an acceptable temporary facility for use at major events is shown in Appendix 5. Any future investment made by Council in temporary facilities should comply with the concept plan, and the locations chosen for placement at events chosen to meet CPTED principles and other relevant principles set out in this plan (e.g. on spacing).

### 4.2.14 Building Approvals

All permanent public toilet facilities should comply with the Australian Building Code and the Building Regulations.

## 4.3 WHOLE-OF-LIFE MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT

Whole-of-life maintenance management strategies are now considered an important adjunct to CPTED design principles.

Comprehensive cleaning regimes, well-planned systems to attend to repairs needed on structures & fittings, and proper lighting can create the kind of environment that encourages support from members of the community. It is the kind of environment where people can develop the confidence to make helpful reports that they feel will be acted on promptly.

### 4.3.1 Cleaning Regime

The frequency of cleaning needs to meet the level of service established in the strategic planning process. The required standard of hygiene and presentation should differ as little as possible from “as new” condition throughout the design life of the facility.

Public toilets should be clean when they first open or (for 24 hour sites) as soon as possible in the morning. Given that Council employs a limited number of cleaning contractors (who themselves have a finite service capacity), this will practically mean that the highest priority toilets in the main towns will be given the highest attention level, followed by lesser used toilets and those in the smaller towns. Practical application of this could be as follows:

- Main toilet blocks (i.e. the designated 24 hour facilities): cleaned before 7:00 a.m.
- Others: Cleaned by 9:30 a.m.

Ideally, each toilet should be visited/cleaned *at least daily* (excluding pavilion toilets, unless designated for casual use), to account for the fact that toilets can become unusable or vandalised at any time. Council has resolved:

**“That the cleaning program be a reactive “as needs” service, to optimise cleaning levels”.**

### ROLES OF CLEANERS

Properly trained cleaners should be made contractually responsible for reporting maintenance problems as part of their duties, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort (i.e. the need to have separate regular maintenance inspections). Inspections

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by Council staff should only be for the purpose of auditing the quality of the cleaner's work (a task done at least monthly at present), as well as assessing more long term issues (see section 4.3.4).

In addition to Workplace Health and Safety training, cleaners should have the knowledge and ability to be able to receive and pass on problems reported to them by the public at the work site.

CPTED principles require cleaners to be readily identifiable and carry some means to establish their authorisation to do the work. A checklist has been developed for use by cleaners to help with inspections and achieve a high standard of workmanship and the use of modular design for public toilets has made the checklist simpler than it would be otherwise.

### **4.3.2 Repairs to Structures & Fittings**

Management systems that produce well maintained structures and fittings produce positive responses from users, so it is important to react as quickly as possible to malfunctions and damage.

Response times are geared to user demands and expectations with the intent of having facilities in full service during the activity periods they have been designed for. At present, reaction times are typically around an hour for simple issues with commonly available parts, and longer where speciality items have been used.

### **4.3.3 Security Measures**

It is a key CPTED principle that facilities be locked when the activity periods they are designed for cease.

Accordingly it is incumbent on management to ensure that facilities are locked at such times.

From time to time some facilities become the focus of abuse and it is necessary to identify the abusers. Management strategies in these cases should include the use of targeted security measures that align with the seriousness of abuse.

It is expected that patrols by Police or private security providers could address most forms of abuse but where matters of personal safety threats are involved the use of surveillance cameras should be warranted, as discussed earlier. Private security should only be used in extreme circumstances, and for short, closely monitored periods. Use of other measures such as improved lighting and piped music can also be of benefit.

### **4.3.4 Regular Condition Surveys**

The use of a whole-of-life maintenance strategy is aimed at optimising any maintenance measures undertaken during the design life of facilities and to enable works to be fully programmed.

Regular condition surveys are needed to monitor the performance of materials and fittings used in facilities so that informed decisions regarding works needed to achieve the design life can be made.

The surveys represent a specialist task and should be conducted by suitably qualified and/or experienced staff or consultants. Inspections should account for the full range of structural and fit out issues, as well as investigate specific complaints, and issues arising from changes to standards or regulations. Safe access

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should be gained onto (and if necessary, into) roofs in order to check blockage or rusting of gutters and the condition of roof seals, flashing, skylights etc.

As the need for works may arise due to incorrect cleaning methods, higher than expected use or faulty/unsatisfactory materials used in construction, there is a need to be able to react in a timely manner to limit their impacts.

**It is recommended that condition surveys continue to be carried out at least annually.**

**Note:** the recommendation above corresponds to continuing the current arrangement, as all Council buildings are subject to an annual condition/maintenance survey.

Results of surveys are used to cost and prioritise coming year recurrent maintenance or Capital improvement/renewal activities, as well as respond to any urgent issues identified, in the shorter term.

### 4.3.5 Whole of Life Cost Analysis

Once the public toilet network is recorded in Council's Asset Management System "MyData" as part of the building inventory, which is currently being compiled, costs should be tracked and analysed periodically (in conjunction with annual condition surveys) to identify:

- Actual vs. planned annual cleaning and other operating costs, and trends/anomalies;
- Projected impacts of refurbishments/portfolio additions/subtractions;
- Proportion of costs related to vandalism, unplanned

breakdowns, planned maintenance etc;

- Economic life projections (and thus depreciation estimates)

This can be done on an individual facility or whole portfolio basis, and the information fed into a Building Asset Management Plan.

## 4.4 UPGRADE, RENEWAL & DE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAMMING

This plan and its principles will continue to guide the upgrade and renewal program and it will be necessary to set priorities for the works to be carried out in an open and orderly manner.

### 4.4.1 Priority Setting

The priorities in this Plan have generally been determined using a weighted scoring system with 8 categories of comparative measures, which provide the basis for choosing one project over another. A certain degree of subjectivity is inevitable on some of the criteria, especially in the absence of rigorously-obtained data. The 8 categories are those considered important to the local community and are weighed against each other using a score out of ten to determine the relative importance of each factor. The weightings used are shown in the following table-

Category	Weight
Level of Service	8
Risk Factors	10
Cost Factors	8
External Funding	10
Secondary Benefits	7
Visual Impacts	6
Environmental Impact	6
Community Acceptance	5

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The score for each category is derived from the degree to which there is a problem to be solved and/or to which the solution proposed is ideal or beneficial.

Projects are individually assessed and given a score out of ten for each of the categories. The product of the score out of ten and the weighting gives the value for each category. The sum of the 8 values determined for each project yields a total score that is used to assess priority. The higher the total score, the higher the priority. The matrix can also be used to demonstrate a justification for decommissioning.

### LEVEL OF SERVICE

In this context, level of service relates to the number of people who directly benefit from a given (proposed) Public Toilet project.

For public toilets the number of people to be catered for determines the number of closet pans/urinals to be provided. The suggested scoring is shown in the following table-

Closet Pans	Patrons	Score
>254	20,000+	10
128	10,000	9
64	5,000	8
26	2,000	7
14	1,000	6
8	600	5
4	300	4
3	225	3
2	150	2
1	Up to75	1

### RISK FACTORS

Risk factors address matters that could potentially damage Council's image and/or conceivably give rise to claims

against Council if the project does not proceed in the short term.

A very high risk such as a dangerous structure should score ten but a very low risk situation should score one. Projects should also be assessed for the following known risk factors-

#### *CPTED non-compliance with-*

Location  
Orientation  
Configuration  
Access  
Security/Lighting

#### *Misuses such as-*

Sexual activity  
Drug related activity  
Use by homeless  
Offensive graffiti  
Vandalism

#### *Non-compliance with laws affecting-*

Health  
Building  
Discrimination  
Environment  
Work Safety

Score one for each factor that is addressed by the project. Maximum score is ten.

### COST FACTORS

Projects are assessed by determining the ratio of cost per direct beneficiary and scored according to the range in which the ratio falls: The higher the ratio the lower the score. This should account for not just initial capital but also maintenance/operating costs, therefore a life cycle cost approach is required. The *Capital cost aspect should ignore funding sources* – e.g. if externally funded, the full cost should still be used.

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Ratio	Score
Less than 25	10
Less than 50	9
Less than 100	8
Less than 200	7
Less than 400	6
Less than 800	5
Less than 1600	4
Less than 3200	3
Less than 6400	2
Less than 12800	1

### EXTERNAL FUNDING

Score one for each 10% of project cost being available from sources external to Council. (e.g. Private Contributions or Special Grants). However, even if fully funded up front by an external agency, a public toilet should NOT be built unless it meets the other plan principles on proximity to other facilities, usage warrants etc. Council has in the past taken on or built certain externally-funded assets that have proven to cause recurrent cost burdens and/or have very limited benefits.

### SECONDARY BENEFITS

Score one for each type of secondary benefit identified with the project. The maximum score is ten. Examples could include issues such as serving several purposes, being timely in terms of other related activities, or fulfilling other strategic goals. It should not include political or local interest group benefits.

### VISUAL IMPACTS

Each project is assessed for what visual impacts it would have on the precinct. Score five for no impact, higher for a positive impact and lower for a negative impact. The minimum score is one and the maximum ten. This relates to the degree to which a

visual “eyesore” would be solved (or created) by a proposed project.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

There are a number of environmental factors associated with public toilets including pollution, noise and water usage etc. Score five for no impact, higher for a positive impact and lower for a negative impact. The minimum score is one and the maximum ten. If a proposed toilet cannot be connected to a reticulated sewer system, it should only achieve a low score.

### COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE

The level of community acceptance can vary markedly from project to project. This factor allows for community opinion to affect priorities. Score five for indifference, higher for a positive acceptance and lower for a negative acceptance. The minimum score is one and the maximum ten. Parochial local support or objection should not be assumed as the only indication of acceptance, especially in the case of facilities designed for usage by non-locals.

### 4.4.2 Funding for Works

Funding for works identified in the Public Toilet Plan 2010-2014 will mainly be funded from rates, however, there will opportunities to source funds from a number of government agencies or in some instances, the private sector.

With the Public Toilet Plan reaching a point of consolidating ‘isolated’ public toilet blocks at sporting venues into pavilions etc., it is possible that pavilion upgrades will be considered for government funding, or ‘grants’, to assist in the cost of these projects. These projects will need to be

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assessed on a case by case basis and in some instances, projects brought forward or deferred, depending on the opportunities that arise.

Where Council is either the owner/manager of a facility or is assisting in a upgrade or development of a private facility, sources for funding could be aligned to at least one of the five facility groups that make up the overall network as follows-

- 1. For Town centres-**  
Revitalization Proposals  
Commercial developments  
Latrobe Transit-Centred Precincts  
Access for all Proposals
- 2. For Sporting Venues-**  
Recreational Proposals  
Access for all Proposals
- 3. For Tourist/Passive Recreation Venues-**  
Tourism Proposals  
Access for all Proposals
- 4. For Parks-**  
Parks Proposals  
NEIP partnerships  
Access for all Proposals
- 5. For Major Events-**  
Sponsorship  
Promotions/Special event funding  
Access for all Proposals

### 4.4.3 Carrying out Works

All projects involving public toilets are specialist works and need to be carried out by properly trained people who can achieve the standards of work required to fulfil the expectations of applying CPTED principles. Attention to detail is essential for works on public toilets and as a consequence supervision should be thorough.

### 4.4.4 Decommissioning

Council has resolved that -

**“Public toilets which are found to be:**

- **Located in unacceptable locations (as determined by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – CPTED principles), and/or**
- **Are surplus to requirements (in terms of the 500 metre spacing principle, and/or**
- **Which do not meet the activity thresholds**

**Should be decommissioned”**

The term decommissioning is used to describe the proposed treatment of facilities that are unsuitable or not needed on the Public Toilet Network.

In most cases it means demolition without replacement but can mean the re-use of a sound building or part of a building, for purposes other than public toilets.

At Sports and Parks Venues it will be important to review options with venue managers and users where decommissioning is recommended. Former toilet blocks could be re-used as kiosks, storage, scoreboard or player/coachbox buildings etc, *if clubs wished to redevelop them as such at their own cost.* This needs to account for planning of service points for temporary toilets for peak use events – the ideal location for such may be a demolished toilet block site, where the floor slab and connections for plumbing/power are retained in a secure manner under control of venue managers.



### 4.5 INFORMATION COLLECTION, ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION

#### 4.5.1 Record of Assets

The network of public toilets represents a large investment in assets and, like all other assets owned by the community, needs to be accounted for in detail.

The public toilet network will be recorded in Council's Asset Management System "MyData" as part of the building inventory which is currently being compiled. Relative non-Council facilities will also be recorded purely as a reference.

#### 4.5.2 User Opinion Survey

As provision of public toilet services is a relatively costly exercise it is important to measure the level of community satisfaction with the service. Accordingly, questions investigating the standing of this service should be included in the regular surveys undertaken on behalf of Latrobe City. Such surveys should target the whole range of users (tourists, sports clubs, shoppers, park users etc) and not be biased by focussing on areas where recent improvement works have been done or are urgently needed.

The results of these can then be compared with the annual resident satisfaction surveys conducted by the Department for Victorian Communities, which generally seek feedback at a broader level.

A positive response from the community is needed to demonstrate that the investment in changes to public toilets is achieving the desired result.

#### 4.5.3 Publishing Data

There are a number of maps, street directories and other publications that supply information to the public about public toilets including "The National Public Toilet Map" that can be found at the web address

<http://www.toiletmap.gov.au>. This website is often used as the primary source for other publications and Council has endeavoured to keep this site up to date when any changes to Latrobe City's Public Toilet Network occur.

### 5.0 PLAN UPDATE

This plan will require to be constantly monitored and if appropriate at the next review it may be integrated into the Building Asset Management Plan. Any review will also need to account for:

- The results of discussions with sporting clubs, concerning pavilion upgrades/external access for casual users and decommissioning of isolated facilities at reserves.
- The results of NEIP discussions and tourism-related needs analysis.
- The number, type and cost of additional temporary toilets that Council should purchase in order to meet peak demands for events at sites where decommissioning has or will occur.
- The results of other strategies or developments that impact on network or the delivery of services.

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### 6.0 SUMMARY

The development of the Public Toilet Plan has produced a set of modern strategies and principles that address the current amenity, design and equity standards needed for Council's Public Toilet Service throughout the municipality.

Since Council first adopted the Public Toilet Strategy in 2006 and the principles it is based, there has been a substantial improvement to Council's public toilet network, be it through upgrading existing facilities, replacing them completely, or increasing the cleaning & inspection frequencies.

The consequence of this plan is that a large number of the isolated and little-used toilet blocks (particularly at sports grounds) will be decommissioned and offset by the introduction of permanent service points where temporary toilets are easily installed during major events or gatherings. It should also be noted that Council now owns two high quality temporary facilities that it makes available to meet the requirements for larger than normal crowds.

Having completed a majority of the initial four year capital program, a further four year capital program has been detailed. This program however is subject to change due to the plan nearing a stage where works to be carried out are reliant on other factors such as club consultation, site master plans or strategies and external funding opportunities, particularly at recreation reserves.

A key approach of this Plan has been to align the provision of Public Toilet services to the activity centres that create the need for the services and to

use the Australian Building Code to establish the scale of service to be provided. Other than contained in this plan, it is strongly recommended that no other public toilet facilities be constructed, funded, managed, taken over, maintained or operated by Council unless considered and adopted as part of the planned update of (or other interim revision to) this plan. Council may require or allow developers to do so (at their initial and ongoing cost), where deemed appropriate for planning reasons. However, this should be consistent with the plan principles.

The Public Toilet Plan has, and will continue to, ensure that Latrobe City Council complies with,

- Disability Discrimination Act.
- Latrobe City Council Disability Action Plan.
- Latrobe 2021 – The Vision for Latrobe Valley, to “*promote active living and participation in community life*”