

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Agenda Item 5.6

8 April 2008

CITY OF MELBOURNE PUBLIC TOILET PLAN 2008-2013

**Division** Sustainability and Regulatory Services

**Presenter** Gordon Duncan, Acting Manager Engineering Services

**Purpose**

1. To seek approval of the Public Toilet Plan 2008-2013 (“the Plan”) for the City of Melbourne.

**Recommendation from Management**

2. That the Planning Committee adopt the *City of Melbourne Public Toilet Plan 2008-2013*.

**Key Issues**

**Asset Management**

3. The Public Toilet Plan notes that some of the toilet stock is ageing - particularly the underground toilets and older toilets in parks and gardens. It recommends the replacement of some toilets.

**Location**

4. The Plan sets out the need for some new toilets while delineating that a maximum of 500 metres between public toilets in major pedestrian areas should be the standard.

**Design**

5. The Plan recommends design modifications to provide a mix of automated and manual functions according to pre-determined guidelines listed in the Plan.

**Environmental Sustainability**

6. The Plan notes that there are opportunities to make City of Melbourne’s public toilets more environmentally sustainable particularly through water saving (refer to page 25 in Public Toilet Plan as attached).

**Consultation**

7. In the preparation and review of this Plan, the City of Melbourne had contact with a number of peak bodies and interested agencies. The following agencies have commented on aspects of the Plan: the Council on the Ageing (COTA), Nightclub & Bar Association, Residents 3000, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Australian Crohn’s & Colitis Association, Yooralla Society, Blind Citizen’s Australia, Travellers Aid Society, WC Convenience Management, Carlton Traders Association, Australian Retailers Association and Heritage Victoria.

8. 100 members of the public were surveyed to obtain their views about City of Melbourne's public toilets and possible improvements to the current network of facilities.

### **Finance**

9. The budget requirements will be considered through the normal budget process. In the previous four financial years, \$1.9 million has been spent constructing new public toilets within the municipality.
10. The 2007/08 Budget includes \$695,000 to construct new public toilets. \$500,000 of this funding is within the Engineering Services budget and \$195,000 within the Park Services budget.
11. The Plan proposes the construction of a further 18 public toilets within a five year period. The Infrastructure Plan contains indicative funding of \$1.25 million for new public toilets for the five year period from 2008/09 to 2012/13. The Park Services Capital Works Building Program contains indicative funding of \$2.25M for new public toilets for the five year period from 2008/09 to 2012/13.

### **Legal**

12. No direct legal issues arise from the management recommendation.

### **Background**

13. While there is no statutory requirement on Council to provide public toilets (except as part of some of its own facilities), they improve local amenity and support social activities within the municipality. There are 55 public toilets within the City of Melbourne.
14. As well as the public toilets managed by the City of Melbourne, there are many toilets available through eateries, carparks, shopping complexes and retail stores. These are privately owned spaces that are publicly available. They supplement the municipal public toilets although they are often only available to patrons of the establishment and may have no advertisement of their public availability.
15. The underground toilets in Russell Street at Bourke Street were decommissioned in 1994. Since 1998, a further five public toilets have been decommissioned. This was because either the structure was unsafe or the toilets were antiquated and being used for anti-social or criminal activity. Underground toilets that were decommissioned were located at King Street at Hawke Street, Parliament Place, Flinders Street west of Elizabeth Street and Flinders Street east of Swanston Street. The male toilets in the Fitzroy Gardens were also decommissioned. .
16. The oldest remaining public toilets are the street underground toilets. The first of these was built at the intersection of Russell and Bourke Street in 1902. The oldest remaining parks toilets are made from brick. Located in Fawkner Park and Princes Park, they were constructed in the 1940s.
17. The Collins/Swanston Street toilet (also known as the 'Town Hall' toilet) is the main public toilet within the municipality. It has high quality fittings and is well maintained. As with the older Elizabeth/Bourke Street toilets (adjacent to the former post office), attendants are employed within both the male and female sections.

18. Heritage Victoria has now included four underground public toilets on the Heritage Register. These are the toilets located at Elizabeth and Victoria Streets, Russell and Bourke Streets (already closed), Queen and Collins Streets and Elizabeth and Bourke Streets. Other public toilets recommended for heritage classification are public urinals at Queensberry/Errol Street, Queensberry/Swanston Street, Queensberry/Elizabeth Street and LaTrobe/Russell Street.
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**Attachments:**

1. Draft City of Melbourne Public Toilet Plan 200-2013
2. Consultation Summary and Response

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

# PUBLIC TOILET PLAN

2008-2013

Draft Only

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## INTRODUCTION

1. While there is no statutory requirement on Council to provide public toilets (except as part of some of its own facilities), they improve local amenity and support social activities within the municipality. In a recent survey, 90% of people who responded believe it to be extremely or very important that the City of Melbourne provide public toilets.<sup>1</sup>
2. Toilet provision has evolved from a time when toilets were intentionally designed to be out of public view to where they are now placed in locations where they can be seen and are most likely to be used.
3. City Plan 2020 notes the importance of amenity and safety to City users<sup>2</sup>. It commits Council to:
  - 3.1. ensuring that city assets and services are responsive to the changing demands of residents, workers, students and visitors to the city;
  - 3.2. the maintenance of city infrastructure and assets.
4. Council Plan 2005-2009<sup>3</sup> commits Council to:
  - 4.1. research, develop and implement initiatives to improve liveability and amenity in the central city. (*strategic objective 3.5.02*), and to;
  - 4.2. encourage public space design that demonstrates environmentally sustainable design principles. (*strategic objective 4.5.03*)
5. The Public Toilet Plan has been written to fit within this brief. It has been organised under the following five headings:
  - 5.1. Asset Management;
  - 5.2. Location and Use;
  - 5.3. Design;
  - 5.4. Managing for Sustainability;
  - 5.5. Implementation Plan.
6. The Public Toilet Plan 2008-2013 (CoM, 2007) replaces and updates 'Toilet Management' (July 2002).

## AIMS

7. To maintain a network of **safe, accessible, clean and environmentally sustainable** public toilets.
8. To continuously improve the **quality** of the public toilet stock ensuring that toilets are placed at locations that best **meet community need**.

<sup>1</sup> Austraffic, Toilet Patron Interviews for the City of Melbourne.

<sup>2</sup> City of Melbourne. City Plan 2010. 2005. p.10

<sup>3</sup> City of Melbourne, Council Plan 2005-2009

## BACKGROUND

### The Current Situation

#### *Public Toilets within the City of Melbourne – A Snapshot*

9. The City of Melbourne manages 54<sup>4</sup> public toilets (at 1 March 2008). 23 of these are located on the street and 30 are located within parks and gardens. Some of these toilets have a single toilet cubicle (eg. automated models) whereas others are larger.
10. The number of public toilets located in each area are:
  - 10.1. *fifteen* in the Central Business District (CBD). Comprises underground toilets at Melbourne Town Hall (including Baby Change Room) , Queen/ Collins, Elizabeth/Bourke and Victoria/Elizabeth, the AMP building, automated toilets at Exhibition/Collins, Exhibition/Lonsdale and Lonsdale/Queen, Market/Collins, Lonsdale/ King Elizabeth/Franklin, urinals at Flinders/Exhibition, Exhibition/Lonsdale and La Trobe/Russell and a brick toilet at Victoria Square;
  - 10.2. *eleven* in central Melbourne but outside the CBD. This comprises one toilet at Batman Park, four at Kings Domain (including a brick toilet which is part of a depot and Government House Drive), one at Alexandra Gardens and one at Carpentaria Place, two at Birrarung Marr, one at Gosch's Paddock and a cast iron toilet at Queensbridge Street;
  - 10.3. *eight* in Carlton including two urinals, two toilets at Rathdowne Street, Lincoln Square, two toilets at Princes Park and an underground toilet at Faraday Street. ;
  - 10.4. *five* in East Melbourne including one urinal and toilets at Treasury Gardens, Fitzroy Gardens (2) and Powlett Reserve;
  - 10.5. *three* in Parkville Royal Park (2) and levers Reserve;
  - 10.6. *three* in North Melbourne with two urinals on Queensberry Street and one at North Melbourne Town Hall;
  - 10.7. *two* in Docklands at Point Park and Docklands Park maintained by the City of Melbourne (The City of Melbourne is also maintaining a toilet at 'Shed Two' independently of its Building Maintenance Contract). There are also toilets at Aquitania Way at New Quay and Central Pier both maintained by VicUrban.
  - 10.8. *two* in Southbank at Sturt & Kingsway Reserve and Southbank Bld;
  - 10.9. *two* in South Yarra at Fawkner Park;
  - 10.10. *two* in Kensington at J.J Holland Park.
  - 10.11. *one* in West Melbourne at Flagstaff Gardens;
11. The public toilet stock located within the City of Melbourne comprises:
  - 11.1. *sixteen* above ground cast iron replica design;

<sup>4</sup> The City of Melbourne will assume responsibility for 3 new toilets on 1 July 2008 due to Kensington/North Melbourne boundary changes.

- 11.2. *fourteen* made from brick or pre-fabricated materials and/or attached to other buildings.
  - 11.3. *seven* urinals of cast iron design;
  - 11.4. *six* underground toilets with five located on streets and one in parks;
  - 11.5. *ten* automated stainless steel units with seven on streets and three in parks.
12. As well as the public toilets managed by the City of Melbourne, there are many toilets available through eateries, carparks, shopping complexes and retail stores. These are privately owned spaces that are publicly available. They supplement the municipal public toilets although they are often only available to patrons of the establishment and may have no advertisement of their public availability.
13. The Building Code of Australia prescribes that department stores, shopping centres, restaurants, cafes and bars provide toilets. Patron toilet facilities are usually required if the premises provides seating for more than 20 patrons to dine in the premises.
14. The National Toilet Map, a project of the National Continence Management Strategy, lists all of the City of Melbourne's public toilets. It also lists the following other toilets in Melbourne that are managed privately:
- 14.1. Australia on Collins, 260 Collins Street. Users must obtain a key from centre management for access;
  - 14.2. Collins Place, 45 Collins Street;
  - 14.3. Port of Melbourne, 530 Collins Street,;
  - 14.4. QV, corner of Swanston and Lonsdale Streets;
  - 14.5. National Australia Bank Headquarters, Bourke Street, Docklands;
  - 14.6. Royal Botanical Gardens.
15. Details of railway station toilets and post office toilets are also listed on the National Toilet Map.
16. The Russell Street underground toilets were closed in 1994. Since 1998, a further five public toilets have been decommissioned. This was because either the structure was unsafe or the toilets were antiquated and being used for anti-social or criminal activity. The first of these was built at the intersection of Russell and Bourke Street in 1902. Other underground toilets that were decommissioned were located at- King Street at Hawke Street, Parliament Place, Flinders Street west of Elizabeth Street and Flinders Street east of Swanston Street. The male toilets in the Fitzroy Gardens were also decommissioned.
17. Of the operational underground toilets, Queen/ Collins Street was constructed in 1905, Victoria/ Elizabeth Street (1907), Faraday Street (1939), Elizabeth/ Bourke (1910 male/ 1927 female), Collins/ Swanston (1914 female/ 1960 male) and Carpentaria Place (1924). The Swanston Street/ Victoria Street female only toilets were constructed in the 1930's. The oldest remaining parks toilets are made from brick. Located in Fawkner Park and Princes Park, they were constructed in the 1940's. City of Melbourne urinals were constructed between 1910 and 1925.



18. The Collins/ Swanston Street toilet (also known as the 'Town Hall' toilet) is the main public toilet within the municipality. It has high quality fittings and is well maintained. As with the older Elizabeth/ Bourke Street toilets (adjacent to the former post office), attendants are employed within both the male and female sections.
19. The first automated toilet was opened in 2002.

### *Current Installations*

20. New automated toilets have recently opened at the intersection of Lonsdale/ Queen Streets and Elizabeth & Franklin Streets.
21. New automated toilets will open in Argyle Square (near Pelham Street) and Lincoln Square– near Bouverie Street in May 2008.

### *Heritage Classification*

22. The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) recognised the significance of the early underground toilets and all the urinals in the CBD by adding them all to its heritage register. A group of six underground toilets were classified at a national level in May 1997. The underground toilets at Parliament Place (now closed) were classified at a state level on 2 June 1997. A group of nine urinals were classified by the National Trust in February 1998.
23. Heritage Victoria recommends to the Heritage Council those places and objects worthy of protection under the Heritage Act. Once a place or object is included in the Victorian Heritage Register, owners cannot make significant changes to it without a permit from Heritage Victoria. Heritage Victoria has accepted a recommendation that four underground public toilets be included on the Heritage Register. These are the toilets located at Elizabeth & Victoria Street, Russell & Bourke Street (now closed), Queen & Collins Street and Elizabeth & Bourke Street.
24. Other public toilets recommended for heritage classification are public urinals at Queensberry/ Errol St., Queensberry/ Swanston St., Queensberry/ Elizabeth St. and La Trobe/ Russell St.













































































