

## 1.6 DRAFT MONASH PUBLIC TOILET STRATEGY (PM)

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

*Adopts the draft Monash Public Toilet Strategy (attachment 1) for public exhibition and invites community submissions before finalising the strategy having regard to any submissions received and presenting it to a future Council meeting for consideration and adoption.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Draft Monash Public Toilet Strategy (PTS) and seek Council approval to publically exhibit the draft strategy and invite community submissions. Any submissions will then be considered and the final strategy will be presented to a future Council meeting for adoption and implementation.

### **BACKGROUND**

Public toilets are essential components of community infrastructure and there is an expectation that the community is provided with access to public toilets across the city when making use of public facilities and building.

In addition to the identified gaps in performance and provision, input from key stakeholders has identified a number of issues and challenges in response to which, the Strategy proposes a vision:

*Monash communities will have access to a network of safe, accessible and well maintained public toilet facilities which support community health and activity.*

The development of an evidence based strategy is important to ensure that we have public toilets at the right locations, that service levels are adequate and that service provision is provided in the most effective and efficient manner.

There are four key drivers for the PTS:

- Policy context
- Current gaps in service provision
- Community feedback
- Municipal and demographic growth

The draft PTS is proposed for community consultation in April/May 2021. Refer to Attachment 1: Draft Monash Public Toilet Strategy

***DISCUSSION***

The Draft Strategy outlines the strategic process, summarizes the findings of the analysis process and identifies the strategic vision, objectives and related strategies, strategic priorities and design standard.

***Service Performance Gaps***

The strategy audit process identified the following service performance gaps:

- 20 per cent of Council-owned toilets are open to public.
- 40 per cent public toilets within and in adjacent to the City of Monash are provided by Council.
- The majority of public toilets in Council-owned public buildings do not have direct external access. Their availability to the public is therefore restricted by the opening hours of the buildings.
- The capacity, cleaning regime and supplementary facilities provided at public toilets in similar settings across the municipality are not consistent.
- Public toilet provision ratio to population is highly uneven across the municipality.

***Demand & Service Provision Gaps***

The current and future demand for public toilet provision was determined with reference to the following (activity centre and transport related infrastructure) service provision parameters:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Policy Reference</b>
Within 250m from a playground	Monash Playground Strategy (draft) identifies that a public toilet should be provided within 250m from a Regional or District level playground.
Public toilet in council's pavilion	There is no clear requirement for public toilet provision based on the Pavilion Classification in Monash Active Reserves Facility Hierarchy.
Public toilet within 50m from A Grade sport ground	No clear requirement for public toilet provision based on the Sports Ground Classification in Monash Active Reserves Facility Hierarchy. Provision of public toilets in proximity of all A grade grounds as a minimum provision standard is proposed.
Open Space service level	Monash Open Space Strategy identifies that a public toilet should be provided in Regional level open space, should be provided in District level open space and good to have in Social / Family recreation type of local park.
Activity Centres	Public toilets should be considered within various levels of activity centre including smaller centres.
Within 400m (5 minute walk) from a railway station	There is not a mandatory requirement for public toilet provision at all railway stations. Currently most Premium Stations in the metropolitan area provide public toilets. However these public toilets are only open when the station service hub is staffed. It is a good practice to provide adequate public toilet in proximity of a railway station to encourage people to use public transport. This could be an advocacy position for Council.
Proximity to Active Transport Network	Public toilet provision should be considered within 100m along an existing and proposed Trail as identified in the Monash Open Space Strategy. The nodes where people access or exit the trail should be considered as high demand for public toilet.

Proximity to Bus route	There is no mandatory requirement for public toilet provision at bus stops. However, it is a good practice to provide adequate public toilet facilities in proximity (50m) of major bus stop along bus route to encourage people to use public transport. This could form an advocacy position for Council.
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### Challenges & Vision

In addition to the identified gaps in performance and provision, input from key stakeholders has identified a number of issues and challenges in relation to:

- Distribution and capacity
- Access and accessibility
- Perceptions of Safety
- Management and Maintenance
- Service Information

In response to these identified service gaps and challenges, the Draft Strategy proposes a vision:

*Monash communities will have access to a network of safe, accessible and well maintained public toilet facilities which support community health and activity.*

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Policy implications relate to five identified strategic objectives:

1. Address identified demand and service gaps
2. Identify service provision design standards
3. Identify service provision actions and priorities
4. Adopt consistent management standards
5. Adopt an effective service communication process

### **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Public toilets are essential components of community infrastructure and there is an expectation that the community is provided with access to public toilets when making use of public facilities and open spaces.

In order to meet community needs and expectations, site service provision must be complemented by provision of accessible paths of travel, landscaping, parking and provision of user-friendly public toilet information.

### **CONSULTATION**

The PTS is proposed for community consultation in April/May 2021. The community consultation process will have regard to Community Engagement Plan, which proposes the following methods for collecting feedback on the Draft Strategy:

- On-line questionnaire and an interactive pin-point mapping exercise. This on-line, survey approach has been successfully piloted with internal stakeholders in July 2020
- Key stakeholders focus groups, including disability, family, age friendly, youth groups
- Hard copy survey handout at public library and civic centre

The locations identified in the priority locations lists in the attached policy are not yet in priority order. An implementation plan along with a finalised policy will be developed and presented to Council following community consultation. This will allow any community input to be properly considered in the finalisation of the strategy and the development of an implementation plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The draft PTS identifies four areas of focus to improve current levels of service provision:

1. Provision of new standalone public toilets – Will require a budget allocation of approximately \$400k to be considered as part of Council’s annual budget process.
2. Provision of new public toilets within a new pavilion - The provision of these toilets will be budgeted separately as part of the Active Monash 10 Years Pavilion Upgrade Program. These will be considered as part of Council’s annual budget program, but will add cost to the pavilion budget.
3. Opening of identified standalone and hosted toilet facilities currently closed to public access - Preliminary analysis indicates that the opening of these facilities to the public is conditional upon the uptake of cleaning, security and minor maintenance costs at \$10-12k per facility per annum on an ongoing basis. An additional budget amount will need to be allocated to the operational maintenance budget for each facility.
4. Investigation of existing facilities that require potential refurbishment or other works to enable public access. However due to their condition and site constraints, further investigation and assessment work is required to understand the level of refurbishment works or if they require replacement which ensures they also comply with current Disability Discrimination Act standards. The budgetary implications for these will be considered as part of Council’s annual budget cycle at the appropriate time.

Proposed PTS recommendations are costed with regard to identified design standards, estimated implementation year(s) and proposed program budgets.

<b>Action Type</b>		<b>Design Standard</b>	<b>Estimated Capital Cost</b>	<b>Program budget</b>
1	New standalone public toilets	Standalone Base type	\$200 -250k	Public Toilet Provision
		Standalone Premium type	>\$250k	Public Toilet Provision
2	New public toilets within new pavilion	Externally accessible public toilets	Site specific	Pavilion Upgrade Program

3	Opening up existing facilities to public	No change to existing facility <sup>#</sup>	Nil or minor	Annual operational Maintenance budget (\$10-12k pa/site)
4	Potential openable facilities subject to further investigation	Site specific actions TBC <sup>#</sup>	Scope TBC	Asset Management Program

**Table 1: Proposed PTS Actions and related program budget – subject to budget being allocated as part of Council’s annual budget cycle.**

**Note:**

- *At some locations proposed opening of the existing facility as an interim measure in advance of the provision of new facility or future refurbishment.*
- *Does not include services, paths, landscaping etc.*
- *Additional maintenance, cleaning and security will need to form part of any additional toilet installation as an ongoing expenditure.*

**CONCLUSION**

The PTS is being developed with reference to a comprehensive service planning and community engagement process.

Council is requested to consider the PTS for public exhibition and invite community submissions for review before finalising the strategy for further Council consideration and endorsement.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Draft Monash Public Toilet Strategy