
Public Conveniences Policy



April 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. AIM OF THE POLICY	2
2. THE CURRENT SERVICE	2
2.1 How the service is managed	2
3. ROLES	3
3.1 Direct provider	3
3.2 Facilitator	3
4. POLICY PRINCIPLES	4
5. APPLICATION OF POLICY	5
5.1 Guidelines to determine the location and type of public convenience	5
5.1.1 Ensuring appropriate provision of public conveniences city-wide	6
5.1.2 Ensuring public conveniences are located appropriately in specific sites	6
6. SERVICE LEVEL STANDARDS	8
6.1 Design & construction standards	8
6.1.1 Amenity standards public conveniences at beaches, parks and playgrounds	9
6.1.2 Construction, materials and equipment	9
6.2 Hours of operation	9
6.3 Maintenance and cleaning	10
6.4 Signage	10
6.5 Promotion of Council's public convenience network	11
6.6 Rationale for the all-gender standard	11
7. ASSET UPGRADE PROGRAMME – COORDINATION AND TIMING OF PROVISION	12
7.1 Asset upgrade programme	12
7.2 Integrating public convenience provision with other planning and/or construction programmes	12
8. IMPLEMENTATION	13
8.1 Future provision of new public conveniences	13
8.1.1 Comprehensive city-wide research and review programme	13
8.1.2 Develop Council's facilitation role	13
8.2 Decisions on service levels for current facilities	14
8.2.1 Develop and prioritise a new upgrade programme	14
8.2.2 Develop and improve public conveniences in line with urban development initiatives	14
8.2.3 Review and revise Asset Management Plan and Service Level Agreement	14
8.2.4 Promote Wellington's public convenience network	15
8.2.5 Undertake specific research projects in 2002/03	15

1. AIM OF THE POLICY

Clean, well-maintained public conveniences that are accessible, safe and strategically situated are an important part of any city for residents and visitors alike.

This policy aims to provide a framework for consistent decision making on the location and service standard of Wellington's public toilet facilities.

The policy builds on the 1994 *'Framework for the Policy and Management of Public Conveniences – A Toilet Paper'* and a core service review of Wellington's public conveniences completed in June 1997 to:

- clarify Council's role in the provision of public conveniences
- provide clear guidelines for the location of public conveniences
- clarify the expected level of service provision of Council's public conveniences
- look at opportunities for Council to coordinate the provision of public conveniences with other city development programmes and
- provide a focused implementation plan.

2. THE CURRENT SERVICE

Wellington City Council owns and maintains a total of 97 public conveniences across the city from Tawa to Island Bay, Makara to Seatoun.

Fifty-nine of these facilities are easily accessible in the city and suburban areas with the remaining 38 being located on sportsfields or in pavilions that are only accessible by sports groups using the grounds. All Council owned public conveniences are provided free of charge.

The hours of operation for facilities differ depending on location. Those within Council owned facilities such as libraries, parks and/or gardens are open within the facilities' opening times, whereas most others are open on a 24 hour basis.

This policy covers Council owned public conveniences including beachfront changing sheds and park facilities that are open each day for public use.

Toilets or changing sheds that are in parks/pavilions for sporting use only (that is - can only be accessed when a sporting event is in progress) will not be included in this policy.

2.1 How the service is managed

Public conveniences are managed under the draft 'Park Buildings, Pavilions and Public Conveniences Asset Management Plan – 2001'. The cleaning schedules and maintenance of public conveniences are contained within the 'Clean Toilets' Service Level Agreement 1997.

3. ROLES

3.1 Direct provider

Council currently owns and maintains a large portfolio of public conveniences as:

- a) they contribute towards Wellington City Council's strategic outcomes by ensuring the maintenance of public health and wellbeing and
- b) the private sector does not provide a service to the required level and/or quantity.

Council is also guided by the:

- Local Government Act 1974 – Section 596 states that in order to provide for the health and wellbeing of the public a territorial authority may provide and maintain land and buildings to be used as rest rooms and for other public amenities.
- Health Act 1956 – Section 23 provides that it is the duty of every local authority to improve, promote and protect public health within its district. Section 25 provides that the Minister of Health may require any local authority to provide sanitary works including “sanitary conveniences” for the public¹.
- New Zealand Standard for Public Toilets (NZS 4241:1999) – provides design information and advice on the numbers, location, type and quality, including features and fittings for public toilets, in any location. Guidance on cleaning and sanitation is also provided.

Council will continue to provide public conveniences but also look at ways it can facilitate the provision of public toilets from other sources.

3.2 Facilitator

Council will:

- Work to include the provision of public conveniences as an integral aspect of redevelopment and/or the Town and Local Centres Upgrade Programme.
- Be proactive in working with local business and business associations to facilitate the development of new public conveniences.
- Work with developers to ensure the provision of adequate conveniences for customers where significant commercial development is planned.
- Explore opportunities to develop distinctive facilities, which provide the same level of service, with the local community, Resident/Progressive Associations and business where opportunities arise.

¹ *New Zealand Standard Public Toilets NZS 4241, 1999 : 31*

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

These principles underpin the policy and will be used to support decision making around the location of Council owned public conveniences and their service standard.

4.1 Availability: public conveniences are appropriately located in the central business district and suburbs across the city. Special attention is paid to areas with high resident and tourist visitation numbers.

4.2 Accessibility: public conveniences are easily accessible for people with disabilities, parents with children and all residents and visitors to Wellington.

4.3 Cleanliness and consistent quality: facilities are well maintained and offer a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

4.4 Free of charge: public conveniences are available without cost to the user. User charges may apply for additional services within the facility such as showers.

4.5 Safety: public conveniences and their surrounding sites are designed or upgraded using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and are maintained to ensure spaces are safe and secure for all users.

4.6 Amenities: high quality, vandal resistant fixtures are provided in public conveniences.

4.7 Community involvement: Council will explore opportunities to develop distinctive facilities, while maintaining service standards, with the local community and business where opportunities arise.

4.8 Cost: Ratepayers money is used cost-effectively to provide and maintain public conveniences to a high standard.



Aro Street All Gender Facility

5. APPLICATION OF POLICY

5.1 Guidelines to determine the location and type of public conveniences

The location of new or relocated public conveniences will be decided using a two step process:

STEP ONE: Ensuring appropriate provision city wide

STEP TWO: Ensuring public conveniences are located appropriately in specific sites.

5.1.1 Ensuring appropriate provision of public conveniences city-wide

When making decisions about the current and future public convenience provision city-wide Council will need to make assessments based on the following guidelines:

- All key locations will be serviced,
- Provision will be cost effective,
- Public convenience provision will be aligned with Council's Town and Local Centres Upgrade Programme, Recreation Strategy and draft Community Facilities Policy.

a) All key locations will be serviced

An adequate number of facilities will be provided in the City Centre, each Town Centre, key recreation areas and tourist sites. Needs assessment for sites will be determined by research examining:

- identified community need, including the need of particular groups such as the elderly and children,
- the proximity and usage rates of existing facilities,
- the population/demography of an area (age, gender, cultural makeup),
- other services in the area such as shops, schools and other community facilities.

b) Provision is cost effective

Facilities will be built or relocated where physical access and usage is optimal. When planning refurbishment, relocation or the establishment of a new public convenience, Council will look at the potential for:

- partnerships with other providers,
- partnerships with local business and communities – to develop distinctive public conveniences that are attractive and add value to the local community while providing a service that meets the policy standard,
- the co-location of Council services – for example new public conveniences located close to community facilities to encourage greater community ownership and use of facilities and possibly reduce reactive maintenance costs,
- Attendants in facilities – where this can reduce reactive maintenance costs and increase access by making facilities more secure.

c) Alignment with Council's Town and Local Centres Upgrade Programme, Recreation Strategy and draft Community Facilities Policy

The Town and Local Centres Upgrade Programme proposes grouping Wellington's centres into town, local and neighborhood centres. The Recreation Strategy proposed the development of recreation 'hubs' in major suburban areas. The draft Community Facilities Policy will develop facilities so they become focal points for communities.

Aligning the development of new public conveniences with these policies will ensure that consideration is given to the way the city is growing and where new public conveniences should be located to provide appropriate access and cost effective provision.

5.1.2 Ensuring public conveniences are located appropriately in specific sites

These guidelines should be used to assess all potential sites to identify appropriate locations and what the requirements of a particular site will be.

a) Site assessment

The following information should be collected by the Asset Manager or contractor prior to the assessment of any site:

- Site information
 - Number of existing and projected site users
 - Age of users
 - Frequency of use, peak and quiet times
 - Needs of specific groups such as people with disabilities, elderly and children

- Site history
 - Safety audits
 - Local police crime data
 - Formal Incident and anecdotal reports

- Advice from stakeholders
 - Community groups
 - Maintenance and cleaning staff².

² Adopted from 'Public Toilet Design Guidelines', 2001 Brisbane City Council: 7

b) Siting Guidelines

The following factors should be taken into consideration when siting new or upgraded facilities:

- **Public convenience sites will be safe and secure** – Council will use the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to plan, design and place new and relocated facilities to reduce opportunities for crime. This will:
 - Increase community ownership and usage of public spaces where public conveniences are located
 - Increase the visibility of public conveniences
 - Manage access to sites so that opportunities for crime are minimised
 - Manage the space and facility – ensure that facilities are clean, well maintained and repairs are performed quickly.
- **Encourage use of the space** – relocate public telephones, notice boards, street furniture to the immediate vicinity of the public convenience.
- **Visibility of the building** – locate near to adjacent pedestrian paths, roads and facilities with entrances facing onto active spaces and consider the surrounding vegetation.
- **Accessibility of building**
 - Provide footpaths around and to toilet
 - Provide clear directional signage – consider signage in braille
 - Ensure easy access for those with restricted mobility and people with disabilities.
- **Provide appropriate lighting**
 - Provide high mounted and vandal resistant lighting that is consistent with the light levels around the building so users do not have to move in and out of different light levels
 - Provide external lighting when the toilets are open for use (lighting when the toilet is closed can attract people and vandalism)

c) Refurbish, replace, relocate or disestablish ?

Decisions on whether to:

- refurbish the existing facility
- demolish and relocate the facility
- demolish and build a new facility on the existing site or
- demolish and not replace the facility

should be made as part of the review of all facilities and the development and prioritisation of a new Asset Upgrade Programme.

Refurbishment should only be considered if the location and structure are still suitable.