

**INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC TOILETS**  
**Hearing: Tuesday 1 April 2025**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**  
**Mrs Lisa Donaldson**

**1. What impact do you think freely available sunscreen would have on sun safety behaviours in NSW?**

Freely available sunscreen in public spaces has the potential to significantly improve sun safety behaviours in NSW by removing a key barrier to use: access. While awareness of sun safety is high in Australia, studies consistently show that individuals often neglect to reapply sunscreen or fail to carry it with them when outdoors. By making sunscreen dispensers easily accessible in high-traffic areas, especially during peak UV times, we prompt on-the-spot protective action.

In NSW, where UV exposure is a major public health concern, this initiative could lead to measurable increases in sunscreen use, particularly among spontaneous users such as park-goers, outdoor workers, festival attendees, and sports spectators. It normalises sun protection in the same way public hand sanitiser normalised hygiene during the pandemic. Furthermore, it sends a strong, visible public health message that sun protection is essential — not optional.

**2. Can you speak to the success of similar programs overseas?**

Yes, a number of international case studies highlight the success and growing adoption of public sunscreen initiatives:

- **The Netherlands:** Over 100 free sunscreen dispensers were installed in schools, parks, festivals, and sports grounds across the country. The program was co-funded by 20 municipalities and private partners to tackle rising skin cancer rates. It received widespread media coverage and community support, illustrating a high level of public engagement.
- **Canada:** At Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador, hand sanitiser dispensers left from the COVID-19 pandemic were repurposed into sunscreen stations across campus. This cost-effective pivot highlighted how easily existing infrastructure could be leveraged to support public health, with the goal of making sun safety as habitual as hand hygiene.
- **United States (Philadelphia):** Approximately 20 sunscreen dispensers were installed in strategic outdoor locations, including Citizens Bank Park and community pools. The aim was to make sunscreen accessible where people may not think to bring it. The project not only received positive public feedback but also media attention, positioning it as a practical urban health intervention.

These examples show that such initiatives are feasible, impactful, and adaptable across different cultures and climates — all with positive behavioural outcomes.

**3. How could this initiative be rolled out cost-effectively using existing infrastructure?**

Cost-effective implementation is achievable by building on three key pillars:

- **Repurposing COVID-19 Dispensers:** Many public spaces still have hand sanitiser stations installed from the pandemic. These could be cleaned, refilled, and rebranded as sunscreen dispensers with minimal cost — as was successfully done in Canada.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Businesses, health insurers, sunscreen brands, and local philanthropists may be willing to co-fund the dispensers or donate sunscreen as part of

preventative health initiatives. In the Netherlands, private companies partnered with local governments to fund their rollout.

- **Integration into Routine Maintenance:** Adding sunscreen dispensers to existing cleaning and maintenance schedules (such as those for public toilets, sports grounds, and community centres) avoids creating new resource burdens.

A pilot program could first be introduced at popular locations like beaches, pools, or council-run sports grounds, with impact evaluated before broader rollout.

#### 4. What role can local councils or community organisations play in supporting this initiative?

Local councils and community groups are crucial to the success of this initiative. Their role can include:

- **Site Identification and Permissions:** Councils manage a large number of high-traffic public spaces — parks, pools, ovals and toilet facilities — and can prioritise these locations based on local demographics and UV exposure levels.
- **Ongoing Maintenance and Refilling:** Many councils already contract maintenance services for public amenities. Refilling dispensers could be integrated into these existing routines.
- **Community Engagement:** Councils and organisations such as Men's Sheds or Lions Clubs (as seen at Happy Valley Reservoir, SA) can help drive awareness and community buy-in. Their involvement also boosts local ownership and pride in the project.
- **Grant Application and Management:** Councils can apply for relevant health promotion grants or work with state health departments to access funding streams.

Local involvement ensures sustainability, trust, and visibility — essential for any preventative health program.

#### 5. Why do you believe public toilets are a strategic location for this public health measure?

Public toilets are one of the most consistently used and evenly distributed facilities in urban and regional areas. They are often:

- **Located at Activity Hubs:** Found at beaches, parks, sporting ovals, markets, and festivals — places where people spend extended time outdoors and are exposed to high levels of UV.
- **A Natural Stop Point:** People already pause here to wash hands, refill water, and reapply sunscreen (if they have it). Adding a sunscreen dispenser at this moment reinforces the habit and makes use convenient.
- **Equitable:** Public toilets serve people across all socioeconomic groups. Ensuring sunscreen access in these areas supports health equity, particularly for those who may not carry or afford SPF products.
- **Cost-Efficient:** Toilets already have cleaning and maintenance services in place, making refilling straightforward.

Strategically placing sunscreen dispensers at public toilets maximises visibility and usability while aligning with existing public health infrastructure.