

Questions on Notice – Portfolio Committee – Public Toilets – 7 April 2025

Blacktown City Council

The CHAIR: You've mentioned those specific facilities in your written submission as well. Is it possible, on notice, to provide us with some photos or an understanding of what that design standard looks like in Blacktown?

PAUL BELZ: Yes, absolutely. As a quick description, they're a much more contemporary design than the traditional brickwork structure. They incorporate timber, security, sustainable materials and a better standard for cleanliness. It's much easier for our cleaners to clean those facilities. We can provide some photos and the standards to go with them.

Blacktown City Council follows contemporary design standards for public amenities, adhering to the Building Code of Australia, Australian Standards, and Industry Codes. The general requirements for all buildings include:

- Quality Design
- Safety in Design
- Access
- Water Sensitive Design (WSUD) and Landscape
- Environmentally Sustainable Design
- Rainwater Harvesting
- Termite Control
- External Pavements
- External Walls
- Soffits
- Roofs
- Internal Flooring
- Internal Walls
- Door Frames and Doors
- Plumbing
- Sanitary Fittings
- Air Conditioning and Natural Ventilation
- Building Control, Security, and Fire Indicator Panel
- Access
- CCTV

Council's Building Design Guideline (attachment 1) is issued to architects and developers. It is also used internally as a guide for procuring prefabricated toilet blocks and amenities buildings.

We ensure buildings are designed to maximise safety by associating public toilets with active areas and maintaining clear sightlines from these areas to the toilet entry points. A Safety in Design review for each project ensures the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) are adopted.

Council engages architects directly and manages the delivery of toilet blocks and amenities buildings to Council's standards. Two recent examples include:

- **Pearce Reserve, Kings Langley Cricket Club:** Designed by Eoghan Lewis Architects, this amenity building and cricket clubhouse has received architectural awards. Public toilets are designed for separate access from change rooms and the clubhouse, serving sporting spectators, playground users, and event attendees.

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- **William Lawson Reserve Athletics Field Amenities and Toilets, Prospect:** Designed by Lahznimmo Architects, this building addresses the need for toilets and change facilities for little athletics events. It features clear sightlines to toilets from the main field, creating a safe environment for children.



Developer/Architects Collaboration:

- **Marsden Park Amenities:** Delivered by CHROFI Architects for Stocklands and handed to Blacktown City Council upon completion. The building won several awards, including the 2020 AIA NSW awards for Small Project Architecture.

Prefabricated Buildings to Council Standards: In urgent situations, Council procures standardised toilet blocks, ensuring siting, materials, and finishes meet Council's standards. Examples include:

- **Nurragingy Splashpad:** A simple building with clear sightlines from active areas and an external hand wash area, creating a safe environment.

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- **Wawai Ngurra, Changing Place Bathroom:** An accessible playground with a “Changing Places” bathroom, providing assisted toilet, shower, and change facilities for people with severe disabilities.



Additional photos: The below photos showcase our recent amenities block at Reserve 885 – Galungara Reserve.



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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Blacktown, I think you mentioned the issue around there being a range of privately provided toilets. Does the council have any enforcement authority in relation to the operation of those toilets? One of the apparent gaps in the policy or legislative or regulatory framework is that it's not clear who actually enforces standards in terms of cleanliness and safety and provision of minimum standards. Obviously, when something is initially built, it's the National Building Code. Beyond that, the ongoing question seems to be a vexed one. Does the council have any responsibility in terms of maintaining those standards in private facilities?

PAUL BELZ: No. As my colleague from City of Sydney outlined, when the facility is actually initially built, under the Building Code of Australia, there are standards to which those assets have to be built. After that, it is really up to the property owner to maintain and operate those facilities. What we are actually flagging to the public is that whilst council owns 159 facilities, there are another 100 facilities that they can access—you know, your local McDonald's or whatever—for the provision of those types of services. It's really an asset that the community can access. But in terms of a standard or enforcement powers, no, council doesn't have those.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: You do have building safety enforcement powers, though. Do they not fall, broadly, within that ambit for ensuring that those are safe facilities?

PAUL BELZ: That's managed by another group to us. I will go out on a bit of a limb and just say, as far as I know, no. I can take that question on notice. Typically, the building safety things relate to fire safety, access et cetera.

In response to your inquiry about our building safety enforcement powers:

Construction standards - These are typically checked during the final inspection, which is usually conducted by the principal certifying authority. More often than not, this authority is a private company rather than the Council.

Health and Safety Concerns - If Council receive a complaint about the condition of a toilet such as in a restaurant, etc, our Environment team will inspect it. If necessary, Council can issue an order under the Local Government Act to address any health and safety issues.

Please note that such inspections are quite rare, with only a handful occurring each year.