

**1. Do you think an audit of accessible public toilets managed by councils and state government should be undertaken and if so, what are the basic standards that should be included?**

I believe an audit of accessible public toilets is needed. The best way to conduct it would be in collaboration with state/local governments, with consultation from users of accessible toilets. Standards should include but not limited to, step free access, unisex access, duress alarms where possible, height of facilities including sinks, hand dryers, easy to open doors, and low sensory, including eliminating flashing, flickering, too bright, or too dim lights, smells, etc.

**2. What are the biggest barriers you face when trying to access public toilets in NSW?**

The biggest barriers for me includes stigma of using accessible bathrooms, restricted access to bathrooms (locked without staff to open upon reasonable request), poorly maintained bathrooms with flickering lights, strong smells or sounds, and accessible bathrooms that do not meet modern accessibility standards. An example of this would be the bathrooms at Gordon Library where the accessible bathroom is inside a gendered, traditional communal bathroom with limited space with loud sounds from the rest of the communal bathroom.

**3. How does the current stigma around using accessible toilets affect you and others with hidden disabilities?**

The negative stigma towards people who "don't look disabled" using disability bathrooms can be devastating and isolating for a lot of people. I've been harassed in the past for using disability bathrooms. And in my own personal experience, it is incredibly exhausting having to advocate for yourself to often quite aggressive members of the public and staff. It can cause significant physical and mental distress. Quite a lot of people will not leave their homes due to the risk of this.

**4. Can you describe what a fully inclusive and accessible public toilet would look like from your perspective?**

There are multiple different solutions required for different varieties of disabilities. For me as a neurodivergent person and a person with a medical condition, having a quiet, low sensory place with a toilet, a sink, that is well cleaned, with some handrails to hold onto is all that's required. While for some people, the current disability toilets currently being constructed in most projects are suitable for people. But there's also people with significant to profound disabilities that may need changing places with enough room for a hoist, adult sized change table, and a variety of sanitary products are essential for people to travel in the community. A great example of a changing place facility would be in NSW Parliament which is located on Level 6 next to the theatre.

**5. How have recent developments, like the Sydney Metro toilets, improved your access?**

Sydney Metro & MTS (the operator of Sydney Metro) have been very thorough in their restroom designs. Accommodating of a wide variety of needs. As a frequent user of the metro, the new toilets are easier and safer for me to use compared to other existing City stations, allowing for a more stress free commute.

**6. What changes would you suggest for training or signage to help reduce stigma?**

Training for staff to be more aware of hidden disabilities, and both signage around Disability toilets reminding the public that not every disability is visible, and general public service advertising about hidden disabilities can be helpful. There are programs including the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard available, but having it being at the core of disability training rather than a part of it can risk incidents where some staff may not assist people with hidden disabilities specifically because they're not wearing a sunflower lanyard. Such incidents have happened in the past where hidden disability training has not been implemented properly.