

**Responses to supplementary questions: Legislative Council  
Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service: Inquiry into  
public toilets**

May 2025

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## **Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association**

Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW Inc (CPSA) is a non-profit, non-party-political membership association that promotes the rights and interests of pensioners of all ages, older people on low incomes and superannuants. Founded in 1931, our aim is to improve the standard of living and well-being of CPSA's constituents.

CPSA's core work is:

- Systemic advocacy on issues that impact our constituents, as identified through engagement and consultation.
- Providing information and referrals to the public through our information line and other communication channels.
- Publishing news, commentary and informational articles on our website that are circulated through a regular e-newsletter and monthly print publication, THE VOICE of Pensioners and Superannuants.

Our services are free to all members of the public, regardless of association membership.

CPSA's local branches provide members with the opportunity to have a say in their local community, as well as shaping the policy and advocacy work of the organisation. Many of our branches are in regional areas, and CPSA is proud to be a voice for our constituents across NSW.

CPSA receives funding support from the NSW Government Department of Communities & Justice under the Ageing Peaks program.

### **Contact**

Billy Pringle

Senior Policy Officer

**(1) Why is it important to install sanitary bins in men's public toilets?**

Incontinence is an issue that can affect men of any age. According to Continence Health Australia<sup>1</sup>, 1.34 million men and boys are affected by incontinence. However, older people are more likely to be affected by both incontinence and other health conditions that can increase the likelihood of incontinence<sup>2</sup>. For many people living with incontinence, managing the condition can involve using continence pads and being able to plan in advance to ensure that they have access to an appropriate bathroom when needed. Unfortunately, sanitary bins remain rare in men's public toilets. This means that men who use continence pads have very limited spaces outside of their homes to comfortably change and dispose of pads. Installing sanitary bins in men's public toilets would ensure that men who experience incontinence are able to freely and easily spend time in public without worrying about their ability to access an appropriate public toilet. This would have beneficial impacts on the mental health and social inclusion of men who experience incontinence.

**(2) Can you describe how the lack of disposal options impacts men living with incontinence?**

The lack of disposal options for continence products can limit the ability for men living with incontinence to feel comfortable and confident travelling outside of their home, especially in less familiar areas. The UK Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) describes this

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<sup>1</sup>[https://continence.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#A00000000KUC9/a/5K0000001mo/7LLHRb2JuXj4oyTFAC\\_v\\_ATdrbSgHT9xaB\\_bmZRvAWs](https://continence.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#A00000000KUC9/a/5K0000001mo/7LLHRb2JuXj4oyTFAC_v_ATdrbSgHT9xaB_bmZRvAWs)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/bladder-and-bowel/bladder-and-bowel-throughout-life/bladder-and-bowel-for-older-australians>

phenomenon as the 'loo leash'<sup>3</sup>, where people who require more frequent or specific access to public toilets consciously or subconsciously restrict their movement to areas where they are already familiar with available public toilets. Combined with the social stigma of incontinence, this 'loo leash' can lead men who experience incontinence to isolate themselves and limit their engagement and participation in public life. This has serious implications for their mental health and their sense of social inclusion. An Australian review cited by Bins4Blokes found that between 20 and 43% of people who live with incontinence may also have depression<sup>4</sup>.

According to the RSPH, people who require more frequent or specific access to public toilets may also take measures to try to limit or control their toileting needs by deliberately drinking less water or eating less food. These restrictions can have severe health implications, especially for older people and people with other medical conditions.

### **(3) What role should local councils and facility managers play in addressing this issue?**

As the main providers of public toilets, local councils have a key role to play in addressing this issue by ensuring that sanitary bins are provided in men's public toilet facilities, and that these facilities are well maintained to allow men experiencing incontinence to comfortably manage their toileting needs. CPSA would like to see a standardised approach rolled out by local councils, wherein men living with incontinence can assume in advance that certain toilets, such as those in parks, libraries and community centres, will meet their needs. Ideally, sanitary bins in men's toilets would be made available in all

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rsph.org.uk/static/uploaded/459f4802-ae43-40b8-b5a006f6ead373e6.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://bins4blokes.org.au/about/>

locations where bins are found in women's toilets as this would mean that cleaning and maintenance could be easily included by expanding existing service contracts.

Local councils also have an important role to play in raising awareness of the Bins4Blokes campaign and the importance of sanitary bins in men's toilets. Material related to this campaign could be included on council websites and in publicly disseminated material.

Facility managers likewise can play an important role in providing sanitary bins in men's toilets within their facilities. As with public toilets, an ideal scenario is one where everyone can assume that their nearest pub, RSL, shopping centre or club will contain public toilets with sanitary bins. If facility managers provide sanitary bins in men's toilets within their facilities, they should also make this information available to their local council and to Bins4Blokes so that information about these facilities can be made publicly available.

#### **(4) How can the Bins4Blokes campaign be scaled across NSW?**

Bins4Blokes already provides resources for toilet providers to implement sanitary bins in men's toilets throughout Australia. Included in these resources is a list of incontinence bin providers in each state and territory except for Tasmania and the Northern Territory. This campaign could be scaled across NSW with the help of the NSW Government, and especially Transport for NSW. NSW Government can support this campaign by raising awareness of, and helping to destigmatise, the issue of incontinence. NSW Government could also encourage local councils and facility managers to provide incontinence bins for men's toilets, and could provide financial support where necessary. Transport for NSW could support this campaign by providing sanitary bins in men's bathrooms in train stations and transport hubs across the state. They could also improve access to public toilets on NSW train stations by ensuring that all station toilets remain open to the public 24 hours a day, or within a reasonable timeframe across the day (e.g. 6am – 10pm).

Finally, NSW Government can assist this campaign by protecting public and station toilets from closure or restricted access as a short-sighted response to issues such as vandalism, drug use or rough sleeping.

**5) Should there be minimum bin provision standards in building codes for all public toilets?**

CPSA supports minimum bin provision standards in building codes for all public toilets, provided these standards are not used as an excuse to limit the development or maintenance of the public toilet stock in NSW. Sanitary bins are likely to add little to the total cost of providing public toilet facilities, but will have a large and positive impact on the accessibility of public toilets and public spaces.