

## PUBLIC TOILETS INQUIRY

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMENTS – STEPHEN WEATHERSTONE

Thank you for the opportunity to additional comments and information regarding public toilets in NSW.

Following my appearance at the Inquiry I have made more observations on the good and bad of public toilets and have documented those observations below.

#### BARANGAROO

After my appearance at the Inquiry, my wife and I decided we would do some sight seeing and made our way to Barangaroo. It wasn't long before we both needed to find a toilet. We followed signs to toilets only to find they led to areas that were closed off for major works. It would be considerate of those closing off public toilets to redirect people to the nearest available public toilet.

Eventually we found a Metro Station with toilets but had to use an Opal card to access toilets! A good feature was that separate male and female toilets as well as unisex were provided!

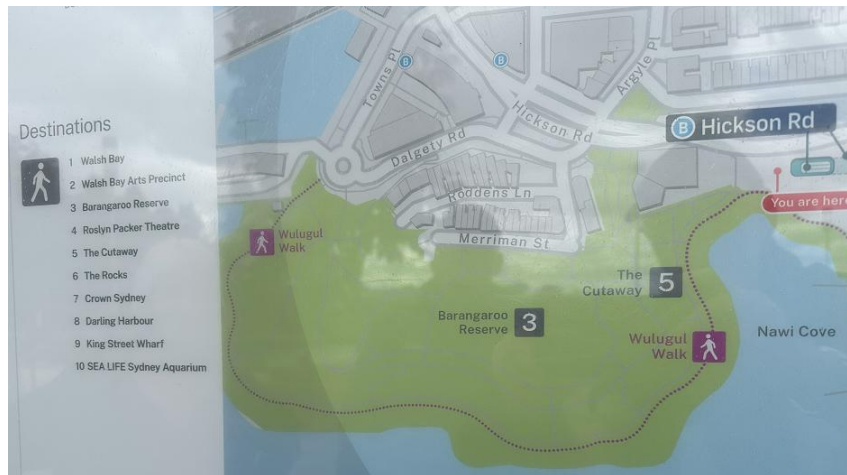


The toilets were high tech with soap dispenser, warm water and air dryer activated without



touching. Some new technologies can be challenging and the operation is not always obvious as I found with the soap dispenser. Older people can have a problem operating some of the fittings where it is not obvious.

A map of Barangaroo outside the Metro Station did not show public toilets. This seems to be an unfortunate omission on a map displayed for tourists. Perhaps when the map is being updated it can include public toilets.



## PERISHER VALLEY, GUTHEGA AND SNOWY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

We are regular visitors to the Snowy Mountains and enjoy the many walks on tracks that have been recently extended and developed by National Parks and Wildlife. These great developments have encouraged an increase in summer visitors. Unfortunately, despite the significant fees for using the Kosciuszko National Park, the provision of public toilets near the tracks has been forgotten.

Recently, on Easter Sunday, my wife and I did the Perisher Valley to Porcupine Rocks walk a return distance of nearly 6 km. It is a great walk and I estimate that there were over 100 people walking the track over the two hours or so that we were on the track. I was approached by one of the many walkers at the start/finish about the location of the nearest toilet. Normally, the National Parks Centre toilets are open near the main road but on this day, despite the high number of visitors making their way to and from the high country walks, it was closed. I mentioned to her that there is another toilet in the Ski Tube Station (about 500 m away) but was not sure that it was open. Its location is not obvious to visitors and I don't recollect seeing a sign for it. Later we found that the Ski Tube Station toilet was open.

This situation is very unsatisfactory for visitors to one of Australia's great landmarks and many natural attractions.

(On the plus side is the provision of public toilets at Charlotte Pass, Seaman's Hut and Rawson's Pass. They are not high tech or pleasant but they are there!)

The location of the start/finish of the track warrants a public toilet as it is also the start/finish of the Perisher Valley – Charlotte Pass track – 13 km. The toilet can be connected to the sewerage system and town water at that location. The image below shows location of public toilets and village in relation to the start/finish of the walk.



Guthega is at the start/finish of a 9 km track from Guthega to Charlotte Pass. This is another great walk and National Parks and Wildlife should be complimented on the work done on this track.

However, a similar problem exists at Guthega as far as access to a public toilet during spring, summer and autumn. Everything is usually closed!

Last November we took an overseas visitor to Guthega to walk the track. Unfortunately the track was closed due to feral animal control measures. There was no access to a public toilet as well. The café that sometimes operates in summer was also closed.



Provision of public toilets in Kosciuszko National Park needs to be improved substantially to cater for the thousands of tourists that travel to the high country in summer, spring and autumn.

### SOME DESIGN ISSUES

My earlier submission pointed out several design, installation and maintenance issues that I have observed over the years. I have continued to look at all these aspects of public toilets since my Inquiry appearance.

I made the following point in my submission – ‘Toilet seats should have integrally moulded supports. This makes cleaning easier and avoids a maintenance issue when the elastomeric pad in some seats falls out – never to be replaced! ‘

The toilet seat on the left below has integrally moulded supports while the seat on the right has ‘rubber’ inserts that invariably fall out adding to the cleaning work if cleaners can be bothered.



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I also made this point - ‘The seat fixing to the pan must be covered and not readily dislodged during cleaning, (The fixing arrangement in some seats is a cleaning liability. It has cover plate that is easily dislodged and the components accumulate muck.)’ The photo below shows the problem. The photo on the left above shows a completely covered fixing.



It seems that there is so much variability in the design and installation of fittings. The architect, builder or plumber may not be on the same page when it comes to installation of the different fittings such as rails to assist people with a disability, hooks on doors for bags, the toilet paper holder or other features.

The example below (which happens to be from Victoria) shows a toilet paper dispenser that seems to be so low that it would be difficult to access. Unlikely that a person could even see where to find the end of the paper!



Compare the above with a similar installation below (NSW).



## IN SUMMARY

I hope the Committee can establish guidelines for:

- The locating of public toilets
- Sign posting
- Design of public toilets addressing the issues that I and others, contributing to the Inquiry have made
- Construction, installation of fittings in accordance with design standards
- The maintenance and cleaning of public toilets

The Committee needs to ensure

- All State authorities and local government instrumentalities implement the guidelines
- Designers, builders and other players are aware of the guidelines

And lastly, I look forward to public toilets that are clean, well designed and maintained across New South Wales.

Stephen Weatherstone  
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