



Petition

Registration No.	18
Title	Provide suitable disability toilets and change facilities
Presented on	31 August 2022
Presented by	Member for Namatjira
Referred to	Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics; and Public Accounts Committee
Assembly debate	If the Committee recommends the Petition be debated it will appear on the Notice Paper
Date referred	1 September 2022
Response due	15 February 2023
Response received	24 January 2023
Response presented	14 February 2023

Petition

Provide suitable disability toilets and change facilities for all needs

Imagine if there were no public toilets you could use. Shopping centres, parks, cafes, pools, recreational areas. Nothing. Imagine there was only 1 public toilet in the whole of Darwin and Palmerston.

Sounds ludicrous to imagine right? And yet, this situation is one thousands of children and adults together with their parents, carers, teachers and special education support officers, face every day due to the lack of appropriate public facilities that meet their needs.

What do you do if your child with disabilities who requires changing (toileting) when in a public place but was too big, heavy or unsafe for a change table and unable to stand for the duration of a change?

What about older children or adults who require some to full support to be changed (including those who require to be transferred from their chair) and have needs above or different to what is provided in standard disability toilet facilities?

As far as I am aware there is only one public toilet facility with an adult sized change bed in Darwin (at Jingili water gardens). According to Changing Places, there are only 194 accredited facilities for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets in the whole of Australia. Without access to these facilities it's not easy.

It can be stressful, upsetting and limiting.

Carers have to make choices such as - changing in the boot of cars (when the person is small enough for this and their car can accommodate this), getting down on the floor of a public toilet, changing the person in public view or having to leave the person in a soiled Nappy/pad until they can leave.

Alternative to using these options, many simply have to leave where they are quickly, cutting their time at outings or choose not to go out at all. The lack of suitable facilities often requires strict planning to where, when and how and can often limit opportunities to even access places.

These are forced options, not solutions. When I asked parents for tips on how they dealt with this situation one stated "this is what we've had to resort to" while another, "this is a big challenge for us over the years".

EVERYONE has the right to safe, hygienic, appropriate and accessible toileting and changing facilities that support their right to privacy and meet their needs. It's a basic human right.

EVERYONE has the right to community access and this should not be impeded on due to the lack of inclusive toilet facilities.

As Katherine Webber states, "I see toilets as really key to enabling participation in all parts of society - whether that's school, work, activities in the community. They're essential,"

The lack of such facilities discriminates towards people with disabilities that require them.

It's 2022. We should not be denying this right, excluding or discriminating against people with disabilities and their care givers.

It's time to change this.

Please support the call to provide more suitable facilities for those who cannot use standard disability toilets by signing the petition I have created.

Response

The National Construction Code 2019 (NCC 2019) sets the minimum required level for the safety, health, amenity, accessibility and sustainability of certain buildings.

The minimum requirements for accessible adult change facilities were introduced in the NCC 2019 edition on 1 May 2019, and applies to buildings which are classified for a:

- shopping centre that has a design occupancy of not less than 3 500 people;
- sports venue or the like that has a design occupancy of not less than 35 000 spectators or which contains a swimming pool that has a perimeter of not less than 70 Metres;
- museum, art gallery or the like that has a design occupancy of not less than 1 500 patron;
- theatre or the like that has a design occupancy of not less than 1 500 patrons; and
- passenger use area of an airport terminal building within an airport that accepts domestics and/or international flights that are public transport services as defined in the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

The Code specifications for accessible adult change facilities are based on the Changing Places Information Guide and Technical Standard, June 2017 edition.

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics is delivering the State Square Art Gallery as part of the Darwin City Deal. The State Square Art Gallery has been designed to accommodate approximately 900 people. Although the State Square Art Gallery does not meet the criteria in the NCC 2019 to require accessible adult change facilities, also known as Changing Places, this significant public building will include accessible adult change facilities providing the first facilities of this kind in the Darwin CBD.