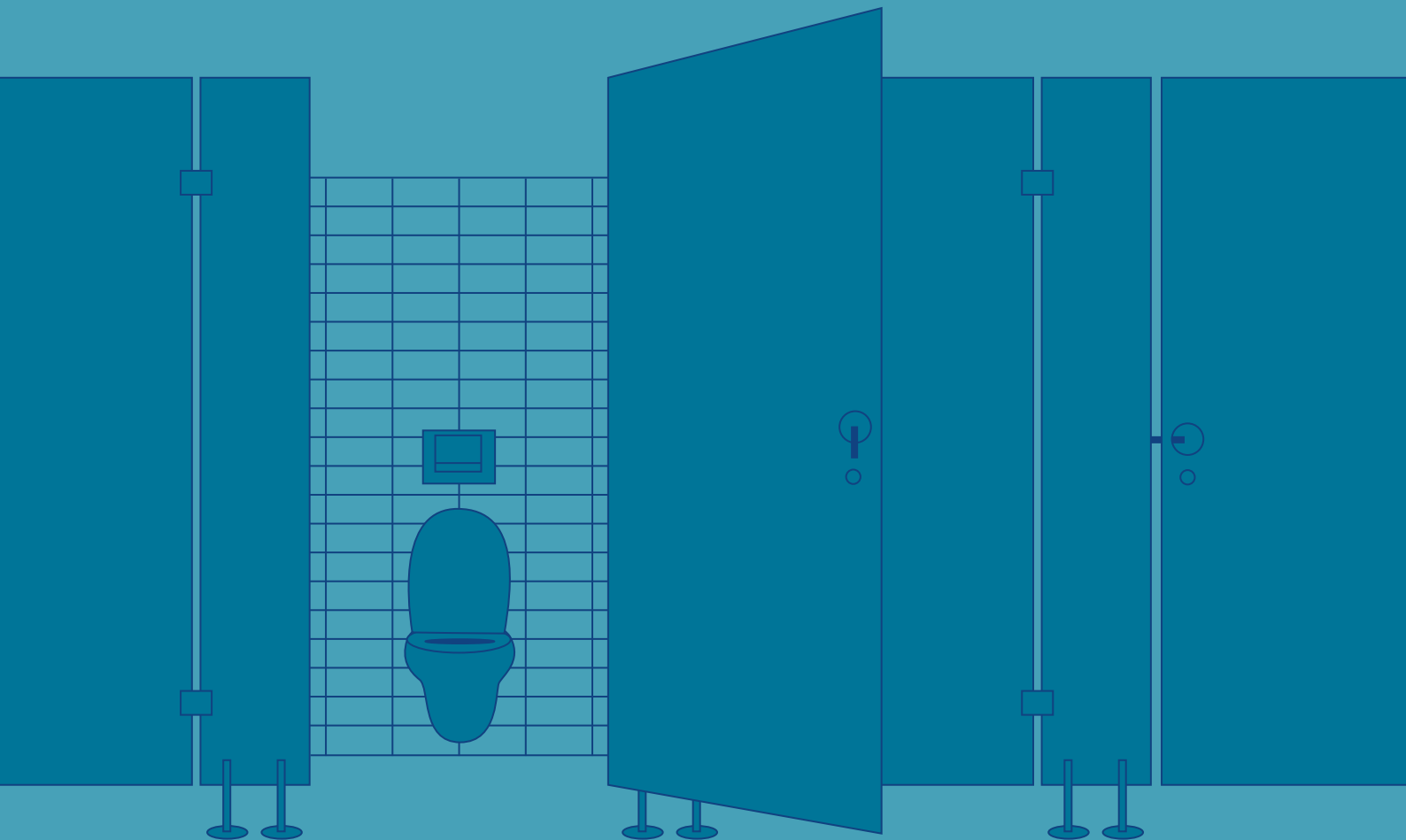




THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

Exploring Accessibility and Inclusion in Public Toilets

2018 Rodney Warmington Churchill Fellow to increase accessibility and inclusion in public toilets by researching taboos, design, policy and legal barriers



REPORT BY **KATHERINE WEBBER**, *Churchill Fellow*

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KATHERINE WEBBER

22 July 2019

KEY WORDS

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The planning, preparation and writing of my Churchill Fellowship occurred on the land of the Jagera and Turrabal people of Meanjin (Brisbane). I pay my deepest respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands that I travelled across.

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And a special thank you to **The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust** and **Rodney Warmington**, who generously sponsored this research. The Fellowship has been an amazing opportunity and I have been inspired by other Churchill Fellows I have met along this journey.

WHY A REPORT ON TOILETS?

The toilet – WC, bathroom, restroom, loo, dunny, outhouse – is an essential piece of infrastructure for everybody regardless of location, race, gender, disability and age. Its provision in public¹ supports essential human functions. Toilets are a space where people expose their most vulnerable body parts in an effort to achieve health outcomes. In addition to eliminating bodily waste, people use toilets to administer essential medication, menstrual management, caring for young children, supporting others to use the facilities, finding a quiet place to rest, or accessing drinking water. In every country of the world, if provided, public toilets are spaces that are too often poorly designed or located, avoided if possible, perceived as dangerous, and are removed rather than improved because they are regarded as an expenditure and liability rather than a right. If a person or group of people is unable to locate, access or use a public toilet, their use and participation of the public space that the toilet is in is limited, therefore restricting their full involvement as a citizen.

Australia has a less than stellar track record in the provision of inclusive toilets to support participation. In Australia, women were elected to Federal Parliament for 31 years, before a specific toilet was provided for them in Old Parliament House.² 31 years! Current Senator Steele-John, a wheelchair user, had to wait for his office to be renovated so that the toilets were wheelchair accessible.³ In 2017, the Queensland Government postponed a multi-billion dollar order for new trains due to design flaws that included lack of access for passengers with disability to the

trains and specifically to the toilets.⁴ There are a number of current events mean that pressure on public toilet accessibility is beginning to catalyse: the lack of affordable housing and levels of homelessness; the debate on gendered access to public spaces and the discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+ people; the aging population and concurrent disability rates; and the move towards traditional public spaces becoming privately managed. Concurrently all level of governments in Australia are supporting physical activity, tourism and applying crime prevention through environmental design principles. All of these are reliant on access to toilets.

As a social planner I have pursued the development of inclusive policy, programs and activities in local and state government in Queensland and with non-government and international organisations in Australia and across the Pacific. The topic of toilets has continued to be identified as a barrier to inclusion and participation, which was the primary driving force behind my interest in toilets.

This report reflects conversations I had with community groups, advocates, local government, and industry in the United States of America, Canada, UK, Ireland, The Netherlands and Germany, exploring how they are developing innovative solutions to support inclusive and accessible public toilets. Ultimately the planning, provision and maintenance of public toilets supports the dignity, humanity and human rights of people and it is time to amplify the discussion in Australia.

1 Any place or space outside of the private home.

2 Marija Taflaga 24 March 2014 *Who knew that toilets would have such a complicated history?* Museum of Australian Democracy. Available at: <https://www.moadoph.gov.au/blog/who-knew-that-toilets-would-have-such-a-complicated-history/#>

3 Brett Worthington 2 April 2018 *Jordon Steele-John has the loneliest seat in the Senate, and it's locking him out of the parliamentary process* ABC news. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-02/senator-jordon-steele-john-disability-access-parliament-house/9587308>

4 Emma Griffiths 1 March 2017 *New Queensland trains put on hold*. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/brisbane/programs/drive/indian-train-deal/8316240>
Isabel Roe 2 March 2018 *Human Rights Commission denies new Qld trains exemption for disability access faults*. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-02/qld-rail-train-not-granted-exemption-disability/9502556>

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NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Language is powerful; therefore it was important to me to use inclusive and respectful terminology in this report. Specific terms have not been used with the intention to be limiting or exclusive, rather to ensure representation. One of the challenges of travelling across different countries was the variety of words used to describe similar concepts, objects or lived experiences. I have endeavoured to use the language that I found to be most appropriate for the Australian context, unless it is referred to in a direct quote.

Terminology

In this report, public toilets refer to toilets that are located outside of the private home. They may be provided by a government authority or business and located in places such as a park, city centre, shopping centre, recreation venue, place of employment or government building. Alternative language includes restroom, amenity, facility, bathroom, or water closet (WC).

Menstruation is a topic that needs to be normalised and stigma removed. I have chosen to remove language around hygiene and sanitation, where possible, to limit association with dirtiness or uncleanliness. Alternative language includes period or menses. Menstrual health products include sanitary products, pads, tampons, cups, and underwear.

I have used the phrase ‘people who menstruate’ to acknowledge that not all menstruators are women, some women do not menstruate, and some men do.



IMAGE 1. Toilet signs indicate who can and cannot use a toilet.

Types of toilets

Single-stalled/user – a single stall that is entered directly from a public area that includes a toilet bowl or urinal, and may be with or without sink, hand dryer/s and bin/s. These can be gender segregated or unisex.

Multi-stalled/user – include facilities with a number of toilets and/or urinals that are partitioned into stalls, with a shared space which includes common amenities such as sinks and hand dryers. These are most often sex or gender segregated. (In the past these were also racially segregated in some places in the world).

All-user – a toilet facility that does not differentiate based on the gender or sex of the user.

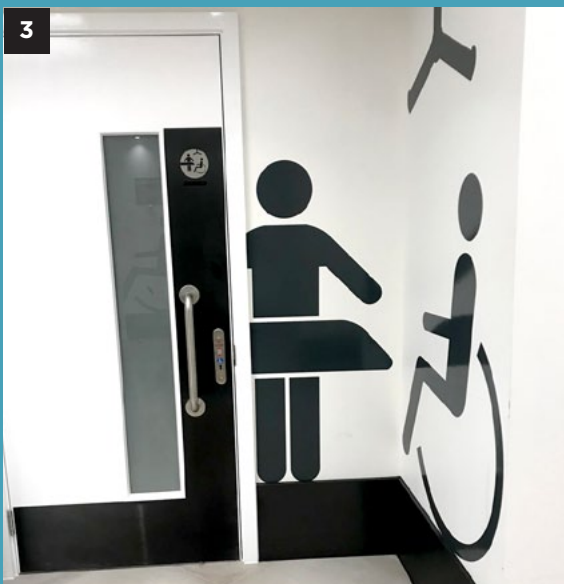
Accessible or Disabled toilet – refers to a toilet that has additional inclusions, often in line with national standards, such as rails or a larger width. These can be directly accessible, which are often unisex, or included in a multi-stalled facility.

Changing Places – larger facilities that have specialised equipment, including a changing bench and hoist, designed for people with disabilities who need assistance.⁵

Family toilets – can be single stalled or included in multi-stall facility. The design can include more than one toilet per stall often at different heights.

Automatic toilet/self-cleaning toilet – often located in outdoor spaces, designed for a single user. When the user leaves an automatic cleaning process commences.

5 <https://changingplaces.org.au/build-a-toilet/designs/>



ACRONYMS

CSW Commission on the Status of Women

CTS Community Toilet Scheme

CWA Country Women's Association

CSE Comprehensive Sexuality Education

HAFAI Health Aid for All Initiative

LBTI Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex

LGBTIQ+ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, plus

NYC New York City

SIA Social Inclusion Audit

IMAGE 2. Single stalled toilet including hand washing facilities

IMAGE 3. An example of highly visible Changing Place signage

IMAGE 4. An example of an automatic toilet

Executive Summary



KATHERINE WEBBER

2018

Rodney Warmington Churchill Fellow to increase accessibility and inclusion in public toilets by researching taboos, design, policy and legal barriers

Project Introduction, Description and Purpose

I was interested in exploring how barriers to accessibility and inclusion in public toilet design, policy and legislation are being addressed across the world as toilets support the active inclusion of all people in public spaces. Where toilets are not provided, or there are barriers to their access or use, this contributes to the exclusion of an individual or group of people from the public space. Between March and May 2019, I travelled to the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, The Netherlands and Germany.⁶ I had 28 meetings with community groups, community representatives, advocates and activists, academics, toilet manufacturers, government, business, social enterprise, non-government organisations, library staff and toilet enthusiasts. The topics covered across the meetings were broad, but all focused on how to meet the basic human need of going to the toilet.

In addition to these meetings I was able to attend the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The priority theme of CSW was *social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls*. The priority theme was in perfect alignment with my Churchill Fellowship research and attending CSW provided a rich experience and I talked with many organisations from across the world that I would not otherwise have been able to visit.

This report reflects conversations I had exploring innovative solutions to support inclusive and accessible public toilets. Ultimately the planning, provision and maintenance of public toilets supports the dignity, humanity and human rights of people and it is time to amplify the discussion in Australia.

Intended Audience

I have written this report from a social planning perspective, aiming the report at state and local level government policy makers, as well as planners and designers. But I also hope that this report is of interest to community members and to toilet users, so that they can advocate for better provision of more inclusive public toilets across Australia.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for a full itinerary and meeting schedule.

Highlights

Highlights of the Fellowship included:

- Discussing toilet needs with trans people, unhoused people, people with physical disabilities and those who require additional support, people with invisible disabilities, people who menstruate, and parents and carers
- Meeting with community advocacy groups and toilet enthusiasts to discuss better ways to increase inclusion and accessibility and hold toilet providers accountable
- Meeting with toilet manufacturers on how they are creating innovate designs and responsive technology
- Visiting Crossness Pumping Station, built 1865 as part of London's first city-wide sewerage system that eliminated cholera from London
- Attending the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women, participating in discussions on the theme *social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls* and meeting women committed to delivering social change from around the world
- Finding fellow toilet enthusiasts in each country, including on the London Loo Tour
- Spending a day in Sheffield discussing the Around the Toilet project with key members of the project team
- Exploring the diversity of public toilets in each of the cities I visited and taking photographs capturing the similarities and differences.

Conclusions and Recommendations

SECTION 1 provides a snapshot of toilet user experiences, indicating the diversity of needs to be addressed in the provision of public toilets. Toilet experiences can illicit relief, fear, frustration, disgust or embarrassment. The importance of single-gender toilets was promoted by some to ensure safety, prevent period shaming and bullying. Yet for other individuals and groups the removal of gendered spaces will increase inclusivity, use and safety. Design alone cannot address the needs of all toilet users and needs to be supported with a conversation about social norms, inclusion, use, safety and acceptance.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 Develop processes to ensure community input into public toilet location and design to ensure public toilets are meeting identified community needs, including those of minority groups.
- 1.2 Explore community dialogue mechanisms to support conversations around public toilets and user experiences to build empathy.
- 1.3 Further research on the provision of sex or gendered segregated spaces, perceptions of safety, inclusion, exclusion and religious requirements and what other mechanisms are required to support de-gendered inclusive and safe spaces.

SECTION 2 covers examples of policy, legislation, standards and strategy in relation to public toilets. A commonality across each of the places I visited was that there was no legislative requirement for government to provide toilets in public spaces. A consequence of the lack of legislative requirement for the provision of toilets is the varying levels of coverage and the reduction in provision. Yet, the provision of public toilets is strongly linked to achieving both human rights and anti-discrimination legislation, as well as supporting tourism,

transport, public health and physical exercise strategies. Policy and legislation can encourage and support a change in social norms surrounding toilet use. In both the Portland and New York City examples it was important to have leadership from the top and clear communication indicating what the new social norms were expected to be. However, with the development of new legislation there needs to be caution to ensure that it does not criminalise vulnerable populations or increase vulnerability.

Recommendations:

- 2.1 Develop a legislative requirement for the provision of public toilets across local government areas, open space and transport networks, which includes:
 - Acknowledgement that access to toilets is a basic human right and supports inclusion and dignity
 - An audit of the existing provision of public toilets
 - Community engagement to determine local needs.
- 2.2 Review and revision of existing building and amenity standards and specifications to meet changing community standards with respect to advancement in accessibility technology, gender inclusion and other community generated issues.
- 2.3 Chambers of commerce and tourism agencies to explore strategies to increase the promotion of toilet location, features and opening hours, to support the achievement of economic development and tourism strategies.
- 2.4 Public toilet provision for transport users to be included in all transport network plans.

SECTION 3 demonstrates that public toilets cannot be separated from the infrastructure they rely on for their effective use. The infrastructure that supports sewerage and public toilets varies across cities and countries, however it needs to be robust against local environmental elements such as weather, climate change and natural

disasters. Toilet design, operation and maintenance should be responsive to the location, local conditions and operational structure. Gender empowerment and youth engagement can also be addressed through programs that support maintaining infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- 3.1 New and existing infrastructure should be fortified against climate change and natural disasters.
- 3.2 Explore scaling up alternative technologies to address environmental sustainability and reduction of water use.
- 3.3 Develop locally responsive toilet designs, operation and maintenance protocols.
- 3.4 Include gender and youth focus in infrastructure programs.

SECTION 4 explores examples of public toilet design from the countries I visited. The lived experience and assumptions of designers can lead to exclusion through design, which can have gendered, ability and sexuality impacts and implications. However, design can remedy exclusion through inclusive design methods, which can create solutions that work for many users. The design of public toilets can be responsive to the different needs of the day and night-time economy, rural and urban areas, and different users. Being able to access information about which toilets are available and when, can assist those who need to plan before leaving home. Apps and signage can be useful tools to locate toilets, however the information must be kept up to date. It can be efficient if one organisation is responsible for the data collection.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 New toilets and upgrades to existing toilet infrastructure should consider public toilet design principles (see text box).
- 4.2 Develop Australia-wide desired standards of service for provision in specific locations such as town centres, parks, recreation areas.

PUBLIC TOILET DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Each toilet will be different responding to the local context and needs. Rather than list each of the items to be included in a toilet I have provided some design principles to consider when it comes to public toilets in response to user and operator requirements:*

-
- **SAFETY & PRIVACY** – All users want to feel safe, and have both audible and visual privacy, when using a toilet as it is private and vulnerable human function
-
- **ACCESSIBILITY** – Design must meet the specific user needs including minimal standards for physical accessibility. This also includes circulation spaces, handles and height of fixtures and features
-
- **INCLUSION** – Design to meet the needs of all populations, including minority groups. This includes a preference to single stall physical designs, signage that reflects all bodies and the review and enforcement of anti-discrimination policies
-
- **LOCATION & AVAILABILITY** – Toilets need to be easily locatable and provided in the appropriate number to respond to the number of users. This includes how far people need to travel to access them
-
- **ATTRACTIVENESS** – Aesthetics are important to make people feel comfortable. The design of the toilets should be a continuation of the place it is located in
-
- **EASE OF MAINTENANCE & HYGIENE** – Materials used in the construction need to allow for easy cleaning, resistance to vandalism and durable while still being functional and welcoming
-
- **SUSTAINABLE** – Design and maintenance needs to consider the use of resources such as water and electricity
-
- **COMMUNICATION** – Toilets need to be easy to find via signage or apps, include relevant information about operating hours and maintenance requests as well to be able to determine if a stall is available or occupied from a distance

* Informed by Design Principles for Public Restrooms in the PHLUSH Public Advocacy Toolkit and seven criteria for a needs-based provision of public toilets in the Berlin Toilet Concept.

SECTION 5 identifies some of the organisations and professions involved in public toilet provision, accessibility, inclusion and operations. With financial austerity impacting government budgets it is important to support industry and other groups in the provision and promotion of accessible and inclusive public toilets. Without a legislative requirement ensuring their provision, toilets can easily be perceived as an on-going expense and liability contributing to their closure. However, it is important that public toilets are seen as investment in social inclusion. When people can easily use a space, they will enjoy it and relax potentially spending more time and more money, which also contributes to an increase in social connections and reduction in isolation.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Acknowledge the complementary and essential roles that different professions and community groups have in the provision, operation and maintenance of public toilets; and explore opportunities for collaboration and information sharing
- 5.2 Explore the opportunities to formalise public access to toilets provided by businesses and industry
- 5.3 Support community groups, academics and research institutions to identify local needs to ensure that the limited resources for toilet provision, design and maintenance are being applied where they are most needed
- 5.4 Explore further research in Australia on discrimination, access, inclusion and personal experiences of public toilet use, similar to the Around the Toilet model.⁸

The final section of the report focuses on menstrual health and toilets and is written to be a standalone section of the report. As part of the Fellowship I intentionally arranged to meet with organisations and individuals who are addressing the stigma and taboo around menstruation through education, advocacy, building networks and creative pursuits. Menstruation has an important intersection with public toilets as approximately 26% of the Australia population is menstruating and menstruation is an activity that intersects with toilets, yet it may not be designed or well catered for. Recommendations have been developed for community engagement and education, access to menstrual products, toilet design, policy and legislation and research.

Implementation and Dissemination of Findings

There are a range of strategies that I will use to disseminate the findings of this report. These include promoting the report, including highlights and recommendations, via social media through Instagram and Twitter, and submitting an extract of this report to a range of Australian and international conferences relating to public health, water and sanitation, social inclusion, and urban design. The opportunity to present my Churchill Report and experiences with local and state governments and other key stakeholders across Australia responsible for the planning, design and maintenance of public toilets will be essential in generating pathways for collaboration for more inclusive public toilets.

I will strive to change the conversation around toilets in Australia.

Have we ever granted toilets – and especially public toilets – their due? Have we given them credit for how they've helped grow our world? As gross or goofy or quotidian as they may seem, public toilets represent higher notions and beliefs. Fundamentally: who is in and who is out. Whom we see as part of the city. Whom we see as human. LEZLIE LOWE⁹

⁸ More detail on Around the Toilet in Section 5.

⁹ Lezlie Lowe (2018) *No Place to Go: How Public Toilets Fail Our Private Needs*. Coach House Books: Toronto. Page 201

Introduction

Toilets are essential for basic human health, wellbeing and sanitation systems. Whilst toilets themselves physically come in many forms, they are all, at a minimum, a private space within a larger public place. The stigma surrounding nakedness and vulnerability of human bodies ignites myths and misconceptions, creates fictional narratives and entrenches social norms. In turn, communities and cultures shame public toilets as physical spaces and blame bodies who need to use them. Toilet experiences can illicit relief, fear, frustration, disgust or embarrassment. This report centralises voices of toilet users to inform strategies for change, proposing methods to overcome the myths and misconceptions, preventing stigma and shame.

Before considering enablers of public toilet access, we must unpack the barriers. This research categorises barriers within three areas: taboos, design, and policy and legal.

- **Taboos** relate to the social norms around toilet use, such as who can use what space, how, what for and when. In some countries these norms are entrenched within legislation and policed, whilst in other countries these may not be legislated but are enforced by popular culture
- **Design** includes the physical location, signage, and what activities are catered for based on the features provided
- **Policy and legal** relates to the legislation, strategies and standards that influence public toilet design, construction, operation and maintenance

Public bathrooms are hard to get right. And no wonder. They are mired in cultural baggage, stuck in the fixedness of fixtures, and bound by massive, often ancient infrastructure.

LEZLIE LOWE¹¹

Individual or combined barriers can impact on an individual's or group of people's access to public toilets. This is the situation that many people find themselves in, resorting to reducing their food and water intake, or limiting their mobility to avoid unsafe, inaccessible, uncomfortable or unhygienic public toilets. This subsequently impacts the access to the places that the toilets are in, whether it be a place of work, educational facility, entertainment venue, park or open space, shopping centre or government building. Going to the toilet and accessing public toilets are a basic human need and intrinsically linked to the achievement of the global development.¹⁰

¹⁰ See Appendix 2 for a blog post on the Toilets and Sustainable Development Goals

¹¹ Lezlie Lowe (2018) *No Place to Go*, page 49

Methodology

I planned the Churchill Fellowship meetings to explore contemporary topics that were in the news relating to toilets and contacted a range of organisations and individuals. Social media – including Twitter and Instagram – and google alerts provided an array of connections. Between March and May 2019, I travelled to the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, The Netherlands and Germany.¹² I had 28 meetings with community groups, community representatives, advocates and activists, academics, toilet manufacturers, government, business, social enterprise, non-government organisations, library staff and toilet enthusiasts. I had a range of questions I could draw on to explore the different barriers to public toilet access and use, as well identify different and innovate solutions to address the barriers.

*Varying social pressures exist within different types of public toilets, such as the powerful peer pressure of school toilets, the relative anonymity of street toilets, or the uncomfortable intimacy of workplace toilets. Private toilets within homes are often bound by similar unwritten rules if the bathroom is not one's own.*¹³

CARLA PASCOE

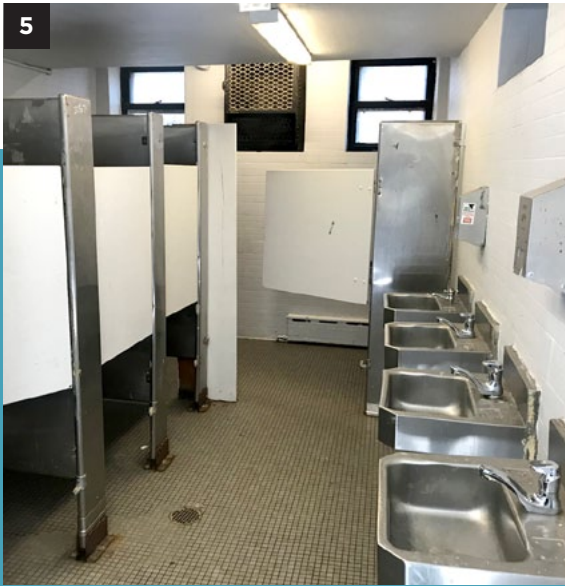
The Commission on the Status (CSW) of Women is the “principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.”¹⁴ CSW is held annually in New York over two weeks with governments, international organisations and non-government organisations coming together to promote women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives across the world and shaping global standards. The priority theme of the 63rd session held in March 2019 was *social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls*. The priority theme was in perfect alignment with my Churchill Fellowship research and I attended many sessions relating to the design, provision and maintenance of sustainable infrastructure; addressing stigma and taboos surrounding menstruation; gendered access to social protection systems and public services – including in areas of conflict; diversity of needs relating to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. Attending CSW provided a rich experience and I talked with many organisations that I would not otherwise have been able to visit.

Whilst travelling I also visited major civic institutions such as libraries, museums and public buildings to observe the accessibility and inclusiveness of their toilets.

12 See Appendix 1 for a full itinerary and meeting schedule

13 Carla Pascoe (2015) A ‘Discreet Dance’: technologies of menstrual management in Australian public toilets during the twentieth century, *Women’s History Review*, 24:2, 234-251, page 235.

14 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>



Many of these have been documented via Instagram @Public_Toilets_Anonymous. A key component of the Fellowship was the inclusion of discussions on menstruation as it intersects with public toilets. Discussions also covered the role of education and product diversity, although these could be whole areas of research on their own.

Public toilets don't neatly fit into one box, looked after by one person or team. Public toilets are at the intersection of planning, design, public health, customer service, maintenance, workplace health and safety, and self-care. This complexity and diversity of the many different conversations I had is what made the Churchill Fellowship so interesting, but also what has made writing the report so difficult. I have broken the report into sections targeting different audiences. There are sections for state and local level government policy makers, as well as planners and designers. Section 1 provides a snapshot of toilet user experiences, indicating the diversity of needs to be addressed in the provision of public toilets. Section 2 covers examples of policy, legislation, standards and strategy in relation to public toilets. Section 3 demonstrates that public toilets cannot be separated from the infrastructure they rely on for their effective use. Section 4 explores examples of public toilet design from the countries I visited. Section 5 identifies some of the organisations and professions involved in public toilet provision, accessibility, inclusion and operations. The final section of the report is about menstruation and toilets and is written to be a standalone section of the report. I also hope that this report is of interest to community and to toilet users, so that they can advocate for better provision across Australia for more inclusive public toilets.

IMAGE 5. Public toilets in a New York park with limited privacy

IMAGE 6. Sharman Stone (right), The Australian Ambassador for Women wearing a toilet pin

IMAGE 7. Occupied double street urinal

1. Toilet User Experiences

Public toilets have long been on the forefront of civic rights and civic action.

PHLUSH PUBLIC TOILET ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Using the toilet is a basic human function, however it is something that is done differently by different people. Toilet experiences can illicit relief, fear, frustration, disgust or embarrassment. Whilst travelling and researching people generously shared their personal experiences with me and there were some similarities and differences across cities, countries and continents. I have included summaries of some of these experiences in this section of the report. These are not exhaustive or universal, however they demonstrate the diversity of needs to be addressed in the provision of public toilets. If these needs are not addressed, they impact on an individual's or group of people's mobility, participation in employment, access to education, and inclusion in social and community activities.

- Wheelchair users shared frustration of not being able to close a toilet door, turn around in toilets or take their children to the toilet.
- Trans and gender diverse people can experience fear of choosing a gendered toilet. One person stated, it is the choice of "having to choose between being a 'poof' or a 'pervert'."
- Transport workers and drivers explained how difficult it can be to access a toilet, with the added challenges of a night-time shift, especially for women "who can't just go behind a bush." A Shebah driver in Brisbane joked about getting a catheter to solve the problem of needing to go to the toilet whilst driving.

- Women complained about queues but also the sense of solidarity that they can experience with other women waiting in a queue. Women are more frequent users and can take longer due to caring responsibilities, menstruation, pregnancy, menopause and clothing.
- Homeless or unhoused people shared examples of being refused access to customer toilets when no other toilets were readily available and highlighted the need for storage for their belongings as well as showering and laundry facilities.



IMAGE 8. Customers Only Sign

- Migrant and refugee women in emergency situations are at higher risk of physical and sexual assault. Emergency situations create additional challenges for menstruation, pregnancy and caring responsibilities.

- People with physical or intellectual disability have different needs that may be met by additional space and assistance provisions. Support animals also have toilet requirements to be catered for. Accessible toilets are often clinical spaces without the aesthetic considerations of non-disability toilets.
- People with invisible disability may require quick access and are often shamed or ridiculed when using specified accessible or disabled toilets. “Those with invisible impairments spoke about the suspicion and harassment that they had faced when using an accessible toilet” even when they had a RADAR key to facilitate access to disabled toilets.¹⁵
- Parents and carers require changing tables suitable for the person they are caring for. They might also be a different gender to the person caring for. Rarely are baby changing tables provided in male toilets.
- People of size shared the challenges when a cubical is not adequately designed for their needs, and the ‘ick-factor’ of when a body part touches a sanitary bin or toilet roll holder placed next to the toilet bowl.
- A family that I met in a museum shared with me that they pretended to be hotel guests that morning to use the toilets whilst travelling to the venue.
- Parents told me stories of small children picking up the urinal puck in public toilets or of children afraid of the hand dryer noise. When toilets are not provided in parks that children like to play in, the bushes are often the only option.



IMAGE 9. Not every disability is visible sign located on an accessible toilet

- Needing to pay to access public toilets or have the correct change can be a barrier. Especially if you need frequent or urgent access, have a group that needs to go (such as group of school children) or have limited money.
- People who exercise or walk dogs indicated having public toilets locked after dark was a hindrance and could create significant inconveniences.
- Safety and perceptions of vulnerability were raised by multiple individuals as were questionable hygiene and unclean toilets.

15 Dr Jen Slater and Dr Charlotte Jones (2018) *Around the Toilet: A research project report about what makes a safe and accessible toilet space (April 2015 – February 2018)*. Sheffield Hallam University: Sheffield, UK. Available at: <http://aroundthetoilet.com>

There are many reasons for using public toilets and many activities that occur in public toilets	Populations who share intersectional barriers to public toilet access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of bodily waste/fluid including mucus, urine, faeces, blood, sweat or tears • Administering essential medication • Menstrual management • Personal grooming • Caring for young children, people with disability and/or elderly people • Finding a quiet place to rest/seek privacy • Swallowing, adhering or injecting prescription or non-prescription medication • Accessing drinking water • Seeking washing facilities • Sexual activity alone or with another person • Work, including toilet cleaning and maintenance, phone calls or other communication, or sex work • Breastfeeding or expressing breast milk • Changing or washing clothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with incontinence/ challenges with bladder or bowel control • People with anxiety, panic attacks or mental health issues • LGBTIQ+ populations • People with vision impairment • People with physical disability • People with intellectual disability • Parents and carers • Children, babies and young people • People using prescription or non-prescription medication • People menstruating • People of size • Pregnant people • People sleeping rough/experiencing homelessness • Elderly, aged and those with limited mobility

TABLE 1. List of activities that may happen in toilets and different user groups who may experience access and inclusion differently

A Lack of Female Toilets in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

In Amsterdam I met with Geerte Piening, who made the news after being fined for urinating in public. Geerte decided to challenge the fine on the basis that there were no toilets for her to use on her way home after all the venues were closed. In 2015 when Geerte was fined there were only 2 female public toilets and 35 male urinals.

In 2017 when Geerte's case went to court the judge stated that, as it was an emergency, she could have used a male's urinal.

"I was so flabbergasted." This response created a substantial amount of debate in the city, making international news and "this not only triggered ammunition for an even stronger campaign for more public toilets for women but also provided a hilarious stream of photographs of women who attempted to pee in a men's urinal."¹⁶ The case and subsequent activism became known as *Wildplasgate* a campaign supported by local feminist organisation De Bovengrondse.



IMAGE 10-11. Street urinals in Amsterdam designed for people who can urinate standing up

16 Wild piss gate (Wildplas gate) <https://debovengrondse.nl/wildplagate/>

12



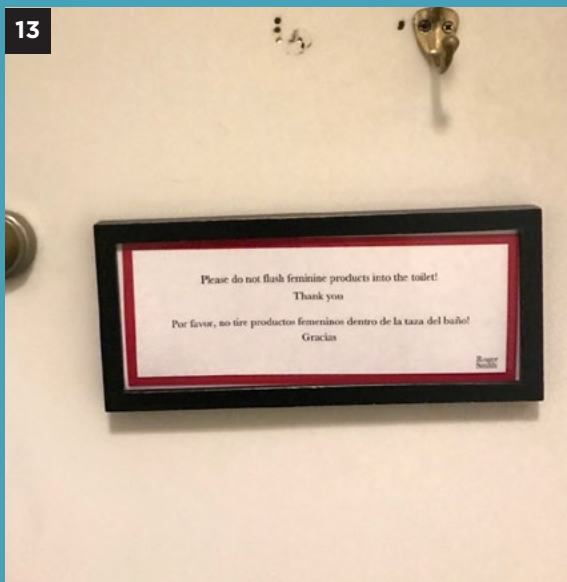
Toilet User Experiences Conclusions and Recommendations

This section is an illustrative list of some experiences around toilets, indicating the diversity of needs to be addressed in the provision of public toilets. Some of the experiences reflect the social norms that are enforced by the user or by other users. There is no one ideal toilet that will meet the needs of all, however many people expressed their ideas for improving toilets. The importance of single-gender toilets was promoted by some to ensure safety, prevent period shaming and bullying. Yet for other individuals and groups the removal of gendered spaces will increase inclusivity, use and safety. Design alone cannot address the needs of all toilet users and needs to be supported with a conversation about social norms, inclusion, use, safety and acceptance.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 Develop processes to ensure community input into public toilet location and design to ensure public toilets are meeting identified community needs, including those of minority groups.
- 1.2 Explore community dialogue mechanisms to support conversations around public toilets and user experiences to build empathy.
- 1.3 Further research on the provision of sex or gendered segregated spaces, perceptions of safety, inclusion, exclusion and religious requirements and what other mechanisms are required to support de-gendered inclusive and safe spaces.

13



14



IMAGE 12. Toilet signs can challenge gender norms

IMAGE 13. Dual language sign in a hotel requesting menstrual products are put in the bin, not toilet

IMAGE 14. Temporary street urinal in Amsterdam

2. Policy, legislation, standards and strategy

The legal framework provides the foundations for the planning, design, provision, construction, operation and maintenance of public toilets. A commonality across each of the places I visited was that there was no legislative requirement for government to provide toilets in public spaces. However, when toilets are provided, their construction must meet international and national standards and the relevant building codes.¹⁷ The provision of and access to toilets is intrinsically linked to achieving other government strategies, especially those related to physical activity and tourism. Hence the importance of legislation, ordinance and by-laws was a consistent theme across many of the meetings.

While I was unable to find a definitive response for all States and Territories in Australia, in Queensland the Local Government and City of Brisbane Acts **do not** prescribe that local governments must provide and maintain public toilets. However, provision must comply with the relevant Building Acts and Code and local planning schemes.¹⁸ A consequence of the lack of legislative requirement for the provision of toilets is the varying levels of coverage. Across the UK there has been a decline in the number of toilets available to the public.¹⁹ In Canada “Tim Hortons²⁰ is the defacto public toilets.” In New York people joked that I wouldn’t find *any* public toilets and to use the nearest Starbucks.

Planning for Provision

Berlin’s City-wide Toilet Strategy, Germany

Berlin, Germany was one city I visited that has a comprehensive public plan for the provision of public toilets. In Berlin the local authority developed the *Toilet Concept* which included an audit of existing toilets, spatial analysis of existing provision and public engagement with senior advocacy groups, disability and tourism associations and other stakeholders, to determine the demand for public toilets and prioritisation for new facilities or upgrades. The strategy recommended that:

- It is essential to maintain and, where possible, improve standards relating to gender equality, building conditions and opening hours
- The accessibility, hygienic condition and additional equipment must be improved
- Although the “usage fee” of currently 50 cents is suitable for avoiding misuse as much as possible, it should also not be increased or, if necessary, even eliminated at certain locations in order to allow threshold-free use for all.²¹

The document identified that a partnership model was one potential strategy for public toilet provision. “Given the almost universal presence of restaurants and pubs in Berlin, the promotion of cooperation is desirable. In any case, however, basic services via

17 Government legislation in Australia only applies to a developer’s compliance with the relevant local government planning scheme and typically these state that toilets must comply with regulatory building standards and specifications, however these standards and specifications are based on generalised evidence of user needs and requirements.

18 Communication with Local Government Division of Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs 12 June 2019.

19 Lora Jone and Rachel Schraer 15 August 2018 *BBC Reality Check: Public toilets mapped*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-45009337>

20 Tim Hortons is a Canadian food and beverage franchise.

21 Konzept für die öffentlichen Toiletten in Berlin (AP 10, Version 1.8, 21.09.2017) Page 13. Available at: <https://www.berlin.de/senuvk/verkehr/toilettenkonzept/>

public toilets must be guaranteed.”²² The development of the *Toilet Concept* led to a new partnership arrangement with Wall GmbH and the *Berliner Toilet* (which is discussed in greater detail in section 3 *Toilet Design and Location*).

Wales Public Health Act 2017

Although I did not meet anyone to discuss legislation in Wales, Rachel Cole-Wilkin from the London Loo Tour alerted me to The Public Health Act (2017), which requires local authorities to develop toilet strategies. I have included a reference to the legislation, as it provides an innovative solution to ensure local governments consider local needs in their planning. “By working with local partners and those affected by continence issues, the toilet strategy will have to assess the need for toilets locally and will set out the steps the local authority propose to take to increase access to toilets in their area.”²³ The legislation also ensures that local authorities will need to coordinate to consider access to toilets along key transport routes and within cultural venues and events. While the Wales Public Health Act 2017 does not mandate the provision of public toilets the strategy must include a local assessment of need and how the local authority will address the local need.

The Wales Public Health Act 2017 was praised by Crohn’s and Colitis UK:

“The Public Health (Wales) Bill is a significant piece of legislation as it is the first time any institution in the UK has treated access to toilets as a Public Health concern. For someone with Inflammatory Bowel Disease, a lack of toilets and not having the confidence of finding one quickly can have a devastating impact on their ability to engage in regular activities away from home such as going to work, school, holidaying, shopping or socialising.”²⁴

Social Inclusion Audits, Canada

I met with Elizabeth Glass, Director, Policy, Planning and Performance Management and Gail MacFayden, Library Service Manager from Toronto Public Libraries to discuss the implementation the Social Inclusion Audit (SIA)²⁵ that was developed by the Urban Canadian Library Association in 2008 as a tool to make libraries more responsive to changing community needs. I was interested to see how the application of the toolkit changed programming and facilities in Toronto libraries and to see if a similar tool could be used in the design and use of public toilets by other sections of government. Elizabeth and Gail shared stories of the consultation at a branch that which was in an old building. The library received a capital project and built a new building, however it was determined that the library was so important as a resource centre to the library that it built on the carpark and kept the old library open. In the new library, a youth advisory group, youth hubs (including after-school program) and a volunteer program were established. The library also developed partnerships with settlement services to support migrants, which were being provided by outreach in schools, as a need was identified for non-traditional hours and separated from the children’s learning. For staff, implementation of the SIA process was supported by training. As we were meeting ten years after the initial implementation of the SIA process, Elizabeth stated, “the cultural change was absorbed into the way we worked” and it is reflected in current strategic plan. “It seems so obvious now ... but it was all very intentional.”

22 Ibid. Page 15.

23 Crohn’s & Colitis UK 22 May 2017 Welsh Assembly passes bill increasing access to toilets. Available at: <https://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/news/welsh-assembly-passes-bill-increasing-access-to-toilets>

24 Ibid.

25 The toolkit is available online at www.siatoolkit.com

Equitable access

Portland All User Ordinance, Portland, Oregon, USA

Jamie Dunphy, Senior Policy Director at the City of Portland, at a meeting with Anna Preble and Carol McCreary from PHLUSH, shared the process and details of the Portland All User Ordinance. Passed in December 2015 the Ordinance removes barriers to inclusion and creates “spaces which are welcoming to all.” Centring the needs of parents with children, people with personal attendants, and trans individuals, the ordinance is based on anti-discrimination legislation. The Ordinance directed existing government-provided, single-user, gender-specific restrooms to be converted into all-user restrooms. In the first year over 600 single-stall gender-specific restrooms were converted to all-user restrooms with signs indicating what is behind the door (a urinal or toilet bowl) rather than who is allowed to use it. To increase the impact of the ordinance the City of Portland ran an ‘All User Restroom Challenge.’ The challenge encouraged businesses to follow suit, rather than mandating change. The City offered to promote businesses that participated in the challenge. The dedicated website²⁶ has over 40 businesses with photos of the signs indicating an all-user restroom, yet Jamie indicated that many more had participated, without informing the City of Portland.



IMAGE 15. All User Restroom sign

Jamie shared that the new government offices under construction will have all-user bathrooms on alternative floors. These changes to the provision of toilets in government buildings was accompanied by communication that went out to all staff. Jamie states that they “see City of Portland as a trend-setter rather than a regulator [and that they] want to demonstrate that [all-user bathrooms are] not a big deal.”

At the ribbon cutting at the first All-Users Restroom Jamie shared a “magical moment.” The event was in a historically black neighbourhood, a resident walking by said, “50 years ago there would have been separate black and white toilets.”

The important role that community stakeholders had in both the development of All User Ordinance as well as in the Portland Loo design was also highlighted. In reference to the All User Ordinance, Jamie stated, “This project was a full partnership. A quintessential example of what community stakeholders can do.” The policy started as a gender-neutral restroom ordinance however, due to community feedback, the name was changed to all-user. For effective community participation the City of Portland earned the trust of the people with an investment in the outcome.

While the ordinance only applied to single-stalled facilities, rather than multi-stalled, the Pioneer Courthouse Square, dubbed Portland’s Living Room, has constructed a multi-stalled all user restroom in the visitor information centre. The facility is open when the information centre is open and has a full-time security officer located in the common area near the hand sinks. Signage in multiple languages explaining what an All-User Restroom is, is located at the entrance. Staff say that everyone is welcome to use the toilets and that they see homeless people using the facility and the design works well for people in scooters and wheelchairs. When asked about feedback they have received, they said that the only complaint was from women who didn’t like it due to the presence of a male security guard.

²⁶ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/AllUserChallenge/>

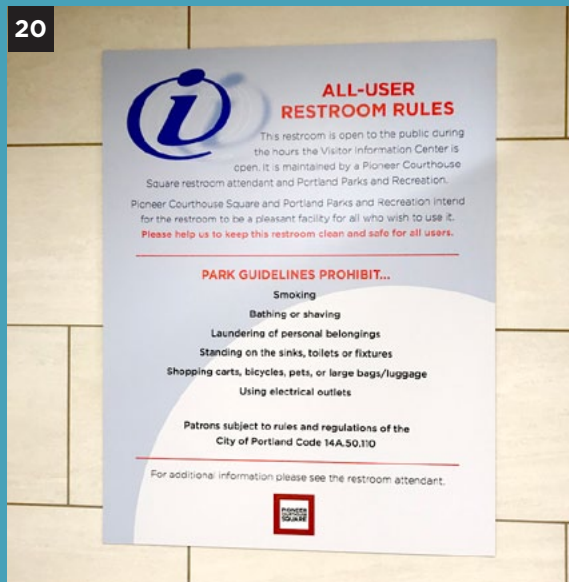
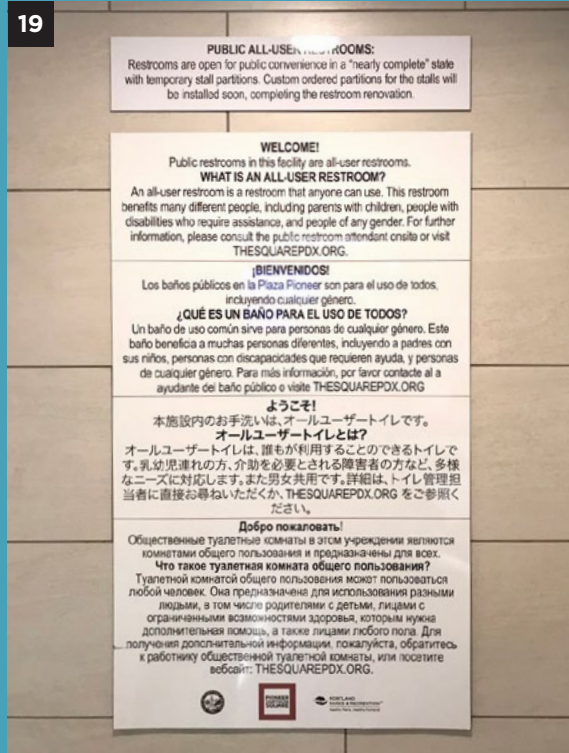
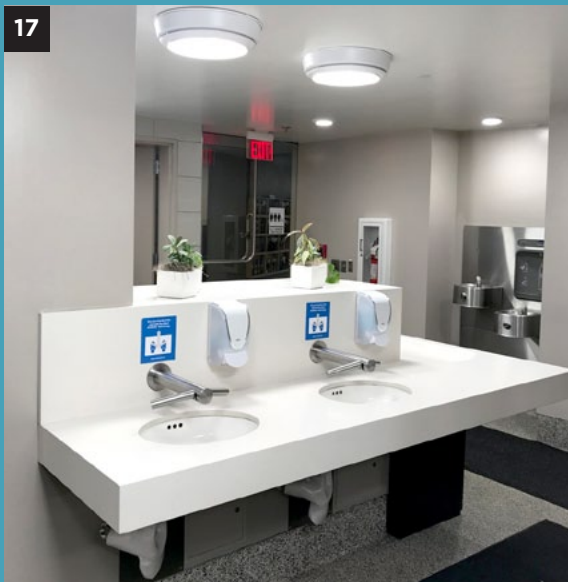
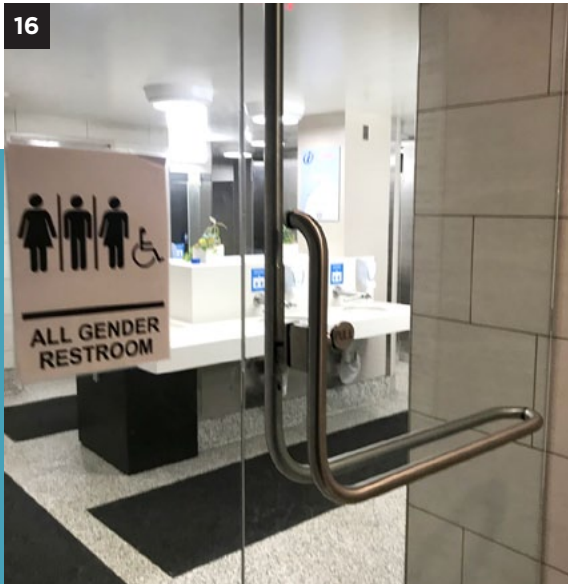


IMAGE 16-20. Photos of the Multi-User All User Toilet at Pioneer Courthouse Square

New York City “Look past the pink and blue”, USA

Carmelyn Malalis, Chair and Commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, shared information about the approach being used to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights at a parallel session at CSW on LGBTI access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. The Commission's campaign *Look past the pink and blue* supports inclusive access to toilets. In response to experiences of discrimination that were occurring in New York City (NYC) the campaign specifically focused on the needs of trans and gender diverse individuals. To address the under-utilisation of existing human rights law the Commission ran the campaign re-announcing legal protections. In NYC everyone is allowed to use a single-sex facility that mostly closely aligns with their gender identity or expression “without being required to show identification, medical documentation or any other form of proof or verification of gender.”²⁷ A key feature of the campaign was to ensure that people knew that it was coming from government. The Commission

“Because safe and equal bathroom access is a fundamental human right, as well as the law of the land in New York City, the NYC Commission on Human Rights has launched the nation’s first government-led citywide ad campaign affirming every New Yorkers’ right to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity, regardless of their gender assigned at birth. It has been illegal in New York City to discriminate against an individual on the basis of gender identity or expression, including denying access to bathrooms, since 2002.”²⁸

also offered training on transgender diversity and inclusion. In many of the toilets that I visited in NYC I saw signs that had reference to the anti-discrimination legislation in them.

Both the Portland and NYC examples demonstrated the importance of having leadership from the top and clear communication indicating what the expectations were.



IMAGE 21-22. Signs in New York toilets stating the anti-discrimination legislation

27 New York City 6 June 2016 *Mayor de Blasio Launches First Ever Citywide Ad Campaign Affirming Right to Use Bathrooms Consistent with Gender Identity*. Available at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/508-16/mayor-de-blasio-launches-first-ever-citywide-ad-campaign-affirming-right-use-bathrooms>

28 <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/single-sex-restrooms.page>

Building Codes and Standards²⁹

Assessing the effectiveness of building codes and standards across the jurisdictions was not a focus of the Fellowship however the importance of these planning tools was raised. Building codes include the type and number of toilets to be included based on the building type and standards include the detail of what is to be provided. Clare Lucas, Head of Policy and Campaigns from Muscular Dystrophy, and part of the UK Changing Places Consortium, identified one of the challenges for the provision of Changing Places was that the current building regulations in the UK only recommended their inclusion in large public buildings, and that it was not enforceable. However, Clare also noted that there were currently two consultations taking place in England and Scotland that could result in mandating Changing Places in new large shopping centres, leisure centres, hospitals and transit hubs as well as developing stronger minimum standards. As of May 1 2019, in Australia the National Construction Code includes Changing Places as a class of public toilets and they will be required in certain public buildings and spaces.³⁰ Throughout the discussion it was noted by many of the people with physical disabilities and disability advocates that the standards are the bare minimum and often users require a greater level of provision. Therefore, it is important for user groups to be included in the design phase to ensure that the facilities are meeting their needs.



IMAGE 23. Clare and Karen from Muscular Dystrophy



IMAGE 24. Example of a Changing Places Toilet Sign

29 For further information relating to building codes and access for people with disability see the 2016 Churchill Report by Michael Small *Ensuring the best possible access for people with disability to existing buildings that are being upgraded or extended*.

30 <https://changingplaces.org.au/changing-places-win-national-construction-code-adopts-new-accessible-toilet/>

Links with other policy

“The lack of toilets for public use in places where people may otherwise take exercise, such as parks and promenades, can contribute to physical inactivity. Physical activity is essential for the health of all members of society but particularly for older people as it can help to maintain independence. In addition, the absence of toilets for public use can exclude people who need regular access to toilet facilities from economic activities, such as shopping, which they would otherwise be undertaking, preventing them from engaging in the local economy. This can increase social isolation and lead to loneliness (especially amongst older or disabled people). Poor provision can also impact on tourism, the economy and use of public amenities.”

WALES DRAFT STATUTORY GUIDANCE³¹

The importance of public toilet provision to achieve other government priorities such as tourism, health and transport was also raised. People are not going to enjoy exploring a new city or evening exercise if they are unable to find and use an open toilet. Transport systems service thousands of people daily yet it can be difficult to find and access a toilet while commuting. In Ottawa, the community organisation GottaGo! is promoting the importance of toilets to residents and tourists. One of their strategies is to improve signage so that it is easier for residents and tourists to locate the public toilets that are available. The inclusion of toilets in parks, major transit stops and key public places are

identified as key for GottaGo! One major accomplishment of the group was to successfully lobby for public toilets in two major node stations of the new light rail transit system.³² Though 10,000 people are projected to go through the system every hour, the original plan did not include toilets beyond the terminus stations.³³

In Fife, Robbie Blyth, Operations Team Leader from Fife Coast and Countryside Trust raised the important link between toilets and healthy living. Provision of public toilets in wilderness areas contributes to increased comfort in undertaking outdoor activities and events. Robbie shared an example of a local race that had an increase in the number of female participants when they announced toilets would be available for participants.

Opportunities exist for chambers of commerce and tourism agencies to acknowledge the importance linkage between toilets, economic development and tourism and increase the promotion of toilet location, features and opening hours.

Criminalisation of hygiene

On the flipside legislation can be used to criminalise undesirable behaviour in public spaces. This can have disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations such as those who are homeless. Lisa Hawash, Associate Professor of Practice at Portland State University School of Social Work, shared the findings of a review of legislation conducted in 2015-16. The review identified 160 laws and ordinances that criminalised a lack of hygiene such as putting your feet in fountain. Lisa explained that some people are more likely to be prosecuted than others, including those who are unhoused or experiencing homelessness.

31 Welsh Government January 2018 *The Provision of Toilets in Wales: Local Toilet Strategy Draft Statutory Guidance*. Page 14 & 15

32 To open in Ottawa Summer 2019

33 Provincial law requires toilets at terminus stations.

Policy, Legislation, Standards and Strategy Conclusion and Recommendations

This section has demonstrated that in the countries I visited there was no legislative requirement for governments to provide or ensure access to toilets in public spaces. A consequence of the lack of legislative requirement for the provision of toilets is the varying levels of coverage and the reduction in provision. Toilet access requiring an entry fee will discourage the 'misuse' of toilets, but it also reduces the overall access, inclusion and usage of toilets. However, the provision of public toilets is strongly linked to achieving both human rights and anti-discrimination legislation, as well as achieving tourism, transport and physical exercise strategies. Policy and legislation can encourage and support a change in social norms surrounding toilet use. In both the Portland and New York City examples it was important to have leadership from the top and clear communication indicating what the new social norms were. However, with the creation of new legislation there needs to be caution to ensure that it does not criminalise vulnerable populations.

Recommendations:

- 2.5 Develop a legislative requirement for the provision of public toilets across local government areas, open space and transport networks, which includes:
 - Acknowledgement that access to toilets is a right and supports inclusion and dignity
 - An audit of the existing provision of public toilets
 - Community engagement to determine local needs
- 2.6 Review and revision of existing building standards and specifications to meet changing community standards with respect to advancement in accessibility technology, gender inclusion and other community generated issues
- 2.7 Chambers of commerce and tourism agencies to explore strategies to increase the promotion of toilet location, features and opening hours, to support the achievement of economic development and tourism strategies
- 2.8 Public toilet provision for transport users to be included in all transport network plans.



IMAGE 25. Machine collecting payment to enter public toilets



IMAGE 26–27. Signs indicating information and location of toilets

3. Infrastructure

Public toilets do not exist in isolation – they are reliant on the plumbed water, sewerage and electricity infrastructure that support them. In London, the first city-wide sewerage network built by Sir Joseph William Bazalgette contributed to the end of cholera in London, of which there had been several epidemics and nearly 16,000 deaths.³⁴ The lack of infrastructure networks can be a barrier to the provision of toilets in public spaces, such as parks or wilderness areas. In Montreal and Ottawa public parks were identified that did not have public toilets due to lack of infrastructure and the subsequent lack of toilets limited the usage of the parks. An additional challenge that affects some areas in the Northern Hemisphere is the sub-zero temperatures and the need to ensure water supply does not freeze causing damage to the infrastructure. Depending on the location, it is also important that this infrastructure is fortified against climate change and natural disasters. For example, in North-West America preparation has commenced for future earthquakes, and cities along coastlines, especially in the Pacific, are grappling with making infrastructure robust to rises in sea-level. Many people I met with expressed astonishment that in many countries drinking-quality water is being used to flush waste from the toilet into the sewerage system. Two of the businesses I met with, Green Flush Technologies and Madden Fabrications (Portland Loo), create modern toilets that can be built without reliance on external water, sewerage and electricity infrastructure.

London Infrastructure and Crossness Pumping Station, UK

The wonders and benefits of Sir Joseph William Bazalgette's 1,100 miles of underground sewers across London were espoused by Petra Cox, Learning and

Outreach Officer at Crossness Engines Trust, and Rachel Cole-Wilkin, Founder of London Loo Tours. In 1858 Members of Parliament finally approved a plan to address the worsening pollution across London that had led to the *Great Stink*.³⁵ Prior to this, all of London's waste was freely deposited into the river, which was also the source of London's drinking water. A key feature of the original sewer network was the Crossness Pumping Station. The Pumping Station was responsible for pumping and storing up to 25 million gallons of raw sewerage in a covered reservoir, until it was able to be pumped out on an ebb tide being released untreated into the Thames away from the existing urban areas. The Pumping Station itself is a beautiful example of Victorian architecture and Cast Ironwork. Demonstrating the interest and enthusiasm at the time, the Crossness Pumping Station was opened on 4 April 1865 by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and operational until the 1950s. The sewerage system constructed in the 1860s still forms the basis of the sewage system used across London today, however it is currently being complemented by the Thames Tideway Tunnel to increase its capacity. Without the construction of a city-wide sewerage network it is unlikely that flushing toilets would have become so popular as each household or neighbourhood would be responsible for their own cesspit.

The pumping station is being restored by a committed team of volunteers and it open to the public on open days throughout the year. I was unable to see the Prince Consort Engine in steam operation but was impressed by the beautiful ironwork and educational displays on the history of London's sewerage infrastructure, their collection of toilets and activities to engage young people.

34 Rose George (2008) *The Big Necessity: Adventures in the World of Human Waste*. Page 28

35 The *Great Stink* was during the hot summer of 1858 when the unpleasant odour from the Thames due to the pollution closed down the Houses of Parliament.

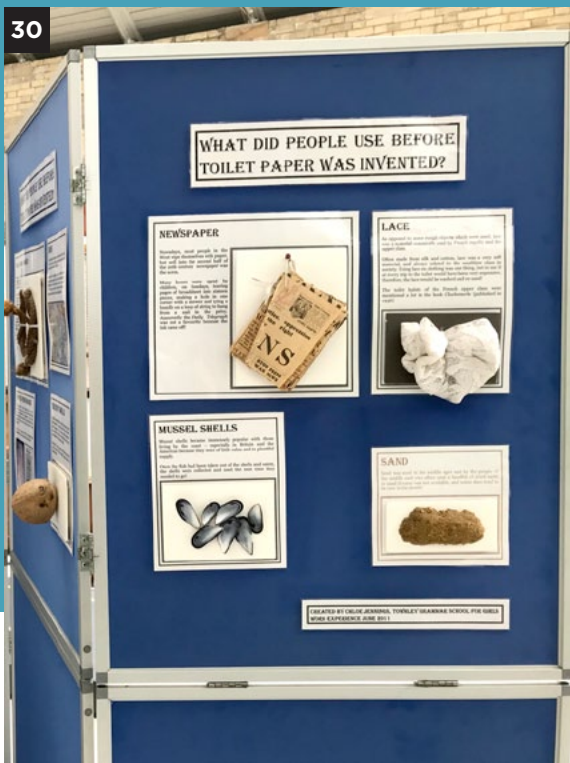
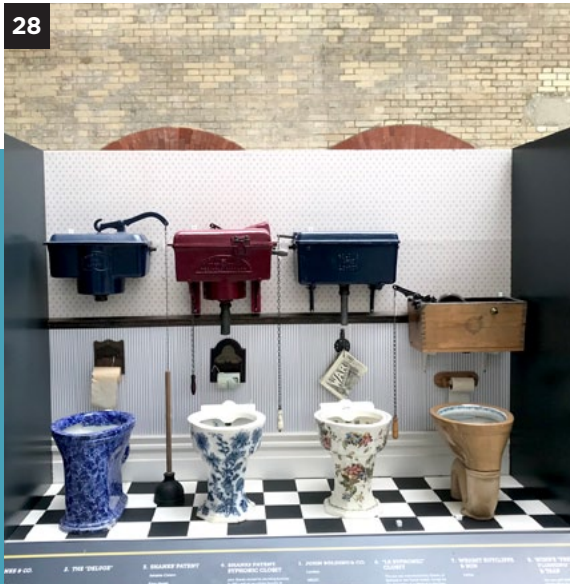


IMAGE 28-32. Architecture and examples of the education displays at Crossness Pump Station

What the indoor bathroom also changed was the notion that toileting (and, for that matter, bathing) was a communal exercise. With interior water closets, it became possible to enjoy complete privacy while urinating and defecating. And with the flush mechanisms, it became possible to instantly flush away one's own feces and urine. To plausibly pretend that bodies did not excrete. LEZLIE LOWE³⁶

Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Scotland

Fife Coast and Countryside Trust is located in Scotland, North of Edinburgh. The Trust was established by the Fife Council to deliver a range of services. Robbie Blyth, Operations Team Leader, provided a tour of several of their rural public toilets, which are located in areas unserved by infrastructure networks but used by those accessing walking tracks for recreational purposes. An initial audit of the toilets found that the majority were over 20 years old; had not had a regular maintenance routine, including the septic systems; were not meeting health and safety or legislative requirements in respect to control of substances hazardous to health, legionnaire's disease or asbestos; and the water which was being sourced locally had travelled through a paddock with livestock. There was also a lack of uniformity in operating hours and consistency in maintenance or cleaning schedules.

In response to this, and with a view to developing affordable and sustainable operational systems, the following were undertaken:

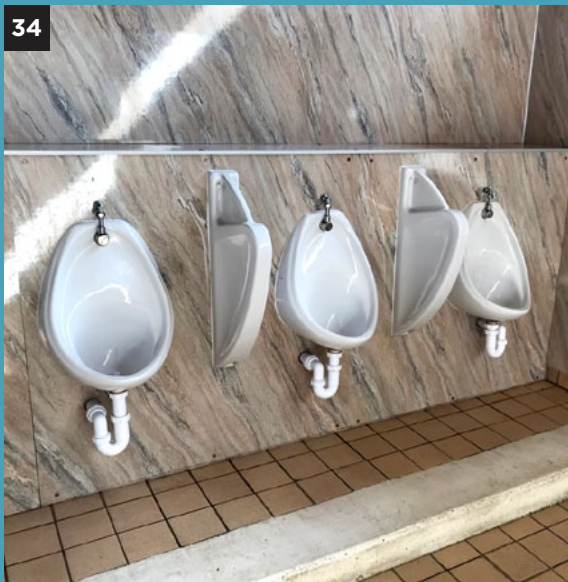
- Reviewed water usage
 - Removed hand sinks and replaced with non-alcoholic hand sanitiser gel
 - Removed flush from urinals and replaced with standard cleaning procedures
- Changed cleaning products to be compatible with the septic systems
- Inclusion of signage that include a calendar with open times, as it varies across the year based on demand, as well as key contact details.

These changes resulted in Fife being awarded Loo of the Year Awards National Category Winner for Scottish Local Authority, Public Toilet and also Scottish In House Cleaning Team. The awards were proudly displayed at several of the locations I visited. As Mike Bone, from Loo of the Year Awards stated, "Toilets have to be fit for purpose." What would not be acceptable in a high-use urban settings suits the operational requirements for a rural area with seasonal use. The toilets I visited are a great example of adapting toilet provision to the infrastructure available.



33

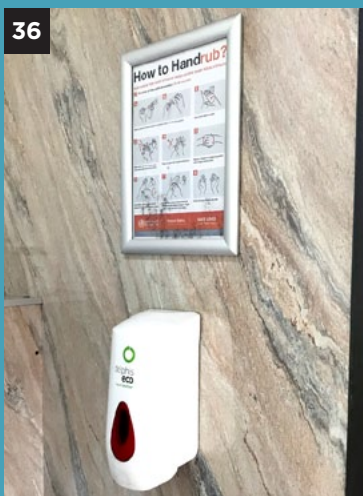
IMAGE 33-35. Rural toilets in Fife using limited water. The water supply is located on a hill behind the toilets



34



35



36



37



38

IMAGE 36-38. Information displays at Fife toilets

Composting toilets, Ireland

While I did not actively explore alternative technology that can respond to limitations in infrastructure provision or climate change, I had a conversation with members of Irish Seed Savers about composting toilets. It is important for a values-based non-government organisation with a focus on environmental sustainability to have infrastructure - including toilets - that reflect their values. They are exploring how to service staff and visitors using limited water and chemicals, within economic constraints.



IMAGE 39-41. Composting toilets

Gender Empowerments and Infrastructure

A parallel event at CSW run by Soroptimist International of Europe and Women for Water Partnership showcased how vocational training for women links gender equality and maintenance of urban infrastructure. The session raised the issue of high water losses across the water network due to aging infrastructure and lack of maintenance. A consequence of this is that no one directly pays for the leaked water and it impacts on water conservation and access to a limited resource. In South Africa the 'War of Leaks' programme was established by the Department of Water and Sanitation to train unemployed youth to maintain the infrastructure. In Jordan the International Labor Organisation (ILO) supports female plumbers, in a traditionally male dominated industry. A female plumber shared her experiencing of convincing her family by fixing items around the home. This then led to her training others and a subsequent expansion into training as an electrician to avoid electrocutions when water and electricity mix. By building skills and demand for female plumbers the program is challenging gender stereotypes, creating new role models in the communities as well as increasing the workforce to maintain water infrastructure and reduce water leaks.

Infrastructure Conclusion and Recommendations

This section has demonstrated that public toilets cannot be separated from the infrastructure they rely on for their effective use. The infrastructure that supports sewerage and public toilets varies across cities and countries, however it needs to be robust against local environmental elements such as weather, climate change and natural disasters. Toilet design, operation and maintenance should be responsive to the location, local conditions and operational structure. Gender empowerment and youth engagement can also be addressed through programs that support maintaining infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- 3.1 New and existing infrastructure should be fortified against climate change and natural disasters.
- 3.2 Explore scaling up alternative technologies to address environmental sustainability and reduction of water use.
- 3.3 Develop locally responsive toilet designs, operation and maintenance protocols.
- 3.4 Include gender and youth focus in infrastructure programs.



IMAGE 42-43. Example of the environmental action in the UN HQ toilets encouraging toilet goes to use less paper

4. Toilet Design and Location

There is a need for public toilets to be designed and located in response to local community needs. As detailed in section 1 *User Experiences*, while we all use toilets, we use toilets differently and can have different requirements. Kat Holmes in her book *Mismatch*³⁷ explores how the lived experience and assumptions of designers can lead to exclusion through design, which can have gendered, ability and sexuality impacts and implications. Holmes also explores how design can remedy exclusion through inclusive design methods, which can create solutions that work for many users. An example of a design in public spaces benefiting many is the provision of curb cuts. Originally fought for and provided for wheelchair users, curb cuts are beneficial for people pushing prams, people with joint pain, cyclists, delivery people³⁸ and tourists with roller bags (of which I was one on my travels). While inclusive design can benefit many, a contrasting opinion was expressed by Marco Schimmel, CEO of the Pop Up Toilet Company. When I asked how toilets can be designed, located and signposted so that the most number of people can use them Marco responded that, “if you design for everyone, no one can use it,” referring to the differing needs of people during the night-time and daytime economy. Marco stressed that toilets need to be responsive to the local needs such as location, time, users and special requirements. In effect both are correct – a design must respond to the local needs and sometimes design solutions have to prioritise specific uses or users, however inclusive design can also have wider impacts.

Below are three highlights of toilet designs [that](#) I encountered during the Fellowship.

UriLift, The Netherlands

A unique design is the *UriLift* designed by the PopUp Toilet Company to combat night-time public urination by men. Marco Schimmel, saw that the night-time economy had significantly different requirements to the daytime economy. The UriLift is a stand-up urinal with no door designed to be located in areas of high foot traffic. “As beautiful as you can make them, no one wants a toilet in front of their shop.” Therefore, the UriLift disappears into the ground when not in use, which in most cases, is during the day. The lack of door is designed to decrease the time that someone will stand and use it, which increases the number of potential users per hour and reduces the wait time for users. The inclusion of curved walls means that when you pass by you only see the back of the person using the urinal, and there is no exposure of private body parts.

One of the limitations of the original UriLift design was that it only caters for men who need to urinate, which, as Marco states, was responding to the original identified need. New toilet models have increased number of features including toilet bowls behind doors, self-cleaning and an event toilet that is compactable for transport and has the added benefit of not looking like a construction toilet.

37 Kat Holmes (2018) *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes design*. The MIT Press: Cambridge

38 <https://medium.com/@mosaicofminds/the-curb-cut-effect-how-making-public-spaces-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-helps-everyone-d69f24c58785>;
<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/curb-cuts/>;
<https://thingofthings.wordpress.com/2014/11/15/the-curb-cut-effect-or-why-it-is-basically-impossible-to-appropriate-from-disabled-people/>

44



45



46



47



IMAGE 44-45. UriLift on a main street in Apeldoorn, Netherlands

IMAGE 46. A UriLift being built in the footpath

IMAGE 47. An event Pop-Up Toilet

Portland Loo, Portland, Oregon, USA

The Portland Loo was designed by the City of Portland in consultation with the community. The toilet is in a self-contained kiosk, that is smaller than a car park space, and designed to go on a footpath or in a park. The internal design is spacious for users with a pram, shopping trolley or wheelchair. There are ventilation slats at the bottom that allow for visibility so that someone outside can see if it is occupied, while still providing adequate privacy for the

user. “Free and accessible around the clock, the Loos are designed specifically to prevent problems that are commonly experienced with public toilets.”³⁹ But design is not enough. As Evan Madden, Sales Manager, Madden Fabrications identified, “We have found that placing the restroom in an area that would serve pedestrians, commuters and homeless is most effective. Essentially the busier the restroom is the more likely it will stay clean and crime free.”



IMAGE 48-52. Myself and Evan Madden at one of the Portland Loos in Portland

³⁹ <https://portlandloo.com/>

Berliner Toilette, Berlin, Germany

To respond to the new requirements identified in the Berlin Toilet Strategy, Wall GmbH designed the New Berliner Toilet. A prototype of the automatic toilet that included two toilet bowls and a urinal was put on public display for two days for community feedback. “Overall, the verdict was very positive. However, valuable hints and suggestions were also received on how to further improve the Berliner-Toilette,”⁴⁰ which were incorporated into the design.

The new design is supported by significant technology, including increasing ways that people can make payments including mobile phone, credit card or via an app. While there is no CCTV or cameras for privacy reasons there are sensors that can determine the volume of the space inside the toilet and if there is someone or something still inside the automatic cleaning will be postponed. There are also help buttons installed that go directly to the customer service centre which allows for assistance to be provided. The service centre can also access information about the toilet systems and usage to check that it is working correctly and if not, an individual toilet can remotely be closed down prior to a repair person arriving.

An advantage of Wall GmbH having a long-term contract for the provision of toilets across public toilets across Berlin and the integrated technology into the design is the consolidation of information. The Berlin toilet app allows for navigation to the nearest toilet, information on whether the toilet is open or not as well as the digital payment function. It also allows users to provide feedback on the toilet and report defects.



IMAGE 53. Meeting with Frank Hoyer, Andreas Scholz & Thomas Schuppe from Wall at the production plant in Velten, Germany

40 <https://www.berlin.de/senuvk/verkehr/toilettenkonzept/>

Locating public toilets

For some people significant planning is required to leave the house, and this includes identifying where the closest toilets are along the route to be taken, or what toilets are available at the intended destination. The inclusion of up to date information about toilet locations, features and opening hours can be of significant assistance and can increase the people who will actively visit a place or location. Adequate signage is another way people can locate toilets when in public, including distance to the nearest toilet. However, information can quickly become out of date. Numerous people I spoke to whilst travelling were aware of the Australian National Public Toilet Map commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Health and identified it as a benchmark in apps for locating toilets.

There is a map for Changing Places across the UK which includes registered Changing Places. Clare, from the UK Changing Places Consortium, commented that it was great some companies and places were including Changing Places but not all were compliant with standards. Internet access is required to access The Changing Places map, as it is not available offline, and users can search by location but not by venue type, size or opening hours. Information is required from providers to be kept up to date so that the map remains useful and relevant.

In Netherlands *Maag Level Darm Sticking* (Stomach Liver Intestine Foundation) is calling for public toilets every 500m in city centres so that everyone can use and participate in the space.



IMAGE 54. Sign in a shop window indicating where closest toilets are

Toilets Signage

There is a wonderful collection of toilet door signs on social media,⁴¹ yet the majority are separated into binary categories of male and female, and some are based on negative gender-based stereotypes. Forcing people to choose between male and female can cause significant stress for sections of the population. For example, a female disability worker shared an example of caring for a male wheelchair user and having to decide which toilet to use. She stated that, “after consideration I decided that if anyone was going to be uncomfortable it would have to be me, not my client” and she went into the male toilets to support her client. This also applies to parents of children with a different gender to them if alternative toilets are not provided. The need to choose which toilet to use can also create an unsafe environment for trans or gender diverse individuals having to choose which toilet to use. In *Around the Toilet* it was reported that “Trans participants in our research also felt that their motives for using the toilet were under suspicion, and wrongly portrayed by others as sexually predatory or violent.”⁴² As identified in section 2, Portland changed signage to include the facility behind the door, such as a toilet bowl or urinal.

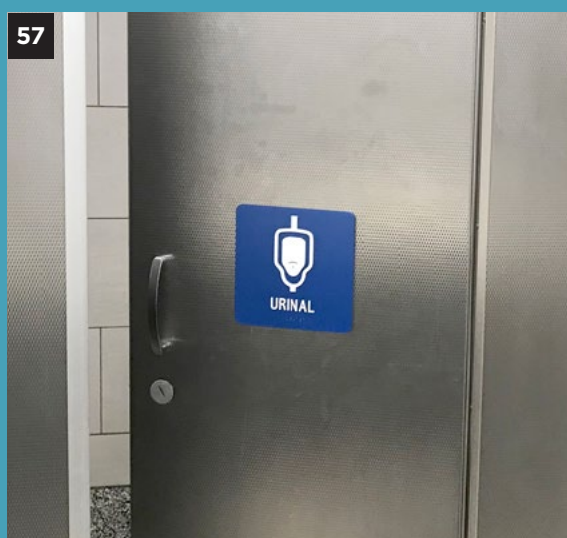


IMAGE 55-57. Examples of binary signs indicate separate toilets to be used by women and men and a urinal sign

41 #ToiletSign #ToiletSigns #ToiletSignage
#ToiletSignsOfTheWorld to name a few hashtags

42 *Around the Toilet* Page 26-27. Further information on the research is in Section 5.

Operating hours

Operating hours are intrinsically linked to the accessibility and availability of a public toilet. Frequently operators will close public toilets after dark to reduce the opportunities for anti-social behaviour and potential damage or vandalism to the toilets. However, the restricted access to toilets can impact different populations. The example of people exercising or walking dogs after dark and finding public toilets locked was commonly shared. As previously identified in section 2 achieving public health and physical exercise strategies is dependent on the provision and access to public toilets. In addition, locked toilets are also inaccessible for other people who need to use them 'after-hours'. This may include people who are homeless or sleeping rough or transport workers. In Australia the Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK)⁴³ can be used to ensure access to people with disability can access locked toilets regardless of operating hours. A similar system is used in the UK (RADAR Key) and in Europe (Euro Key).

One of the rationales for a user fee of the Berliner Toilet in Berlin was that people are unlikely to pay to enter a space to then damage it. The entrance fee then becomes a barrier to entrance to toilets and reduces opportunistic anti-social activities. However, Wall GmbH shared with me that compared with other cities with similar toilets that had no entrance fee, Berlin had a lower overall usage.

Toilet Design and Location Conclusion and Recommendations

This section has explored some examples of public toilet design. Section 4 explores examples of public toilet design from the countries I visited. The lived experience and assumptions of designers can lead to exclusion through design, which can have gendered, ability and sexuality impacts and implications. However, design can remedy exclusion through inclusive design methods, which can create solutions that work for many users. The design of public toilets can be responsive to the different needs of the day and night-time economy, rural and urban areas, and different users. Being able to access information about which toilets are available and when, can assist those who need to plan before leaving home. Apps and signage can be useful tools to locate toilets, however the information must be kept up to date. It can be efficient if one organisation is responsible for the data collection.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 New toilets and upgrades to existing toilet infrastructure should consider public toilet design principles. (see text box)
- 4.2 Develop Australia-wide desired standards of service for provision in specific locations such as town centres, parks, recreation areas

"An investment in design pays dividends!" LOO OF THE YEAR

PUBLIC TOILET DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Each toilet will be different responding to the local context and needs. Rather than list each of the items to be included in a toilet I have provided some design principles to consider when it comes to public toilets in response to user and operator requirements:⁴⁴

- **SAFETY & PRIVACY** – All users want to feel safe, and have both audible and visual privacy, when using a toilet as it is private and vulnerable human function

- **ACCESSIBILITY** – Design must meet the specific user needs including minimal standards for physical accessibility. This also includes circulation spaces, handles and height of fixtures

- **INCLUSION** – Design to meet the needs of all populations, including minority groups. This includes a preference to single stall physical designs, signage that reflects all bodies and the review and enforcement of anti-discrimination policies

- **LOCATION & AVAILABILITY** – Toilets need to be easily locatable and provided in the appropriate number to respond to the number of users. This includes how far people need to travel to access them

- **ATTRACTIVENESS** – Aesthetics are important to make people feel comfortable. The design of the toilets should be a continuation of the place it is located in

- **EASE OF MAINTENANCE & HYGIENE** – Materials used in the construction need to allow for easy cleaning, resistance to vandalism and durable while still being functional and welcoming

- **SUSTAINABLE** – Design and maintenance needs to consider the use of resources such as water and electricity

- **COMMUNICATION** – Toilets need to be easy to find via signage or apps, include relevant information about operating hours and maintenance requests as well to be able to determine if a stall is available or occupied from a distance

- **COST EFFECTIVENESS** – Considering public toilets as an investment in public amenity also ensure value for money and consideration of maintenance costs across the lifespan of toilets

⁴⁴ Informed by Design Principles for Public Restrooms in the PHLUSH Public Advocacy Toolkit and seven criteria for a needs-based provision of public toilets in the Berlin Toilet Concept.

5. Roles, Responsibilities and Partnerships

A wide range of professions are involved in public toilet provision, accessibility, inclusion and operations. This includes operational staff, architects and urban designers, public health officers, police and ambulance services, disability services and academics. In meetings to discuss the roles and responsibilities of government, financial austerity was frequently mentioned as a challenge to the provision and on-going operation of public toilets. In this era of austerity and with costs being shifted to individuals and the private sector, toilets can easily be seen perceived an on-going expense and liability contributing to their closure. However, it is important that public toilets are seen as investment. When people can easily use a space they will enjoy it and relax, potentially spending more time and more money, which also contributes to an increase in social connections and a reduction in isolation.

This point was demonstrated by the ECHO participants' representative group. They identified that the promotion of Changing Places increased their likelihood of visiting a place. Members shared the example of the local ECHO festival that provided a portable changing places facility (called Mobiloo). For a cost of £395 an additional 20-25 people were able to attend, who would not have been able to attend without it. Across the UK it is estimated that over ¼ million people require a Changing Place, and this number increases when you include people who would benefit from using it, as well as parents, carers and families.

This section will feature some of the different organisations involved in public toilets that I was able to meet or discuss during the Fellowship.

Libraries, Toronto, Canada

Libraries can be a de-facto public toilet in urban areas as libraries are often located across a city, have long opening hours and everyone is welcome. Libraries are also able to reflect the local community with branches providing different services. Access to public toilets is a critical requirement to full the library's mission "to provide free and equitable access to services which meet the changing needs of Torontonians ... in a welcoming and supportive environment." In Toronto new libraries included gender-neutral toilets as well as some with Changing Places. Elizabeth Glass, from Toronto Public Libraries, states, "Public libraries must be aware of evolving standards of accessibility as the population ages and requirements for privacy, gender neutral and family spaces. Good design is founded in research, inclusive public consultation, analysis of usage trends and evaluation". The library teams in Toronto have also seen an increase in users with accessibility requirements which has corresponded with an increase in accessible public transport options. However, toilets are private spaces in a public building. I was informed that the week before I arrived in Toronto a local library branch had closed the toilets on several floors in response to alcohol consumption and illicit drug use.

Community Toilet Schemes, UK

To complement, or replace government provision of public toilets, some local governments across the UK are implementing Community Toilet Schemes (CTS). While implementation is slightly different in each area, the concept of CTS are that businesses are paid a small fee to make their toilets open to non-customers. The benefit is that there are more toilets available for the population, without them being provided by the local government. The businesses place a sign in the window to indicate that toilets are available, and that people do not need to be paying customers to use them. Challenges of the CTS identified in my interviews included that not everyone was aware of the schemes, that operating hours and level of accessibility may vary, and that people may feel uncomfortable using them. An example provided was a CTS being provided in a pub may be unsuitable for a non-drinker, someone with children, or if it does not meet accessibility standards of a wheelchair user.



IMAGE 58. Community Toilet Scheme sign near Waterloo Station, London

IMAGE 59. The London Loo Tours

Loo of the Year Awards, UK

Industry has a role in promoting the provision of quality toilets. I met with Mike Bone, Managing Director of Loo of the Year Awards. Annually in the UK over 5,000 toilets are inspected against specialised criteria as part of the Loo of the Year Awards. The inspection criteria are above and beyond the British Standards and result in toilets being awarded a platinum, gold or silver standard. Toilets are entered in sixteen sectors and sixty-one categories. Mike commented that he has seen a decrease in government and education applicants but a corresponding increase in industry involvement in the awards. The Awards provides an opportunity for businesses to showcase their toilets and then use the awards as promotion. Mike espoused the business case for good toilets as companies need to see toilets as a feature or benefit because people will go where they have clean and well-equipped facilities that meet their needs.

London Loo Tours, UK

The London Loo Tours were developed after founder Rachel Cole-Wilkin was determined to find toilets in London that she did not have to pay for. The tours have, however, expanded into four different themed tours across London exploring the history and evolution of private and public toilets. The tours provide practical tips, puns and fun toilet facts as well as spotting toilets in their natural habitat. Through the tour locals and tourist alike get to explore an important part of the city which is rarely thought about.



Around the Toilet Research Project, UK

Around the Toilet was a two and a half year cross-disciplinary, arts-based research project based at Sheffield Hallam University which explored the toilet as a place of exclusion and belonging. I met with Dr Kirsty Liddiard & Dr Charlotte Jones in Sheffield to discuss the project and the extensive resources that were developed. The project initially engaged with trans, queer and disabled people but this was expanded due to demand and interest from people who also wanted to share their toilet experiences. *Around the Toilet* shared personal toilet experiences and worked with different professions to develop a comprehensive list of findings and recommendations. Some of the resources developed through the project included:

- Lift the Lid zine shares the experiences of different people with different perspectives
- The Toilet an animated film exploring the importance of toilets
- Project Blog <http://aroundthetoilet.com/>
- Design toolkit for architects, designers, academics and students
- @cctoilettalk and #cctoilettalk on Twitter



IMAGE 60. I met with Dr Charlotte Jones and Dr Kirsty Liddiard at The University of Sheffield

“Toilet access requires consideration of so many things: mental health, faith, gender, sexuality, race, disability, class, homelessness, workplace and labour rights, fatness, age, parenting, and much more.”⁴⁵

Community Groups and Advocacy

A highlight in each country was meeting with community groups and advocates who are working to create more inclusive communities. Community groups can play a vital role in identifying demand, advocating to government authorities and ground-truthing.

Public Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human, Portland, Oregon, USA

Public Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human (PHLUSH) was one of the key organisations that worked with the City of Portland to develop the All User Ordinance and the Portland Loo. They also regularly write blogs and run events raising awareness of the importance of toilets. I was warmly welcomed by the PHLUSH members and they assisted in providing me introductions to the key players with an interest in toilets, hygiene centres and sanitation. The mission of PHLUSH is to help local governments and citizen groups, through education and advocacy, to provide equitable public restroom availability and to prepare for a pipe-breaking seismic event with appropriate ecological toilet systems. To further this aim PHLUSH has developed a Public Toilet Advocacy Toolkit for North America.⁴⁶ Designed for use by community advocates it explains how to frame the conversation and make the case for public toilets. The toolkit is very comprehensive including strategy and action planning tools.



IMAGE 61. PHLUSH members welcoming me to Portland

GottaGo! Ottawa, Canada

Bessa Whitmore, Kristina Ropke and Zeinab Mohammed from GottaGo! Ottawa share details of their community organisation and the progress they have made improving access to public toilets in Ottawa. GottaGo! was established in 2013 through a Citizen's Academy Civic Bootcamp run by the local authority to increase engagement skills of citizens. The GottaGo! members have worked closely with students and community volunteers to develop reports identifying local issues around the need for public toilets. The organisation, although small, aims to "create a network of safe, accessible, free, clean and environmentally responsible public toilets and water fountains in parks, major transit stops and key public places to meet the needs of residents and tourists in Ottawa." I was provided with multiple examples of their effectiveness. In Harrold Park there is a small playground with water in the summer for children, yet no public toilets in the vicinity. In the summer of 2016 GottaGo! Funded an accessible port-a-loo and had it painted by a local artist to make it look more welcoming. The neighbourhood association liked it so much they requested the local councillor fund it the next year through discretionary funds. Success! Previously parents would knock on neighbourhood doors close by to request to use the bathroom for children, or they would use the bushes, an obvious health hazard.

For another park GottaGo! developed a business case titled, *Toilets Please for Dundonald Park* which involved consultation with neighbours and nearby businesses. Whilst, the government did not provide toilets in the park a GottaGo! member established relationships with two local businesses (a liquor store & Tim Hortons) to allow access to toilets for park users. The access was tested by volunteers and no barriers for access were determined, however there is no signage indicating the arrangement.

46 <https://toolkit.phlush.org/>

ECHO participant's representative group, Leominster, UK

ECHO is a service provider for people living with disability in Herefordshire. The ECHO participant's representative group are elected participants who work together to help run ECHO and ensure that participants wants, needs and ideas are incorporated into the services provided. At our meeting in Leominster the important role that advocacy can have in improving access to toilets was discussed. Aida, an ECHO representative group member, was successful in obtaining a Changing Place at a local swimming pool after starting campaign and obtaining community support.



IMAGE 62-63. ECHO participant's representative group meeting in Leominster, England

Country Women's Association Victoria, Australia

An Australian example demonstrating the importance of community groups in catalysing a response to local need was initially shared with me by Dorothy Coombe, Vice President of the National Rural Women's Coalition, at CSW. Jean Black, former Chair of The Social Issues Committee, provided me with additional details of the work of the Country Women's Association of Victoria (CWA) to improve toilet conditions across the state. Several members had complained that the toilets at the train stations lacked baby changing spaces and were locked after dark, meaning they were unable to use them when they travelled. Members often can have long days travelling to Melbourne and back to rural areas. To respond to this identified need, the Social Issues Committee developed a survey that was sent out to the 400 branches across the State to complete to determine what was available and what was needed. "The response was outstanding, many branches making detailed reports on toilets in their areas. (One branch had 2 carloads of ladies and they split their Shire up, packed lunches and spent several days visiting every toilet they could find.)".⁴⁷ The extensive collection of information was shared with each of the branches. Some of these then approached local authorities demanding improvements. "Some of the actions taken saw local authorities repairing, repainting and cleaning up their toilets. (It is hard not to listen to a group of 'fierce women' when confronted with a toilet survey)." The Committee also wrote to VicRail (the state-wide rail provider) about the station toilets "with favourable results ... Many saw this as a 'fun' thing but overall I felt it achieved a better deal for all people using toilets anywhere in the State. Changes were slow in some areas, but they have been done."

Roles, Responsibilities and Partnerships Conclusions and Recommendations

This section has touched on some of the organisations and professions involved in public toilet provision, accessibility, inclusion and operations. With financial austerity impacting government budgets it is important to support industry and other groups in the provision and promotion of accessible and inclusive public toilets. Without a legislative requirement ensuring their provision, toilets can easily be perceived as an on-going expense and liability contributing to their closure. However, it is important that public toilets are seen as investment in social inclusion. When people can easily use a space they will enjoy it and relax potentially spending more time and more money, which also contributes to an increase in social connections and reduction in isolation.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Acknowledge the complementary and essential roles that different professions and community groups have in the provision, operation and maintenance of public toilets; and explore opportunities for collaboration and information sharing
- 5.2 Explore the opportunities to formalise public access to toilets provided by businesses and industry
- 5.3 Support community groups, academics and research institutions to identify local needs to ensure that the limited resources for toilet provision, design and maintenance are being applied where they are most needed
- 5.4 Explore further research in Australia on discrimination, access, inclusion and personal experiences of public toilet use, similar to the Around the Toilet model.

“We need to act like a world-class city. World Class cities have toilets.”

KRISTINA ROPKE GOTTAGO!

6. Menstrual Health and Toilets

“Secrecy, stigma and shame - replace with dignity, empowerment and confidence” HAFAI

As part of the Fellowship I intentionally arranged to meet with organisations and individuals addressing the stigma and taboo around menstruation through education, advocacy, building networks and creative pursuits. Menstruation has an important intersection with public toilets as 26% of the population is menstruating⁴⁸ and menstruation is an activity that occurs in toilets, yet it may not be designed or well catered for. A person who menstruates can have approximately 450 periods across their lifetime, potentially using over 9,000 disposal pads or tampons. Generally, each of these menstruation events intersect with a public or private toilet.

Menstruation is normal and healthy yet, in Australia and globally, many taboos and social stigmas exist around periods and menarche.⁴⁹ Much of the language used - such as ‘hygiene’ or ‘sanitation’ and the creation of euphemisms - contributes to the stigma. Often menstruation is a topic that is not openly discussed and in some cultures a range of limitations are placed on people while they are menstruating. In school-aged children and young people, menstruation can also be linked with missing school or dropping out.

Many of these issues are explored in the report launched in June 2019 by the Victorian Women’s Trust *About Bloody Time: the menstrual revolution we have to have*.⁵⁰ Based on an international online survey and face-to-face consultations across Victoria, the Trust surveyed almost 3,500 women and girls about their experiences of menstruation and menopause. It explored lived experiences of “the many permutations of the menstrual taboo; the ways period stigma affected people’s lives; and how we may better support those who menstruate.” The book details negative sentiments surrounding experiences of menstruation, and how experiences and reflection on menstruation are intertwined with culture. The report noted, “How repressive religious, traditional or male-dominated family situations caused (respondents) to feel alone, ashamed, ostracised, sad, uninformed, unprepared, embarrassed and weaker and less valuable than boys and men”⁵¹ and how taboos and stigma isolate individuals, compounding a lack of support and information.

48 In Australia there are over 6 million who could be menstruating at any time (females aged between 12 - 50 years old) as a percentage of the total population of 26 million.

49 Menarche is the first time a person menstruates.

50 <https://www.vwt.org.au/about-bloody-time-book-launched-period/>

51 Victorian Women’s Trust (2019) page 37

AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE 63RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

PARA 29. *The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from education. It also recognizes that among the gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, in their technology-mediated environment, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, including for menstrual hygiene management, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work performed by girls and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys and may influence the decision of parents to allow girls to attend school.*

PARA EEE. *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water, as well as access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls, as well as for menstrual hygiene management, including for hygiene facilities and services, in homes, schools, temporary shelters for refugees, migrants or people affected by natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies or armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in all other public and private spaces; take measures to reduce the time spent by women and girls on collecting household water; address the negative impact of inadequate and inequitable access to drinking water and to sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education; and promote women's full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation.*

Education

Project Luangwa's Gender Support Program, Zambia

As part of a panel on 'Meeting needs and changing mindsets: the benefits of gender-responsive water and sanitation services for women's rights' at CSW, Fwilane Banda, Gender Support Manager, from Project Luangwa presented the Gender Support Program, an education program being run in Zambia. The program was established to challenge misconceptions and a lack of knowledge regarding both physiological and psychological aspects of menstruation and other reproductive health issues. Although menstruation is a natural biological process and a key sign of reproductive health, in Zambia little attention had been given to the provision of appropriate and adequate sanitation facilities and services for menstrual management. Fwilane commented that menstrual health "is a subject that has been hard to advocate for because there is a lot of myths and misconception surrounding it across cultures."



IMAGE 64. Fwilane Banda presenting at CSW

Across Zambia women and girls face challenges that include some negative cultural and traditional practices including as child marriages and gender-based violence. Fwilane shared stories of young people who lacked information on menarche and had no idea what was happening when they had their first period. There were also stories of menstrual products not being purchased within the household so without access to them students would miss school. Project Luangwa's Gender Support Program targets girls, boys, women and men to promote gender equality by providing education based on accurate health information and to create societal change. Male students were encouraged to help female students catch up on schoolwork if they miss school and provide help around the house. "It was very important to bring boys and girls together to encourage a mutual understanding, a willingness to work together and to give reciprocal support. ... Society is complex and it's only by creating a true desire for equality in that a long and lasting impact can be made." The program evaluation demonstrated the positive effect the education has had for individuals and on communities. A young man, stated, "I used to think that it was unsafe to talk about menstrual hygiene," but now feels better able to support his sisters.

Fwilane concluded that the program has changed attitudes, "they used to laugh, and now they help". This program demonstrates the importance of education on menstrual and other reproductive health issues in tackling stigma and taboos to support positive attitudes and behaviour change. By providing education to all school students they were able to create allies and a supportive educational and learning environment for all students.

"I am so proud that I menstruate. How wonderful to be able to bleed without injury." FWILANE BANDA

Crafts and Cramps, Germany

Crafts and Cramps, based in Berlin Germany, takes a different approach to raising awareness and education. Craft and Cramps was created by Isabel Idun in response to unexpected disgust to an artwork depicting menstrual blood she had made and displayed in her home. “It isn’t even real blood and people are freaking out.” Through the creation of artwork and hands-on activities Crafts and Cramps creates a safe space for adults to discuss menstruation. Isabel has been surprised at the high demand for this type of conversation. Crafts and Cramps has also developed a workshop for young menstruators covering the basics of menstrual health. Social media is a key platform to share the visual artwork and images, which is complemented by slow craft workshops bringing people together. Through talking to people and running workshops Isabel has learned about the variety of experiences people have as well as a lack of awareness of different menstrual products. Crafts and Cramps also reflects the global trend to challenge the shame, stigma and silence surrounding menstruation in social media movements such as #PeriodPositive #PeriodPower and #MenstruationMatters.



IMAGE 65. Illustration by Crafts and Cramps addressing period poverty

Period Poverty

“We are a group of young activists across the U.S. united by the belief that menstrual care is a basic right.”

PERIOD ORGANISATION

Period poverty is not being able to access adequate menstrual products due to a lack of financial resources. Around the world people who are menstruating, and cannot afford manufactured menstrual products, often use unsafe and unhygienic items to absorb period blood such as toilet paper, magazines, rags, and feathers. The use of these items can lead to infections, pelvic inflammation and infertility. The increase in range of reusable menstrual products seen in Australia, such as cups and underwear, can also assist in addressing period poverty⁵² and providing people who menstruate with a choice of products.

In Australia, Share the Dignity is an active not-for-profit organisation addressing period poverty by providing menstrual products to homeless service providers and providing Pink Boxes dignity vending machines⁵³ in key locations, so that no one “should have to choose between a tampon and a meal.” In 2018 there was a significant change in Australia, with the GST being removed from menstrual products.

52 While they may have a higher upfront cost, over the course of multiple uses they are cheaper.

53 <https://www.sharethedignity.com.au/dignity-vending-machines/>

PERIOD, USA

On International Women's Day I met with Betsy Natter, Managing Director of PERIOD, for a wide-ranging discussion on menstruation, human dignity, toilet access and gaps in research.

PERIOD was established in 2014 in Portland, Oregon by high school students Nadya Okamoto and Vincent Forand to provide menstrual products to 20 homeless women. PERIOD has now grown to an organisation that has over 425 active chapters across the United States, Uganda, France, Nigeria, and Canada. The chapters are often in high schools or colleges and engage young people to deliver period packs to those in need, facilitate positive and educational conversations about periods and raise awareness to increase access to menstrual products.⁵⁴ Some chapter leaders are 15-16 years old and working towards PERIOD's mission to Serve - Educate - Advocate. I also met with Abrahimi Rajeev, Period Chapter leader from Macaulay Honors College Feminist Club in New York. The Chapter is running film and documentary screenings, fundraising activities, and information sessions as well as collecting and packing menstrual products to supply to local services providers including homeless and domestic violence shelters.

This network of chapters is also active in advocacy, lobbying law makers to remove the 'pink tax' and engage with local institutions to provide free products. PERIOD provides training and guidance for the chapters, such as the five steps on how to get free products in schools. PERIOD demonstrates the impact and reach that a youth-led organisation can have in addressing a global issue.



IMAGE 66. Abrahimi Rajeev and myself at Macaulay Honors College

Health Aid for All Initiative (HAFAI), Nigeria

Health Aid for All Initiative (HAFAI) in Nigeria is working to eliminate period poverty in schools and economic empowerment of women. HAFAI's menstrual hygiene program trains women on how to make pads, which are then provided to school students. Reusable pads are cheaper to use than disposable ones and have the added benefits of contributing to sustainable environmental outcomes. Disposable pads are a hazardous waste as they contain bodily fluids and need to be disposed of either through burning or land fill, although many also end up in sewerage systems creating blockages and expensive repairs. HAFAI's patented design of reusable pads can be reused for approximately 2 years.

"Periods should only end sentences, not education" HAFAI

54 <https://www.period.org/>

Students are provided with packs that include: zip lock bag, two pad holders, six towels⁵⁵, a bar of soap, calendar, underwear and instruction manual. The provision of reusable pads is supported by health clubs, providing education on bodies and changes that occur during puberty.

Challenges still exist for the use of reusable products as they require access to clean water to wash them and there can be stigma associated with drying them in a visible location. HAFAI has purposefully made the reusable pads brightly coloured and patterned so they will be hung outside. The added benefit of being hung in the sun is the free anti-bacterial properties of the sun's rays ensuring a clean and hygienic reusable product for the menstruator to use.



IMAGE 67. Dr Ugochi Ohajuruka from HAFAI presenting at CSW

Toilet facilities

“Despite being sex-segregated realms, public toilets were described as places in which women deliberately conceal their use and disposal of menstrual products. Toilets were experienced as paradoxical spaces where private bodily rituals must be performed semi-publicly; spaces in which women have developed sophisticated manoeuvres for obfuscating menstruality by concealing the practice of its management.”⁵⁶

CARLA PASCO

It is essential that toilets are designed to be responsive to the needs of people who are menstruating. It was raised numerous times during discussions that toilets often do not provide a safe space to change menstrual products, can lack privacy and many are lacking appropriate disposal. For toilets to meet menstrual hygiene requirements they must include:

- adequate privacy
- access to running water and soap for washing hands, body parts and reusable products
- a supply of menstrual products
- a safe place to dispose products, preferably covered
- hooks and shelf for hanging clothes and belongings
- full-length mirrors to check clothing.⁵⁷

Acknowledging that people with disabilities and trans men may also menstruate it is important that these are provided in ALL toilets.

⁵⁵ The user can choose to use one or two towels at a time depending on how heavy the flow is.

⁵⁶ Carla Pascoe (2015) A ‘Discreet Dance’: technologies of menstrual management in Australian public toilets during the twentieth century, *Women’s History Review*, 24:2, 234-251, page 236.

⁵⁷ This list is similar to the features identified by WaterAid, WSUP and UNICEF (2018) in *Female-friendly public and community toilets: a guide for planners and decision makers*.

Free provision of menstrual products

What does the White House, most schools and workplaces have in common? They do not have emergency pads or tampons. Globally there has been a push towards free provision of menstrual products, acknowledging that menstruation is normal and health and access to safe products is a human right. Across many of the conversations on dispensers of menstrual products the common complaint was that the dispensers were often empty, broken or that the cost was too prohibitive. Demonstrating that access to menstrual products occurs even in the echelons of power Alyssa Mastomonaco, in her book detailing her time as a United States Presidential advisor in the White House, refers to the inability to find products whilst at work.

“The bathroom situation in the West Wing is probably not what you would expect: Toilets do not exactly abound. For women, there was only one full restroom on the ground floor, plus a single toilet in the hall on the main floor and one on the first floor. You would often find yourself waiting in line. ... It was your standard office bathroom – three stalls, some sinks, unflattering light, and that’s it. On top of this, there were no tampons. I didn’t think this was a big deal when I started working in the West Wing in 2009, but it was a huge pain to get out of the White House once you were already on the grounds - there was no running across the street to CVS between meetings.”

ALYSSA MASTOMONACO⁵⁸



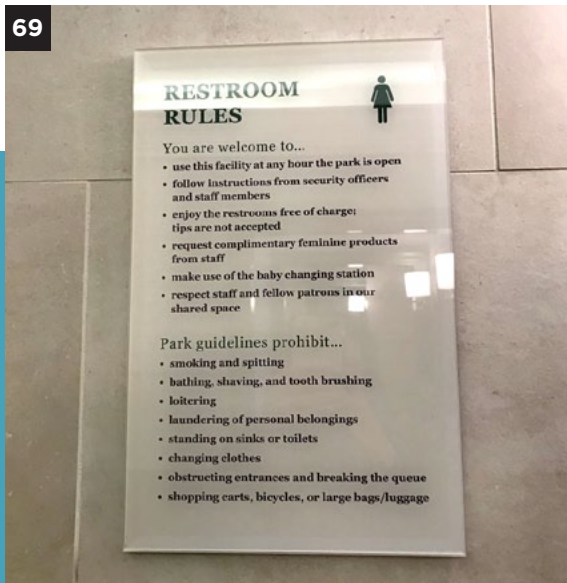
IMAGE 68. Free menstrual products in the PERIOD shared office space

Bryant Park, New York City, USA

The Bryant Park Corporation provides a publicly accessible toilet during set operating hours in Bryant Park, New York. There is one entrance with female toilets to the left and male toilets to the right. When I visited there were two attendants, one female and one male. Fresh flowers are delivered on a Monday, artwork is displayed, classical music being over the speakers and the inside is climate controlled so that it is warm in winter and cool in summer. Each toilet bowl has an automatic seat cover that can be replaced by a user. Surprisingly these toilets are free of charge. The restroom rules state that “Enjoy the restrooms free of charge; tips are not accepted.” Also, the rules inform visitors that they can “request complimentary feminine products from staff.” The staff member working the day I visited indicated that yes, she did often receive requests for products. I was also informed that during the summer there can be a long queue around the corner to use the toilets. There is also a long list of activities that are not allowed in the toilets. These activities, which include bathing, shaving and toothbrushing, laundering of personal belonging and changing clothes, could be essential activities for personal hygiene and restrict access or use by people who are unhoused/homeless.

58 Alyssa Mastomonaco (2017) Who Thought This Was A Good Idea?: And Other Questions You Should Have Answers to When You Work in the White House. Page 13

69



70



71



72



73



IMAGE 69-73. The toilet facilities provided at Bryant Park, New York City

Menstruation Conclusions and Recommendations

Community engagement and education

Education and awareness are required to reframe menstruation as normal and healthy, and to reduce stigma and challenge taboos.

- 1.1 Increase awareness of the diversity of the experiences of menstruation and menstruators. Not all women menstruate, and not all who menstruate are women. Education and awareness activities can incorporate the strengths of body positivity movements. Bodies come in all shapes and sizes, and menstruation can be frequent, absent or intermittent
- 1.2 Increased support to young people led/peer support work to educate younger people⁵⁹
- 1.3 Parents and carers are the primary educators of young people when it comes to health, puberty, and relationships. It is important that parents and carers are equipped to have positive conversations about puberty, menarche, and menstruation, as well as prioritising access to menstrual products
- 1.4 Within schools and institutions, provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education targeted at menstruators and non-menstruators to provide accurate health information, challenges negative stereotypes about puberty and menstruation, and create allies
- 1.5 Support culturally appropriate education without reinforcing stigma
- 1.6 Encourage the use of creativity and social media to create community and safe spaces for conversations around menstruation

Access to products

Access to affordable and sustainable menstrual products can support menstrual dignity and address period poverty across Australia. Product diversity is also important for people who may have access difficulties (disabilities) and support environmental sustainability.

- 2.1 Support the provision of reusable menstrual products to target populations
- 2.2 Support the provision of free, disposal menstrual products in education institutions (primary & high schools, colleges, TAFEs and universities), prisons, places of employment and public toilets

Toilet design

Public toilet design and operation should be responsive to the needs of all people who menstruate.

- 3.1 Ensure the consideration of menstrual health in design of all public toilets. This includes a safe space to change menstrual products, privacy and appropriate disposal
- 3.2 To be included in male and disabled toilets in addition to female toilets
- 3.3 Toilets to include facilities that support the use of reusable products

⁵⁹ YWAG Let's Talk is an example of this. Available at: <http://reports.equalityrightsalliance.org.au/ywag/lets-talk/>

Policy and legislation

The Australian Government and civil society are responsible for the implementation of the CSW Agreed Conclusions, including through policy and programming, in government run facilities and through development assistant programs.

- 4.1 Of particular note to menstruation and public toilets is action paragraph eee:
 - Ensure availability (of) adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls, as well as for menstrual hygiene management, including for hygiene facilities and services, in homes, schools, temporary shelters for refugees, migrants or people affected by natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies or armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in all other public and private spaces
 - address the negative impact of inadequate and inequitable access to drinking water and to sanitation and energy services on the access of girls to education
 - and promote women's full, effective and equal participation in decision making on water and sanitation

Research

There is the potential to increase the knowledge within Australia and other developed countries on the impacts of menstruation and different ways so support people who menstruate.

- 5.1 Explore any potential links between absenteeism in Australian schools and menstruation including contributing factors such as access to products, toilet facilities, bullying, and/or inappropriate school uniforms
- 5.2 Complete a cost benefit analysis of the provision of free menstrual products in institutions and workplaces
- 5.3 Examine the effectiveness and enablers of condom distribution programs and sharps/needles distribution programs and see how these could apply to menstrual products.

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Criminal, That Crime of the Month published 29 August 2014
<https://thisiscriminal.com/episode-nine-that-crime-of-the-month-8-29-2014>

Ladies We Need to Talk Let's Slay Menstrual Taboos published Wednesday 27 September 2017.
<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/ladies-we-need-to-talk/lets-slay-the-menstrual-taboo/8964452>

Ladies We Need to Talk Bonus: More than Pads and Tampons published Thursday 23 November 2017.
<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/ladies-we-need-to-talk/bonus-theres-more-than-pads-and-tampons/9168608>

NPR. Period! Why These 8th-Graders Aren't Afraid to Talk About Them published 15 May 2019.
<https://www.npr.org/2019/05/15/721729850/periods-why-these-eighth-graders-arent-afraid-to-talk-about-them>

APPENDIX 1. ITINERARY

DATE	ORGANISATION	PERSON	TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
United States of America, Oregon, Portland			
05/03/2019	PHLUSH - Public Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human https://www.phlush.org/	Carol McCreary, Genevieve Schutzius, Helena, Greg Madden, Tom Carrollo, Lewis Barrett, Paul, Anna Preble, Denise Silfee	Community activism, engagement and community change
	Portland State University https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness-collaborative/	Lisa Hawash	Hygiene centres for people who are unhoused Homeless Research and Action Collaborative
06/03/2019	CCC Clean Start https://www.centralcityconcern.org/	Jay McIntyre	Needs of people who are unhoused
	City of Portland https://www.portlandoregon.gov/	Jamie Dunphy	Role of local government in providing public toilets All User Ordinance "The Portland Loo" & partnerships
	Right to Dream Too	Community members	Needs of people who are unhoused
07/03/2019	Madden Fabrications / Portland Loo https://portlandloo.com/	Evan Madden	"The Portland Loo" Design and maintenance of public toilets
	Green Flush Technology https://greenflushrestrooms.com/	Kyle Earlywine	"Green" design and maintenance of public toilets
	Community representative	Barbara Weber	Needs of people who are unhoused and support organisations
08/03/2019	Period www.period.org	Betsy Natter	Provision of menstrual products Community activism, engagement, advocacy and education

DATE	ORGANISATION	PERSON	TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
United States of America, New York, New York City			
10/03/2019 - 22/03/2019	63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women <i>PRIORITY THEME: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government and NGO presentations on design, provision and maintenance of sustainable infrastructure; addressing stigma and taboos surrounding menstruation; gendered access to social protection systems and public services - including in areas of conflict; diversity of needs relating to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure.
18/03/2019	FLUSH www.flushwash.org	Kimberly Worsham	Importance of toilets and need for link between WASH sector and urban planning
22/03/2019	Period Chapter Macaulay Honors College	Abirami Rajeev	Feminism, community activism and education around menstruation
26/03/2019	UN Women Safe Cities Global Initiative http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/creating-safe-public-spaces	Laura Capobianco Lizzette Soria	Violence against women in public spaces, including toilets Importance of local solutions to creating safe public spaces and infrastructure provision
Canada, Ontario, Toronto			
28/03/2019	Toronto Public Libraries https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/	Elizabeth Glass Gail MacFayden	Social Inclusion Audit toolkit & community engagement Provision of toilets in libraries, libraries as public spaces
Canada, Ontario, Ottawa			
01/04/2019	GottaGo! Ottawa https://ottawapublictoilets.ca/	Bessa Whitmore Kristina Ropke Zeinab Mohammed	Identifying community needs for public toilets, including needs of wheelchair users Participation in planning processes and tourism
Canada, Quebec, Montreal			
02/04/2019	Women in Cities International https://femmesetvilles.org/	Kathryn Travers	Gendered impacts of infrastructure provision Safety Audits and women's participation in governance processes

DATE	ORGANISATION	PERSON	TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
England, Herefordshire, Leominster			
05/04/2019	ECHO https://www.echoherefordshire.org.uk/	Community Representatives Aida, Mand, Matt, John, Bev, and Marianne	Changing Places Toilet Facilities Needs of people living with disability
	Marches Family Network www.marchesfamilynetwork.co.uk	Louise Walton	Needs of people living with disability and their families
	Leominster Town Council https://www.leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk	Liz Miles Paul Russell	Toilet provision, contracting and maintenance in rural areas Community Toilet Schemes
England, London			
08/04/2019	London Loo Tours www.lootours.com	Rachel Cole-Wilkin	Provision, wayfinding and payment for public toilets History of provision and access in London
England, West Sussex, Horsham			
08/04/2019	Loo of the Year Awards https://www.loo.co.uk/	Mike Bone	Industry/business provision of toilets Award criteria - 'fit for purpose' toilets
England, London			
10/04/2019	Muscular Dystrophy UK Changing Places Consortium http://www.changing-places.org/	Clare Lucas Karen Hoe	Changing Places Toilets Advocacy and promotion
England, South Yorkshire, Sheffield			
12/04/2019	University of Sheffield University of Exeter Around the Toilet https://aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com/	Kirsty Liddiard Charlotte Jones	Community research on toilets with a focus on gender, disability, sexuality Development of resources Right to public space

DATE	ORGANISATION	PERSON	TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
Scotland, Fife, Glenrothes			
15/04/2019	Fife Coast and Countryside Trust http://fifecoastandcountryside.co.uk/	Robbie Blyth	Rural provision, design and maintenance of public toilets
	Community representatives	Amble Skuse Jamie Lindsay	Toilet experiences of marginalised populations
Ireland, Clare County			
15/04/2019	Irish Seed Savers http://irishseedsavers.ie/	Jen McConnell Phil Brown	Environmental sustainability Composting toilets
England, London			
24/04/2019	Crossness Engines Trust Crossness Pumping Station http://www.crossness.org.uk/	Petra Cox	History of provision and access in London Links between infrastructure provision and public health Community education
The Netherlands, North Holland, Amsterdam			
29/04/2019	Community activist https://www.dw.com/en/dutch-women-protest-lack-of-female-friendly-public-toilets/a-40655098	Geerte Piening	Gendered access to public toilets
The Netherlands, Gelderland, Apeldoorn			
29/04/2019	Pop-Up Toilet Company https://popuptoilet.co.uk/	Marco Schimmel	Design, provision and maintenance of public toilets Responding to local needs, day and night-time economy
Germany, Berlin			
07/05/2019	Crafts and Cramps https://craftsandcramps.com/en-au/	Isabel Idun	Menstruation education and advocacy through art and engagement activities
08/05/2019	Wall GmbH www.wall.de	Frauke Bank Andreas Scholz Thomas Schuppe Franke Hoyer	Design, provision and maintenance of public toilets Technology to support community access, reduce anti-social behaviour and streamline maintenance

APPENDIX 2

TOILETS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (Blog Post)

by Katherine Webber 20/03/2019

So after 10 days hanging out at the United Nations and participating in many a conversation at the Commission on the State of Women (CSW) I spent some time mapping toilets to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations, and all the member country states identified 17 goals that are to be achieved by 2030 to create a “better and more sustainable future for all” (For more information - <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>). Each of the goals are interconnected and there are targets and indicators for each goal.

So what are they?



So a quick glance at the list and toilets fall under **Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation** & **Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities** (if you think about planning like I do). However taking a closer look I think toilets are essential to achieving 12 of the 17 goals!

Here we go...

GOAL 1: NO POVERTY

“Poverty is more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making.” So a consequence of experiencing poverty is the lack of ability to access basic services, such as safe and hygienic toilets, and for people who menstruate it could impact their ability to purchase menstrual products.⁶⁰ There has been some use of the term “period poverty.” During the CSW there has been many examples of how menstrual products are often not included in grocery lists, are seen as luxury items and taxed, and suggestions that ideally menstrual products should be provided free of charge, similarly to toilet paper and in some places condoms.

GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER

While I have not included this in my list of 12 goals there is the potential that human waste can be used to support sustainable agriculture and food production systems – although this is currently outside my scope of knowledge.

GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Hygiene is essential for health. Without adequate sanitation there are greater levels of illness and lack of well-being. “Each day, nearly 1,000 children die due to preventable water and sanitation-related diarrheal diseases.” This is unacceptable and could be addressed, in part, by improvements in access to suitable toilets and sewerage systems. I use the term suitable toilets, because a flush toilet, connected to sewerage pipe that carries waste to a treatment plant is not an appropriate solution in all situations. In addition the inclusion of suitable toilets in health facilities will increase the quality of services and care that people receive.

GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

I attended multiple sessions on menstruation and all of them have drawn a link between girls staying in school and adequate facilities which includes water and a mirror, menstrual products, and education around puberty. In addition, young people with disability, or who are gender nonconforming or trans* need to be able to access safe toilet facilities. In fact Goal 4.A states, “build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.”

GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY

“Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.” Yet men and women have very different experiences as we travel through this world - be it in relation to employment, experiences of violence, representation in all levels of government. So how does gender equality relate to toilets - Women take longer than men to use toilets (due to clothing, menstruating, caring for younger or older people). But also toilets need to be designed for men who have caring responsibilities. In Australia there was a recent ABC article about there being a lack of bins in men’s toilets, which affects men who are using incontinence pads. Toilet design, the number and location need to be responsive to differing needs. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-03/wee-problem-for-men-with-sanitary-bins-hard-to-find/10442516>

60 also called sanitary products.

GOAL 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Some statistics for you: “At least 892 million people continue to practice open defecation & more than 80 per cent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any pollution removal.” There are two distinct actions that relate to toilets:

6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

6.B Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

GOAL 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Toilets at work are an essential component of decent working conditions (have you seen the proliferation of port-a-loos on construction sites, or had a conversation with a share-ride driver about using a loo?). In addition, globally there are many people who work in jobs which involve waste management - whether it be manually cleaning septic systems, or sorting waste. These jobs need to have safe and secure working environments.

GOAL 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Flush toilets are the norm in Australia, yet require a lot of infrastructure to support them. I went to an interesting session that was discussing training women to work with sanitation infrastructure. Globally there are water leakages due to old and poorly maintained pipes and other infrastructure. In New York City the sewerage pipes are connected to the storm water pipes and so in times of storms or floods raw sewerage can be sent out into the ocean, or back on to the streets. However often with new infrastructure comes userfees, which affects the most marginal and those least able to afford the additional costs. There are other toilet types, including combustion, compost, water-free ... I have a lot to learn in this space.

GOAL 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

There are inequalities in provision of services across regions and also for populations (including those who are homeless or unhoused). Part of my rationale for this 'toilet project' is that the lack of toilets, or their location, design or the social norms around toilets contributes to the unequal participation in community life. So I was happy to read target 10.2 and think that toilets can support this: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

I just want to copy and paste whole section from the UN website here! Here is my summary: So many people live in cities and so many things happen in cities. Everyone needs to use a toilet, therefore cities need lots of toilets. Essential to this is good planning processes. But if you want to read the UN version (and in particular the targets) - go here <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

I am going to return to menstruation here. I have seen a statistic that a person menstruating can use up to 17,000 products in a lifetime! If reusable products are not used this is a lot of waste. There can be barriers to using reusable products, such as limited water access or stigma to use them. There are a number of manufacturers are embracing environmentalism and creating more environmentally friendly products, however they need to be affordable so that people who menstruate feel empowered to make their own choices and that there is no guilt associated with that choice.

GOAL 14: LIFE BELOW WATER & GOAL 15: LIFE ON LAND

What we do on the land affects the life below the water. How we treat (or fail to treat) our human waste impacts the water quality and how we can use the land. Disposal menstrual products contribute to ecological damage either through burning, land fill or sewerage. There is also a strong link between goal 6 & 9. So I have included toilets in here too.

GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Already I have found many passionate people with an interest in toilets. To achieve the sustainable development goals, strong partnerships and the involvement of many different actors are required. I hope that my research, and ultimately my final report, will be able to contribute to the discussion on the importance of toilets and sanitation.

So that is my summary. I would love your feedback. Have I missed a connection between toilets and the SDGs? Have I made too many connections? I hope I have made you think about toilets in a slightly different way.

KATHERINE WEBBER

2018 Rodney Warmington Churchill Fellowship to increase inclusion and accessibility in public toilets by researching taboos, design, policy and legal barriers.

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