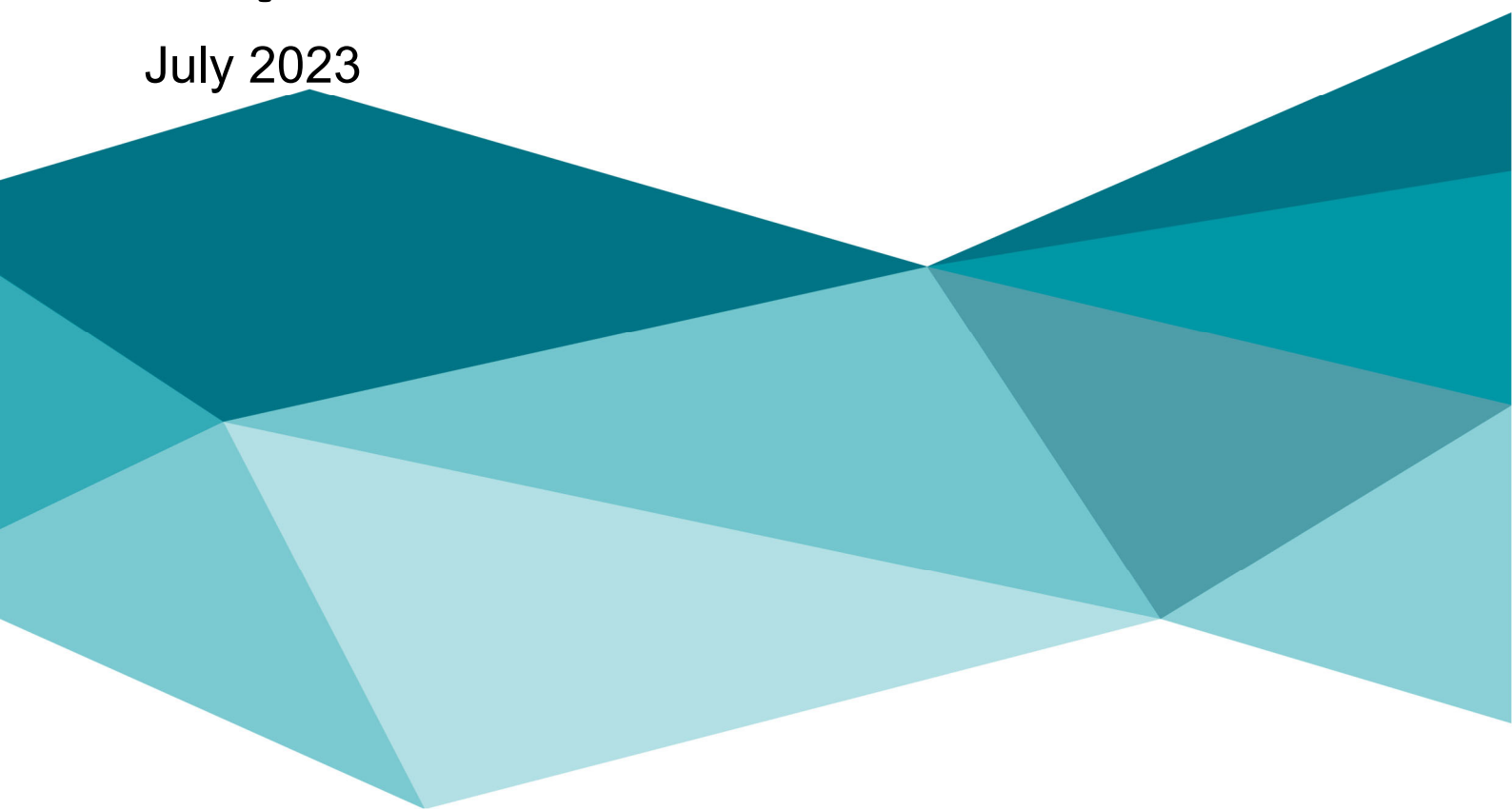




Public Toilet Plan 2023-33

Engagement Summary Report

July 2023





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Introduction

Project background

While not a legislative requirement, there is a general understanding that local Councils will provide public toilet facilities to their communities. City of Port Phillip currently manages 49 public toilet facilities across the municipality, and has agreements with a future three private operators to allow public access.

Council has an existing Public Toilet Plan 2013 – 2023 which outlines guidance and assistance for planning and decision making in the development, maintenance and operation of the public toilet network across the City of Port Phillip. This plan is now out of date and requires renewing.

The purpose of the new plan is to ensure City of Port Phillip is providing public toilets that meet current and future requirements, that the general public want to use, in a cost-effective manner. The plan identifies a number of objectives for improvement in public toilet provision and outlines the current state of toilet facilities and the target future state, including practical operational changes and capital works investments to be made to achieve these targets. The plan also includes a capital works plan for priority toilets over the next ten years and design guidelines that should be included when considering new or upgrades to toilets to ensure the targets are met.

Engagement on this topic has not been undertaken since the last ten-year plan. However, a number of community members presented their thoughts on the Fitzroy St Public Toilet, and requests/complaints are often received relating to public toilets, providing some understanding on how the community perceives public toilets.

The plan is intended to be an evolving document with changes in priority expected according to emerging challenges, trends and information received. A number of sites are also planned for further investigation and the results of these will further inform the plan

What we set out to achieve

The purpose of the engagement project was to:

- To share the plan, objectives, targets and priorities with the community.
- To provide the community with an opportunity to provide feedback on any gaps in public toilet provision.
- To understand what the community considers important in public toilet provision to ensure alignment to the plan.



- To seek feedback on how we can make toilets more accessible and inclusive (within limitations and parameters).
- To provide a forum for the community to provide feedback on initiatives observed elsewhere to deter anti-social behaviour.

What we did

Engagement activities

In order to seek feedback from the community, a survey was conducted, hosted on Have Your Say for five weeks, from 8th June – 12 July 2023.

The survey was promoted in a number of ways including:

- On-site signage either outside, or inside all of Council managed public toilets. A total of 74 signs were erected.
- Social media blasts were posted with a link to the survey.
- Divercity magazine.
- Direct emails to a number of identified key stakeholders including:
 - St Kilda Park primary school
 - Victoria Police
 - Vixen Collective
 - Scarlet Alliance – Australian Sex Workers Association
 - Kinetic bus company
 - Residents Association
 - Beacon Cove Residents Association
 - JAAG
 - Older Persons Advisory Committee
 - Multi-faith Advisory Committee
 - Continenence Foundation
 - Esplanade Market Committee
 - Trans Gender Victoria
 - Victorian Pride Lobby

Engagement questions

Participants were asked the following questions in the survey:



- Did we miss anything? We have prioritised a number of sites for upgrades and renewal based on stated criteria, have we missed anything when prioritising these sites?
- Your top three priorities - based on the objectives we have identified in the plan, what are the three most important?
- Locations – where do you think there are gaps in locations of public toilets across City of Port Phillip?
- Inclusivity and Accessibility – are there any other initiatives you think we should be investigating to make our toilets more accessible and inclusive?

An ideas board was also set up on the Have Your Say page asking participants to share any unique initiatives they had overserved either locally or abroad that have been successful in discouraging anti-social behaviour.

Participation

Total participation

During this project, there were 1202 visits to the survey page. As a result, we heard from 172 participants – all via the Have Your Say survey site.

Who we heard from

Demographics

Participants were asked a range of demographic questions, in order to gather a picture of who we heard from during the engagement period.

Age

Age groups compared to municipal population

Participants were asked to describe their age group, with the highest representation of participants from the 35-49 year age group (47%), followed by 50-59 year olds (24%). Within the City of Port Phillip population, these groups make up 25% and 13% of the population respectively. Lowest representation in this project per population came from the

under 80-84, 85-90, and 91 and over age groups, where participants made up 0% of total engagement. Further detail on participation in this engagement compared to our municipal population can be seen in Figure X below.

Age group	Percentage of total participants (all activities)	City of Port Phillip population (2021 CENSUS data, ABS)
Under 15	0.6% (1 participant)	13.3%
15-17	0.6% (1 participant)	1.6%* approximated from CENSUS data as age groups are separated out differently
18-24	1% (2 participants)	6.8%
25-34	6% (11 participants)	22.7%
35-49	47% (80 participants)	25.4%
50-59	24% (41 participants)	13.1%
60-69	14% (24 participants)	9.5%
70-74	3% (5 participants)	3.7%
75-79	3% (6 participants)	2.6%
80-84	0% (0 participants)	1.6%
85-90	0% (0 participants)	1.4%*
91 & over	0% (0 participants)	*grouped with 85 and over in CENSUS data
Prefer not to say	0.6% (1 participant)	N/A

Table 1 Age groups – total participation versus municipal population

Gender

The gender breakdown of participants across the engagement activities is shown in Figure 2 below, with 35% of participants identifying themselves as a man or male, 59% identifying themselves as a woman or female, 2% identifying as non-binary, 1% using a different term and 3% preferring not to say.

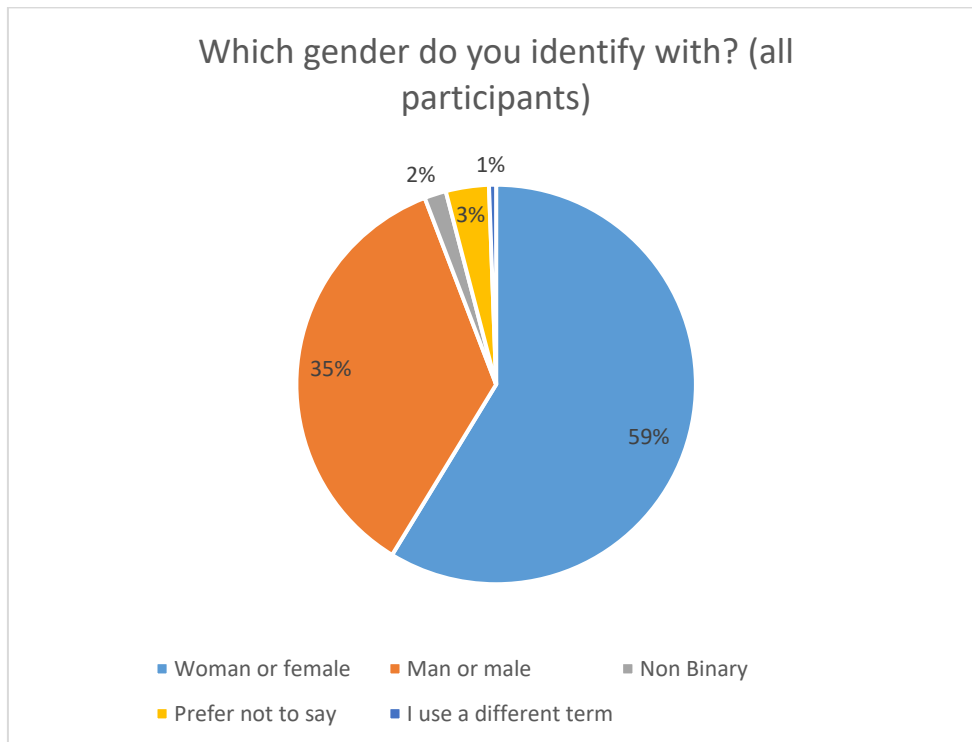


Figure 1 Which gender do you identify with – all participants

Participants’ suburbs

Participants were asked to identify where they lived, with the majority being from St Kilda, which is likely as a result of a high number of respondents providing feedback on the proposed Fitzroy St Public Toilet near to St Kilda Park Primary School as a result of ongoing opposition, community and media interest in the project. 54 participants said they lived in St Kilda, making up 31% of the total participants. Following this, participants from Port Melbourne made up 19% of the total participants (n=33). Six participants said they lived in locations outside of the City of Port Phillip. See Figure 3 below.

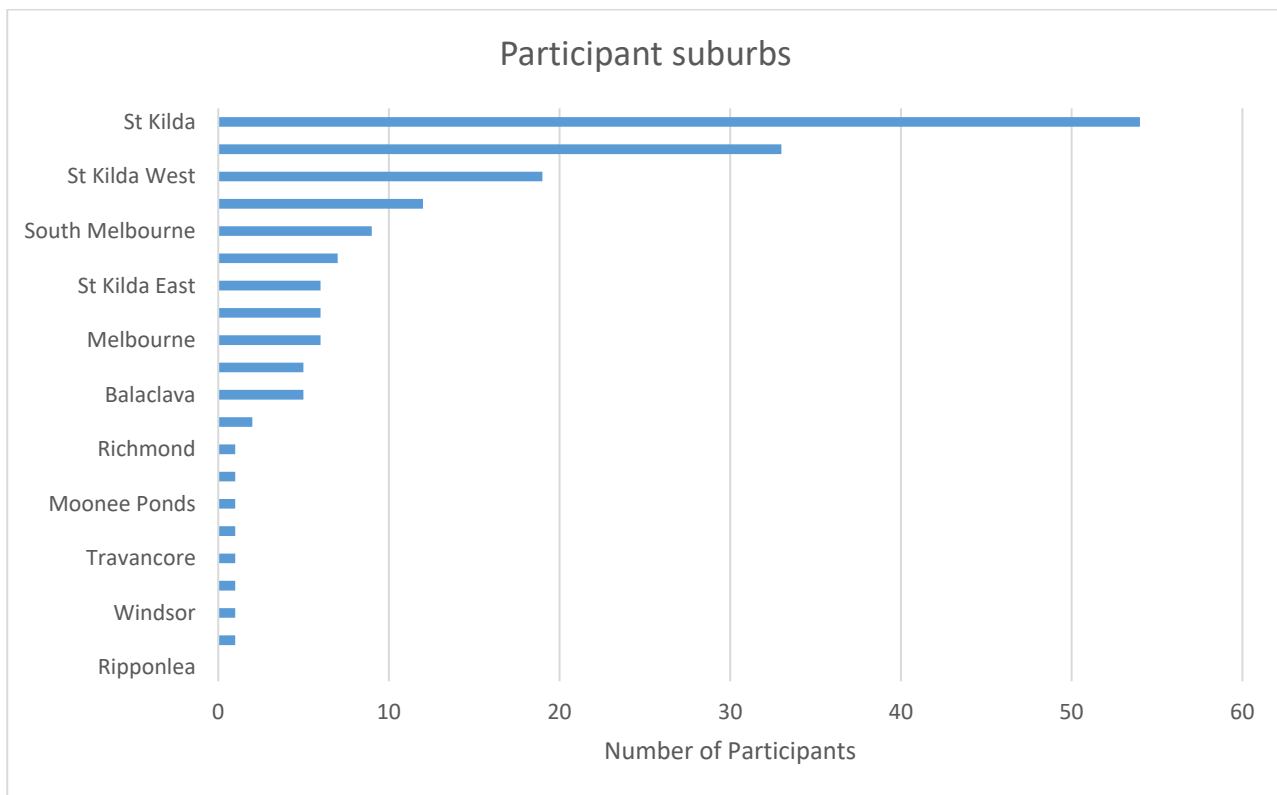


Table 2 Suburbs where participants said they lived

Other

Participants were also asked if any of the following applied to them:

- I am from a non-English speaking background
- I am from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- I consider myself financially disadvantaged
- I identify as LGBTI
- I am a person with a disability

Of the responses, 58% (n=100) said none of these applied to them, with 12% (n=20) preferring not to say. See figure 4 below.

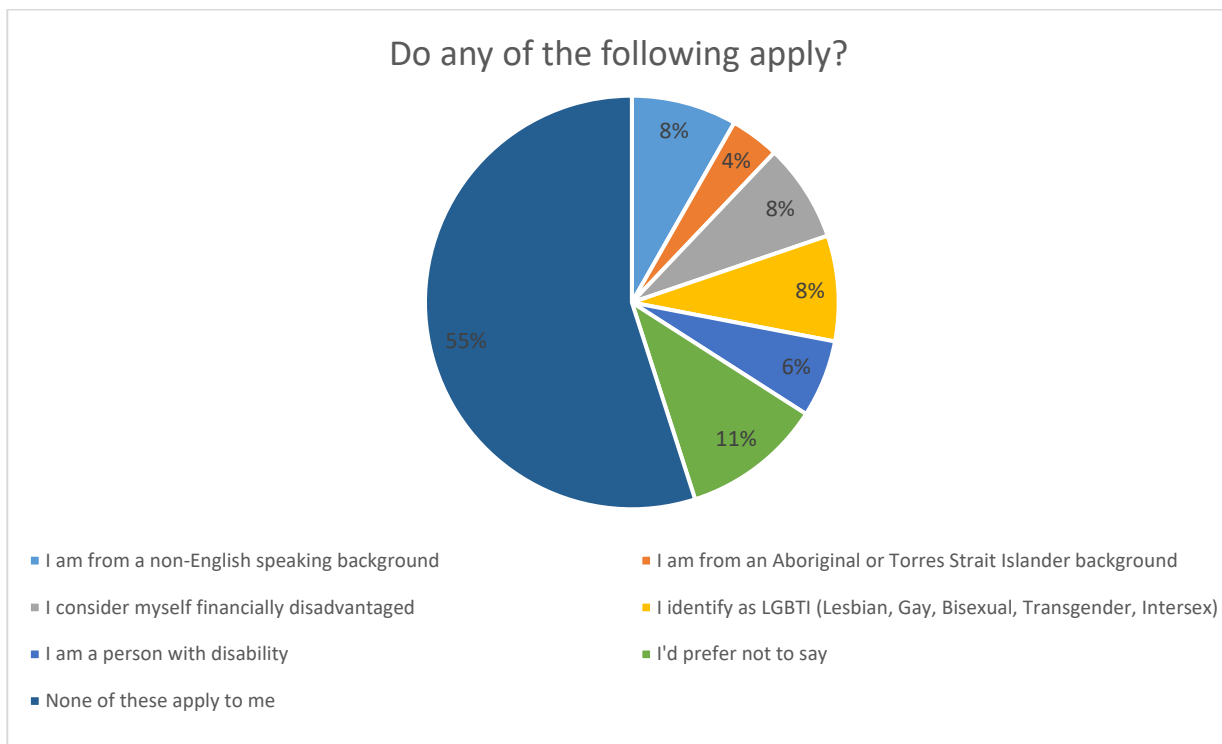


Figure 2 Additional demographic information shared

What we heard

Most important public toilet objectives

The draft public toilet plan listed a number of objectives that had been identified to improve our public toilet network. During the engagement period, participants were asked which of the objectives they considered the most important, with an option to pick their top three, or suggest an alternative we had not considered. Of the responses, 66% (n=114) suggested cleanliness was in their top three, closely followed by 61% (n=105) suggesting safety as a top priority, as shown in Figure 5 below.

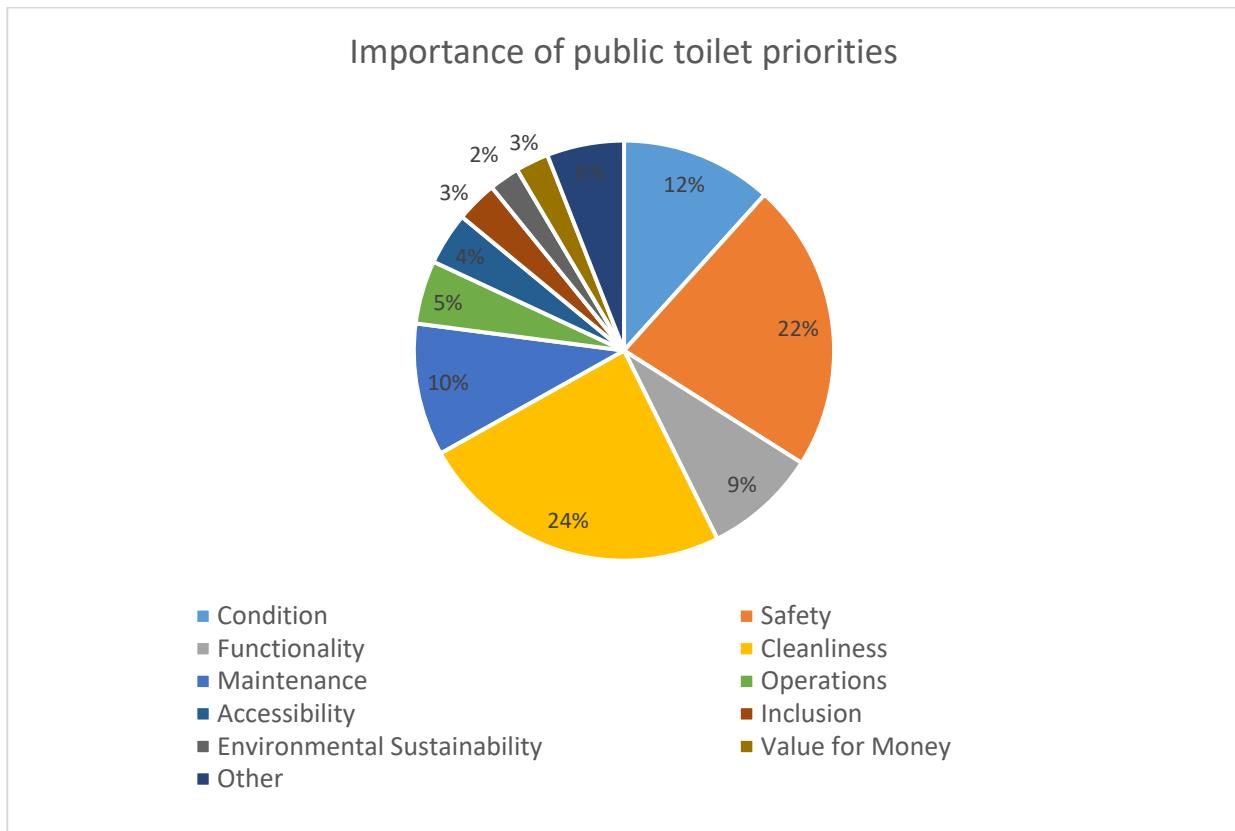


Figure 3 percentage of public toilet plan objectives community considers most important

Of the respondents, 28 selected other and were asked to tell us what these were. Given the high number of respondents who used the survey to share their continued opposition to the proposed Fitzroy Street public toilet project, 50% (n=14) suggested appropriate location as a key objective, specifically not near to schools. Here are a few of the verbatim responses received

Other objectives to be considered:

“Will it attract anti-social behaviour? I don’t want to spend my rates attracting drug users”

“Recognise that toilets are also changing rooms and need to be clean and not stink, put in clothes hooks and hot water”

“Indoor showers at the beach away from the cold and wind. A lot of people use the beach in winter too...”

“Women’s toilets – single sex toilets are vital for women’s safety, comfort and hygiene”

“Removal of homeless people living in toilet areas and blocking access”

“Availability. I need toilets in close proximity and open early into dark hours”

“Toilets in activity centres should be accessible after sunset to avoid defecation in public areas”

Gaps in public toilet provision

Participants were asked to tell us if they considered there were any areas that did not currently have public toilets that they thought needed them. 30 responses were received suggesting an additional 18 locations. Three additional responses were also received suggesting there was adequate toilet provision across the municipality and two suggestions are not City of Port Phillip areas. Interestingly given the strong opposition to the Fitzroy Street public toilet project, and numerous suggestions that a public toilet is not required in the area, this area was suggested by nine respondents as shown in figure 6 below.

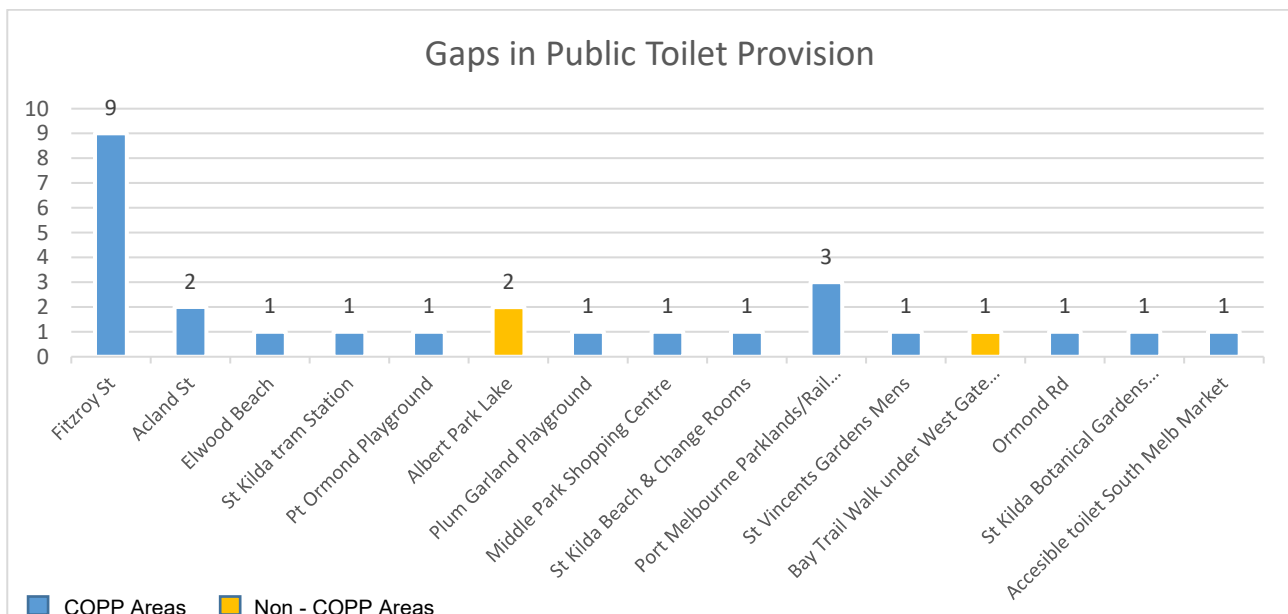


Figure 4 gaps identified in COPP public toilet provision

Prioritisation Feedback

The draft public toilet plan included a 10-year capital works program that listed planned major capital works, minor renewals, and investigation works in priority order. Survey participants were asked to provide feedback. 48 responses were received, though again, majority of this feedback was used as further opportunity to oppose the Fitzroy Street toilet project, with 48% (n=23) of responses in relation to opposing the location of the proposed Fitzroy Street public toilet.

Of the other 25 responses, 44% (n=11) suggested the toilet adjacent Port Melbourne Life Saving Club should be a higher priority, though it is hard to interpret whether this is due to a toilet upgrade, or the ongoing requests for hot water showers in this area, due to the

number of responses that specifically mentioned this. Below are some of the verbatim responses received in relation to the Port Melbourne Life Saving Club toilets:

“Port Melbourne life saving club to be expedited – as it provides a great public amenity to the foreshore and surrounds and is well utilised. Hot showers to be included”.

“The Port Melbourne Life Saving Club stands in dire needs of a ventilation. This would involve knocking out a few bricks and replacing them with vented bricks. The toilers are redolent with urine and pungent faecal smells and intolerable to change or shower in.”

“The toilet block at Port Melbourne LSC could be much improved by the connection of 2+ of the external showers to hot water. This could be time limited to the winter months. This is a very popular open water swimming beach (10+ daily, most weekends more than 50).”

“The Port Melbourne life saving club facilities already stink like some kind of third world sewer. Waiting another two or three years seems a little unfair.”

“Port Melbourne life saving club is heavily used by local swimming groups who would appreciate cleaner, less smelly facilities and indoor and outdoor warm showers.”

“Port Melbourne life saving club is highly frequented – need hot showers for the multitude of regular patrons using daily.”

“Good to see that Port Melbourne LSC is on the list, however it should be brought forward as a priority project.”

“Why is Port Melbourne not happening until 4yrs! This is highly used both in summer but now in WINTER due to the popularity of winter swimming. There are many swimming groups that utilise this facility all year round.”

“Port Melbourne Life Saving Club toilet block is located at a beach that is used by a large group of all year round swimmers. Since Covid, a large number of people have taken up ocean swimming and it is one of the fastest growing activities. The toilet is in terrible state. Given the large numbers using it daily, I would like to see it prioritised earlier.”

The table below shows the other sites that were commented on when asking about prioritisation:

Site	No. of Responses	Comment
Cummings Reserve	1	Improve condition, safety & accessibility
Kerferd Rd	1	Often closed or unsanitary and in a highly utilised area
Point Ormond	1	Nil.

Sandridge Beach & Life Saving club toilets	2	Anti-social behaviour observed requiring more open plan toilets with additional security features
Catani Gardens	1	Maintenance
Middle Park toilets	2	Ongoing issues with homeless person
Port Melbourne beach M and F	1	Upgrade within existing structure
South Melbourne Life Saving Club	2	Remove public toilets from the life saving club and install stand alone toilets
Dandenong Road	1	- Kept open and maintained
	1	- Closed
West beach pavilion	1	Improve signage to inform public that these are Council public toilets

Table 3 prioritisation feedback

Other initiatives for Access and Inclusion

The draft public toilet plan listed a number of initiatives to improve accessibility and inclusion including items such as sanitary bins in male toilets, additional Master Locksmith Association Keys (MLAK) on suitable accessible toilets, and the introduction of all-gender/nonbinary toilets. The survey asked respondents to consider any other initiatives they thought could be considered to further include access and inclusion across the existing public toilet network.

75 Responses were received, and participants took the opportunity to suggest other initiatives not relating to access and inclusion. Table 2 below outlines the themes and initiatives suggested. Two responses have not been included as they relate to prioritisation of Port Melbourne life saving club toilets, which was covered in the prioritisation feedback above.

Theme	No. of Respondents	Comments
Accessibility		

Design	2	Improve accessibility through removal of steps, wide doorways and DDA handles
Design	1	Design of spaces for children or shorter people with lower toilets, basins, soap dispensers
Opening Hours	3	24hr access or additional opening hours
Signage	1	Braille on signs
Design	1	Encourage time limits on toilets through design
Technology	1	Create a COPP toilet location app that includes opening hours
Inclusion		
Sanitary Bins	2	Support for inclusion of sanitary bins in all toilets
Health	1	Request for toilet seat wipes for those immunocompromised
All-gender/ nonbinary	4	Two responses supported the inclusion of all-gender toilets, whilst two were against them
Baby-Change	1	Additional baby change facilities
Homelessness	1	Removal of homeless people
Anti-Social behaviour		
Drug use	2	Ensure drug and alcohol affected people cannot camp outside toilets
Drug use	1	No sharps disposals to discourage drug use
Graffiti	1	Removal of graffiti and tags – suggestion to include a message board for people to leave these unsavoury messages rather than on partitions and walls
Cleaning		
Cleanliness	7	Better and increased cleaning
Design		
Type of toilet	1	No Exeloo facilities
Hygiene		
Fixtures/Fittings	2	Auto sensor/touch free flushing toilets and faucets
Water	1	Hot water in basins
Soap	1	Soap in all toilets

Safety		
Visibility	1	Increased visibility for all-gender toilets
Design	2	Once respondent who felt reduced feeling of safety in toilets that open straight onto street/park rather than into a basin/foyer area, and another who suggested outward opening doors to public spaces were more safe
Locks	2	Proper locking mechanisms that are easy to use (potentially a sliding lock rather than rotating)
Lighting	3	Natural lighting and extra lighting around buildings
Security	3	Security features/monitoring to deter anti-social behaviour/drug use
Showers		
Beach locations	5	Better showers and change rooms including benches and hooks
Functionality	1	Clean and functional showers
Water temperature	8	Warm showers across the bay/lifesaving clubs (particularly Port Melbourne)
Sustainability		
Water use	1	Water recycling
Other		
Other Features	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rubbish bins, bike hoops and landscaping around toilets - Drinking fountains - Hooks on the back of toilet doors
Signage	1	More signage needed
Plumbing	1	New plumbing/drainage at Port Melbourne

Table 4 additional public toilet initiatives for consideration

One of the more detailed responses was received from the National Continence Foundation who were extremely supportive of a further rollout of sanitary bins, particularly in male toilets. They advised of an initiative they have launched called BINS4Blokes which promotes the installation of incontinence product disposal bins in male public toilets, and they have engaged with a number of councils to promote this initiative.



Ideas board

As part of the Have Your Say page, an Ideas board was posted where participants were asked to share ideas, initiatives or designs that they may have seen from anywhere around the world that help to deter or manage anti-social behaviour in public toilets.

Similar to responses received in other sections of the survey, the ideas board was not necessarily used for its intended purpose and was used as an opportunity to further voice concerns regarding other elements of public toilets. 49 responses were received, of these 81% (n=40) were comments objecting the construction of a toilet on Fitzroy Street near to St Kilda Park Primary School, with 2% (n=1) using the ideas board to share their support of the Fitzroy street location due to it being in a safe open space without impinging on local traders.

Of the remaining responses, only four provided ideas/initiatives that could be considered. These include:

- Playing classical music when sensors indicate a toilet is occupied
- Good lighting, visible entrances and lines of sight, possibly near to other highly utilised facilities, doors that lock and hand basins outside similar to the [Burley Restroom Design](#) and the [Portland Loo](#).
- The [Tokyo Toilet Project](#), using unique designs to encourage visitors and high use, through aesthetically pleasing features, good function, high visibility and good lighting along with a committed cleaning and maintenance schedule.
- Provide crisis accommodation for homeless people and work with non-profit groups, social workers, mental health/addiction staff, housing workers and local laws to link those experiencing homelessness or expressing anti-social behaviour to services to gain support and help and repeat the process.



How to find out more

How this report will be used

This engagement summary report has been reviewed in line with the draft plan which has now been updated to reflect some of the findings. The updated Toilet Plan 2023 – 2033 will be presented at a Council meeting on 6 September, alongside this summary report to inform the decision on whether to adopt the new toilet plan for implementation.

The decision on whether the Public Toilet Plan 2023 – 2033 is endorsed will be communicated to the community in September 2023.

Updates about this project can be found on the Have Your Say project page at [Public Toilet Plan 2023-2033 | Have Your Say Port Phillip](#)

This report is a summary of findings from engagement undertaken on this project.