

Adequate toilets for women

What are the proposed changes?

We're proposing changes to NCC Volume One to provide adequate and equitable female toilet facilities.

These changes include:

- An increase in the number of female toilets (closet pans) in single auditorium theatres and cinemas (Class 9b buildings), from the current male to female average of 1:1.25 to 1:1.8 (Table F4D4i).
- Requiring dispensers for sanitary products in female toilet facilities in commercial buildings (new clause F4D4(6)(a) and (b)).

Why are these changes proposed?

Female toilet facilities in single auditorium theatres and cinemas

There are often long queues for female toilet facilities in single auditorium theatres and cinemas. This is due to peak time demand around show times. Long queues affect users, including young children, pregnant people and the elderly who may have difficulty waiting. It also affects the ability of those using the toilet facilities and their companions to socialise or buy food, beverages, and merchandise during peak times.

Peak times at this type of venue are just before or after a show, movie, or other entertainment, and during intermissions. Research found that:

- NCC compliant single auditorium theatres and cinemas have queuing times for females of up to 14 minutes at peak periods.
- Females access a toilet facility 1.3 times more often and spend 1.6 times longer using a toilet facility, compared to males.

Female sanitary items in commercial buildings (Class 3 to 9 buildings)

Building Ministers asked us to investigate how the NCC could require commercial buildings to provide female sanitary items. This is because lack of access to sanitary items can impact women's lives, affecting both their physical and mental health, as well as limiting their participation in education, employment opportunities, and social activities.

How were the changes developed?

These changes primarily stem from [Proposals to Change](#) the NCC we received from community members.

We undertook a literature review and queuing analysis for a range of venues. Further analysis helped us to determine the number of toilets required for females that would result in fairer queuing times for females, when compared with males.

We found an average ratio of 1:1.8 (male to female sanitary facilities) for 100 to 2000 occupants produces more equitable queuing times compared with the current average ratio of 1:1.25. The new ratio relates to the capacity of the venue so that small venues have enough sanitary facilities for peak times.

Our work indicated existing washbasin numbers are still adequate because the time taken to wash hands is far less than the time taken to use a toilet.

We also investigated how the NCC could require female sanitary products to be provided in toilet facilities of commercial buildings. We found the NCC could not require sanitary products in toilet facilities, as this is a responsibility of building owners or their tenants.

However, changing sub-clause F4D4(6) in the NCC to require female sanitary dispensers and product disposal units can help address the problem. This is the simplest and most effective solution within the scope of the NCC.

Who has been involved?

We consulted with the Commonwealth's [Office for Women](#) and with members of our peak technical committees, the [Building Codes Committee](#) and [Plumbing Code Committee](#).

What are the impacts?

These changes will result in reduced queuing times for people using female toilet facilities at venues having single auditoriums theatres and cinemas. This will result in faster access to a toilet facility and reduces concerns about timely accessibility and discomfort. Because the new

provisions simply change the existing male to female toilet distribution ratio, there is a low cost impact to the building owner. The changes also provide more equitable toilet facilities. It will also allow females and accompanied children, and their companions, more time to socialise or buy food, beverages, and merchandise during peak use times.

Requiring female sanitary dispensers will result in improved accessibility and support for menstrual hygiene management in public places, promoting inclusivity and ensuring the wellbeing of all the building users.

More information and relevant links

- [Adequate toilets for women Impact Analysis](#)
- [Adequate toilets for women Impact Analysis placemat](#)

To read the full details of the changes, please review the [NCC 2025 Volume One PCD](#).

Want to provide feedback?

Responses to the Public Comment Draft are invited until **11:59 PM AEST Monday 1 July 2024**.

In line with the ABCB's process for undertaking public consultation, comment will only be accepted through the ABCB's online [Consultation Hub](#).

To access the Public Comment Draft and response form:

1. Download the NCC volume(s) you wish to view and provide comment. You can also download the supporting information PDF for detailed information on the more significant/complex changes.
2. Download the response form.

Once you've reviewed the draft, complete the response form, and include your feedback on the suggested changes to the NCC.

To submit your comments:

1. Enter our Public Comment Draft consultation hub.
2. Start by agreeing to the privacy statement.
3. Let us know if you'd like your submission published publicly.

4. Enter your contact details.
5. Upload your completed form in .doc format (please make sure each file is under 25MB) and submit.