# Finance Technical Guideline

## TG014 Designing for Inclusion

## 1. Objective

The State Government and Department of Finance (Finance) recognise the value equity and diversity brings to the workplace. We acknowledge this requires our built spaces be inclusive, ensuring all users dignity is respected and a safe environment provided, regardless of ability, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, gender or background.[1]

By providing a framework exceeding base legislated requirement, we lead by example in delivering inclusive infrastructure for both our customers and the State.

We encourage our customer agencies, steering groups, project control groups, brief writers, facility managers and other project stakeholders, to use this Technical Guideline (Guideline) to inform and prompt their decisions addressing inclusiveness for all users in their projects.

## 2. Methodology

It is fundamental to consider what experience and support we require our spaces deliver for the intended user.

- Who are being including within those spaces, and more importantly, who might be excluded, in the process of making each design decision?

- Are these spaces providing all users a dignified and safe experience?

To best accommodate the range of potential users' needs, inclusive spaces should be flexible, adaptable and responsive. It should take into consideration the impact elements such as acoustics, ventilation, light quality, and tactility might have on an individual's perception.

The Guideline outlines a range of approaches a project team might take to support Finance's inclusive design objective.

### 2.1 Co-design

A co-design approach should be considered for those key projects or user groups where a more collaborative approach can better inform and define the specific needs of the users, or when the project brief is unable to be sufficiently defined to deliver the user's needs successfully.

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[1] *Finance-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2022-25.pdf (www.wa.gov.au)*

Stakeholder engagement, consultation, and co-design during the design process of a Finance infrastructure project is a collaborative design approach. The end users are engaged to take an active role in shaping the design of the facility. This builds resilient relationships and promotes diversity of perspectives. It also leads to informed decision making and clearly communicates community issues and visions.

When developing a co-design approach, the project team should address:

1. Best practice:

    Identify, interrogate, and implement current best-practice co-design approaches that may be relevant to the specific project. This may include:

    - Guidelines for best practice planning engagement in WA
      (Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, WA Government, 2022)
      This document offers a step-by-step guide for stakeholder engagement and consultation, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and special interest groups.
    - Co-design toolkit
      (Western Australian Council of Social Service, 2017)
    - Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy - Western Australia 2021-2029
      (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, WA Government, 2021)
    - Co-design toolkit
      (NSW Government)

2. Community engagement:

    - Determine with the customer agency the level of consultation that will be appropriate and necessary with the key stakeholders, communities of place and interest.
    - Outline and obtain endorsement of the proposed scope and strategy prior to any engagement.

3. Design reporting:

    - Outline the strategy and adopted co-design process.
    - Identify consulted and engaged stakeholders.
    - Report on the outcome and findings of the engagement, consultation, and co-design process.

## 2.2 Accreditation

Inclusive design is an evolving and developing field. Best practice approaches may be guided by recognised relevant organisations who have design requirements

ahead of legislative frameworks. Many of these organisations offer accreditation which an owner/occupier may wish to pursue.

Finance does not formally support or endorse the use of any specific organisation. However, the use of their design requirements and subsequent formal accreditation may be supported, provided building certification and all other legislated and regulated obligations, and specific project briefing needs are also addressed.

The project team shall undertake their own due diligence on the suitability and appropriateness of any organisational allegiances or accreditations.

## 2.3 Registers

To improve accessibility at a community level, the project should refer to and make consideration for lodgement with relevant and supporting registers, including for example:

- National Public Toilet Map

  Managed by the Department of Health and Aged Care as part of the National Continence Program. This interactive map provides information on the location and available range of ablution facilities, including accredited adult changing facilities, accessible and gender-neutral/unisex facilities, as well as those controlled by a master locksmith access key (MLAK).[2]

# 3. Guiding strategies

## 3.1 Gender inclusive facilities

The Public Sector Commission's People of Diverse Sexualities and Genders Action Plan to Improve WA Public Sector Employment Opportunities 2020-2025 aims to support inclusive work environments for people of diverse sexualities and genders in the WA public sector. The inclusion of gender-neutral facilities within our buildings is one way Finance can support that plan.

The provision of safe and considered gender-neutral facilities benefit:

- People of all gender identities and expression.

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[2] *Developed by Master Locksmiths and Spinal Cord Injuries Australia, MLAK is a nationally implemented universal keying/locking system, designed to permit secured universal access to facilities such as public ablutions and playground equipment, to community members with a proven and legitimate need.*

- Parents or guardians accompanying children and people requiring the assistance of a carer.

Any proposed design features adopted must consider the current and future operational needs, as well as the capacity of the facility management and supporting governance structures to implement the needs. The design should ensure the facility:

- is appropriately designed for the target cohort,
- well-supported by the facility management including:
  - complaints can be registered anonymously and will be acted on,
  - an appropriate frequency for cleaning and maintenance is achievable.
- maintains the designed level of functionality,
- is security and safe.

Where the applicable National Construction Code (NCC) requirements cannot be met, a performance-based solution may be necessary.

### 3.1.1 Parenting / feeding rooms

Parents returning to work after the birth, adoption or acquired care of infant children are assisted with the provision of appropriate onsite infant feeding and care facilities, supporting a more gender balanced workforce. Failing to provide adequate facilities may constitute discrimination and a breach of work health and safety laws.[3]

Consideration should be made to design parenting facilities to enable accreditation by a recognised and established organisation. Accreditation for a breastfeeding friendly workplace (BFW) is offered by the Department of Health funded Australian Breastfeeding Association's (ABA)  through their BFW program and supported by the federal government's Department of Health and Aged Care and the COAG Health Council. [4] The BFW program provides guidance on setting up a breastfeeding and expressing space, along with developing a breastfeeding policy and implementing a supportive culture.

In addition to meeting the relevant requirements of the NCC and standards and the nominated accreditation pathway, when planning and designing parenting/feeding rooms, the following should be considered:

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[3]*Fair Work Ombudsman - Returning to work from parental leave*
[4]*Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and beyond, p. 43*

- Reference to the most recent released version of the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines: Standard Components - Parenting Room [5]
- Located where there is an appropriate level of passive and active surveillance. Isolated or remote locations should be avoided to prevent misuse.
- Must be readily accessible by all staff and facility visitors by arrangement, at all times during the building's usual operations.
- Wheelchair accessibility.
- Acoustically private to ensure minimal disruption to the user and adjoining spaces.
- Securable, including entry door with internal privacy snib or similar.
- Appropriately illuminated (considering colour and illumination points) with ability to dim the lighting.
- Space for parking of large, double sized pram
- Child safe. For further reference: [www.kidsafewa.com.au](www.kidsafewa.com.au) and
  [www.productsafety.gov.au/products/babies-kids/kids-equipment](www.productsafety.gov.au/products/babies-kids/kids-equipment)
- Sink with filtered cold and hot-tempered water.
- Benchtop with electrical point for bottle warming equipment.
- Electrical point for equipment, such as breast pumps, in vicinity of the feeding chair.
- Lockable cupboards for personal storage of feeding equipment for regular users.
- Visual privacy such as blinds to windows or partitioning device in large multiuse rooms etc.
- Calm, comfortable, non-clinical/sterile interior, as users may use the room for a length of time.
- Fixed or pull-down baby change table, meeting the required legislated safety standards.
- Facilities for waste disposal (including nappies), appropriately considered in conjunction with the Facility Manager
- Hand sanitising and drying facilities, including paper towel dispenser.
- Loose furniture:
  - Seating suitable for feeding.
  - Small, movable table to support feeding incidentals and other sundries.
  - Chair and facilities for other dependent children and/or support person.
  - Fridge for the storing of milk and other incidentals.
  - Microwave.

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[5] *Healthy Facility Guidelines - Parenting Room*

- The room and furniture be easily cleaned, within the agreed facility management framework.
- Signage - see section 3.1.4.

### 3.1.2 Infant hygiene facilities

Infant hygiene facilities can support parents returning to work after the birth, adoption or acquired care of infant children and visiting parents or support carers. On a project-by-project basis, when planning and designing infant hygiene facilities, the following should be considered:

- Located where there is an appropriate level of passive and active surveillance. Isolated or remote locations should be avoided to prevent misuse.
- Must be readily accessible by all staff and facility visitors by arrangement, at all times during the building's usual operations.
- When included in a facility, such as a universal access toilet (UAT) or adult change facility, ensure any required clearances meet NCC requirements and functional use. This includes ready and safe access to necessary features from the change table location.
- Wheelchair accessibility.
- Securable, including entry door with internal privacy snib or similar.
- Sufficient and safe space for parking of large, double sized pram and co-occupation of dependent children or a support person.
- Child safe. For further reference: www.kidsafewa.com.au and www.productsafety.gov.au/products/babies-kids/kids-equipment
- Fixed or pull-down baby change table, meeting the required legislated safety standards.
- Sink with cold and tempered hot water.
- Facilities for waste disposal (including nappies), considered in conjunction with the facility manager.
- Hand sanitising and drying facilities, including paper towel dispenser.
- The room and furniture be easily cleaned, within the agreed facility management framework.
- Signage - see section 3.1.4.

### 3.1.3 Gender inclusive ablutions

When planning and designing gender-neutral hygiene facilities, the following should be considered:

- Avoid the retrofit of toilets that are already designated to a minority of users, to avoid inadvertent discrimination (e.g. converting UAT or female toilets to gender-neutral facilities)
- Locate and design facilities to ensure facilities are safe and are provided with an appropriate level of passive and active surveillance. Isolated or remote locations should be avoided to prevent bullying and/or harassment.
- Alternative facilities (e.g. gender allocated toilets or a UAT) must be:
  o located within the immediate vicinity, and
  o readily visible as an alternative.
- Facilities should be open whilst maintaining an appropriate and considered level of privacy.
- Sufficient and safe space for parking of large, double sized pram and co-occupation of waiting dependent children or a support person, where appropriate.
- The design should avoid bottlenecking or zones where entrapment may be possible.
- Ensure the minimum requirements associated with male and female facilities are included within each private facility, such as:
  o Female sanitary disposal facilities are included within each private cubicle, positioned and designed to discourage inappropriate use.
  o Urinals should generally be avoided.
- Privacy of cubicles, including between, over and to the front of partitions. Water resistant doors that extend fully to the floor and solid partitioning may be appropriate.
- Consider if in-cubicle or shared handwashing facilities are more appropriate. A mixed approach may offer a more diverse response.

### 3.1.4 Signage and visual cues

It is important to ensure the location and function of gender-inclusive facilities is clearly articulated to avoid offence, discrimination, confusion, and discomfort, as well as unintended or inappropriate use. Consider:

- Room use is clearly defined, but remains gender-neutral, supporting all gender users (e.g. 'mothering' or 'breastfeeding' are potentially exclusionary terms).
- 'Humorous' signage should typically be avoided, as it may generate unintentional offence.
- For gender-neutral ablutions:
  o Signage and visual cues must be clear, visible and understandable.

- o Stereotypical colours should be used with caution as these may confuse.
- For parenting facilities:
  - o Avoid signage that presumes the chosen/necessary feeding approach (e.g. breast pump).
  - o Consider signage that identifies the room is in use or a booking is in place.
  - o Consider signage identifying alternative locations for caring needs.

## 3.2 Adult change facilities

Adult change facilities provide accessible hygiene facilities for those people with high support needs, and their carers enabling access to take care of physical and sanitary needs, with privacy and dignity.

While the NCC defines the minimum requirements and location for accessible adult change facilities within a limited number of public building typologies, the need for these facilities should be considered in all new and refurbished publicly accessible building typologies.

Over and above the minimum requirements defined by the NCC, the project should consider delivering facilities that can be accredited by an organisation such as Changing Places.

Changing Places is an advocate for adult change facilities and offer a range of tools, certifiable designs and design support, advocacy resources and end user support.

Considerations may include:

- Immediate in-room access to accessible showering facilities
- Additional in-room privacy measures
- Additional circulation space for complex toileting needs.
- Additional security measures (e.g. MLAK keying) to preserve the facility from misuse.
- Registering the facility location on established platforms, to aid users in locating and planning their daily access needs.

## 3.3 Inclusive of culture

### 3.3.1 First Nations

Demonstrating respectful and appropriate consideration for designing on and for Country underlies Finance's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25* and commitment to the community we support and work with.

A culturally responsive design approach that draws upon Aboriginal people's '...perspectives, priorities, knowledge, experience, and ways of working' [6] is more likely to positively influence the service delivery of the facility. This approach aligns with the [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy – Western Australia 2021-2029](), specifically the strategic element: *Building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work.*

Where the project-specific brief identifies it is appropriate, a co-design approach should be considered. This is to ensure due and proper consideration is made for the land on which the facility will be located and the culture it will reference. It is anticipated this approach will deliver a more considered, appropriate and improved project outcome.

Consideration might also be made, where appropriate, for including specialist advisors or a community-nominated elder, representative or spokesperson on the project team. They may support, endorse and guide the project as necessary.

### 3.3.2  Art and appropriation

Where art is procured for a project, avoid and sensitively manage cultural appropriation or intellectual property rights, including any inadvertent breaches. Specialist advice should be sought, and procedures be considered to ensure any potential concerns or conflicts can be monitored and addressed throughout the brief development and design process. There are a range of resources and publications available to guide the consultant team. This includes:

- Australia Council for the Arts *First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts* [australiacouncil.gov.au/investment-and-developmen/protocols-and-resources/protocols-for-using-first-nations-cultural-and-intellectual-property-in-the-arts/]()
- Percent for Art Scheme [www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-finance/percent-art-scheme]()

### 3.3.3  Wellbeing rooms

It is recommended that projects consider provision of space to cater exclusively for a variety of non-work-related wellbeing needs such as meditation, multifaith prayer, grieving or rehabilitation exercises. These should be defined on a project-by-project basis.

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[6] Aboriginal empowerment strategy – Western Australia 2021 - 2029 - Policy Guide*, page 18*

Where implemented as part of the project's briefing and design definition, multifaith use should be defined by co-design processes.

The planning and design of a wellbeing room could consider the following:

- Locate in a quiet and discreet position, easily accessible by all staff and visitors by arrangement.
- Washroom facilities should be in close proximity.
- Acoustic control should be appropriate.
- Natural and/or artificial lighting and the ability to dim lighting.
- Privacy should be considered, including in-use signage or privacy snib locking.
- Clearly defined signage to show the room use, but remains faith and gender neutral.
- Free of culturally specific decoration.
- Appropriate storage, including securable options for regular users.
- Carpet or similar soft flooring options.
- Subject to facility size, it may be appropriate to consider strategies to divide the space, such as a temporary partition or curtain. This is, for example, to enable the division of sexes for religious prayers.
- The space should accommodate the ability to be bookable.
- Reinforce to the customer agency and facility management that this space should not be considered, or otherwise identified, for use for any other purpose.

## 4. References

Department of Finance's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25*

[Finance-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2022-25.pdf (www.wa.gov.au)](#)

Western Australian Government's *Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy – Western Australia 2021-2029*
[Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy - Western Australia 2021-2029](#)

## 5. Document Control

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## 6. Document Approval

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