



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION  
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Mr Jonathan Davis MLA (Deputy  
Chair), Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Future of School Infrastructure in the ACT

**Submission Number: 16**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [LA Committee - ECI](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to Inquiry into the Future of School Infrastructure in the ACT  
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**Attachments:** [REDACTED]

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Dear Committee Members,

I'd like to make a submission to this inquiry specifically on the topic of the future of school toilets.

Toilets are the only gendered spaces in our schools, and this is problematic for students of all ages who are questioning their gender identity, identify as trans or non-binary, or simply feel uncomfortable having their gender identified every time they visit the toilet.

Increasingly, schools and other institutions are trying to address this by putting gender-neutral labelling on ambulant/accessible toilets, but this remains problematic because most gender diverse students don't identify as 'disabled' and many others are afraid of being outed by their choice to avoid the 'normal' toilets.

School toilets also highlight to young children that society expects them to fit into the gender binary. Many of us probably remember how it felt to be teased for entering the wrong toilet as a kindergarten student, and the experience likely entrenched our understanding of how the world expected us to behave in a broader sense (for girls - be neat, quiet, deferential, good looking, etc.).

Of course, having mixed-gendered toilets would also cause concern for some people.

For future Canberra schools, I'd like to suggest a toilet setup that's rarely seen in Australia, but is increasingly common in Scandinavia. Imagine a normal school hallway, with a series of doors coming off it, as in this image:



Behind each door, imagine one small room containing a single toilet, a sink, soap, and a hand dryer. These toilets don't need to be gendered, because when you're in them, you're there alone. Let's call these 'individual toilets.'

Just as no one would be concerned about using a 'mixed-gender' toilet at a friend's house, or perhaps at a small business such as a dental clinic with just one toilet, individual toilets are designed to be used by one person at a time.

As well as having the incredible benefit of removing gendered spaces from our schools, there are many members of the community who would appreciate having a sink and toilet accessible within the same private space. Take, for example, people who use reusable period products such as menstrual cups. Menstrual cups need to be removed, rinsed, and reinserted regularly - something that is impossible to do without a toilet, sink, and soap together in a private space.

Individual toilets could also be installed at the back of classrooms, in the library, etc., where teacher supervision is a given, and trips to the toilet don't result in time wandering far from class.

Committee members, could 'individual toilets' be the the default option for all new schools around Canberra? Could they be installed in existing schools when upgrades are required?

Thank you so much for considering this issue, something that hits incredibly close to home for many in our community.

Sincerely,

Anna Haiblen (she/her)

