

# CHANGING PLACES<sup>®</sup>

## CHANGING LIVES



# Changing Places General Information Guide

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*Imagine... a world without public toilets...*

## What's the Problem?

Everyone needs the loo when they're out and about, but not everyone can use the usual facilities.

**People with profound and multiple disabilities that severely limit mobility cannot use standard accessible toilets.**

Standard accessible toilets (or "disabled toilets") do not provide changing benches or hoists and most are too small to accommodate more than one carer. Without Changing Places, the person with disabilities is put at risk, and families are forced to risk their own health and safety by changing their loved one on a toilet floor - or stay at home all together.

**This is unhygienic, undignified and unsafe.**

Government policy rightly promotes the idea of community participation, active citizenship and inclusion for all, but for some people with disabilities the lack of a fully accessible bathroom makes this impossible.

Providing Changing Places in public spaces makes a dramatic difference to the lives of the people who desperately need them. Giving them this freedom to interact fully also enriches the lives of others in our community.

## *Changing Places - Changing Lives*

## What Are Changing Places?

Changing Places New Zealand was formed in 2017 to provide fully accessible bathroom facilities in public places throughout New Zealand. Changing Places bathrooms provide the right equipment, enough space to move around, and a safe and clean environment for its users. They are different to standard accessible toilets (or “disabled” toilets) and should be provided IN ADDITION to standard accessible toilets, not INSTEAD OF them.

### The right equipment

- a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench/shower plinth
- a height adjustable hand basin with built in hand grips
- a ceiling or wall mounted tracking hoist system
- a screen or curtain to allow privacy

### Enough space

- adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person and at least two carers
- a centrally placed toilet with room either side

## Who Needs Changing Places?

**Statistics on profound disability in NZ is sorely lacking. However, research has found that 1 in 260 people in the UK need Changing Places bathrooms.** Logic tells us this ratio would be similar worldwide, which would mean the needs of around 20,000 people in New Zealand are currently not being met – and all their families and care teams.

Those who would potentially benefit from a Changing Places bathroom include people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, motor neurone Disease, Alzheimer’s, colostomy and catheter users and those with an acquired brain or spinal injury.

We also know that the number of people with complex disabilities is growing – we are all living longer, meaning many more people are likely to need access to Changing Places in the future.

*Even one person without access to public toilet facilities is too many*



## Where Should Changing Places Be Located?

**Changing Places should be installed in all big public places – and some small ones too.**

We would like to see Changing Places installed in the following types of venues:

- Sports stadiums and events arenas
- Leisure complexes and theatres
- Museums and galleries
- City centres and shopping malls
- Hospitals and medical centres
- Transport hubs – motorway service stations, bus/train stations, airports (and in the transporting vehicles themselves!)

*Changing Places facilities would ideally be located nearby standard public toilet facilities.*

## Where Are Changing Places Now?

Changing Places originated in the UK in 2006, where there are more than 1500 Changing Places facilities as at November 2020 - the number increases by around 20 new facilities every month. Also as of November 2020 there are 150 Changing Places in Australia.

**The current count in NZ is SEVEN:**

Hamilton Gardens - Hamilton

Rotokauri Transport Hub - Hamilton

Rototuna Library - Hamilton

Westfield - Newmarket

Gould Park - Takapuna

Drury Park - Mount Maunganui

Cornwall Park - Hastings

But rest assured, we have more units coming!



***Imagine... not ever having a public toilet within simple walking distance***

## Changing Places NZ Specifications:

Changing Places New Zealand specifications are based heavily on overseas models, but are higher than those in both the UK and Australia.

- Minimum room size of 12sqm for new builds. Minimum height of 2.4m to any ceiling or structure to accommodate hoist rails. Retrofits can be smaller depending on design, however functionality must be adhered to.
- A height adjustable adult sized change table that doubles as a shower bed. Height adjustability is vital to prevent manual handling injuries for caregivers. It also assists those who can self-transfer to safely do so.
- A toilet placed at least 900mm from the nearest wall or obstacle to the centre of the bowl to allow for a caregiver either side. We recommend the height adjustable toilet for facilities wanting to meet the highest standards
- A shower with 2m hose set at the head of the change table/shower bed and shelving/towel rails within easy reach – some users will require shower capability as part of their toileting requirements. The shower facility also allows bathing for people when out of town, for example on holiday, when a typical hotel accessible bathroom isn't adequate.
- A continuous charge ceiling/wall mounted hoist utilising a 'loop sling' system
- A height adjustable handbasin with touch tap
- Heat lamp with timed delay switch above/nearby the change table to allow for ambient temperature control
- Curtaining or other screening capability around the toilet to allow privacy and dignity for both caregiver and the person being cared for
- A large bin for disposal of nappies and incontinence pads
- A secure sharps disposal container
- Contrasting colours of flooring and walls for those with visual/sensory impairment
- Non-slip flooring and the usual fixtures and fittings (soap dispenser, hand drier etc) as required in any public toileting facility or wet area bathroom
- Fully automated sliding cavity door (minimally 1m in width) with safety lasers and floor brushes for external doors.
- Changing Places NZ secured access system
- Agreement to a Memorandum of Understanding with Changing Places NZ to ensure full care and maintenance of facilities
- Changing Places NZ official signage – logo, instructions and safety posters

## Which Equipment?

Those who want to invest in these rooms need to have confidence in the specialised equipment and in the installation and maintenance support thereafter. Consistency is vital - people must know before they enter exactly what they're going to get.

We believe Pressalit and Arjo provide this confidence at highly competitive rates. That said, asset owners are **free to choose** other equipment (in consultation with Changing Places NZ) if safety standards and function requirements are met.

## Why Secured Access?

**ALL Changing Places facilities WORLDWIDE are locked:**

- To protect the asset - from vandals and misuse
- To protect the public - those who don't know how to use this equipment will be at risk of harm if allowed general access.
- To protect the asset owners - to be allowed access, users must agree to standard terms and conditions, including indicating that they know how to use the equipment and agree to do so responsibly. This protects asset owners (councils, DHBs etc) from undue responsibility or potential health and safety litigation.
- To ensure that the room, wherever possible, is available, clean and fully functional for those who need it.

We appreciate that restricting use seems exclusive rather than inclusive, but it is necessary. In this instance, exclusivity is not necessarily a negative, Those who need this room or care for someone that does are already part of an exclusive group of society – one they'd most likely prefer not to belong to. Changing Places facilities are their 'Koru Lounge' and feedback from families is already reflecting that view.

## Why the Electronic Key System?

The UK and Australia both use a skeleton key system - RADAR or MALAK keys. Users purchase keys for a nominal amount. However, Changing Places NZ learned quickly that this system is far from ideal. The Changing Places Consortium in the UK has confirmed many keys are now in the wrong hands – keys in the UK can be bought on EBay and in Argos stores! With this skeleton key system, as soon as just one key was lost, or found its way to someone who was not a genuine user, security in *all* units was irreparably compromised.

Changing Places NZ recognised that a better secured access system was vital to ensure safety and security across all facilities without interfering quick and easy access for those who truly needed it.

Working closely with Gallagher's and Advanced Security, we adapted an existing access package using electronic technology to meet the needs of both users and asset owners. A specialised plastic key (tag) is issued to each registered user. Entrance is allowed automatically when an authorised tag is placed against a reader near the door of the facility. Tags can also be accessed via a certain location nearby (an information kiosk or a number to call a security guard, etc). Instructions on how to access tags on site are clearly displayed outside the bathrooms.

Like the skeleton key systems, the same tag will open *any* Changing Places NZ facility. However, unlike the skeleton key system, if a tag is lost or misused, Changing Places NZ can deactivate it to retain security. The system also logs each tag use, so if damage or misuse occurs (or if an item is left in the room by a user) Changing Places can identify who accessed the room and when. With this electronic system, Changing Places NZ can also produce reports on usage of each facility for asset owners and others.

Users tell us they prefer the membership idea as it *empowers* them with quick and easy access and eliminates the cumbersome alternatives such as calling for security, searching out a key or paying a deposit each time they need access to the room. They gain buy in - some ownership of the room that they've waited all their lives to access.

The UK Changing Places Consortium is so impressed by the work done here with secured access, that it has indicated it wants to replicate our system throughout their 1500+ facilities. We believe Australia will follow suit, meaning that the same membership tag that opens all Changing Places facilities in NZ may well open any Changing Places facility worldwide.

***These rooms are not about excluding those that don't need them – they're about including those that do***



## How Does Secured Access Membership Work?

People who need these facilities apply for a Lifetime Membership by writing to Changing Places NZ (register@ChangingPlaces.org.nz), giving contact details etc and a reason for needing these facilities over and above standard disability toilets. As part of the signup process, they also receive information on how the rooms work (for example, that they need to provide their own 'loop' sling) and agree to the Terms and Conditions - this protects the asset owners from potential Health Worksafe litigation.

Those using the MoH "charitable model" pay a one-off lifetime membership fee of \$150 per tag, most often fully funded through Individualised Funding streams, MSD, or other organisations such as the Cerebral Palsy Society. Others, for example ACC clients, residential care homes and special schools, pay the full membership price of \$300 per tag. This helps cover some of our running costs without burdening families financially for public conveniences that everyone else gets for free. With the collaboration of these agencies, Changing Places NZ facilities gain some promotion, potential users can be identified, and user need can be established without medical certificates etc as currently required by other schemes such as the Mobility Parking Permit system.

Changing Places NZ then registers a numbered (identifiable) tag to the client and posts it out to them, along with an information flier, a bumper sticker and a Changing Places NZ branded retractable clip unit that enables the tag to be attached to a wheelchair as an alternative to using it on a keyring.

We have future-proofed our infrastructure - the same tag that opens the facility at Hamilton Gardens will open any future Changing Places NZ facilities subsequently built, all for the same low one-off Lifetime Membership fee.

We are a registered NZ Charity (#CC55106) and currently receive NO government funding. All volunteers running Changing Places NZ do so with NO financial gain.

## Access for Non-Members

Facility owners are encouraged to place a tag in a nearby location of their choosing (eg an information kiosk or with a roaming security guard) for those that need access but aren't yet members. Hamilton Gardens, for example, has placed a sign near the door that states what the room is, details of the Changing Places NZ website for more information on registering, and directing people to the Information Centre during opening hours for one-off access if needed. It is also possible for an overseas visitor to 'rent' a tag via Changing Places NZ for the duration of their stay in New Zealand.

*Imagine... having to ask or search for a key every time you need the loo*

## Where to next?

We are working towards a *change in the Building Code* requirements, similar to those Australia and the UK introduced in 2019. The recent Government Response to our 2017 petition will also be helpful – the Ministry of Local Government has agreed to support a nationwide network and Changing Places will be working alongside them to create the framework needed in order to build that network.

Until then, we plan to continue with strategic locations of Changing Places facilities within NZ until they become accepted as the ‘norm’. We’re starting with a focus on places with high foot traffic, high visitor numbers, high social interaction venues, and high populations of disabled people.

We’re also working on a **portable model** (“Changing Places – On The Go”) available to be rented out at festivals/concerts etc, enabling our world-renowned events such as Field Days to be truly accessible to all.

*We want to be able to go anywhere you can go. It’s as simple as that.*



## How much will it cost?

### Short term

The Hamilton Gardens project was around \$200,000. This included the building enclosure, paving, site works, consents, design etc, all specialised equipment (installed) and the secured access system needed to ensure the safe and secure usage. However, this was a standalone project - if this build had been undertaken as part of a bigger project, the costs would have been much lower. We can also offer a prefabricated model with potential to significantly reduce cost, planning, timeframes and effort.

The specialised equipment and secured access system costs around \$50,000 installed. These costs can vary slightly depending on the size and location of the room.

Contact us for Changing Places NZ consultation and design fee and ongoing support package costs.

### Long term

Standard maintenance costs as per any usual public toileting facility - including cleaning, utilities, annual electrical testing of equipment, etc.

An annual maintenance cost averaging \$1500 for specialised load testing of the hoist and occasional strap or battery replacement, as recommended by the manufacturer.

A modem and SIM with ongoing (contract) data to allow Changing Places NZ remote access to the secured access system, in order to register users and provide monthly reports on usage etc to asset owners (e.g. Council).

Minimal extra consumables - e.g. the removal/disposal/replacement of the sharps container.



*Cameron washing his own hands for the first time...  
Priceless.*

## What Can Changing Places NZ Offer You?

- Thorough information and support to establish official Changing Places NZ facilities, ensuring public conveniences are provided for ALL of our communities, not “almost” all.
- Once certain specifications are met and maintained, permission to use the Internationally recognised Changing Places name and Logo (we hold the Registered Trademark in New Zealand).
- Access to our Secured Access System and the ongoing running of the system. Changing Places NZ commits to handling all registrations for Lifetime Memberships, including sending out tags and garnishing funding for families to purchase memberships. We also commit to sending monthly usage reports to each facility.
- Promotion of facilities via our fliers/website/Facebook page/mapping app/media and Disability Sector partnerships.
- Sharing of overall design, equipment supply and ongoing maintenance and support, secure access, campaign and promotion information etc with councils and other interested agencies nationwide.
- The ridiculously good feeling you get when you do a great thing - **the right thing**.

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## Still Not Convinced?

Councils, DHBs and even privately owned entities like shopping malls and entertainment complexes have an *obligation* to provide public conveniences for *all* of their communities and patrons – not *almost* all... By committing to these facilities, you’re helping fill the definition of true inclusiveness in public spaces – providing freedom and confidence to those that need them, and enriching the lives of others in society by enabling everyone to move within those spaces together. Isn’t that what ‘community’ is all about?

***Imagine... Imagine if everyone had the same toileting freedoms that you take for granted***

## More Future Plans...

Along with the portable/mobile unit and prefabricated models, we have big plans for leading the way with Changing Places internationally. These include:

- **Bluetooth access**

We've future proofed the secured access system to allow for Bluetooth technology. Members will be able to opt for Bluetooth access on their smartphones - the door will recognise when a member is nearby and open automatically.

- **Mapping App**

We're developing an app that will show all Changing Places NZ facilities. Members will be able to input their route, including location and destination (e.g. Kerikeri to Wellington) and the app will show them all the Changing Places along the way.

## Imagine...

Imagine if the *only* toilet or bathroom *you* could use was the one *in your own home*.

For some of us, that is the reality.





# Changing Places Locations

## Hamilton Gardens



## Westfield, Newmarket



## Rotokauri, Hamilton



## Gould Park, Takapuna



## Mt Maunganui



## Cornwall Park, Hastings



# Rototuna Library, Hamilton



Better than nothing



Nothing better

Visit [changingplaces.org.nz](http://changingplaces.org.nz)



**Changing Places**  
Fully Accessible Public Bathrooms NZ



## Trademarks and accreditation List

The Changing Places name and logo are registered trademarks of Changing Places New Zealand (Changing Places NZ) for use in New Zealand.

A bathroom must be accredited by Changing Places NZ before it can be called a Changing Places bathroom or display the Changing Places logo.

Accreditation is necessary because currently there are no standards or building code requirements in New Zealand to ensure consistency and quality control. Accreditation ensures that every bathroom which displays the Changing Places logo will consistently meet the needs of users and their caregivers.


Contact Changing Places NZ for more information.



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 [info@ChangingPlaces.org.nz](mailto:info@ChangingPlaces.org.nz)  
[register@ChangingPlaces.org.nz](mailto:register@ChangingPlaces.org.nz)

 [ChangingPlaces.org.nz](http://ChangingPlaces.org.nz)

 [facebook.com/ChangingPlacesNewZealand](https://facebook.com/ChangingPlacesNewZealand)

 (+64) 021 141 9005