TOILET BUILDING INSIGHTS

Comparing Construction Types

Choosing the right construction type for toilets

Local governments especially have a lot to get right when investing ratepayer funds on infrastructure projects. With competing demands of the community and their responsibility to deliver both quality infrastructure that delivers value for the investment — there are a number of things that require strong consideration. **The important toilet building considerations include:**

Vandalism — is the building vulnerable to vandalism or damage?

Maintenance — is maintenance simple, is effective cleaning easy and are parts available?

Life Cost — How easy is maintenance and replacement of parts? Is the asset life reasonable compared to the cost?

Asset Life — will the asset be in working condition for long enough to justify its cost?

Construction — is the building construction simple, quality and fast with minimal onsite disruption?

User Experience — is it a pleasant environment for users, now and when the asset is aged?

Appearance — does it look great and compliment the open space?

Why construction type matters

When making selecting a supplier partner for your public toilet building, there will often be proposals for masonry or concrete style buildings. These are commonly promoted as being the answer to vandalism and having a long asset life, however these claims don't necessarily stand up on closer inspection.

While these materials are indeed sturdy, they are not immune to damage—graffiti is difficult to remove from porous surfaces, and deliberate destruction, such as chipping or cracking, can still occur. Additionally, maintenance and repairs for these structures can be costly and labor-intensive. Alternative materials and modern modular designs can often provide similar durability with lower maintenance demands and a more user-friendly experience. Therefore, it's crucial to assess the long-term practicality and upkeep requirements before committing to a masonry or concrete option.

Comparing Modus buildings to concrete/masonry

When investing in public toilet infrastructure, several key factors must be considered, including durability, maintenance costs, user experience, and long-term value. Different construction methods offer varying benefits, but not all solutions perform equally well in real-world conditions. While traditional options like masonry and concrete may seem like the default choice, modern modular designs often provide superior performance in critical areas such as vandal resistance, ease of cleaning, and operational efficiency.

The table below dives deeper into the key purchase considerations, and how Modus toilet buildings perform better than alternatives on all fronts:

Purchase Consideration	Masonry / Concrete Toilet Buildings	Modus Toilet Buildings
Vandalism	Large flat surfaces like painted concrete, masonry or even tiles are a prime target for graffiti vandals. Concrete toilets withstands impacts well, although when serious damage occurs sectional replacement is not possible, and patching/repainting is costly	Our standard internal MiniOrb sheeting does not offer a viable surface for graffiti — should small graffiti occur, surface can be easily cleaned. Tough sheeting and cladding with fully welded steel support framing is very impact resistant — in the event of serious damage, individual sheets can be replaced fast and cheap.
Maintenance	Generally built with walls sealed to the ground, internal cleaning is time consuming to achieve a high quality clean, while grout lines and porous materials retain dirt and odour	With hardy and easy to clean materials, and gaps under the walls, Modus buildings can be easily washed through with a pressure blaster using strong chemicals and a good clean achieved
Asset Life	30 years +	30 years +
Upfront Cost	Upfront costs are extremely high, and not justifiable by lower life cost or asset life length	Modus buildings are often 40 — 50% cheaper than concrete options, with a comparable a lifespan and lower maintenance
Lifetime Cost	Asset lifespan is comparable, however more difficult maintenance and longer term issues may result in greater lifetime costs and early replacement	With comparable asset lifespan, minimal/easy maintenance and more cost effective up front, the lifetime cost of Modus buildings is much lower
Construction Speed & Cost	Masonry and concrete toilets buildings that are constructed on site require multiple trades, meaning higher on site costs, lengthy build times, greater waste/pollution and community disruption	Modus buildings are often buildings are a prefabricated modular kit form system that ensures fast, accurate and easy installation— lowering on site costs and minimising community disruption
User Experience	While good initially, these buildings tend to retain bad odour over years, even when cleaned regularly	Modus buildings stay fresh and comfortable for users throughout their lifetime
Design and Appearance	While blockwork is flexible, concrete tends to be more limited in the options that can be achieved. Appearance is generally good for these buildings and they can be customised as required	Modus' unique modular system means almost any conceivable floorplan can be achieved. We also offer a wide range of materials, finishes and custom enhancements to make its toilet buildings a compliment to any open space

RELATED PROJECT

Gordon Station, NSW

Location
Gordon, NSW

Client
Ku-ring Gai Council

Completed
August 2024

Product
InCube 3

Modus delivered a modern replacement for an ageing concrete toilet block at Gordon Station, working with Ku-Ring-Gai Council to install a durable, accessible, and visually appropriate solution for a high-foot-traffic urban environment. The previous facility was worn down and failed to meet Australian Standards, prompting the council to seek a compliant and future-proof alternative.

The InCube 3 toilet building answered this need with two ambulant cubicles and one fully accessible cubicle, all built to AS 1428.1 specifications, including handrails, an adult change table, and ample space for mobility aids. The structure featured robust aluminium composite cladding in a grey palette to match its urban surrounds, high-durability internal fixtures to withstand constant use, and a SolarSpan roof for insulation and weather resistance. Additional elements like a sharps disposal bin and a privacy-enhancing perforated verandah screen helped ensure safety and comfort.

The end result was an attractive and secure public amenity that elevates the daily commute for locals and visitors, delivered on time and within budget while providing a superior alternative to traditional masonry builds.

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