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## **Uphill task for disabled to visit loo in MRT stations**

### **Occasions when requests for toilets to be unlocked are frowned upon**

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Letter from Leo Chen Ian, President, Disabled People's Association

What is the purpose of a public toilet facility if its access is restricted to even that section of the public for whom it was constructed?

This irony lies particularly with the Tiong Bahru, Yio Chu Kang, Bugis and Chinatown MRT stations, where the toilets for people with disabilities (PWD) are under lock and key, and to gain access to these amenities sometimes require demanding effort.

PWDs have been finding it an uphill task even when the concern is of a fundamental right to utilise a public facility. The public toilets within MRT stations are implemented with the purpose of providing convenience to commuters.

However, this has been challenged with locked access to the toilets for PWDs, supposedly a preventive action adopted to avoid its abuse by non-disabled people.

Ironically, this misplaced act also robs the right of PWDs to make use of the amenity that was originally built with them in mind.

Moreover, there have been occasions where requests for toilets to be unlocked are frowned upon for the inconvenience caused.

This is a typical situation that should not even be an issue of contention in the first place.

The Disabled People's Association's Advocacy Sub-Committee believes what would work more effectively as a preventive measure is public education.

Public awareness can be raised in the appropriate and considerate usage of public facilities.

Two wrongs do not make a right.

There is no benefit to any party by closing access to toilets for PWDs by all.

We hope that all MRT stations and other public facilities with toilets will take note of this issue and review existing policies.