

Access for People with Disabilities

“MLAK” - Master Locksmiths Access Key System

The **Master Locksmith Access Key** (MLAK) is an innovative system that allows 24 hours a day access to public facilities (e.g. toilets for people with a disability, elevators at railway stations, National Park facilities, and adaptive playground equipment) using a universal lock.

It is a nationally recognised key system that was trialled and introduced in the mid 1990s by Pittwater Council in conjunction with ACROD Ltd NSW Division, Technical Aid for the Disabled (TAD) and the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia Ltd (MLAA) to improve access for people with disabilities.

The MLAK is a master key that fits into specially designed locks. Two types of key are available: a standard triangular head key and one with a specially designed large key head for use by people with impaired hand function. The specially designed key head takes advantage of a device called a Lederer Key Leverage Aid which was designed by TAD.

MLAK is designed to improve access and not to encourage building owners to lock their accessible facilities. Accessible facilities should be open during the day; however, sometimes it is necessary to lock them after hours due to vandalism and other antisocial behaviour.

Special Note: In the Blue Mountains region, Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) Cleaning Rangers routinely unlock Disabled Public Toilet/Parent Rooms early in the morning so the facilities are available during the day and a Security Patrol secures them in the evening.

Unfortunately, there are times (during daylight) when an eligible MLAK key holder may have been trained to close and lock an Accessible facility after its use. Regrettably this will impact a parent attempting access to those few combination sites that have a nappy change table installed. If you find yourself in this situation, please call BM Council on Tel. 4780 5000 (or 4723 5000 if in the lower mountains for a local call) and Council will endeavour to re-open the facility for you.

The MLAK is designed to **INCREASE ACCESS** to facilities that would under normal circumstances be locked after hours. The MLAK reduces the level of vandalism, keep facilities clean and at the same time overcome the obstacle of accessible toilets being locked. The scheme is important to enable people with a disability to go out in the evening.

Eligibility

Access is restricted to people who have a mobility difficulty **OR** those who have written authority from a Doctor, a disability organisation, community health centre, the centre management or the owner of a building with an accessible toilet on site.

Eligible people will be able to purchase a key that will open all accessible public toilets that display the MLAK key symbol. During mid November 2006, Blue Mountains City Council installed customised signage at all Disabled public toilet sites (with thanks to local Blue Mountains resident Mr Paul Cassidy, suggested this constructive and informative improvement). See sample of signage - second photo attached. Keys may be purchased from members of the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia (Australia wide).

MLAA members in the Blue Mountains include:

1. **Lock Logic** (also known as Blue Mtns District Locksmiths) at 55 Megalong Rd, Katoomba Tel. **(02) 4782 2296**
2. **All-Locks Master Locksmith** at Unit 2/29 Attunga Rd Blaxland Tel. **(02) 4739 3656**

Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia (MLAA)

Website www.masterlocksmiths.com.au has a list of all its members across Australia.

For more information contact the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia Ltd on **1800 810 698**.

Helpful links:

1. The National Public Toilet Map: website <http://www.toiletmap.gov.au/>
2. SCIA - Spinal Cord Injuries Australia: website <http://www.scia.org.au>
3. Blue Mountains City Council's *Access & Equity* web-site page at www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/accessandequity or call BMCC on **4780 5000**.

Public toilets with the MLAK key system in the Blue Mountains include:

- **Mt Wilson Rural Fire Station** - The Avenue (opposite the Mt Wilson Village Hall)
- **Blackheath Carpark**, Govetts Leap Rd (behind the Ivanhoe Hotel)
- **Blackheath - Sutton Park**, (south of township)
- **Katoomba - "Studleigh Place"**, Katoomba St (next door to the Telstra building)
- **Leura Mall Carpark - Leura**, Megalong St
- **Springwood Carpark** (Macquarie Rd, Springwood)
- **Coronation Park, Wentworth Falls** - opposite the shopping centre
- **Glenbrook Park** (behind the Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre)
- **Blaxland Mall** (Station St, Blaxland - near the Mall under the Footbridge)
- **Hazelbrook Shopping Precinct** - Great Western Hwy
- **Katoomba Falls Reserve** - Cliff Drive
- **Bulls Camp Reserve**, Woodford - Great Western Hwy
- **Cultural Centre** (Parke St Katoomba)
- **Echo Point** - Lift and Change Facility Cliff Drive