

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Jobs and Industry
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Women



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FREE PADS AND TAMPONS PROGRAM CREATING LOCAL JOBS

The Allan Labor Government's nation-leading work to provide free access to pads and tampons is taking its next major step with companies approached to tender to deliver period products in machines across the state.

Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today announced the next step in the \$23 million program, which will provide free pads and tampons at 700 public sites from next year – at places like cultural institutions, hospitals, courts, TAFEs, public libraries, and staffed train stations across the state.

The program will not only increase access to products and ease cost of living pressures but also create jobs, with a requirement that companies meet an 85 per cent minimum local content as part of the Local Jobs Act.

The Labor Government is reaching out to companies shortlisted following an Expression of Interest process earlier this year to respond to a Request for Tender (RFT) to deliver the free period products.

Pads and tampons are not a luxury, they are a necessity, yet many people in Victoria cannot afford the products they need to manage their periods.

Research commissioned by Plan International Australia earlier this year showed almost 6 in 10 Gen Z and Millennial women were finding it more difficult to pay for period products due to the rising cost of living.

The RFT process is the next step in finding a partner who can provide the period products and vending machines to roll out the project across the state.

Vending machines are expected to be installed in a phased roll-out next year, following the Labor Government's nation-leading move to make pads and tampons – alongside information and resources about women's health conditions and period pain – available for free in every public school in 2020.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Providing free pads and tampons across the community is not only the right thing to do for Victorian women, but it will also benefit Victorian manufacturers and grow local jobs."

"A lack of access to appropriate period products can have significant impacts across many areas of women's lives, including physical and mental health and participating in education, employment and social activities."

"It's one part of the Allan Labor Government's nation-leading focus on progressing gender equality towards a better future for women, where everyone has equal opportunities regardless of gender."