

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 14 November 2024

WE'RE ROLLING OUT FREE PADS AND TAMPONS. PERIOD.

Pads and tampons are not a luxury – they're a necessity, which is why the Allan Labor Government is delivering free period products in public places.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today visited the State Library, announcing it as the location for three of the first 50 machines rolling out to public bathrooms, in the first phase of this nation-leading reform.

The \$23 million investment will improve access and deliver cost-of-living relief, with 50 machines installed at an initial 30 venues across Melbourne, ahead of a statewide rollout next year in a mix of women's, gender neutral and accessible toilets.

In addition to the State Library, Bendigo Kangan Broadmeadows, Northern Health Broadmeadows, Lalor Library, Coburg Library and Diamond Valley Library will be among the first locations to be included. Sites in the first phase of the rollout also include the Arts Centre, Immigration Museum, Melbourne Museum and Royal Exhibition Building.

Once complete, the rollout will reach 700 sites including Victorian libraries, courts, hospitals, train stations and TAFEs. Women will be able to get enough products to last them several days.

The 50 test machines are smart machines equipped with technology to monitor inventory updates, with Affinity Outdoor the official supplier. Affinity Outdoor have an all-female management team and a workforce of more than 90 per cent women.

Access to pads and tampons is a basic need, but 64 per cent of respondents in Share the Dignity's Big Bloody Survey reported struggling to afford period products.

The Labor Government was the first in Australia to make pads and tampons available for free in public schools in 2020, and we will continue to support women through initiatives like free pads and tampons in public places.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Pads and tampons are not a luxury – they're a necessity. And women and girls should be able to access them whenever and wherever they need them."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Women spend thousands of dollars over their lifetime on these basic necessities – this nation-leading program provides cost-of-living relief for women while providing them the basic dignity they deserve."

Quote attributable to Affinity Outdoor CEO Michelle Davis

"Affinity Outdoor is proud to partner with the Victorian Government on this initiative to provide free period products through vending machines. We believe access to essential products like pads and tampons should never be a barrier for anyone, and this program represents an important step towards achieving equity in our community."

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Quote attributable to National Homeless Collective CEO Donna Stolzenberg

“The experience of homelessness is a horrific, frightening and shameful situation. Adding lack of access to sanitary items and forcing people to beg for a tampon creates an even greater trauma with added humiliation. The government’s Free Pads and Tampons program removes the humiliation of not being able to access sanitary items.”