

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Medical Research



Friday, 26 April 2024

PELVIC PAIN EDUCATION AND NEW PERIOD PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS

The Allan Labor Government is offering young people across Victorian government schools' free pelvic pain and menstrual health education from next year.

Minister for Education Ben Carroll today announced at least 400 in person education sessions will be given to students in Years 5 to 10 with education expected to begin by 2025.

The sessions will include curriculum-aligned, age-appropriate and evidence-based information about menstrual health and pelvic pain. Students will develop skills and confidence to recognise when and how to seek help and support.

Procurement for a provider of the Pelvic Pain Education in schools' initiative will soon get underway, thanks to a \$900,000 investment in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*.

The Labor Government has also announced a trial of free individual tampons and reusable products like period underwear in a select number of Victorian government schools this year. Schools will provide feedback to understand the best ways menstruating students can access reusable period products.

The program and trial will be rolled out in addition to the Government's \$36.2 million Australian-first Free Period Products initiative.

An Australian study indicated that 21 per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 experience severe pelvic pain during their periods. The education sessions will cover period pain as well as endometriosis and a range of other conditions which result in pelvic pain among women and girls.

Almost half of all Australian women experience pelvic pain – for those 1 in 9 women with endometriosis, diagnosis can take on average seven years.

Victoria has a proud track record of working to improve women's health outcomes, most recently launching our women's pain inquiry and investing in our nation-leading \$153 million women's health package – including establishing 20 new women's health clinics for conditions like endometriosis and pelvic pain.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"Nobody should suffer in silence, so we are educating young people about pelvic pain, so they know what to do if and when it affects them."

"No young person should be stressed or worried about having access to period products. Our Free Period Products initiative has seen more than nine million period products dispensed in Victorian government schools, with tampons in multipacks of eight."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"We know that schoolyard conversation around menstruation and pelvic pain has historically been seen as taboo – that's why education to destigmatise and remove the shame associated with periods is so important."

"We are ensuring more young Victorian girls understand their bodies and seek help before their pain impacts their overall health and wellbeing."

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