

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Government Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



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REGIONAL VICTORIA LEADS ROLLOUT OF FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS

Regional Victorians are set to benefit from the Allan Labor Government's rollout of free pad and tampon vending machines – helping remove barriers to education, work and community life.

Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today launched the start of the official statewide rollout at TAFE Gippsland, where new machines have been installed in Bairnsdale and Warragul – with the Barwon region set to follow next week.

The rollout is now expanding beyond Melbourne, following the installation of 50 smart vending machines in 30 metro locations. Women across Melbourne have already saved thousands of dollars, with more than 25,000 packs of pads and tampons dispensed in the first six months of the program.

Once the rollout is complete, up to 1,500 free pad and tampon machines – both smart and battery-operated – will be available at more than 700 public locations across Victoria. Sites will include regional libraries, hospitals, TAFEs, train stations and other community hubs.

Lack of access to period products is a real issue for women and girls in regional areas, where local services may be limited. It can affect health and wellbeing, school and work attendance, and social participation.

Councils across Victoria were invited to nominate sites for the machines – ensuring the rollout reflects the needs of communities right across the state.

Access to pads and tampons is a basic need, but one in five women reported struggling to afford period products.

The Labor Government's free pads and tampons in public places program builds on our work delivering free menstrual products in government schools, as well as pelvic pain education.

A full list of locations is available at freepadsandtampons.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Pads and tampons are not a luxury, they're a necessity – this rollout means women and girls right across Victoria won't have to miss work or school because they can't afford them."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"Period products are necessary but expensive, and not having access to them impacts women and girls in all sorts of negative ways. Our program to provide free pads and tampons makes sense and will make a big difference for women and girls right across the region."

Quotes attributable to TAFE Gippsland Acting CEO Justin Fallu

"Inability to access sanitary products should never be a barrier to participation in education. These new vending machines provide free and discreet access to essential period products, supporting dignity, inclusion and equal opportunity for all."

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