



Women policy portfolio - Women's health - Free period products in schools and other locations	
Party:	Australian Greens
Summary of proposal: The proposal would provide free period products in all public schools and public facilities (including hospitals, libraries, and transport hubs). The proposal would be ongoing and start on 1 July 2025.	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$124.5 million over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). The financial impacts of the proposal are driven by increases in both administered and departmental expenses. Departmental expenses reflect the costs of implementing the proposal, monitoring, and reporting.

The proposal would be expected to have an impact beyond the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period. A breakdown of the financial implications (including separate public debt interest (PDI) tables) over the period to 2035-36 is provided at Attachment A.

The financial implications of this proposal are sensitive to assumptions about the cost of providing sanitary products at a national scale, and the demand for sanitary products in public schools and public facilities. The estimated usage of the free period products is outlined in *Key assumptions* below.

Table 1: Women policy portfolio - Women's health - Free period products in schools and other locations – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-31.0	-30.0	-31.2	-32.3	-124.5
Underlying cash balance	-31.0	-30.0	-31.2	-32.3	-124.5

(a) A positive number represents an increase in the relevant budget balance; a negative number represents a decrease.

(b) PDI impacts are not included in the totals.

Key assumptions

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has made the following assumptions in costing this proposal.

- The Commonwealth and state and territory governments would be able to make the agreements necessary to support the implementation and ongoing maintenance of the proposal.
 - Costs have been uplifted to account for ongoing implementation costs associated with administering the program, dispenser replacement, refilling and maintenance costs.
- The unit period product cost is based on indications from suppliers and increases in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- The dispenser cost is based on the 2023-24 Victorian State Budget measure *Free pads and tampons in public places*,¹ and increases in line with the CPI.
- 20% of dispensers would be replaced annually due to damage.

Component 1 – Public Schools

- The eligible number of students was estimated based on female enrolments in public schools, informed by the Department of Education enrolment projection model, and age-based likelihood of menstruation based on information from the United States' National Centre for Health Statistics.
- 95% of eligible students in years 6 to 12 would access sanitary products from school, informed by expected take up rates in Victorian public schools.
- The number of dispensers was estimated based on an assumed ratio of the number of eligible students serviced per dispenser.
- Product dispensers would be fully rolled out over the first 12 months, with ongoing costs for product refills, replacement of damaged dispensers, and new dispensers added to meet the estimated demand in public schools.

Component 2 – Public facilities

- The eligible number of females who would access sanitary products in public facilities are aged 15 to 49 years old and increases by the average growth rate per state. This is informed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *National, state and territory population* report.
- 50% of the eligible number of females would access these sanitary products.
- The number of dispensers was estimated based on an assumed ratio of the eligible number of females serviced per dispenser. The ratio is based on the 2023-24 Victorian State Budget measure *Free pads and tampons in public places*.

¹ *Free pads and tampons in public places*: Funding is provided to supply free sanitary items across Victoria. 1,500 sanitary dispenser machines with free pads and tampons will be installed in up to 700 public sites across Victoria, including courts, TAFEs, libraries, train stations and cultural institutions, such as the State Library and Melbourne Museum. [Victoria State Budget Paper 3 2023-24](#) (pages 41 and 48).

Methodology

Administered costs for both components include 2 elements:

1. The product cost was calculated by multiplying the estimated number of eligible females by the unit period product price.
2. The dispenser cost was calculated by multiplying the number of dispensers by the unit dispenser price as per the respective *Key assumptions*.

Departmental expenses were estimated based on standard departmental staffing costs.

Financial implications were rounded consistent with the PBO's rounding rules.²

Data sources

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025) [National, state and territory population](#), accessed 12 May 2025.

Commonwealth of Australia (2025) *Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025*, Commonwealth of Australia.

The Department of Education provided data on the estimated number of enrolments for government schools in each state as at the 2025-26 PEFO.

Flinders Foundation (2022) [Improving school experience for girls with early onset menstruation](#), accessed 12 May 2025.

The Guardian (2020) [Free pads and tampons now available to all Victorian public school students in Australian first](#), accessed 12 May 2025.

National Centre for Health Statistics Reports (2020) [Trends and patterns in menarche in the United States, 1995 through 2013–2017](#), accessed 12 May 2025.

Product pricing information was sourced from [Free the Tampons](#), accessed 12 May 2025.

Victorian State Budget 2023-24 [Budget Paper 3: Doing What Matters](#), accessed 12 May 2025.

² <https://www.pbo.gov.au/for-parliamentarians/how-we-analyse/pbo-rounding-rules>

Attachment A – Women policy portfolio - Women’s health - Free period products in schools and other locations – Financial implications

Table A1: Women policy portfolio - Women’s health - Free period products in schools and other locations – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)^(a)

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	Total to 2028-29	Total to 2035-36
Expenses													
Administered													
<i>Free period products in schools and other locations</i>	-30.4	-29.8	-31.0	-32.1	-33.4	-34.6	-35.9	-37.2	-38.6	-40.0	-41.4	-123.3	-384.4
Departmental													
<i>Department of Health and Aged Care</i>	-0.6	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-1.2	-2.6
Total (excluding PDI)	-31.0	-30.0	-31.2	-32.3	-33.6	-34.8	-36.1	-37.4	-38.8	-40.2	-41.6	-124.5	-387.0

(a) A positive number for the fiscal balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A negative number for the fiscal balance indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A positive number for the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in receipts or a decrease in payments or net capital investment in cash terms. A negative number for the underlying cash balance indicates a decrease in receipts or an increase in payments or net capital investment in cash terms.

Table A2: Women policy portfolio - Women’s health - Free period products in schools and other locations – Memorandum item: Public Debt Interest (PDI) impacts – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	Total to 2028-29	Total to 2035-36
Fiscal balance	-0.7	-2.1	-3.5	-5.1	-6.8	-8.6	-10.6	-12.7	-15.0	-17.5	-20.2	-11.4	-102.8
Underlying cash balance	-0.5	-1.7	-3.2	-4.7	-6.3	-8.1	-10.1	-12.2	-14.4	-16.9	-19.5	-10.1	-97.6

- (a) As this table is presented as a memorandum item, these figures are not reflected in the totals above. This is consistent with the approach taken in the budget where the budget impact of most measures is presented excluding the impact on PDI. If the reader would like a complete picture of the total aggregate, then these figures would need to be added to the figures above. For further information on government borrowing and financing please refer to the PBO’s online budget glossary³.
- (b) A positive number for the fiscal balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A negative number for the fiscal balance indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A positive number for the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in receipts or a decrease in payments or net capital investment in cash terms. A negative number for the underlying cash balance indicates a decrease in receipts or an increase in payments or net capital investment in cash terms.

³ [Online budget glossary – Parliamentary Budget Office \(pbo.gov.au\)](https://pbo.gov.au/online-budget-glossary)