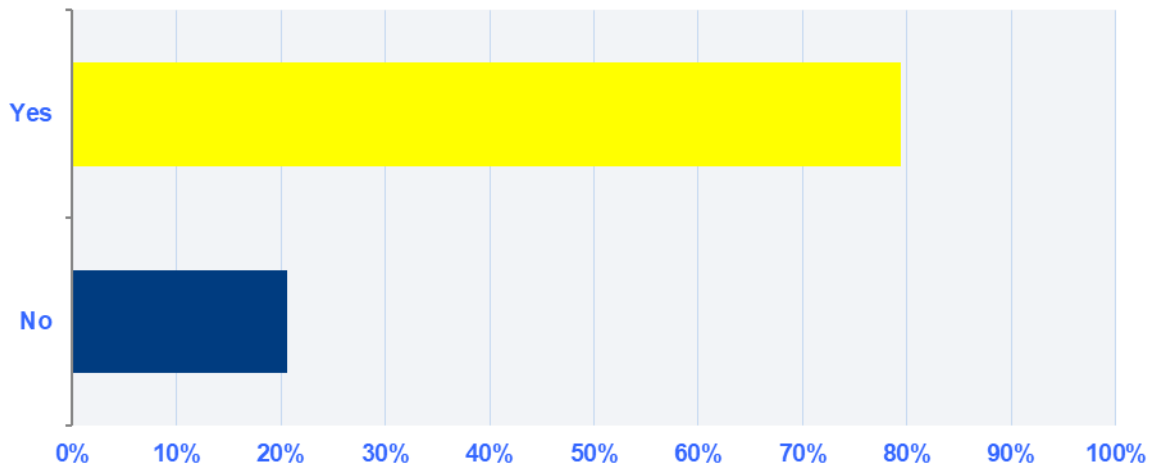




Should The SA State Government Provide Free Female Sanitary Products In Our Public Schools?



A new South Australian report into child poverty recommends schools provide 'free, easily accessible and non-stigmatising provision of sanitary products to female school students'.

This comes on the heels of the announcement by the Victorian State Government that girls at every public primary, secondary and specialist school will get free tampons and pads by the middle of next year - citing them as essential as toilet paper and soap.

SAASSO asked parents and educators what they think.

1,362 respondents completed the survey. 93% of these were parents and 47% work in a school.

Asked if the SA State government should provide free female sanitary products in public schools:

- 79.41% said 'Yes'
- 20.59% said 'No'.

82.52% of parents were in favour - compared with 38.54% of non-parents.

78.66% of school staff voted for free tampons - compared with 80.48% of non-school staff.

School staff who voted in favour of the government supplying free female sanitary products in public schools, consisted of:

- 88.37% of principals
- 84.69% of teachers
- 80.63% of SSOs
- 66.32% of 'other' school staff.

Comments were generally supportive of the idea, however, school staff were clear that additional funding would need to be provided for a state-wide initiative - as schools could not meet the costs out of existing budgets.

Comments also revealed that many schools and school staff already provide sanitary products to students, for 'emergencies'.

Despite the overwhelming support for the idea of providing sanitary products in schools, there were a number of comments criticising the use of an image of a tampon on SAASSO's initial survey email.

Selected Comments



As long as it doesn't take money away from other areas. Should be on top of existing funding.

It's a basic necessity that more and more families are unable to afford.

I wish that it had been provided when I was at school. Would have saved a lot of embarrassing moments!!

About time!

Essential item which can be very costly.

Although, I would also like products such as Love Luna and other sanitary underwear items promoted as an eco alternative. There are many products out there. I am not suggesting that these should be free, but that they should be better promoted to be thought of first, and a go to item rather than disposable tampons and pads.

We currently provide these items through our first aid room free of charge to girls who require them.

Some families have no idea how to talk to their female children about what is happening with their bodies, let alone helping the student with those products - students come in a lot to ask for them.

Not all students can afford to access them...simple as that...this is a basic need.

I keep them in my desk for students

Firstly I am all for these items to be free. Secondly I think the front page is probably distasteful, as some women do not use tampons especially primary school age and yes we have quite a few young ladies with their period, or maybe I am just old fashioned.

Parent should provide for their daughter individual taste in sanitary product .

This would absolutely take away any embarrassment girls feel when not having money or parent support in providing sanitary goods, or deodorant , hair brushes etc..

One our senior female students took the initiative this year to approach the local supermarket to donate a selection of sanitary products - products to the value of \$60 was received.

Access to sanitary products is an essential item for all women. It is not a luxury, providing these items is not "preferential treatment for girls" it is simply levelling the playing field and providing equity in opportunities for all.

I have an emergency pack in my daughters bag, she is 10 as you never know the first time your period will occur. It has always been unfair that you have an added cost for being female as well as the pain and discomfort that goes along with it.

Girls cannot be prepared all the time, some support from schools would be beneficial.

Yes it should be mandatory for low income families or for the girls that forget to bring them to school for emergency situations.

At the moment teachers within classes or the front office provide out of personal budgets for teachers school budgets for schools. I am not sure that all female students should be provided but students due to financial difficulties or they simply get "caught out".

If you want students to be at school and learning, they need to be not starving and not worried about blood running down their legs. This is really a no-brainer.

Great idea. Better than us teachers paying for them out of our pockets. Thanks SAASSO.

I support your survey but I find the image you have used in poor taste

I thought that schools were only allowed to provide sanitary napkins not tampons due to toxic shock syndrome.

Only as back up if they are caught out.

Sanitary products could be supplied for emergency situations or to girls who sites know that their families struggles financially.

We already supply these items when students get caught out or forget, what criteria for supply - to all??

We have them in the uniform shop for emergencies.

Absolutely they are a basic need and females are often not prepared for the onset causing embarrassment and they are an expensive item females should never have to feel that they can't access sanitary needs during the day particularly at school.

Not only due to limited resources, but kids are always forgetting to pack things or to "re-stock". Should be accompanied by teaching sexual and reproductive health and hygiene, and toxic shock syndrome teaching.

The image of a tampon is unnecessary.

I agree with the idea but in my experience we will end up paying for it out of our existing budgets.

There is a extreme amount of families that get assistance from many agencies but are still struggling and these products are very expensive especially with the GST component.

They should be free to all school students.

Maybe a 'cup' could also be offered for those that wish to try it as it is reusable. Certainly I think products should be available as often it arrives unexpectedly or is heavier than expected. Periods are sometimes hard enough without stressing about what happens if I don't have the needed products. Kids who are struggling to have sufficient products may skip school to save themselves embarrassment.

It is as essential as toilet paper. Women and girls should not be disadvantaged.

I think sometimes girls miss school because of their period. Free provision of pads and tampons would encourage school attendance.

Essential and utter social suicide if you bleed obviously at school.

Finally! But it must come from the government. Schools can't pay for it out of existing budgets.

The govt would be better served putting any funding where both genders can make use of it via a breakfast or lunch program, rather than into a single gender program.

Tacky.