

20 April 2021

## Future Melbourne Committee

### Notice of Motion, Cr Jamal Hakim: Supplying free sanitary products in Council owned facilities – pilot program

#### Motion

1. That the Future Melbourne Committee requests management undertake the following:
  - 1.1. Commence a 12 month pilot program offering a free sanitary product service in at least six public facilities across the municipality such as accessible adult change facilities, recreation centres/baths, community centres and libraries/hubs.
  - 1.2. Consider, as part of the pilot program, partnership with relevant organisations, such as Share the Dignity, for a wider provision of free sanitary products in the municipality.
  - 1.3. Support the pilot program through a communication plan aimed at reaching those within the community who would benefit from the service.
  - 1.4. Report back to this Committee, within three months following conclusion of the pilot program, on the outcomes and potential partnerships with a view to offering a free sanitary product service on an ongoing basis.

#### Background

2. According to the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Non-profit Studies report on '[Reducing Period Poverty in Australia 2020](#)', period poverty is the term used to describe the inability to purchase sanitary products, which is considered a significant obstacle to health, comfort, and engagement with school and community activities. It is experienced by women all over the world including Australia. Research about period poverty is limited, however some evidence shows that poor menstrual management can affect the emotional and physical health of young women and influence their behaviour such as school attendance.
3. In January 2019, Federal government removed the GST from sanitary items to reduce the high cost associated with sanitary products to make products more affordable for all women. Period poverty is a complex problem and therefore multiple strategies are needed to ensure women have relevant and effective menstrual health education, access to period products and amenities such as toilets, soap and bins to manage menstruation without embarrassment or stigma.
4. Victoria is the first state or territory in Australia to provide universal access to free sanitary products to every government school student. The \$20.7 million initiative commenced in late 2019 and installed dispensing machines in every school by June 2020. This initiative will continue until June 2023.
5. Specialist homelessness support agencies operating in the Melbourne municipality all provide sanitary products to women experiencing homelessness. Cities of Cardinia, Casey and Wyndham offer a rebate to residents who purchase reusable and ecofriendly sanitary products such as menstrual cups and reusable pads.
6. This motion seeks to support the proposed action by management to undertake a pilot program involving select locations within the municipality. Consideration is currently being given to the structure and delivery method of a pilot program. This will include the potential for partnerships with relevant organisations to amplify the free service.
7. Management advises that funding required for a 12 month pilot program, approximately \$10,000, can be provided through the cleaning budget for Council's Property Services Branch for years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**Moved by: Cr Jamal Hakim**

**Seconded by: Cr Dr Olivia Ball**