



## **Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

Standing Committee on Environment,  
Climate Change and Biodiversity

# **Inquiry into the waste management of absorbent hygiene products**

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory  
Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

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Approved for publication

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Report 8  
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# About the committee

## Establishing resolution

The Assembly established the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity on 2 December 2020.

The Committee's areas of responsibility are:

- climate change
- climate action
- environment
- heritage
- Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
- Environment Protection Agency
- parks and conservation
- water and energy policy and programs
- emissions reductions
- environment and ecological sustainability

You can read the full establishing resolution [here](#).

## Committee members

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA, Chair

Ms Jo Clay MLA, Deputy Chair

Ms Leanne Castley MLA (until 4 August 2022)

Mr Ed Cocks MLA (from 4 August 2022)

## Secretariat

Ms Miona Ikeda, Acting Committee Secretary (from 21 November 2022)

Ms Joanne Cullen, Committee Secretary (until 9 September 2022)

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# About this inquiry

Under Standing Order 216, standing committees can self-initiate an inquiry into any subject area for which it is given responsibility by the establishing resolution. The Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity resolved to conduct the *Inquiry into the waste management of absorbent hygiene products* on 2 August 2022.

The Committee informed the Assembly of its intention to conduct this inquiry on 3 August 2022.

## Terms of Reference

Inquire into and report on matters relating to absorbent hygiene product waste (including nappies) in the Australian Capital Territory, with particular reference to:

- a. the environmental impacts of absorbent hygiene products across their entire life cycle including single use and reusable nappy types, and to compare these with each other;
- b. the quantity of absorbent hygiene product waste produced, including the methane gas emissions generated by this waste in landfill;
- c. the costs associated with managing waste generated by absorbent hygiene products;
- d. usage of absorbent hygiene products by the community and care sectors, including but not limited to, aged care, disability care, and early childhood settings;
- e. the opportunities and challenges to boost absorbent hygiene product waste minimisation through incentive programs and other means in the ACT, including the feasibility of community trials for compostable, reusable and cloth nappies;
- f. identifying social impacts for carers created by a change to low-waste solutions;
- g. the opportunities and challenges to encourage compostable absorbent hygiene product research, technology development and industries in the ACT;
- h. identifying short and long-term solutions to the recycling and waste management of absorbent hygiene products, including, but not limited to:
  - i) single use vs reusable products;
  - ii) options for managing waste as part of planning for the citywide FOGO service;
  - iii) impediments to waste management innovation; and
  - iv) opportunities and challenges in composting options including local processing;
- i. the strategies to address limitations to collaboration and innovation between absorbent hygiene product management stakeholders;
- j. the effectiveness of policy and regulatory settings of ACT Government to provide an environmentally responsible approach to absorbent hygiene products waste management;
- k. the availability of educational material highlighting the benefits of using sustainable and environmentally-friendly types of absorbent hygiene products; and
- l. any other related matters.

# Contents

<b>About the committee</b>	<b>i</b>
Establishing resolution	i
Committee members	i
Secretariat	i
Contact us	i
<b>About this inquiry</b>	<b>ii</b>
Terms of Reference	ii
<b>Acronyms and abbreviations</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1. Conduct of the inquiry</b>	<b>1</b>
Acknowledgements	1
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>2</b>
Waste management	2
Absorbent hygiene products	3
Environmental impacts of AHPs	4
Financial impacts of AHPs	6
<b>3. Matters considered by the Committee</b>	<b>7</b>
Re-usable nappies and laundry services	7
Funding	7
Recyclopaedia	9
Rebates, subsidies, and trials	9
AHP rebate scheme	9
Cloth nappy library and bounty bags	13
Re-usable period products in schools	14
Laundering service subsidy program	17
Recycling and FOGO	18
Composting techniques	18
Waste collection services	20
Policies	24
Disposable vs. re-usable adult AHPs	24
Financial implications	26
Education	28
Spreading awareness and knowledge	28
	<b>Inquiry into the waste management of absorbent hygiene products iii</b>

Challenging misinformation and perceptions	32
Social stigmas and taboos	33
Workshops and information sessions	34
Moving to a circular economy	35
<b>4. Conclusion</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Appendix A: Submissions</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix B: Witnesses</b>	<b>40</b>
Monday, 5 December 2022	40
Tuesday, 28 February 2023	41
<b>Appendix C: Question Taken on Notice</b>	<b>42</b>

# Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Long form
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTCOSS	ACT Council of Social Service
AHPs	Absorbent Hygiene Products
Commissioner	ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
Committee	Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity
Conder House	Conder House Laundry and Linen Service
Conservation Council	Conservation Council ACT Region
CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
FOGO	Food Organics and Garden Organics
HDPE	High-Density Polyethylene
Kimberly-Clark	Kimberly-Clark Australia
LGA	Local Government Area
MCN	Modern Cloth Nappies
Minister	Minister for Transport and City Services
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MRF	Material Recovery Facility
MUDs	Multi-Unit Dwellings
NOGO	Nappy Organics = Good Organics
NSW	New South Wales
NSW EPA	New South Wales Environment Protection Authority
OCSE	Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate
QTON	Question Taken on Notice
SDs	Single Dwellings
UK	United Kingdom

# Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consult with early childhood education and care settings across the ACT to develop a plan to increase the uptake of re-usable nappies, including training for educators, and providing education for parents and carers to support the uptake.

## Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider adding laundering services to the *Recyclopaedia* A-Z Listing and provide education to parents, carers, early childhood education and care settings about the availability of these services.

## Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the use of rebates or incentives for re-usable nappy products, and measure uptake and waste reductions as a result.

## Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the introduction of a cloth nappy library trial.

## Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that as part of school education programs, provide education and products to encourage the use of re-usable period products.

## Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore developing a laundering service subsidy program targeting the early childhood education and aged care sectors.

## Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, ahead of the procurement of the new FOGO facility in 2026, the ACT Government engage with the absorbent hygiene industry to see the ACT at the forefront of compostable nappy technology and how nappy composting can be supported in the ACT.

## Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider trialling kerbside collection and recycling for compostable nappies for households to inform the future procurement of the FOGO facility, and investigate what is required to offer this to businesses including early childhood educational settings.

## Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the new composting facility can process genuinely compostable nappies.



### **Recommendation 10**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government not develop any new policies that affect access and ease of use for adult absorbent hygiene products without in-depth consultation and co-design with people with lived experience and relevant peak bodies, including ACTCOSS and Advocacy for Inclusion.

### **Recommendation 11**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government promote their *Recyclopaedia* resources more widely to maximise uptake of sustainable absorbent hygiene products.

### **Recommendation 12**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government look to introduce workshops and information sessions on modern re-usable nappies at pre-natal classes at Canberra Hospitals and new-parent groups.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide education and training on the disposal of absorbent hygiene products to organisations involved in waste collection, handling and disposal, in order to limit contamination in general waste.



# 1. Conduct of the inquiry

- 1.1. On 3 August 2022, the Committee published a media release announcing the inquiry and inviting submissions from the public.
- 1.2. Submissions closed on 28 October 2022. The Committee received 19 submissions. These are listed in **Appendix A** and published on the [inquiry webpage](#).
- 1.3. The Committee held two public hearings, on 5 December 2022 and 28 February 2023. Witnesses who appeared at the hearings are listed in **Appendix B**.
- 1.4. The Committee had one Question Taken on Notice (QTON) from the public hearings. The details of the QTON are listed in **Appendix C**.

## Acknowledgements

- 1.5. The Committee would like to thank everyone who assisted the inquiry, including council representatives from other jurisdictions, local and national organisations, the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, and Mr Chris Steel MLA in his capacity as Minister for Transport and City Services, and accompanying directorate officials.

## 2. Background

### Waste management

- 2.1. Between 2018–2019, the Australian waste and resource recovery sector managed 61.5 million tonnes of waste, which was comprised of 20 percent municipal solid waste (both from households and local government activities), 36 percent from the commercial and industrial sector, and 44 percent from the construction and demolition sector.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2. According to the *ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025*, the ACT is one of the leading jurisdictions in waste management in Australia, with over 70 percent of waste generated in the ACT reused or recycled.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.3. Recycling collected from ACT households are sent to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) located in Hume. The facility also processes commercial recycling and recycling from some of the surrounding local council areas in NSW, as well as ACT public-place recycling bins and eligible used beverage containers through the Container Deposit Scheme, both from the ACT and NSW.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.4. At the MRF in Hume:
  - Around 90-95 percent of materials processed (paper, cardboard, glass, steel, and aluminium) are sold to domestic markets;
  - Paper and cardboard, which make up around 45-55 percent of material processed (by weight) is sent to a pulp and paper mill at Tumut in NSW to produce Kraft paper;
  - Glass, which makes up around 30-35 percent of material processed is made into sand and sold locally and interstate; and
  - HDPE (i.e., milk bottles), PET (i.e., soft drink bottles), mixed plastics, steel, and aluminium are separated and sold to a variety of end users based on market demand.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.5. On 26 December 2022, the MRF in Hume was destroyed by a fire. Since the fire, the ACT Government has been transporting the ACT's recycling material to three MRFs in Western Sydney and one in Victoria for processing. Approximately 229 tonnes per day is being transported, which is an average of nine trucks per day.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.6. In April 2023, the ACT Government announced that the new MRF will be located on the same site as the existing facility and will be designed to have an increased processing

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Environment and Energy, [National Waste Report 2020](#), p x.

<sup>2</sup> ACT Government, [ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025](#), accessed 26 May 2023.

<sup>3</sup> ACT Government, [Canberra's Recycling Story](#), accessed 19 May 2023.

<sup>4</sup> ACT Government, [Canberra's Recycling Story](#), accessed 19 May 2023.

<sup>5</sup> ACT Government, [New Materials Recovery Facility in Hume](#), accessed 28 July 2023.

capacity of up to approximately 115,000 tonnes per year.<sup>6</sup> In comparison, the previous MRF received approximately 65,000 tonnes of materials per year.<sup>7</sup>

- 2.7. The ACT Government aims to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and to increase resource recovery to over 90 percent by 2025.<sup>8</sup>

## Absorbent hygiene products

- 2.8. Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs) are a range of products designed to absorb excreted body fluids at various stages of a consumer's life.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.9. There are three main categories of AHPs:
- 1) AHPs for babies and toddlers, such as diapers, nappies, and wet wipes;
  - 2) AHPs for adults, such as incontinence pads, panty liners, and adult diapers; and
  - 3) AHPs for feminine care, such as sanitary pads, napkins, tampons, and panty liners.
- 2.10. Designed to contain human excreta, AHPs are generally made of a combination of natural fibres, plastics, glues, and synthetic absorbent materials.<sup>10</sup>
- 2.11. AHPs involve four major components:
- (i) top-sheet – thin film made of non-woven polypropylene or polyethylene. This layer allows the fluid to pass freely to the next one. The amount of fluid retained in this layer must be kept to a minimum to reduce moisture in the skin;
  - (ii) acquisition and distribution layer – made of cellulose and non-woven polyester. This layer stores fluids temporarily while distributing them through capillarity into a large area;
  - (iii) absorbent core – typically made by a blend of fluff pulp and superabsorbent polymer encapsulated by cellulose or non-woven polypropylene. This layer absorbs and retains body fluids; and
  - (iv) outer cover – also known as the ‘back sheet’, this layer retains fluids within the AHP. Some materials used in this layer allows for passage of air, making products breathable while keeping the fluid barrier.<sup>11</sup>
- 2.12. It is the plastic and polymer contents in AHPs that do not disintegrate easily and remain in the landfill sites for years. Along with these materials, the absorbed liquids further leach

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<sup>6</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, ‘Update on MRF and FOGO following Boxing Day fire’, *Media Release*, 24 April 2023.

<sup>7</sup> ACT Government, [New Materials Recovery Facility in Hume](#), accessed 28 July 2023.

<sup>8</sup> ACT Government, [Recycling better and reducing waste in the ACT](#), accessed 19 May 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Prakriti Kashyap, Thet Ko Win, and Chettiyappan Visvanathan, [Absorbent Hygiene Products - An emerging urban waste management issue](#), Asia-Pacific Conference on Biotechnology for Waste Conversion 2016, December 2016, p 58.

<sup>10</sup> Emma Thompson Brewster, Beth Rounsefell, Fangzhou Lin, William Clarke, and Katherine R. O'Brien, ‘Adult incontinence products are a larger and faster growing waste issue than disposable infant nappies (diapers) in Australia’, *Waste Management*, vol 152, October 2022, pp 30–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wasman.2022.07.038>

<sup>11</sup> Maribel Velasco Perez, Perla Xochitl Sotelo Navarro, Alethia Vazquez Morillas, Rosa María Espinos Valdemar, and Jéssica Paola Hermoso Lopez Araiza, ‘Waste management and environmental impact of absorbent hygiene products: A review’, *Waste Management & Research*, vol 39(6), September 2020, pp 767–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734242X20954271>

down the landfill, contaminating the environment as well as increasing the risk of public health hazards.<sup>12</sup>

## Environmental impacts of AHPs

- 2.13. According to the Commonwealth Government, an estimated 148,000 tonnes of used AHPs goes to landfill every year.<sup>13</sup>
- 2.14. Kimberly-Clark Australia (Kimberly-Clark), one of Australia's biggest manufacturers of AHPs, estimate that approximately 1.5 billion nappies ending up in landfill across the nation each year, making up 4.4 percent of landfill in total.<sup>14</sup> Kimberly-Clark also estimates that approximately 95 percent of babies in Australia wear disposable nappies which are discarded after one use.<sup>15</sup>
- 2.15. Nearly all used disposable nappies are sent to landfill, where the materials – even for those brands marketed as biodegradable or compostable – will produce significant environmental pollution in the form of greenhouse gases and leachate (water) emissions.<sup>16</sup>
- 2.16. In its submission to the inquiry, the ACT Government detailed the environmental implications of AHP disposal:

All hygiene products have an impact on our environment, and this varies depending on the type of product, how they are packaged, washed, dried and disposed of. Single-use products are usually made from cotton, synthetics and plastic. They can take hundreds of years to breakdown and can only be disposed of in landfill where they break down slowly, emitting methane, a harmful greenhouse gas.<sup>17</sup>

- 2.17. The Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE), similarly wrote in its submission about the impact of greenhouse gas emissions from nappies and adult continence aids, and added that the manufacturing of disposable nappies and adult continence aids is water and energy intensive.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.18. One submitter gave evidence that disposable nappies can take up to 150 years to break down:<sup>19</sup>

While there are a number of “environmentally friendlier” disposable nappies on the market today, the sustainability is only in the creation of the nappies, rather than the disposal. Whether created with renewable resources or not, all

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<sup>12</sup> Prakriti Kashyap, Thet Ko Win, and Chettiyappan Visvanathan, [Absorbent Hygiene Products - An emerging urban waste management issue](#), Asia-Pacific Conference on Biotechnology for Waste Conversion 2016, December 2016, p 58.

<sup>13</sup> Department of the Environment and Energy, [Recycling absorbent hygiene products](#), accessed 11 May 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 1.

<sup>15</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 3.

<sup>16</sup> Emma Thompson Brewster, Beth Rounsefell, Fangzhou Lin, William Clarke, and Katherine R. O'Brien, 'Adult incontinence products are a larger and faster growing waste issue than disposable infant nappies (diapers) in Australia', *Waste Management*, vol 152, October 2022, pp 30–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wasman.2022.07.038>

<sup>17</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 5.

<sup>18</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 1.

<sup>19</sup> Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 2.

disposable nappies end up in landfill where the anaerobic environment slows the biodegrading process.<sup>20</sup>

- 2.19. In its submission, Icon Water highlighted the associated environmental impacts resulting from AHP blockages in their wastewater network. These include overflow into the environment:

Inappropriate disposal of absorbent hygiene products has detrimental impacts on the sewage network which in turn can negatively impact the local environment due to overflows caused by blockages. This includes direct impacts to water quality within wetland areas and in-direct impacts to many species that rely on healthy functioning aquatic environments.<sup>21</sup>

- 2.20. Icon Water also stated that, unlike toilet paper, AHPs such as wipes and sanitary products do not break down after being flushed.<sup>22</sup> As a result, if they are flushed, they need to be removed from sewage at some point in the water treatment process.<sup>23</sup>

## ACT data

- 2.21. The OCSE estimated that approximately 15 million nappies go into ACT landfill each year.<sup>24</sup>

- 2.22. The *2014 ACT NoWaste Domestic Waste Audit Report*<sup>25</sup> found that in the ACT, nappies were the fourth highest material found in the general waste stream from all dwellings audited. Food scraps (29.0 percent), garden organics (9.7 percent), contaminated paper (7.9 percent) and nappies (6.1 percent) made up more than half of the general waste stream.<sup>26</sup>

- 2.23. For the 2021-22 financial year, approximately 84,500 tonnes of household waste were produced in the ACT.<sup>27</sup>

- 2.24. In its submission, the ACT Government applied the 6.1 percent figure above to the 2021-22 total household waste volume figure, to estimate that approximately 5,160 tonnes of nappy waste were sent to landfill for this period.<sup>28</sup> The submission continued:

According to the National Greenhouse Accounts Factors 2021, for every tonne of waste from nappies disposed to landfill, 2 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions are generated. This method can be used to produce an estimate of lifetime emissions from waste degradation in a landfill, noting that emissions will occur over a period of decades. Based on the conversion factor, the waste

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<sup>20</sup> Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 2.

<sup>21</sup> Icon Water, *Submission 6*, p 3.

<sup>22</sup> Icon Water, *Submission 6*, p 2.

<sup>23</sup> Icon Water, *Submission 6*, p 2.

<sup>24</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 1.

<sup>25</sup> Note: This audit was, at the time, the most recent audit which had been undertaken. During this inquiry, the *2022 ACT NoWaste Kerbside Waste Audit Report* was released.

<sup>26</sup> APC Waste Consultants, *2014 ACT NoWaste Domestic Waste Audit Report*, November 2015, p 16.

<sup>27</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 6.

<sup>28</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 6.

from nappies in 2021-22 alone has the potential to generate approximately 10,300 tonnes of lifetime emissions.<sup>29</sup>

- 2.25. By comparison, the *2022 ACT NoWaste Kerbside Waste Audit Report* found loose food (26.3 percent for Single Dwellings or SDs, 20.8 percent for Multi-Unit Dwellings or MUDs), containerised food (12.5 percent for SDs, 13.8 percent for MUDs), and other organics – i.e., contaminated paper, animal waste, and compostable cups (18.6 percent for SDs, 17.2 percent for MUDs) – were the largest sources of waste, comprising over half of all waste collected for each dwelling type. For SDs and MUDs, nappies and hygiene products were the fourth (6.9 percent) and seventh (4.9 percent) largest source of waste, respectively.<sup>30</sup>
- 2.26. Kuver Designs, the manufacturer of Eenee Compostable Nappies, also calculated that ACT families create over 2,300 tonnes of used regular plastic disposable nappy waste, which produces over 2,500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e emissions per year.<sup>31</sup>

## Financial impacts of AHPs

- 2.27. According to a nationwide survey of 1000 adults (in both metro and regional locations) detailed in [Cleanaway's Recycling Behaviours Report 2023](#), 47 percent of Australians reported that they 'buy cheaper items, even though they know they will wear out/break down sooner than something more expensive' and 51 percent said that they 'buy cheaper items that are not sustainably produced, instead of sustainable items that cost more.'<sup>32</sup>
- 2.28. Submissions also pointed out that for individuals, a major barrier to making the switch to more sustainable options such as re-useable or recyclable products is the initial cost of purchasing the re-usable or recyclable products, as they are often more expensive than their single-use alternatives.<sup>33</sup>
- 2.29. Tackle Lab stated that 'currently, cost is a prohibitive factor for many to make the switch to compostable products.'<sup>34</sup>
- 2.30. For ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS), whilst re-usables were less expensive over time, there was also a time-cost associated with washing and cleaning them, noting that 'a lot of people who are on low incomes are very time poor.'<sup>35</sup>
- 2.31. ACTCOSS also shared figures from [Period Pride's 2021 'Bloody Big Survey'](#):

Period Pride's 2021 'Bloody Big Survey' found that 15% of ACT respondents had been unable to afford period products at some point in their life, pointing to the urgency of ensuring that all members of the Canberra community have access to a range of necessary absorbent hygiene products.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 6.

<sup>30</sup> APC Waste Consultants, [2023 ACT NoWaste Report: Audit of domestic kerbside waste bins](#), January 2023, pp 31–32.

<sup>31</sup> Kuver Designs, *Submission 5*, p 1.

<sup>32</sup> Cleanaway, [Recycling Behaviour Report 2023](#), accessed 26 May 2023.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example: Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1; Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 1; Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 8; Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 7.

<sup>34</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 7.

<sup>35</sup> Dr Gemma Killen, ACT Council of Social Service, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, pp 4–5.

<sup>36</sup> ACT Council of Social Service, *Submission 12*, p 2.



### 3. Matters considered by the Committee

#### Re-usable nappies and laundry services

##### Funding

- 3.1. Tackle Lab estimate that more than 5 million nappies end up in landfills across Australia every day,<sup>37</sup> with childcare centres being one of the biggest consumers of disposable nappies.
- 3.2. According to the Conder House Laundry & Linen Service (Conder House), in order to comply with the National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care settings, childcare centres change nappies every two hours.<sup>38</sup>
- 3.3. While the number of nappies used per day across the entire childcare centre will vary depending on placements, Conder House have found that most childcare centres are changing each child's nappy four times per day.<sup>39</sup> In calculating the usage for a childcare centre with 40 placements using disposable nappies, that equates to 160 nappies (8 kgs) per day or 56,640 nappies (2.832 tonnes) per year, going into landfill.<sup>40</sup>
- 3.4. In order to decrease such large quantities of disposable nappies going into landfill, evidence received suggested promoting and supporting the use of re-usable nappies as an alternative to single-use products.
- 3.5. The ACT Government's submission stated that 're-usable options can be more environmentally friendly as they can be reused over many years, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste to landfill.'<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the ACT Government's *Recyclopaedia* notes that – despite the impact cloth nappies have on the environment due to the detergents, water, and energy used to clean them – overall, they tend to use fewer resources and greatly reduce waste to landfill.<sup>42</sup>
- 3.6. Conder House was of the view that a regulation of re-usable nappies in early childhood education and care settings would be 'the only way to truly make a significant positive impact on the number of disposable nappies entering landfill':<sup>43</sup>

We encourage the ACT Government to regulate the use of reusable nappies in early childhood education and care settings. Industry regulations are the norm and this would be perceived as just another regulation on business, rather than the ACT becoming a 'nanny state' by telling residents how to run their families.

If families do not wish to use reusable nappies in their home, they will still be contributing to the reduction of landfill when their child is attending an early

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<sup>37</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 18*, p 3.

<sup>38</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 2.

<sup>39</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 2.

<sup>40</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 2.

<sup>41</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 7.

<sup>42</sup> ACT Government, [Recyclopaedia – Nappies and sustainability](#), accessed 30 May 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 4.

childhood education and care setting, and this will have no impact on their family, but the benefits to the reduction of landfill will be enormous.<sup>44</sup>

- 3.7. The Conservation Council ACT Region (Conservation Council) was of a similar view, stating that ensuring childcare centres to facilitate the use of cloth nappies is critical, as cloth nappies tend to be more environmentally friendly than disposables.<sup>45</sup>
- 3.8. However, the Committee also received evidence which suggested several problems encountered by early childhood education and care settings in using re-usable products.
- 3.9. EA Sustainability observed that solutions for minimising nappy waste in landfill should not only rely on re-usable nappies being used:<sup>46</sup>

Disposable nappy use is highly likely to continue amongst parents, whether it be a part time use integrated with reusable nappies as a means of convenience or life stage situations. Implementing a solution will take time addressing behaviour change and the broader community's perception of baby nappy waste.<sup>47</sup>

- 3.10. While acknowledging that there is certainly an 'appetite to switch to environmentally friendly products and processes in the childcare sector', Tackle Lab recognised that there are also drawbacks for re-usable nappies:<sup>48</sup>

We have learnt ... that the challenges of using cloth nappies at scale are around storing large quantities of soiled nappies securely, the weight of handling the collection bins, the extra steps involved in preparing, and the unhygienic methods of cleaning by scrapping soiled cloth nappies down sinks. But most importantly educators are taken out of ratio spending less time with children to perform these extra duties.<sup>49</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.11. The Committee understands that while re-usable nappies can be more environmentally friendly, not all early childhood education and care settings are in a position to make the switch from using disposable nappies, due to the increased burden on these centres and their staff.

#### Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consult with early childhood education and care settings across the ACT to develop a plan to increase the uptake of re-usable nappies, including training for educators, and providing education for parents and carers to support the uptake.

<sup>44</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 4.

<sup>45</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, pp 3–4.

<sup>46</sup> EA Sustainability, *Submission 15*, p 3.

<sup>47</sup> EA Sustainability, *Submission 15*, p 3.

<sup>48</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 18*, p 2.

<sup>49</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 18.1*, p 1.

## Recyclopaedia

- 3.12. The Committee heard from Conder House, who have provided modern cloth nappy services to the Territory since 2018, that despite the range of educational resources available from the ACT Government and its *Recyclopaedia*, it has not been approached to participate or advise on these materials.<sup>50</sup>
- 3.13. A visit to the [Recyclopaedia webpage on nappies and sustainability](#)<sup>51</sup> shows information on the various types of nappies, such as disposable nappies, compostable nappies, modern cloth nappies, and cloth nappies. There is a brief mention of nappy services underneath the various types of nappies:

A cloth nappy service offers the ultimate in convenience. A nappy service will supply and deliver professionally laundered MCN to your home, collecting and replacing used ones each week. This type of service can be expensive, but it allows you to try using cloth nappies before investing in cloth nappies of your own.<sup>52</sup>

- 3.14. However, this brief summary does not provide information on any of the nappy services currently available in the ACT.
- 3.15. Further, laundering services are not listed in the A-Z listing of the *Recyclopaedia*,<sup>53</sup> despite their inherent connection to waste management and AHPs.

### Committee comment:

- 3.16. The Committee believes that re-usable nappy services make a significant impact to reducing the landfill contribution of nappies and should be more actively promoted by the ACT Government as part of its education and information campaign on re-usables and recyclables.

### Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider adding laundering services to the *Recyclopaedia* A-Z Listing and provide education to parents, carers, early childhood education and care settings about the availability of these services.

## Rebates, subsidies, and trials

### AHP rebate scheme

- 3.17. The Committee received several submissions about local governments areas (LGAs) across Australia who had rebates, subsidies, or trials in place to assist people with the purchase of

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<sup>50</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 4.

<sup>51</sup> ACT Government, 'Nappies and Sustainability', [Recyclopaedia](#), accessed 8 May 2023.

<sup>52</sup> ACT Government, 'Nappies and Sustainability', [Recyclopaedia](#), accessed 8 May 2023.

<sup>53</sup> ACT Government, 'Nappies and Sustainability', [Recyclopaedia](#), accessed 8 May 2023; ACT Government, 'A-Z Listing', [Recyclopaedia](#), accessed 8 May 2023.

more expensive re-usable or recyclable products, such as cloth nappies and re-usable sanitary products.<sup>54</sup>

- 3.18. For example, the Shire of Augusta Margaret River in Western Australia offers a subsidy of up to one hundred dollars for the purchase of re-usable cloth nappies.<sup>55</sup> The City of Hobart in Tasmania similarly runs a rebate scheme for cloth nappies and re-usable sanitary products, in which residents can apply for up to a 50 percent rebate for the purchase of either cloth nappies or re-usable sanitary items.<sup>56</sup> Other councils with similar schemes include the Liverpool City Council and Sutherland Shire Council of NSW, and the Banyule City Council of Victoria.<sup>57</sup>
- 3.19. The OCSE advised the Committee that currently, the ACT Government has no incentive program to help boost the waste management of AHPs.<sup>58</sup> There are also currently no government-led initiatives supporting the community and care sectors to transition away from single-use absorbent hygiene products in the ACT.<sup>59</sup>
- 3.20. The OCSE recommended that the ACT Government should draw on lessons from other jurisdictions, such as the City of Hobart, who have established AHP rebate schemes:

Other jurisdictions, such as the City of Hobart, are successfully running a cloth nappy and reusable sanitary product rebate scheme. As a part of this scheme, eligible City of Hobart residents can apply for a rebate for 50% of the purchase price of either cloth nappies (including swim nappies and modern cloth nappies), or reusable sanitary products (including menstrual cups, cloth pads and period underpants).<sup>60</sup>

- 3.21. Ms Sophia Newman of City of Hobart gave evidence that their rebate scheme was about bringing down the price of re-usable nappies to the other nappy options available:

It is probably still not the most affordable option in terms of outlay. So we are looking at a regular disposable nappy being about, say, 50c. A reusable nappy is still going to be around \$25, sometimes more and sometimes less. It allows people to be able to afford a handful of nappies that allows them to use them part time or at least get started and decide whether it is something they want to continue with.

We know that using cloth, you would need about 25 for a child. So it would save you over the lifetime of that child about \$2,000. So we just need to assist people to be able to make that initial outlay.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See, for example: Andrea Friend, *Submission 1*, p 1; Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1; Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 3; Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 2; Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 5.

<sup>55</sup> Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1.

<sup>56</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 2.

<sup>57</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 5.

<sup>58</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 2.

<sup>59</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 2.

<sup>60</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ms Sophia Newman, City of Hobart, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 28 February 2023, p 57.

- 3.22. Further, Ms Newman explained that the City of Hobart’s 50 percent rebate scheme captures people who may not have otherwise looked at alternative options:

I feel like it does in that it addresses those that are on the fence who are saying, “I would but is it not kind of gross and kind of expensive and kind of hard work?” Having that rebate means that we can go, “You know what? It is not going to cost you much to try, and you can also go to this free workshop and they will go through all those qualms with you and myth-bust a lot of those qualms.” They can make that initial purchase. It has not cost them the Earth, and from thereon they might go, “Yes, it is worth it for me, and I will buy more or I might go second-hand or I will use the ones from a sister-in-law,” whatever it might be. It does not make everybody converts, but it certainly allows for an opportunity for people that are thinking about it but are not quite committed.<sup>62</sup>

- 3.23. The Committee also heard from Ms Emma Black, who runs the ‘Canberra Cloth Bums’ Facebook group, that government financial assistance would greatly help in encouraging individuals to make the switch to re-usable products, because of the generally higher up-front or initial cost:

Providing financial forms of assistance helps, whether it be a rebate or similar, or potentially even a temporary loan where the government pays for the up-front cost for a kit and then the individual can pay it back in increments of what they would be spending on disposables—you know, paying back \$10, \$20 a week, just so that they do not have that intense up-front cost. I saved money by using cloth nappies, but I was in a position of privilege where I could spend that money up front. However, I spent \$500 up front, whereas, over the life of a child using nappies—2½ years approximately—you are spending over \$1,000 on disposables, potentially.<sup>63</sup>

- 3.24. According to Ms Black, there were also associated economic benefits for individuals if they were provided assistance with the initial cost of re-usable products:

Inevitably, those people who cannot afford the up-front cost end up paying more overall. I think that goes with everything. People who can afford solar save money in the long run. Those people who can insulate their homes can save money in the long run. It is those people who cannot afford that up-front cost that end up paying more in the long run, and it adds to that cost of living issue.<sup>64</sup>

- 3.25. Ms Amy Blain made a similar point, in relation to menstrual cups:

The problem is that cost is still a barrier. A cup will be maybe 40 [dollars] upwards, depending. There is a specific size that you need to have. But I think mainly it is just because it is easier not to change. You get huge sales on single-use items, so you get deals on those. Although they have partnered with things like JuJu Cup to

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<sup>62</sup> Ms Sophia Newman, City of Hobart, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 28 February 2023, p 60.

<sup>63</sup> Ms Emma Black, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 14.

<sup>64</sup> Ms Emma Black, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 14.

say that you can donate a cup, the cost is prohibitive, so people are not donating them.<sup>65</sup>

- 3.26. The Conservation Council and Conder House suggested that if the ACT Government was to move towards regulating re-usable nappies in the long-term, an incentivisation program in the short-term for early childhood education and care settings would be an 'initial positive step.'<sup>66</sup>
- 3.27. However, some argued whether rebates were useful in supporting the intended outcomes.
- 3.28. Dr Sophie Lewis, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (the Commissioner), was cautious of how programs were implemented in order to support considered outcomes :

In terms of those sustainability considerations, focusing on increasing the use of reusable products in this space is hugely important. But, as to how we go about that, it is a really difficult question as to whether rebates are going to actually improve the outcomes and increase the uptake or, as you said, whether it is possible that they are really rewarding people who are already on board and ready to make behavioural changes.<sup>67</sup>

- 3.29. Andrea Friend, Livingstone Shire Councillor, addressed the issue of driving behavioural change:

I think the challenge here is trying to work out whether we have changed the behaviour of anyone or whether our investment has largely just reaffirmed the good behaviour of that small percentage who would do what's best for the environment regardless.<sup>68</sup>

- 3.30. The City of Stonnington said that it was unsure whether rebates and incentives were the solution:

The City of Stonnington has elected not to commence this as there was unclear data to the effectiveness of these rebates in encouraging households to adopt these practices. Furthermore, it is difficult to distinguish if rebates helped those who were already considering or supported the use of reusable products or had already committed to reusables.<sup>69</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.31. The Committee is of the view that an incentivisation program, similar to that used by the City of Hobart, could be explored in the ACT and has potential to encourage ACT residents to move to re-usable products.

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<sup>65</sup> Ms Amy Blain, Ainslie Community Pantry, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 20.

<sup>66</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 5; Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 3.

<sup>67</sup> Dr Sophie Lewis, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 6.

<sup>68</sup> Andrea Friend, *Submission 1*, p 2.

<sup>69</sup> City of Stonnington, *Submission 14*, p 2.

### Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the use of rebates or incentives for re-usable nappy products, and measure uptake and waste reductions as a result.

## Cloth nappy library and bounty bags

- 3.32. Several submissions highlighted education campaigns that include product trials or free product offerings as an opportunity to increase awareness through targeted information, challenging perceptions, or introducing alternative products.
- 3.33. The Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra wrote of the benefits of a nappy library as they ‘help with support and advice and finding brands that work for each child.’<sup>70</sup>
- 3.34. The Conservation Council would like for a community cloth nappy library to be established:
- Nappy loan libraries may also be useful for low-income households, enabling swapping to larger sizes as infants grow, and keeping cloth nappies in use for as long as possible.<sup>71</sup>
- 3.35. The Conservation Council also provided examples of what several other Councils across Australia are doing in relation to cloth nappies:
- Liverpool City Council is conducting a trial of a cloth nappy rebate where residents can claim up to \$150 for the purchase of reusable nappies and sanitary products. Banyule City Council worked with a local designer to showcase local landmarks and wildlife on cloth nappies, offering them at a special price for families that book a workshop. Sutherlandshire Council offers a \$50 rebate for the purchase of reusable nappies or sanitary products. The costs of these schemes to Councils is easily offset compared to the cost of disposing single-use nappies to landfill.<sup>72</sup>
- 3.36. At the public hearing, Ms Emma Black also called for a nappy library trial in the ACT, referencing the Switch Your Thinking campaign in Western Australia, which had a library where people could borrow from for up to four weeks.<sup>73</sup>
- 3.37. Ms Black also noted that parents at hospitals often are given ‘bounty bags’, which contain samples and information aimed at new parents, and is an opportunity to promote education and rebate options.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 3.

<sup>71</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 4.

<sup>72</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 4.

<sup>73</sup> Ms Emma Black, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 14.

<sup>74</sup> Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 3.

3.38. The Ainslie Community Pantry pointed out that the Australian Nappy Association offers nappy kits for midwives and maternal and child health nurses that include nappy samples and instruction videos.<sup>75</sup>

3.39. Ms Amy Yang, Waste Strategy and Engagement Coordinator of City of Stonnington, stated that 'a combination of tools would be needed'.<sup>76</sup>

It is about having conversations, targeted education and campaigns to parents before the baby is born, when they are considering the use of the nappies beforehand, because once the baby comes then families are too busy or time poor to consider all the additional information on top of a newborn. It is about prior education, advice from trusted sources, knowledge sharing about products and, on top of that, incentives to encourage those who may not be able to afford the up-front costs of reusables.<sup>77</sup>

3.40. The ACT Government told the Committee that ACT Health offers various 'kits' to people:

We did develop a sustainable period products and hygiene and nappy products education kit, which gets borrowed out very regularly. In the 2020-21 financial year that kit was borrowed out 267 times, and in the last financial year that kit was borrowed out 305 times as well over the same period. So we do know that there is a level of interest. The feedback we have had on that kit has been very positive.<sup>78</sup>

#### Committee comment:

3.41. The Committee is of the view that free product offerings are a great way to introduce alternative products to particular cohorts in a targeted manner.

#### Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the introduction of a cloth nappy library trial.

### Re-usable period products in schools

3.42. At the public hearing, Ms Amy Blain of Ainslie Community Pantry spoke of the need for education in schools in relation to period products:

The education that we get about our periods is quite limited. People know, and their parents or whoever is raising them will have known, that there are single-use items and that is what you do. But we are not having that same explanation in

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<sup>75</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 3.

<sup>76</sup> Ms Amy Yang, City of Stonnington, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 32.

<sup>77</sup> Ms Amy Yang, City of Stonnington, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 32.

<sup>78</sup> Ms Katherine Harrington, ACT NoWaste, Transport Canberra and City Services, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 38.



schools. Generally, people have a real discomfort about talking about their periods.<sup>79</sup>

3.43. In its submission, Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra commented that free product offerings help ‘overcome stigma, barriers to using sustainable items and address period product waste.’<sup>80</sup> The submission also referenced a 2021 pilot by Melbourne Girls’ College in partnership with ModiBodi to demonstrate to the Victorian Government that ‘their aims of alleviating period poverty and easing the cost of living...could be achieved in a sustainable way.’<sup>81</sup>

3.44. Sixty students participated in the pilot and were surveyed pre- and post-use of the period undies.<sup>82</sup> These were some of the post-use survey responses:

Yes they did improve my day, I was able to not worry about going to the bathroom to change pads, and it was also nice to just know I wouldn’t have to go out and buy products because I already had them at home. It also just made me feel a lot more comfortable in school, not worrying about a pad fitting awkwardly or needing to change it.

I didn’t have to worry about taking to [sic] long in the bathroom during class and could spend more time outside at recess.

Not having to worry about stock up [sic] products incase [sic] pads run out, also I basically forgot I had my period most of the time, as I didn’t have to worry about changing pads or tampons. The underwear were extremely comfortable, just like an ordinary pair.<sup>83</sup>

3.45. Also in its submission, Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra charted the differences between disposable and reusable period products, in terms of their cost and usage:<sup>84</sup>

	Average unit cost	Number of uses	Cost per use
Tampon	50 cents	1	50 cents
Disposable pad	40 cents	1	40 cents
Reusable pad	\$23	100	23 cents
Menstrual cup	\$40	432	9 cents
Period underwear	\$24	180	13 cents

Table 1: Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Data on period products*, 15 November 2022, p 7. Source: ACT NoWaste.

<sup>79</sup> Ms Amy Blain, Ainslie Community Pantry, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 21.

<sup>80</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 2.

<sup>81</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 7.

<sup>82</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, pp 7–8.

<sup>83</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, pp 7–8.

<sup>84</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 7.

- 3.46. Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra further stated that:

One menstrual cup can last 10 years and period underwear, if well looked after, will last up to 5 years. Over the course of menstruation throughout the life span, a menstruating person would need 3 menstrual cups = \$120 AND 10 pairs of period undies = Totalling \$240 for a lifetime.<sup>85</sup>

- 3.47. This is compared to its own calculation that the total lifetime cost of single-use disposable period products would be \$6384.<sup>86</sup>
- 3.48. Recently, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed the Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022 on 7 June 2023.<sup>87</sup> The object of the Bill is to reduce and prevent period poverty in the ACT by, providing free access to period products at 'suitable places', and by providing information on menstruation and menstrual hygiene and by improving access to toilet facilities.<sup>88</sup>
- 3.49. Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, who introduced the Bill, told the Assembly how a lack of access to period products can impact a person's social life, education, and work life:

Period poverty is more pervasive in the ACT community than is commonly realised and the impacts of period poverty are significant. Not being able to access sanitary products and hygiene facilities leaves people feeling stressed and ashamed and will often lead to their withdrawal from regular activities until their period is over. This can mean withdrawing from school classes, work, or social activities at the detriment to the person menstruating.

The reasons a person experiences period poverty can be complex and result from one or a combination of more than one contributing factor. The experience of period poverty can be short term in nature for example because of a crisis event which is then resolved or sustained over a longer term for example because of ongoing financial hardship or cultural practices that create shame and stigma preventing people accessing the products, facilities, or information they need to manage their period.<sup>89</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.50. The Committee agrees that a lack of education or information about period management can have detrimental effects. This can especially effect adolescents who are already navigating a new chapter of growth and change in their lives.
- 3.51. It is therefore the view of the Committee that the ACT Government should provide education on re-usable period products in schools.

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<sup>85</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 7.

<sup>86</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 7.

<sup>87</sup> ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 87, 7 June 2023, p 1265.

<sup>88</sup> Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022, *Supplementary Explanatory Statement*, June 2023, p 1.

<sup>89</sup> Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022, *Supplementary Explanatory Statement*, June 2023, p 1.

- 3.52. The Committee is also of the view that the ACT Government should, in addition to education, supply re-usable period products to schools in the ACT.
- 3.53. By supplying re-usable period products instead of single-use products, the government has the opportunity to educate and promote new and sustainable options available, which will also be an opportunity for the Territory to further reduce the waste to landfill.

### Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that as part of school education programs, provide education and products to encourage the use of re-usable period products.

## Laundering service subsidy program

- 3.54. The OCSE recommended that the ACT Government should explore a laundering service subsidy program targeting the community and care sectors:

There is an opportunity to partner with local laundry and linen services to provide subsidised cloth nappy and reusable continence aid laundering services. Subsidy programs could also be explored for individual consumers using nappy or continence aid laundering services.<sup>90</sup>

- 3.55. At the first public hearing, the Commissioner told the Committee that ‘there are private laundering services that are already available for particularly nappies’:<sup>91</sup>

Our recommendation was trying to remove those barriers for some people who would find that a particular hurdle in adopting these products. We thought most particularly in terms of the continence aids that laundering could be a huge barrier for people.<sup>92</sup>

- 3.56. The Conservation Council was also of a similar view that ‘subsidising nappy washing services may also make cloth nappies more attractive for low-income or busy families.’<sup>93</sup>

### Committee comment:

- 3.57. The Committee agrees that it is important that those sectors of the economy that are large users of AHPs (i.e., the community and care sectors) are incentivised to move away from single-use AHPs.

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<sup>90</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 2.

<sup>91</sup> Dr Sophie Lewis, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 10.

<sup>92</sup> Dr Sophie Lewis, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 10.

<sup>93</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 4.

## Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore developing a laundering service subsidy program targeting the early childhood education and aged care sectors.

## Recycling and FOGO

- 3.58. The ACT Government provides general waste collection weekly, and recycling and green-waste bins are collected on alternate fortnights.<sup>94</sup>
- 3.59. There is also currently a Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection pilot servicing approximately 5,000 households in the suburbs of Belconnen, Bruce, Cook, and Macquarie. The FOGO bins are collected each week, and processed into compost at the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre.<sup>95</sup>
- 3.60. In April 2023, Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services (the Minister), stated in a media release that the ‘ACT’s first FOGO processing facility will not be operational until around 2026’, due to the Boxing Day fire in 2022. The Minister explained that ‘building a new recycling facility has to be the priority after the Boxing Day fire to ensure that we have the basic infrastructure to process and recycle materials in yellow bins ... the costs associated with transporting the ACT’s recycling to processing facilities outside of the Territory to facilities as far away as Victoria, is unsustainable in the long run.’<sup>96</sup>
- 3.61. The new FOGO facility is expected to have capacity to process more than 50,000 tonnes of compost each year, with food scraps turned into a valuable resource instead of going to landfill, further reducing emissions from waste that would ordinarily go to landfill.<sup>97</sup>

## Composting techniques

- 3.62. In its submission, Kimberly-Clark detailed ‘The Nappy Loop’ trial it is undertaking in South Australia, using anaerobic digestion to turn used Huggies nappies into nutrient-rich compost, with bioenergy captured as a by-product used to power the recycling process:<sup>98</sup>
- 3.63. Kimberly-Clark defines anaerobic digestion as follows:

Anaerobic digestion is a process through which bacteria breaks down organic matter—such as wastewater biosolids, and food waste—in the absence of oxygen. In anaerobic digestion systems waste steams with high content of organic

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<sup>94</sup> ACT Government, [Let’s go FOGO](#), accessed 26 May 2023.

<sup>95</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 4.

<sup>96</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, ‘Update on MRF and FOGO following Boxing Day fire’, *Media Release*, 24 April 2023.

<sup>97</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, ‘Update on MRF and FOGO following Boxing Day fire’, *Media Release*, 24 April 2023.

<sup>98</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 5.

matter (kitchen waste, animal manure, food packaging) are combined and transformed to biogas that can be used to make heat and electricity.<sup>99</sup>

3.64. As part of the process, the organic materials are separated from the plastic materials, with the former being turned into compost, and the latter evaluated for future recycled products.<sup>100</sup>

3.65. Kimberly-Clark told the Committee that the trial showed promising results for anaerobic digestion:

There are a few things that have come out of their report—which is still in draft form, but it should be released very soon—including, firstly, that anaerobic digestion is a beneficial way to break down the organic material in nappies; second, that bioenergy is created in the process; and, third, they did not find microplastics in the initial testing of the digester, which is also a big win. That is something we were very happy about.<sup>101</sup>

3.66. Kimberly-Clark also pointed to a 2021 study of the life cycle assessment of anaerobic co-digestion of use disposable nappies and food materials, which found a positive environmental impact of anaerobic digestion compared to use of landfill and incineration of nappies.<sup>102</sup>

3.67. The Committee heard that the compost produced from the trial was safe to use:

The great thing about the anaerobic digestion is that, once it goes through the digestion phase and it goes through the composting system, the composting system has a pasteurisation process. The temperature can get up to about 70 degrees celsius. So, yes, the compost is meeting standards.<sup>103</sup>

3.68. The Committee also heard from Tackle Lab that ‘the best solution to divert nappy waste from landfill is to allow compostable nappies to be accepted or integrated into current FOGO or green waste collections already being composted’.<sup>104</sup>

There are current examples of this happening in Australia mostly in Tasmanian LGAs where the compostable nappy product Eenees is based. There was also a successful compostable nappy trial undertaken by Bega Valley Council in NSW in 2019 which received NSW EPA conditional approval to accept the Eenees nappy as an input into their compost at their facility.<sup>105</sup>

3.69. Tackle Lab was of the view that in terms of composting compostable nappies, the infrastructure does not need to be complicated or expensive:

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<sup>99</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 7.

<sup>100</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 5.

<sup>101</sup> Ms Annelise Tregoning, Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 28 February 2023, p 52.

<sup>102</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 8.

<sup>103</sup> Ms Annelise Tregoning, Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 28 February 2023, p 54.

<sup>104</sup> Tackle lab, *Submission 17*, p 11.

<sup>105</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 10.

The beautiful thing about the Bega Valley [trial] was that when they did their trial they used it with no equipment so that it could be the most basic form of composting: static pile. We are not composting experts, but the static pile essentially is just one big long pile that gets rotated so that it reaches the temperatures required. It essentially can be done in any place that is composting. They did it deliberately so that it could be easily replicated anywhere. It does not need fancy machines or anything like that to be done. They have just got to be allowed to accept that it is more about looking at licensing and things like that.<sup>106</sup>

- 3.70. The OCSE was also of a similar view that the ACT Government should investigate whether other composting techniques may be viable in the ACT, subject to feasibility studies:

Given that the risk of bacterial contamination is likely to make compost produced using absorbent hygiene products unsuitable for food and fibre production, this investigation should extend to how this risk can be mitigated through further treatment of the finished product, or through exploring alternative uses for it.<sup>107</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.71. The Committee would like for the ACT Government to explore the various composting methods available, especially those being trialled or have been trialled across Australia, to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

#### Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, ahead of the procurement of the new FOGO facility in 2026, the ACT Government engage with the absorbent hygiene industry to see the ACT at the forefront of compostable nappy technology and how nappy composting can be supported in the ACT.

## Waste collection services

- 3.72. According to Kuver Designs, manufacturer of the Eenee compostable nappies, if all 2,300 tonnes of the ACT's used nappies were compostable nappies, approximately 1,150 tonnes of valuable compost/750 tonnes of dry matter compost could be produced.

Nappy type	Waste produced	Water usage	Emissions produced (CO2-e)
Plastic Disposable	500kg	141m <sup>3</sup>	550kg
100% Cloth	5kg	1221m <sup>3</sup>	570kg
100% Compostable	0kg (250kg compost)	141m <sup>3</sup>	425kg

Table 2: Kuver Designs, *Comparison of environmental impact of different nappies for one baby*, 27 September 2022, p 2.

<sup>106</sup> Ms Megan Connor, Tackle Lab, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 15.

<sup>107</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 3.

- 3.73. The ACT Government noted in its submission that compostable products ‘present an opportunity to reduce impacts on the environment as they are made from natural materials rather than synthetic materials.’<sup>108</sup>
- 3.74. The Committee heard that several LGAs around Australia have been composting compostable nappies for years, such as the City of Hobart, City of Glenorchy, and Kingsborough Council in Tasmania, and at the NuGrow facility in Queensland.<sup>109</sup> The Committee also received evidence from a Western Australian LGA which has recycled Eenee compostable nappies in the past, as part of its FOGO collection.<sup>110</sup>
- 3.75. The Committee also received evidence of several LGAs around Australia which, currently or have in the past, accepted compostable nappies and/or continence aids as part of their FOGO kerbside bin collection scheme.<sup>111</sup>
- 3.76. For example, the City of Hobart and Bega Valley Shire already accept certified compostable nappies in their FOGO processing facilities.<sup>112</sup> The Shire of Augusta Margaret River previously accepted compostable nappies as part of its FOGO scheme as well.<sup>113</sup>
- 3.77. At the second public hearing, the City of Hobart expanded on their experience with incorporating certified compostable nappies into their FOGO scheme:

We also have a FOGO service. We do accept certified compostable nappies—of which there are not a lot. We tested a local brand that we know that we can accept, and we have those in our FOGO system as well.<sup>114</sup>

We have had a relationship with that nappy producer for a number of years now. They approached us with a service where they wanted to provide the compostable nappies to the community. They also gave them a bin and arranged collection as well. People could put food and organic waste in that bin as well as nappies. So we knew that that was a secure load of this particular brand of nappies that we were comfortable was certified compostable. Before we made the decision to accept them, we also did some trials in our compost process that we had at our waste management centre, and they certainly did break down and they did form a part of the overall compost. After those trials, we agreed to take those on scale for that service.

[W]e have rolled that out now into our council-wide FOGO. We allow people to put compostable nappies in and other biogenic products. We do not treat the majority of our FOGO ourselves; it actually goes to a commercial compost

<sup>108</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 5.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example: Ms Megan Connor, Tackle Lab, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 15; Mr Ben Creese, Eenee, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 26; Kuver Designs, *Submission 5*, p 1.

<sup>110</sup> Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1.

<sup>111</sup> See, for example: EA Sustainability, *Submission 15*, p 4; Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 10.

<sup>112</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 3; Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 10.

<sup>113</sup> Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1.

<sup>114</sup> Ms Sophia Newman, City of Hobart, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 28 February 2023, p 56.

operator. They, like us, operate in accordance with Australian standard AS4454. They take compostable nappies in their process also.<sup>115</sup>

- 3.78. The Conservation Council noted that overseas councils are also experimenting with AHP waste management. In the UK, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and other County Councils run subscription-based AHP waste collection services which divert conventional AHPs from landfill to recycling, which are then turned into products such as plastic seating, kitty litter, and road base.<sup>116</sup>
- 3.79. The Conservation Council recommended that the ACT Government run a trial of supplying compacting nappy bins and/or compostable bags to households, similar to the FOGO kitchen caddies:

Separating used hygiene products from other household and commercial waste and diverting it to industrial composting would reduce contamination of mixed recycling and divert the waste from landfill, also reducing associated methane emissions.<sup>117</sup>

- 3.80. Kimberly-Clark outlined the benefits of a household FOGO bin:

Incorporating nappies into a household FOGO scheme presents a number of benefits including that it connects with existing infrastructure and addresses the highest proportion of nappy waste, households. The ACT already has a FOGO trial in place which would likely mean there would be no additional collection fees as a contractor is already in place collecting FOGO and FOGO infrastructure in the ACT is already established. In the future, Kimberly-Clark believes there could be an opportunity to open up FOGO collection to additional items such as AHPs, just like the City of Toronto has been doing for the past 20 years, utilising anaerobic digestion technology.<sup>118</sup>

- 3.81. However, Kimberly-Clark also cautioned that this FOGO approach would require a shift to weekly collections, as the odour of nappy waste in bins would not be manageable if left to fortnightly collections.<sup>119</sup>
- 3.82. Tackle Lab has developed a similar concept for facilities that use approved compostable nappies, called the NOGO (Nappy Organics = Good Organics) bin, which is a dedicated nappy bin. Tackle Lab is of the view that it 'creates a single uncontaminated waste stream' through ensuring that plastics are separated at the source before they arrive at the compost processing facility.<sup>120</sup>
- 3.83. EA Sustainability suggested that a compostable nappy collection service would work best from a single source waste stream where the volumes can be monitored:

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<sup>115</sup> Mr Jeff Holmes, City of Hobart, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 28 February 2023, p 56.

<sup>116</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 3.

<sup>117</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 3.

<sup>118</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 6.

<sup>119</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 6.

<sup>120</sup> Tackle lab, *Submission 17*, p 11.



For example, collection from a participating childcare service where all the disposable nappies can be guaranteed to be the compatible compostable nappy. For households, a separate collection bin paired with the education of correct compostable products and agreement of use could be a way to accept this waste.<sup>121</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.84. The Committee is of the view that the inclusion of compostable nappies in FOGO as part of kerbside collection is an opportunity for diverting waste from landfill that should not be ignored.
- 3.85. Noting that there is currently a FOGO collection pilot being trialled across a select few suburbs in the Belconnen area, the Committee would like for the ACT Government to look into the inclusion of compostable nappies to its kerbside collection services.

#### Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider trialling kerbside collection and recycling for compostable nappies for households to inform the future procurement of the FOGO facility, and investigate what is required to offer this to businesses including early childhood educational settings.

- 3.86. The Committee received evidence that one limitation of recyclable and compostable nappies is that they cannot be composted in home composting systems, and instead require large-scale composting facilities.<sup>122</sup> The ACT currently does not have a facility that can compost compostable nappies, and so they are currently disposed of into landfill.<sup>123</sup>
- 3.87. The absence of appropriate recycling and composting facilities in the ACT was similarly reiterated by Kimberly-Clark:

The current Materials Recovery Facility's (MRF) in the ACT, including the Mugga Centre and the Mitchell Resource Management Centre are unable to recycle soiled nappies and incontinence products and there are no current processing or recycling options for disposable nappies in the ACT. This waste stream is currently disposed of in landfill.<sup>124</sup>

- 3.88. Another limitation is that compostable nappies are single-use products, and produce methane when they breakdown.<sup>125</sup>
- 3.89. Compostable nappies are also generally more expensive than disposables.<sup>126</sup>
- 3.90. The Committee heard from the Commissioner that the issue of whether or not compostable products will work, is 'really complicated':

<sup>121</sup> EA Sustainability, *Submission 15*, p 4.

<sup>122</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 5.

<sup>123</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 37.

<sup>124</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 4.

<sup>125</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 5.

<sup>126</sup> Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1.

Again, this is a really complicated issue both in terms of how we achieve the outcomes we want in terms of the environmental and sustainability outcomes but also in terms of the technical approach and how we go about looking at the technical specifications and the processing of these products.

Underpinning our submission to this inquiry is the idea that we are likely going to need multiple approaches to reduce this huge volume of products that are going into landfill—the primarily disposable approach that we have got at the moment. There are multiple ways that we can achieve that reduction in the disposability of these hygiene products.

What we can do to increase the usage, the uptake, the normalising of cloth nappies, of reusable products and sanitary products, is likely to be one of the best approaches for the sustainability outcome, but then also supplemented by looking at compostable products for nappies and continence aids. But that also has this hugely complicated technological aspect to it.<sup>127</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.91. The Committee is of the view that a major obstacle for the ACT’s waste management of AHPs is the absence of proper infrastructure to recycle compostable AHPs, as it negates the efforts of people buying compostable products. Therefore, the ACT Government should ensure the city-wide FOGO processing infrastructure accepts certified nappies and continence aids.

#### Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the new composting facility can process genuinely compostable nappies.

## Policies

- 3.92. The Committee heard from several witnesses about the need for community engagement and input into developing new policies that affect access and use of adult AHPs.

### Disposable vs. re-usable adult AHPs

- 3.93. Kimberly-Clark wrote in its submission that 4.8 million Australians live with some form of incontinence, and it can have a great impact on a person’s physical and emotional well-being, affecting them on a daily basis.<sup>128</sup>
- 3.94. Incontinence can vary from person to person, and so a range of products is seen as necessary to ensure the appropriate level of care.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Dr Sophie Lewis, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 7.

<sup>128</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 3.

<sup>129</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 3.

3.95. One Australian study found that adult incontinence products outnumber baby nappies in landfill, and could outstrip them 10-to-1 by 2030.<sup>130</sup> The study showed that while the waste from infant nappies will likely remain constant over the next decade, the waste from used AHPs will increase, due to the nation's ageing population and associated age-related health conditions.<sup>131</sup>

3.96. ACTCOSS submitted that 'consumers of AHPs are of all ages and demographics and include some people with disabilities, older people, and people with a variety of health issues'.<sup>132</sup>

Given the range of people who use or will at some point need to use absorbent hygiene products it's particularly important that the products do not become inaccessible nor unaffordable. Many people will use multiple absorbent hygiene products each day, so it is also imperative that these people are not unfairly disadvantaged by changes to the availability of such products.<sup>133</sup>

3.97. Advocacy for Inclusion stated that for those with a disability or who experience urinary or faecal incontinence, AHPs are a necessity for them in terms of accessibility and day-to-day quality of life.<sup>134</sup> As such, any regulation of single-use AHPs would have a significant impact on their lives:

Changing the regulation of these products would cause a massive shift in the functioning of their day-to-day lives and potentially massively impact their ability to go about their day-to-day lives as they currently do.<sup>135</sup>

3.98. Advocacy for Inclusion additionally noted that single-use AHPs presented several distinct advantages over re-usable AHPs:

Absorbent hygiene products, particularly disposable forms, tend to be far more accessible and convenient for people with disability. They have a lower upfront cost, can be used for longer and then immediately disposed. Reusable products may be less expensive over time but are more costly up front and more labour intensive or challenging to maintain. An individual may be granted autonomy and independence by being able to use and manage disposable products themselves. With certain recyclable alternatives, such as reusable or cloth products, an individual may be forced to use their limited hours with a carer to wash and care for the products. There are health, safety and privacy issues involved as well as issues of dignity and autonomy. In addition, reusable products must also be replaced every 6-12 months. Another distinct advantage of disposable products is their wide availability for purchase. This means that a person with disability has a variety of choices available to them from supermarkets, chemists, and medical

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<sup>130</sup> Jessica Black, '[Adult incontinence products outnumber baby nappies in landfill—and the figure is only going up, researchers say](#)', *ABC News*, 20 October 2022, p 1.

<sup>131</sup> Southern Cross University, '[Adult incontinence pads emerging as worse waste problem than baby nappies](#)', accessed 26 May 2023.

<sup>132</sup> ACT Council of Social Service, *Submission 12*, pp 1–2.

<sup>133</sup> ACT Council of Social Service, *Submission 12*, p 2.

<sup>134</sup> Ms Isabel Moss, Advocacy for Inclusion, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 1.

<sup>135</sup> Ms Isabel Moss, Advocacy for Inclusion, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 1.

practices; allowing people to buy a product which suits their needs in a way which affords both convenience, privacy, dignity and independence.<sup>136</sup>

- 3.99. Advocacy for Inclusion also expressed concern about the social costs those suffering with continence problems faced, with both stigma and independence being key issues:

Continence is also a highly stigmatised area of health and wellbeing for people with disabilities, both young people and also adults. It is often the thing that people actually mention as the greater impairment over, say, a physical impairment. Anything that makes it harder to manage and maintain your continence, like requiring people to wash non disposable products, to use products that are not fully efficient or effective or imposing a price signal which means people cannot manage these products independently, might be the thing that tips a person out of independence and into nursing care. Our argument would be that the social costs for a group of people in a lot of logistical, financial and personal difficulty are too high.<sup>137</sup>

- 3.100. Kimberly-Clark provided supporting evidence that re-usable continence products differ from their disposable counterparts primarily in terms of absorbency, with disposables having a much higher rate of absorbance, meaning an individual can wear them for a longer period of time.<sup>138</sup>
- 3.101. Re-usables, on the other hand, do not use super absorbent materials, so fluid absorbed into the product is able to be released back onto the skin of the user, meaning it is not suitable for those who may need to wear it for longer periods, such as those with limited mobility or those with moderate to heavy incontinence.<sup>139</sup>
- 3.102. The ACT Government acknowledged the difficulty some people with a disability may face in trying to use re-usable products:

Reusable hygiene products can be too difficult to navigate for people with disability. Alternatives to disposable hygiene products may require greater physical dexterity or require increased washing, which may be difficult for some people with disability. Again, the intimacy required for a support worker or family member to provide personal care for people with disability may preclude the use of these products.<sup>140</sup>

## Financial implications

- 3.103. ACTCOSS stressed the importance of accessibility and affordability of AHPs for everyone in the community:

The demographics of people who utilise absorbent hygiene products includes people on low incomes including disability pensioners, aged care pensioners and

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<sup>136</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 18*, pp 2–3.

<sup>137</sup> Mr Craig Wallace, Advocacy for Inclusion, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 2.

<sup>138</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 3.

<sup>139</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, p 3.

<sup>140</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, pp 8–9.

those on Jobseeker. Increases in cost for these products would have a very profound negative impact on these groups. For people living on income support, essential items are often already a major cost, and have already been exacerbated by rising cost of living in the Territory. These costs often fall to women because they are likely to use them but also because of the high proportion of women in unpaid caring roles and acting as primary caregivers.<sup>141</sup>

3.104. Advocacy for Inclusion pointed to evidence from a Senate *Inquiry into the Purpose, Intent and Adequacy of the Disability Support Pension* that a person with a mild or moderate disability spends, on average, \$87 more a week than someone who does not have a disability, and that this gap increases to \$173 a week for those with a severe disability.<sup>142</sup>

3.105. Ms Isabel Moss of Advocacy for Inclusion warned that the cost of living pressures for those with a disability might be exacerbated by a mandated switch to re-usables:

For people with disability in Canberra, as we have already pointed out, there are already really high costs of living. The analysis that we did left no contingency for emergencies or for changes in product regulation or use. So, if we were to impose a price signal on these products, it might be the thing that tips a person into homelessness, into debt or into crisis.<sup>143</sup>

3.106. Advocacy for Inclusion also warned of the costs any regulation might impose on those with a disability or continence issues, as ‘the social and financial costs of limiting or minimising the availability of absorbent hygiene products will fall disproportionately on an already marginalised group of people.’<sup>144</sup>

3.107. Mr Craig Wallace of Advocacy for Inclusion was of the view that at this point in time, no suitable balance could be struck in terms of shifting away from disposable products whilst maintaining the dignity and independence of those who rely on single-use AHPs:

Our advice is basically do not go there. In terms of the things that we could be having a just transition trade-off with, we would say that the level of threat to the dignity, the health, the wellbeing, the confidence and the independence of a really vulnerable group of people mean that this is not worth it. Continence affects around one in four Australians. If you do that sort of maths backwards on the number of people with disability in Australia and the ACT, we have potentially around 26,000 people who rely on these products.<sup>145</sup>

3.108. Advocacy for Inclusion were also of the view that placing additional costs through regulation on those dependent on disposables would constitute a form of indirect discrimination ‘as it sets an unacceptable inequitable premium on the already heightened cost of living with disability.’<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> ACT Council of Social Service, *Submission 12*, p 2.

<sup>142</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 18*, p 2.

<sup>143</sup> Ms Isabel Moss, Advocacy for Inclusion, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 4.

<sup>144</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 18*, p 2.

<sup>145</sup> Mr Craig Wallace, Advocacy for Inclusion, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 2.

<sup>146</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 18*, p 3.

- 3.109. As a result, Advocacy for Inclusion opposes ‘any steps to ban, limit, restrict from easily available public sale or impose price signals against continence products required by people with disabilities.’<sup>147</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion instead advocates for solutions which focus on improving the ‘sustainability of these products across the value chain, particularly within product design.’<sup>148</sup>
- 3.110. The City of Stonnington had similar views, stating that ‘education materials must be developed to suit the community and engage disadvantaged groups through consultation, awareness-raising and support.’<sup>149</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.111. The Committee is of the view that in managing the waste produced by AHPs, the ACT Government must be mindful of the sensitivities and impacts any future policy or regulation may have on those who rely on AHPs on a daily basis.

#### Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government not develop any new policies that affect access and ease of use for adult absorbent hygiene products without in-depth consultation and co-design with people with lived experience and relevant peak bodies, including ACTCOSS and Advocacy for Inclusion.

## Education

- 3.112. Several submissions wrote of the importance of education campaigns in challenging and changing perceptions.

### Spreading awareness and knowledge

- 3.113. During the first public hearing, the Minister told the Committee that ‘education is key’:

People will adopt the single-use product because it is often the simplest and the cheapest upfront. Education can help in making people aware about the wide variety of options available that they may not have been aware of and also to try out those products for the first time and get a sense about whether it is right for them and their family.<sup>150</sup>

- 3.114. The Minister recognised the importance of information consistency:

The biggest inconsistency across the country at the moment is that some councils do not have FOGO or GO at all and some have GO. We are currently in the process of adding the FO to the GO. Consistency is important because, if there is a national approach that is taken, the suppliers want to know and the federal

<sup>147</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 18*, p 3.

<sup>148</sup> Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 18*, p 3.

<sup>149</sup> City of Stonnington, *Submission 14*, p 3.

<sup>150</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, pp 43–44.

government will want to know that the alternative products—compostable nappies, for example, being one of those—can actually be accepted consistently across the country in composting facilities.<sup>151</sup>

- 3.115. Icon Water submitted that it is crucial that AHPs are not incorrectly disposed of into the wastewater network as an alternate method of disposal:

Absorbent hygiene products including wet wipes and sanitary (including incontinence) products contribute significantly to blockages across our wastewater network each year. Blockages within our wastewater network can result in overflow to environment, inconvenience to the community through interrupted services and can be costly to rectify. While toilet paper is designed to break down quickly in water, hygiene products including wipes and sanitary products do not break down after being flushed ... As we regularly promote to the public - only the 3Ps should be flushed down the toilet – pee, poo and (toilet) paper.

- 3.116. Icon Water is currently developing a wastewater literacy program that builds upon its ongoing [Free the Poo campaign](#). The *Free the Poo* campaign was developed to specifically build the community's awareness of Icon Water's wastewater network. Key messaging for this campaign highlights the impacts of wet wipes and other non-flushable items on the wastewater network when they are flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain.<sup>152</sup>



Table 3: Icon Water, *Free the Poo* – campaign banner, May 2023.

- 3.117. Icon Water aims to change the community's flushing and drain care habits through the *Free the Poo* campaign:

<sup>151</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 48.

<sup>152</sup> Icon Water, *Submission 6*, p 2.



We know behaviour change takes time, which is why we developed a staged approach that will span across several years beginning with the topic of wet wipes.<sup>153</sup>

3.118. Evaluation research for the *Free the Poo* campaign in August 2022 found that 40 percent of participants had seen the campaign so far, of whom at least 24 percent claim specifically to have stopped flushing any wet wipes. Based on there being approximately 160,000 households in Canberra, this means that at least 9.6 percent or around 15,360 households say that they have responded positively to the campaign by changing their behaviour regarding wet wipe disposal – up from around 7,000 households in November 2021.<sup>154</sup>

3.119. The City of Stonnington advocated for the importance of access to relevant, clear and accurate education materials:<sup>155</sup>

For reusable products to be offered and promoted in such settings [like aged care, disability care, schools, and early childhood services], it is crucial that there is training and education around the suitability of items, how to choose them and how to care for them and extend their life, for staff, carers and users where appropriate. These settings are key hubs in the community and provide a significant opportunity to normalise and transition to more sustainable products and provide access to members of the community.<sup>156</sup>

3.120. The Conservation Council stated that behavioural change should be encouraged by shifting norms:

Behaviour change depends on shifting social norms. This can be achieved by making responsible products more readily available, providing financial support to overcome cost barriers, and educating the community and healthcare providers about responsible options.<sup>157</sup>

3.121. The OCSE commented that despite the existence of resources to assist the public in making better choices, ‘awareness about the availability of these resources among members of the public appears to be low’, adding ‘relying on community members to proactively seek out and find the website on their own initiative is not an effective education strategy.’<sup>158</sup>

3.122. This point was similarly echoed by Emma Black, who observed that most educational resources available on nappies are passive sources, ‘with those interested needing to actively seek out the information.’<sup>159</sup>

3.123. Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra exclaimed that ‘consideration of waste management on absorbent hygiene products is closely connected to people’s conditioning and learned disgust towards their bodily functions.’<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Icon Water, *Submission 6*, p 3.

<sup>154</sup> Icon Water, *Submission 6*, p 3.

<sup>155</sup> City of Stonnington, *Submission 14*, p 3.

<sup>156</sup> City of Stonnington, *Submission 14*, p 2.

<sup>157</sup> Conservation Council ACT Region, *Submission 13*, p 3.

<sup>158</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 3.

<sup>159</sup> Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 2.

<sup>160</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 1.



It underlined the important role of government in ‘shifting this response for the benefit of those managing their periods, incontinence and their children’s transition to toileting whilst mitigating the harmful environmental impacts.’<sup>161</sup>

- 3.124. Ms Amy Blain of Ainslie Community Pantry told the Committee that education and awareness initiatives must be empowering:

I think the government is ideally positioned to oversee that sort of transformation and culture shift. At the moment, we have so much tied up in period stigma and taboo. If we start to encourage and promote the sustainable and re-usable products you will start to see that shift in people’s responses to them. At the moment it is just like, “Oh no! It’s my period. We’ve just got to have pads and tampons.” But we see that the UK has done some great work on advertising menstrual cups and making the difference by saying that this is actually a really good product.

...[I]t is about normalising it. Any re-usable, sustainable item should come with education about how you use it, how you care for it. All of them are far more empowering because you do not need to have that anxiety about wearing your period pants or menstrual cup.<sup>162</sup>

- 3.125. Ms Blain also spoke about the importance of educating early in school settings:

I also think education is important in schools, at a primary level and a secondary level, and for all genders. We do not separate people and say, “Let’s talk about periods over here.” We talk to everyone about it so that everyone knows what periods are, the impact of them and what products are available. That emphasis and education is something that I think is really key.<sup>163</sup>

- 3.126. A lack of knowledge on how to properly use cloth nappies was specifically raised by Ms Cathy Costa of Conder House:

Early childhood educators are not being trained on the use of cloth nappies to the extent that they need to be to actually use them. A lot of educators have used them at home and they are very comfortable with it, whereas other educators have never seen them before and are really quite worried about using them. You do not just whack them on and they work. If you do not put them on correctly they leak. It is a fact. If you are not changing them regularly enough they will leak. If you have a child who is a heavy wetter, you will probably need to put some more boosting into it to make it a bit more effective—extra inserts and things like that for more absorbency.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 1.

<sup>162</sup> Ms Amy Blain, Ainslie Community Pantry, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 19.

<sup>163</sup> Ms Amy Blain, Ainslie Community Pantry, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 19.

<sup>164</sup> Ms Cathy Costa, Conder House, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 23.

3.127. Tackle Lab detailed that the childcare centre operators and staff it spoke to had raised the issue of not enough training in the use of cloth nappies as a barrier to its uptake.<sup>165</sup>

3.128. In terms of adult incontinence products, Dr Gemma Killen of ACTCOSS stated that ‘there is very little information about the climate impact of those products’.<sup>166</sup>

For example, with nappies for children, you can often find out whether they are ecologically sound. There are lots of products that are made with bamboo, for example, or do not use plastic packaging. But, for adult products, because there is such a significant stigma, there is much less information about the ecological impact of the way that the products are made, even when they are not disposable. So I think there is some education that can be had broadly in the community and with manufacturers about sharing that sort of information.<sup>167</sup>

3.129. Andrea Friend, Livingstone Shire Councillor, advocated that ‘it is most definitely education which drives behavioural change and not compliance alone.’<sup>168</sup>

## Challenging misinformation and perceptions

3.130. Tackle Lab raised the importance of consistent information, commenting in its submission that ‘wading through the greenwashing and conflicting marketing can make it very difficult for people to discern what is and is not compostable. Having clear messaging and guidelines about what it and is not a compostable product would be useful.’<sup>169</sup>

3.131. The City of Stonnington had a similar view:

While there is a wealth of information online, and a number of providers offer education and workshops in the space, a clear set of consistent standards for the different products on the market would assist with educating the public.<sup>170</sup>

3.132. Misleading labelling paired with a lack of consumer knowledge was also an issue raised by the OCSE:

A lot of items that are sold as flushable should not be flushed—for example, baby wipes—and there is a real gap in communication and public understanding of what should be flushed and what can be processed in the sewerage treatment plants without causing major clogging.<sup>171</sup>

3.133. This was echoed by Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra in its submission, which noted that:

Compostable nappies and liners are often not easily compostable in home composts and often need industrial composting – this is often not made clear on

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<sup>165</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 6.

<sup>166</sup> Dr Gemma Killen, ACT Council of Social Service, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 5.

<sup>167</sup> Dr Gemma Killen, ACT Council of Social Service, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 5.

<sup>168</sup> Andrea Friend, *Submission 1*, p 1.

<sup>169</sup> Tackle Lab, *Submission 17*, p 7.

<sup>170</sup> City of Stonnington, *Submission 14*, p 3.

<sup>171</sup> Ms Victoria Herbert, Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 9.

the packaging. Signposting clearly to the correct disposal for composting will be critical to uptake and success.<sup>172</sup>

- 3.134. At the first public hearing, Ms Isabel Moss of Advocacy for Inclusion raised the issue of improper language-use:

Already, we have heard, just in the language used in this inquiry, that people are uncomfortable in the language and unsure about the language to use when talking about adults with incontinence. We have already heard the phrase today “nappies for adults”. While unintentional, I am sure, this language is hugely stigmatising. These are fully grown, competent and capable adults who are not using nappies. This is infantilising and uncomfortable language. That kind of thing is something that we hear all the time and that adults with incontinence hear all the time and it perpetuates that stigma that they already face.<sup>173</sup>

## Social stigmas and taboos

- 3.135. In its submission, the OCSE highlighted the impact of cultural taboos around menstruation and incontinence, and proposed a recommendation to the government:

The ACT Government should facilitate and fund free educational campaigns and workshops in collaboration with community organisations on topics such as menstruation and incontinence. These programs should be culturally and linguistically appropriate, targeting sectors of the community who may have limited exposure to this topic.<sup>174</sup>

### Committee comment:

- 3.136. The Committee is aware that the ACT Government has ongoing initiatives in the education and information space through its portals such as the *Recyclopaedia* online guide, Recycling Discovery Hub, as well as its sustainable sanitary education resource kits which display a range of sustainable samples and information on reusable and suitable hygiene options.<sup>175</sup>
- 3.137. Similarly, the Committee is aware of the ACT Government promoting community-based groups and organisations, such as Canberra Cloth Bums and the Canberra Environment Centre, which provide information sessions, support, and advocacy for reusable cloth nappies.<sup>176</sup>
- 3.138. The Committee is of the view that general education campaigns are important in continuing to educate and inform the public on the alternative options for recyclable and re-usable AHPs and responsible ways of disposing both disposable and re-usable AHPs. It is clear however from earlier evidence that the reach of these campaigns could be further widened in scope.

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<sup>172</sup> Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra, *Submission 11*, p 5.

<sup>173</sup> Ms Isabel Moss, Advocacy for Inclusion, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 4.

<sup>174</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Submission 10*, p 3.

<sup>175</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 10.

<sup>176</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 9.

- 3.139. The Committee therefore recommends that the ACT Government continue with its public education campaigns on these matters and ensure that they are sufficiently funded so they reach all Canberrans. The Committee also recommends that the ACT Government promote its *Recyclopaedia* resources more widely to maximise uptake of sustainable AHPs, for example, through community newsletters, fetes and events, information sessions and workshops for people of all ages.

### Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government promote their *Recyclopaedia* resources more widely to maximise uptake of sustainable absorbent hygiene products.

## Workshops and information sessions

- 3.140. The Committee heard from a submitter that the City of Wollongong in NSW estimates that it has saved approximately 700,000 disposable nappies through its workshops as part of Wollongong Hospital's pre-natal classes and baby health clinics promoting the use of cloth nappies.<sup>177</sup>

- 3.141. EA Sustainability also gave evidence through sharing lived experience:

The best uptake for reusable nappies I've witnessed is when education and resources are received prior to the birth of the child, not afterwards and not linked with the new parents group groups/mothers groups education.<sup>178</sup>

- 3.142. The Shire of Augusta Margaret River in Western Australia offered regular modern cloth nappy interactive workshops to supplement its \$100 subsidy for the purchase of modern cloth nappies, both of which the Shire's Manager of Waste said was 'very popular'.<sup>179</sup>

- 3.143. Conder House noted in its submission the importance of training for ensuring re-usable nappies are correctly used:

Reusable nappies are not as easy to use as disposable nappies. If incorrectly fitted, they will leak causing parent and Educator frustration. In order to use the reusable nappies correctly, Educators must undertake training to achieve success. As release time to allow Educators to attend such training is costly, financial assistance for training would also incentivise centres.<sup>180</sup>

- 3.144. Ms Emma Black was supportive of early childhood education and care settings being a place to begin conversations on sustainability:

Going into the childcare centre is a very valuable way of providing parents with alternative nappy styles. They trust their educators; they are leaving their kids with them all day. If the educators are using these compostable products or re-

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<sup>177</sup> Emma Black, *Submission 9*, p 2.

<sup>178</sup> EA Sustainability, *Submission 15*, p 4.

<sup>179</sup> Shire of Augusta Margaret River, *Submission 2*, p 1.

<sup>180</sup> Conder House, *Submission 8*, p 3.

usable products, they are going to feel more confident using them at home, so it is a really great way of getting to a wide demographic of parents to make them switch to a greener product by going through day care as well.<sup>181</sup>

#### Committee comment:

- 3.145. The Committee is of the view that targeted education and awareness campaigns are an effective tool in informing, educating, and encouraging key sectors of the community and industry to change their behaviour in the longer-term. Therefore, the Committee would like for the ACT Government to especially target pre-natal classes, new-parent groups, and baby-preparation classes, and provide these groups with information on modern recyclable and re-usable AHPs.

#### Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government look to introduce workshops and information sessions on modern re-usable nappies at pre-natal classes at Canberra Hospitals and new-parent groups.

### Moving to a circular economy

- 3.146. Tackle Lab gave evidence that there seemed to be a general acknowledgement in Australia towards the need to recycle more waste:

I feel like there has been a momentum shift towards that. I think everyone is realising that that is what needs to happen. We are not manufacturers; we are just setting up the collection systems. But there is a recognition that it needs to change and shift and that is what we are advocating for.<sup>182</sup>

- 3.147. The Commissioner stated that there was likely ‘no silver bullet solution’, therefore, ‘we are likely going to need multiple approaches to reduce this huge volume of products that are going into landfill’.<sup>183</sup>

What we can do to increase the usage, the uptake, the normalising of cloth nappies, of reusable products and sanitary products, is likely to be one of the best approaches for the sustainability outcome, but then also supplemented by looking at compostable products for nappies and continence aids.<sup>184</sup>

- 3.148. The ACT Government wrote in its submission that it is working towards strengthening the ACT’s circular economy ‘by delivering a range of waste management and resource recovery projects’ and ‘supporting the use of more sustainable alternatives to reduce the volume of disposable products entering our waste systems.’<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Ms Emma Black, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, pp 14–15.

<sup>182</sup> Ms Megan Connor, Tackle Lab, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 16.

<sup>183</sup> Dr Sophie Lewis, Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, p 7.

<sup>184</sup> Dr Sophie Lewis, Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, *Proof Committee Hansard*, p 7.

<sup>185</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 4.

- 3.149. A circular economy aims to stop waste being produced in the first place and replace the dominant ‘take-make-dispose’ system (linear economy model) with one that is resource efficient and regenerative, and is based on three key principles:
1. Design out waste and pollution;
  2. Keep products and materials in use; and
  3. Avoid negative impacts to the environment and regenerate natural systems.<sup>186</sup>
- 3.150. Notwithstanding the government’s commitment to move towards a circular economy, the Minister stated that ‘it is a challenge’ to regulate the variety of AHPs from international producers entering the ACT:

...ultimately, we are dealing with products that are sold into a national market where the ACT may not have an influence over exactly what products are supplied by, in some cases, multinational companies who are supplying them here in the ACT.<sup>187</sup>

- 3.151. In its submission, Kimberly-Clark argued that education and collaboration is key across the community and industry to minimise the amount of AHPs ending up in landfill:

In order to successfully tackle the problem of nappy waste, and AHP waste more broadly, any program will require collaboration of all stakeholders in the waste stream, not just on the manufacturing side. This includes the waste sector, state/territory and local governments and consumers to drive the actions required to successfully address nappy waste.<sup>188</sup>

- 3.152. In order to develop wastewater and waste literacy among the community, Icon Water are moving to the ‘next phase’ of the *Free the Poo* campaign:

The next phase of the Free the Poo campaign, specifically focused on sanitary products, will assist Canberrans to understand the impacts of flushing these items down the toilet and where to dispose of items.

An important insight identified as part of our developmental research is that many people only flush sanitary products when a suitable disposal bin is not provided. This is often the case in public toilets throughout Canberra. Therefore, while building literacy around this issue is important, so is encouraging businesses, schools, and public facilities to provide access to appropriate disposal units, ideally within each cubicle.

#### Committee comment:

- 3.153. The Committee believes that there are certainly indications of social readiness to move to a circular economy; however, consumer behaviour does not always align with such sentiments. There are also a number of industries involved in waste collection, handling

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<sup>186</sup> ACT Government, *Submission 7*, p 4.

<sup>187</sup> Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 5 December 2022, p 47.

<sup>188</sup> Kimberly-Clark Australia, *Submission 19*, pp 4–5.

and disposal. These industries will require appropriate processes in place in order to responsibly manage AHP waste. This highlights the need for more education and training on the disposal of AHPs, in order to shift consumer behaviour to ultimately drive the market towards a circular economy.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide education and training on the disposal of absorbent hygiene products to organisations involved in waste collection, handling and disposal, in order to limit contamination in general waste.

## 4. Conclusion

- 4.1. Australians create approximately 67 million tonnes of waste each year, which equates to 2.7 tonnes per person.<sup>189</sup> Whilst the simple act of putting something in the bin may not seem like much in our busy daily lives, the fact is, the small decisions we are currently making will manifest itself into bigger problems for future generations, due to the finite space we have in both our Territory and the country.
- 4.2. The Committee is of the view that – whilst disposable products will always have some place for particular people – there should be a priority to increase the awareness and uptake of re-usable products, and focus on reducing our overall environmental impacts by managing our waste in a more proactive and conscientious manner.
- 4.3. The Committee has made 13 recommendations in this report.

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Chair

6 September 2023

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<sup>189</sup> Department of the Environment and Energy, [2018 National Waste Policy: Less Waste More Resources](#), accessed 19 May 2023.



## Appendix A: Submissions

No.	Submission by	Received	Published
1	Councillor Andrea Friend, Livingstone Shire Council	11/09/22	13/09/22
2	Chris Yates, Shire of Augusta Margaret River	15/09/22	27/09/22
3	Name withheld	16/09/22	27/09/22
4	Name withheld	17/09/22	27/09/22
5	Kuver Designs Pty Ltd (Eenee Compostable Nappies)	23/09/22	27/09/22
5.1	Kuver Designs Pty Ltd (Eenee Compostable Nappies)	23/09/22	27/09/22
6	Icon Water	26/09/22	27/09/22
7	ACT Government	30/09/22	25/10/22
8	Conder House Laundry and Linen Service	04/10/22	25/10/22
8.1	Conder House Laundry and Linen Service	04/10/22	25/10/22
9	Emma Black	19/10/22	25/10/22
10	ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	24/10/22	25/10/22
10.1	ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	24/10/22	25/10/22
10.2	ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	01/02/23	14/02/23
11	Ainslie Community Pantry, @ZeroWasteSchoolsAustralia & Red Flag Canberra	25/10/22	15/11/22
12	ACT Council of Social Service	27/10/22	15/11/22
13	Conservation Council ACT Region	27/10/22	15/11/22
14	City of Stonnington	28/10/22	15/11/22
15	Emma Avery, EA Sustainability	28/10/22	15/11/22
16	Confidential	28/10/22	15/11/22
17	Tackle Lab	28/10/22	15/11/22
17.1	Tackle Lab	05/12/22	31/01/23
18	Advocacy for Inclusion	09/11/22	15/11/22
19	Kimberly-Clark Australia	19/01/23	31/01/23

## Appendix B: Witnesses

Monday, 5 December 2022

### Advocacy for Inclusion, ACT Council of Social Service

- **Mr Craig Wallace**, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Advocacy for Inclusion
- **Ms Isabel Moss**, Policy Officer, Advocacy for Inclusion
- **Dr Gemma Killen**, Head of Policy, ACT Council of Social Service
- **Ms Avan Daruwalla**, Policy Officer, ACT Council of Social Service

### Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

- **Dr Sophie Lewis**, Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
- **Ms Victoria Herbert**, Project Officer

### Tackle Lab, Ms Emma Black

- **Ms Jacqueline Mata**, Co-founder, Tackle Lab
- **Ms Megan Connor**, Co-founder, Tackle Lab
- **Ms Emma Black**

### Ainslie Community Pantry, Conder House Laundry and Linen Service

- **Ms Amy Blain**, Leadership Team, Ainslie Community Pantry; Administration Team, Buy Nothing Ainslie; Canberra Representative, Australian Parents for Climate Action
- **Ms Catherine Costa**, Director, Conder House Laundry and Linen Service Pty Ltd

### Kuver Designs (Eenee Compostable Nappies)

- **Mr Benjamin Creese**, Marketing and Sales Manager, Kuver Designs Pty Ltd

### City of Stonnington

- **Ms Amy Yang**, Waste Strategy and Engagement Coordinator, City of Stonnington

### ACT Government

- **Mr Chris Steel MLA**, Minister for Transport and City Services
- **Mr Bruce Fitzgerald**, Executive Group Manager, Infrastructure Delivery and Waste, City Services, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate
- **Ms Katherine Harrington**, Senior Director, ACT NoWaste, Infrastructure Delivery and Waste, City Services, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

**Tuesday, 28 February 2023**

**Kimberly-Clark Australia**

- **Mr George Papanikitas**, ANZ General Counsel
- **Ms Annelise Tregoning**, Director of Communications and Government Affairs

**City of Hobart**

- **Mr Jeff Holmes**, Acting Manager City Resilience
- **Ms Sophia Newman**, Waste Projects Officer

## Appendix C: Question Taken on Notice

No.	Date	Asked of	Subject	Response received
1	05/12/2022	Minister for Transport and City Services	ACT NoWaste education team	14/12/2022