



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING  
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## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022

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## **Submission**

### **Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing**

#### **Inquiry into Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022**

To whom it may concern,

I believe the Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022 will make a world of difference to women, girls and those who menstruate if the bill is passed.

I started Share the Dignity in 2015 after finding out that people were using socks, wadded up toilet paper and newspaper to manage their period.

I could not believe that this was happening anywhere in the world let alone here in Australia, the 'lucky country'.

At the time, statistics said 48,000 women were experiencing homelessness and I thought it was doable to collect enough period products for them all. But as I began collecting period products to give to charities, I realised the problem was greater than I ever imagined.

That original number wasn't including remote Indigenous communities where the cost of one packet of period products can be \$16 or greater, the women who were fleeing domestic violence with nothing but the clothes on their backs, the drought-stricken farming communities, the refugees who have only recently touched down in Australia and those who are just doing it tough and choosing between putting food on the table or managing their period with dignity.

This year we had the most requests we have ever received for our August Dignity Drive (a biannual event where we collect period products at Woolworths and other collection points nationwide). 1,181 of our charities requested over 244,000 requests of period products. Showing just how needed period products are for those who menstruate who are doing it tough.

Over the years I have heard many devastating stories from women who have or are experiencing period poverty.

When I first started Share the Dignity one woman told me she would steal socks from the laundromat to use for her period. Another told me she would buy rolls of cotton wool for 99 cents to manage her period.

Most recently I was speaking to a woman at a conference who had received help through one of our charity partners. She said that her husband lost his job during covid and they couldn't afford to pay their bills let alone buy period products. To get by she would cut a pad into three and put it right where the blood was to get by.

None of these solutions are okay and I hope that those who menstruate in ACT will soon not have to choose between managing their period with dignity or being able to afford to put food on the table for their family.



Period products are not a luxury item, they are necessity. Everyone deserves dignity and this Bill would make a world of difference to the women and girls we support.

Rochelle Courtenay

Founder and Managing Director  
Share the Dignity

[Redacted contact information]