

NATIONAL MEDIA RELEASE

“A woman used bread to manage her period”: Australians urged to act as Dignity Drive enters final days.

A woman in regional Victoria has been using bread to manage her period, highlighting the reality of period poverty in Australia as Share the Dignity's March Dignity Drive enters its final days.

With collection points located in Woolworths supermarkets and businesses nationwide throughout March, the campaign is calling on Australians to donate period products to support people experiencing hardship.

The need is greater than ever, with those doing it tough forced to use old towels, Chux wipes, wadded-up toilet paper and heartbreakingly, even bread, to manage their periods.

New insights from Share the Dignity's Dignity Map show that 64% of people who menstruate have struggled to afford period products, with the highest rates recorded in Tasmania at 69%, Queensland at 66% and South Australia at 66%.

Share the Dignity Founder and Managing Director Rochelle Courtenay said the story reflects a broader national issue.

“A woman in regional Victoria recently walked into a charity asking for pads because she had been using bread to manage her period.

“Bread is for soaking up gravy after a roast dinner or for Vegemite toast in the morning. It should never be an option for managing a period.

“I cannot fathom that in Australia, a woman's brain must go there, but this is happening. Right now. Here in Australia.

“Period poverty is happening in every community, in every postcode, and for too long it has remained hidden,” Ms Courtenay said.

The Dignity Map is based on responses from more than 153,000 Australians through the 2024 Bloody Big Survey and provides a clear picture of where support is needed most.

The data shows:

- 63% have missed school due to their period
- 56% have missed work, costing the economy an estimated \$9.6 billion annually
- 68% have missed sport, most due to fear of leaking, pain or lack of access to products

The survey also found:

- 1 in 4 people wear period products longer than recommended due to cost
- 83% of gender diverse people and 78% of people with a disability have experienced period poverty

Ms Courtenay said the data is important, but it is the lived experiences that continue to drive urgency.

"These are everyday Australians doing what they can to get through the day," she said.

Running throughout March, the Dignity Drive invites Australians to donate unopened period products and incontinence aids at Woolworths supermarkets and participating locations nationwide or give financially to support communities in need.

Loretta Arrastia, Woolworths' Community Programs Manager said: "We're proud to support Share the Dignity and help ensure period products are accessible for people who need them most.

"Since the start of Woolworths partnership with Share the Dignity, we've donated more than \$3.3 million to help provide better access to period care for local communities. Each March and August we donate five cents from every period product sold, and this funds Dignity Vending Machines across Australia."

With only days remaining, Australians are being encouraged to act now.

"Every donation makes a tangible difference to someone's life," Ms Courtenay said.

"This final week matters."

To explore the Dignity Map or find your nearest collection point, visit sharethedignity.org.au/dignity-drives

- ENDS -

Interview opportunities:

- Rochelle Courtenay - Share the Dignity Founder and Managing Director
- Share the Dignity volunteers and charity partners

VNR available:

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About Share the Dignity:

Share the Dignity was formed in 2015 when founder Rochelle Courtenay first learnt of homeless women going without basic period products during their menstrual cycle. Courtenay decided the question was not, "why is no one doing anything" but rather, "what's stopping me from doing something?"