



Minister for Education
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08 NOV 2022

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Email: neil.laurie@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil,*

Thank you for your letter dated 13 October 2022 regarding Petition No. 3713-22, received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly. I note the Petition – *Fighting period poverty in Queensland schools*, requests access to free menstrual hygiene products be provided to students in Queensland schools.

I am pleased to be able to respond to this petition by providing details of how the Palaszczuk Government is delivering on its commitment to provide Queensland students with access to free period products at school.

In 2020, the Palaszczuk Government committed \$2.5 million, over three years, to partner with Share the Dignity to provide free period products to students in 120 state and non-state schools, through the installation of Dignity Vending Machines. The response to this initiative was very positive, with over 200 schools applying for a Dignity Vending machine in the initial Expression of Interest process. In 2021–22, Dignity Vending Machines were installed in 62 schools across the State, with more than 58 additional machines to be installed through this initiative in the coming months.

Through the partnership with Share the Dignity, all Queensland schools will also have free access to the Period Talk educational program. Designed for students in Years 5 to 8, this program provides resources to help inform and support students to be at ease when talking about periods.

In June 2022, the Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Olympics, announced additional funding of \$32.1 million over four years, and an ongoing \$6.4 million per year to ensure all Queensland state school students can access free period products at school. Through this initiative, all Queensland state schools, outdoor and environmental education centres, and student residential facilities will have the opportunity to register their interest for a period product vending machine. Following a process for schools to register their interest in Term 4 2022, it is anticipated that installation of period product vending machines will commence in 2023.

We know the positive impact free access to period products is having and will continue to have on students' social and emotional wellbeing and their ability to engage positively with their learning. Additionally, by providing all Queensland schools with free access to Period Talk, we are assisting to reduce the stigma around menstruation and help students to better understand the impact of periods on their bodies.

I would like to thank you and the principal petitioner and every person who signed the petition for their strong advocacy for reducing period poverty for students in Queensland schools.

If you require additional information or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me directly or alternatively your staff can contact Ms Sharon Durham, Chief of Staff of my office, on (07) 3719 7110.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Grace', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Education
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Ref: 22/701947