



PERIODS: HOW THEY IMPACT OUR LIVES

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF
AN AUSTRALIAN STUDY

© August 2022 Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies

qut.edu.au/business/acpns

CRICOS code: 00213J

Queensland University of Technology's Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies was commissioned by Share the Dignity to conduct this study. The report has been written by Dr Ruth Knight. We thank all the respondents who completed the survey and have helped us learn more about the impact of periods and the Dignity Vending Machine on their lives. For further updates about this study and ongoing research, please subscribe to qut.edu.au/business/acpns.

Suggested citation:

Knight, R. (2022) *Periods: How they impact our lives. Preliminary results of an Australian study*. Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

QUT acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay respects to their elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning. QUT acknowledges the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT community.

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	5
Providing free period products	6
The Study	9
Method	9
High school students.....	10
Respondents	10
The impact of periods.....	11
Managing periods.....	14
Using public toilets	15
Cost of buying period products	15
Tertiary students and employees	18
Respondents	18
The impact of periods.....	20
Managing periods.....	23
Using public toilets	23
The impact of periods.....	24
Cost of buying period products	25
The impact of free period products	27
Discussion	31
References	33

Executive Summary

This report details the results of a preliminary study into the impact that periods have on women's lives when learning, training or in employment. It provides contemporary evidence that periods often have a regular and sometimes significant impact on productivity, mental and emotional health, relationships, attendance at work and performance.

An online survey was promoted during 2021-2022 and those students and employees that have periods were invited to respond to the survey. The respondents were high school students (144 respondents), tertiary education students and employees (237 respondents). Most identified as female, so the term woman is used throughout this report, although we know that people with other gender identities may menstruate.

Some of the key findings include:

- Periods can create a lot of mixed feelings and impact women in many different ways due to pain and discomfort, being unable to perform normal daily tasks, mood swings, anxiety and depression.
- Disposable pads and tampons are the common products of choice for all women when managing a period.
- A large percentage of high school students (70%) say if they stay at home because of their period, they inform their school they are unwell. Only 16% tell them it is period related.
- High school students have the most difficulty buying period products every month (12.6%) while one in ten tertiary students and employees also experience difficulty buying period products every month (10.8%).
- Due to the cost of tampons and pads, 30% of high school students often ask someone to purchase products for them, while 21% often wear a tampon or pad for more than the recommended four hours.
- There are many high school students (37%) who stated that they often or sometimes 'make do' (with tissue, cloth or paper for example) instead of pads or tampons due to the cost of pads and tampons.
- 19% of high school students and 14.7% of tertiary students and employees often or sometimes stay at home due to their inability to afford pads or tampons.
- More than half (58.6%) of tertiary students and employees report missing half or an entire day of work or study due to having their period.
- 98% of high school students believe that having free pads and tampons available at their school is important.

-
- High school students stated that the impact of having free period products available at school means that they change their pad more regularly (91%), stay at school (82%) and feel less embarrassed (85%) and anxious (76%), and more confident (74%).
 - Having free period products at school means that 61% of high school students feel their school cares about them.

These are results of a small preliminary study but provide early indications that to reduce period stigma, period poverty and poor menstrual health there needs to be policies and practices concerning menstrual equity and dignity including:

- Education for students and women about how to manage their period confidently;
- Clean and appropriate toilet facilities;
- Free and accessible period products; and
- Supportive school and workplace policies that encourage good menstrual health and period care.

Introduction

Around the time of 12 years old, most young women begin their monthly menstrual bleed, known as a period. For the first few years after a girl starts her period it may not come regularly at the same time each month, which means girls can be caught out unexpectedly and bleed without having period products with them. Pads and tampons are the most common products that women use to help manage their period. Some girls and women never have regular periods and so are always at risk of finding themselves starting their period without having access to a pad or tampon. Due to the long history of societal stigma about periods, many girls and women feel embarrassed if they 'have an accident' or experience other symptoms associated with menstruation such as a negative mood, pain and headaches.

Researcher Nina Landsbury (2021) states:

Menstruation is a natural experience for most girls and women, yet it is often associated with socially imposed taboos and shame. It can include total concealment of a woman's menstrual status where shame and embarrassment are associated with others seeing leakage or soiled products or smelling odor.¹

A pervasive negative stigma around menstruation, and inability to easily access period products that can help girls and women manage their periods often lead to other negative consequences. These can include feeling dirty and unclean, avoiding school, work, or other social situations, avoiding sport, or presenteeism (low productivity).^{2,3,4,5} One 2017 study that surveyed 32,748 women aged 15–45 years in the Netherlands found that these physical and psychosocial challenges can result in an average of 1.3 days per year being lost due to absenteeism. The women also reported less productivity due to their periods, so the researchers calculated that periods and menstruation-related symptoms cause lower productivity approximately nine days every year.⁶

When a person menstruating is under financial stress and cannot afford to purchase period products, this is known as period poverty. Period poverty can place women at risk of developing reproductive and gynaecological health issues and it adds further emotional stress to women trying to manage their period. Period poverty is a complex issue and limited research exists about its incidence or impact in Australia, however it may be one reason why girls and women chose to stay at home during their period rather than attend education, training or work.

Providing free period products

In order to stop the taboo concerning periods, reduce period poverty and provide women with support to manage their periods with dignity and confidence, schools, higher education (e.g. TAFE and Universities), and workplaces in Australia and around the world are adopting new policies, which include providing access to free period products such as pads and tampons.

- Countries such as Scotland, New Zealand, France, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, and some Canadian states have implemented policies that include providing free period products in schools.⁷
- Some Australian workplaces such as Share the Dignity⁸ and Future Super⁹ have introduced a paid menstrual leave policy. Share The Dignity also provides an additional Personal Leave for employees who may be experiencing severe symptoms related to their period or menopause. The Victorian Women's Trust have also introduced a policy and provide a "menstrual policy template" for employers so they can create a policy for their own organisation.¹⁰
- Melbourne City Council agreed to a trial in 2021 that provides pads and tampons in at least six community spaces, including community centres, pools and libraries. The Council will evaluate the pilot to determine potential expansion of the service to other council facilities.¹¹
- Universities such as the University of Iowa in the United States and Monash University in Australia have started offering free products. Monash University has installed dispensers, providing free pads and tampons in 30 bathrooms across their Melbourne campuses in 2021.^{12,13}
- In 2019, The Victorian Government announced they would be installing dispensing machines in every school by the end of Term 2, 2020.¹⁴
- In 2021, Tasmania announced they would make period products freely available in all government schools from Term 3.¹⁵
- The Tasmanian Government also announced free period products would be made available in hospitals from 1 July 2022.¹⁶
- In 2021, the Northern Territory Government announced they would be providing free period products in all primary, middle and senior government schools.¹⁷
- In 2022, the New South Wales government announced a program to place free pads and tampons in all the state's public schools, with the aim of ensuring young women's education is not impacted by their period.¹⁸
- In 2022, New South Wales became the first state in Australia to offer free period products for those who are unable to supply their own while in healthcare facilities.¹⁹
- Commencing during Semester 2, 2022, all Queensland state schools, outdoor and environmental education centres, and student residential

facilities will have the opportunity to register to have a Dignity Vending Machine installed to provide students with free period products.²⁰

- In 2022, students at three Gold Coast campuses became the first TAFE Queensland students to be able to obtain free period products.²¹

These organisations have determined that providing free period products to girls and women that need them outweighs the costs associated with poor menstrual health, low productivity and absenteeism. Some companies are offering free period products to demonstrate a tangible commitment to employees and improve menstrual equity, which aims to ensure that menstruation never poses a barrier to human dignity, employee engagement and social participation.

Our research found that having products available for girls and women to take in toilets can reduce stigma and feelings of embarrassment. Products would also be available at the time and place they were most needed.

Department of Education, UK.²²

Providing free pads and tampons to every Australian public high and primary school is an easy and effective way to reduce period stigma, improve students' health and wellbeing, and minimise school absences.

Greens Senator Larissa Waters.²³

The Territory Government acknowledges gender equality as fundamental to improving the lives of all Territorians. Our schools play an important role in promoting a positive culture of equality and body positivity within their school communities, and this program is about making our schools more inclusive and supportive for all. Office of the Chief Minister, Northern Territory Government.²⁴

Let's face it, if blokes had periods, we would have done this decades ago. Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece, Melbourne City Council.²⁵

One less barrier to their education means that our female student population (nearly 50 per cent) will not have to decide whether they come to TAFE because they cannot afford period products that month. It means that they can engage with their learning fully. For staff, we are helping to enhance their engagement and productivity which in turn means better quality of education and service. Karen Dickinson, TAFE Queensland Gold Coast General Manager.²⁶

Despite these responses and new policies, the research about the impact of periods on women who are studying or working remains sparse. There is very

limited research about the impact of providing free period products in public toilets. Therefore, this study has been developed to begin exploring why and how we should support women more effectively, and what might be the most human-centred, respectful and effective support to women who are menstruating and want to continue participating in their daily activities.

This report describes the results of a preliminary study conducted in 2021 and 2022. The study is being expanded and developed, as we learn more about the issue. We hope to make further reports available as we continue this research.

The Study

The goal of this study was to gather feedback from Australian

1. high school students
2. students in tertiary education
3. employees.

The study aimed to explore the impact of periods on people's lives, assess how girls and women feel about their periods, what period products they use, if women use public toilets when menstruating, and if they experience period poverty. For those in high school, we also wanted to gain information about whether free period products at school impacted them in a positive way.

The study was approved by the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee Ethics Approval Number: 2000000787 and Ethics Approval Number: 2021000485. It was also approved by Department of Education in New South Wales and Queensland.

Method

A survey was created by reviewing the current literature and developing survey questions. The researchers were mindful that talking about periods can cause embarrassment and so the survey was carefully designed to avoid any potential negative impacts on participation. Six young women aged 14-18 years old were asked to individually test the survey and provided feedback before the survey was finalised.

The research design was a purposive sample as appropriate respondents needed to be approached and invited to participate. A selection of high schools were invited to promote the survey between June 2021 – February 2022. These schools were in Queensland and New South Wales and were schools that had a Dignity Vending Machine (DVM) providing free period products to students. The DVM is provided by the Australian charity, Share the Dignity.²⁷ Another survey was promoted in March – May 2022 by the organisation Pixii²⁸ and TAFE Queensland.²⁹

The survey was available online and respondents were told it was anonymous and that they could skip any question if they felt unable to answer or uncomfortable. The qualifying question was "Do you have periods?". If respondents answered yes, they then progressed to the survey. A majority of the questions used Likert scales to gain respondents' feedback such as Disagree/Agree, Just like me/Not like me, Every month/Never. There were questions that allowed respondents to provide an

individual written response, meaning researchers were able to gain a more in-depth understanding of the issue under investigation.

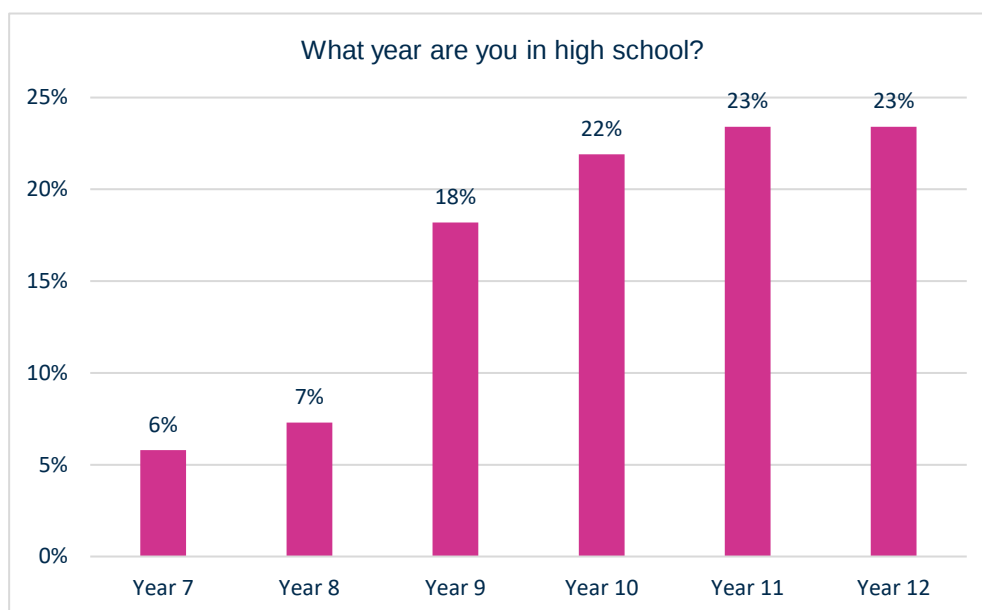
Only the survey offered to high school students collected information about whether the respondents were using the DVM and the impact of being able to access free period products on their lives.

High school students

Respondents

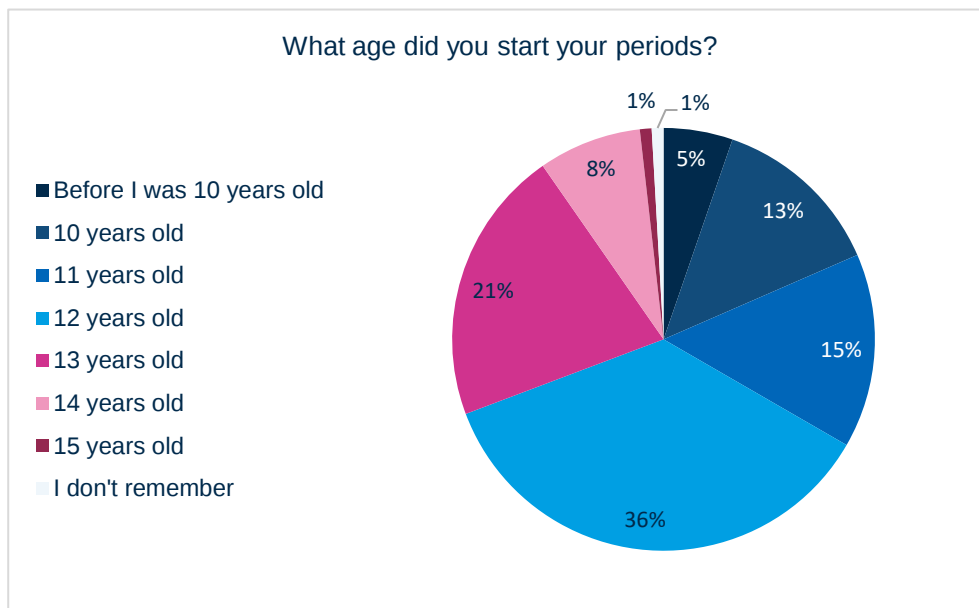
A total of 144 high school students responded to the survey, of which 75% completed the whole survey. Most (78%) were from Queensland, while 22% came from New South Wales. The majority (89.1%) identified as female and 96.4% have periods. Most students were in Grade 10, 11 and 12 (see Figure 1) and some students identified as Aboriginal (8.8%).

Figure 1: High school grade



It was most common for respondents to be either 12 (36%) or 13 (21%) years old when they first started having their period (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Age of first period

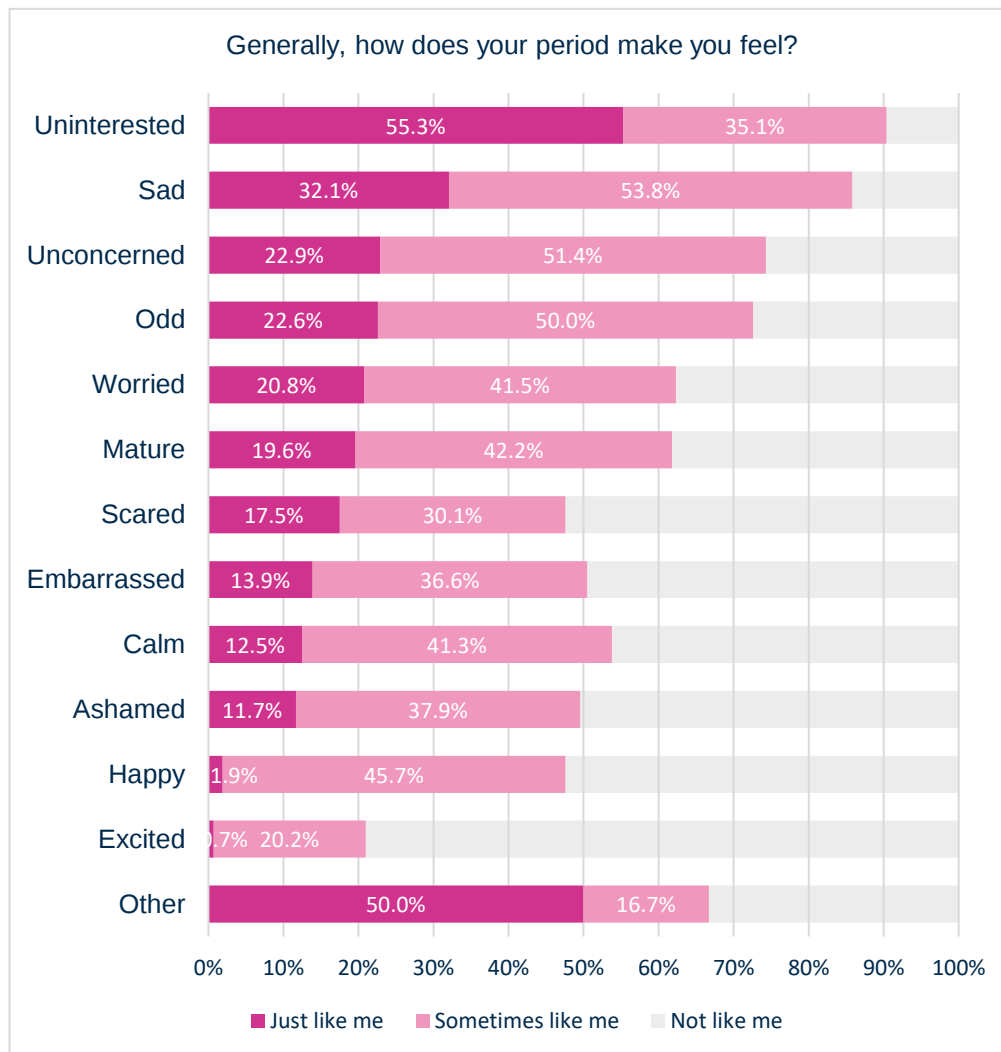


The impact of periods

The survey asked how periods made them feel and provided a list of possible feelings and thoughts. Respondents were able to choose more than one option and provide their own individual response. High school students identified that their periods most commonly made them feel uninterested, sad, unconcerned and odd (Figure 3). They could also write their own personal response and the most common responses in the 'other' category were:

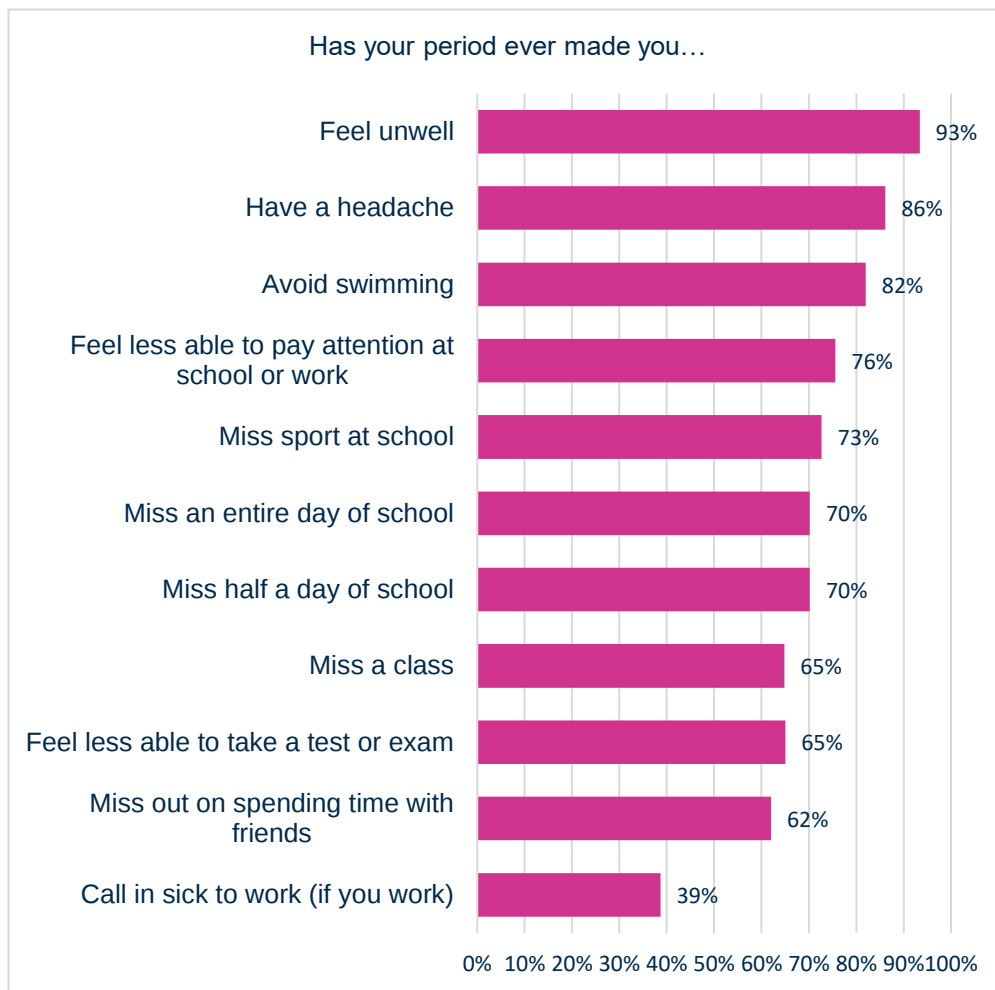
- Painful/sick/uncomfortable/tired
- Angry/annoyed/frustrated
- Disgusting/insecure

Figure 3: How does your period make you feel?



Nearly all the respondents indicated that their period has made them feel unwell or given them a headache (Figure 4). Three-quarters (76%) identified that they were less able to pay attention at school or work and 70% had missed an entire day of school due to their period.

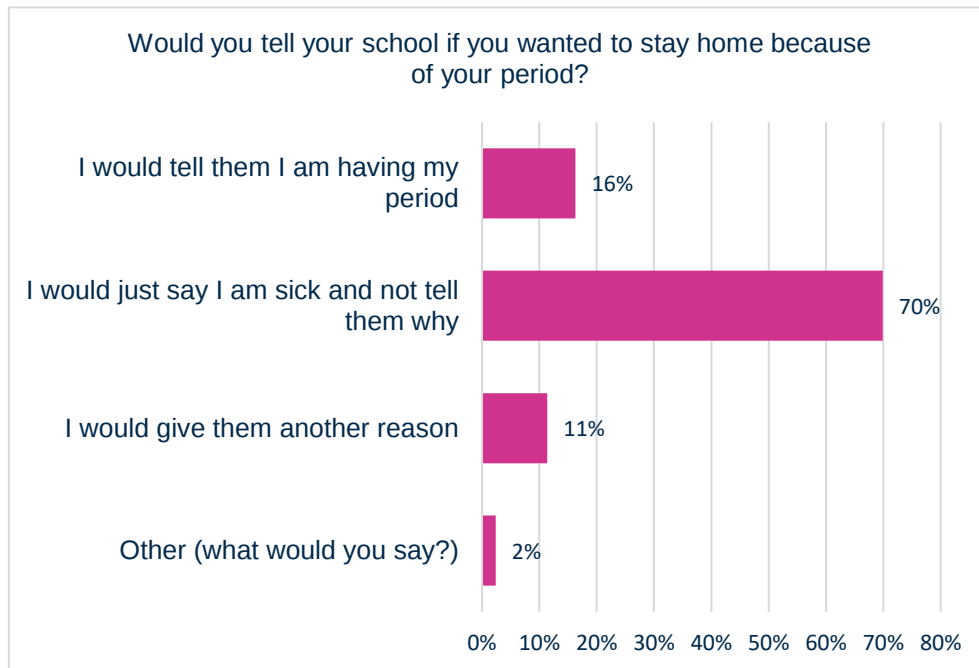
Figure 4: Consequences on high school students



Managing periods

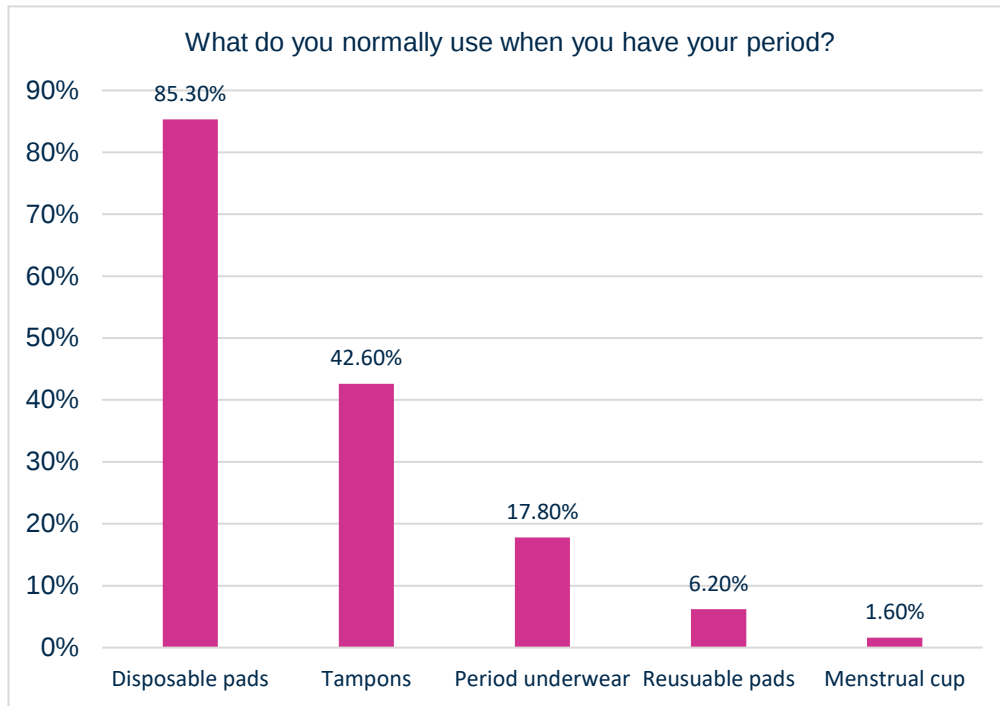
Most (70%) respondents indicated that they would tell the school they were sick if they wanted to stay home because of their period. Only 16% would tell them it was period related.

Figure 5: Information given to school



The majority of high school students are using disposable pads (85.3%) to manage their periods (Figure 6), although some high school students also use tampons, period underwear, reusable pads or a menstrual cup.

Figure 6: Period products used



Using public toilets

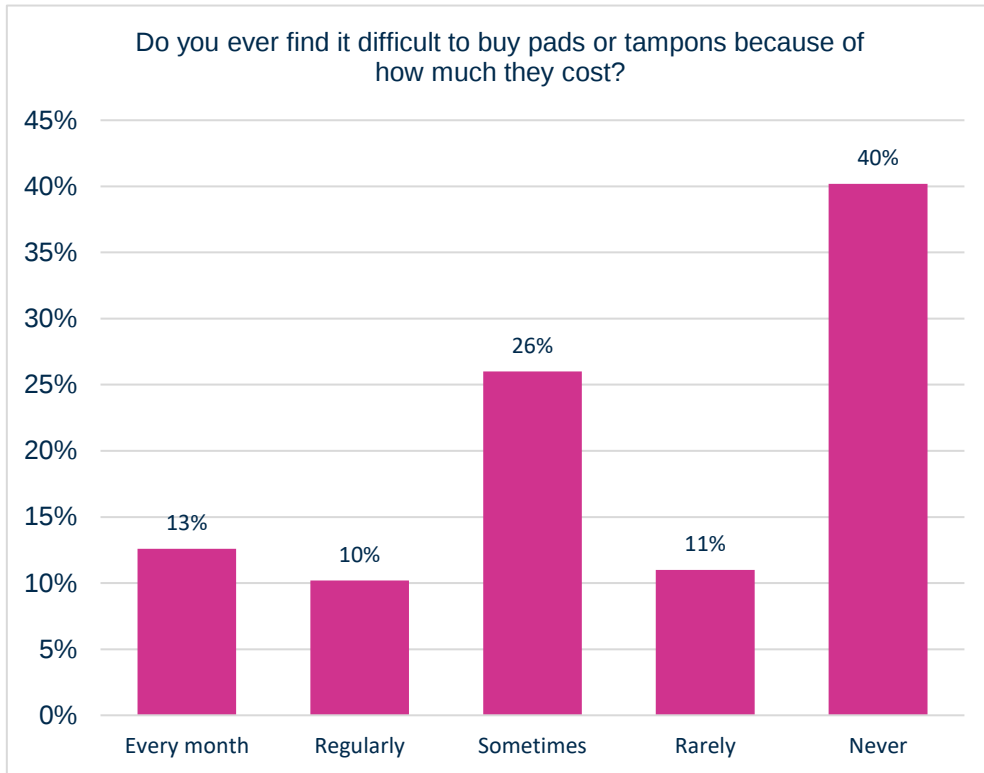
Most of the high school students (87.6%) indicated that they use the public toilets at school and 70.8% indicated they use the toilets to change their pad or tampon.

However, there were many reasons the students did not like to use the toilets at school. These include that they believed they were dirty and it was embarrassing to use the school toilets.

Cost of buying period products

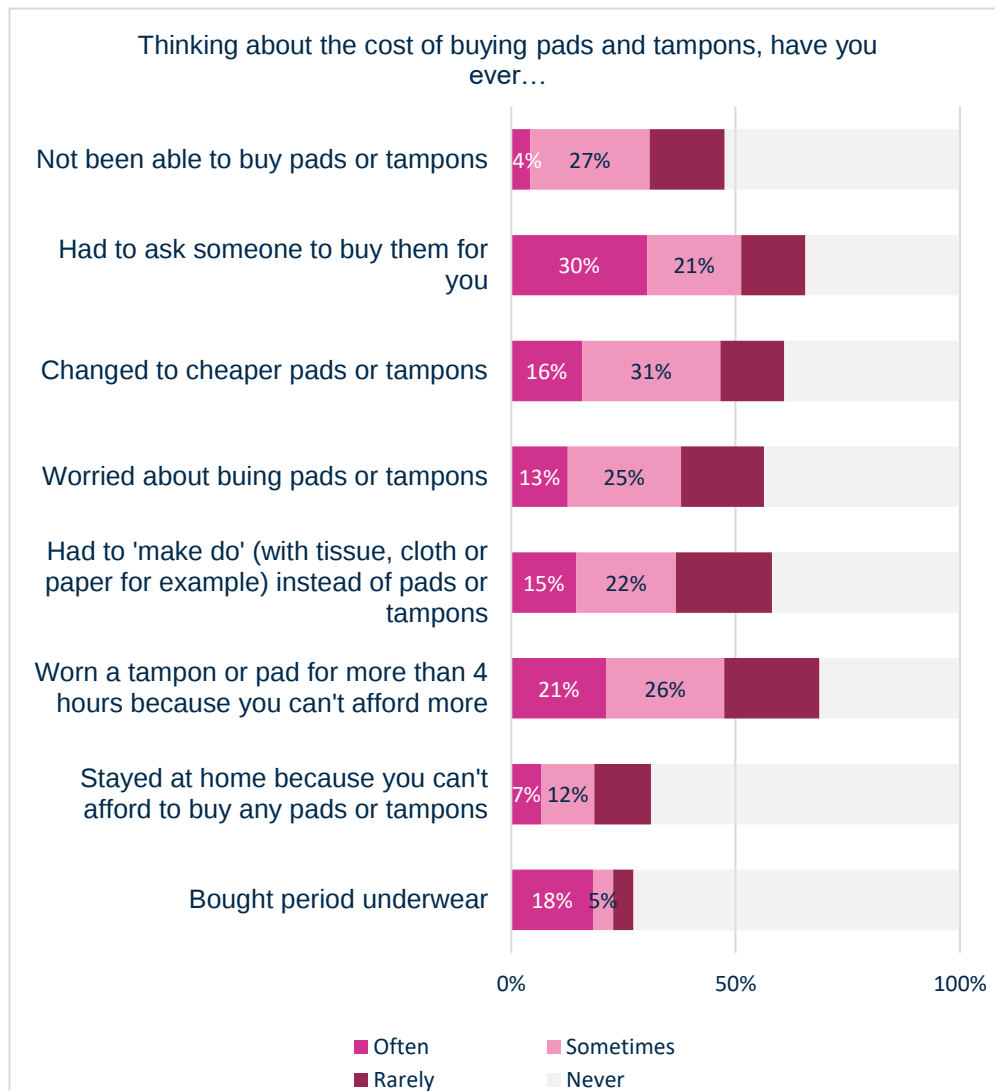
While 40.2% of students never had difficulty buying pads or tampons because of cost, 13% had difficulty every month (Figure 7) and 10% stated they find it difficult to buy pads or tampons regularly because of how much they cost.

Figure 7: Do you ever find it difficult to buy pads or tampons because of how much they cost?



Due to the cost of tampons and pads, 30% of students often had to ask someone else to buy them, while 21% had worn a tampon or pad for more than the recommended four hours. 15% often had to make do with tissue, cloth, or paper and 7% often stayed at home because they couldn't afford to buy pads or tampons.

Figure 8: Impact of cost of buying pads and tampons

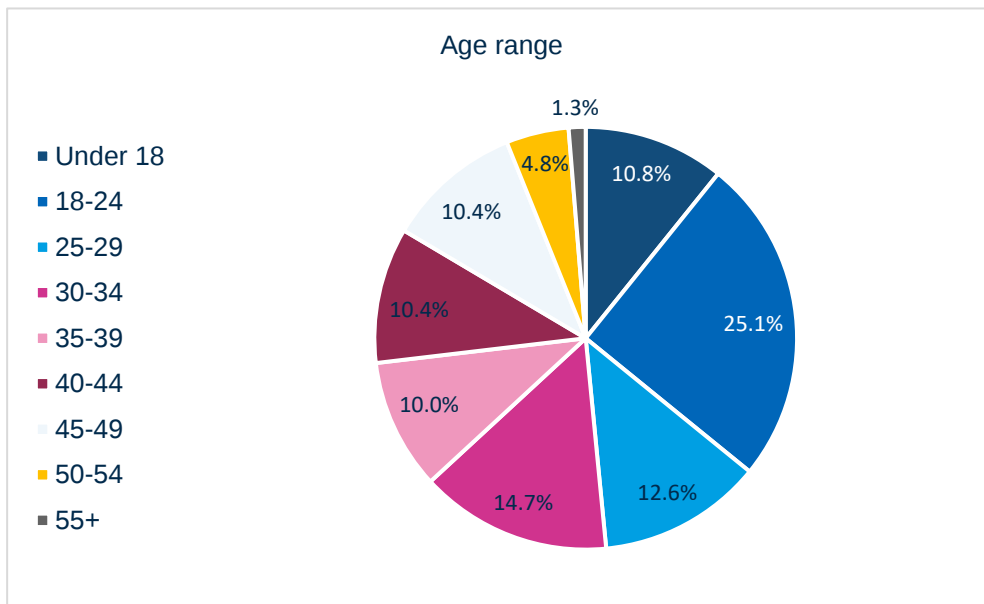


Tertiary students and employees

Respondents

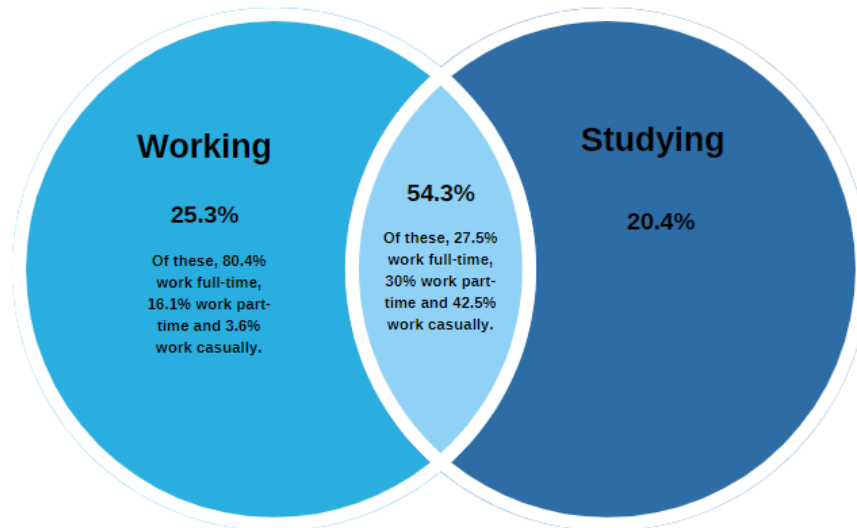
This survey was completed by 237 respondents of which 66.7% of respondents completed all questions. Most were female (96.6%), while 0.9% identified as male and 2.5% as another gender identity or did not specify. Some respondents identified as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (5.2%). The respondents' ages ranged from below 18 years of age (10.8%), 18-29 years (37.7%), 30 to 39 years (24.7%), 40-49 years (20.8%) and 50 years or older (6.1%).

Figure 9: Age range of tertiary students and employees



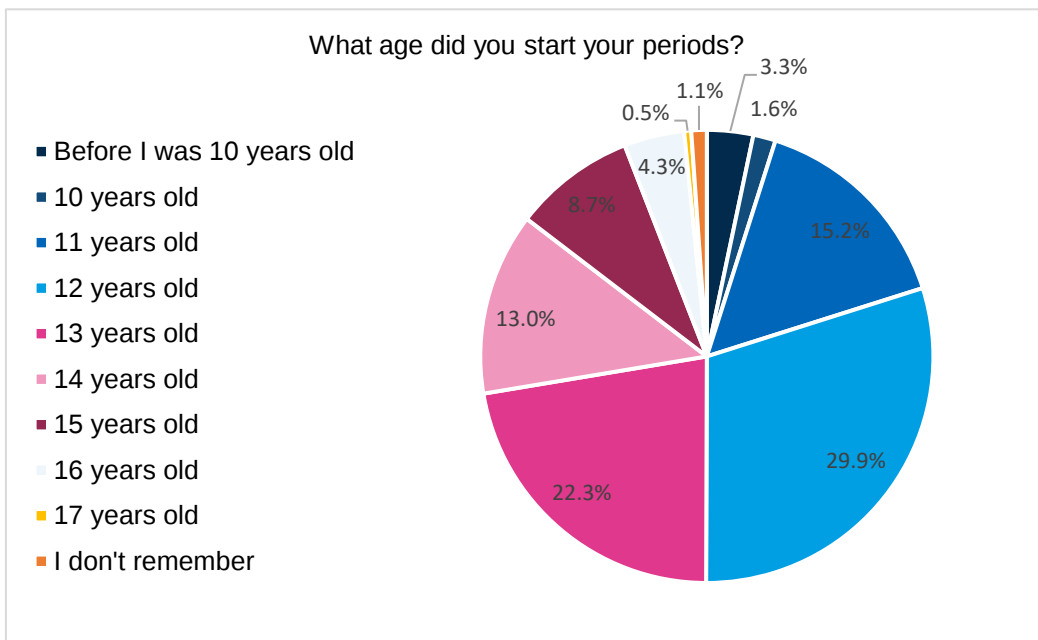
Respondents stated they were from Queensland (85.2%), New South Wales (7.6%), Victoria (6.4%), and South Australia (0.8%). Their employment status was, employed on full-time basis (35.3%), employed part-time (20.4%), casually employed (24%), and unemployed (20.4%). Of those unemployed, all but one person indicated that they were currently students. Most respondents were currently studying at TAFE (66.5%), at a university (6.3%) or elsewhere (1.8%). A further 25.3% indicated they were not currently studying.

Figure 10: Venn diagram of those working and studying



It was most common for respondents to have started their period at 12 (29.9%) or 13 years old (22.3%) (Figure 11).

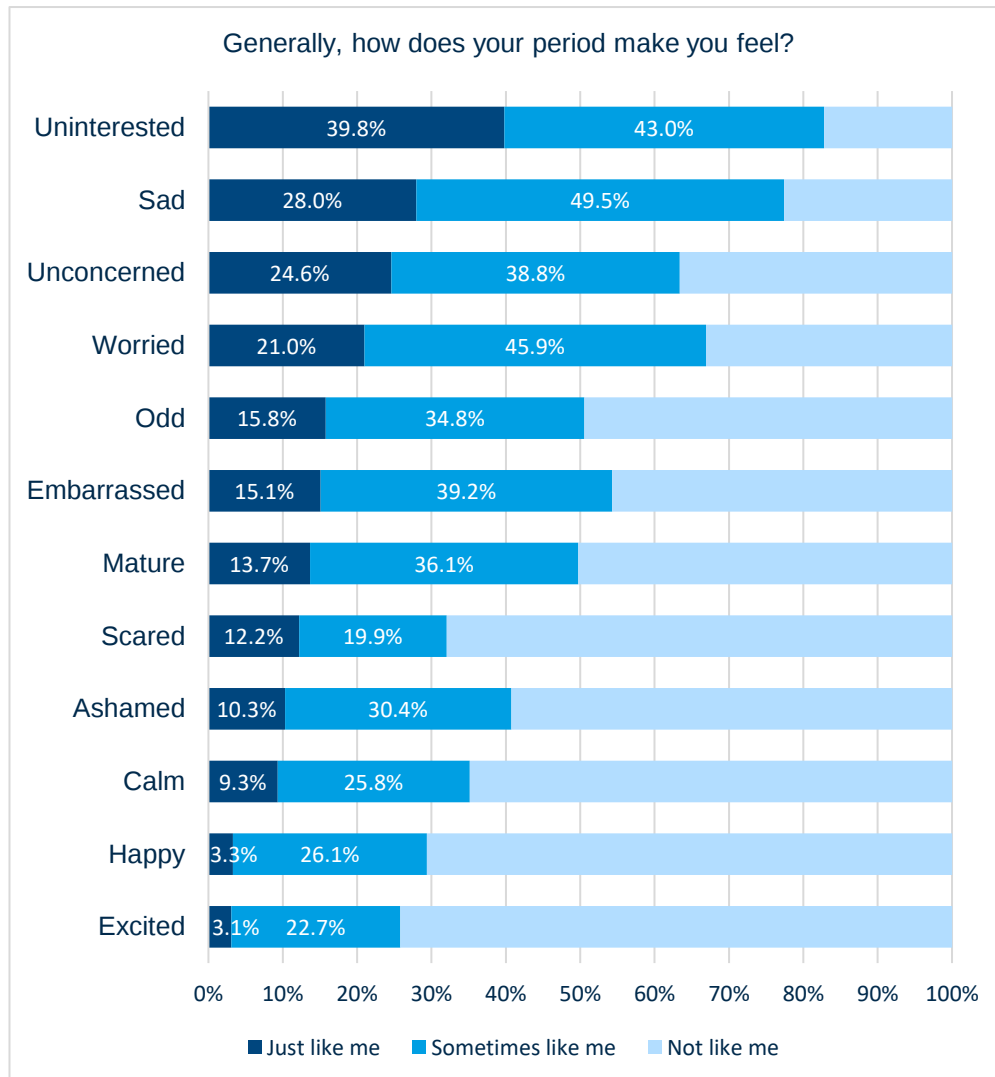
Figure 11: Age tertiary students and employees started their periods



The impact of periods

Of those who have periods, 66.9% of respondents reported feeling sometimes or always worried when having their period, and 54.3% of respondents reported feeling embarrassed when having their period. Some respondents felt a mix of emotions (Figure 12).

Figure 12: How does your period make you feel?



Survey respondents were also provided the opportunity to explain further about the ways that periods impact on their life in addition to the options in the preceding question. The key themes were pain, lower mood, anxiety over getting their period, relationship strain and missing everyday activities and certain events and opportunities. These are discussed in greater detail below.

Many respondents discussed the extreme pain they experience, especially for those that have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) or endometriosis.

Causes me to faint and not be able to move physically for about 3/7 days. Nonstop pain. I cannot go anywhere, can't eat, and can't sleep. Now I just hope that I can afford birth control every 3 months, so I don't experience this.

The pain does not allow me to perform normal daily tasks, such as cooking, going to work, etc, as I am confined to my bed and needing heat packs and pain relief.

Extreme pain, vomiting, unable to walk.

For some, periods come with a lower mood, including depression, anxiety, and exhaustion.

It makes me lose my self-esteem. It makes me feel disgusting.

Makes me feel low mood and sad. I prefer to withdraw and not be as active and chatty.

I always feel more depressed when on my period, as well as feeling extremely uncomfortable, so I tend to hide away in bed.

Leak through often as I can't change then often enough so worry about being around people as I think they can smell.

For many, the anxiety over when they will get their period affects their self-confidence and their choice of clothing.

[I'm] always being aware you could leak, spot etc.

As I'm irregular it can come at any time, and it can be heavier than anticipated. And I can be unprepared as I don't always have a cup on me. It changes what clothes I feel comfortable wearing.

Several respondents discussed how their relationships are strained during their periods including with their partner.

I feel uncomfortable sleeping next to my husband in bed with a pad on, if he wants cuddles and I haven't announced it I will push him away.

Often it leaves me feeling irritable and unfortunately impacts my relationship with my friends and family.

Finally, respondents discussed how their periods can affect their everyday activities.

I often put things off until it's over. I try to schedule things around my period (e.g., I don't go away, or book appointments, or plan social activities when I have my period).

I normally avoid doing any kind of activities such as socialising with friends, studying or doing extra-hour work. During my periods I prefer to stay at home in my own bubble.

Several respondents also reflected how their period made them miss certain social events and opportunities including affecting their working life.

I've had to miss social events like birthdays or dates because I've been bloated/uncomfortable/cramping/bleeding without being prepared properly.

I feel like I cannot do rational decisions. I often overreact, get irritated or easily cry which makes it hard in my work and private life to focus! [I've] missed important events and occasions.

I am anxious about starting new jobs or placements, or attending interviews, or doing anything that requires me to be "at my best" when I'm on my period.

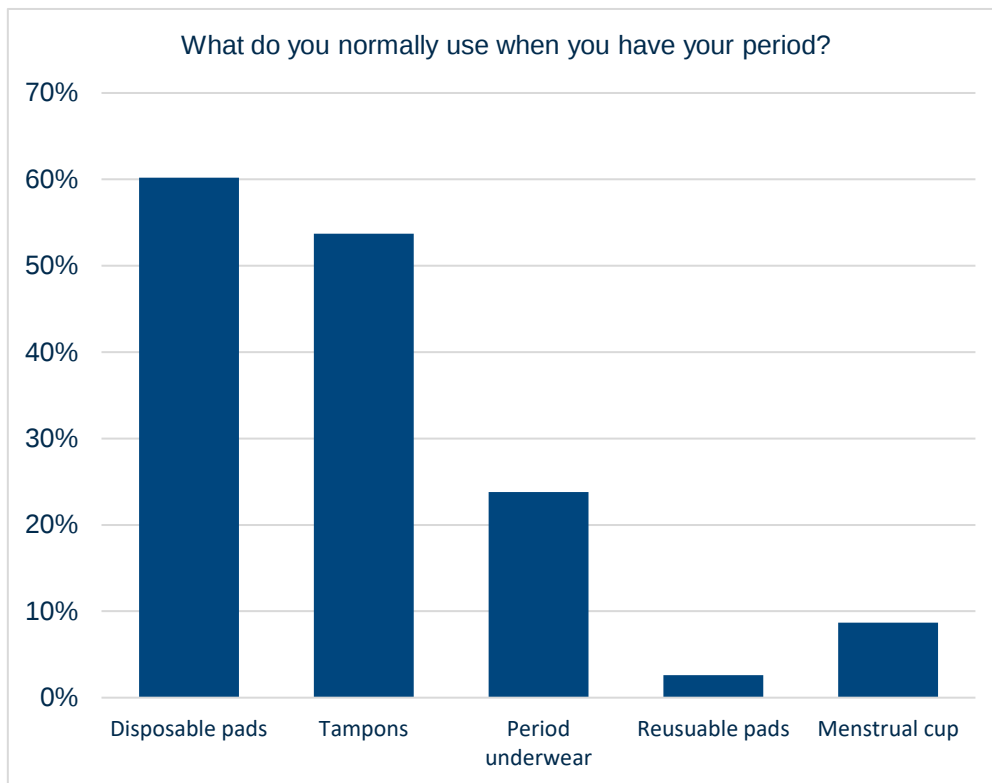
It also impacts on my ability to do full day callouts as a volunteer fire fighter - i.e., in places where I won't have access to a toilet.

Makes me feel exhausted and also hard to concentrate at work as have to go to bathroom every hour sometimes to change tampons at the beginning of my period, which can be awkward if you are delivering training or in a meeting.

Managing periods

Tertiary students and employees manage their periods by using disposable pads (60.2%), tampons (53.7), with some using period underwear, reusable pads, or a menstrual cup. (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Period products used by tertiary students and employees



Using public toilets

While the majority (97.2%) of respondents are using public toilets (at their place of work or study) during their period, there were also many reasons for avoiding using public toilets including embarrassment and concerns over cleanliness.

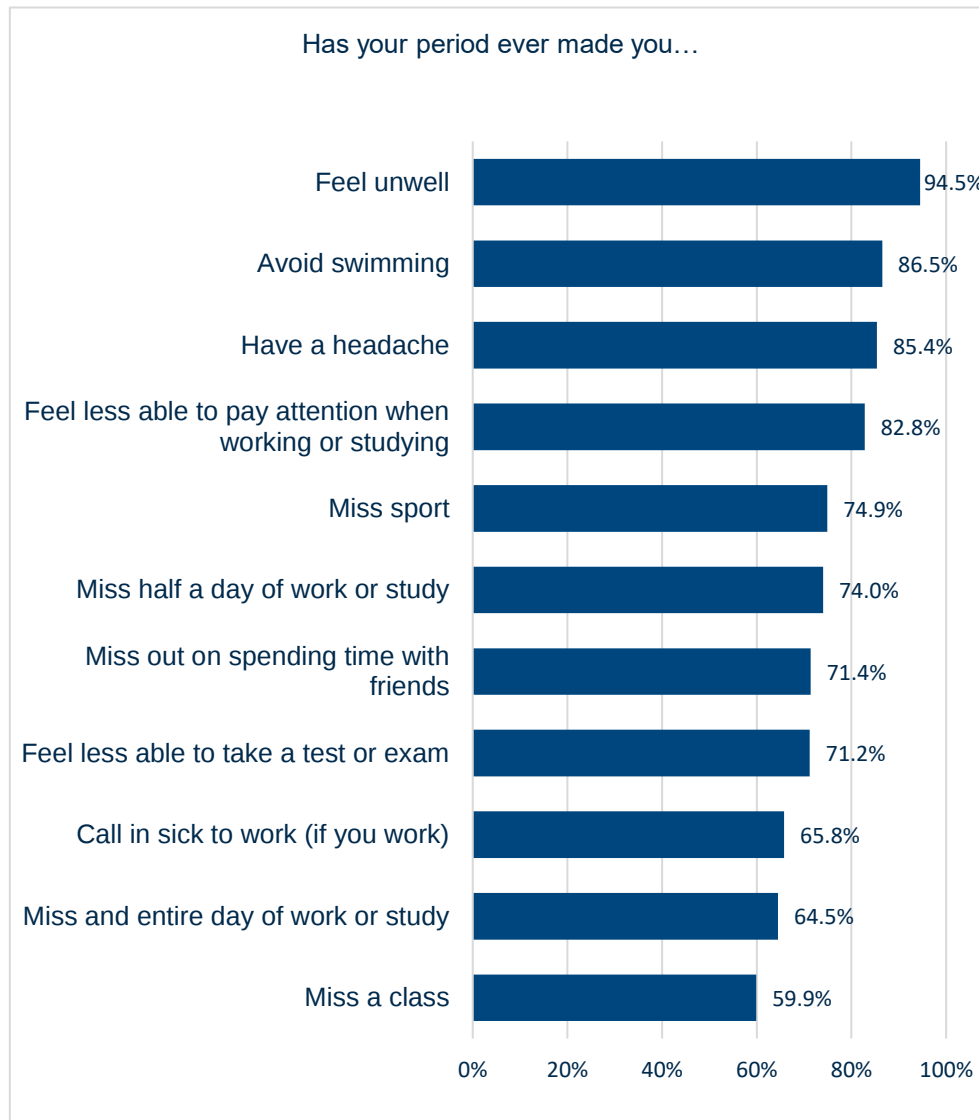
It sometimes makes me feel uncomfortable. I feel embarrassed if someone can hear me changing my pad.

I think public toilets are incredibly unhygienic and I would rather not use it.

The impact of periods

Overall, 58.6% of respondents reported missing half or an entire day of work or study due to having their period. There were many respondents who stated they avoided swimming, felt less able to take a test or exam, or missed out on spending time with friends.

Figure 14: Consequences of having your period



Other ways that periods impact on life included feeling pain and being unable to perform normal daily tasks, mood swings, anxiety and depression, which can affect

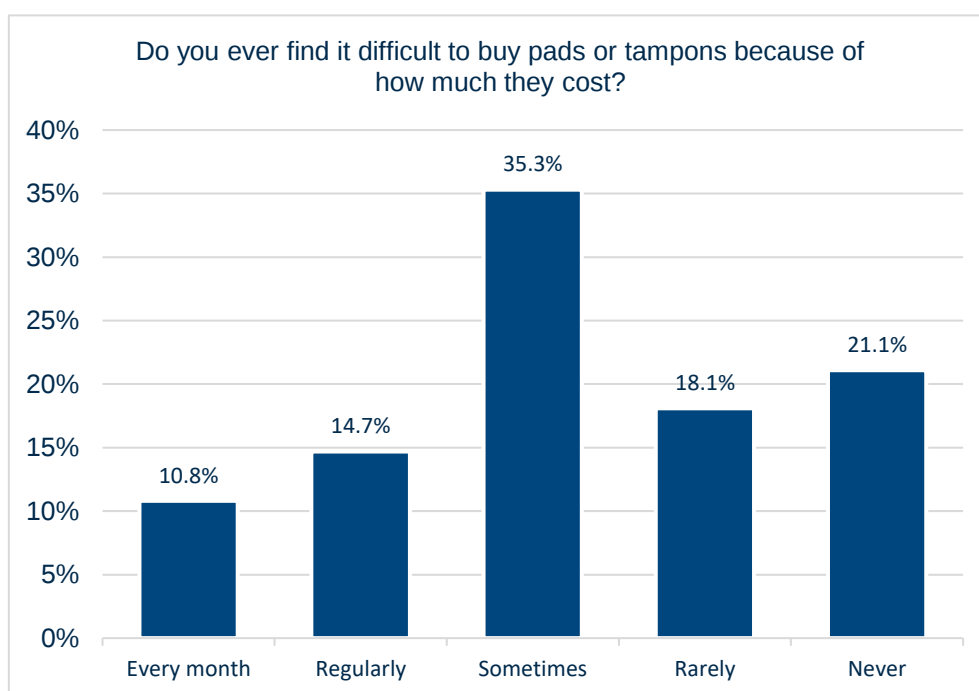
relationships with significant others. Others indicated that they must plan their life around their periods such as avoiding socialising and taking on extra work when they have their period.

More than half (62.2%) of the respondents indicated that they would tell their work they were sick if they wanted to stay home because of their period. Only 11.9% would tell them it was period related. For those studying, 59.3% would tell their teacher they were sick and only 9.3% would tell them it was because of their period.

Cost of buying period products

The survey revealed that 60.8% of respondents found it hard to purchase period products, with 10.8% struggling every month (Figure 15).

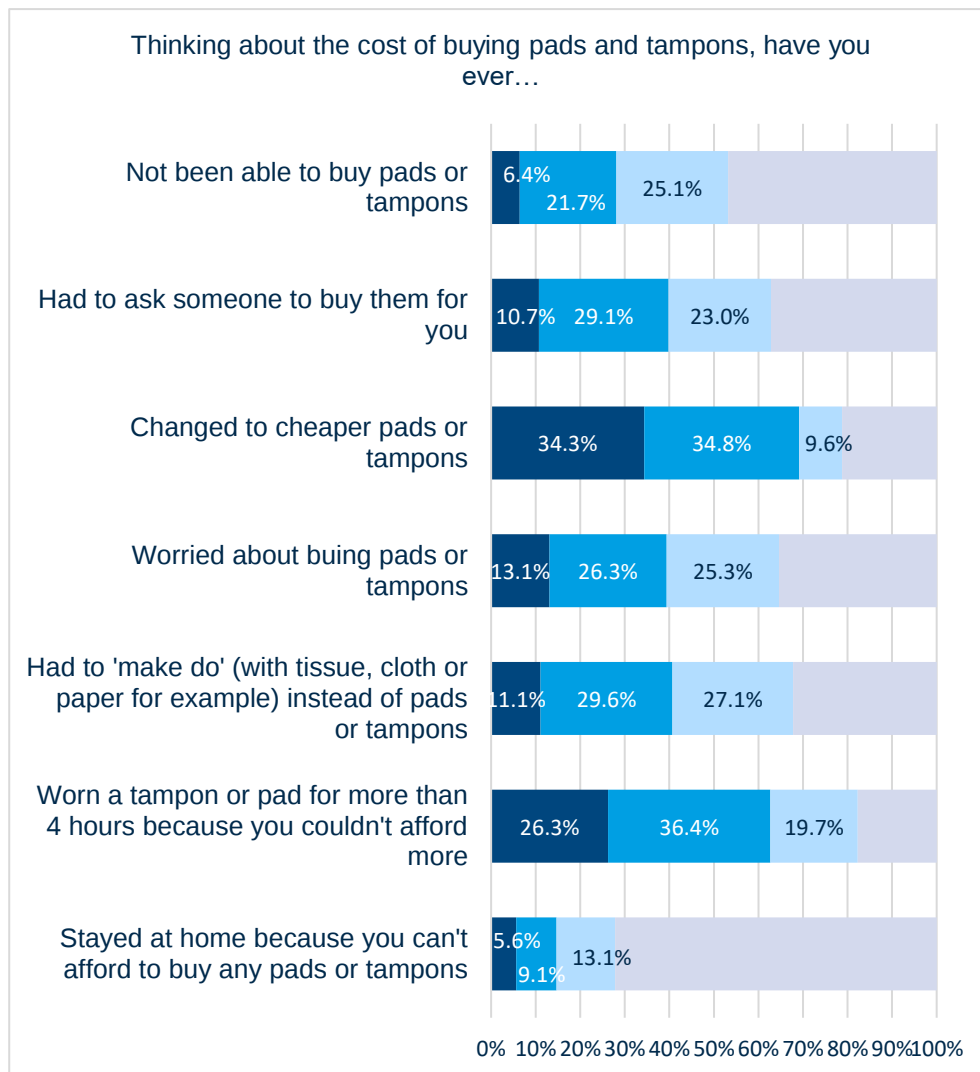
Figure 15: Difficulty tertiary students and employees have purchasing pads or tampons



The results showed that 69.1% of respondents have 'sometimes' or 'often' shifted to a cheaper period product due to financial hardship, 28.1% have at least sometimes been unable to buy products due to cost, while 40.7% have 'made do' due to price of period products.

A total of 62.7% have worn a tampon or pad for more than four hours due to having limited pads or tampons available and 14.7% have at least sometimes stayed at home due to the inability to afford pads or tampons. The survey also revealed that 39.8% of respondents have asked someone to purchase period products for them and 65% have had to ask someone for free pads or tampons because they needed them.

Figure 16: Impact of the cost on tertiary students' and employees' lives

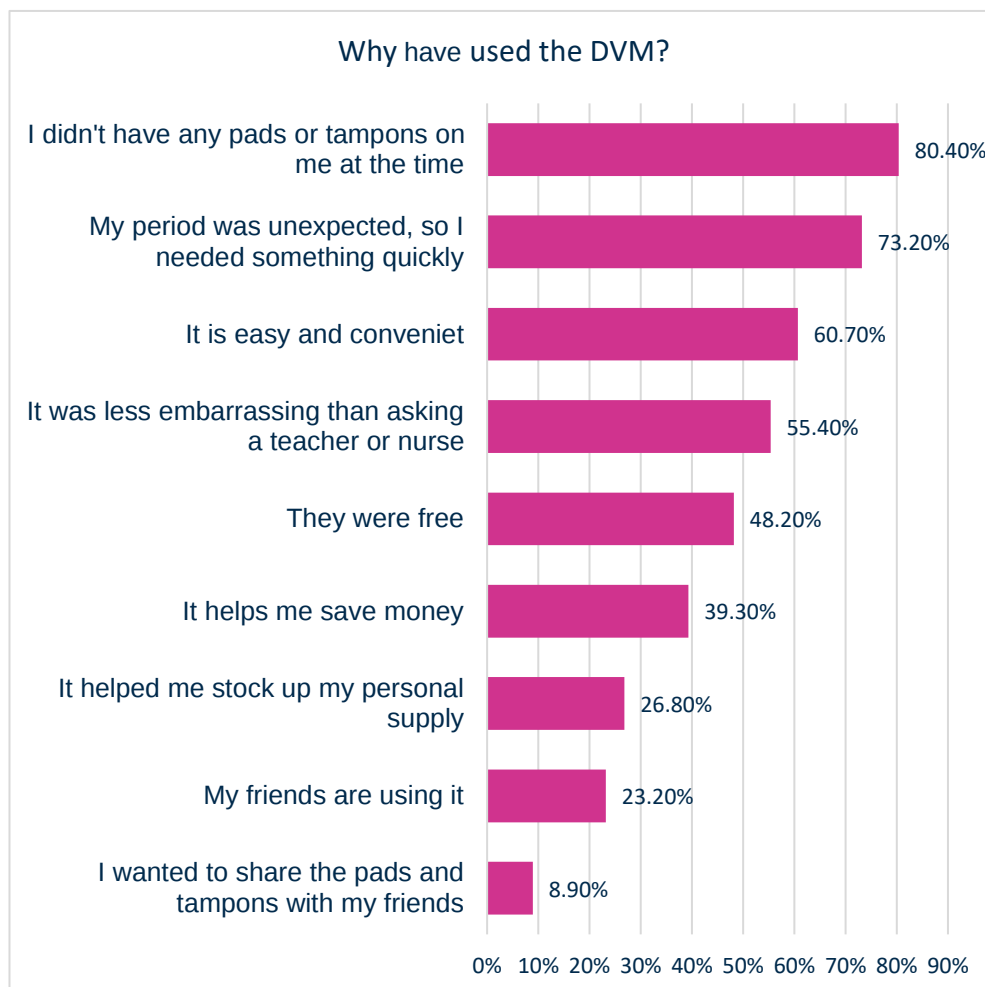


The impact of free period products

The survey conducted in high schools that have a DVM was also used to identify if the students use the DVM, and what the impact they believed having access to free period products was on their lives.

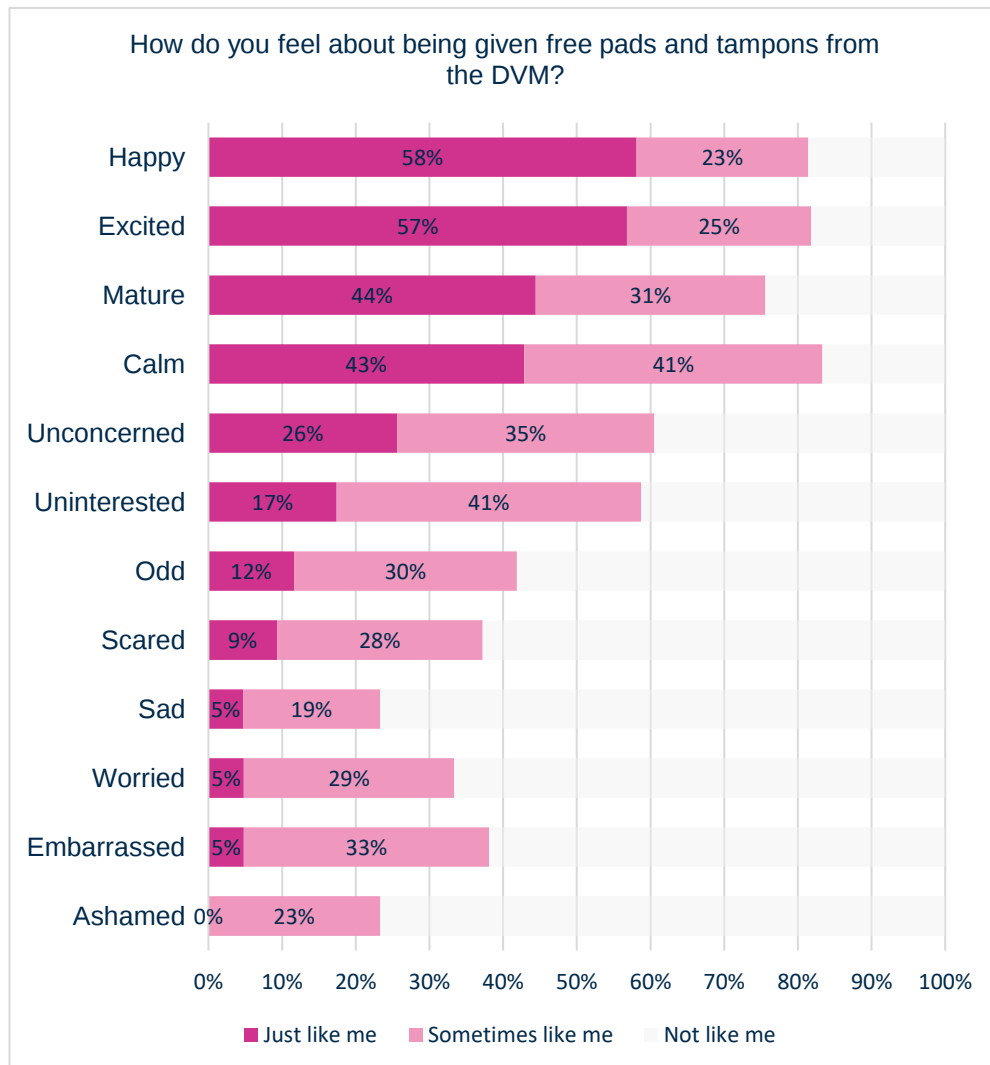
The survey results found that the majority (85.4%) indicated that their school has a DVM. Of these, 38.1% had used it for themselves, 24.8% for someone else, while 47.6% had not used the DVM at all. While the most common reasons for using the DVMs were around not having supplies at the time, more than half used them because it was less embarrassing than having to ask a teacher or nurse (Figure 17).

Figure 17: High school students' reasons for using the DVM



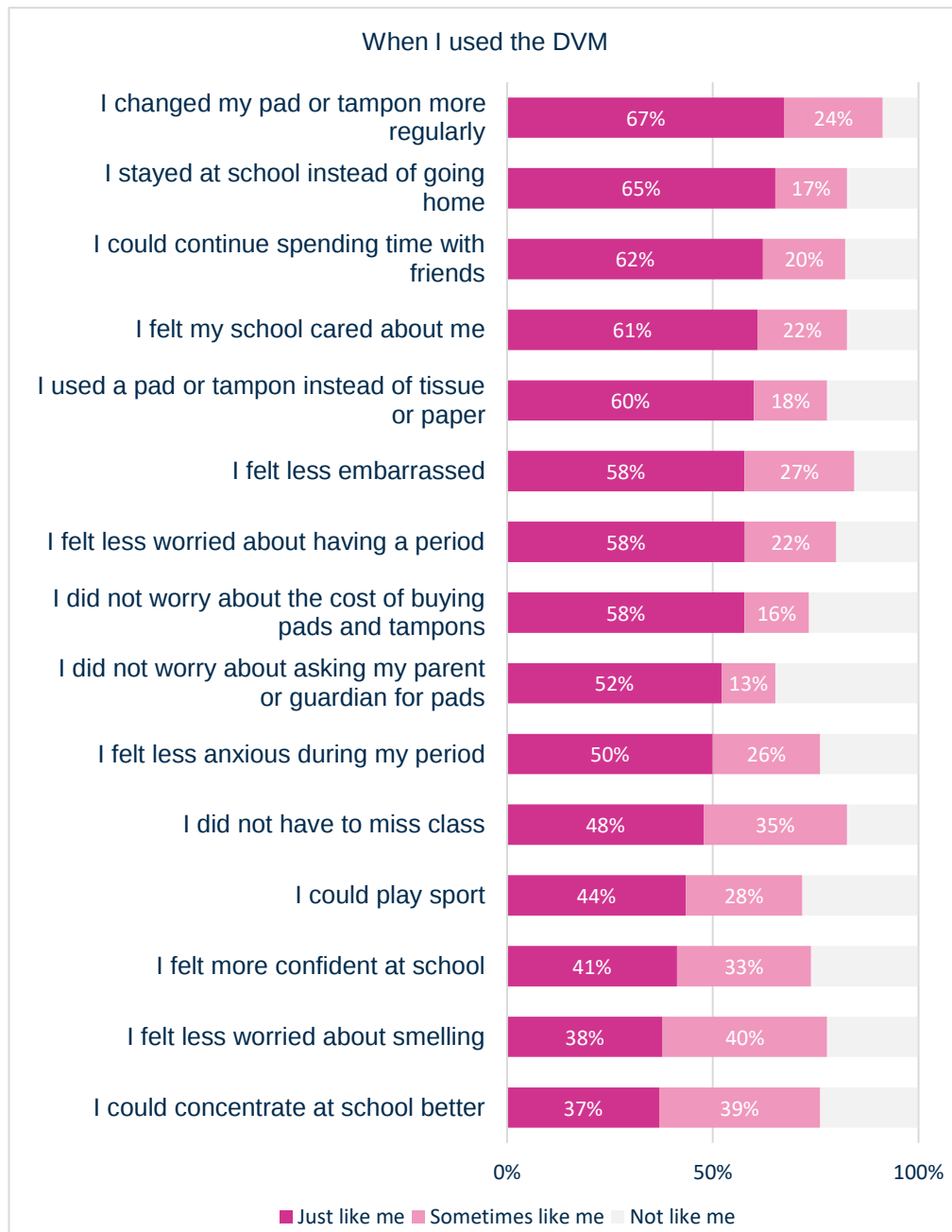
When asked how important they felt the DVMs were, 90% of high school students indicated that having free pads and tampons available at school was very important. A further 8% listed it as important.

Figure 18: High school students' feelings about using DVMs



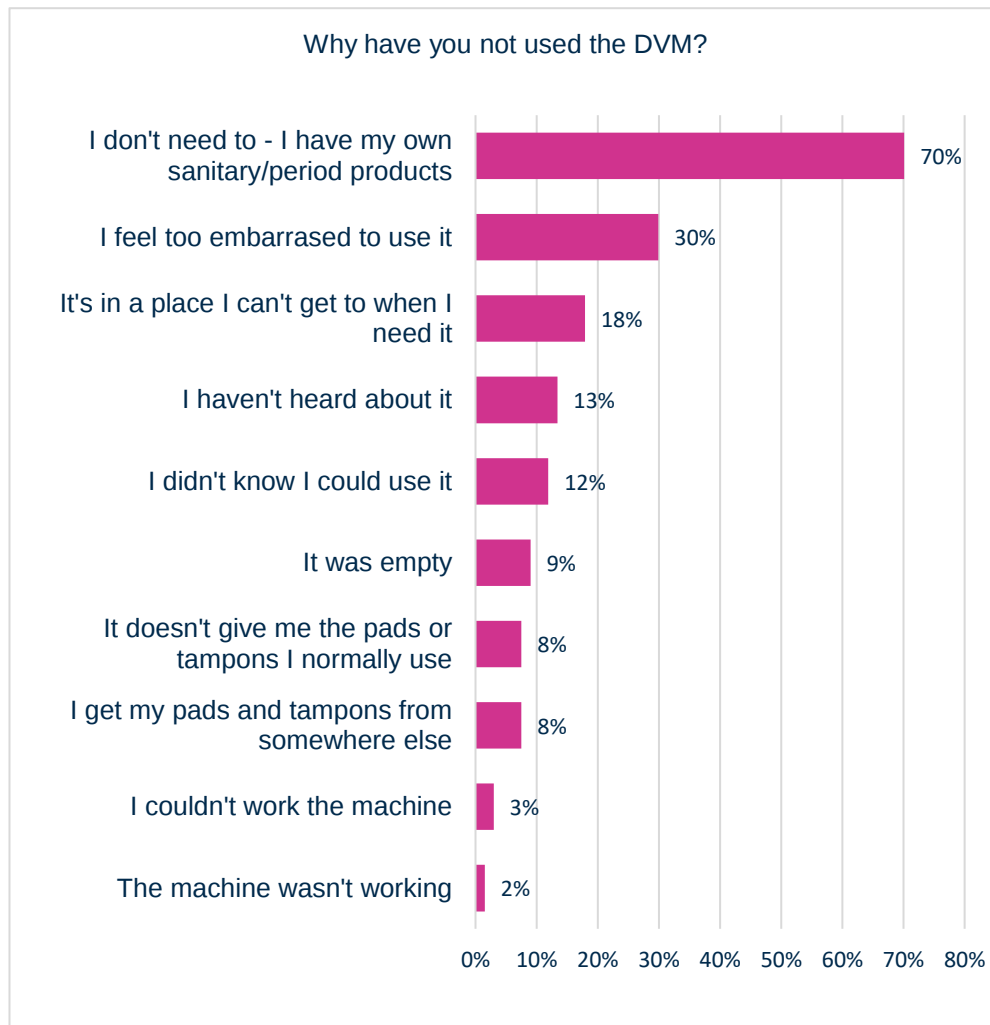
Many high school students stated that there was an impact on their lives because of having access to free period products at school (Figure 19). More than 60% changed their pad more regularly, stayed at school and could continue spending time with their friends. Furthermore, 61% indicated that they felt their school cared about them and 60% were able to use a pad or tampon instead of tissue or paper.

Figure 19: Impact of using the DVM on high school students



The main reason that some students did not use the DVM was because they did not need to while 30% of students identified that they were embarrassed to use it (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Reasons high school students' do not use the DVM



High school students provided feedback on several ways students could be encouraged to use the DVMs. The most common responses were to place them in the bathroom rather than in the school office so students can discretely access them and letting students know that they have one and how to use it, which would help break the stigma around using it.

Discussion

This preliminary study about the impact of periods is very important. It provides evidence that women can have many, and often mixed, emotions about periods as periods can impact their productivity, mental and emotional health, relationships, attendance at work and performance.

The results show that for many people periods in some way impact on their ability to attend work or study, with 70% of high school students stating periods have made them miss a day of school and 66% of tertiary students and employees stating periods can be the cause of them being sick and being absent from work or study. Many respondents provided some insight into the challenges that many women face when they have their period, including pain and emotional anxiety.

The study suggests that many girls and women do not like using public toilets and this impacts their ability to maintain their menstrual health. It may mean they want to stay at home during their period. There is clear evidence that there continues to be menstrual stigma and taboo in Australian culture and this can affect women's self-confidence. This might also reduce the likelihood of women taking free period products in bathrooms when available.

This study revealed that period poverty is an ongoing challenge for many students and women. There were 13% of high school students who stated they have difficulty buying period products every month and another 10% who state they regularly find it difficult to buy period products. The consequences include staying at home (19%) or using tissue, cloth or paper to make do (37%). Over half (60.8%) of tertiary students and employee respondents stated they have found it hard to purchase period products with 10.8% struggling every month. This is similar to other studies such as the study conducted in the United States with 184 low-income women, with research finding that over 60% experienced difficulty purchasing period products some months, or every month.³⁰

The concern about high numbers of women experiencing period poverty is that it puts women at greater risk of discomfort, irritation, and urogenital infection.³¹ It may also increase the risk of adverse sexual and reproductive health.

This study suggests that there are students and employees that need support to manage their periods with dignity. Workplace policies could support women who are unwell, clean bathrooms could support women by making them feel more comfortable, and free period products in bathrooms could reduce period poverty and improve mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.

The question is, are we as a society providing the necessary knowledge, facilities and cultural environment to support women to manage menstruation hygienically and with dignity?³² Should places where women study and work be doing more to ensure that periods are destigmatised, and women's health is prioritised?

Further research is needed to explore if free period products in places of study and work are being accessed, and the impact this is having on women's lives.

References

-
- ¹ Hall, N. L. (2021). From “period poverty” to “period parity” to meet menstrual health needs. *Med* 2(5), 469–472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.medj.2021.03.001>
- ² Ismail, K., Pedro, A., & Andipatin, M. (2016). Exploring a sample of university students’ perceptions of menstruation. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 26(4), 394–396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2016.1208962>
- ³ Findlay, R. J., Macrae, E. H. R., Whyte, I. Y., Easton, C., & Forrest (née Whyte), L. J. (2020). How the menstrual cycle and menstruation affect sporting performance: experiences and perceptions of elite female rugby players. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 54(18), 1108–1113. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2019-101486>
- ⁴ Cronjé, H., & Kritzing, I. (1991). Menstruation: symptoms, management and attitudes in university students. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, 35(2), 147–150. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0020-7292\(91\)90818-P](https://doi.org/10.1016/0020-7292(91)90818-P)
- ⁵ Schoep, M., Adang, E. M., Maas, J., Bie, B. D., Aarts, J. W., & Nieboer, T. (2019). Productivity loss due to menstruation-related symptoms: a nationwide cross-sectional survey among 32 748 women. *BMJ Open*, 9(6), e026186–e026186. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-026186>
- ⁶ Schoep, M., Adang, E. M., Maas, J., Bie, B. D., Aarts, J. W., & Nieboer, T. (2019). Productivity loss due to menstruation-related symptoms: a nationwide cross-sectional survey among 32 748 women. *BMJ Open*, 9(6), e026186–e026186. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-026186>
- ⁷ Rodriguez, L. (2021, October 1). *20 Places Around the World Where Governments Provide Free Period Products*. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/free-period-products-countries-cities-worldwide/>
- ⁸ Share the Dignity. (2022). *Share the Dignity*. <https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/>
- ⁹ ABC. (2021, June 24). *Menstrual leave adopted by more Australian businesses as debate grows around policy*. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-24/menstrual-leave-australia-womens-health-employment-workplace/100235920>
- ¹⁰ Victorian Women’s Trust. (2017, May 23). *Why we’ve introduced a menstrual policy and you should too*. <https://www.vwt.org.au/blog-menstrual-policy/>
- ¹¹ City of Melbourne. (2021). *Period poverty*. City of Melbourne. <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/gender-equality/Pages/period-poverty.aspx#:~:text=To%20help%20address%20period%20poverty,Library%20at%20the%20Dock>
-

-
- ¹² SAGE. (2021, November 26). *Period Positivity at Monash*. Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE).
<https://sciencegenderequity.org.au/resources/initiatives/period-positivity-at-monash/>
- ¹³ Guzman, A. (2015, August 28) *UI to save nearly \$30,000 ... on tampons*. The Daily Iowan. <https://dailyiowan.com/2015/08/28/ui-saves-nearly-30000-on-tampons/>
- ¹⁴ Victorian Government. (2022, March 17). *Free sanitary pads and tampons in all government schools*. Victorian Government. <https://www.vic.gov.au/free-sanitary-pads-and-tampons-all-government-schools>
- ¹⁵ Minister for Education and Training. (2021, July 23,) *Supporting our students to access basic needs*. Tasmania Government.
https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/site_resources_2015/additional_releases/supporting_our_students_to_access_basic_needs
- ¹⁶ Minister for Women. (2022, June 18,). *Free sanitary pads and tampons in public hospitals*. Tasmania Government.
https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/site_resources_2015/additional_releases/free_sanitary_pads_and_tampons_in_public_hospitals
- ¹⁷ Office of the Chief Minister. (2021, March 8,). *Providing Free Sanitary Products for our Students*. Northern Territory Government.
<https://newsroom.nt.gov.au/article?id=34229>
- ¹⁸ NSW Government – Education. (2022, March 7). *Free menstrual hygiene products for public schools*. NSW Government.
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/free-menstrual-hygiene-products-for-public-schools>
- ¹⁹ NSW Government. (2022, April 5). *Access to Sanitary Pads and Tampons in NSW Health Services*. Health and Social Policy Information Bulletin.
https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/IB2022_008.pdf
- ²⁰ Queensland Government. (2022, June 7) *Share the Dignity in Queensland schools*. Queensland Government. <https://education.qld.gov.au/students/student-health-safety-wellbeing/student-health/share-the-dignity#:~:text=Commencing%20in%20July%202022%2C%20the,free%20sanitary%20products%20to%20students.>
- ²¹ TAFE Queensland. (2022). *TAFE Queensland leads the way to address period poverty*. TAFE Queensland. <https://tafeqld.edu.au/news-and-events/news/2022/period-positivity-project>
- ²² Department of Education. (2022, June 15). *Period product scheme for schools and colleges in England*. Department of Education.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england>
-

-
- ²³ Waters, L. (2021, May 28). *Greens launch policy: \$25 million a year to provide free period products in Australian schools*. The Greens. <https://greensmps.org.au/articles/greens-launch-policy-25-million-year-provide-free-period-products-australian-schools-0>
- ²⁴ Tasmania Government. (2022, June 18). *Free sanitary pads and tampons in public hospitals*. Tasmania Government. https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/site_resources_2015/additional_releases/free_sanitary_pads_and_tampons_in_public_hospitals
- ²⁵ Keck, M. (April, 28, 2021). *Melbourne Will Fight Period Poverty by Introducing Free Pads & Tampons Across the City*. Global Citizen. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/melbourne-fight-period-poverty-free-pads-tampons/>
- ²⁶ Queensland Government. (2022, June 7) *Share the Dignity in Queensland schools*. Queensland Government. <https://education.qld.gov.au/students/student-health-safety-wellbeing/student-health/share-the-dignity#:~:text=Commencing%20in%20July%202022%2C%20the,free%20sanitary%20products%20to%20students.>
- ²⁷ Share the Dignity. (2022). *Get ready for our August Dignity Drive! Share the Dignity*. <https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/>
- ²⁸ Pixii. (2020). *Australia's most eco-friendly period products*. <https://www.pixii.com.au>
- ²⁹ TAFE Queensland. (2022). *TAFE Queensland leads the way to address period poverty*. <https://tafeqld.edu.au/news-and-events/news/2022/period-positivity-project>
- ³⁰ Sommer, M., Kjellén, M., & Pensulo, C. (2013). Girls' and women's unmet needs for menstrual hygiene management (MHM): The interactions between MHM and sanitation systems in low-income countries. *Journal of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for Development*, 3(3), 283–297. <https://doi.org/10.2166/washdev.2013.101>
- ³¹ Das, P., Baker, K. K., Dutta, A., Swain, T., Sahoo, S., Das, B. S., Panda, B., Nayak, A., Bara, M., Bilung, B., Mishra, P. R., Panigrahi, P., Cairncross, S., & Torondel, B. (2015). Menstrual hygiene practices, WASH access and the risk of urogenital infection in women from Odisha, India. *PloS One*, 10(6), e0130777–e0130777. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0130777>
- ³² Mahon, T., & Fernandes, M. (2010). Menstrual hygiene in South Asia: a neglected issue for WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) programmes. *Gender and Development*, 18(1), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552071003600083>
-