



The Hon Bill Shorten MP
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Date 19 August 2024

Dear Minister Shorten

RE: INCLUSION OF MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS AS LIFESTYLE RELATED ITEMS NOT FOR NDIS SUPPORT

Zonta International is a leading global organisation of individuals working together to build a better world for women and girls. Zonta International envisions a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential.

Zonta Australia provides a unified voice for Zonta in Australia on issues of national importance as they impact women and girls. It represents the three Zonta Districts in Australia. Each District represents many local clubs across the country.

- District 22 - Queensland, Northern Rivers NSW and a club in formation in PNG. 958 Members in 44 Clubs
- District 23 - Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Victoria and Tasmania. 690 Members in 34 Clubs
- District 24 – New South Wales, (not the Northern Rivers section), Australian Capital Territory. 427 Members in 26 Clubs

Zonta Australia is aware that the Australian Government is currently conducting a consultation on draft lists of NDIS Supports. We acknowledge the importance of reducing inefficiencies and wasted resources so that this vital scheme remains sustainable into the future. Zonta Australia welcomes the undoubted commitment of the Australian Labor Government to providing a fair and equitable system of supports to people with disabilities, while eliminating rorts and unnecessary expenditure.

It is from this perspective that Zonta Australia is writing to request in the strongest possible terms that menstrual products NOT BE included in the Supports that are not 'NDIS supports' under the category of Day-to-Day Living Costs. We are alarmed to see that this proposal is included in the *Consultation on draft lists of NDIS supports – Discussion paper*.



Menstrual products have been categorised as “Lifestyle related” alongside cigarettes, vapes and smoking paraphernalia, legal cannabis, gambling, gaming PCs, and many other clearly optional leisure items. We can only assume that the inclusion of menstrual products in the Lifestyle category is an error or an oversight, as it makes no sense from any perspective.

There can be no doubt that menstrual items are essential items for all women who are in the menstruating stage of their lives. This applies equally to women with disabilities who often need specific products to provide effective and comfortable protection. According to Share the Dignity’s 2024 Bloody Big Survey Report, 78% of people with disabilities already struggle to afford period products. This recommendation would only exacerbate the problem.

In summary, Zonta Australia asserts that menstrual products for women with disabilities should be included as assistive products for personal care under the NDIS. We anticipate that this recommendation in the Discussion Paper will be withdrawn from the “Not for Support Lists before the NDIS legislation is presented to the Parliament.

We look forward to a response and also a positive outcome for all women from this request.

Yours sincerely

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BUILD A BETTER WORLD
FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Cc Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Women
Minister for Finance