

Teachers buy tampons for girls

By TIM WILLIAMS

The Advertiser

Thursday 28th November 2019

265 words

Page 10 | Section: NEWS

117cm on the page



Teachers buy tampons for girls

TIM WILLIAMS

TEACHERS are missing lunch breaks and using their own money up to three times a week to buy sanitary products and even underwear for students, a report says.

Almost 50 public high schools were surveyed by SA's Commissioner for Children and Young People about "period poverty". The majority reported "word of mouth" was the only way girls found out they could ask for help.

In the "vast majority" of schools there was no formal policy, just ad hoc "emergency measures" championed by in-

dividual teachers who weren't always available. That left girls "embarrassed or shamed by the often convoluted and informal processes that they need to follow", sometimes having to ask multiple staff members, including men.

One in five schools said female teachers were buying sanitary products for students with their own money, including trips to chemists and supermarkets in lunch breaks.

"One teacher ... had recently purchased for three students in one week," the report says. "Another teacher reported frequently calling parents to bring in clean underwear

from home or when this was not possible, (the teacher) had to purchase it for students." A third of schools engaged a manufacturer or charity to supply sanitary products, but "these partnerships are getting harder to secure, are inconsistent and on the decline".

Fewer than one in 10 schools had dispensing machines in toilets, typically costing \$1 to use. SA Best and Labor are pushing a Bill for free dispensing machines in schools. Almost all schools surveyed wanted government funding, but the State Government wants to grow partnerships with not-for-profits.