

Low waste menstrual products

Around 300 million tampons and 500 million pads are sold in Australia each year*. The Sustainable Period Project estimates that with every period where only disposable pads and tampons are used, Australians spend up to \$20 and throw away one shopping bag full of plastics, fibres and packaging.

And with the average woman using over 10,000 disposable menstrual products in their lifetime, that's a lot of waste going to landfill.

For women and girls looking to reduce their menstrual product waste, there are several alternatives available including washable cloth pads, period underpants, and menstrual cups.

Although the up-front cost is higher for re-usable products, they provide better value in the long run*:

	Avg unit cost	No. of uses	Cost per use
Tampon	\$0.50	1	\$0.50
Disposable pad	\$0.40	1	\$0.40
Reusable pad	\$23.00	100	\$0.23
Period underwear	\$24.00	180	\$0.13
Menstrual cup	\$40.00	432	\$0.09



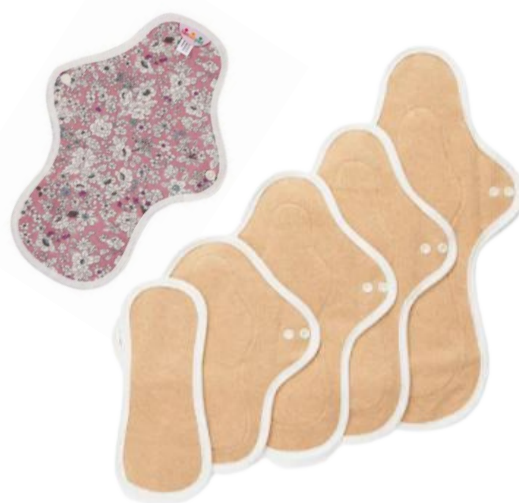
Re-usable cloth pads

Made from washable fabric and designed for different absorbencies to suit different period flows, these are an alternative to disposable pads. They may be made from cotton, hemp or bamboo fabrics, sometimes with a waterproof synthetic backing.

Cloth pads can be rinsed and washed in the washing machine and with proper care can last at least 5 years.

Cloth pads can be bought from retailers, online and there are also patterns available to make your own. For example:

<https://sustainableperiodproject.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/how-to-make-a-simple-cloth-pad.pdf>



Re-usable period underwear

Available in a range of styles, colours and absorbencies, period underpants are just like regular underpants except they have a built-in absorbent layers and can either replace disposable pads and tampons or be used with tampons or menstrual cups for extra protection.

They are moisture wicking and leak-proof and as least as slim as a disposable pad.

Period underpants are also a useful way to cut down on disposable pads and liners when you are expecting your next menstrual cycle to begin.

Period pants can be rinsed and washed in the washing machine and should last for as long as non-period underwear.



Re-usable menstrual cup

Made from medical-grade silicone, a menstrual cup is a small, flexible cup inserted in the vagina similar to a tampon, but it collects menstrual blood rather than absorbs it.

It is removed and emptied (into the toilet or sink) 2 – 4 times per day, depending on period flow, and can be kept in place for up to 12 hours. A menstrual cup is washed in warm water with a mild soap between uses and should be sterilized with boiling water before and after each menstrual cycle.

A single cup can last for many years.

Just like tampons, menstrual cups are suitable for swimming.



There is a lot of information online regarding the different re-usable menstrual products. Explore what is available and find a product or product combination which suits your personal preference.

Image credits: Love Luna, My Cup, Juju, Lunette, Hannahpad

Source * ACT Government - Transport Canberra and City Services. ACT NoWaste - www.act.gov.au/recyclopaedia

rethinkwaste.com.au