

Sponsor: Bass Coast College
Refuter: Albert Park College

Access and Distribution of Hygiene Products for Disadvantaged Persons Bill 2022

A Bill for an Act to establish procedures for disadvantaged persons to access hygiene items. This Bill legislates for the establishment of the Victorian Hygiene and Sanitary Supplies Assistance (VHSSA) and relieves financial stress from essential hygiene products by making them free. The Bill was written to address the reality that despite frameworks established to support access to sanitary items, there is a lack of acknowledgement for Victoria's most disadvantaged person/s. All Victorian citizens deserve the right to cleanliness and opportunities to achieve this.

The Bill is put in place for the biological, psychological, and social welfare of disadvantaged Victorians. It further upholds the basic human rights established under the *Human Rights Charter 2006* (Vic). This bill avoids unnecessary strain on the healthcare system by putting in place proactive measures for access and advocacy.

A Bill for an Act relating to Access and Distribution of Hygiene Products for Disadvantaged Persons to be enacted by the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament;

PART I—Preliminary

Clause 1 Purpose

The main purposes of this Act are—

- (a) To establish the VHSSA program which will:
 - (i) Provide hygienic items to disadvantaged persons and families.
- (b) Improve livelihoods of people under financial stress by:
 - (i) Relieving financial stress by making essential hygiene products free;
 - (iii) Increasing mental, physical, and social wellbeing all done by maintaining proper hygiene.

Clause 2 Commencement

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

Clause 3 Definitions

In this Bill—

- (a) *Hygiene items* means basic toiletries and sanitary items including, but not limited to, soap, shampoo, conditioner, pads, tampons, menstrual cups, deodorant, toothpaste, razor blades, tissues, and toilet paper;
- (b) *Income* means a particular earning maximum that deems you eligible for supplies;
- (c) *Disadvantaged person* means a person eligible for healthcare services such as a healthcare card;
- (d) *A household* means a house and its occupants regarded as a unit;
- (e) *VHSSA* means Victorian Hygiene and Sanitary Supplies Assistance;
- (f) *Applicant* means a person who has applied for the program but is awaiting approval;
- (g) *Participant* means a person who has applied and been approved for participation in the program.

PART II—Establishment

Clause 4 Establishment of the VHSSA

- 4.1 A body shall be established and operated by the Department of Health to be known as ‘Victorian Hygiene and Sanitary Supplies Assistance’ (VHSSA).
- 4.2 The responsibilities of the VHSSA shall be as follows;
 - (a) Provide financially struggling families with basic hygienic necessities;
 - (b) Alleviate financial strain by removing common spending to focus on bills and food;
 - (c) Relieve stress on the healthcare system.

Clause 5 Program Delivery

- 5.1 VHSSA shall be a supply and delivery service operating by;
- (a) Creating and opening applications for disadvantaged persons to apply for support;
 - (b) Reviewing requests and data of the applicants;
 - (c) Approve or dismiss applications based on if they supply the relevant information, including;
 - (i) Identification;
 - (ii) Medicare card;
 - (iii) Healthcare card.
 - (d) Approved applicants may request necessary products monthly before the last week of the month;
 - (e) VHSSA shall organise, package, and deliver supplies to approved applicants.
- 5.2 Disadvantaged people/families shall be able to apply for assistance with necessary information including:
- (a) Identification including;
 - (i) Drivers' licence;
 - (ii) Passport;
 - (iii) Birth certificate.
 - (b) Medicare card;
 - (c) Healthcare card.
- 5.3 Once approved, VHSSA shall;
- (a) Send a Virtual Certificate for Disadvantage Person/s to access required hygiene items;
 - (b) Provide a selection of hygiene items with amount relating to size of household;
 - (c) Deliver items within a 72-hour period;
 - (d) The items shall continue to be delivered on a monthly schedule for 12 months.
- 5.4 After 12 months from the date of approval, the applicant shall;
- (a) Resubmit an application form;
 - (b) Update their information (e.g. healthcare card number);
 - (c) No items will be delivered until a resubmission is made.

Clause 6 Resource Management

- 6.1 VHSSA shall work alongside hygiene companies and brands to organise supplies to;
- (a) Increase accessibility and reach for disadvantaged person/s;
 - (b) Ensure the longevity of the program, by advocating for disadvantaged person/s and their basic human rights.

Clause 7 Data and Accessibility

- 7.1 Specific data shall be recorded about an applicant prior to and throughout the program, including:
- (a) Applicant's identity;
 - (b) Household member identities;
 - (c) Living address;
 - (d) Requested items from previous deliveries.

- 7.2 All data collected shall be reviewed and updated annually, with the data of applicants that don't reapply being retained in the case of future applications for a maximum of 3 years.
- 7.3 The data recorded shall be kept confidential, only to be accessed by;
 - (a) Participant;
 - (b) Department of Health;
 - (c) VHSSA.

Clause 8 Systematic Review and Evaluation

- 8.1 The program shall be reviewed annually to assess its practicality and success over the past year, the review shall cover:
 - (a) Effect on participants regarding the program's purpose;
 - (b) Participant and staff satisfaction;
 - (c) The practicality of the application and distribution processes;
 - (d) Financial expenses.