



# Simple gesture helps share the dignity

By Declan Martin

Shepparton residents are being urged to help Victoria's homeless women by donating sanitary items to Share the Dignity bins at Coles during August and beyond.

Products donated at stores in Shepparton, Shepparton South and Mooroopna will be distributed to women in a range of situations, including those who are homeless, have fled domestic violence, live in remote indigenous communities, in low socio-economic areas and drought stricken farming communities across Australia.

"We encourage customers to purchase double what they need for sanitary items and donate half into the bin located at the self-check-out space," Shepparton Coles customer service manager Kerrie Simpson-Thouliss said.

"It doesn't have to be just sanitary items, we encourage some items like deodorant or make-up."

Ms Simpson-Thouliss said the donation bins would remain in store after August because Coles was passionate about the cause and wanted organisations such as Women's Rural Health to benefit from the generosity of customers throughout the year.

More than 22 000 Victorians are homeless and 43 per cent of them are women, which is part of reason why Share the Dignity was established in 2015.

Share the Dignity founder Rochelle Courtenay said the support of Victorians was important in helping women across Australia.

"We want to ensure that no woman ever has to choose between

eating or buying sanitary products. Access to sanitary items is a right, not a privilege," she said.

"Your generosity will make a real difference to women who are struggling."



Share the dignity: Shepparton Coles customer service Kerrie Simpson-Thouliss places an item in the charity box with colleagues

Picture: Holly Curtis