

# MAX CLEAN



## Ikura | Manaakitia te whare tangata Period products in schools

In 2022, OfficeMax teamed up with Essity and the Ministry of Education to supply period products to schools and kura for the Government funded Ikura | Manaakitia te whare tangata - Period products in schools initiative.

This involved distributing dispensers and products to more than 2,100 schools and kura throughout New Zealand and supporting them to promote the initiative and ensure products are easily accessible for their students.

We worked closely with the Ministry's Senior Adviser of Operational Policy, Jane Evans, and the Director of Special Projects, Sheryl Ching, to overcome some of the initiative's challenges. These included:

- Finding an easy and efficient way to **distribute period products to schools and kura**
- **Providing ongoing support for schools and kura**, especially those with limited capacity to manage a new initiative

### Results at a glance



#### Seamless distribution to schools and kura

OfficeMax coordinated a smooth and timely rollout of dispenser units for installation and streamlined the order process and product distribution. To date, 2100 schools and kura signed up for the initiative.



#### Continuous support for schools and kura

We created a distribution plan to promote the initiative within the school communities and immediately saw a boost in engagement.



#### Streamlined reporting process

We have provided monthly reporting on order data, feedback from the schools and kura with any actual or potential issues. The Ministry has access to a dashboard for comprehensive reports on the initiative.

"The work OfficeMax and Essity are doing in supporting this important government-funded initiative is making such a difference to change the narrative, alleviating financial pressure on families and removing barriers for ākonga to attend school and extracurricular activities. The initiative is making a positive impact on kids' lives."

**Jane Evans**, Ministry of Education Senior Advisor - Operational Policy

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## Distributing products to schools

OfficeMax was selected through an open tender process to deliver the second phase of the Ikura initiative largely for our extensive reach and relationships with schools and kura throughout New Zealand and our proven ability to provide products at scale.

Jane Evans notes that the Ministry of Education was working to a tight timeframe to get the programme in place, and “OfficeMax had the connections in schools and kura to deliver the products so quickly.”

Working closely with Essity, we installed dispenser units in 11 eligible schools and kura as a prototype in February 2022 and subsequently rolled out dispensers to a further 350 schools and kura. To date, **2100 schools and kura** have signed up for the initiative.

A strong focus of the Ikura initiative is to destigmatise periods in a culturally responsive way. The Ministry of Education provided onboarding training for OfficeMax staff managing the relationships with schools, with the result that

our teams now feel more confident talking about periods and period products.

To ensure a smooth and timely rollout of dispenser units, we held weekly Work in Progress meetings with both Essity and the Ministry of Education and remained in constant communication via Teams.

Careful coordination was needed to ensure the dispensers and period products arrived at each school and kura before the Essity installers arrived on site.

We identified the project liaison at each school and kura and met with them to clarify roles (e.g., who would order the product and keep dispensers topped up) and schedule delivery and installation.

According to Jane, the Ministry has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from schools and kura, who say the ordering process is more streamlined than it was with the initial phase and were impressed with the level of service around dispenser installation.

## Partnership with Essity

Jane notes that the strength of the partnership between OfficeMax and Essity was evident throughout the initiative’s implementation.



“On their own, neither company could have done it. Their willingness to partner has been a real strength and no-one has ever said “that’s their area” – it’s always been a true collaboration and they’ve shared accountability.”

OfficeMax and Essity have enjoyed a strong working relationship for several decades.

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In the words of Mark Stevens, Essity's General Manager B2B Sales – New Zealand, the Ikura partnership “is a marriage made in heaven”, with Account Managers from each company working hand in glove.

“OfficeMax have the best coverage into schools in New Zealand, and Essity is most highly rated among menstruators. At the system level it works like clockwork – we work well together and we know each other really well, so it's easy.”

## Ongoing support for schools and kura

95% of New Zealand schools and kura have an account with OfficeMax and were already using our order portal, and larger schools have an OfficeMax Account Manager.

This made it easy for us to work with them to develop a distribution plan and then support and encourage them to promote the initiative within their school community.

We respect the fact that Ikura isn't the most important thing that busy school staff have to deal with, and we tailor our messaging accordingly.

This included a two-day call blitz several months after implementation to all schools without an OfficeMax relationship manager.

We talked them through how to distribute the product to their students, and we saw a boost in engagement almost immediately.

Ministry of Education staff have been complimentary about OfficeMax's capabilities and our willingness to work collaboratively to find solutions.

## Reporting

Ministry staff met with OfficeMax and Essity weekly during the rollout, then fortnightly as the project moved into 'business as usual.'

We provide monthly reports that include ordering data, feedback from schools, and any actual or potential issues. Ministry staff have access to a dashboard, and Jane notes that it's easy to understand and “better than our standard reporting”.

“Most of the time the response is “we can do that”, or “that won't be a problem”. We've never had to chase things up or had any push-back.”

**Jane Evans**, Ministry of Education Senior Advisor - Operational Policy



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