

# Breastfeeding

## Recommendations to increase breastfeeding

### Breastfeeding and Work

- Research has reported the return to work for some women is a large deterrent in breastfeeding initiation and duration (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009)
- Exclusive breastfeeding and breastfeeding duration is predominately higher in countries which have longer periods of paid parental leave (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009)
- Canada illustrated a large increase in breastfeeding rates when it doubled their paid maternity leave to 50 weeks for mothers who had been in employment for the past 12 months, resulting in a 40% increase in exclusive breastfeeding at six months (Australian Breastfeeding Association 2008).
- In January 2011, Australia commenced its paid parental leave scheme, which entitles mothers to 18 weeks of pay on the minimum wage (Australian Breastfeeding Association, 2009)
- However the ABA recommended a minimum of six months paid maternity leave, recognising the contributions women make when caring for babies at their highest point of vulnerability (Australian Breastfeeding Association 2008).
- Breastfeeding-friendly work conditions, such as lactation breaks, supportive workplace policies and practices, and facilities provided for women to express breastmilk or breastfeed their babies, are vitally important to ensuring ongoing breastfeeding.
- Flexible working hours, job sharing or job splitting, are also advocated methods to increase women's retention in the workforce and breastfeeding duration.

### Breastfeeding Welcome Here

- Program is designed to improve community acceptance of breastfeeding in public through the accreditation and promotion of breastfeeding friendly businesses and services. Any venue can be accredited: restaurants, indoor play centres, chemists, local government services etc.
- To be eligible to display the Breastfeeding Welcome Here sticker or folder, a business or service must have the following attributes: a welcoming attitude from staff and management, a smoke free environment and room to move a pram.
- Once accredited, the business or service is listed on the ABA website, making it easy for mums to find venues in which they will feel comfortable breastfeeding.

### Babies Day Out

- Babies Day Out is an initiative designed to celebrate our babies' place in the community and their right to be breastfed anywhere, anytime. Held on the 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> October this year, it is an event for the whole community and opportunity to show breastfeeding is a normal part of life and to support the babies within the community.
- The event encourages women, their friends and family to get out in the community, gathering in public places such as parks, cafes, playgrounds etc to share a meal and send a message to the community they have a right to breastfeed anywhere, anytime.

### **Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation (BFWA)**

- BFWA is a consultancy service for employers provided by the Australian Breastfeeding Association. Through the accreditation process, BFWA assists employers to create a supportive environment for breastfeeding mothers returning to work from maternity leave
- The accreditation process involves an initial audit and site inspection from ABA workers, working with ABA to meet accreditation requirements, awarding of the organisation as compliant and then ABA staff to assist communicating the new policy to all staff. The worksites are then provided with return to work resources and are evaluated yearly by a trained ABA professional.

### **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)**

- BFHI is a global effort to implement practices that promote, support and protect breastfeeding. The Initiative aims to give every baby the best start in life by creating a health care environment in which breastfeeding is the norm and practices known to promote the health and well-being of all babies and their mothers are followed. The BFHI has developed the '10 steps to successful breastfeeding' which create an optimal environment for the initiation of breastfeeding.