



MEDIA RELEASE
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Australian Breastfeeding Association welcomes federal funding for free call national Helpline

Funding in the 2008/2009 Federal Budget for a national free call breastfeeding Helpline has been welcomed by the country's leading organisation on breastfeeding education, support and advocacy, the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

The commitment of \$2.5 million over 5 years will ensure that a free call national Helpline will help to improve the 24-hour support currently given to Australian mothers by over 1,000 volunteer breastfeeding counsellors.

'The Federal Government has demonstrated a commitment to breastfeeding and the long term health of mothers and babies', President of the Australian Breastfeeding Association, Margaret Grove, said.

Further support from Federal and State governments is required to address Australia's breastfeeding rates that fall below the federal government's own guidelines, as well as international standards.

'Paid maternity and parenting leave are important to increasing breastfeeding rates as is ongoing breastfeeding education of health professionals and the wider community', Ms Grove said.

It is hoped that the report from the Productivity Commission Inquiry will include recommendations to ensure all women are supported to exclusively breastfeed their babies for the first 6 months of life and enable them to continue to breastfeed beyond 6 months, as recommended by national and international health authorities.

References:

WHO, UNICEF 2003 Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Geneva
National Health and Medical Research Council 2003 Food for Health. Dietary guidelines for children and adolescents in Australia. NHMRC, Dept Health and Ageing, Canberra

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