

Lee Courtwood

To: *The Committee for the Parliamentary Inquiry
into Breastfeeding*

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into Breastfeeding

I am a mother, Australian Breastfeeding Association Counsellor and Lactation Consultant in private practice. I have 4 children and over a decade of breastfeeding experience.

These are some of the obstacles to breastfeeding in Australia that I see:

Obstacles to breastfeeding	Action required
1. Inadequate education of the public	Government campaign to extensively promote breastfeeding and in particular the WHO guidelines that pertain to feeding infants - adopted by Australia in 2006.
2. Inadequate education of health professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government (not formula companies') campaign to educate health professionals about breastfeeding including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health dept policy on 'controlled crying', schedule feeding and 'feed/sleep/play' routines and the negative impact they can have on breastfeeding. - Education about the 'normal' sleeping behaviours of breastfed infants.
2. Inadequate support for mothers after they leave hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for the Australian Breastfeeding Association – the only breastfeeding support service in Australia. • Extend medicare cover to lactation consultants in private practice – often the only person who can see a mother asap after she leaves hospital.
3. Perceived low supply	Make new WHO growth charts available to ECHNs ASAP.
5. Government not acting to enforce the nhmrc guidelines on infant feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to enforce the WHO code on the marketing of breast milk substitutes: implement marketing regulation of breast milk substitutes that covers RETAILERS, not just manufacturers (as the current – ineffective - MAIF agreement does) • Government health campaign to advise the public and health professionals of the risks associated with formula feeding • Enforced regulations regarding labeling of baby food as 'suitable from 6 months' – not '4-6 months' as is currently the case.
5. Absence of universal paid maternity leave	Implementation of national scheme for paid maternity leave
6. Absence of sufficient milk banks	Funding to establish breastmilk banks – to show government's awareness of and commitment to the importance of human milk for all babies.

*Yours sincerely
Lee Courtwood.*