

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
House Of Representatives
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ACT 2600

Carol Boomsma

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SUBMISSION FOR THE INQUIRY INTO BREASTFEEDING

Various Government and health departments have given voice to the importance of breastfeeding and have attempted to set targets for breastfeeding rates. Many have been unsuccessful and many of the targets have not been achieved. Below are ways that the government can improve the health of the Australian population through support for breastfeeding.

Education of Health professionals should be improved. Many have a very poor working knowledge of breastfeeding, and many mothers receive conflicting information and care in hospitals and neonatal units.

Public health campaign targeted at people other than mothers to change the attitudes of breastfeeding in our community. Focus should be on not the benefits of breastfeeding but about the importance of breastfeeding and the risks associated with premature weaning.

Adequate funding for breastfeeding support to help organizations such as Australian Breastfeeding Association. Funding for free breastfeeding helplines in each state to be operated by Australian Breastfeeding Association volunteer counsellors.

We need funding for human milk banks so that a large proportion of our babies are not exposed to artificial baby milk in hospitals.

We need legislative protection against the unethical marketing of infant formulas, bottles and teats. Adoption at a national level of all the recommendation of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

More support and paid maternity/lactation leave is needed to enable choice and make it easier for woman to keep breastfeeding if they choose to return to work. Adoption and promotion of practices from the Australian Breastfeeding Association's Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation scheme.

The National Government for this inquiry into breastfeeding is commendable. I sincerely hope that breastfeeding strategies will be developed, funded and implemented as not breastfeeding and early weaning have huge costs to the entire community.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Boomsma

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