



Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

Annual Report

2017-2018



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About ABA

More than 50 years ago, on 13 February 1964, Mary Paton hosted a meeting with five other women committed to breastfeeding. These women were the Founding Mothers of the Nursing Mothers' Association - now known as the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).

Today, ABA is one of the largest volunteer organisations in the country, with more than 1300 volunteers providing valuable support, information and assistance to breastfeeding families.

ABA VISION

Breastfeeding is recognised as important by all Australians and is culturally normal.

ABA MISSION

As Australia's leading authority on breastfeeding, we support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society.



Message from the President

2017–2018 has been a big year for ABA.

We have been very active at all levels of the Association and have made some notable achievements. However, like many not-for-profits in today's tight fiscal world we are facing challenges on a number of fronts. This annual report is a snapshot of the year. None of our accomplishments would have been possible without our valuable volunteers and supporters. A heartfelt thankyou to every one of you. Without your ongoing support, we could not do what we do.

Firstly, I would like to introduce you to ABA's new CEO Alison Boughey. Alison joined our team in May this year and brings a wealth of expertise, with extensive experience in leadership, policy and project management roles and a strong interest in organisational governance, advocacy, operations and strategy. She has an impressive record of accomplishment with a long history in senior management roles in health and not-for-profit sectors.

As Australia's leading authority on breastfeeding we support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society.

After extensive piloting of our online *LiveChat* facility, we were pleased in May this year to be able to roll this out to the public as an ongoing service.

Support

For more than 54 years the foundation of ABA has been to provide mother-to-mother support. Today our trained breastfeeding counsellors and community educators continue to provide evidence-based information, combined with generations of collective experience on breastfeeding. The take-up of online options for support is increasing each year. However, the opportunity to meet a friendly volunteer at the group level or talk to a counsellor on the phone is still a priority for many. In the last year we received 77,000 calls to our Breastfeeding Helpline.

After extensive piloting of our online LiveChat facility, we were pleased in May this year to be able to roll this out to the public as an ongoing service. Our website itself with more than 130 referenced information articles is the go-to place, receiving more than 2.2 million visits in the last year.

Whilst the National Breastfeeding Helpline receives funding (until June 2019), local group services, LiveChat and the website are all unfunded and running costs are covered by fundraising or donations. The website is largely maintained by a small and dedicated band of volunteers - an incredible achievement when it performs such an important service to the Association and the wider community.

Educate

ABA educates at many levels. Qualified volunteers educate at the local level by running group discussion meetings and giving school and community talks. ABA's Breastfeeding Education Classes (BECs) are a must-do for expectant parents. They

It is one of our goals to develop a high-quality online version of BECs so that geographical location is no longer a barrier to parents.

complement existing hospital-based birth classes with a special focus on breastfeeding and the realities of bringing home a new baby. As well as a special section for partners or key support people, they include 12 months' membership to ABA so that the support and information continues beyond the birth.

Currently BECs are held in various locations across the country and are very popular. However, with a country as large as Australia there are many gaps. We know that for many regional, rural and remote Australians access to health and support services is more limited than their city-based counterparts.

It is one of our goals to develop a high-quality online version of BECs so that geographical location is no longer a barrier to parents being able to access a Breastfeeding Education Class. The ABA ACT/NSW branch will pilot this project shortly.

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) ABA provides Cert IV volunteer traineeships to fulfill the needs of our volunteer workforce that carries out so much of our service provision. With trainees all over Australia including remote locations, our training is designed to be flexible in its delivery. Our dedicated trainers and assessors work online and face-to-face, and at times literally go to the ends of the earth (well, all over Australia!) to provide quality education and training.

In addition, a specialised team within our RTO also provides health professional training via accredited workshops, courses and our annual Health Professional Seminar Series. It is with great pleasure each year that we sponsor a number of student midwives to attend the seminars as part of their training.

One of the areas I am immensely proud of is the work we do in the training of health workers, community support people and women of standing in Indigenous and ethnically diverse communities to become community breastfeeding mentors (CBM). This 2-day workshop empowers key people, in often marginalised communities, to be supporters of breastfeeding in their community.

Not forgetting dads, ABA (via some initial funding from NSW Health) developed, piloted and evaluated the Deadly Dads workshop for Indigenous men. This strengths-based program, delivered by trained male health workers has been well received and is highly regarded. ABA is seeking specific funding for both the CBM and Deadly Dads courses to be able to expand our reach via these programs to improve the breastfeeding outcomes in groups that are socially disadvantaged.

Advocate

In the past 12 months, ABA has provided submissions in VIC, SA, WA and NSW to inquiries into ante/postnatal health services for mothers and infants as well as numerous other opportunities in relevant fields.

At the national level, we have continued as a key stakeholder to work with the Department of Health on the draft *National Enduring Breastfeeding Strategy*. Alison Boughey and I attended a workshop on the monitoring and evaluation needs of the strategy in Canberra in late June alongside other key groups/people.

Whilst in Canberra we took the opportunity to meet with a number of ministers and shadow ministers regarding the need for both sides of government to show leadership in our community's health and long-term well-being by fully funding ABA to be able to implement its range of programs that are closely aligned to the Breastfeeding Strategy.

ABA runs three campaigns each year that advocate, educate and support breastfeeding:

World Breastfeeding Week (1–7 August 2017)

where our focus was on celebrating key partnerships that help us Sustain Breastfeeding Together.

Baby's Day Out is celebrated in October. Mums around the country had a great opportunity to engage with fellow mums out and about and celebrate breastfeeding anytime, anywhere.

National Mothering Week (7–13 May 2018)

where we celebrated a mother's unchanging and eternal love, as demonstrated throughout the generations and encouraged mothers to focus on the little things that show a mother's love. We encouraged families to connect with different generations of mothers and mother-figures to celebrate National Mothering Week and learn from each other.

Supporters & partnerships

Once again, we would like to thank all our supporters and those who partner with us or provide pro bono support on specific projects or on an ongoing basis. Your support of ABA allows us to continue to support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society. Partners for the 2017–18 financial year include Bambooty, GAIA Skin Naturals, Weleda, Angel Maternity, Key Pharmaceuticals, Milk & Love, Peachymama, ToLife Technologies, Ubere and Fertile Mind.

A very special thank you to Medical Australia (now known as Clinical Innovations Australia), who has been ABA's Platinum Partner since 2016.

Governance

I would like to thank the ABA Board for their work during this reporting time. All of the directors volunteer their time and skills to the Association and participate on Board sub-committees as well as representing the Association at various events. In November we thanked Judy Gifford OAM and Elizabeth Oei, both past directors and honorary members, who were temporarily seconded to the Board in June 2017 (until the November 2017 AGM) to ensure that we met constitutional requirements regarding director numbers until the board election was completed.

We also said goodbye and thanks to Robyn Hamilton and Debra Holtham, whose terms had been completed after serving 7 and 6 years respectively. In November, we welcomed new directors Karin Collinson, Margaret Grove, Frieda Maher and Steve Miller to the ABA Board. On 30 June our Honorary Treasurer Sarah Lowndes stepped down after her term had concluded after 4 years.

The Board continued its work with the pro bono team from Hive Legal on our draft new Constitution. After a number of rounds of membership consultation, we took the draft to the November 2017 AGM for consideration by the membership. Due to a very low participation rate from our voting membership, the Board made the decision to undertake further engagement and advertising, and re-presented the draft to the membership at an EGM in May 2017. We were very pleased at the increased engagement - up from 4.2% in Nov to 24.5%. Whilst the vote of 69.8% was clearly in favour, it was below the required 75% for changes to be passed. We therefore will continue to work with our membership in the latter half of 2018 on further amendments.

We encouraged families to connect with different generations of mothers to celebrate and learn from each other.

ABA team

I would like to give my thanks to ABA's small group of paid staff who work at our National Office and in offices in some Branches. Their ongoing commitment to ABA is very much appreciated and complements the work of our volunteers, enabling ABA to deliver high quality programs across the country.

I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Kate Nuttall who stepped up from her senior finance role as interim CEO whilst recruitment took place. Kate has now moved on from ABA and we wish her well. In addition, our thanks to both Kathy Farrell, Senior Manager for Marketing and Income Development and Louise Duursma, Senior Manager for Consumer Services. Kathy was responsible for securing many of our partnerships in Australian Breastfeeding Association. We wish Kathy well in her new role. Louise, a long time and very valued volunteer for the Association, has stepped back for a while and is focusing her volunteering at the local level. Both Kathy and Louise will be missed at the senior management level.

**Every bit of support
you provide,
education you
deliver and
advocacy you do,
makes a difference
in supporting
mothers to reach
their breastfeeding
goals.**

On behalf of the ABA Board, I extend my gratitude and thanks to everyone within ABA and to those who support us. Every bit of support you provide, education you deliver and advocacy you do, makes a difference in supporting mothers to reach their breastfeeding goals and for Australia to become a breastfeeding inclusive society.

Susan Day
President



Association overview



KEY

STAKEHOLDERS

We recognise the value of working collaboratively with all stakeholders to fully achieve our objectives.

Our stakeholders include:

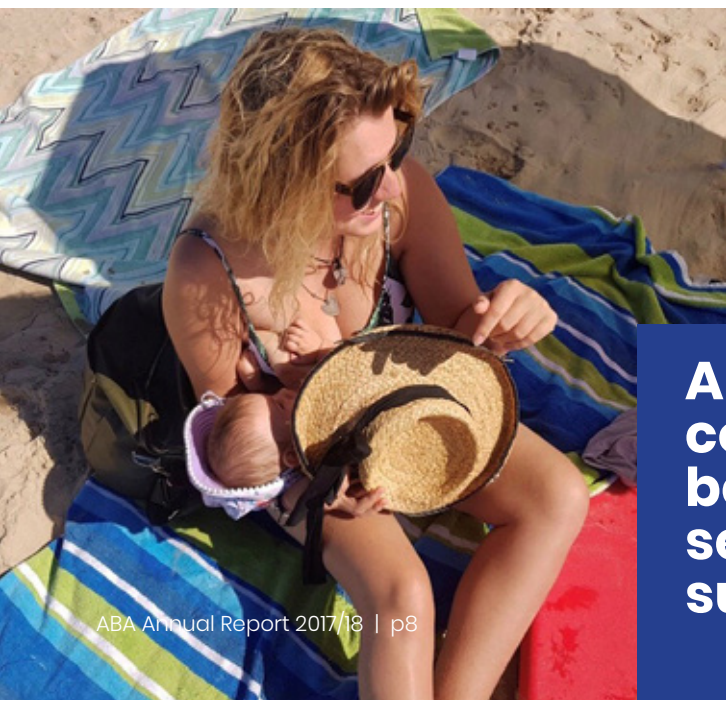
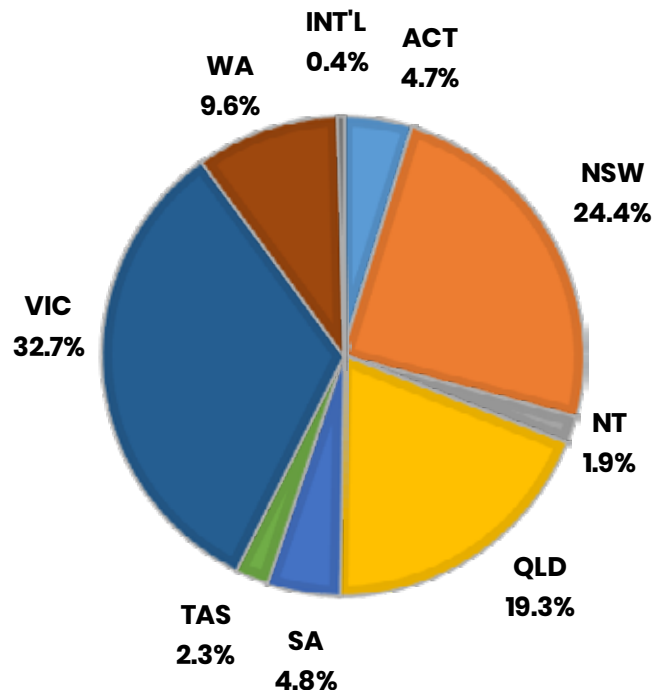
- Mothers, babies and their families
- Our members
- Our volunteers and employees
- Government at all levels
- Health professionals
- Our funding bodies
- Our supporters
- The Australian community
- Our corporate partners

Working to achieve a breastfeeding inclusive society

ABA is supported by our trained breastfeeding counsellors and community educators who provide phone, online and community support. These volunteers have dedicated over 28,600 hours to the Breastfeeding Helpline alone.

ABA's Strategic Plan continues to remain the benchmark of all activity, services and the level of support we provide. Further consultation will be carried in the next financial year to determine ways of enhancing areas of membership, revenue streams and organisational focus.

ABA Membership Demographics 2017-2018



ABA's Strategic Plan continues to remain the benchmark of all activity, services and the level of support we provide.

A very special thank you

ABA acknowledges the financial support we receive from the Australian Government and other entities. Through your provision of much needed funding, we are able to reach and support thousands of mothers every year.

Thank you to the following organisations for your continued support of the following programs and projects:

National Breastfeeding Helpline and Volunteer Education and Training
Supported by the Federal Government

Breastfeeding in NSW office funding
Supported by the NSW Ministry of Health

ACT Service funding & ACT health promotion
Supported by ACT Health

ACT/NSW Branch Conference funding
Supported by Destination NSW

Community Self Care Funding Program
Supported by QLD Health

Service funding for ABA SA Branch
Supported by Child and Family Health Service SA Health

ABA NT Branch funding
Supported by the Department of Health NT

Early Childhood and School Education Group Grant (VIC)
Supported by the Department of Education and Training (VIC)

Breast pump funding for Tasmania Branch
Supported by the Tasmanian Community Fund

WA Residential Conference funding
Supported by Lotterywest

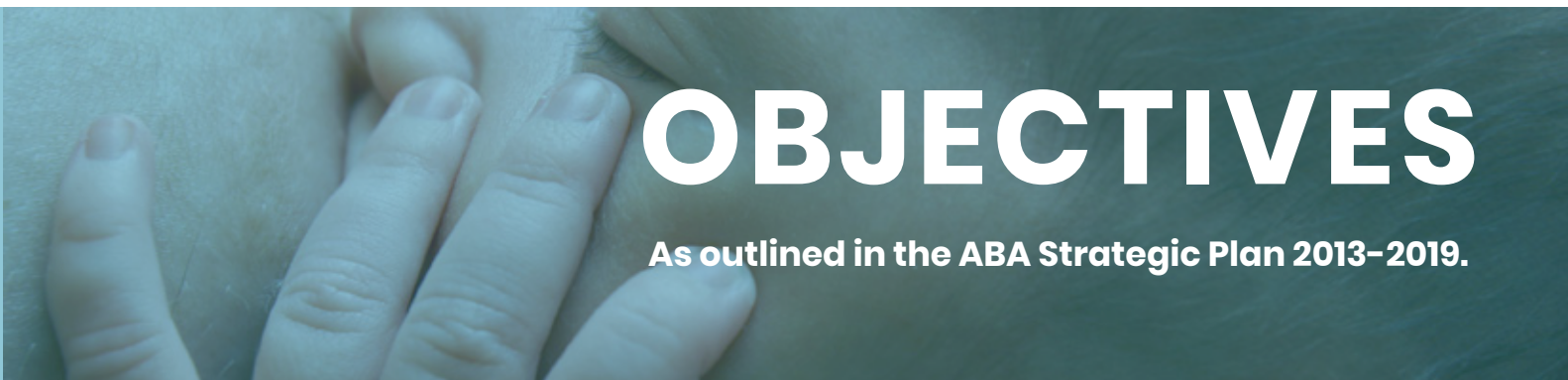
We look forward to continuing and extending our community partnerships and grants in the 2018/2019 financial year.

Breastfeeding support

Provide mothers with practical mother-to-mother support and information, enabling them to establish and continue breastfeeding.

Maintain the Australian Breastfeeding Association as an authoritative, high-profile organisation that is responsive to changing needs to protect, support and promote breastfeeding.

Public profile & awareness



OBJECTIVES

As outlined in the ABA Strategic Plan 2013–2019.

Advocacy

Strengthen the advocacy work of the Australian Breastfeeding Association in order to improve breastfeeding outcomes and through participation in breastfeeding research and policy development, educate the broader community that breastfeeding is normal.

Provide for financial security and economic sustainability by diversifying income streams, protecting and increasing the real value of our financial assets, investing well and using our financial and people resources with economy.

Governance & organisational development

Develop a well-governed, effectively managed, representative and accountable organisation that values and recognises the contributions of its people.

Training, education & resources

Provide high quality and accessible training, education and resources to our volunteers, health professionals and the wider community to ensure skilled, knowledgeable and practical breastfeeding support for mothers.

Organisational viability

Year in review

Community engagement

Year upon year, ABA continues to grow our presence in the community and reach more mothers than ever before. New age technologies, such as social media, drive our awareness and advocacy campaigns, ensuring we are well-positioned to target and support pregnant women and new mothers.

One of ABA's major achievements in the 2017-18 financial year was the launch of our online shop. This enabled mothers to purchase resources for instant download. Since the launch of the online shop, over 5700 resources have been purchased online - equating to over \$47,000 in sales. Processing is also streamlined and more efficient, including less demand on staff time.

Social media presence continues to rise and campaigns such as World Breastfeeding Week are pivotal in communicating the importance of supporting mothers to breastfeed. Our message of *anytime, anywhere* remains strong in the community and we look forward to achieving even greater reach in the coming year.

Our volunteers remain the heart of the Association. Their passion and dedication is unparalleled and are a powerful source of reaching new mothers. We are grateful to every single volunteer and donor who has contributed to ABA this year - we could not achieve any of this without you.

ABA's community engagement focus in 2018-19 will be continued growth of the online shop, social media (including the establishment of a LinkedIn presence), focus on grant and funding opportunities, new corporate partners, fundraising, large scale events and new ways to grow our annual campaigns.

84%
view ABA
website
on mobile
devices

77,000+
calls made
to the
Breastfeeding Helpline

6550 calls
made to the Helpline monthly

2.2 million
visits to the ABA website

1200 'Likes'
on Facebook per month
(average)

1053 active
& engaged
ABA
volunteers

2100
orders
placed through
ABA's online shop

108,900
follows
on ABA social
media accounts



Training & education



2017–2018 has been another busy year for training and education with significant achievements in our four key priority areas.



1

Training future and current volunteers to support the work of the Association.

2

Providing continuing education to volunteers to ensure ongoing skills and knowledge currency.

3

Providing breastfeeding education to health professionals and community groups.

4

Maintaining our status as an RTO and the accreditation of our nationally recognised courses in breastfeeding education and management to make ABA the leading provider of breastfeeding education.


1 Training ABA volunteers

The transition of our training courses from the expired 10006NAT & 10007NAT to the 10280NAT Cert IV in Breastfeeding Education was successfully completed by the end of 2017. This course changeover resulted in 155 new volunteers qualifying as breastfeeding counsellors and/or community educators with ABA in 2017 and 104 existing volunteers gaining the revised qualification by Recognition of Prior Learning.

This represented a massive workload for our volunteer training personnel and training staff at the National Office. In particular, we need to acknowledge the work of the Branch Training Managers who provided leadership and support to their very busy teams during this time. A very special thank you must be given to Laura Hughes, who took on the role of Transition Trainer and was so proactive in assisting trainees to complete their transition to the new course. We also would like to thank the online training team for running additional study groups and study jams to ensure trainees were able to meet their submission deadlines and completed their course.

The qualifying of this many trainees also represented a significant workload for our wonderful Breastfeeding Helpline mentors. Completion of the practicum ensures our newly qualified breastfeeding counsellors are able to consolidate their skills and the training department would like to acknowledge the fabulous job of the Breastfeeding Helpline team in ensuring all new counsellors received the support they needed.

Feedback from trainees and training personnel working with the 10280NAT Cert IV in Breastfeeding Education continues to be extremely positive with trainees already course completing. As in previous years, our Quality Indicator Survey Reporting from trainees and those who work with them once they qualify, highlights the quality, strength and appropriateness of the training received. The training department would like to thank all those within the Association who have contributed to helping our trainees along their ABA journey!



Our Quality Indicator Survey Reporting from trainees and those who work with them once they qualify, highlights the quality, strength and appropriateness of the training received.

2 Continuing education of ABA volunteers



The second cohort of the 10243NAT Diploma in Breastfeeding Management course worked steadily through the course with very positive feedback. Interest is high in the course, though cost and time factors have limited growth.

In 2017 we changed providers to MECCA Concepts for the 2018 March Health Professional Seminar Series, *Breastfeeding: Science to practice*. The feedback from participants was very positive – Dr. Amy Brown and Dr Katie Hind were fabulous speakers and well received by the audience. We would like to thank everyone in the Association for their contributions to the success of this year's series. Planning is already well underway for the 2019 series and we look forward to an even better outcome.

We have continued to deliver Community Breastfeeding Mentoring workshops (10170NAT Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring) to a range of groups over the year, with participants providing very positive feedback about the practical learning and assessment activities covered in the workshop.

During 2017–18 our focus has been on increasing access for all volunteers to the continuing education opportunities available at Branch Conferences. This has seen Heather Miller attend Branch Conferences to film presentations for uploading to our online continuing education space. This has resulted in over 20 new activities being made available, which received very positive feedback.

Volunteer take up rates for the online recording mechanisms for continuing education/professional development activities trialled last year have been very satisfactory and it has been pleasing to see the depth of self-reflection and learning being expressed about the resources being provided.

3 Provision of income-producing health professional and community group breastfeeding education

Feedback from workshop sponsors (who funded the course) indicated that participants increased their community breastfeeding knowledge and skills. This closely aligns with the initiatives for priority groups described in the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2018 and beyond*.

4 Maintaining our status as an RTO and the accreditation of nationally recognised courses

As a Registered Training Organisation ABA is required to maintain its compliance with the VET Quality Framework which includes the Standards for Registered Training Organisations. This work underpins our provision of nationally recognised courses to our volunteer base, community groups and health professionals and forms a significant part of the work undertaken by training personnel, paid and volunteer roles.

During 2017/2018, ABA completed its course accreditation cycle and work in this area has been limited to the ongoing validation of the courses and collection of feedback for the next cycle of review and revision due mid-2019.

ABA would like to acknowledge funding received from the Australian Government that has enabled our Association to maintain its registration as a Registered Training Organisation, as well as provide support and resources to learners, training personnel and our volunteers.

Thank you to all our ABA training personnel and mentors for their dedication.

Melanie Carter
Training Manager



Breastfeeding information & research



The Breastfeeding Information and Research team continued to work and collaborate with multiple ABA stakeholders including volunteers, other ABA teams, health professionals, researchers, hospitals and governments.



ABA collaborations

Professional development for ABA volunteers and health professionals

Several members of the Breastfeeding Information and Research (BIR) team engaged in providing professional development opportunities for volunteers through presentations at ABA Branch Conferences and recording webinars that were made available online for the continuing professional development of ABA volunteers.

The BIR Manager presented at ACT/NSW Branch Conference on positioning and attachment, exercise and breastfeeding and supplementing a breastfed baby to protect breastfeeding. The BIR Scientific Information Officer presented at the Victoria Branch conference on *Breastfeeding big babies* and the BIR Manager recorded a webinar for the ABA Health Professional Seminar Series on *Research and ethics: how to identify high-quality evidence to inform breastfeeding practices and policies*.



The BIR Manager also attended a consultation workshop for the national strategic approach to maternity services.

Public policy collaborations

National Australian Breastfeeding Strategy: 2018 and beyond

The BIR Manager and ABA President continued to represent ABA on the Federal Department of Health's Expert Reference Group for the Strategy being developed to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. They gave detailed feedback on several draft versions of the Strategy which was released for public consultation in June 2018. Further submissions were made by the BIR team and Tasmania Branch during the period of public consultation.



Victorian inquiry into perinatal services

The BIR Manager and the ABA President made a submission to the Victorian inquiry into perinatal services and were subsequently invited to appear before the Family and Community Development Committee. The final report of the committee was tabled in Parliament in June and some pleasing recommendations regarding breastfeeding were made:

- **Recommendation 2.6:** The Victorian Government prioritise a public health promotion campaign to encourage breastfeeding and increase breastfeeding rates across Victoria.
- **Recommendation 2.7:** The Victorian Government develop and fund specific training for health professionals, including midwives and GP obstetricians, on supporting mothers to breastfeed.
- **Recommendation 2.8:** The Victorian Government request lactation education and support be included in the core syllabus in university training for nurses and midwives, including Maternal and Child Health nurses, by making submissions to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Education Council's reviews of nursing and midwifery education Standards.
- **Recommendation 2.9:** The Victorian Government support hospitals to become accredited with the Baby Friendly Health Initiative.

- **Recommendation 2.10:** The Victorian Government fund and establish day stay lactation clinics across the Victorian public health system, with flexibility of delivery to best suit the needs of communities.
- **Recommendation 2.11:** The Victorian Government use its position on the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to advocate for:
 - the creation of a new Medicare item so that breastfeeding mothers can receive Medicare rebates for consultations with lactation consultants;
 - a review of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas: Manufacturers and Importers Agreement 1992 to expand the Agreement and ensure that all industry participants selling formula in Australia are parties to the Agreement.

(The full report can be found at https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/fcdc/inquiries/58th/Perinatal/Inquiry_into_Perinatal_Services_.pdf.)

Submissions were also made to:

- The inquiry into the future sustainability of health funding in the ACT
- Committee on community services inquiry into and report on support for new parents and babies in New South Wales
- WA sustainable health review
- National strategic approach to maternity services.

The BIR Manager also attended a consultation workshop for the national strategic approach to maternity services.

Stakeholder collaborations



World Breastfeeding Trends initiative

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) developed the World Breastfeeding Trends initiative (WBTi) Assessment Tool for countries to use to measure progress on breastfeeding policies and programs at a national level and to generate action. The tool itself is comprised of 10 indicators that relate to policy and programs and five indicators that relate to infant and young child feeding practices. Each indicator is allocated 10 points relating to a relevant set of criteria, giving the tool a total score out of 150.

In September 2017, a core group including two representatives from ABA (BIR Manager and SA/NT Branch President) was formed. The tool was used to assess Australia's score related to breastfeeding policy and programs and was effectively an evaluation of the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy 2010–2015*. Australia scored 25.5/150, placing it third last in the world. Australia's score was particularly low because no national data on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) data has been collected in the last five years. ABA has been advocating for regular collection of useful, national IYCF data amongst a number of other initiatives forming the basis of the *National Australian Breastfeeding Strategy: 2018 and Beyond*.

The WBTi Australia report card 2018 can be found at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325527623_WBTi_Australia_Report_Card_2018. ABA would like to acknowledge the work of Naomi Hull, Queensland Branch President, for her work on this project.

Dr. Susan Tawia
Breastfeeding Information and Research
(BIR) Manager



The World Breastfeeding Trends initiative tool was used to assess Australia's score related to breastfeeding policy and programs.

Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces



This year, the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces team worked hard on a program of continuous improvement of our processes, with the aim of simplifying the BFW program so we are able to help more organisations around Australia better support their breastfeeding employees.

At the end of this financial year, 106 organisations around Australia are officially accredited as Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces. Importantly, a large proportion of these accredited workplaces are longstanding accreditations, which deserves recognition and celebration.

The following organisations have been BFW accredited for more than 10 continuous years:

- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
- St. Paul’s Grammar School, NSW
- Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited
- Parliament of Australia – Parliamentary Departments
- Perpetual Limited
- The Department of Veterans Affairs
- City of Ballarat
- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Department of Premier & Cabinet (VIC)
- Vicinity Centres
- Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
- Mercy Health
- Australia Zoo
- Department of Parliamentary Services (NSW)
- ACT Legislative Assembly
- Flinders Medical Centre
- Hydro Tasmania Group
- Reserve Bank of Australia
- AGL(NSW)
- Joondalup Health Campus
- The Treasury

The BFW program continues our work to have a positive impact for breastfeeding mothers in the workplace. We’re proud to be working with many organisations around Australia that are committed to supporting their breastfeeding employees.

Sasha de Silva
Team Leader – Breastfeeding Friendly Environments

BFW year in review

BFW statistics 2017/2018

103
 reecredited organisations

57
 Accreditation EOs received

21
 toolkits sold

3 new accredited organisations

workplace site inspections completed **36**

To find out more about the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Program, visit: www.breastfeeding.asn.au/workplace



National Breastfeeding Helpline



During the 2017–2018 financial year over 77,000 calls were made to the National Breastfeeding Helpline, equating to just under 6500 calls a month. We also celebrated the 800,000th call to the service since the National Breastfeeding Helpline was launched to the Australian public in October 2008.

Key achievements 2017/18

85%

of all calls to the service were supported

694

volunteer breastfeeding counsellors staffed the National Breastfeeding Helpline

over

28,600

volunteer hours were dedicated to the Breastfeeding Helpline

116

newly qualified breastfeeding counsellors completed the Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education course and began volunteering for the service

95%

of all callers mentioned that they would recommend the National Breastfeeding Helpline to a relative or friend*.

** Caller statistics from 2017 caller survey*

A key highlight for the National Breastfeeding Helpline during 2017/2018 has been research conducted into the effectiveness of peer-to-peer counselling via the service in assisting mothers to continue their breastfeeding journey and reach their own goals.

Had the Breastfeeding Helpline not been available, 45% of callers who took part in the 2017 annual caller survey said that they would have seen a medical adviser (ie GP, hospital, lactation consultant) and 2.7% of all callers would have ceased breastfeeding at that time*.

Analysis of this survey showed:

- 92% of the callers said that the support they received from the peer breastfeeding counsellor encouraged them to continue breastfeeding.
- 70% of the callers indicated that their call to the Breastfeeding Helpline left them more determined to continue breastfeeding than they had been before they made the call.
- 85% agreed that they felt more confident about breastfeeding after their call to one of ABA's volunteer counsellors.
- 88% felt less worried after their call.
- 28% of the callers said that without their call to the Breastfeeding Helpline, they would have weaned their baby.

Callers provided some very positive comments about their experience in calling the Breastfeeding Helpline.

Annual caller survey 2017

'I was left feeling **very confident** and that I'd been heard. I felt that the **counsellor really cared** and they were awesome with my million questions.'

'It is a **great service** and I found the call **very reassuring** and had a great plan for the next 24 hours until I could see a GP.'

'The Helpline is so helpful, especially in moments **where you desperately need reassurance and advice**. It's an **absolutely needed service** and provides **invaluable support** to mums who may not be able to go out and physically seek assistance.'

* Caller statistics from 2017 caller survey



Answer choices	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The wait time before connection to a counsellor was what I would expect from a 1800 free call service	88%	7%	5%
I would call the National Breastfeeding Helpline again in the future, if needed	92%	4%	4%
I would recommend the National Breastfeeding Helpline to a friend or relative	95%	3%	2%
Overall, the support and assistance I received on the National Breastfeeding Helpline was what I expected	88%	4%	8%

The National Breastfeeding Helpline looks forward to celebrating its 10th Birthday in the coming financial year (January 2019).

LiveChat

100% of all visitors stated that they would use LiveChat in the future or would recommend it to a friend or family member.

‘(The volunteer) was **thoughtful, attentive and empathic.**
Very reassuring.’

‘Very **easy to use** and **super quick to receive help.** The volunteer was lovely and provided a lot of information.’

‘The LiveChat allows me to get the information I require in a timely manner, in the **comfort of my own home at my convenience.**
This is a huge advantage.’

In response to growing anecdotal evidence surrounding how mothers and their families access breastfeeding support, ABA has extended its current breastfeeding support services to include web-based ‘LiveChat’ for all families via the ABA website.

This service became available to the Australian public at the beginning of National Mothering Week, Monday 7 May 2018 and is currently offered weeknights, 8 pm–10 pm AEST. As with the National Breastfeeding Helpline, LiveChat is staffed by many of ABA’s trained volunteers who work from their own homes to support families across Australia.

Early analysis of the service shows that visitors to LiveChat experience an extremely high satisfaction rate. 100% of all visitors stated that they would use LiveChat in the future or would recommend it to a friend or family member. 91% of all visitors commented that they received the information that they were seeking through LiveChat.

ABA plans to extend the hours of LiveChat in the future.

Nerida Haines
Breastfeeding Services Manager



Promotion & events

National Mothering Week



Mother's love through the generations

National Mothering Week 2018

ABA celebrated National Mothering Week during 7–13 May 2018. This year's theme was *Mother's love through the generations*, which celebrated a mother's unconditional, unchanging and eternal love. The campaign demonstrated the ways in which love passes through generations, each giving the gift of love to the next.

Throughout the week we encouraged families to connect with all generations of mothers and mother figures to learn from and inspire one another. This enabled community involvement, with mothers submitting photos of their mother (or mother figure) that captures a memory of what this person represented to them. The competition winner was Robyn Gray (pictured right). Robyn's photo and story was shared on the ABA website and social media pages.

Accompanying hashtags were also used on social media to drive community engagement, which included #NMW2018 and #motheringthroughthegenerations.

Other activities throughout National Mothering Week included local group gatherings, as well as the launch of LiveChat to the Australian public (previously a member-only service).



World Breastfeeding Week 2017

Sustaining Breastfeeding Together

The 2017 theme for World Breastfeeding Week was *Sustaining Breastfeeding Together*. In September 2015 the world's leaders committed to 17 'Sustainable Development Goals' that aimed to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity. World Breastfeeding Week enables the breastfeeding movement (and beyond) to connect with a variety of development issues over the next 15 years (through to 2030) for maximum impact.

ABA's work underpins each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and during World Breastfeeding Week it was our intention to raise and highlight one particular goal that demonstrates ABA programs and initiatives. The focus for 2017 was *Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals*.

Throughout the week ABA celebrated all of the ways we can help sustain breastfeeding, including:

- Our amazing volunteers who staff the National Breastfeeding Helpline, LiveChat, run events, local groups and offer support to many other projects.
- Corporate sponsors who help us support mothers. We named and created a social media post celebrating our corporate sponsors.
- Our Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces who are accredited to support breastfeeding mums when they return to work.
- Breastfeeding Friendly Welcome here venues.
- ABA's internal Breastfeeding Information and Research team who are constantly researching, reviewing and updating information, ensuring accuracy and relevance for mothers and health professionals.

The hashtag #WBW2017 was also used to share and connect with our community.



ABA's work underpins each of WABA's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Baby's Day Out 2017

Baby's Day Out 2017 was a continuation of the World Breastfeeding Week theme: *Sustaining Breastfeeding Together*. Mothers were encouraged to celebrate sustainably by recognising and acknowledging the partnerships that have assisted them with their breastfeeding journey. Together, we can support women to breastfeed and protect the health and wellbeing of future generations.

Socialising with others is a fantastic way to share experiences and extend support to mothers who may not feel comfortable to breastfeed in public. Baby's Day Out gives mothers the perfect opportunity to engage with fellow mums and their peers, advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society and celebrate their ability to nurture their babies anywhere they choose.

ABA invited all mothers to participate in Baby's Day Out. The community could be involved by attending a local group event, hosting an event of your own, attending an event organised by another mother and following ABA's social media accounts.



Socialising with others is a fantastic way to share experiences and extend support to mothers who may not feel comfortable to breastfeed in public.

Inspiration for events given to mothers were as follows:

- A walk and a picnic lunch in the local park
- A play date at a local swim school
- A morning tea at the playground
- A mums' and bubs' yoga or exercise class
- A coffee and cake date at a favourite café
- A lunch or afternoon tea surrounded by nature
- A pyjama or lounge-around party in their own living room.

As well as hosting an event, participants were also encouraged to fundraise for ABA. ABA developed campaign-specific marketing and promotional material (digital fundraising kit) for everyone to use, which included a logo, web banners for their fundraising page, posters and images to share across their social media pages. Event photos were also encouraged and some are pictured on this page.

Kathy Farrell
Senior Manager, Income Development
and Marketing



Fundraising & partnerships



Thank you

Thank you, our valued supporters, for your continued generosity. Your passion and commitment that makes our vital work possible. Our organisation is stronger and more capable than ever before and with you by our side we continue to improve the way we support, educate and advocate for breastfeeding mothers. It is exciting to think what we can achieve together as part our Strategic Plan in 2019.

This financial year has seen a steady flow of our donors supporting the Association, with 687 of you contributing towards our vital work. With 140 donating regularly around 68% of our fundraising income came via regular giving. Your regular donations strengthen our capacity to provide reliable and sustainable support for our programs and services, now and into the future.

Donors responded generously to our two annual appeals, generating over \$50,000 towards our support services for breastfeeding mothers.

In the 2018–2019 financial year, the business development team will focus on developing further community and corporate partnerships, sourcing a wider range of advertisers and increasing our festive and tax appeal along with regular donors.

Nitty Brown Advertising & Partnerships



Corporate partners

Corporate fundraising has been one of our core activities over the financial year. We have invested in corporate fundraising through partnerships and advertising. This has assisted us in sourcing new partners, as well as nurturing existing relationships.

Thank you to our 2017/18 ABA partners & supporters



We would also like to thank our Platinum Partner, Medical Australia (now known as Clinical Innovations Australia), who have worked closely with ABA to help us achieve our vision and mission.



National Raffle 2018

ABA runs an annual raffle as our major fundraising event for the year. The raffle commenced on Valentine's Day (14 February) and concluded on Mother's Day (13 May). The major prize was worth \$20,000 (either in gold bullion or to be used towards travel). Each year the holiday is used as a promotional tool for marketing the raffle. Both National Office and local groups are responsible for selling tickets (\$5 each with 30,000 available).

The 2018 marketing theme showcased the seven natural wonders of the world, which were used as a tool to inspire potential ticket purchasers and throughout the campaign we encouraged people to share where they would travel to if they were to win the major prize.

The remaining raffle prizes were as follows:

- \$5000 shopping spree
- \$2000 Red Balloon experience
- \$1500 Flight Centre voucher
- \$1000 JB Hi-Fi voucher
- \$500 Ticketmaster voucher.

The national raffle was drawn on 22 June 2018. Results were announced on the Association's website, ABA social media pages, at: www.raffleresults.com.au and in The Australian newspaper on 29 June 2018.



2018 Raffle

WIN

\$20,000 dream holiday or \$20,000 in gold

Get your tickets now: visit www.breastfeeding.asn.au/raffle

The graphic features a blue background with the text '2018 Raffle' at the top left. Below it is a grid of seven images representing natural wonders: the Grand Canyon, a person scuba diving, a waterfall with a rainbow, a cityscape, the Aurora Borealis, and a snowy mountain peak. The word 'WIN' is written in large white letters. At the bottom, it says '\$20,000 dream holiday or \$20,000 in gold' and 'Get your tickets now: visit www.breastfeeding.asn.au/raffle'.



Winning number: The Raffle 2018 draw taking place at ABA National Office. Pictured (left to right): Fanny Hanusin and Paula Banda



ABA volunteer Desley Hubner selling raffle tickets at her local Bunnings Warehouse.



News from our branches

ACT/NSW Branch

The ACT/NSW Branch had a great year and has really become stronger together. We worked to bring to fruition some important projects for ACT Health, wisely manage the Branch's grant success and at the same time continued to provide excellence in service to the community.

Here is what our Branch has done in the past year to support breastfeeding in the community:

Projects

We are in the middle of delivering a number of projects for ACT Health, including a Breastfeeding Basics Video that was filmed in and around Sydney. As part of the grant we have also partnered with Nutrition Australia to deliver workshops, we are working on new CALD resources which include our multilingual *How Breastfeeding Works* booklets (now available to download from the eShop) and we're developing more materials aimed at CALD and Indigenous communities. We are also evolving our Breastfeeding Education Classes (BECs) to become more flexible and have delivered two BECs for parents expecting multiple babies.



Services

Training: We continue to see new trainees enrolling with dozens of regular workshops conducted across the Branch by local trainers. In all, 140 training sessions were provided. Trainees are also supported to attend training workshops outside their region to develop networks.

BECs: We conducted 74 BECs around ACT/NSW this year, in addition to an estimated 930 general workshops/discussion groups throughout the Branch this year which is an incredible amount of volunteer activity. We have also been evaluating our BECs as part of the ACT grant funding.

Community education and activities: We had 'advice' stands at five expos this year and are negotiating with a number of organisations to deliver Community Breastfeeding Mentor sessions. We continue to deliver breastfeeding education sessions to first year Midwifery students at The University of Canberra annually.

Health Professionals: The Branch held or supported over 30 workshops for health professionals this year and continues to develop relationships with Maternal and Child Health teams. There has been a mailout in the ACT to all GPs and obstetrics clinics completed annually to raise awareness of our services locally.

Breastfeeding Helpline: The Branch continues to support the Helpline in a big way, with an average of 156 breastfeeding counsellors taking calls each month. This has increased from previous years.

Grant success

In the last year the Branch has successfully been awarded \$45,672 in ACT/NSW-based grant funding for various programs which are carefully managed. These include remote conferencing subscriptions for counsellors and trainees; reprinting our Chinese booklet for CALD groups; breast pumps for Sydney West; training cost subsidies and \$20,000 from Destination NSW for our 2018 Branch Conference as part of increasing visitation to the region. Our Funding & Projects Officer continues to look for ACT/NSW grant opportunities and has visited National Office to consult with our National Philanthropic Grants Coordinator on ways we can work together.

Nicole Bridges
Branch President

Queensland Branch

ABA Queensland continues to benefit from a Community Benefit Fund provided by Queensland Health. This money is enough to provide for the running of our office to support our volunteers and cover some of our training costs.

Our regional team's weekend in November 2017 was a success, enabling our training team to rejuvenate and plan for the following year's activities. We use the above mentioned funding to assist our trainers and assessors with their travel costs and to cover some other costs such as venue hire and catering.

In July 2017 we held a very successful Branch Training Conference, also funded by the Community Benefit Fund. This was a great success all round.

We were appreciative of the invitation from the ACT/NSW Branch to join them at their recent training workshop in Northern NSW. Many Queensland trainees travelled south of the border to attend.

Our Branch Conference was in May and we were fortunate to be joined by ABA's newly appointed CEO, Alison Boughey. The theme this year was *'Embracing Change'*. The conference was a great success and positive feedback was received.

Branch Office breast pump hire has been a success this financial year, with all 25 pumps frequently out on hire.

ABA Queensland has many community partnerships and collaborations. We have representatives attending the meetings of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Infant Feeding Resource Group, Child and Youth Community Health Service Breastfeeding Workgroup and the South East Queensland Breastfeeding Coalition.

We recently bid farewell to Lesley McBurney, a former ABA volunteer, who has worked in our branch office for many years (and has seen many moves!). She will retire on her 65th birthday and will be missed. However, luckily, she has promised not to disappear. We have appointed a new office manager, who works two days per week.

We are extremely pleased to have such a dynamic, passionate and willing team in Queensland who continue to do such a fabulous job. We are so well supported by our office staff and a big thank you goes to them also. They are invaluable to our volunteers.

Naomi Hull
Branch President



SA/NT Branch

SA/NT Branch was off to a running start with our annual conference and planning held during World Breastfeeding Week in August 2017. We learned so much from our local health experts and were challenged to reflect on our perceptions of a mother's experience. At the conference we mapped out the year ahead, committed to a project for SA Health antenatal records and a health professional seminar in Darwin, reconnected with each other and welcomed our new trainees.



The Branch continues to receive a small amount of funding from both the South Australian and Northern Territory governments for the respective regions as well as hosting fundraisers over the course of the year (including participation in the National Raffle and continuing to offer breast pump hire). South West Metro and Unley Burnside Groups worked together to host a movie fundraiser, which successfully raised money and public awareness of ABA in the region. SA attended the annual International Women's Day breakfast in Adelaide, while the NT group partnered with Charles Darwin University to host a panel to discuss breastfeeding and workplace

policies. The panel discussion was well attended and encouraged thoughtful dialogue about how to support mothers and parents at work.

In addition to these major events, the Branch also had the opportunity to comment or provide submissions to the Early Childhood Strategy in the Northern Territory and the Breastfeeding Strategy in South Australia. The Early Childhood Strategy submission successfully resulted in breastfeeding indicators being included in the final strategy, as well as a commitment to a breastfeeding friendly workplace policy across government. We are continuing to work with each government to support them in their goals.

The Branch continues to attend parenting expos and local community events, volunteer on the Breastfeeding Helpline, run breastfeeding education classes, host local group meetings and reach out to health professionals.

A huge thank you to the staff and volunteers who dedicate their time to provide valuable support to families and advocate for breastfeeding to be recognised as culturally normal.

Mary Peterson
Branch President

Approximately 35 people from across the state attended the seminar in Launceston in May and enjoyed the program of interstate and local speakers, including two mothers sharing their own personal breastfeeding stories, which was a real highlight of the day. The Minister for Health opened the event. In his opening remarks, he mentioned the importance of breastfeeding and the costs to the community when mothers are not supported to breastfeed to 6 months.

Breastfeeding counsellors continue to support the National Breastfeeding Helpline with approximately 65% active on the Breastfeeding Helpline across the year. Our valued Community Educators also participate in *LiveChat*.

Our newly established Breastfeeding Education Classes (BECs) continue to gain momentum with seven classes offered during the year. These classes are run by our volunteer breastfeeding counsellors and

Tasmania Branch

Tasmania Branch continues to make the most of limited womanpower and, once again, had a busy and productive year providing support and information to mothers and babies, health professionals and the wider community across our island state. There are currently eight groups in Tasmania and two regions.

For the first time in many years, we ran our own seminar – *Breastfeeding: A Community Approach* – aimed at health professionals and the wider community.

educators, usually on a Saturday in a central location in the northwest of the state, taking into account volunteer capacity. Evaluations are very favourable and classes have also provided a boost to membership of local groups.

In September we held our annual Branch Conference at Dodges Ferry, at a beautiful waterside location close to Hobart, with nearly all of our volunteers attending at least for part of the 2-day event. Attendees came away renewed and reinvigorated with new skills and knowledge. Due to a generous grant from the WD Booth Foundation, all conference costs were covered so there was no requirement for groups, regions or volunteers to pay any of the costs of attending.

At the conference, we always take the opportunity to acknowledge the years of service of our volunteers. Last year we acknowledged the years of service of several volunteers including Felicity Sly and Suzanne Groom who have both been breastfeeding counsellors for 20 years, and Ros Escott, who celebrated 30 years as a breastfeeding counsellor.

Our dedicated team of trainers and assessors continue to work hard to support our trainees, with five trainees completing their Cert IV BE and one volunteer completing her Cert IV TAE during the course of the year. One newly qualified breastfeeding counsellor moved immediately into the role of group leader, ably supported by the previous group leader and other volunteers in the group. As at 30 June, we had five trainees working their way through their training. We wish them all well and hope that they enjoy their training.

Social media remains an important way for us to connect with our market and to promote branch activity. We have found our Facebook presence has worked well as it gives people a feel of what is on offer at ABA, helps demystify group meetings and how we work - which can be particularly helpful for new mothers.

Last year nine enthusiastic volunteers (and some partners and supporters) entered the Burnie Ten, a well-known road race, raising approximately \$1400 for Tasmania



Branch. Our coordinator even managed to run some Facebook live streaming during the course of the event, without running out of puff. Local groups mostly rely on the annual ABA raffle for their income.

In January we were surprised and thrilled to receive a donation of \$5000 from Barwon Region in Victoria. This will be put towards conference costs in 2018, again ensuring volunteers, groups and regions do not have to contribute to registration costs etc. We are very grateful to Barwon Region for this exceptionally generous donation.

The time eventually comes for all us to 'wean' from our volunteer roles in ABA. During the year we said goodbye and thank you to several volunteers including Del Walsh who qualified as a breastfeeding counsellor in 1983. Del contributed to Tasmania Branch in many significant ways, including writing many successful grant applications. She also took over 2780 calls on the National Breastfeeding Helpline and many more in the years before the national system. Ros Escott also resigned as a breastfeeding counsellor, after 30 years. We are grateful that Ros is remaining as a community educator and as part of the training team (slow weaning works best for all concerned).

Thank you to all our volunteers and to all who support them in their roles, including National Office staff, partners and family members, and our local group members.

Charlotte Fielding
Branch President

Victoria Branch

VIC Branch has continued to work hard towards providing high-quality support and assistance to mothers and babies across the state.

The Branch is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training and must provide three major activities as part of the funding model:

- Provide mothers with practical mother-to-mother support and information, enabling them to establish and continue breastfeeding.
- Provide high quality and accessible training, education and resources to our volunteers, health professionals and the wider community.
- Strengthen the advocacy work of the ABA.

These activities are achieved through the work of local groups and regions throughout the state, with the branch overseeing the operations.

In the 2017/2018 financial year, the Victorian Branch has achieved the following:

- 73 Breastfeeding Education Classes were held.
- 603 participants attended Breastfeeding Education Classes.
- Training weekends were held at Bendigo, Mt Eliza and Strathmore for trainees who are completing 10280NAT Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education.
- Volunteers took part in events around the state as exhibitors and sponsors, as well as running feed and change tents. This demonstrates ABA's commitment to establishing presence in our local community.
- Groups, regions and the branches worked with local hospitals, schools and health organisations, including maternal and child health centres, to build and strengthen our relationships with these stakeholders, whilst providing and promoting ABA resources and services.
- Our annual VIC Branch conference was attended by 180 delegates. The theme was *Nourish: A Holistic Approach to Lactation* and was presented by the Maroondah Region.
- The Branch contributed funding to the National Office for the ABA website redevelopment project. With over 2.2 million hits to the ABA website, this is one of ABA's main assets and needs to be functional, relevant and engaging for the community. This is a major investment of our funds and will assist with the strategic direction of ABA.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who are dedicated to making ABA a nurturing and wonderful organisation. Your help is greatly appreciated and truly valued.

Kathleen Mather
Branch President



Western Australia Branch

The WA Branch continues to provide much needed peer-to-peer support to many mothers and their families. Part of providing such invaluable information and support requires maintaining our professional development and as such we held a very successful residential conference weekend in September 2017. We hosted interstate guest speakers along with volunteers right throughout WA, making it a special occasion and important opportunity to connect as a state team, given we are spread so far and wide. Thank you to the support we received from Lotterywest, making the event possible.

Funding is an ongoing concern. Alas we have made the decision not to continue with the WA raffle beyond 2018 due to the significant workload it involves for our WA volunteers to organise and run this event. The branch relies on selling branch projects and fundraising to cover costs, which we are finding an increasing challenge. We always welcome new ideas or support to be involved with our fundraising efforts.

We continue to maintain a high percentage of active volunteers in the branch. Once again we have consistently remained above the expected 70% volunteer participation on the National Breastfeeding Helpline, many months reaching beyond 80% participation. The volunteers in WA also organise and facilitate around 20 breastfeeding education classes a year, staff LiveChat, participate in email counselling, attend numerous community events and run face-to-face local support groups. We congratulated 13 newly qualified breastfeeding counsellors and 1 community educator who all completed their Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education and welcomed 19 new trainee volunteers to our team.

The Capes Group in the south west of the state was very successful in receiving a grant from their local Lions club to support families in the community by paying for a membership and Breastfeeding Education Class. The WA Branch was also successful in being awarded some funds from the Rotary Club of Matilda Bay to purchase a brand new Ardo Carum breast pump to hire.

The volunteers in WA are an incredibly dedicated and wonderful group of people to work with. They give their time so freely to support others and I give them my heartfelt thanks for all the amazing work they do with mothers, the community and within the Association.

Emma Hitchens
Branch President





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Association**

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