



UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 4PM, 5 MAY 2021

Media Release – 5 May 2021

Australian mums make milestone 1 million calls to the National Breastfeeding Helpline

Today, the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA), Australia's peak body on breastfeeding, is celebrating the 1 millionth call to its National Breastfeeding Helpline.

The vital service offers round-the-clock support and information to more than 5500 breastfeeding mothers, their families and health professionals each month.

For Jemma Manwaring, her call to the Australian Breastfeeding Association's (ABA) National Breastfeeding Helpline was not just one in a million – it was lifechanging. The Gladstone mum was separated from her son, Zac at birth when both needed to be flown to Brisbane on emergency flights.

“The stress of the ordeal of being separated from my newborn baby was difficult but one factor in particular that concerned me was establishing breastfeeding. My milk was coming in and I was so engorged, but my son wasn't strong enough to feed at the breast yet. I became really anxious with the 'what ifs' and I phoned the Breastfeeding Helpline.” Jemma, who is now an ABA trainee volunteer, explains.

“The counsellor I spoke with was empathetic, kind and supportive, reassuring me with ideas and different approaches to try. Several times throughout Zac's stay in the NICU, ABA supported me to feel confident and equipped with knowledge to establish and continue breastfeeding. After one phone call to the Breastfeeding Helpline, I remember looking at my mum and saying, 'I have to help women like this one day, they're just so helpful on the phone.'”

The National Breastfeeding Helpline is staffed by trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors who are mothers themselves. Around 400 of ABA's volunteer mums give more than 1,600 combined hours to take calls on the Breastfeeding Helpline each month.

“This milestone achievement of 1 million calls to the National Breastfeeding Helpline shows just how crucial it is to be able to support women at every stage of pregnancy, birth and motherhood when and where they need it. We are the only Australian service that offers free mother-to-mother support every day and night of the year, regardless of whether it's 3 am or 3 pm,” says ABA's Executive Officer, Victoria Marshall-Cerins.

“It's also a huge testament to the thousands of volunteers who have made it possible to operate this crucial service and continue to give their time to ensure we can be there for another million plus calls in the future.”

The Breastfeeding Helpline was established in 2008 and is complemented by other ABA services including LiveChat, the mum2mum app, breastfeeding education classes, local support groups and health professional education and training initiatives.

The National Breastfeeding Helpline is supported by funding from the Australian Government and delivered by technology from Launtel.

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Photo opportunity

Photos available on request. Contact marketing@breastfeeding.asn.au

About the Australian Breastfeeding Association:

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is Australia's largest breastfeeding information and support service, providing assistance to more than 80,000 mothers each year. ABA also provides up-to-date information and continuing education for thousands of health professionals working with mothers and babies. It is our vision that breastfeeding is recognised as important by all Australians and is culturally normal. As Australia's peak authority on breastfeeding, we support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society.

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>