

World Breastfeeding Week 2020 - Support breastfeeding for a healthier planet

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is a global campaign to raise awareness and encourage action on issues related to breastfeeding. This year's theme, *Support breastfeeding for a healthier planet*, was chosen to focus on the impact of infant feeding on the environment and the imperative to protect, promote and support breastfeeding for the health of the planet and its people. World Breastfeeding Week 2020 is a valuable opportunity for the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) to raise awareness among decision makers of the need to invest in the implementation of the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy and also the wider community of the contribution breastfeeding makes to population health, food security and environmental sustainability.

During this year's event from 1–7 August, ABA's community will showcase some of the work the Association and its volunteers have been doing to continue to keep mothers and families connected to breastfeeding information and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes virtual local group meetings, safe and timely breast pump hire services, support through the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services, online Breastfeeding Education classes, an updated avenue to deliver evidence-based information straight to mums' fingertips through our app, mum2mum, as well as a national ABA Facebook group. ABA has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to review new information and providing updates in a timely manner to families, health professionals and public.

At a national level, the Association will use World Breastfeeding Week as an opportunity to urge the Federal Government to fully fund the implementation of the priority action areas in the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy (ANBS), with a particular focus on infant and young child feeding in emergencies.

'Given the recent catastrophic summer bushfires, hail storms and flood, followed by the pandemic, ABA has seen first-hand the need for the development of policies and guidelines for infant and young child feeding in emergencies', says ABA Executive Officer Victoria Marshall- Cerins.

'During emergencies, infants and young children are especially vulnerable due to their particular food requirements. At present, Australia lacks emergency planning for infants at every level of government. It is evident that there is a need for the development, funding and implementation of planning for infant and young child feeding in emergencies. This is one of our key messages this WBW.'

ABA plays an important role in raising awareness of the importance of breastfeeding. As Australia's leading authority on breastfeeding with more than 50 years' experience, ABA will use World Breastfeeding Week to educate the community on the imperative to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding for the health of the planet and its people.

'Breastfeeding is a sustainable way to feed our infants and young children and provides food security for them in emergencies and climate-related disasters', Ms Marshall-Cerins says.

‘Breastmilk is a natural, renewable food that is produced and delivered to the consumer without pollution, packing or waste. When we protect and support mothers and breastfeeding, we are also reducing the impact on our air, water and land, protecting our young ones and future generations.’

Ms Marshall-Cerins says World Breastfeeding Week is also a fantastic occasion to encourage mothers to empower one another and to celebrate breastfeeding.

ENDS

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