



**The Hon Ged Kearney MP**  
**Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care**  
**Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health**  
**Member for Cooper**

Ms Victoria Marshall-Cerins  
Executive Officer  
Australian Breastfeeding Association  
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Dear Ms Marshall-Cerins

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to advocacy and partnership with the Albanese Labor Government. I am grateful for the constructive way your organisation has worked with me over the last three years. I write to you today on behalf of the Albanese Labor Government in response to the Australian Breastfeeding Association's 2025 Election Priorities. Our response to each of the four questions is outlined below.

**Q. Will the Labor party, prioritise full, 4-year funding for ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services?**

- The Albanese Labor Government recognises the vital service that the Helpline and LiveChat have provided over many years, including support, education and advice to breastfeeding mothers and families across Australia.
- The Australian Government has funded the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) to operate the National Breastfeeding Helpline since 2008, as well as the LiveChat since its launch in 2018.
- The 2023-24 Budget included \$5.3 million for ABA to facilitate the ongoing delivery of the Helpline.
- Through MYEFO 2024-25, the Government provided an additional \$2.6 million to ABA to extend funding for 1 year to 30 June 2026, consistent with the Government's decision on other terminating measures providing similar services.
- An independent evaluation of the Helpline and LiveChat was finalised in late 2024. The Department received the final report on 10 December 2024. The Government will consider the recommendations to inform future funding decisions.

**Q. Will the Labor Party commit to enacting legislation of new controls of the marketing of breastmilk substitutes in Australia that encompass the full scope of the WHO Code?**

- The Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of women and children, with a particular focus on supporting health outcomes within the first 2,000 days (first 5 years) of a child's life, including through a focus on breastfeeding which is a key contributor to infant health.

- In October last year, the Government announced its intention to replace the voluntary MAIF Agreement with stronger mandatory controls to protect the health of mothers and babies.
  - This was after the Review of the MAIF Agreement (the Review) found that the voluntary, self-regulatory approach was no longer fit for purpose.
- The Government has already begun working on a robust and stronger regulatory framework to prohibit the marketing of infant formula in Australia.
  - Consultation with experts, public health and industry stakeholders will form a key part of this process.
- It is expected that a mandatory Code of Practice will be developed and implemented by the end of 2026, subject to the successful passage of relevant legislation.
- The scope of the mandatory controls was considered during the process of the Review, which did not find sufficient evidence to support extending the scope of controls to capture toddler milk, nor retailers.
- However, noting Recommendation 3 in the Review was to “Conduct a review of the scale and impact of inappropriate marketing of infant formula by supermarkets and pharmacies to determine whether the regulatory framework should include retailers in its scope” the Department has commissioned Nous Group to undertake a review.
- Additionally, in response to a recommendation by Food Ministers in November 2024, FSANZ has commenced work on a review of the relevant provision of the Food Standards Code as it applies to the composition of ‘toddler milk.’

**Q. Will the Labor Party commit to ensuring that there is a 2025 repeat of the National Infant Feeding Survey?**

- The Albanese Labor Government recognises the importance of data and evidence in supporting families and infants to have the best start to life, and that nutrition in the first 2000 days is one of the most significant factors that influence child health and development.
- The 2010 Australian National Infant Feeding Survey was the first specialised national survey of infant feeding practices in Australia, and collected important data on attitudes towards, and enablers for and barriers against breastfeeding.
- The Government will continue its commitment to promoting the benefits of breastfeeding by:
  - ensuring safe and adequate nutrition for babies
  - encouraging breastfeeding as the first option for babies
  - ensure parents and caregivers have best practice, evidence-based information to make informed decisions
  - ensuring health professionals are equipped to support families and infants to have the best possible start to life.
- A re-elected Albanese Labor Government will consider options to improve data and evidence around breastfeeding practices in Australia.

**Q. Will the Labor Party prioritise improving access to continuity of care for women?**

- The Albanese Labor Government is committed to models of care that deliver the best, safest, and highest quality of care for women throughout their pregnancy journey.
- Midwives are a critical part of Australia's healthcare workforce. The Albanese Labor Government has invested in midwives, including through funding scholarships for midwives to undertake postgraduate study to extend their skills and experience, and the upcoming Commonwealth Prac Payment.
- In the 2025-26 Budget, the Albanese Labor Government announced it will provide \$10.5 million for 400 more postgraduate scholarships to support nurses and midwives to extend their skills and become highly trained nurse practitioners or endorsed midwives. This builds on the \$50.2 million the Government provided for 1,850 scholarships for nurses and midwives.
- These investments will build the maternity care workforce and support continuity of care for mothers and babies.
- We believe there is more to do and will work with nursing and midwifery organisations to ensure nurses and midwives can work to their full scope of practice and have rewarding careers.
- A re-elected Albanese Labor Government will prioritise scope of practice reforms, including those identified through the Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce (Scope of Practice) Review. This will strengthen our primary health care sector, support multidisciplinary care teams, and remove barriers to enable nurses, midwives and other health professionals to work to their full scope of practice. The Government will continue to consult with the health sector as it considers the recommendations and findings of this review, alongside other related reviews. A taskforce has been established in the Department of Health and Aged Care to work with the health sector to design and coordinate options in response to the reviews.
- A re-elected Labor government will prioritise the development of a National Midwifery Strategy and appoint a Commonwealth Chief Midwife, within the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Thank you for your advocacy on these important matters. If an Albanese Labor Government is fortunate enough to be re-elected on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025, I will look forward to continuing to collaborate on our shared goals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ged Kearney', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ged Kearney

30 / 4 / 2025