

## Secure the future of Helpline



### ABA's Helpline Services Commonwealth Government funding campaign key messages

#### Who are we?

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is the national organisation committed to the support and promotion of breastfeeding.

Through the provision of evidence-based information, education and counselling, we provide unconditional breastfeeding peer support to mums and their families. At the same time, we educate and equip health professionals and advocate to remove the societal barriers to breastfeeding.

#### About ABA's Helpline Services

- The Australian Breastfeeding Association's Commonwealth Government funded, national services are accessed by 57,000+ families each year, that's almost 1 in 5 of the 292,500 births in Australia in 2024.
- ABA's 24/7 toll-free National Breastfeeding Helpline and web-based, real time LiveChat are **essential services** equitably supporting parents of infants and young children, including the following priority communities young mothers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- ABA's Commonwealth Government funding also supports the delivery of world-class health professional education enabling more than 2000 healthcare professionals annually to provide best-practice care to mothers and their babies.
- ABA's volunteer based, peer support service model **represents a high quality, cost-effective investment** that cannot not be replicated by other health service providers. Additional information:
  - ABA Helpline Services have a 95% satisfaction rate
  - ABA services are delivered by volunteer breastfeeding counsellors and educators who complete a Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education and participate in ongoing continuing education.
  - ABA volunteers give more than 25,000 hours to the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services each year
  - The cost of running the Helpline and LiveChat is \$7.73 per call, compared with the *Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline* cost of \$85 per call.

#### What is the problem?

- The National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat Services rely on Commonwealth Government funding. ABA has only been offered 12-months funding to 30 June 2026, even though a 2024 Government evaluation found ABA's services to be 'world-leading'.
- The level of funding offered since 2023 (\$2.4 million per year) does not cover the increasing costs of service delivery.
- The telecommunications infrastructure supporting the services is at end-of-life and risk of failure.

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### Who it affects

- Funding the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services significantly reduces the burden on primary health care providers and the health system.  
Additional information:
  - 44% of callers said without Helpline they would have accessed their local hospital or other medical services
  - 23% of callers said they may have stopped breastfeeding if it wasn't for their call.
  - 86% of callers experienced a reduction in anxiety and stress, feeling more confident and reassured after their call.
- ABA health professional education – Public consultation on the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy (ANBS) identified poor or conflicting advice from health professionals to mothers as a major factor in ceasing to breastfeed. ABA's world-class health professional education offerings address the need for consistent evidence-based and best-practice breastfeeding information and support from health professionals working with families.

### How to tackle the problem

- ABA has submitted a proposal to the Department of Health for an increase in funding to \$14.8 million over 4 years, in order to maintain our Helpline Services; upgrade critical telecommunications infrastructure and expand culturally, safe, multilingual access for priority communities.

### What we would like you to do

- Show your support for ABA's proposal for full, ongoing funding of our National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services, in whatever way you can.



Australian  
Breastfeeding  
Association