



Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

Annual report

2024-25

Our impact 2024–25

215,000+
families reached

2.5
million
website users

1333
parents attended
a local or online
breastfeeding
education
class

139
Accredited
Breastfeeding Friendly
Workplaces

15,000+
health professionals
connected with ABA

11,600
mum2mum app
downloads

122
ABA local peer
support groups

Our impact 2024–25 *continued*

50,890

calls received by
ABA's National
Breastfeeding
Helpline

5906

'chats' received
by ABA's real-time
LiveChat services

31,518

ABA members

661

fully-qualified
volunteer
breastfeeding
counsellors and
educators and
volunteer
members

1962

health professionals
engaged in ongoing
education

27,000

ABA professional
website users

179

trainee volunteer
breastfeeding
counsellors and
educators

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October 2025, Australian Breastfeeding Association

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Attendees at ABA's QLD Branch conference 2025

National President's report



The Board, together with Executive Officer, Victoria Marshall-Cerins, continue our work to ensure the future of ABA and support breastfeeding. This year we have seen increasing engagement with the Association, with our total membership over 31,000 at the end of June 2025. The value of our services, resources and programs is immense, and the Association continues to do so much and make a real difference with our limited resources.

In the second half of 2024 we continued to commemorate the Association's 60th anniversary. Many groups, regions and branches held celebrations across the country. In addition, a national online event was held in August for all volunteers and staff. Many attended at 'watch parties', in small groups, as individuals and at two branch conferences held concurrently. It was a wonderful opportunity to look back over our many achievements, be inspired, connect and have fun at the same time.

Also in August, we celebrated World Breastfeeding Week with the theme 'Breastfeeding support for all'. This theme highlighted support and empowering mothers from diverse cultures. Mothers shared their lived experiences of seeking breastfeeding support via a social media campaign, 'Share your journey with us'. Our goal was to explore what worked, identify gaps, and learn how we could ensure that all mothers and families get

the support they need when they need it. The responses we gathered were both inspiring and heartwarming, shedding light on the vital elements of breastfeeding support.

In February 2025 initial consultations were held to prepare for our 2026–2030 strategic plan. This vital work will continue throughout the upcoming year. The Association will be looking to ensure its relevance and sustainability into the future. Input from a wide range of sources will be crucial to the plan, meeting the challenges of the future.

ABA continued its advocacy work throughout 2024–25. In February 2025 we saw the Final Determination from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), denying the application of the Infant Nutrition Council for the authorisation of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula (MAIF) Agreement for another 5 years. This decision by the ACCC is very much welcomed by ABA. I would like to congratulate the ABA WHO Code Taskforce steering group and partners, ABA staff, volunteers and members who have all contributed to this great outcome. It is very gratifying to see the positive outcome of the efforts of these advocates of breastfeeding. Thank you to all who have participated in the efforts to ensure that the inadequacy of the MAIF Agreement was well understood by the ACCC. ABA also congratulates the Australian Government on their current work

to create new legislative controls regulating the marketing of infant formula in Australia. We will continue to work to educate and advocate for the goal of having the full scope of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and subsequent WHA resolutions (The WHO Code) legislated and we will encourage the government towards meeting this goal.

March saw the culmination of the *Community protection for infants and young children in bushfire emergencies project*. It delivered a fabulous range of resources to help families prepare for emergency and disaster situations, as well as detailed materials for those involved in community emergency preparedness and disaster response. My thanks to all involved.

In National Mothering Week 2025, we saw the launch of the full suite of ABA's wonderful resource for expectant and new parents, *The first 72 hours*. This digital first-offering addresses a gap in support information that many new mothers experience, with many leaving hospital during this time. The online resource is ideal for expectant parents to read prior to the birth of their baby and then 'dip into' as they navigate the early days of their new baby's life. I congratulate the team who worked so hard to bring this together.

ABA's National Breastfeeding Helpline services rely on federal government funding. This

President's report *continued*

funding enables us to operate the 24/7 National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat service, train volunteers to provide these services and offer education opportunities for health professionals. In early 2024 we supported an external evaluation of the service. The evaluation provided to us in early 2025 highlighted the amazing work of ABA throughout the incredibly positive feedback in the report. It also noted the exceptional value ABA's Helpline services provides the community. We hope that this glowing account supports secure, full funding of ABA's Helpline services into the future.

ABA's Board oversees the Association's strategic direction and ensures operations are well managed. It also ensures good-governance, risk-management and financial practices are in place and monitors the overall performance of the Association. Our directors bring varied backgrounds and experience to their role. I thank all our directors for their commitment to the Association and for giving freely of their time and expertise. In November 2024, we welcomed elected directors Alannah Shore and Nitty Brown to the Board. We also welcomed appointed directors Simone Flanagan and Natalie Polkinghorne to the Board in early 2025. We also sincerely thank outgoing directors Leila Forde, Katie Cross and Genevieve Finey, for their valuable contributions during their terms.

Board of directors 2024–25

Cate Uhe, National President

Elected Director in 2019; re-elected 2022

Louise Brown, Vice-President in 2023

Elected Director in 2020; re-elected 2023

Leila Forde, Honorary Secretary

*Elected Director in 2021;
term ended 29 November 2024*

Lynn Ng, Honorary Secretary

Elected Director from 24 November 2023

Dominique Bougoure, Honorary Treasurer

Appointed Director in 2021; reappointed 2023

Daile Kelleher, Company Secretary

*Appointed Director in 2020;
reappointed 2022 and 2024*

Katie Cross

*Elected Director in 2021;
resigned 27 October 2024*

A huge thankyou to everyone for their extraordinary contributions to the work of the Association throughout the year – our members, volunteers, staff and supporters. We have an amazing national staff team, led ably by our executive officer, and a small, committed staff team across the branches supporting our dedicated branch presidents. Together, we continue to make a difference!

Cate Uhe, National President



ABA's Board of directors (left to right in person) Lynn Ng, Simone Flanagan, Alannah Shore, Nitty Brown, Cate Uhe, Louise Brown, Natalie Polkinghorne; (online) Dom Bougoure (top left), Daile Kelleher (top right), Sally Eldridge (bottom of screen).

Sally Eldridge

Appointed as casual vacancy Elected Director February 2020; Elected Director in November 2020; re-elected 2023

Genevieve Finey

Appointed Director in 2022; reappointed 2024; resigned 31 December 2024

Nitty Brown

Elected Director in November 2024

Alannah Shore

Elected Director in November 2024

Simone Flanagan

Appointed Director in February 2025

Natalie Polkinghorne

Appointed as casual vacancy Elected Director in February 2025

Executive Officer's summary



The Australian Breastfeeding Association marked another successful year in 2024–25, as we continued our mission to support, educate and advocate for breastfeeding families across Australia. Building on the momentum of our 60th anniversary celebrations, ABA's reach and impact have grown, with our services touching the lives of more than 215,000 families and engaging over 2.5 million website users.

ABA is a key implementation partner to the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond* (ANBS). Our 2024–25 *Annual Report* showcases the extent and impact of our activities across all three priority areas of the strategy.

Structural enablers for breastfeeding

Community education and awareness

Our national network of 120+ local peer support groups remained the heart of ABA's community education and awareness efforts. Volunteers delivered breastfeeding talks at Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expos, connecting with the 100,000 parents and support people who attended 13 events nationwide. These expos, alongside community presentations at universities, hospitals and health services, strengthened ABA's relationships with the community and health professionals to ensure expectant and new parents received timely, evidence-based support.

Our annual campaigns – World Breastfeeding Week and National Mothering Week – highlighted the importance of equitable access to breastfeeding support. This year's themes, 'Breastfeeding support for all' and 'A village of support: celebrating motherhood', showcased ABA's commitment to empowering mothers from diverse backgrounds and building communities of care. The launch of *The first 72 hours* eModule provided expectant and new parents with a step-by-step guide for navigating the early days with their newborn, filling a critical gap in support information.

Work on the development of ABA's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), continued this year. Led by a working group including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, we mapped historic and ongoing partnerships and set actions to strengthen relationships and culturally safe support. Submission of the draft RAP to Reconciliation Australia is planned for the end of 2025.

Prevent inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes

ABA's advocacy achieved a significant milestone this year in relation to the WHO Code Taskforce project. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) decision to deny re-authorisation of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas: Manufacturers and Importers (MAIF)

Agreement, reflected years of dedicated advocacy by ABA volunteers, staff and partners. We continue to work with the Australian Government to ensure that the proposed new legislation fully aligns with the WHO *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes*, protecting breastfeeding and parents' infant feeding choices from commercial influence.

Settings that enable breastfeeding

Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI)

ABA's Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) eLearning modules provided essential training for maternity care staff, supporting hospitals and health facilities in meeting accreditation requirements.

Health professionals' education and resources

Our Health Professional Seminar series, 'Breastfeeding: supporting the journey', delivered live and online events, attracting over 670 attendees and receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback. The 10960NAT Diploma of Breastfeeding Management continued to build capacity among health professionals, with recognition from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners as a CPD Approved Activity.

Executive Officer's summary *continued*

Breastfeeding-friendly environments

Breastfeeding Friendly Australia continued to expand, with 139 workplaces and 78 Early Childhood Education and Care services accredited this year. The 'Baby Care Room' and 'Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere' programs grew, with 12 new parenting rooms and 212 venues joining, ensuring families feel supported in public spaces across the country.

Individual enablers for breastfeeding

Universal breastfeeding education, support and information services

ABA's National Breastfeeding Helpline remained a lifeline for families, with 50,890 calls made to 465 trained peer counsellors who volunteered nearly 21,000 hours. Satisfaction rates remained high, with 92% of callers reporting positive experiences and 43% noting the service saved them a visit to a health professional. LiveChat continued to provide accessible, compassionate support, with 5906 chats and 97% satisfaction. The mum2mum app saw over 12,500 new downloads, offering parents practical tools and direct access to ABA's support services.

Face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes and online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions empowered hundreds of expectant parents, with knowledge and confidence scores rising

ANBS priority areas

1 Structural enablers

- 1.1 Community education and awareness
- 1.2 Prevent inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes
- 1.3 Policy coordination, monitoring, research and evaluation
- 1.4 Dietary guidelines and growth charts

2 Settings that enable breastfeeding

- 2.1 Baby Friendly Health Initiative
- 2.2 Health professionals' education and training
- 2.3 Breastfeeding-friendly environments
- 2.4 Milk banks

3 Individual enablers

- 3.1 Universal access to breastfeeding support services
- 3.2 Breastfeeding support for priority groups

Source: Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond (ANBS)

significantly after participation. ABA's Newborn Virtual Village and Connect & Share webinars provided tailored support, reaching hundreds of new parents and fostering connections.

ABA's 120+ local groups provided tailored breastfeeding support and community connection across Australia in 2024–25. Groups hosted social events, education sessions and breast pump hire, meeting diverse community needs. Activities ranged from informal 'Cuppa & Chat' gatherings to targeted workshops, helping hundreds of families feel supported, informed and empowered throughout their breastfeeding journeys.

Breastfeeding support for priority groups

Our commitment to supporting priority groups continued, with targeted resources and

workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and young parents. The 10960NAT Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring was offered as workshops to communities in Melbourne in Victoria, Alice Springs in NT, and Eurobodalla in NSW (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities), strengthening ABA's reach and impact among priority groups.

Looking ahead

As we commence work on ABA's strategic plan for 2026 to 2030, we remain committed to accessibility and sustainability. Our education and support services continue to evolve, meeting the changing needs of Australia's families. The dedication of our people, particularly ABA's team of dedicated volunteers, is the foundation of our success. Together, we are building a future where every parent has access to compassionate, evidence-based breastfeeding support to empower their goals.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to ABA's achievements this year. Your commitment ensures that our village of support remains strong, inclusive, and ready to offer support into the future.

Victoria Marshall-Cerins, Executive Officer

Structural enablers for breastfeeding

'The ABA stand was honestly the highlight of the expo and the only thing I actually purchased was 15 months of ABA membership I really appreciated how much knowledge you had to share!' **Brisbane expo attendee**



Jessica at ABA's WA Expo stand

Community education and awareness

Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo

Baby expos are a terrific way for ABA to showcase our services and events to expectant parents. ABA's expo booths are staffed by passionate volunteer breastfeeding counsellors, educators and trainees who present breastfeeding talks and offer information to expo attendees.

During 2024–25, over 100,000 mothers, parents and their support people attended the Pregnancy Babies and Children's Expo at 13 events in all state capital cities, Canberra and Gold Coast, QLD. ABA connected with more than 6000 expo attendees.



Jess and Kathleen at ABA's Melbourne Expo stand

Volunteer story

I recently volunteered at the PBC Expo and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I would encourage any volunteers or trainees to get involved if you are thinking about it! It was such a wonderful opportunity to connect with mums – especially expectant mums, many of whom were preparing for their first baby – and to share all that the ABA has to offer. It was heartening to see so many already thinking about breastfeeding, with some seeking out the ABA stand specifically, while others were discovering us for the first time. Everyone I spoke with was genuinely interested and pleasantly surprised by the wealth of support

available – from the Helpline to local group meetings. Many mums attended with their own mothers, and regardless of their mothers' past breastfeeding experiences, they expressed positivity and reassurance knowing a strong support network like ABA exists. It was also a fantastic opportunity to promote our Breastfeeding Education Classes, which many were keen to explore before their babies arrive. So many left the stand feeling informed, supported and empowered for their breastfeeding journeys which was brilliant to see and be a part of.

Ingrid, Expo volunteer NSW

Community talks

WA Branch continued its relationship with local universities this year, upskilling and educating health professional students. The Branch presented to first-year student midwives at Edith Cowan University, raising awareness of ABA and how we work in conjunction with health professionals to support expectant and new families. The Branch also held two more detailed breastfeeding information sessions at Curtin University, open to not only student midwives from all universities, but also attracting a variety of health professional students from fields such as nutrition and physiotherapy. The Branch plans to further develop these relationships to reach more students in the coming year.

In Victoria, Hamilton Group was asked to give a presentation to nurses at the local hospital. In the hospital, midwives aren't always on duty after the birth, so it's vital that nurses feel confident in monitoring mums and new babies – and when they need to call midwives in.

The presentation was a breastfeeding class focussed on health professionals and what they might encounter, but also what parents might experience in the weeks and months after.

Building these relationships with health professionals is not only valuable for Hamilton Group and the parents who are referred to it

'In October 2024 the Central Coast NSW Group was invited to present about ABA at a lactation workshop for the health districts in the local area to share insights on the breastfeeding support we offer. These engagements not only strengthened awareness of our work supporting breastfeeding mothers and parents, but also the information and resources we can provide to health professionals. By participating at workshops such as this, we build professional collaboration and relationships within the healthcare sector.'

Kathryn Barwick,
ACT/NSW Branch president

but also strengthens ABA's connection with the wider health professional community.

Hamilton Group has been working on building relationships with the local hospital for many years and they are heading in a good place. Hamilton Group now also facilitates Breastfeeding Education Classes in the hospital's education centre, which has led to more referrals.

Our national campaigns

World Breastfeeding Week August 2024

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) takes place each year from 1 to 7 August, and in 2024 the theme was '**Breastfeeding support for all**', highlighting the importance of equality of access to breastfeeding support and addressing the structural and cultural barriers that culturally and linguistically diverse mums experience.



Our national campaigns *continued*

Throughout the week we highlighted how ABA has been there to support and empower mums from diverse cultures for over 60 years. Many of these mothers were born outside Australia and turned to ABA to provide support, mentoring, training and volunteer opportunities, resulting in ABA becoming a family for many.

This theme also aligned with research showing that the vast majority of women want to give breastfeeding a go, however lack of structural and cultural supports interferes with this, and many women are unable to meet their breastfeeding goals. During the week we prioritised mums born outside Australia and connected them to other mums to build communities, access trusted information, and to empower them along their breastfeeding journeys.

Many ABA local groups held a range of events and activities for families.

A live panel for WBW was a collaboration with Lactation Consultants of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) and was targeted towards health professionals. The event included a range of guest speakers talking about their experiences supporting mothers to breastfeed in challenging circumstances.

National Mothering Week 2025

In 2025, National Mothering Week (NMW) took place from 5 to 11 May, and was about highlighting how ABA has been supporting the unique journey of Australia's mothers for over 60 years.

Our theme for NMW was '**A village of support: celebrating motherhood**' and during the week we highlighted how mothers have cherished the support they found by joining ABA local groups and the role ABA has played for mothers along their parenting journey – from making breastfeeding work, to supporting family life, extending to personal growth, and career advancement.

During NMW, live panel events were targeted towards mothers and featured a range of speakers and topics focused on mental wellbeing, nutrition and physical relaxation to support the motherhood journey.

ABA local groups offer new parents a village of support, friendship and timely information to help them build community, learn new skills and make new friends in their local areas.

Our NMW25 campaign showcased some new mums reflecting on how joining an ABA local group helped them build a community of support and how feeling empowered by education, resources and evidence-



based information helped them along their breastfeeding journeys.

During the week ABA launched the complete package of *The first 72 hours* eModule designed to provide new parents with a step-by-step guide for the first 72 hours after giving birth.

This new 24/7 online learning and support resource guides new parents through the first hours with their new baby, providing them with practical information and support.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In October 2023, ABA established a working group to oversee the development of our first Reconciliation Action Plan. In 2024–25, a group of 15 members, including three members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, commenced work on a Reflect RAP.

The Association-wide mapping activity to identify historical and current activities, relationships and partnerships with First Nations families, communities and organisations continued to indicate that from the 1980s onwards, there have been many documented and undocumented partnerships and engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, driven by local members and communities. These range from national-level partnerships to local family celebrations.

The Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia (NMAA)'s first coordinated activities were the Thalikool project and the Nursing Mothers' Aboriginal Outreach Program, both in New South Wales in the early 80s. NMAA trained Aboriginal health workers and peer counsellors in the Mullumbimby area and other communities to support and assist breastfeeding.

ABA's primary project delivered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is the Community Breastfeeding Mentoring program. A nationally-accredited course, this program was developed in 2009 and was delivered first

in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in 2010. Further courses were then delivered in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory from 2011. Another key program, the 'Deadly Dads train-the-trainer' program, delivered by Aboriginal men, for Aboriginal men, supports fathers to support their breastfeeding partners. Several courses have been delivered since 2015, in New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

At the grassroots level, local groups and branches have partnered with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations for specific projects and activities over the years, with the purpose of strengthening relationships to benefit all Australians.

More recently, ABA branches and groups have reached out to local Aboriginal Health Services to provide information and support to new mums and mothers' groups, and education for health workers. This work with local Aboriginal Health Services also included invitations to official Reconciliation Day and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day activities.

The draft of the Reflect RAP itself progressed significantly this year, with the drafting of the narrative sections being completed in May 2025. The next step for the RAP Working Group

is to finalise the action plan component of the RAP and submit this first draft to the Board's Governance Committee for feedback. The RAP Working Group is actively working towards submitting ABA's Reflect RAP to Reconciliation Australia by the end of the calendar year.

ABA's social media presence

In 2024–25, ABA's social media presence grew. Facebook remains the strongest performer with over 123,000 followers. ABA's Instagram account has 40,900 followers and is widely used during our Festive Appeal and Tax Appeal campaigns as well as during National Mothering Week and World Breastfeeding Week.

ABA's Meme Team Working Group and Social Media Working Group continue to provide relatable content and parenting tips that connect with mums and families across Australia.

Our X platform has over 6000 followers and our LinkedIn account has 2000 followers. A TikTok account was launched during 2024–25 and will gather more momentum over the coming year.



ABA fosters stronger relationships with the media

During 2024–25, we have strengthened our relationship with the ABC, *The Age* and the *Herald Sun* resulting in a series of stories covering a range of topics such as:

- National Breastfeeding Helpline receives over 1000 calls during the festive season
- Disaster planning tailored to babies, toddlers to improve emergency preparedness
- Breastfeeding – the difference between discomfort and pain
- Mastitis affects about one in five breastfeeding women, but experts say there are treatment knowledge gaps
- Donor breastmilk protects premature babies. Here's how mums can donate
- The Australian Breastfeeding Association has welcomed the discontinuation of a voluntary code of conduct that restricted the marketing of baby formula.

ABA 60th anniversary celebrations

60 years of ABA: National online get-together

In August 2024, as an organisation we came together online and in person with our volunteers and trainees from across the Association to celebrate 60 years of dedicated service.

In total, **over 385** attended the online event. Groups and regions were encouraged to organise watch parties to gather with fellow volunteers and trainees to participate in the event together. QLD and ACT/NSW Branches joined from their in-person branch conferences. In addition to the watch parties, many individuals joined online.

The event included a photo wall where participants submitted where they were, what they were doing to celebrate, as well as photos of past NMAA/ABA events, groups and volunteers.



Jessica and Lauren, Randwick Group, ACT/NSW Branch



Above: QLD Branch volunteers joined the online event from their branch conference

Below: Inner South East Melbourne Group's 60th anniversary event, VIC Branch



ABA 60th anniversary celebrations *continued*

The 60th anniversary in Ballarat

Ballarat Group celebrated the 60th anniversary by gathering volunteers past and present for a reunion afternoon tea. Almost 25 volunteers from the group came together to share their stories of supporting local Ballarat mothers over the last 4 decades while enjoying a lovely afternoon tea. Volunteers were asked to bring along their ABA memorabilia to share, and folders of mothering information, merchandise and newspaper articles were provided, plus old photographs.



Celebratory treats in Ballarat



WA Branch celebrated ABA's 60th anniversary in Kings Park, Perth

The 60th anniversary in Perth

In the latter half of 2024 ABA WA Branch celebrated ABA's 60th anniversary, hosting a community event in Kings Park, Perth. It was a gathering of volunteers and families on a beautiful sunny day where the children made the most of the playground. As is traditional in ABA, everyone brought some food to share, along with memories of ABA through the years.

We were delighted to speak with a previous ABA member who had facilitated ABA meetings over on Rottnest Island, with our counsellors making the journey across to support families living there at that time. It was

a testament to the impact of ABA in WA and a beautiful celebration of our ongoing story.

WA Branch launched our celebratory 60th anniversary mug, continuing our relationship with WA artist Rebecca Cool, who provided the beautiful 'Softly sleeping' artwork. The mugs soon shot out the door to homes across Australia.

South West WA Group commemorated ABA's 60th anniversary with a rose planting ceremony held in Stirling Gardens. The group welcomed current and past volunteers and members to add roses to the Mother's Love rose planted for ABA's 40th anniversary.

ABA WHO Code Taskforce project

The year 2024–25 was pivotal in the advocacy journey for the implementation of the full provisions of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) in Australian law.

The year began with the conclusion of ACCC's public consultation on the Infant Nutrition Council's application to re-authorise the MAIF Agreement for a further 5 years. ABA and the WHO Code Taskforce provided strong advocacy to the ACCC not to re-authorise the voluntary, industry-led Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas: Manufacturers and Importers Agreement (MAIF Agreement). The Australian Government's review of the MAIF Agreement had found that it was no longer fit for purpose and recommended the establishment of a stronger regulatory framework in the form of a legislated, prescribed, mandatory code.

In September 2024, the ACCC released their draft determination stating their plan to deny the application and revoke the MAIF Agreement once the interim authorisation expired. A further consultation period followed, and ABA enabled more than 160 individuals to make submissions to the ACCC. Submissions collectively thanked the ACCC for their interim decision proposing to not re-authorise the MAIF Agreement. ABA's own submission to the ACCC in October 2024 was endorsed by nine WHO Code Taskforce project partner organisations and two individuals.

Determination

The ACCC has decided to deny the application for revocation and substitution of a new authorisation sought by the Infant Nutrition Council ... There are several factors that undermine the likely effectiveness of the MAIF Agreement in achieving [the] public health benefit, including:

- that the MAIF Agreement is voluntary and does not extend to retailers
- signatories are not restricted from advertising toddler milk products, which often have almost identical packaging to infant formula and can have the effect of cross-promoting infant formula
- the MAIF Agreement's limited ability to effectively regulate modern digital marketing practices such as social media advertising and marketing using data algorithms
- the ineffectiveness of the complaints process, including that it carries no sanctions for a breach, other than the publication of a breach finding on the Department of Health and Aged Care's (the Department's) website.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (2025)

Determination: Application for revocation of AA1000534 and the substitution of authorisation AA1000665 lodged by Infant Nutrition Council Ltd in respect of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula: Manufacturers and Importers Agreement, and associated guidelines. February 2025.

ABA and other advocates made a request to the ACCC for a pre-decision conference. In October 2024, Dr Jennifer Hocking, WHO Code Taskforce Project Manager, and Sally Eldridge, ABA Board Director, represented ABA at the ACCC pre-decision conference in Canberra, with Victoria Marshall-Cerins, ABA Executive Officer, attending online.

In November, ABA made a further written submission to the ACCC, urging the denial of

the MAIF Agreement's re-authorisation, and met again with the ACCC in December 2024.

In January 2025, Victoria Marshall-Cerins, ABA Executive Officer and Dr Jennifer Hocking WHO Code Taskforce Project Manager provided Assistant Minister Ged Kearney with an in-person briefing on the gap analysis between the WHO Code and the MAIF Agreement. ABA urged the Minister to seize the opportunity of this generational moment by ensuring

ABA WHO Code Taskforce project *continued*

that the new legal controls of marketing of breastmilk substitutes in Australia were fully aligned with the WHO Code. Only aligning the new legislation with the WHO Code will provide the best possible chance of protecting breastfeeding and parents' infant feeding choices from commercial influence.



ABA's Executive Officer, Victoria Marshall-Cerins, Assistant Minister for Health, Ged Kearney, and ABA Board Director and Breastfeeding Educator, Sally Eldridge, in August 2024

On 6 February 2025, the much-anticipated moment arrived and ACCC published its final determination to deny the Infant Nutrition Council's application and revoke the MAIF Agreement. The Infant Nutrition Council did not appeal the ACCC's final determination.

The Australian Government remains committed to legislating new controls of the marketing of infant formula in Australia. The policy approval for the Government's new legislation remains limited to the scope of the outdated MAIF Agreement. At the time of the MAIF Agreement's implementation in 1992, it was relatively closely aligned with the scope of the WHO Code. However, by 2025, the 2-yearly review of the WHO Code by the World Health Assembly in response to evolving industry marketing tactics had significantly expanded the WHO Code's scope. The MAIF Agreement was not similarly updated and in February 2025 when it expired, its scope was insufficient to protect breastfeeding and parents' infant feeding choices from being undermined by commercial influence.

The ABA WHO Code Taskforce continues to work with the Australian Government to support its work to legislate controls of the marketing of breastmilk substitutes in Australia, by incorporating the full provisions of the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes*.

WHO Code Taskforce Steering Committee 2024–25

Professor Emeritus Jane Scott, Curtin University, Steering Group Chair

Victoria Marshall-Cerins, ABA Executive Officer

Dr Jennifer Hocking, ABA WHO Code Taskforce Project Manager

Associate Professor Julie Smith, University of Canberra

Dr Nisha Khot, Director of O&G Peninsula Health, Member of Board of Directors RANZCOG

Dr Rosemary Stanton, Public Health Nutritionist, Visiting Fellow, UNSW

Dr Mary-Anne Land, Strategic Advisor, World Health Organization

Naomi Hull, World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative, Country Coordinator Australia

Mark Zirnsak, Senior Social Justice Advocate, Uniting Church in Australia

ABA would like to offer our thanks to the 2024–25 WHO Code Taskforce Steering Committee for their ongoing guidance, support and advocacy.

Consultations and submissions

ABA provides expert guidance to key policymakers such as governments by making submissions and engaging in stakeholder consultations regarding policy issues relevant to breastfeeding and women's and children's health.

Victorian Department of Health inquiry into women's pain

A submission made in July 2024 by ABA VIC Branch addressed a serious gap in the understanding of women's experience of pain during breastfeeding, and its impact on breastfeeding outcomes and quality of life. ABA's evidence-based recommendations to the inquiry were developed following a survey of mothers in Victoria to gather their lived experiences of pain during lactation.

'When feeding isn't working, the pain is excruciating. It takes a lot of support, encouragement and sheer will to continue ... I am so grateful for the help I received, as without it I would not be breastfeeding today.'

Respondent to the ABA Breastfeeding Pain Survey



Charlotte Fielding, TAS Branch Assistant Branch President presenting at the House of Assembly Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Health Services in Tasmania.

Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Health Services in Tasmania

ABA TAS Branch's submission to the **Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Health Services in Tasmania** highlighted reports from Tasmanian mums, parents and families made to ABA volunteers about the difficulties accessing timely, accurate breastfeeding support across local health services and it included a lengthy submission from one local member regarding her experience.

The submission emphasised the need for greater breastfeeding education for health professionals and the need for full implementation in Tasmania of the recommendations contained in the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and beyond*.



Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal Care (LEAPP) guidelines

Through representation on the steering committee, ABA provided important feedback on recommendations that may impact breastfeeding prior to their inclusion in the postnatal guidelines. This helps to ensure the guidelines protect and support breastfeeding and remain up to date, reliable and relevant for health professionals caring for pregnant and breastfeeding women in Australia.

Public consultation on improving commercial foods for infants and children

Leveraging off ABA's participation in the Infant and Toddler Foods Research Alliance (ITFRA), ABA made an independent submission encouraging the alignment of composition, labelling and texture of commercial foods with international best practice. ABA's submission focused on the inappropriateness of marketing that promotes commercial foods for infants under 6 months (i.e. the recommended period of exclusive breastfeeding), and the importance of appropriate complementary feeding in the protection and promotion of breastfeeding.

Professional collaborations and research

ABA continues to work in collaboration with allied organisations and researchers to effect broader improvements in breastfeeding information and support.

- ABA continues to be a member of the **Infant and Toddler Food Research Alliance** (ITFRA), offering expertise about breastfeeding in the context of broader young-child food matters.
- The 15 World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) indicators comprise the formal assessment that relates to national policy and processes that support breastfeeding. ABA continues its collaboration with WBTiAUS as a core group member and continues to advocate for the need to strengthen important areas of policy in Australia.
- ABA contributed to **The FIFO Family Project's** development of a new parents' guide for fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers. The guide was published in June 2025 and includes information about ABA breastfeeding services and support for FIFO families.
- ABA is a partner organisation for a **University of Canberra research project**, *Scaling up the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in support of maternal and newborn health*. Funded by a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Health and Healthy Lifestyles grant, the project commenced in 2024 and aims to better

enable women to meet their breastfeeding goals, reduce preventable mortality and morbidity in mothers and babies, and improve the health and wellbeing of Australians.

ABA presentations delivered to a range of health professional audiences throughout the year promoted best-practice breastfeeding support in healthcare:

- Australian College of Neonatal Nurses 2024 National Conference – 'Providing great breastfeeding support for mothers and families in neonatal environments'
- Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand 2025 Congress – 'Recent changes to regulation of marketing of breastmilk substitutes in Australia' [poster]
- Lactation Consultants of Australia and New Zealand 2025 online webinar – 'The WHO Code in Australia'
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation 2025 National Conference – 'Let's talk about breastfeeding (baby): Some things you might not know about ABA'
- Australian College of Midwives Victorian Branch 2025 seminar – 'Discussing the current issues in breastfeeding in Victoria' [panel host]



'We are so grateful to have the Australian Breastfeeding Association contribute to the new FIFO new parents guide. For many FIFO families, the early parenting journey can feel especially daunting when one parent is working away for weeks at a time. While there's often help available during the day from family, friends or other services, it's the long, lonely nights that can be the hardest. The ABA's 24/7 phone line is an invaluable support for FIFO families and so many other parents. Their kind, compassionate and understanding helpline staff provide exactly what parents need, right when they need it most.'

**Vicky Pellowe, Founder,
The FIFO Family Project**

Community protection for infants and young children in bushfire emergencies project

In its third year, the *Community protection for infants and young children in bushfire emergencies project* (Bushfire project) continues to address a critical gap in disaster preparedness and response, support for families with babies and toddlers. Funded by the Australian Government, the project has developed practical resources for parents, health professionals and emergency responders.

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Conference, 3 to 6 September 2024

The Bushfire project team attended the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Conference in Sydney. We hosted a stall and delivered a well-received talk, sharing the project research findings. Delegates showed

strong interest in the resources, with several key organisations exploring how to incorporate these into their emergency training programs. The team also met Senator Jenny McAllister, Federal Minister for Emergency Management, to discuss future collaboration and advocacy.

Emergency Prep Week Campaign, 16 to 23 September 2024

Ahead of the NSW Rural Fire Service 'Get ready weekend', ABA ran an Emergency Prep Week Campaign to remind families of the importance of having an evacuation plan. ABA branches and local groups were invited to be involved and use social media, community events and Connect & Share sessions.

Emergency resource collection launch, 14 November 2024

The *Emergency resource collection* was officially launched online, with 61 attendees representing a range of emergency and health organisations. The resources were warmly received, with attendees praising the project for filling a long-standing gap in emergency planning. The launch even received an international mention at the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine annual meeting in Illinois, USA.

Left: ABA's Bushfire project team presenting at the closing event, Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden on 27 February 2025

'Only praise for it. Looking forward to ongoing connections!'
Project stakeholder,
Eurobodalla Shire

Volunteer story

Helen lives in Tolmie, North East Alpine Region of Victoria. It is an isolated rural area and no stranger to bushfires.

Trees fall and often block access roads, and small tornados have wreaked havoc here.

When she saw the ABA launch in November for the 'Community protection for infants and young children in bushfire emergencies project' she was keen to utilise ABA's resources in her community of families, healthcare workers, and emergency services.

She made up a few posters and a tub full of items needed when evacuating during an emergency. Helen then hit the road, supported by the Country Fire Authority, to promote the project in Tolmie, Bonnie Doon, Goughs Bay, Mansfield and Yackandandah. In National Volunteer Week, ABA shared a space with Mansfield Shire maternal and child health and library.



Closing events, 27 February 2025

With the funding for the project concluding, the team celebrated their achievements, thanking supporters, contributors and sharing the vision for the future. The event highlighted how the resources are now available to the Eurobodalla community and beyond.



Settings that enable breastfeeding

Baby Friendly Health Initiative

Baby Friendly Health Initiative eLearning modules

In 2025, maternity care staff enrolled in the Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) online modules continued progressing through the training, building their knowledge and skills to better support breastfeeding families.

This series provides hospitals and health facilities with an efficient way to meet the compulsory staff education requirements for BFHI accreditation or re-accreditation, while reducing the time, effort and resources required for in-house training.



ABA's eLearning modules provide the mandatory

8 hours

of education for maternity personnel who assist mothers with breastfeeding, for facilities accredited under the Baby Friendly Health Initiative.

8 hours of staff education



Counselling skills for breastfeeding support



Antenatal breastfeeding education



Supporting a mother to initiate breastfeeding



Assessing a breastfeed



Supporting a mother to hand express



Establishing and increasing milk supply



Counselling a mother with breast and nipple challenges



Challenges to feeding at the breast and alternative methods of feeding

Annual Health Professional Seminar series 2025

In March 2025, ABA held the Annual Health Professional Seminar series, *Breastfeeding: supporting the journey*. This year, it was delivered live in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, and made available online from the end of March to the end of May 2025. Unfortunately, due to Cyclone Alfred, the difficult decision was made to cancel the live Brisbane event at the eleventh hour. A 'make-up' event has been scheduled for October 2025.

Feedback from attendees indicated they appreciated the opportunity to network with others while gaining relevant skills and knowledge.

ABA would like to thank our 2025 presenters, Karen Graham, Dr Jennifer Hocking, Dr Nishamanie Karawita, Dr Treasure McGuire, Dr Catherine Chamberlain, Nicola Kett, Dr Melissa Morns and The Marri Gudjaga team.

The 2025 program and presenters received incredibly positive feedback, with over 82% of attendees evaluating the materials presented as very good or excellent. ABA is excited for what future seminar series will bring.

Attendance statistics

Brisbane	100 registered but event cancelled
Sydney	104
Melbourne	172

'It was a fabulous experience of professional development, a great array of speakers and topics that was very well curated.'

Seminar attendee

'All the speakers were very knowledgeable and passionate about what they were doing. Great choice in speakers.'

Seminar attendee

'The variety of topics covered. The passion of the presenters. Increasing my knowledge about First Nations women's breastfeeding experiences.'

Seminar attendee

Perth	72
Online	223
Total	671



Diploma of Breastfeeding Management

Throughout 2024–25 ABA continued to deliver the 10960NAT Diploma of Breastfeeding Management. Enrolled learners were health professionals working in a variety of settings ranging from providing care in local hospitals in regional areas, to staff working in antenatal, postnatal and neonatal care in tertiary hospitals in metropolitan areas, to community health services in regional and remote areas. Learners came from a variety of professional backgrounds including midwifery, postnatal, neonatal and child and family health nursing, general practice medicine, neonatal and emergency medicine, and allied health professions such as speech pathology, dietetics and physiotherapy.

The course builds on learners' existing knowledge and skills to increase their theoretical knowledge and practical skills to provide comprehensive care to breastfeeding families to help improve breastfeeding outcomes. Learners find the in-depth knowledge gained from the workshops, eLearning modules and assessments to be very satisfying.

'I have learnt so much that I find myself applying every single day at work.'

Emergency department doctor

'Overall, the knowledge and skills that I have developed from this unit has helped me gain confidence in taking a lactation history and has changed my clinical practice for the better.'

Registered nurse in neonatal intensive care unit

Learners appreciate the flexible and online delivery formats of the course, which allows them to fit their study in around their work and other commitments. Learners have access to virtual workshops, eLearning modules and other resources via ABA's Learning Management System (LMS), complemented by individualised support. Health professional learners are required to complete assessment tasks which consolidate their knowledge and include practical tasks and reflections on experiences in their workplace. The ability to choose two elective units and to choose an area of lactation research to critically appraise affords learners the opportunity to tailor their learning to their clinical interests.

ABA was very pleased to achieve recognition for the 10960NAT Diploma of Breastfeeding Management with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) as a Continuous Professional Development Approved Activity for the 2023–2025 triennium (CPD Approved Activity number 862592). This recognises the high standard of the course and allows GPs to use their study for the course to meet some of their professional development requirements.

Health professional workshops

ABA was very pleased to continue to deliver virtual workshops as stand-alone professional development for health professionals. These workshops are presented by both internal ABA presenters and external guest speakers.

Forty-five health professionals and midwifery students from a variety of areas of Australia and New Zealand participated in the eight online workshops. Learners really appreciated the opportunity for in-depth breastfeeding education that incorporates background theoretical knowledge and practical tips they can use immediately in clinical practice. Learners have access to eLearning modules, recordings from the workshops and other resources for a period of 6 months after the workshop, allowing them to extend their knowledge. Participants found case presentation discussions allowed them to apply their learnings to examples of clinical situations.

The most popular workshop topics continue to be *Medications and breastfeeding* and *Managing breastfeeding*.

'Great support for ongoing professional development and CPD as well as supporting me in my role.' **Workshop participant**

eLearning modules

ABA's extensive range of eLearning modules supports health professionals across Australia and beyond to advance their knowledge in lactation-related areas. These convenient and flexible online education options support best practice by allowing individuals to meet their continuing professional development needs.

There is something for every learner, from breastfeeding basics such as *Structure and function of the breast* through to specialist subjects including *Diabetes, pregnancy and breastfeeding*, and *Breastfeeding support for babies with Down syndrome*. With 23 different topics currently on offer, 559 learners completed 1558 individual eModules in 2024–25. That's almost 2500 hours of professional development and education.

'Great summary; liked the format, presentation and links to other sources. Made it easy to stay engaged and focus.'

Participant on *Disaster support for babies, toddlers and caregivers* eModule

Breastfeeding information, resources and publications

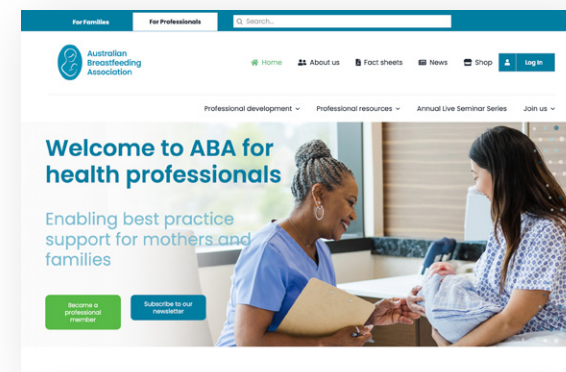
To complement our easily accessible online information, ABA also provides information to families in a wide range of print and digital formats, including books, booklets, eNewsletters, posters, flyers and more. Highlights include:

- *Breastfeeding: a practical guide*, ABA's comprehensive book for pregnant or breastfeeding mothers and their supporters
- A series of 21 in-depth, evidence-led booklets covering a wide range of breastfeeding and parenting topics
- A suite of resources to support parents and carers to safely feed their babies and toddlers in emergencies

Resources are reviewed and updated throughout the year to capture changes to information and the latest lactation research.



Over
1229
booklet copies sold



Resources for health professionals

Our professional website, abaprofessional.asn.au, provides a dedicated platform for health professionals to access professional development opportunities and a comprehensive suite of resources to enable them to engage in best-practice breastfeeding support for mothers and families. The evolving collection of *Focus on breastfeeding* articles, fact sheets and interactive eLearning modules attracts visitors from across the world.

The website also provides access to the full back catalogue of ABA's peer-reviewed journal, *Breastfeeding Review*, which publishes original research, case studies, reviews, letters, commentaries and discussions. The three editions published in 2024–25 included 10 original research papers from research groups across Australia and further afield, including Japan, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia. Topics included breastfeeding support for vulnerable mothers, type 2 and gestational diabetes, infant feeding in emergencies and women's experiences of antenatal education.

Our professional members continue to value the support ABA provides to them in their roles.

Over the last 12 months, ABA's national initiative *Breastfeeding Friendly Australia* continued to lead the way in creating supportive environments for breastfeeding across workplaces, communities, public spaces and childcare services. Through our programs, we helped more organisations and businesses take practical steps to become inclusive and family-friendly, ensuring breastfeeding women and families feel welcomed and supported wherever they are.

This year's work reflects our ongoing commitment to normalising breastfeeding, removing barriers and making it easier for women to combine breastfeeding with everyday life.

In late 2024, *Harper's BAZAAR Australia* quoted ABA in an article on breastfeeding rights in public spaces. The article was published in their January 2025 issue, helping to bring more visibility to this important topic.

'Thank you. It's been a first year for our accreditation. I am very glad we took the step forward to take up accreditation. The team at BFW has been super-supportive and friendly in answering our questions and ensuring we are set up for success. Emily has been extremely responsive, and I feel grateful for opening up the space for employees' utilisation for their needs.'

Paul Ramsay Foundation

Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace (BFW) accreditation continued to make strong progress, with more organisations across Australia recognising the importance of supporting breastfeeding employees. **Ten new organisations** achieved accreditation, bringing the total **number of accredited organisations to 139**.

There were **51 expressions of interest**, with **12 organisations** formally signing up to begin their accreditation journey. While one organisation chose to cancel their accreditation, overall momentum remained strong, reflecting a growing commitment to inclusive, family-friendly workplace culture.

The most represented industries of accredited organisations are government agencies (18), education and training (16) and healthcare and social assistance (16). Other industries with strong representation included Australian Government departments (12), local councils (12), energy and mining (8) and legal (9).



139

accredited organisations
in the Breastfeeding Friendly
Workplace program



**Child and Family Health Services
in South Australia accredited as a
Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace**

Ally Higgs (left) and Lisa Jenkins proudly
hold the certificate for CaFHS SA

Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care

The Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) service recognition continues to grow. This year **78 ECEC services** signed up to the recognition. Participation was strong across several states, with the highest number from Queensland (27), followed by Victoria (19) and New South Wales (16). We also received **44 expressions of interest**, demonstrating the program's growing reach.

To raise awareness and encourage participation, we ran two promotional campaigns, one during Children's Week in October 2024 and another for Back to School in January 2025.



Emily Carrolan, Manager of Breastfeeding Friendly Australia, at Affinity Education Group's (BFW-accredited) conference on the Gold Coast, August 2024



78

services signed up to the Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care service recognition

Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere

Over the past year, we received **212 venues sign up** to the Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere (BWE) program, including **44 renewals**. Libraries were the most common venue (73), followed by community centres (40), hospitality venues (28) and leisure centres (20). Most venues are in Victoria (105), New South Wales (43) and South Australia (23).

In July 2024, we began a targeted email outreach campaign to libraries across South Australia to encourage participation. This proactive approach will continue in the year ahead, expanding across all states and territories.

In response to a growing number of enquiries we had been receiving regarding breastfeeding rights at aquatic and leisure centres, we identified the need for clear, supportive information for these facilities. To address this, we developed a new fact sheet and poster to help staff and management understand the legal rights of breastfeeding families.

Baby Care Room

This year **12 new parenting rooms** signed up to join the Baby Care Room (BCR) recognition, continuing our efforts to highlight public spaces that provide safe, clean and accessible facilities for families.

A key highlight was the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) becoming a recognised BCR venue. It has several dedicated rooms located on Level 1 of the stadium.

As we continue to grow the BCR recognition, we aim to engage with more venues across Australia, ensuring families feel supported and respected, wherever they are.

Individual enablers for breastfeeding

'At a time when cost-of-living pressures are affecting so many families, having access to professional, compassionate support without financial burden is invaluable. This service alleviated considerable stress for me and has had a direct positive impact on my wellbeing and my baby's health. I deeply appreciate the dedication of the volunteers who make this possible.'

Rikki, Helpline caller 2025

Universal breastfeeding education support and information services

Breastfeeding Helpline

Throughout the 2024–25 year, a remarkable team of 465 trained, dedicated peer breastfeeding counsellors contributed 20,974 hours, volunteering their time to offer tailored, evidence-based support to mothers, families and health professionals through ABA's National Breastfeeding Helpline.

During the 2024–25 financial year:

- 50,890 calls were made to the National Breastfeeding Helpline
- 77% of all calls were supported
- Almost 21,000 hours were generously dedicated to ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline alone.

The 2024–25 caller survey shows the strong and ongoing impact of ABA's peer support. The overall satisfaction for the Breastfeeding Helpline service remained very high at 92%. Almost all callers (96%) said they would use the Breastfeeding Helpline again if needed, and the same proportion would recommend it to other families. Importantly, 90% of callers reported feeling reassured after speaking with a volunteer, and 86% said they ended the call feeling less worried. These outcomes demonstrate the meaningful difference ABA volunteers bring to the mental health and wellbeing of parents each and every day.

ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline continues to play a significant role in reducing the burden on the Australian healthcare system.

Volunteer story

I have been a counsellor for nearly 12 years. My most fulfilling call was from some new parents wanting 'urgent help tonight'. I advised them to go to the A&E, then said, 'Is there anything that I can help with on the phone?'. I ended up talking them through their concerns, and in the end they didn't need to go anywhere. The baby was completely fine, the parents just needed some reassurance and a bit of information, as many do.

Zofia, Breastfeeding Helpline counsellor



'I was feeling so overwhelmed and one call made everything better. It was so reassuring and helpful. I honestly didn't know what to expect and I was sick of reading stuff online as I wasn't sure if it pertained to me, but Laura helped me feel very confident and reassured, and now I feel better about my BF journey.'

Raine, Helpline caller 2025

Breastfeeding Helpline *continued*

During 2024–25, 43% of callers noted that the service saved them from a visit to their GP or other health service, which would often incur costs for their family, and 20% of callers said that they may have stopped breastfeeding if the service was not available to them.

As in previous years, the most common reason for reaching out to ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline was to seek support in treatments for sore breasts or nipples, including breast inflammation or mastitis.

The Breastfeeding Helpline is a lifeline for thousands of families, and it exists because of the generosity and commitment of ABA's volunteer counsellors. Day or night, every day of the year, these volunteers offer calm, knowledgeable support to mothers, their families and health professionals. ABA extends deep appreciation to every volunteer who helps make this 24/7 support possible. Your contribution makes a huge difference to the lives of others, one call at a time.

'It's always the middle of the night when help is needed most and the ABA is always there when there is no one else to turn to.'

Melanie, Helpline caller 2025

Top 5 reasons for calling 2024–25

1	Sore breast or nipples
2	Information on feeding patterns
3	Reassurance
4	Concerns with low milk supply
5	Concern with frequency of feeds

After the call I felt **2024–25**

Less worried	86%
Less stressed	84%
More confident	82%
Reassured	90%
More knowledgeable about breastfeeding	81%
More determined to continue breastfeeding	75%



43%

of callers noted that Helpline saved them a visit to their GP or other health service



LiveChat

ABA's LiveChat, available through our website, breastfeeding.asn.au, continues to provide timely, compassionate support to families across Australia. Staffed by volunteers trained in breastfeeding support, LiveChat connects parents with trusted, evidence-based information and guidance tailored to their individual breastfeeding goals.

In 2024–25, ABA volunteers were there for 16 hours every week – every weeknight from 8 to 10 pm AEST, and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12 to 2 pm AEST. These accessible time slots make it easier for families to reach out when they need it most, whether during quiet moments of the day or late in the evening.

ABA's volunteers help families to feel informed, empowered and supported through their practical advice and personalised support, backed by a library of articles, videos, and links to further resources.

Top 5 reasons for visiting 2024–25

1	Reassurance
2	Information on feeding patterns
3	Concern with frequency of feeds
4	Concerns with low milk supply
5	Expressing and/or storing breastmilk

'I can't thank you enough for having this service after so many hours of googling and searching for the answers. To be able to have the answer by someone who shows so much empathy and care really means so much.' **LiveChat visitor, 2025**

During the 2024–25 year, 5906 chats were initiated and 97% of these were supported. There were 102 volunteers giving their time to support families via LiveChat. The service consistently achieves excellent results, with 96% of parents reporting overall satisfaction during the year. In addition, 95% said the support provided by volunteers helped them resolve their concerns or issues.

The impact of LiveChat is remarkable with 27% of parents saying that without this service, they may have stopped breastfeeding, and 36% of all visitors to the service said that they would have needed to go to a hospital, GP, or other health professional for support with their queries if the service was not there for them.

The most common reason for parents to reach out to ABA volunteers via LiveChat was for reassurance (25%) followed closely by information on feeding patterns.

Behind every conversation on ABA's LiveChat is a volunteer offering calm, reliable support at a time when it's often needed most. Whether a parent is navigating early feeding challenges or seeking reassurance late at night, someone is there, reading what a family is working through, responding with care and supporting them to reach their goals.

Volunteer story

I've been supporting parents through ABA's LiveChat for around a year and love helping anyone on their breastfeeding journey. I especially value it when support people reach out too – whether it's a dad wanting to help his partner or a health professional seeking evidence-based information. Supporting a new mum to realise, 'I DO know what I'm doing!' is the most rewarding part.

Leah Atkinson, Breastfeeding Educator and LiveChat volunteer



This quiet but powerful presence wouldn't be possible without the remarkable commitment of ABA's trained volunteers. Their dedication and commitment create a space where families feel heard, informed and less alone. We acknowledge and thank each volunteer who contributes to this vital support service.

After the chat I felt	2024–25
Less worried	88%
Less stressed	88%
More confident	82%
Reassured	92%
More knowledgeable about breastfeeding	78%
More determined to continue breastfeeding	73%

Breastfeeding ... with ABA podcast

ABA's podcasts and blogs are created by parents, for parents.

In each episode, our volunteers, experts and guest speakers dive into a breastfeeding or early parenting topic, from what to expect in the early days, to normal baby sleep, juggling work and breastfeeding, weaning and much more.

We also hear stories of breastfeeding experiences from real parents. The podcasts and blogs are evidence-backed but also explore the personal stories of a diverse range of parents, grandparents and community members, using a range of interview and conversation formats. The podcasts sustain an average of over 100 plays per day, across 33 episodes.

Three new episodes were released in 2024–25, 'Breastfeeding stories ... breastfeeding and adoption', 'Breastfeeding and ... baby-led solids' and 'Breastfeeding and ... the 8-month-old baby'. These three new episodes have been listened to over 10,000 times.

With 33 episodes to choose from, the *Breastfeeding ... with ABA* podcast is one of Australia's most popular parenting podcasts, regularly charting on Apple's top 100 Australian parenting podcast charts, peaking at number 19 during 2024–25.



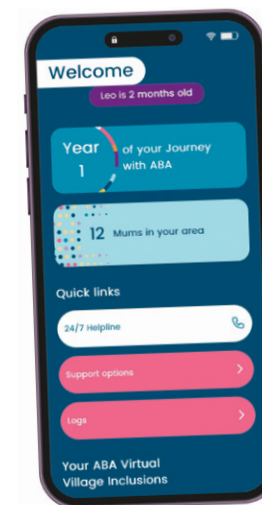
mum2mum app

In 2024–25, the mum2mum app supported thousands of parents with accessible, evidence-based breastfeeding guidance. Over 12,500 new downloads were recorded during the financial year, with an average of 1724 active users per month.

Features like 'Saved feeds', 'Sleep logs', and 'Nappy tracking' saw strong engagement, with up to 94% of active users using these functions. The launch of *The first 72 hours* package was offered to app users via pop-ups and supported new parents during the critical early days.

Direct access to LiveChat and the National Breastfeeding Helpline remained popular, connecting 2845 and 1878 users respectively.

Mum2mum continues to evolve as a trusted digital companion, publishing new content and features to become Australia's leading pregnancy and breastfeeding app and an entry point into ABA membership.



Breastfeeding Education Classes

ABA's face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes have continued to be a massive hit with expectant parents throughout Australia. This year, classes were delivered across Australia, in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The popular classes have continued to be very well received by participants with **97%** of participants either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they would recommend the class to a friend and **98%** agreeing that the class met their expectations.

Feedback also indicated that participants experienced a major increase in knowledge and confidence to breastfeed after attending a class. On average, participants' knowledge of breastfeeding increased from **42%** to **80%** and their confidence to breastfeed increased from **41%** to **80%** after attending a face-to-face class.

'Such a great educational class. Makes you feel more settled and reassured to tackle breastfeeding for the first time. The presenters were really friendly and approachable, so I felt confident to ask questions.' **Jessie, QLD**

The table below provides an outline of the number of face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes held and the participants who attended throughout 2024–25.

Breastfeeding Education Classes (BECs), 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Branch*	Number of BECs held	Number of participants
VIC	26	275
NSW	18	220
QLD	29	223
SA	3	28
NT	9	108
WA	36	72

Note: TAS – continued to provide sponsored registration for online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions in 2024–25 in lieu of face-to-face classes.

'I learnt so many things ... After the class I felt even more confident. During the class I loved that I could ask questions, see real-life demonstration of breastfeeding. I would recommend to any mother wanting to learn how to breastfeed.' **Shania, QLD**

Volunteer story

I love presenting BECs, it ensures parents in our regional community have access to face to face antenatal education. For parents knowing how their body and breasts make milk, what normal newborn behaviour is, and how to tell if their baby is getting enough – is super important for them to meet their breastfeeding goals. As a breastfeeding counsellor ensuring parents have this information before their baby is here so they can make informed decisions and giving families confidence to know where to find help when they need it – is rewarding.

**Cassie Franklin, Breastfeeding Counsellor,
Breastfeeding Educator and Regional
Representative, Western Districts Region,
VIC Branch**

ABA Virtual Village

ABA Virtual Village meets parents where they are at providing connections from the office, from hospital or from the comfort of home.

Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions

ABA's weekly online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions (BPS) have continued to be well-received and popular among expectant parents.

This year, ABA provided support to **over 407** expectant mothers and their partners through the program. This support was delivered through **53** online sessions, which wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of **63** breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators, and trainees.

The high satisfaction of the classes was highlighted in the feedback with **92%** of participants strongly agreeing or agreeing they would recommend the class to a friend. Feedback also indicated participants' breastfeeding knowledge increased significantly, rising from an average of **47%** before attending a class to **74%** after a class. Their confidence also increased from **44%** to **72%**.

ABA has continued to provide tailored support for specific situations through its Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions for parents expecting multiples and mothers impacted by

diabetes as well as its 24/7 online module for parents from the LGBTQIA+ community.

ABA looks forward to continuing this support in the future by empowering and preparing expectant parents for the practicalities of breastfeeding and caring for a newborn.

'Thank you for the session. I found it incredibly valuable and reassuring ... really helpful to get some practical advice and hear about experiences from the presenters and community guest mother!' **Emily, VIC**

Volunteer story

I really enjoy being a Q&A mum for the BPS sessions. I know they would have greatly helped my breastfeeding journey, and I enjoy getting to be a part of that for others. I always get asked great questions as most participants get really involved and seem to be learning a lot.

Claire, BPS Q&A mum, QLD Trainee



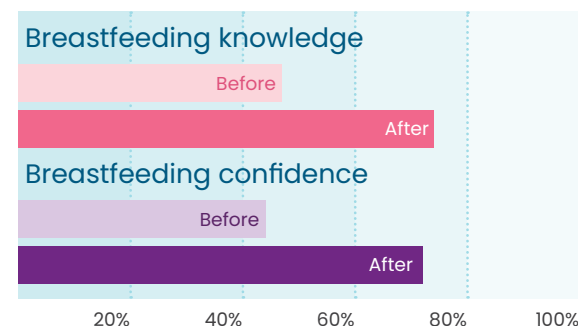
'Excellent session, very clear information, not too much information or too overwhelming. Great to have a recent breastfeeding mother to discuss her experiences.' **Irene, NSW**



ABA provided support to

over 407

expectant mothers and their partners through the program



ABA Virtual Village *continued*

The first 72 hours – ABA's learning and support program

In National Mothering Week 2025, ABA launched *The first 72 hours* online learning package. Following the release of the first part of the resource in 2024, the final two parts focus on hours 24 to 72 after giving birth.

The complete learning resource provides new parents with a 24/7 accessible step-by-step guide for navigating the first 72 hours with their newborn. It includes practical information on what new parents might expect and features videos of other new mothers talking about their experiences during this time.

The topics covered throughout the resource include:

1. learning to breastfeed, including skin-to-skin
2. what's happening with mum and baby during this time, including physical and emotional changes
3. healthcare for mum and baby during the first 72 hours
4. how to access ongoing support.

From the feedback received so far, the complete resource has been incredibly well received with **98%** of users strongly agreeing or agreeing they would recommend the resource to a friend and that the resource met their expectations. **One hundred per cent** of

'I have nothing but good things to say about this first module. It was clear, easy to use, had amazing links. I am going into this new feeding experience much more informed.' **Ashlee, NSW**

'Clear information that told the vital parts of the first 72hrs, without overwhelming detail. There were links with more detail, should you want it, so I could choose what was relevant for me.' **Shandar, VIC**

users also strongly agreed or agreed that the information contained in the resource was clear and easy to understand and that the information met their needs at that time.

ABA looks forward to equipping more new parents with the knowledge and skills to navigate this critical period leading into the future.

Volunteer story

Being the main presenter for the Newborn Virtual Village sessions has been such a rewarding and fun experience. I love chatting with parents from all over Australia and answering their questions ... The tech hosts are super supportive, and the resources provided make presenting easy. It's great knowing I'm helping educate mums and making a difference.



Karlee, Newborn Virtual Village presenter and trainee, WA Branch

Newborn Virtual Village

ABA's twice weekly webinars for parents from birth to 8 weeks continue to be a hit among new parents, providing them with breastfeeding information and support in the early days and weeks after giving birth.

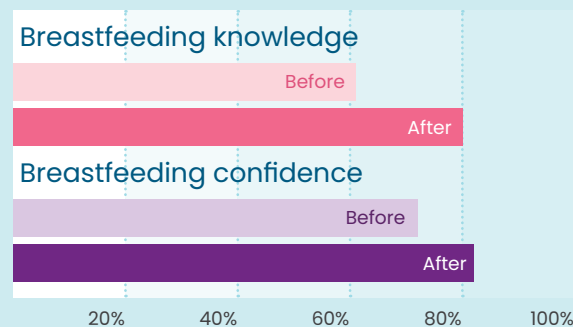
With the support of **40** breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators and trainees, **97** online sessions were delivered in the previous year. These webinars helped to support **over 651** new parents in navigating the early days and learning to breastfeed.

'Thank you – this is a great service, and it is so reassuring to know that these resources are readily available!' **Emma, QLD**

ABA Virtual Village *continued*

The popular peer-support webinar series continued to be very well received, with **94%** of participants strongly agreeing or agreeing that they would recommend the session to a friend.

Participants also reported a significant increase in breastfeeding knowledge and confidence after attending a session. This increase is highlighted in the graph below.



What did you find most useful?

'The opportunity to interact with other mums on the same topic ... I've read the same information a few times now and it feels different to hear it from someone else's mouth that helps with retention.' **Winnie, NSW**

Connect & Share Virtual Village and live panel events

ABA continues to provide monthly online Connect & Share webinars, designed especially for parents with babies beyond the newborn stage.

With the support of **11** breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators and trainees, ABA delivered **12** Connect & Share webinars in the previous year. One of these webinars was a free special event for World Breastfeeding Week. Two free live panel events also took place during World Breastfeeding Week and National Mothering Week.

'Such an excellent webinar, the panel of experts was so well chosen, the topics shared a theme but were varied. I feel inspired to be an even better advocate for the breastfeeding families I care for.'

Abi, NSW, World Breastfeeding Week live panel participant



All Connect & Share webinars and live panel events held were very well received and attracted

286 attendees
in total.



ABA local groups

ABA's network of local groups provides tailored breastfeeding support across Australian communities. These local groups offer services designed to meet community-specific needs.

During 2024–25, local groups hosted free social events and organised breastfeeding support gatherings. These activities build community connections and provide hands-on support to breastfeeding mums.



ABA local groups also facilitated breast pump hire and offered in-person counselling at various events. This is crucial for addressing immediate breastfeeding challenges and ensuring families have the resources they require.

ABA local catch-ups come in a variety of formats. While sessions with guest speakers or specific topics like 'Working and breastfeeding' or 'Baby-led weaning' are very popular, many attendees appreciate the informal 'Cuppa & Chat' sessions.

These catch-ups provide a relaxed environment where families can bring their breastfeeding questions and connect with other parents. A key feature that parents value is the ability to bring their partners, other children and friends along to the meetings.

Number of events for parents 2024–25

ACT/NSW	522	TAS	68
QLD	384	VIC	471
SA/NT	194	WA	222



A Murray Group catch-up in Yackandandah, VIC

Left: Hasna, Ingrid and Julia at a catch-up of The Hills Group, NSW

Below: In Hobart and Surrounds Group, Fiona, Anita and Kelly are each the children of ABA breastfeeding counsellors, and are bringing the next generation along to ABA's parenting village.



ABA local groups *continued*

ABA local groups in WA Branch

In WA, local groups met from Albany, to Gingin, up to Karratha and across the Perth Metro and South West area. Thanks to the work of both qualified volunteers and enthusiastic and committed trainees, ABA's reach in remote and regional communities continues to expand.

Isolated Members North-West Group held a Firefighter Story Time, in partnership with City of Karratha Libraries Team and the Dampier Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service. This was a special community event that was very much appreciated.

Midwest and Wheatbelt Group began regular events in Gingin, and supported breastfeeding drop ins in Geraldton and Northam, deepening ABA's reach in those areas.

In Perth Metro, all groups held regular meetings, some on a weekly basis. As well as breastfeeding information sessions on

a number of topics, many groups opted to bring in guest speakers on other relevant parenting themes.

Groups also held many interesting events beyond the usual weekly catch-ups. Swan Mundaring Group hosted a Mother's Day photo shoot, a session on making playdough and a swap meet, all of which were thoroughly enjoyed.

Kalamunda Group held a session on Emergency and Disaster Preparation, sharing the fantastic resources generated by ABA and helping their members be ready for the specific challenges faced by breastfeeding families in a crisis.

ABA local groups in SA/NT Branch

Throughout 2024–25, ABA groups across South Australia and the Northern Territory played a vital role in supporting breastfeeding families through regular community-based activities and consistent local presence.

Fortnightly catch-ups continued across a number of towns and suburbs, providing familiar and welcoming spaces where parents could share their experiences, ask questions, and feel supported. These catch-ups helped reduce isolation, particularly for new mums, and offered a reliable source of breastfeeding information and peer connection.

Local group expansion was a key feature during 2024–25. New meetings in Kadina on the Yorke Peninsula and Goolwa on the Fleurieu Peninsula attracted solid participation, underscoring the importance of ABA support in regional communities. The intergenerational group catch-ups in Crystal Brook continued to add a unique layer to community engagement, with older members providing insight and encouragement to younger parents.



Lisa Weatherley and Sophie Turnbull of Adelaide Northern Suburbs Group, SA/NT Branch, representing ABA at *Discover Surrey Downs village*, showcasing local organisations within the community.

ABA local groups *continued*

‘Coming to ABA catch-ups was a lifesaver in those early weeks. I didn’t know many other mums nearby, and suddenly I had this friendly group where I could ask questions and just feel normal again.’ **ABA local group participant, SA**

Whether offering information, chatting with families, or simply being present, ABA groups helped normalise breastfeeding and raise awareness of available support. Highlights included stalls and activities at the Whyalla market, Riverland Field Days, and the Mount Barker Show – important events where ABA had a visible and approachable presence.

In the Northern Territory, Darwin–Palmerston and Rural Group and Katherine Group remained actively engaged. Katherine Group volunteers hosted a community expo that introduced ABA to new families, while Darwin volunteers ran several breastfeeding education classes, helping parents feel prepared and confident.

Overall, ABA’s local groups have had a meaningful impact by being present, consistent and engaged – ensuring breastfeeding families feel seen, heard and connected at every stage of their journey.



Melanie and Sophie, volunteers with Western Melbourne Group, VIC Branch, at a ‘Welcoming the Babies’ event in Footscray

ABA local groups in VIC Branch

ABA local groups have been busy across Victoria, from Portland in the west, Shepparton and Wodonga in the north, to Bairnsdale in the east, and all over the city of Melbourne.

Local group volunteers often provide feed-and-change tents and/or information stalls at local festivals and events; in 2024–25 volunteers from Boroondara, Casey–Cardinia, Diamond Valley, Greater Geelong, Portland, and Western Melbourne Groups were present at family events in their local area.

Below: Mums and bubs at a local catch-up at Gippsland Group, VIC Branch. Renée is seated in the centre with her son (in the yellow hoodie).



Gippsland Group

Two years ago, Gippsland Group welcomed Renée, a qualified breastfeeding educator who moved to Trafalgar from regional Western Australia. Renée quickly resumed monthly Cuppa & Chat/Chat & Play meet-ups in various towns in the La Trobe Valley/South Gippsland area, with Mirboo North being a popular destination.

With a consistent group of mums in attendance, combined with the growing needs of playful toddlers, the group sourced a great new local venue in Mirboo North. In central Gippsland meet-ups have been facilitated at various venues and also have a new time at a local playgroup venue.

Further east, we are very excited an ABA local group has been reinvigorated in the Bairnsdale area. The group is now hosting monthly Connect & Share gatherings at the Bairnsdale Library.

ABA local groups *continued*

Breast pump hire

The Breast Pump Hire Working Group has had a busy and productive year.

Our new online pump hire system is nearing completion, to improve access for families and an easier process for pump hire officers.

We have developed an induction video for new breast pump hire officers (BPHOs) and have updated our hiring and lending forms, and the breast pump hire procedure including troubleshooting guide.

The product endorsement procedure was updated, and we have since assessed two new pump models to ensure they meet our standards for quality and usability, one for hire purpose and another for product endorsement.

Throughout the year we've supported a significant number of families through our low-cost, environmentally friendly, local service – making breastfeeding more accessible and supported across our communities.

'Supply looks to be increasing and we are doing fewer top-ups with formula.' Mum of a 3-week-old after having a pump for a fortnight



Volunteer story

We have hired out pumps to 44 families in the past 12 months. Breast pump hire is the busiest part of my job as a volunteer. The time is irregular but you're always there for families when they desperately need it. I manage 22 pumps across 8 locations and have had to learn the geography of our northern metro region to best meet the needs of parents.

Rebekka Mitchell,
North Metropolitan Region, WA Branch

'I just wanted to say thank you again to you and your operations manager. I could have cried tears of joy when I pumped for the first time in 2 months and saw little droplets visible on my nipples (not enough volume to store or do anything with but the fact I could see milk at all made me so happy). Thank you for helping my babies and me.'

Essence magazine

Essence, ABA's flagship publication for all Virtual Village, Friends of ABA and volunteer members continues to enjoy strong readership.

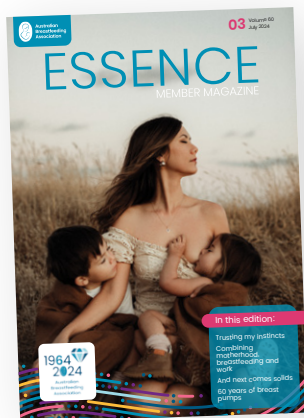
Essence is delivered each quarter to thousands of families and health professionals.

The publication has a broad variety of informative articles and information focusing on the lived experience of breastfeeding mums. It also has evidence-based information pieces on broad subject matters.

Some issues feature lighter content such as 'brelfies', recipes and key events across ABA.

In 2024–25 popular stories included:

- tips for helping your baby to sleep
- understanding perinatal depression and anxiety
- traditions of supporting breastfeeding mums in the Middle East
- jaundice in babies
- juggling breastfeeding and sport
- a risk-minimisation approach for safer infant sleep
- breastfeeding is hurting and tips to help you
- Vesna's experience of combining motherhood, breastfeeding and paid work
- Nicola's personal experience of navigating surgery with an exclusively breastfed baby.



15,047

copies of *Essence* delivered online,
direct to members

7593

copies of *Essence* magazine
landed in letterboxes

Our membership eNewsletter

ABA *eNews* is a digital newsletter delivered 11 times a year to all ABA members including our new introductory members. It is filled with informative breastfeeding and parenting articles, recipes, a 'What's on' section plus stories from the wider ABA community.

ABA *eNews* now reaches more than 23,000 ABA members, with a monthly open rate of around 55%.

Community Breastfeeding Mentoring Course

The 10961NAT Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring (CBM workshops) is a nationally recognised course that covers mentoring skills and basic breastfeeding information for culturally and linguistically diverse groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, and the individuals and groups that work with them.

During the 2024–25 financial year, we continued to build upon our relationships with CALD communities in Victoria thanks to funding provided by the Victorian Department of Health. Alongside this, there were workshops held in Alice Springs and the Eurobodalla region of NSW.



Helpline and LiveChat

ABA is committed to making breastfeeding support accessible to all families, recognising that every parent's experience is unique. As part of this commitment, ABA continues to develop tailored resources that reflect the diverse needs of the community.

This includes culturally appropriate materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, resources designed specifically for young parents, and translated content to better support families for whom English is not their first language. By meeting families where they are, with language, relevance and care, ABA works hard to ensure that no one misses out on the breastfeeding support that they deserve.

The table below shows the percentage of callers from each of these priority groups who have contacted the Helpline services over the 2024–25 year. This year saw a slight increase in the percentage of calls from all priority groups compared to previous years.

These results reflect steady progress in reaching families who most benefit from targeted support. ABA remains focused on strengthening this connection further, ensuring that every parent, regardless of age, culture, or background, can access compassionate, evidence-based breastfeeding support when they need it most.

Left: 10961NAT Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring workshop in Alice Springs

Helpline Services combined, 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Aged 25 and under
3.93% of contacts

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
2.55% of contacts

Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
11.77% of contacts

Deadly Dads

Deadly Dads® workshops: a unique, interactive workshop facilitated by Aboriginal men, for Aboriginal men.

We have continued to raise awareness around this valuable program via events like the Pregnancy Babies & Children's Expo (PBC Expo) and the 2025 Health Professional Seminars.

The last 12 months have seen an increase in enquiries from organisations nationally. Updated marketing and information collateral means we can better engage key stakeholders.

Volunteer training and support

‘All my expectations were exceeded. The training team locally and nationally have been phenomenal, supportive and always eager to provide assistance and advice.’ **ABA trainee**

‘The different platforms used for learning and presenting have seen my confidence grow and made me feel more comfortable in front of people, online or face-to-face. A course with pure theory would not achieve this.’ **ABA trainee**

ABA volunteer training

A year of growth and continuous improvement

The ABA volunteer training program had a strong year, with a renewed focus on continuous improvement to elevate the trainee learning experience.

We saw a notable increase in inquiries about our course and traineeship, which prompted the introduction of more robust tracking and monitoring systems. These updates have allowed for more effective follow-up and a stronger conversion rate from inquiry to enrolment.

From the start of the traineeship, learners now receive more targeted and intensive support, both in coursework and volunteering, helping many complete their early units more efficiently. Trainees consistently express appreciation for the program’s flexibility and the responsive support available at every stage.

Training and assessment materials continue to evolve through regular validation and moderation sessions conducted by our assessors, guided significantly by learner feedback. This feedback highlights the value of our practical, skills-based approach and the clarity of our assessment methods.

Our annual Quality Indicator Survey again reflected high levels of satisfaction:

- **90.9%** of learners reported overall satisfaction
- **94.4%** of training personnel rated the program positively
- **91.3%** of learners specifically praised the exceptional support they received throughout the course

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the Australian Government for its continued support. This funding is essential to our ability to deliver high-quality training and provide invaluable support to the hundreds of thousands of families we assist each year on their breastfeeding journeys.

‘Knowing that I have practised the skills so many times and have layered all of the new information so repeatedly, I really do feel fairly confident in starting on the Helpline. It’s all so structured and scaffolded and clearly designed with consideration to the busy phase that many of its learners are in when engaging in the course.’ **ABA trainee**

Volunteer support

The year 2024–25 was fantastic for ABA. We welcomed 72 new volunteers into our village – 34 being breastfeeding counsellors and educators and 38 being volunteers supporting ABA local groups.

All ABA volunteers have a special place in the Association, in a role that reflects their passion and their selected area of work. We know that when our volunteers find their passion, they also find their village and lifelong friends. In so many places, in so many ways, ABA's volunteers use their skills to contribute, connect and add value within their communities.

These passionate volunteers give to their communities every day in many ways, such as:

- face-to-face get-togethers where families find friendships and can receive counselling and education support
- online education
- advocacy and promotion of ABA's work
- peer-to-peer support on our National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services.

Our volunteer support team works closely with volunteers to support, develop and encourage them, as well as to celebrate, acknowledge and recognise the incredible contributions that they make.

In 2024–25 we introduced new volunteer roles, encouraging more ABA members to become involved in activities that they enjoy. We also celebrated major events such as International Volunteer Managers' Day, International Volunteer Day and National Volunteer Week, by holding online connection sessions and recognising all our volunteers. We specifically acknowledged 13 volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their roles as 'exceptional achievers'.

ABA volunteers are what makes the ABA community unique and special, and they can express this best.

'It is an incredible honour to walk alongside so many mothers, babies and families – offering support, sharing stories, and witnessing the strength and connection that breastfeeding brings. I've been privileged to be part of a community built on compassion, encouragement, and the shared belief that support makes all the difference.'

Karen, ABA Volunteer

Judy Gifford Impact Award

Judy Gifford OAM was a long-standing ABA volunteer ABA who positively impacted thousands of families through her interactions over 4 decades. Prior to her passing in February 2023, ABA chose to honour Judy with an annual Judy Gifford Impact Award, to be bestowed on a volunteer each year, for outstanding service to the Association.

In 2023, the inaugural recipient was Dot Newbold, a breastfeeding counsellor for over 40 years. Dot has held many roles in ABA at national, branch and group level, including national president. Training, and making ABA information accessible to all, have been her focuses and passions.

The 2024 recipient was Hilary (Pixie) Endacott who joined the then Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia (NMAA) in 1972 in Sydney and qualified as a counsellor in 1976. Pixie, based in Portland, Victoria, is best known as a trainer and assessor, a doula to trainees and a sounding board for her fellow volunteers.

She has had various roles in counsellor training and remains an active volunteer there as well as on the Helpline Services, with a regular LiveChat shift.

Pixie was a pioneer – successfully campaigning for ABA to produce a breastfeeding journal aimed at health professionals and becoming the inaugural editor of *Breastfeeding Review*. She also drove the task of revising ABA's internal counsellor and educator training for this to become nationally accredited within the Vocational and Education Training (VET) system.



Thank you Dot!



Thank you Pixie!

Volunteer continuing education

During 2024–25 there were:

- In 2024–25, five branch conferences comprising of two for QLD Branch and three face to face two-day residential conferences in SA/NT, VIC and ACT/NSW Branches. Keynote presentations from VIC Branch were livestreamed for volunteers to access.
- Thirty-seven new online professional development activities provided for volunteers to view.
- Two breastfeeding counsellors and one breastfeeding educator achieved their Certificate of Counselling/Educator Practice.
- New professional development resources were created to support volunteers with new initiatives and services including Breastfeeding Helpline calls, diversity and inclusion and volunteers returning to their role activities.
- Eleven issues of *Talkabout*, ABA's internal newsletter and professional development publication were published.
- Live sessions were delivered on how to volunteer on ABA's national LiveChat service and supporting trainers to facilitate live sessions.

'I enjoyed meeting with regional representatives and sharing ideas. It is wonderful to have volunteers support many mums with our range of programs.'

Heather, ABA volunteer



A meeting of volunteers from North Metropolitan Region, WA Branch



Thank you

Corporate and pro bono partners

In our support of Australia's mums and families, ABA has been supported by partners and sponsors who share our values. All ABA partners are proudly WHO-Code-compliant and are subject to evidence-based assessments.

Recently ABA welcomed Lacevo as a platinum partner. Lacevo has a hands-free, untethered, in-bra breast pump designed for busy mothers on the move. ABA is delighted to endorse this wearable pump.

ABA continues to work collaboratively with Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo, enabling ABA to have a presence to over 100,000 attendees across all state capital cities, Canberra and Gold Coast. ABA connected with over 6000 mums, families and parents throughout the year.

ABA would like to acknowledge Nala, Mama Movement and Everform for their support at Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo during the year.

ABA also acknowledges our long-standing donation partner, Petals Florist Network. Through generously donating 10% of their flower value to our organisation, they in turn assist the wonderful volunteer work that enables ABA to continue its support of breastfeeding mums, parents and families.

ABA wishes to thank Fuzion, KMT and Launtel for supporting ABA's ICT and telecommunications needs on a national level, as we continue to improve our communication and resource provision channels, managing the ABA website, Helpline and LiveChat system, and supporting a largely remote volunteer and staff workforce.

We are also deeply appreciative of the pro bono legal counsel provided by Russell Kennedy Lawyers.

Images

We thank the following photographers and contributors for the use of their images in this report.

Pappilon Studio,
page 5

Rheanna Banfield,
page 28

Antonia Norton, pages
35 (left) and 38

Fiona Arthur, page
43 (group)

Volunteer support *continued*

Appeals

ABA has two national fundraisers each year, the festive appeal and the tax appeal. In 2024–25 these appeals were successful despite a volatile economic climate.

Festive appeal 2024

The theme for our 2024 festive appeal was ‘Together for every mother, ABA is here for you.’ This campaign focused on the countless lives ABA has touched over 60 years and included stories of resilience, joy and helping families overcome breastfeeding obstacles to achieve their goals.

This campaign showcased Lara Scott who was a first-time mum to a 7-week-old baby when she called the ABA National Breastfeeding Helpline. Lara needed urgent support to wean her new baby after receiving a cancer diagnosis requiring radiotherapy treatment. The ABA volunteer superheroes staffing the Breastfeeding Helpline were there for her.

The appeal raised \$19,455 which was 33% more than the 2023 Festive appeal.

Reference: **Festive Appeal 2024 | Australian Breastfeeding Association**

Donors

We would like to extend our thanks to the following individuals and foundations who have provided significant support this year.

Agnieszka Kosidlo

Alice Fleetwood

Amanda Kemsley

Amne Alrifai

Andrew Wandel

Ann Nicholson

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Anna Womersley

Anthea Fleming

Beverley Jan

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Michael McCormack

Naomi Hull

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Patrice Laslett

Pattie Burke-Maxwell

Penny Zucchi

Phillip Bird

Ray Kerr

Rebecca Sonsie

Robin McHugh

Roger Franklin

Ruth Thomas

Sally Carratt

Sandra Cuthbert

Steven Robinson

Susan Williamson

Susan Gillard

Suzanne Groom

The Lyle Foundation

Tracy Raymond

Tax appeal 2025

ABA's tax appeal theme was ‘Every drop counts – so does every dollar you give.’

We had a target of \$40,000 reflecting our commitment to sustaining vital ABA programs and continuing to support mums, parents and families into the future. This appeal focused on mothers who found their village by joining ABA local groups.

Our tax appeal raised just over \$58,000.

Donations have always played a pivotal part in enabling our offerings, informing expectant parents with world-class breastfeeding resources and education.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we rely on the generosity of donors who share our vision. We thank them as we cannot achieve what we do in the community without their generous support.



Australian
Breastfeeding
Association