

Restricting Infant Formula Marketing in Australia

Why the Australian Government's proposed legislation matters for families in your electorate

THE ISSUE

Formula milk is a **USD \$55 billion global industry** backed by sophisticated marketing proven to undermine breastfeeding. Australia's voluntary Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas (MAIF) Agreement **ended in February 2025** after being found unfit for purpose by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Mandatory laws are now essential.

Australia currently scores just **27 out of 100** on the WHO's scale for implementing the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

HOW FORMULA MARKETING IMPACTS FAMILIES

- **Exploits parental anxiety** through emotional messaging that casts doubt on breastmilk adequacy
- **Targets health professionals** via gifts, sponsorships and conference funding, compromising independent clinical advice
- **Uses digital tracking** to reach pregnant women and new parents at their most vulnerable moments
- **Cross-promotes via toddler milks** using identical branding to infant formula, deliberately confusing parents
- **Influences in-store purchasing** through retailer price promotions and catalogue features targeting expectant parents

"Formula milk marketing is one of the most significant and least visible barriers to breastfeeding."

WHO & UNICEF, 2022



Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

WHAT WILL STRONG LEGISLATION DO?

In October 2024, the Government announced its intention to replace the MAIF Agreement with stronger mandatory controls to protect the health of mothers and babies. The most comprehensive option for the legislation proposed by the Government will:

Ban all public advertising

No formula advertising to the public via any channel — TV, print, social media or digital platforms

Cover toddler milks

Close the proxy advertising loophole by including all breastmilk substitutes, not just infant formula

Include retailers

Prohibit in-store promotions, catalogues and special displays by supermarkets and pharmacies

Protect health professionals

Prohibit industry sponsorship of conferences, gifts and professional development for health workers

End free samples

No free samples distributed through health facilities or to the general public

Introduce real penalties

Civil penalties for all companies — no loopholes for non-signatories as existed under the MAIF Agreement

OUR ASK

- **Request a briefing on the status of the new legislation** from the office of The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health
- **Champion adoption of the strongest possible legislation** with colleagues and raise its importance in Parliament on behalf of the families in your electorate