

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Annual report

2025-26

breastfeeding.asn.au

Our impact 2025–26

215,000+
families reached



2.275 million
website users



1157
expectant parents attended a local or online antenatal breastfeeding education class



141
Accredited Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces



11,000+
health professionals connected with ABA



9358
mum2mum app downloads



115
ABA local groups



41,361
calls received by ABA's National Breastfeeding Helpline



4980
'chats' received by ABA's real-time LiveChat service



661
volunteers including counsellors, educators and volunteer members



178
trainee volunteer breastfeeding counsellors and educators



32,000
ABA professional website users



559
learners completed 1558 individual eModules, almost

2500
hours of professional development and education

1895
health professionals engaged in ongoing education

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Level 3, 11 Queens Road, Melbourne VIC 3004 | PO Box 33221, Melbourne VIC 3004 | Email: info@breastfeeding.asn.au
ABN: 64 005 081 523 | RTO: 21659



VIC Branch conference attendees, February 2026

National President's report



2025–26 has been a big year for ABA, with the culmination of a number of key projects and achievements. The Board is excited by the work undertaken this year and, together with Executive Officer Victoria Marshall-Cerins, will continue our work to ensure the future of ABA and to support breastfeeding.

Firstly, after much stakeholder engagement, we approved the new *Strategic plan 2026–2030*, which was launched in late June. This document presents our strategic priorities, how they were determined and why they are our focus. It presents our rationale for what we are doing and aim to do, in much more detail than in previous documents. We look forward to the new plan driving ABA's work over the next 5 years and keeping us on track with our mission to support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society.

Over the year ABA's WHO Code Taskforce project continued to bring together and empower voices advocating for the full implementation of the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and subsequent WHA resolutions (The WHO Code), in the Australian Government's proposed legislation to regulate the marketing of commercial baby milks in Australia. ABA has been proactive in seeking consumer engagement and driving understanding of the importance of this legislation through our *Free 2 feed* campaign. The Board is proud of the Association's efforts in this area and thanks all those who have contributed.

In May 2026, Reconciliation Australia gave conditional endorsement to our first *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP). This is an important milestone on our reconciliation journey. The Board thanks the RAP Working Group, as well as every staff member and volunteer who attended meetings and contributed to development of the RAP over the last 18 months.

After a number of years of reduced government funding periods, the Board was delighted by the outcome of the Association's *Secure the future of ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline* campaign. We now have the financial security of $11.6 million of ongoing funds over 4 years from the Australian Government's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook budget released on 17 December 2025. This includes a $1 million one-off investment for rebuilding the Helpline telecommunications infrastructure, a very exciting and much-needed upgrade that will help us future-proof an essential service for Australian families. This renewal is a clear acknowledgement from the federal government of the value of ABA's services.

ABA's work to promote breastfeeding and drive societal change continued through its annual promotional campaigns in World Breastfeeding Week (WBW), 1 to 7 August 2025, and National Mothering Week (NMW) 4 to 10 May 2026. In WBW the theme *Prioritise breastfeeding: Create sustainable support systems* highlighted the role ABA has in bringing together support for breastfeeding mothers and providing accurate, useful and timely information to enable mothers to meet their breastfeeding goals. In particular, we focused on the vital role of support people. The NMW theme *See mums, hear mums, support mums* celebrated and acknowledged the role mothers play in creating a positive and functional future society.

Other ABA programs also increased support and systemic change to better enable mothers to breastfeed as long as they choose. In particular, ABA's Breastfeeding Friendly Australia programs saw increased uptake of our Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace accreditations, Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) recognition program by childcare centres, and Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere recognition by community venues.

The much-anticipated launch of online pump hire services has enabled better access to our range of hospital-grade breast pumps via a seamless experience on our website. The Board is grateful to the many contributors at all levels of the Association – from local groups funding the work, to scoping and planning, to development, database

integration, volunteer support, and testing. It has been hugely successful and enabled us to support more families and ensure the continued economic viability of our local groups and regions.

Much of ABA's work is provided by an incredible volunteer base, most particularly our Certificate IV-trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors and educators. This year we launched a 'volunteer dashboard' where volunteers can record their volunteering and professional development. This also provides us with in-depth statistics to share with stakeholders and funders as well as allowing deeper recognition of the amazing work our volunteers undertake.

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. I am thankful for the broad experience of our volunteer directors, their commitment to the Association and generosity in giving freely of their time and expertise. I am grateful that all our directors work together cordially, with dedication and passion for the work of the Association. Thank you!

In November 2025, I was delighted to be re-elected for a 3-year term. In addition, Natalie Polkinghorne was elected for a 3-year term after 10 months on the Board as a casual vacancy appointment. Also, Bruce Hampton was appointed to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Simone Flannagan in October 2025. At the end of 2025, elected director Sally Eldridge also stepped down from the Board, while in February 2026, Daile Kelleher's term as an appointed director ended, each contributing as directors for 6 years. We sincerely thank these directors for their valuable contributions whilst on the Board.

Once again, 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. Each year, we support hundreds of thousands of families with up-to-date, evidence-based information, education and bespoke counselling on breastfeeding. We provide continuing education for healthcare workers, and work to affect policy and societal change to make it easier for mothers to successfully breastfeed for as long as they choose. This is what we, together, do and I am so proud to be a part as we continue to make a difference!

Cate Uhe
National President



Front row from left to right: Dominique Bougoure, Cate Uhe and Louise Brown
Back row from left to right: Danielle Lee, Natalie Polkinghorne, Bruce Hampton, Yuyan Wang (on screen), Lynn Ng, Nitty Brown and Alannah Shore, May 2026

Board of directors 2025–26

Cate Uhe, National President Elected Director 2019; re-elected 2022 and Nov 2025

Louise Brown, Vice-President Elected Director 2020; re-elected 2023

Lynn Ng, Honorary Secretary Elected Director 2023

Dominique Bougoure Appointed Director 2021, re-appointed 2023 and 2025

Bruce Hampton Appointed Director Nov 2025

Yuyan Wang Appointed Director Feb 2026

Nitty Brown Elected Director 2024

Alannah Shore Elected Director 2024

Danielle Lee Appointed as casual vacancy for Elected Director Feb 2026

Natalie Polkinghorne Appointed as casual vacancy for Elected Director 2025; Elected Director Nov 2025

Sally Eldridge Appointed as casual vacancy for Elected Director 2020; Elected Director 2020; re-elected 2023; resigned Dec 2025

Daile Kelleher Appointed director 2020; re-appointed 2022 and 2024; term ended Feb 2026

Simone Flannagan Appointed Director 2025; resigned Oct 2025

Executive Officer's summary



2025–26 was a big year for ABA! We launched our new *Strategic plan 2026–2030*, received conditional endorsement of our first *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* and took our advocacy for WHO Code-aligned legislation to the Australian community through the *Free 2 feed* campaign. Over the year ABA reached more than 215,000 families and 2.275 million website users, and connected with over 11,000 health professionals.

After several years of short funding cycles, the Australian Government confirmed ongoing, 4-year funding for our Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services along with a modest funding increase. The Government also committed to resourcing the rebuild of the ageing Helpline telecommunications infrastructure. The outcome recognises the incredible work and impact of ABA's volunteer counsellors and educators, and gives ABA the stability to plan with confidence.

ABA continues to act as a key implementation partner to the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond* (ANBS). Here's a summary of our activities and their impact across the three priority areas of the strategy.

Structural enablers for breastfeeding

Community education and awareness

This year, ABA volunteers exhibited and presented educational sessions at 12 Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expos across Australia, connecting with more than 5000 pregnant women and their partners.

They also delivered bespoke educational presentations to universities, hospitals and health services, including Edith Cowan University, Curtin University, Flinders University and VACCHO. World Breastfeeding Week 2025, *Prioritise breastfeeding: Create sustainable support systems*, invited supporters to claim their link in the warm chain of support. National Mothering Week 2026, *See mums, hear mums, support mums*, highlighted the need to protect breastfeeding and parents' infant feeding decision-making from inappropriate formula marketing and championed the need for breastfeeding-friendly workplaces.

In May 2026 Reconciliation Australia gave conditional endorsement to ABA's first *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP), the culmination of more than 2 years' work by the RAP Working Group. Our RAP encompasses activities from August 2026 to January 2028.

Prevent inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes

Following the expiry of the MAIF Agreement in February 2025, ABA briefed Minister for Health Mark Butler and Assistant Minister Rebecca White, the WHO Code Taskforce prepared a submission to the Government's consultation on the scope of new legislation, distributing a briefing paper to more than 150 stakeholders. Our subsequent *Free 2 feed* campaign, launched in June 2026, invited parents to write to their MP in support of the strongest, enforceable legislation aligned with the full *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and subsequent WHA resolutions (the WHO Code).

Policy, advocacy and research

ABA continued to contribute expertise through the Infant and Toddler Foods Research Alliance, the LEAPP guidelines, the Lifeblood Donor Milk Advisory Committee and WBTi Australia. We also made a submission to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

Settings that enable breastfeeding

Health professionals' education and training

The Health Professional Seminar series 2026, *Breastfeeding: care that continues*, engaged more than 460 health professionals in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and online, receiving fabulous feedback from participants. Our 10960NAT Diploma of Breastfeeding Management continued to attract learners from midwifery, nursing, medicine and allied

health, and our updated eModule collection now offers 21 topics.

Breastfeeding-friendly environments

Breastfeeding Friendly Australia continued to grow. It now includes 141 accredited Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces and almost 400 Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere venues. Our new Early Childhood Education and Care recognition program upskilled educators from 68 services in the care of breastfed infants and their families.

Individual enablers for breastfeeding

Universal access to breastfeeding support services

ABA's National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services received 46,341 calls and chats in 2025-26. These services were staffed by 435 volunteer breastfeeding counsellors and educators, who contributed more than 20,700 hours. User satisfaction remained high at 93%. Of callers, 42% said they would otherwise have sought help from a GP, hospital or other health service, and 23% that they may have stopped breastfeeding.

A total of 1157 expectant parents attended face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes or online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions this year, with knowledge and confidence for breastfeeding rising substantially. Our Newborn Virtual Village supported more than 530 new parents with babies under 8 weeks' old.

Across ABA's network of 115 local peer support groups, volunteers hosted nearly 1700 events for families, providing free in-person breastfeeding support and social connection for local families. In October 2025 we launched online breast pump hire, to improve the experience of parents accessing pumps and reduce the administrative burden for our volunteers. The new system recorded 1577 weeks of hire in its first year.

Breastfeeding support for priority groups

With funding from the Victorian Department of Health, six Community Breastfeeding Mentoring workshops reached more than a dozen culturally diverse communities in Victoria. The course was also delivered for the first time in Tasmania. Contacts to ABA's Helpline Services in 2025-26 from culturally and linguistically diverse families rose to 13%.

Our volunteers

ABA's volunteers remain the foundation of everything ABA does. This year 178 trainees progressed through the 10998NAT Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education. A new volunteer dashboard in the ABA website allowed volunteers to record their contribution and professional development. We also recognised 138 volunteers for long service, the longest-serving of whom has given 50 years.

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)

Looking ahead

2026–27 is the first year of our *Strategic plan 2026–2030*. With Helpline funding secured, our priorities are to:

- rebuild the Helpline telecommunications platform
- launch and embed our Reflect RAP
- recruit, grow and support ABA's volunteer community
- ensure our services are accessible and culturally safe for every family.

Thank you to everyone, particularly ABA's wonderful volunteers, who have worked so hard this year to make ABA the village of support that it is for parents in Australia. You make an important impact that can last a lifetime.

Victoria Marshall-Cerins,
Executive Officer

Structural enablers for breastfeeding

‘This year’s PBC Expo in WA was a great success. We had a full volunteer roster and a new coordinated pack to give out to parents – with around 700–800 given out!’

Shona, WA

‘It was so much fun attending the Baby Expo and chatting with so many different people. It was lovely to feel that our presence made a real difference.’

Celeste, Breastfeeding Counsellor, Adelaide Central Metro Group, SA

Pregnancy, Babies and Children’s Expo

Baby expos continue to be a fabulous way for ABA to showcase our services, events and membership offerings to expectant parents. All the ABA expo booths are staffed by dedicated volunteer breastfeeding counsellors, educators and trainees, who present breastfeeding talks and offer information to expo attendees.

During 2025–26, over 87,700 families, mothers and parents attended the Pregnancy, Babies and Children’s Expo at 12 events in most state capital cities, as well as Canberra and the Gold Coast. ABA connected with just over 5000 expo attendees.



ACT/NSW Branch office staff Amanda (left) and Jess (right) with Flora, Trainee, at the Sydney expo



From left to right: Chantal, Kaitlyn and Maria at the Brisbane expo

Volunteer story

I really enjoyed volunteering at the Expo – it was really fulfilling to know that I’m offering resources to expecting mums that can help them in their breastfeeding journey. A conversation I had with an expecting mum really stayed with me; she asked how we are different from the services midwives and lactation consultants. I answered that we are more like a support and counselling organisation; we help mums reflect and find what works for them, and let mums feel less alone in a society that doesn’t always recognise the needs of a nursing mum and her family. I’m really grateful that it gave me the opportunity to reflect on why our organisation exists and why it’s so important to reach out and make sure people know who we are and what we do.

Winnie, NSW

Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo *continued*

'I enjoy letting people know about all the information and resources available to help them reach their breastfeeding goals.'
Jess, VIC



From left to right: Tara, Jessica and Lisa at the Melbourne expo

Community talks

ABA local groups continued to strengthen relationships with health professionals, parents, professional associations, education institutes and the wider community through providing local talks and presentations. These presentations helped to upskill and provide the target audience with crucial breastfeeding information, and knowledge of the support and services ABA has available.

Fourteen bespoke presentations were developed throughout 2025–26. Along with our existing standard presentations, we reached a broad range of audiences and organisations. These audiences included: Edith Cowan University WA, Curtin University WA, Australian College of Midwives, Flinders University Rural and Remote Health SA, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), Children Young People and Families Health Network, and Monash Children's Hospital.

The feedback received from the presentations was very positive with several institutes and audiences requesting follow-up sessions.

'Amazing session and a wealth of knowledge. … I am imagining setting up an info board at work using ABA flyers.'
Sabrina, midwifery student, Curtin University, Perth

WA Branch event: tertiary talks

In May, the WA Branch held a 3-hour paid breastfeeding education session at Curtin University, attended by 13 midwifery and child health nurse students. A repeat of this class is planned for November 2026.

Feedback from participants demonstrated a significant increase in both breastfeeding knowledge and confidence to support breastfeeding families. Self-rated knowledge increased from scores of 2 to 8 before the session to 7 to 9 afterwards, while confidence increased from 6 and below to 7 to 10. Additional feedback highlighted the value of the demonstration mother, the informative nature of the session, and even inspired one attendee to express interest in volunteering with ABA.

A wonderful outcome and a great example of the impact that WA Branch tertiary engagement is having on the future health workforce.

Right: Amy, Breastfeeding Educator, WA Branch, delivers breastfeeding education to midwifery and child health nurse students at Curtin University in May 2026



Our national campaigns

World Breastfeeding Week August 2025

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) takes place each year from 1 to 7 August, and in 2025 the theme was *Prioritise breastfeeding: Create sustainable support systems*, highlighting how when communities come together to support breastfeeding mothers, the benefits last generations. Prioritising and supporting breastfeeding will reduce the growing climate impact of artificial infant-feed supply chains.

WBW25 highlighted the roles of actors in the warm chain of support for breastfeeding. By linking individuals and organisations at all levels – national, state, health, workplace and community – we can create a more breastfeeding-friendly society.

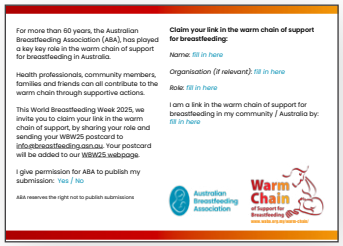
ABA plays an important role in the warm chain of support for breastfeeding in Australia. For over 60 years, ABA has been a huge support for parents, especially for those without local family support, through our local peer support groups, our National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services, our online and community-based workshops and classes.

During the week we invited ABA members and supporters to claim their link in the warm chain of breastfeeding support across health, community and workplace sectors, by submitted a special postcard and celebrated their role in the continuum of care during the first 1000 days, by adding these postcards to a digital 'wall' on the ABA website.

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

A free live webinar took place during the week, titled *Strengthen what works: turning evidence into everyday support*.

This special one-off event focused on breastfeeding support that truly works, bringing together practical insights, evidence-based guidance, and real-world support strategies.


For more than 60 years, the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA), has played a key key role in the warm chain of support for breastfeeding in Australia.

Health professionals, community members, families and friends can all contribute to the warm chain through supportive actions.

This World Breastfeeding Week 2025, we invite you to claim your link in the warm chain of support, by sharing your role and sending your WBW25 postcard to info@breastfeeding.asn.au. Your postcard will be added to our WBW25 webpage.

I give permission for ABA to publish my submission: Yes / No

ABA reserves the right not to publish submissions

Claim your link in the warm chain of support for breastfeeding:

Name: fill in here

Organisation (if relevant): fill in here

Role: fill in here

I am a link in the warm chain of support for breastfeeding in my community / Australia by:
fill in here

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Warm Chain of Support for Breastfeeding

National Mothering Week 2026

In 2026, National Mothering Week (NMW) took place from 4 to 10 May and focused on how ABA acknowledges the role mums play in creating a positive and functional future society.

Our theme for NMW was *See mums, hear mums, support mums* and during the week we highlighted issues important to mums, such as protecting breastfeeding from formula industry marketing and working to improve conditions for breastfeeding and expressing at work, so mums feel supported, seen and heard.

During NMW, live panel events were targeted towards mothers and featured a range of speakers and topics focusing on sleep, wellbeing, looking after yourself and a special webinar acknowledging all that mums do from pregnancy, birth and beyond.

ABA local groups offered new parents a chance to connect with a ready-made network of supportive, local parents to help them build community, learn new skills and make new friends in their local areas.

Our NMW26 campaign showcased new mums reflecting on how helpful ABA classes and the National Breastfeeding Helpline were to them.

During the week, ABA emphasised to the media and our supporters how the Breastfeeding Friendly Australia initiative leads the way in creating supportive environments across workplaces, communities, public spaces and childcare services, helping to ensure mothers and families are supported where they live, play and work.

These programs have helped organisations and businesses take practical, low-cost steps to become inclusive and family-friendly, so women can return to work and continue breastfeeding. That's incredibly important for women's health and also good for business, reducing disruptions, supporting retention and strengthening workplace productivity. This is critical in today's cost-of-living crisis, with some women needing to return to work soon after their baby's birth.

Reconciliation Action Plan

This year, ABA reached an important milestone on our reconciliation journey. In May 2026, Reconciliation Australia gave conditional endorsement to our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

From draft to endorsement

Our RAP Working Group brings together ABA volunteers, staff and members, including members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. In 2025–26, the group finalised the RAP narrative and action plan and incorporated feedback from the branch presidents and senior managers. Following Board approval, the draft was submitted to Reconciliation Australia. After two rounds of feedback, conditional endorsement was received. The published RAP uses the colour palette from ABA's Community Breastfeeding Mentoring workshop, The Story of Breastfeeding flip book, which has been warmly received by First Nations families and workers.

Knowing the Country we work on

Volunteers in every branch helped identify the Traditional Country on which each ABA local group meets. They used the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia and consulted with local people. This information is now included in our RAP.

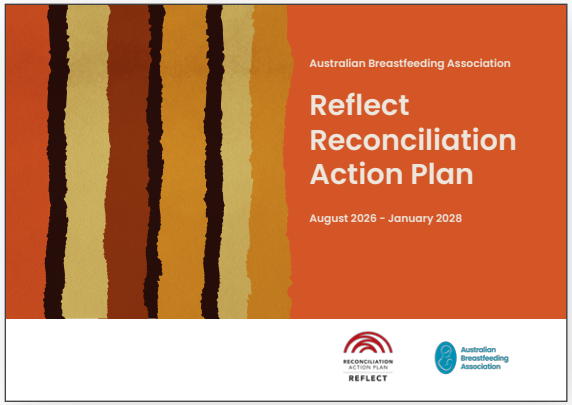
Learning from our history

We continued to gather stories of ABA's past work with First Nations communities. These include the 1987 Thalikool project report, a copy of the 1985 video *Babies of the Dreamtime*, and records from ABA's former Indigenous Women's Working Group.

Relationships and resources

Resources from the Marri Gudjaga research project, a partnership with the University of Wollongong, are now available on ABA's new Reconciliation Action Plan webpage. Katherine Group, NT, developed new postcards in Kriol for First Nations families, shared at events in Darwin.

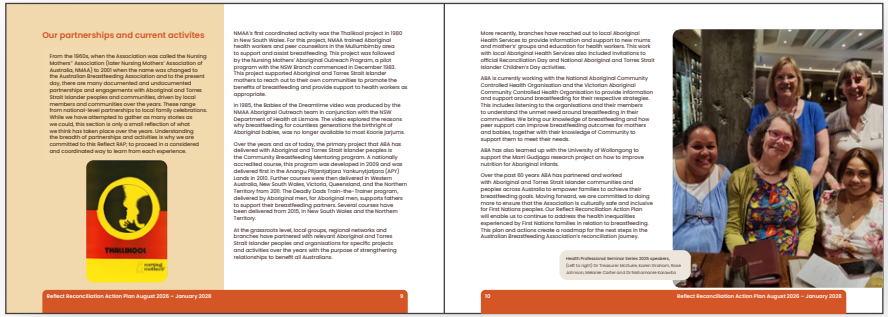
In early 2026, a Community Breastfeeding Mentoring workshop in Tasmania included workers from the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation. ABA volunteers have since supported the Corporation's mothers' group and took part in local Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and Children's Day events.



Looking ahead

Our Reflect RAP will run from August 2026 to January 2028. We will launch the RAP, share it with all volunteers and staff, and invite new members to join the Working Group.

ABA thanks every member of the RAP Working Group for their time and commitment. We especially acknowledge our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, whose knowledge and guidance have shaped this plan.

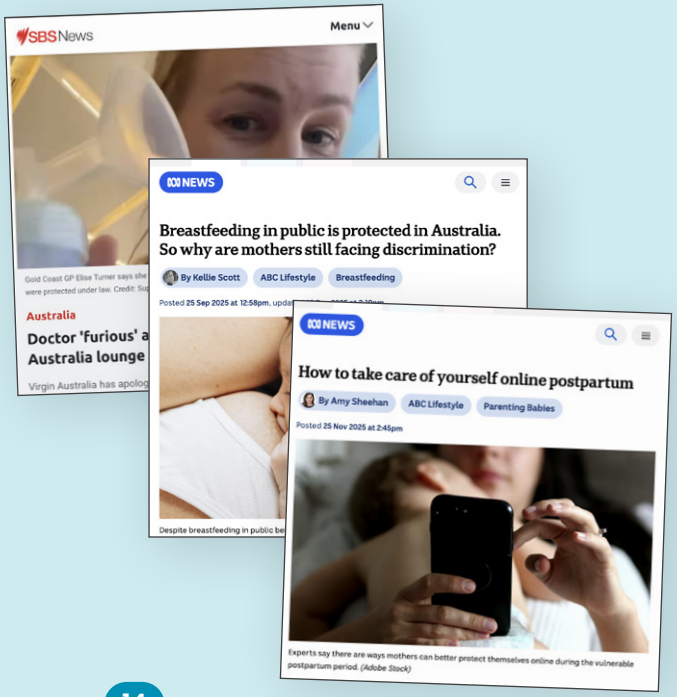


ABA in the media

During 2025–26, we strengthened our relationship with various media such as the ABC, Channel 7, news.com.au and Channel 9.

These relationships resulted in a range of stories covering topics such as:

- Breastfeeding and your rights at work
- Caring for yourself postpartum
- Breastfeeding in public and discrimination
- The cry-it-out method
- Milk supply during menstruation
- Managing breastfeeding aversion.



ABA's social media presence

In 2025–26, ABA's social media continued to grow. Facebook remains the strongest performer with over 124,000 followers. ABA's Instagram account has 41,300 followers and is widely used during our Festive Appeal and Tax Appeal campaigns as well as National Mothering Week and World Breastfeeding Week.

ABA's Meme Team Working Group and Social Media Working Group continue to provide relatable content that connects mums, parents and families across Australia.

Our X platform has almost 6000 followers. TikTok has almost 1000 followers with more plans for its use in the following year.

Top performing posts

Facebook



Instagram



Collaborations and submissions

Professional collaborations

ABA continues to collaborate with a number of external organisations as an advocate for breastfeeding, including the Infant and Toddler Foods Research Alliance (ITFRA), Red Cross Lifeblood Advisory Committee for donor milk programs and breastfeeding research, and the Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal (LEAPP) Guidelines Leadership Group and Steering Committee. ABA's partnership with the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) Australia continues with attendance at monthly meetings and collaboration on government submissions and consultations.

Also our ACT/NSW branch strengthened strategic relationships with NSW Health and ACT Health, including participation in NSW Health's antenatal education review.

ASPECT (Autism Spectrum Australia) launched their award-winning online pregnancy and parenting hub in mid-2025. An episode from ABA's lived experience podcast *Joey's story of breastfeeding with autism* was shared on the hub website and ABA reciprocally shared links to the online hub on the ABA podcast webpage. The ASPECT hub is also listed as a recommended resource for ABA Breastfeeding Helpline volunteers to offer to callers. ASPECT staff contributed feature articles for ABA's *Professional express* and for *Essence* magazine that describe the information and resources available for parents and for professional development on the hub.

ABA attended an inaugural policy roundtable in October 2025 for SoBrave (Australia's young women's breast cancer advocacy). Updates were given about new approaches to cancer treatments during pregnancy and experts with lived experience shared their stories, including descriptions of breastfeeding during and after cancer treatments.

Submissions

ABA made a submission in September 2025 as part of the public consultation process conducted by the Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQH). The submission drew attention to breastfeeding as a significant health behaviour that is not being optimally supported in the Australian healthcare system and highlighted the most important areas where improvements in support and protection of breastfeeding can be made.

SOBRAVE
Australia's Young Women's Breast Cancer Charity
Pregnancy and Postpartum Associated Cancers Project

aspect
Autism Spectrum Australia

Australian Commission on **Safety and Quality** in Health Care

LEAPP
Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal care

ABA WHO Code Taskforce project

Throughout 2025–26, ABA built on years of advocacy for Australian laws that fully implement the World Health Organization's *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* (WHO Code). This work gained urgency after the voluntary, industry-led *Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas Agreement* (MAIF Agreement) was found unfit for purpose, was not reauthorised by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and expired in February 2025. With no enforceable national framework then in place, the Australian Government committed to 'mandating the MAIF Agreement' through formal regulation of infant formula marketing. ABA continued to press for comprehensive, independent regulation that protects breastfeeding and enables families to make infant feeding decisions free from commercial influence.

ABA advanced this work through broader organisational advocacy and the specialist expertise of the WHO Code Taskforce. In September Victoria Marshall-Cerins and Naomi Hull, World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative Australia, briefed Assistant Minister Rebecca White's Chief of Staff, Celeste Miller, and shared analysis of the gaps in the MAIF Agreement and its alignment with the WHO Code. In September, ABA also met with Assistant Minister White in Bridgewater, Tasmania, to advocate for legislation implementing the WHO Code in Australia, and with Minister for Health, Mark Butler regarding the Taskforce's advocacy for controls on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes.

In April, ABA made its submission to the Government's public consultation on the scope of the new legislation, informed by the Taskforce's specialist expertise, calling for strong, enforceable legislation aligned with the full WHO Code and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions. Key priorities included covering toddler milks to close cross-promotion and brand-extension loopholes; regulating retailer advertising, discounts and displays; including bottles and teats; preventing gifts, sponsorship and other commercial influence within health systems; stopping free samples; addressing digital and social media marketing; and establishing independent oversight, meaningful penalties and coverage of all companies rather than only voluntary signatories. The submission was strengthened by research, evidence and specialist input from the Taskforce that supported development of the economic and public health case for comprehensive regulation, while also demonstrating strong alignment with broader Australian Government priorities in preventive health, health equity, consumer protection and reducing the commercial determinants of health.



From left to right: Linda De Vries, Breastfeeding Counsellor and Educator, SA/NT Branch; Victoria Marshall-Cerins, ABA Executive Officer; Mark Butler, Minister for Health; Kasey-Lea Williams, Breastfeeding Counsellor, SA/NT Branch

During the consultation period between February and April 2026, the WHO Code Taskforce led broad stakeholder and community engagement, developed and distributed a detailed briefing paper to more than 150 health stakeholders, volunteers and members, generating 133 downloads. In April 2026 we delivered a stakeholder webinar to explain the consultation and support informed, evidence-based submissions. The Taskforce encouraged volunteers, members, parents and partner organisations to participate in the consultation.

ABA WHO Code Taskforce project *continued*

The WHO Code Taskforce also contributed to related food policy and regulatory processes. In September 2025, ABA responded to the Australian Taxation Office's draft GST determination on infant formula and toddler milk products. In December 2025, the Taskforce contributed to the Public Health Association of Australia's open letter about the establishment and membership of the National Food Council, and responded to consultations concerning online food labelling standards, including Proposal P1066. In June 2026, ABA participated in a public health working group to collaborate on FSANZ Proposal P1066 consultation on young child formula. ABA subsequently welcomed the ATO's decision to retain GST on toddler milks, noting that these products are unnecessary and costly and that their marketing and cross-promotion can create uncertainty for families.

We developed a consumer lived-experience survey to capture where and how families encounter infant formula marketing and how it affects their access to trusted, independent infant feeding information. The findings will help demonstrate the real-world reach of current marketing practices and strengthen the evidence base for future advocacy and regulatory reform.

This momentum culminated in June 2026 with the WHO Code Taskforce's launch of the *Free 2 feed* campaign, supported through ABA's wider communications and advocacy channels. Through accessible evidence, lived experience and an action enabling people to write to their MP, the campaign showed how commercial influence extends beyond visible advertising to social media, parenting apps, digital tracking, supermarket promotions, free samples, toddler-milk branding and industry-sponsored health information. It positioned strong legislation as essential to every family's right to objective, unbiased infant feeding information.

The Taskforce will continue its advocacy with government and sector partners, to convert this momentum into strong, enforceable protections aligned with the WHO Code.



ABA meeting with Assistant Minister Rebecca White in Bridgewater, Tasmania

From left to right: Victoria Marshall-Cerins, ABA Executive Officer; Rebecca White, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care; Tate Lennon, Hobart & Surrounds Group Leader; Jo Slamen, Breastfeeding Counsellor & Promotion Officer, TAS Branch

WHO Code Taskforce Steering Committee 2025–26

ABA acknowledges and thanks the 2025–26 WHO Code Taskforce Steering Committee for their expert guidance, commitment and advocacy throughout the year:

Chair, Prof Emeritus Jane Scott

Dr Phillip Baker

Prof Kathryn Backholer

A/Prof Alexandra Jones

Adj Prof Dr Julie Smith

Dr Rosemary Stanton

Dr Mark Zirnsak

Settings that enable breastfeeding

‘The content so far in the diploma has helped give me the confidence to perform a thorough breastfeeding history and examination that is sensitive and unrushed. It has galvanised breastfeeding as a social and health justice issue and shown the importance of having a thorough understanding of the anatomical and physiological components of breastfeeding.’

GP Diploma learner

Diploma of Breastfeeding Management

ABA has continued to successfully deliver the 10960NAT Diploma of Breastfeeding Management to a diverse cohort of health professionals across Australia. Participants came from a wide range of clinical settings and from a variety of professional fields including midwifery, nursing, medicine and allied health disciplines such as dietetics and physiotherapy.

Through a combination of workshops, eLearning modules and assessment activities, learners develop the knowledge and confidence needed to provide comprehensive, evidence-based support to breastfeeding families and contribute to improved breastfeeding outcomes. Feedback consistently highlights the value of the course’s depth and relevance, with learners reporting high levels of satisfaction with the knowledge and skills gained.

The opportunity to select two elective units and to undertake a critical appraisal of lactation research allows participants to further customise their studies, aligning their learning with individual clinical interests and professional development goals.

eLearning modules

ABA’s comprehensive eModule collection for health professionals underwent extensive updates this year, with refined content and improved functionality. The online delivery format of our eModules provides a convenient and flexible learning opportunity, helping health professionals across Australia to extend their knowledge on breastfeeding and lactation. Popular topics included everyday essentials such as *Mastitis prevention and care*, as well as more nuanced subjects such as *Breastfeeding support for babies with Down syndrome* and *Lactation after infant loss*. Our eModules remained a popular choice for busy health professionals seeking bite-sized learning opportunities to support best practice. Across the year, 586 learners enrolled in 1343 eModules, equating to over 2000 hours of education. With 21 topics currently on offer, there really was something for every learner, no matter their continuing professional development needs.

‘Love, love, love this eLearning! Thank you so much for making it free and accessible to health professionals. I have learnt and taken so much away from this to enhance my practice.’

eModule learner

Annual Health Professional Seminar series 2026

In March 2026, ABA delivered its annual Health Professional Seminar series, *Breastfeeding: care that continues*, across Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with the program also available online from late March to the end of May. The series engaged 461 health professionals, including strong participation through the refreshed online seminar format. The revamped digital offering proved highly successful, making the program more accessible for those unable to attend in person, while maintaining the quality, relevance, and connection valued by delegates.

Attendee feedback reflected appreciation for the opportunity to strengthen professional knowledge, hear from expert speakers and connect with others working to support breastfeeding families. The positive response to the 2026 program highlighted the ongoing importance of accessible, evidence-informed education and reinforced ABA's role in supporting health professionals across Australia. ABA thanks all presenters for sharing their expertise, insight and commitment to best practice.

'As a first-time attendee I can say this will not be my last. The variety of presentations alongside the passion and knowledge of the presenters was tremendous. I am very much looking forward to learning more in the future through these seminars.'

Hannah, Speech Pathologist



From left to right: Monica Hogan, Dr Nina Chad, Sue Smith, Dr Bec Jenkinson and Dr Treasure McGuire

Attendance statistics

Brisbane	91
Sydney	87
Melbourne	116
Online webinar only	167
Total	**461**

Health professional workshops

ABA was pleased to continue delivering virtual workshops as standalone professional development opportunities for health professionals. These workshops were facilitated by both ABA expert presenters and external guest speakers.

A total of 40 health professionals from across Australia participated in eight online workshops. Participants highly valued the opportunity to undertake in-depth breastfeeding education that combined theoretical knowledge with practical strategies that could be immediately applied in clinical practice. The most popular workshop topics were 'Medications and breastfeeding' and 'Assessing breastfeeding'.

Feedback showed participants were highly likely to recommend the workshops to colleagues and to change their clinical practice as a result of the learnings from the workshops.

'I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop. This has been my first with ABA and I wasn't sure what to expect. However, I'm now looking at future workshops.'

Workshop participant

Breastfeeding information, resources and publications

In keeping with ABA's digital-first approach, a comprehensive review of ABA's parent-facing online content ensured our breastfeeding information remains evidence-based, accessible and easy to navigate. Web articles were revised for clarity and readability, while the consolidation and merging of content streamlined the website from 192 to 177 resources. Updates were strengthened through collaboration from external experts and families with lived experience, resulting in practical and reliable online information that meets the needs of Australian families.

Resources for health professionals

ABA values the work of health professionals who are supporting breastfeeding families across Australia. We provide a dedicated website for health professionals where they can access high-quality educational resources to support their practice with breastfeeding mums and babies. Our collection of free downloadable fact sheets for health professionals includes 30 titles that range from nipple pain to hyperlactation and are on a continuous cycle of review. Each fact sheet is concise, clear and utilises current evidence to inform best practice and includes further reading options.

Every month during 2025–26, professional subscribers and members received *Professional Express*, an eNewsletter that included the most recently produced or revised fact sheet, short summaries of recently published breastfeeding research and all the latest ABA news. A monthly *Focus on Breastfeeding* article was also included, written by an active breastfeeding researcher who took this opportunity to communicate their work to their target audience of clinicians.

> 'There's so much noise on the internet about breastfeeding and parenting in general. It's nice to know that I can get concise, accurate information.'
>
> **Parent and ABA website user**

ABA's peer reviewed journal *Breastfeeding Review* continued to publish articles about various aspects of breastfeeding and lactation. With two new co-editors taking over from our long-serving editor, Dr Jenni James, we are excited to continue publishing valuable research articles, reviews and commentary pieces that challenge and inform. ABA would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of Dr Jenni James through her 15-year-long editorship of *Breastfeeding Review*.
Our professional members have also had access to each new edition of *Breastfeeding Review* as well as the full digital archive going back to 1996.



Baby Friendly Health Initiative eLearning modules

The Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) education modules continued to support healthcare organisations in strengthening knowledge and skills in breastfeeding support best practice. During the year, four organisations signed up to purchase access to the modules, providing a total of 301 employee accesses. The modules offered flexible, evidence-based education that helped staff build their understanding of breastfeeding support in line with Baby Friendly Health Initiative requirements.

Growing uptake of the modules has reflected ongoing commitment across the health sector to improving breastfeeding outcomes and ensuring families receive consistent, high-quality care.

301
employee accesses from four organisations in 2025–26

During 2025–26, 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. ABA helped many organisations and businesses take practical steps to become inclusive and family-friendly, ensuring breastfeeding women and families feel supported and welcomed wherever they are. During the year our work ensured barriers to breastfeeding were removed, making it easier for women to combine breastfeeding with everyday life.

'We are making our swim school safe for all families with children of all ages. We are proud supporters of our swim school being a safe space for breastfeeding.'

Fish N Flips Swim School (Fairfield), Idalia QLD

'This is a very positive experience, and the resources and support offered are extremely helpful in creating breastfeeding friendly workplaces.'

Affinity Education Group

Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace (BFW) accreditation continues to make strong progress, with more organisations across Australia recognising the importance of supporting breastfeeding employees.

BFW accreditation continued to drive positive change across Australian workplaces, supporting employers to create environments where breastfeeding employees can combine work and family responsibilities.

Interest in the program remained high, with 45 organisations submitting expressions of interest and 12 organisations signing up to begin their accreditation journey. Seven organisations achieved accreditation during the reporting period, while a further 9 organisations reached Best-practice accreditation.

These results demonstrate the growing commitment of Australian workplaces to creating family-friendly practices that help employees work while continuing their breastfeeding journey, and supporting positive workplace culture and staff wellbeing.

'Hilary, who has recently returned to work, … expressed that she feels comfortable and supported in managing her breastfeeding needs alongside her return to work and noted a positive and understanding workplace culture. Overall, Hilary described her experience as positive and felt that CaFHS provides a supportive and accommodating environment for staff returning to work while breastfeeding.'

Child and Family Health Services, South Australia

141

accredited organisations in the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace program

Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace
An Australian Breastfeeding Association Initiative

Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care

Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) service recognition continued to grow and supports families by embedding practices that help create welcoming and supportive childcare settings. During the year, 68 recognitions were processed, including 43 new services joining the program and 25 services renewing their recognition.

'It supports our community to know that we are welcoming, supportive and encouraging of breastfeeding in a safe, warm and knowledgeable space.'

North Star Early Education Wallan, VIC

'The resources provided will help support the process we have in place and reinforce to staff and families the message that we are indeed a breastfeeding-friendly place.'

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health Children's Centre, Lakes Entrance VIC

Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere

Our Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere initiative improves community support for breastfeeding in public by encouraging local venues and businesses to show their support for breastfeeding mums and babies.



Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere recognition continued to grow, with 393 venues signing up to demonstrate their commitment to creating supportive, breastfeeding-friendly spaces. Of these, 108 venues renewed their recognition, highlighting ongoing dedication to families. Strong engagement was seen across community settings, including 167 libraries and 54 community centres across Australia.

'We would like to let parents know that our library is a welcoming space to breastfeed. We don't have many breastfeeding-friendly spaces that the community can just enter into – libraries are the best location for that.'

Berri Library, Berri SA

Baby Care Room

Baby Care Room recognition continued to grow, with 10 rooms achieving recognition. This program helps ensure families have access to clean, comfortable and welcoming spaces when caring for their babies. As the program expands, we aim to engage more venues across Australia, helping families feel supported, respected and included wherever they are.

Emergency resources

Emergency breastfeeding resources continued to support communities during times of need. During the year, health professionals in Western Australia expressed interest in helping local members through the distribution of emergency breastfeeding support magnets. Feedback was also gathered to review the implementation of these resources, providing valuable insights to guide future improvements. This work helps ensure families can access timely breastfeeding information and support during emergency situations.

Individual enablers for breastfeeding

‘So helpful and supportive, I felt much calmer and informed at the end of the call’

‘The Volunteer was really supportive and reassuring. Was just nice to chat to someone who acknowledged and praised my efforts breastfeeding my child. It was just the right words of reassurance that I needed in that moment to keep persevering’

Universal breastfeeding education support and information services

Breastfeeding Helpline

For many families, breastfeeding questions and challenges do not arise during business hours. They happen in the middle of the night, on weekends or public holidays. They happen in the early days of parenting when reassurance can make all the difference, they happen as breastfeeding comes to a close and a baby begins to wean – and of course, every stage in between. ABA’s National Breastfeeding Helpline remains a trusted source of support through all these times, ensuring families have access to evidence-based information and compassionate peer support whenever they need it.

During 2025–26, a dedicated team of 435 trained breastfeeding counsellors contributed 20,700 volunteer hours supporting families, health professionals and communities. 41,361 calls were made to the National Breastfeeding Helpline during the year and an incredible 84% of these were supported thanks to ABA volunteers.

Feedback from callers continued to demonstrate the exceptional value of the service. Overall satisfaction remained high at 93%, with 90% of callers reporting they felt reassured following their conversation and 86% saying they felt less worried. Many callers also reported feeling more knowledgeable, more confident and better equipped to make decisions about their breastfeeding journey.



Right: Alisa on the Breastfeeding Helpline

Beyond supporting individual families, the National Breastfeeding Helpline continues to deliver broader benefits to the health system. 42% of callers reported they would otherwise have sought support from a GP, hospital or other health service, while 23% indicated they may have stopped breastfeeding without the assistance they received from ABA.

After the call I felt …	
… less worried	86%
… less stressed	83%
… more confident	82%
… reassured	90%
… more knowledgeable about breastfeeding	82%
… more determined to continue breastfeeding	76%

Breastfeeding Helpline *continued*

The issues raised by callers reflect the everyday realities of breastfeeding and parenting. Reasons for contacting the Breastfeeding Helpline remained largely unchanged from previous years, with sore breasts or nipples again the most common concern. Enquiries about feeding patterns have consistently ranked second over the past 6 years, while the need for reassurance has remained a leading reason for contact over the past 3 years.

Top 5 reasons for calling in 2025–26

1	Sore breast or nipples
2	Information on feeding patterns
3	Reassurance
4	Concerns with low milk supply
5	Positioning and attaching my baby

'The information provided was so reassuring and made me feel like what I was experiencing was common, and manageable. The counsellor was compassionate and comprehensive in her explanation, suggestions and overall support.'

Volunteer story

I love volunteering on the ABA Breastfeeding Helpline because I can support parents through the early days of parenthood, when breastfeeding and understanding baby behaviour can feel stressful or overwhelming. It's also very rewarding to be there when other support services, such as lactation consultants, midwives and child health nurses, have finished for the day because breastfeeding concerns have a tendency to pop up outside office hours. The best calls are when mums thank me for volunteering and share how helpful the information and support have been. It reminds me how much our service means to them and you can never underestimate how good it feels to just be thanked!

Karlee, Breastfeeding Counsellor and Helpline volunteer

Every call to the Helpline represents a person seeking support, information or reassurance. Collectively, these conversations demonstrate the enduring value of peer breastfeeding support and the important role ABA volunteers play in helping families achieve their breastfeeding goals. ABA extends its sincere thanks to every breastfeeding counsellor who has contributed their time, expertise and compassion throughout the year.

Their commitment ensures trusted support remains available to families across Australia, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

LiveChat

Every LiveChat conversation represents a family reaching out with a question, concern or need for reassurance, and a volunteer helping with compassionate listening, evidence-based information and practical guidance. Accessed via the ABA website, LiveChat offers an additional convenient and accessible way for families to connect with ABA's support services.

During 2025–26, LiveChat was available for 16 hours each week, operating every weeknight from 8:00 to 10:00 pm AEST/AEDT and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12.00 to 2.00 pm AEST/AEDT. These service hours allowed flexible daytime and evening connections with trained volunteers.

Throughout 2025–26, LiveChat continued to be a trusted source of breastfeeding information, reassurance and encouragement. Across the year, 4980 chats were initiated, with 98% successfully supported by ABA volunteers. A dedicated team of 104 volunteers contributed their time, knowledge and care.

'This is such a great service to get reassurance and feel that the answers are from a reputable source rather than the mixed messaging from other sources.'

LiveChat *continued*

The quality and impact of the service remained exceptionally strong. Overall, 90% of parents reported being satisfied with the support they received and 94% noted that the volunteer was welcoming and approachable.

The positive impact of LiveChat was also reflected in how parents felt after engaging with the service. Following a conversation with an ABA volunteer, 85% of parents noted that they felt reassured and 81% felt less worried.

The service also continues to demonstrate significant value to both families and the broader health system. 25% of parents reported that, without LiveChat, they may have stopped breastfeeding, while 29% said they would have sought support from a hospital, GP or other health professional if the service had not been available.

The most common reason to reach out to ABA volunteers via LiveChat was sore breast and nipples, followed by a need for reassurance. LiveChat has an important role in helping parents feel heard, supported, and confident.

A LiveChat conversation provides more than information. It offers families reassurance, confidence and the knowledge that they are not navigating breastfeeding challenges alone. In responsive, one-to-one conversations, volunteers help parents work towards their own breastfeeding goals and connect them with additional support where needed.

The ongoing success of the service reflects the generosity and dedication of ABA's trained volunteers. We acknowledge and thank each volunteer who contributed to LiveChat during the year and helped make a meaningful difference in the lives of families across Australia.

'Such a helpful service when you really need an answer on the spot'

85%

of parents noted that they felt reassured following a LiveChat conversation with an ABA volunteer

Top 5 reasons for contact in 2025–26

1	Sore breast or nipples
2	Reassurance
3	Information on feeding patterns
4	Concerns with low milk supply
5	Expressing and/or storing breastmilk

Volunteer story

I love helping mums with questions about breastfeeding, especially when they are feeling confused with conflicting information and opinions. It feels great to give them the up-to-date information – and, even through the medium of LiveChat, you can feel the relief when, more often than not, the current information matches what their gut was telling them.

Jane, Breastfeeding Educator and LiveChat volunteer

After the chat I felt that ...

... the volunteer empathised with my situation	91%
... the information and support was helpful	91%
... the volunteer was welcoming and approachable	94%

Below: Julia, an ABA volunteer, on LiveChat



Breastfeeding … with ABA podcast

ABA's podcasts and blogs are created by parents, for parents. In each of the 37 episodes, our volunteers, experts and guest speakers dive into breastfeeding or early parenting topics such as normal baby sleep, juggling work and breastfeeding, weaning, postnatal depression and much more.

We also hear stories of breastfeeding experiences from real parents. The podcasts and blogs are evidenced-backed but also explore the personal stories from a diverse range of parents, grandparents and community members, using a range of interview and conversation formats. The podcast sustains an average of over 100 plays per day across all 37 episodes. Four new episodes were released in 2025–26:

- 'Breastfeeding stories … breastfeeding through cancer, chemo, and milk-sharing'
- 'Breastfeeding stories … breastfeeding and postnatal depression'
- 'Breastfeeding and … postnatal depression'
- 'Breastfeeding stories … breastfeeding a baby with a rare metabolic disorder'

With 37 episodes to choose from, the *Breastfeeding… with ABA* podcast is a very popular parenting podcast, with over 10,000 listens in 2025–26 as well as regularly being included in Apple's top #33 on Australian parenting podcast charts.



Sisters, Emma and Katie, appeared in the episode called 'Breastfeeding stories … breastfeeding through cancer, chemo, and milk-sharing'

mum2mum app

During 2025–26, ABA's mum2mum app continued to support parents with practical, evidence-based breastfeeding information and everyday tracking tools. The app had an average of over 1500 active users each month.

There was strong engagement with feed, sleep and nappy tracking tools and the app evolved with new content and functionality.

This year, a dedicated content task group expanded the app's pregnancy journey resources, adding new information on topics such as routine ultrasounds and pregnancy milestones. We also simplified the account creation process, making it easier for new users to get started. Through pregnancy and early parenting, mum2mum helped thousands of families connect with trusted ABA resources, practical tools and support.



Breastfeeding Education Classes

ABA's face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes continued to be highly valued by expectant parents across Australia. During 2025–26, classes were delivered in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, helping families prepare for their breastfeeding journey.

Participant feedback remained overwhelmingly positive, with **96%** of attendees agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would recommend the class to a friend, and **96%** reporting that the class met their expectations.

Evaluation data also demonstrated substantial increases in breastfeeding knowledge and confidence, with average knowledge scores rising **from 44% to 80%** and confidence increasing **from 45% to 81%** following attendance.

The table below summarises the number of face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes delivered and the number of participants who attended during 2025–26.

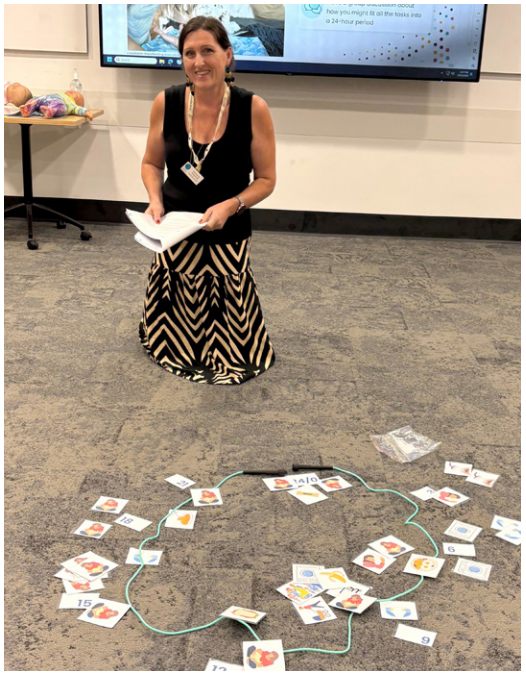
> 'Great class, lovely volunteers, a really valuable thing to do before baby comes. I feel much more empowered than before.'
> **Stephanie, VIC**

> 'The workshop was really good and has given me lots of confidence. It was great to do this before having baby … I feel like now when I have my baby, I will know the basics and where to start with confidence.'
> **Lizzie, NSW**

Breastfeeding Education Classes, 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Branch*	Number of classes held	Number of participants
VIC	22	216
ACT/NSW	22	199
QLD	25	321
SA/NT	11	72
WA	12	58
Total	**92**	**866**

*TAS continued to provide sponsored registration for online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions in 2025–26 in lieu of face-to-face classes.



Michelle, Breastfeeding Counsellor and Educator, and Group Leader, Central Coast Group NSW, at a Breastfeeding Education Class



Sachelle, Breastfeeding Educator, also Central Coast Group NSW, at a Breastfeeding Education Class

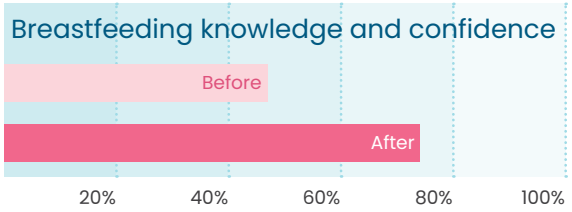
ABA Virtual Village

Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions

ABA supported over 291 expectant mothers and their partners through Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions (BPS) during 2025–26. With the support of 45 breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators and trainees, 44 online sessions were delivered to help families prepare for breastfeeding and early parenting.

Participant feedback remained positive, with 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing they would recommend the session to a friend. Evaluation data also showed significant improvements in breastfeeding knowledge and confidence, with average scores increasing from 47% before attendance to 74% afterwards.

ABA continued to provide tailored support through specialised live sessions and resources for parents expecting multiples and expectant parents from the LGBTQIA+ community. Based on evaluation, the live BPS for expectant mothers impacted by diabetes was converted into a 24/7 online module.

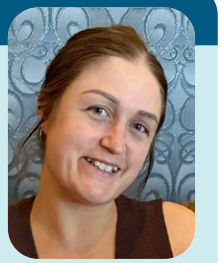


> 'It reinforced information I had only heard in passing during birth classes, so I now feel more confident just giving feeding a go.'

The module is free for ABA financial members and features practical information on preparing for breastfeeding with diabetes and lived-experience videos.

ABA looks forward to continuing to empower expectant parents with the knowledge, confidence and practical skills needed to breastfeed and care for their newborns.

Volunteer story



I've found the BPS sessions to be such a valuable part of what ABA offers. Living in a regional area means access to face-to-face sessions is limited. Being a facilitator and Q&A mum has meant I've been able to support mums across Australia and share information with those who prefer online sessions or may not have a local group.

Genevieve, Trainee, QLD

> *What did you find most useful?*
> 'The information was clear and included plenty of support on the emotional side of things. The videos really helped make it make sense for me.'

The first 72 hours online package

ABA continued to provide essential information and support to new and expectant parents through its 24/7 online learning and support resource for the first 72 hours.

The valuable resource continued to meet users' needs and expectations for this time with 100% of 2025–26 survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that the information met their needs for this time and 97% agreeing the module met their expectations.

Along with meeting these needs, the resource continued to be very well received by new and expectant mums with 100% of survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that they would recommend the module to a friend, and users' overall satisfaction with the modules scoring 4.75 out of 5 stars.

ABA looks forward to guiding and supporting more new parents through these critical hours after birth into the future.

> 'I hope every pregnant woman and new mum can have access to this module.'

ABA Virtual Village *continued*

Newborn Virtual Village

ABA's Newborn Virtual Village continued to provide valuable breastfeeding information and support to parents in the early days and weeks after birth.

During 2025–26, 38 breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators and trainees delivered 97 online sessions. These webinars helped to support over 530 parents as they navigated feeding and early parenting challenges.

The peer-support webinar series remained highly valued, with 92% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing they would recommend the session to a friend.

Participants also reported increased breastfeeding knowledge and confidence after attending. This demonstrates the positive impact of accessible, evidence-based support during the early days and weeks after giving birth.

Volunteer story



Presenting NVV this year has been a valuable experience, with the updated sessions building on excellent content through practical, easy-to-understand tips that parents can apply in everyday life. Preparing and presenting the topics, learning from mums' questions and our supportive tech hosts have strengthened my counselling skills and breastfeeding knowledge. As a mother, I have also gained valuable knowledge from NVV, even after my own breastfeeding experience. I'm grateful to be part of such a wonderful and knowledgeable team.

Lucy, Trainee, VIC

'Thanks for running these sessions! It's great that they're via Zoom and at a low cost as it makes them really accessible.'

Mel, ACT

'Sessions are easy to access, good speakers (friendly and create an environment where you want to participate)'

Mackenzie, NSW

'It was most useful that this amazing knowledge is made available to many people like grandparents and friends so that young mums can be better supported.'

World Breastfeeding Week live panel participant

Connect & Share Virtual Village and free online events

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

With the support of 10 breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators and trainees, ABA delivered 11 Connect & Share webinars during 2025–26, helping to support parents with babies beyond the newborn stage.

Three free webinars were held during World Breastfeeding Week, National Grandparents Day and National Mothering Week.

The World Breastfeeding Week and National Grandparents Day webinars focused on how family, friends and grandparents can support breastfeeding, while acknowledging how breastfeeding and parenting practices have changed over time. The National Mothering Week webinar celebrated the important role mothers play from pregnancy, birth and beyond.

All Connect & Share webinars and free events were well received, attracting a total of 262 participants.

ABA local groups

Across Australia, ABA's network of local groups tailor their support to the needs of Australian communities. In 2025–26 local groups hosted free social events, breastfeeding support gatherings and hands-on help that brought mums together and strengthened community ties. ABA local groups also facilitated breast pump hire and offered in-person counselling at various events for families navigating breastfeeding challenges. Format varies widely across ABA's local meet-ups. Topic-based sessions and guest speakers, on subjects like 'working while breastfeeding', or 'baby-led weaning', draw strong interest, and the informal 'Cuppa & Chat' gatherings remain a firm favourite. These sessions give families a low-pressure space to ask breastfeeding questions and meet other parents, and attendees consistently value being able to bring along partners, kids and friends.

Number of events for parents 2025–26

ACT/NSW	**495**	TAS	**84**
QLD	**404**	VIC	**395**
SA/NT	**127**	WA	**194**

> 'Attending the meet-ups has made me more comfortable breastfeeding in public and it has made me more confident about my choice of breastfeeding for a long time.'
>
> **Northern Perth Group attendee**

ABA local groups in WA Branch

Local groups in WA continue to provide valuable information and support to breastfeeding families in their communities. Groups throughout the Perth Metro region offered regular fortnightly or weekly meet-ups, while regional groups held meet-ups in Northam, Geraldton, Karratha and across the South West.

The Kalamunda Group offered two special 'Early days support' series, a block of fortnightly meet-ups to take new parents through common topics in those first months, such as supply, attachment and baby cues. Other groups offered sessions on baby-wearing, sleep, starting solids and a number of other parenting topics, supporting mums through not only breastfeeding but many other aspects of their parenting journey.

WA groups showed a continued focus on helping mums to care for themselves. Many groups offered 'walk and talk' sessions, mixing breastfeeding support with social connection and gentle exercise. The Southern Lakes and Swan-Mundaring Groups ran mums and bubs yoga sessions, helping mums to combine self-care with caring for their children. WA groups also hosted guest speakers on topics such as pelvic floor health, mental health and even family finance, recognising the diverse challenges mums can face and seeking to meet them where they are at.



Swan-Mundaring Group held a fundraiser movie night at Kookaburra Outdoor Cinema in March 2026.

Pictured are co-Group Leaders Alice (left) and Shona and their children Elizabeth, Henry, Madeline and Riley.

This year, the WA Branch conducted a survey of those attending local group meet-ups, to help them gain insight into the impact groups are having. Benefits highlighted by respondents included meeting and learning from other mums in the area, increased breastfeeding knowledge and confidence, accessing face-to-face breastfeeding support and feeling part of a breastfeeding community. The survey will now run annually to allow groups to tailor their offerings and ensure they continue to provide value for breastfeeding mums and families across WA.

ABA local groups *continued*

ABA local groups in VIC Branch

ABA groups across Victoria held a total of 395 free local events throughout the year to support local families. These included weekly breastfeeding drop-ins in some areas; information sessions on topics such as sleep, introducing family foods, returning to work or study, getting out and about with baby, as well as social catch-ups like pram walks, cafe meet-ups, and 'chat and play' sessions where toddlers were welcome alongside babies.

Victorian volunteers also ran feed-and-change tents at local festivals, staffed information stalls at regional expos, and attended 'Welcome Babies' events held by local MPs. Our volunteers also spoke to new parents' groups, provided resources to local child health centres and hospitals, and presented to child health nurses and hospital staff.

Our long running partnerships and education sessions with services from Portland Health to the Royal Women's Hospital ensured that staff were aware and could refer parents to ABA's information and local support networks.

Local group volunteers and branch office staff participated in several local networks to encourage breastfeeding, across the local government areas of Casey, Dandenong, Glenelg, Hume, Latrobe, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Whittlesea and Yarra.





Hamilton Group volunteers receiving their Australia Day community organisation award from the local council. Pictured with some of their children, back row from left to right, are Cody, Cassie, Kelly and Marlene.



Rebecca, Breastfeeding Counsellor, at a Casey-Cardinia Group feed-and-change tent

At the Breastfeeding Centre in Dandenong, we continued to run weekly breastfeeding help sessions. These were often attended by families with very young babies and parents born overseas and/or speaking a language other than English at home.

VIC Branch highlights

Western Melbourne Group ran a lunch and discussion about *Your breastfeeding journey* for World Breastfeeding Week 2025. Women shared the barriers they'd experienced and what support they had found helpful. A couple of attendees then decided to train with ABA, and the group has been running regular meet-ups in a formerly underserved local government area.

Hamilton local group were awarded an Australia Day community organisation award from their local council. This hard-working volunteer team has provided antenatal education classes, regular breastfeeding support meet-ups, and breast pump hire in their regional Victorian town.

Babywearing expert and longstanding ABA volunteer, Yvette O'Dowd, has been on a personal mission to visit ABA groups around Melbourne and share her knowledge with mums. In 2025–26 she went to groups in Boroondara, Casey-Cardinia, Diamond Valley, Inner South East Melbourne and Yarra Ranges, and has her calendar packed for the second half of the calendar year. These sessions have been extremely popular with local families.

Above left: babywearing expert and longstanding ABA volunteer, Yvette, visited ABA groups around Melbourne to share her knowledge

ABA local groups *continued*

ABA local groups in SA/NT Branch

It has been a positive year for our local groups across South Australia and the Northern Territory, with volunteers continuing to find different ways to support mothers and stay connected with their local communities.

For some groups, getting together for a regular weekly catch-up has become more difficult because of volunteer availability. These groups have adapted and found new ways to stay involved. A number of groups have focused more on having a presence at local community events, giving them opportunities to meet mothers, connect with families and let people know about the support available.

Groups have also been building relationships with their local councils and other community organisations. These connections have been a great way to become more involved in the community and open up new opportunities to support local families. It's encouraging to see groups finding ways to make a difference, even when their regular meeting schedule has changed.

Across the regions, groups have had good attendance and continue to provide a welcoming place for mothers to connect and support one another. It's also been really encouraging to see the new group on the Yorke Peninsula getting off to a great start. The group has been doing well and has already become a valuable local support for mothers in the area.

> 'I really enjoy attending our local group catch-up with other mums for a whole range of reasons; whether it's meeting someone new, hearing others' experiences and support, or just spending the morning having a chat.'
>
> **Lisa, Crystal Brook Group, SA**

Our metro groups in Darwin and Adelaide have continued to do well. They remained active in their communities and have been providing ongoing support, connection and friendship for local mothers.

Overall, it's been great to see how our volunteers have adapted to the changes this year. While groups may have looked a little different from one community to another, the focus remained the same – supporting mothers, building connections and making sure families know they have a community around them. The commitment and flexibility of our volunteers continued to make a real difference.



Emma, Breastfeeding Counsellor, Crystal Brook Group, with baby Frank

Emma and Frank are also pictured below right with Emma's mum, Beth, an ex-ABA counsellor with the former Mt Gambier Group in the 1990s



Above: a Crystal Brook Group catch-up



ABA local groups *continued*



Hobart and Surrounds Group organised a baby massage event in March 2026

ABA local groups in Tas Branch

Local group volunteers in Tasmania have been busy facilitating a variety of regular parenting catch-ups providing social connection, encouragement and breastfeeding and parenting support in local communities. Over 2025–26, Tasmanian local groups have been fostering new connections with allied organisations, increasing cooperation and opportunities for mums and parents to engage with ABA events in more venues and resulting in working together to raise public awareness of ABA's local activities. The mix of events on offer included coffee mornings, breastfeeding information sessions, guest speaker sessions, pram walks and dessert nights.

Over the year, each of the groups has welcomed new trainees or volunteers, who have helped with organising and conducting local group meet-ups. This has also enabled ABA representation at a number of different community and parenting events across Tasmania, including (but not limited to) resourcing and staffing a 3-day feed-and-change facility in the paddock at Agfest in Tasmania's north in May. Braving the elements and the crowds, hundreds of families used this parenting facility each day over the event, and ABA was able to support families with babies and young children to participate more fully in their community in Tasmania.

Our local groups supported families at the Spring Fling Family Festival Devonport in October and at the Wynyard Tulip Festival.



Volunteers at North West Pregnancy, Birth & Postpartum Expo, Ulverstone



Volunteers at Birth in Tasmania Expo, Launceston







Above left: ABA at the Spring Fling in Devonport

Above right: Tana (left) and Jenn, two volunteers from the large ABA volunteer team who supported the 3-day ABA feed and change facility at Agfest in Carrick in May 2026

Centre of column: Babies at a TAS Central Coast Group catch-up

ABA local groups *continued*

ABA local support in ACT/NSW Branch

Throughout 2025–26, ABA groups across the ACT and NSW were an inclusive and supportive space for mothers and parents. Each group sought to acknowledge and understand the needs of their communities while recognising the skills and dedication of their volunteers, with volunteers showing passionate determination to maintain face-to-face activities as an inclusive, non-judgemental and accessible space. Over 470 activities and events were organised by local groups in 2025–26.

The importance of local groups can be seen in the snapshot of the revitalisation and return of a local ABA group in Armidale, NSW. Families in Armidale and neighbouring areas were supported by a new team of volunteer breastfeeding counsellors, supported by trainees, who stepped forward to re-establish the Armidale group, ensuring local families once again had access to face-to-face breastfeeding support within their own community.

> 'Thanks so much, it (the pump) was a huge help. We really appreciate how lovely ABA has been to us.' **Anonymous**

Volunteer story

Our North Brisbane Group had 32 hires for 2025–26 with 19 pumps.

I get a great sense of fulfillment from being able to assist parents when they are most vulnerable – mainly in those early days or weeks with a new baby when they are feeling overwhelmed and a little bit uncertain.'

I hire pumps (since 2012), coordinate the Test and Tag and am also the group treasurer. Shortest hire has been 1 week and the longest hire has been 68 weeks.

Tanya, Breastfeeding Educator and Breast Pump Hiring Officer, North Brisbane Group QLD

The reopening of the Armidale Group reflects the important role local volunteers played in ensuring families had access to evidence-based information, peer support and a welcoming community close to home. By restoring this local service, the volunteers created a place where parents could seek support, build confidence and connect with others at an important time in their parenting journey.

Volunteer story

Our group has been fortunate to use the online breast pump hire system over the past 12 months. During that time, we have had 10 online pump hires, and the process has been incredibly easy to manage. The online system removes the need for paperwork or payment follow-up, allowing time to assist families in other ways.

Nerida, Breastfeeding Counsellor and Breast Pump Hiring Officer, Yarra Valley & Surrounds Group VIC

Breast pump hire

In October 2025, online pump hire became available through ABA. Many (55) of our breast pump hire volunteers, from 36 different ABA groups, have taken up the opportunity to move their pump hire online. These pumps can now be hired directly through the ABA website. The hirer finds and chooses a pump from the map and completes the hiring process and payment online. The breast pump hiring officer receives an SMS notification of the hire and contacts hirer to arrange pick-up. This has reduced administrative burden for pump hire volunteers. There have been 347 pump hires through this online system already, with 1577 weeks of pump hire recorded through the online system in 2025–26 – equivalent to more than 30 years when expressed as one continuous hire period. This is in addition to the pumps hired out manually by our pump hire officers all around Australia. While ABA has hired out breast pumps since the 1970s, this is certainly a major milestone.

Essence magazine

Essence, ABA's flagship publication for all Virtual Village, Friends of ABA and Volunteer members, continues to enjoy strong readership. The publication is delivered quarterly to thousands of families and health professionals.

Each edition of *Essence* has a variety of personal and informative articles focusing on the lived experience of breastfeeding mums as well as evidence-based information covering broader subject matters.

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

In 2025–26 popular stories included:

- mothering in the 70s and 80s
- fasting and breastfeeding across religions
- politicians fighting to keep their babies close
- breastfeeding through grief and at funerals
- feeding babies in an emergency
- breastfeeding through cancer, chemo and milk-sharing.

14,080
copies of ***Essence*** delivered online, direct to members

8977
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. Each edition is filled with informative breastfeeding and parenting articles, recipes, a 'What's on' section plus other stories from the wider ABA community.

ABA *eNews* now reaches more than 24,000 ABA members, with a monthly open rate of around 28%.

Community Breastfeeding Mentoring Course

The last 12 months have proven to be a very busy time for the program. Thanks to a very generous grant awarded to ABA by the Victorian Department of Health, the team delivered six Community Breastfeeding Mentoring (CBM) workshops across Victoria, reaching over a dozen different cultural communities and the community health staff who support them.

Along with the specialised CALD workshops delivered in Victoria, ABA continued to work with organisations who could self-fund a CBM workshop for their staff and community members to attend.

During 2025–26, our facilitators travelled to Tasmania, South Australia, the Northern Territory, and regional NSW.

- 50+ participants received a nationally recognised statement of attainment
- Over 100 role plays were practised/ performed
- Countless stories were shared

We are in talks with community health services in Queensland and Western Australia about facilitating CBM workshops for their staff and community in the very near future.



Trainers Melanie and Heather in Burnie

Tasmania

The CBM Course was offered for the first time in Tasmania in March 2026, in Burnie, with participants from Circular Head, Wynyard, Burnie and Devonport attending. We were grateful to Victoria Branch trainers Melanie and Heather for facilitating it. Two local volunteers, from Penguin and Wynyard, also attended.

Participants were encouraged to think about what would work best in their communities, in terms of providing breastfeeding information and support.

We were very excited to get this off the ground in Tasmania and are hopeful that more organisations will be able to offer it in their communities in the future.

'I have really enjoyed the last two days. I have so much new knowledge and tools to help me support the families in my Supported Playgroup role.'

Helpline and LiveChat

ABA recognises that families seeking breastfeeding support have diverse backgrounds, experiences and needs. We remain committed to providing information and support that is inclusive, culturally responsive and accessible to communities across Australia. During 2025–26, families continued to engage with resources tailored for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, young parents, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Together with ABA's counselling, helpline and online support services, these resources give families access to trusted breastfeeding information in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them. Supporting equitable access to breastfeeding information remains an important focus for ABA as we continue to respond to the needs of families.

The table below shows the percentage of callers from each of these priority groups who have contacted the Helpline services over the 2025-26 year. ABA is here to support all parents in their breastfeeding journey.

1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Aged 25 and under: 5% of contacts
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: 2.5% of contacts
Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds: 13% of contacts

Volunteer training and support

‘ABA as an organisation has been incredible to be involved in and to have been a trainee with. The student support available is beyond expectations, specifically the encouragement, support and mentorship from my learner progress and support officer.’

‘It was very satisfying to develop skills quickly and collaboratively, supported empathetically by our assigned trainer and other ABA trainers. The pace was very supportive for skills and content learning.’

ABA volunteer training

ABA’s volunteer training program continued to provide a strong, supportive pathway for trainees preparing for future volunteer roles. Improvements introduced in recent years are now embedded in day-to-day practice, with clear systems in place to manage enquiries, enrolments, learner progress and support from first contact through to course completion.

Learners were supported through both their *10998NAT Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education* coursework and practical volunteer training, helping them build the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to provide effective, compassionate support to breastfeeding families.

Feedback from trainees continued to highlight the value of the program’s flexible learning, practical skill development and responsive support.

Quality improvement remained central to the program. Training and assessment materials were regularly reviewed and refined through validation and moderation activities conducted by ABA assessors, with learner feedback used to ensure the program remained relevant, effective and aligned with the needs of volunteers and the families they support. This ongoing investment in volunteer capability supports consistent, high-quality service delivery.



Trainers and trainees travelled to Brisbane from around Queensland to complete practical role plays and participate in learning in May 2026

The 2025 annual Quality Indicator Survey reflected strong satisfaction with the training experience:

- 88.3% of learners reported overall satisfaction
- 97.1% of training personnel rated the program positively
- 87.6% of learners praised the exceptional support they received

Together, these results demonstrated that ABA’s training model is delivering a positive learner experience while supporting the capability and confidence of its volunteer workforce.

ABA gratefully acknowledges the funding support of the Australian Government in enabling this program, and extends sincere thanks to its extraordinary volunteers, whose commitment makes this work possible.

‘It was rewarding to develop skills to listen, provide information and offer compassionate support.’

Volunteer support

ABA volunteers are central to all that ABA does. Their passion and commitment, paired with their skills and lived experience as parents, create communities for breastfeeding mums, their children and those who support them.

The 2025–26 financial year saw 695 volunteers generously give their time to supporting parents in their individual breastfeeding journeys, all across Australia.

This year ABA volunteers:

- provided breastfeeding information and support one on one, at local events and via the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat
- provided education to expectant parents, new parents, mums at all stages of their breastfeeding journeys, health professionals, grandparents and more
- offered breast pump hire in their local communities
- advocated for breastfeeding
- brought parents and families together through in-person meetings, events and catch-ups
- contributed to the Association through local groups and leadership roles
- used their unique skills to volunteer in a way that is meaningful for them.

These activities are the tip of the iceberg. The depth and breadth of volunteer contributions within ABA cannot be overstated. One hundred and thirty-eight volunteers were recognised for long service to the Association (in increments of 5 years of service) this year, with the longest-serving volunteer having contributed an incredible 50 years to supporting mums, babies and families. Whether they have been volunteering for 5 decades, or 5 days, ABA volunteers are invaluable.

Each year we highlight just a fraction of the outstanding service that is contributed to ABA through our Exceptional Achievement Awards. This year there were 14 recipients, with each having offered a profound level of service to the Association. We also recognised the third recipient of the Judy Gifford Impact Award for contributions to both the Association and breastfeeding advocacy more broadly.

While it is wonderful to highlight so many dedicated volunteers, there are many more inspiring stories that remain untold.

We are so grateful for every contribution made by ABA volunteers and acknowledge that ABA would not be what it is without the effort of such an incredible volunteer workforce.



Above: volunteers and members in Kaitlyn's local ABA group

Volunteer story

Our group is a connected community with around 18 volunteers and many parents. Our volunteers are all at different stages of life, from raising young children to becoming empty nesters, yet all share a passion for helping local families achieve their breastfeeding goals. Whether guiding a parent in using a breast pump, walking alongside them through challenges, or simply offering a listening ear, every volunteer makes a meaningful difference in our community.

Kaitlyn, Breastfeeding Counsellor, Tarragindi Group, QLD

Volunteer support *continued*



Judy Gifford Impact Award

In 2023, the annual Judy Gifford Impact Award was created to honour Judy's incredible impact over almost 5 decades of volunteering with ABA.

This year, Kirsten Tannenbaum OAM was recognised for her consistent and considerable contribution to ABA, since 1986.

Month after month, Kirsten gives her time to the National Breastfeeding Helpline. As a leader, she motivates and nurtures others. She has encouraged many to begin their training journey with ABA and countless families to join our community.

Kirsten's advocacy for breastfeeding has shaped the landscape in WA and far beyond.

Thank you, Kirsten, for everything that you have given, and continue to give, to ABA, to mothers, parents, babies and the Australian community.

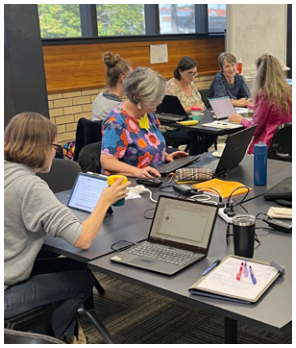
Volunteer continuing education

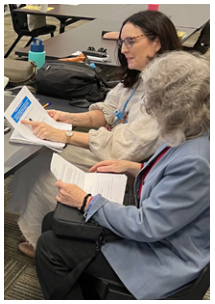
During 2025–26:

- there were 5 face-to-face 2-day residential conferences for QLD, SA/NT, VIC, WA and ACT/NSW Branches. Keynote presentations from VIC Branch were livestreamed for volunteers in TAS Branch to access
- there were 27 new online professional development activities provided for volunteers to view
- a volunteer dashboard was created on ABA's website, to enable volunteers to track their professional development progress and log volunteer hours

Below: VIC Branch conference, February 2026







Professional development for trainers and assessors at the training day at QLD Branch conference, May 2026

- professional development resources were created to help volunteers learn more about facilitating breastfeeding education classes and how to become involved
- 11 issues of *Talkabout*, ABA's internal newsletter and professional development publication were published
- live sessions were delivered to breastfeeding counsellors and educators on how to volunteer on ABA's LiveChat.



Professional development for trainers and assessors in Melbourne, April 2026

Thank you

Corporate and pro bono partners

ABA is grateful to the partners and sponsors who share our commitment to supporting mothers, parents and families across Australia. All ABA partners are proudly WHO-Code-compliant and undergo an evidence-based assessment.

We value our continued collaboration with Lacevo as a Platinum Partner and Gold Health Professional Seminar sponsor. Lacevo's hands-free, untethered, in-bra breast pump supports busy mothers on the move and is proudly endorsed by ABA.

We are deeply grateful to Russell Kennedy Lawyers for providing pro bono legal counsel that strengthened ABA's important contribution to the WHO Code consultation this year.

We acknowledge the partners who supported ABA's 2026 Health Professional Seminar series: Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, FARE (Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education), our Platinum Partner; Lacevo, our Gold Sponsor; NSW Health, our online program and Sydney morning tea partner; and Perinatal Professionals Hub. Their generous contributions helped ABA deliver accessible, evidence-based professional education to health professionals across Australia.

Our ongoing collaboration with the Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo enabled ABA to reach more than 87,700 attendees across most state capital cities, Canberra and the Gold Coast. Through these expos, ABA connected directly with just over 5000 mothers, parents and families during the year. We thank Nala and Everform for supporting ABA's presence at these expos throughout the year and thank Lacevo for generously providing breast pumps as prizes for ABA expo attendees.

Our longest donation partner, Petals Florist Network, contributes 10% of flower purchases, via the ABA website, and we recognise Ameda's generous in-kind donation of breast pumps, which helps women across Australia access affordable pump hire when they need it.

We thank Launtel for providing essential infrastructure for the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat systems, helping ABA's largely remote volunteer workforce deliver trusted support across Australia.

Images

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

Rebekka Mitchell, page 11
Leah Moore Photography, page 26 (left)
Kellee Ives, page 37 and page 39 (two at top right)
Joni Simone Photography, page 38
Paula Banda, page 39 (bottom right)

Appeals

ABA has two national fundraisers each year, the Festive Appeal and Tax Appeal. In 2025–26 these appeals performed well despite a challenging economic climate.

Festive Appeal 2025

The theme for ABA's 2025 Festive Appeal was *Moments that matter – celebrating the small wins*.

This campaign focused on celebrating the everyday victories that define so many breastfeeding journeys.

Our campaign showcased a few new mums who turned to ABA for breastfeeding support.

The appeal raised $15,000 and every single donation makes a real difference to breastfeeding mums and new parents.

Tax Appeal 2026

ABA's Tax Appeal theme was *Give a gift that lasts a lifetime*. We had a target of $40,000 reflecting our commitment to help us continue our vital work with mums into the future.
Our appeal focused on mothers who turned to ABA local groups, the National Breastfeeding Helpline or website to assist them with community and breastfeeding issues.

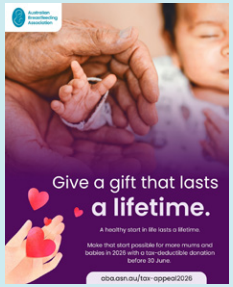
Our Tax Appeal raised just over $60,000.

All these donations will go towards providing resources to support breastfeeding, further development of eLearning modules such as *The first 72 hours* and running local meet-ups.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we rely on the generosity of donors who share our goals and vision. We cannot achieve what we do in the community without their generous support and are very grateful. Thank you.









Donors

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

Andrew Wandel, Angela Hewson, Ann Nicholson, Anna Schell, Anna Womersley, Beverley Jan, Beverley Uhe, Bindi Borg, Brooke Wade, Bruce Hampton, Carolyn Cutten, Catherine Barry, Catherine Bowman, Catherine Matthews, Cathy Xu, Charles Lawson, Clare Frew, Edward Paull, Elizabeth Minogue, Graeme West, Gregory Burton SC, Heather Bryde, Heather Watt, Heidi Harwood, Helen Henry, Helen Oakes, Helen Wilson, Jan Oatway, Jean Putland, Jenny Davies, Joanne Smith, John Cooper, Joy Hounslow, Joy Spark, Judith Manahan, Julie Holschier, Kathryn Dan-U'Ren, Kristina Mudge, Kylie Waring, Lisa Sherwood, Louise Cunningham, Margaret Curnow, Maria Rosa Papalia, Mary Webb, Michael McCormack, Mitchell Tap, Naomi Cuthbert, Nicole Lugg, Pam Hassett, Penny Zucchi, Ray Kerr, Rebecca Cassidy, Robin McHugh, Rosemary Pollock, Roslyn Miles, Ruth Thomas, Sally Carratt, Sandra Cuthbert, Sue McLeod, Sue Robinson, Susan Gillard, Suzanne Groom, Tamasine Dale, Tracy Raymond, Wendy Nicholson.

Australian Breastfeeding Association