

## Media Statement – 13 April 2014

### Australian Breastfeeding Association completes trial of innovative new tool Google Glass

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) has completed a trial project with technology company Small World utilising wearable computer Google Glass to support mothers with breastfeeding.

ABA was excited to be a part of the Google Glass trial in its golden jubilee year as it provided an opportunity to explore a new approach to supporting mothers. Although about 96% of Australian women start breastfeeding soon after birth, many decide to stop before their baby is 12 weeks old due to difficulties and not receiving the right support at the right time.

The ABA currently helps more than 80,000 mothers each year through a variety of online and offline means; including face-to-face local support groups, a comprehensive website, email counselling, forums, social media pages and the National Breastfeeding Helpline. The Breastfeeding Helpline receives an average of 7000 calls per month which are answered by 450+ trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors.

In the Google Glass trial the device's camera was used to film babies as they were breastfeeding. Mothers in the trial were able to contact an ABA breastfeeding counsellor through the Google Glass device and this vision of their babies was streamed to the counsellor so they could see exactly what the mums see. This assisted the counsellor to provide support and suggestions to improve the mum's breastfeeding situation.

Fifteen breastfeeding counsellors volunteered for the trial, providing approximately 360 hours of volunteer time to be available to the five mothers trialling Google Glass. The new technology did have a few hiccups such as low battery life, but it was successful in helping the counselling process where needed.

When surveyed, both the breastfeeding counsellors and mothers said the technology was particularly useful when there was an issue where it helped if the counsellor could observe the baby during a breastfeed. A good example is when the mum was having difficulty attaching her baby to the breast.

The mothers said that during the six week trial they also accessed breastfeeding support from the trial's online breastfeeding portal (containing commonly used ABA information), the ABA website, friends and family, the Breastfeeding Helpline and medical professionals such as a Lactation Consultant.

This shows having a variety of options works well for mothers so they can choose the right avenue depending on their current needs.

ABA plans to further explore the concept of video call/real time chat options to provide breastfeeding support while continuing to provide its current range of services. Google Glass is not currently available for sale in Australia.

**ENDS.**

#### **Further information:**

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**Websites:**

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/breastfeeding-and-google-glass-application-trial>

<http://breastfeeding.smallworldsocial.com/>

**About the Australian Breastfeeding Association**

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is Australia's largest breastfeeding information and support service, providing assistance to more than 80,000 mothers each year. ABA also provides up-to-date information and continuing education for thousands of health professionals working with mothers and babies. It is our vision that breastfeeding is recognised as important by all Australians and is culturally normal. As Australia's leading authority on breastfeeding, we support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society.

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