



**Australian
Breastfeeding
Association**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government abandons the most vulnerable

The government announced today that it will scrap the only protective mechanism for mothers in Australia against the sometimes misleading claims of formula companies. The Advisory Panel on the Marketing of Infant Formula (APMAIF) is among a raft of advisory panels to be abolished by the Abbott government. This panel oversees the MAIF Agreement, which monitors the marketing practices of formula companies.

The President of the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA), Rachel Fuller said today 'reducing bureaucracy is one thing, but failing to protect mothers when they are most vulnerable to formula marketing hype is something else, it's irresponsible. While the MAIF agreement did not provide the maximum level of protection available, it at least provided some safeguard for parents of young children when choosing an infant formula'.

A joint parliamentary inquiry had previously recommended increasing not decreasing protection for mothers using infant formula, by instead introducing legislation based on the full World Health Organization (WHO) Code. This Code, designed to prevent exploitation through formula marketing, is much more comprehensive than the MAIF Agreement and therefore offers greater protection. Australia was one of the first signatories to that code yet has never implemented it.

'This is a major backward step and potentially exposes mothers who use formula to unethical marketing practices, with no accountability' said Ms Fuller.

No replacement for APMAIF has been announced. Ms Fuller added, 'we implore the government to rethink its stance on the protective measures it puts in place for the vulnerable in our community. Mothers who are choosing an infant formula need to make an informed decision based on information they can trust, and that isn't driven by the profit motive and unfettered marketing hype of the formula companies'.

Ends.

Media enquiries:

Nicole Bridges	0413 726 513
Louise Duursma	0411 872 334
Rachel Fuller	0427 396 940

National Head Office
1818-1822 Malvern Rd
East Malvern VIC 3145

PO Box 4000
Glen Iris VIC 3146

Telephone: 03 9885 0855
Facsimile: 03 9885 0866

info@breastfeeding.asn.au
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
ABN 64 005 081 523

Breastfeeding Helpline
1800 mum 2 mum
(1800 686 268)

Retail Subsidiary
www.mothersdirect.com.au