

Media Statement

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**Australian
Breastfeeding
Association**

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The issue of immunisation attracts a variety of views amongst the Australian population.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) does not elevate, nor promote one view above another.

Our Breastfeeding Position Statement says: Breastfeeding alone does not provide sufficient immunity to childhood diseases and parents need to seek appropriate guidance on immunisation from their medical advisers.

The position statement refers parents to their medical advisor as the Australian Breastfeeding Association (and its volunteers) does not give medical advice. Our volunteers are trained to give mother-to-mother support and suggestions to assist mothers to breastfeed their babies.

Our volunteers are required to comply with our Code of Ethics and Constitution as well as our policies and procedures. We require, and expect, our volunteers to meet the requirements of external stakeholders with whom they interact.

In response to recent media activity regarding the ABA Orange group, the Australian Breastfeeding Association understands that some local health districts are implementing a requirement for volunteers visiting a Department of Health facility in NSW to demonstrate, amongst other things, a current record of vaccination. Volunteers in the Orange group have been working with their local hospital to ensure volunteers meet these compliance requirements. The Association has responded to a complaint made against a volunteer in NSW and advises this volunteer has opted to no longer represent the Association in a volunteer capacity in NSW Ministry of Health facilities. This volunteer has complied with the requirements set out by the NSW Ministry of Health and at no stage has been in breach of these requirements once advised of the change.

The immunisation status of our volunteers and their children is a complex issue and there are a number of factors our organisation needs to consider in relation to this issue and are awaiting further clarification from our advisors.

At a minimum, we feel it is reasonable our volunteers must comply with the policies of any facility they visit in their capacity as a representative of the Australian Breastfeeding Association. Any volunteer who is not willing to comply with these requirements is unable to represent the Association in these facilities.

The Board of Directors of the Australian Breastfeeding Association is considering a draft policy on immunisation at its next board meeting.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association has a complaints handling procedure and investigates each issue thoroughly.

Media Enquiries:

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