

Embargoed for release: 1 Aug 2015



**Australian
Breastfeeding
Association**

ABN: 64 005 081 523
RTO: 21659

The Australian Breastfeeding Association calls on more workplaces to become breastfeeding friendly.

World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated annually around the world from 1 –7 August. It celebrates the signing of the Innocenti Declaration, which calls for government policymakers and international organisations to promote, protect and support breastfeeding. The theme for 2015 is *Breastfeeding and Work: Let's make it work*.

During World Breastfeeding Week, the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is calling on more Australian workplaces to adopt breastfeeding friendly practices.

'Breastfeeding is important — for babies, for their mothers and for all Australians. The workplace can be a barrier for some women to continue breastfeeding', said Rebecca Naylor, CEO of the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

Return to work is the 4th highest reason for mothers of infants 7-12 months not continuing to breastfeed. Public health recommendations on breastfeeding recommend that a baby receives only his mother's milk for 6 months and continues breastfeeding to at least 12 months. Almost 1 in 4 mums return to work in the first 6 months.

Research shows that in workplaces where mothers knew there was a breastfeeding policy, 61% were exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months. However, in workplaces where employees were unsure or knew there was no such policy, only 34% were exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months.

'The needs of breastfeeding women in the workplace are really quite minimal and short lived. However, they can have a big impact. The provision of a clean, private space to breastfeed or express their milk and supportive work practices such a lactation breaks will enable more women to breastfeed their infants according to current health recommendations after their return to work.'

'Research shows that employees with breastfeeding infants take less time off work to care for sick infants than their non-breastfed counterparts. Studies have found that women who are supported in breastfeeding their babies by their employers are more likely to return to work after maternity leave.'

The Australian Breastfeeding Association runs an accreditation program for businesses who wish to support breastfeeding mothers by becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

'Companies who provide support for breastfeeding have consistently reported improved morale, better satisfaction and higher productivity. Everyone wins when a workplace becomes breastfeeding friendly.'

ENDS

For more information, including case studies please contact:

Rebecca Naylor, Chief Executive Officer 03 9885 0855

Links:

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/workplace>

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. ABA's Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace program works with business to remove the workplace as a barrier to continued breastfeeding. 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.