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National Breastfeeding Strategy

Summary Report

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care – March 2001



Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care

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FOREWORD



Breastfeeding is an important part of maternal and infant health and an important public health issue. As a doctor and a father I have always had a

keen interest in how we can continue to promote and support breastfeeding in Australia. In 1996, soon after coming to office, I was able to act on this interest by launching the National Breastfeeding Strategy.

The National Breastfeeding Strategy has targeted a wide variety of groups including health professionals; the general community; specific sub-groups of communities as well as health and other related organisations. Educating Australian families, including fathers and employers about breastfeeding issues has also been a significant part of the Strategy's achievements.

The Strategy has enabled the production of practical resources that will be useful for many years to come.

The accounts contained in this Summary Report should speak to that. I also believe that this Strategy enhances and complements other maternal and child health initiatives currently under way such as the National Child Nutrition Program that has funded community groups around the country to target children's health and wellbeing through nutrition-related initiatives at the community-level.

While much has been achieved we must continue to be diligent in protecting and supporting this important part of a young Australian's upbringing. I trust that the achievements and successes of the National Breastfeeding Strategy will assist these ongoing efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Wooldridge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Dr Michael Wooldridge

INTRODUCTION

The National Breastfeeding Strategy was announced by the Commonwealth Government in the 1996–97 Federal Budget as part of its *Health Throughout Life* policy statement (Department of Health and Family Services, 1996). *Health Throughout Life* introduced a range of new public health measures in the areas of maternal and child health, childhood immunisation, diabetes, injury prevention, HIV/AIDS and the minimisation of the harm from drug abuse.

The Budget package lifted the profile of public health as a national priority and reflects the Government's commitment to provide a more creative and flexible public health approach to meet the changing needs of individuals and the Australian community. These new initiatives recognise the great potential of public health: that relatively small outlays on prevention and early intervention can lead to many millions in savings to health care dollars in the future. As a result, the \$2 million National Breastfeeding Strategy is a key component.

The aim of this report is to provide a summary of all the projects funded under the National Breastfeeding Strategy. It is targeted to all health professionals, health and community organisations and the general public. The report can be used as a resource for obtaining further information on

breastfeeding initiatives undertaken by the Commonwealth.

This report was prepared by the Primary Prevention Section, Primary Prevention and Early Detection Branch of the Population Health Division, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. The report was compiled from information obtained in written reports received from the individuals/organisations who were contracted by the Department to do the projects as well as from verbal consultations and references to corporate documents held within the Department of Health and Aged Care.

The report focuses on:

- the objectives of each project;
- how each project achieved its objectives;
- resources produced, to whom they were disseminated and details on where to obtain further copies of the resources; and
- achievements of the project, particularly relating them to the overall aim of the National Breastfeeding Strategy.

Unless otherwise indicated, all resources produced under the National Breastfeeding Strategy can be found on the Department of Health and Aged Care website at:

www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/brfeed

BACKGROUND

Breastfeeding is one of the most important contributors to infant health. Breastfeeding provides a range of benefits for the infant's growth, immunity and development. In addition, breastfeeding improves maternal health and contributes economic benefits to the family, health care system and workplace.

The Commonwealth Government has demonstrated its support for maternal and child health in its policy statement *Health Throughout Life* (Department of Health and Family Services, 1996). Encouraging breastfeeding is a key component of this initiative. The approach of the National Breastfeeding Strategy is multi-faceted and includes: community and family education, education and skilling of health professionals, increasing hospital and community support for breastfeeding and improving the capacity to monitor trends in breastfeeding by using consistent measurement tools.

In addition to the National Breastfeeding Strategy, the Commonwealth has a number of other strategies to encourage and protect breastfeeding:

- development and dissemination of the *Infant feeding guidelines for health workers* (NHMRC, 1996) with the aim of assisting health workers to promote, encourage and support breastfeeding in a consistent way;
- development and dissemination of the *Dietary Guidelines for Australians* (NHMRC, 1991) with the message to encourage and support breastfeeding highlighted as being important to all Australians in recognition of its nutritional, health, social and economic benefits to the community;





- development and dissemination of the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents* (NHMRC, 1995) with the message to encourage and support breastfeeding highlighted as the most important guideline;
- facilitation of a self-regulatory model for implementation of the World Health Organisation's *International Code of Marketing Breast Milk Substitutes* (WHO Code) in the 1990's. The resulting voluntary agreement is the 1992 *Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas: Manufacturers and Importers Agreement* (MAIF Agreement). This Agreement covers the marketing of infant formula by manufacturers;
- allocation by the Commonwealth to a National Child Nutrition Program totalling \$15 million — the Program will fund community-level projects to improve the diet and eating habits of young children from the pre-natal stage through to the primary school years; and
- funding of \$50,000 per annum for the three years commencing 1998–99 has been allocated to the Nursing Mother's Association of Australia to assist its ongoing work of supporting breastfeeding in the community.



PROJECT 1 INDIGENOUS HEALTH SERVICE

**OFFICE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH (OATSIH)
FEBRUARY 1996 – DECEMBER 1998**

OBJECTIVES

To conduct an audit of current training in breastfeeding support and infant nutrition and review current interventions and best practice.

PROJECT 1A AUDIT OF CURRENT TRAINING AND BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT AND INFANT NUTRITION



METHOD

The Department of Health and Aged Care commissioned the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) to undertake this project. This audit was conducted at the same time, and in conjunction with, a review of current interventions and identification of best practice currently used by Aboriginal health service providers in promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate infant nutrition.

The project involved identifying a range of community-based Indigenous health workers, identifying the range of courses offered and focusing on the components of the training course which covered breastfeeding support and infant nutrition.

Samples of training and education facilities were selected to maximise representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker programs and cover a broad range of other professions.

The overall approach was a call for public submissions to the project, and special invitations to participate in the audit for selected training institutions. Indigenous advisers to the project were involved in commenting on research instruments to request information.

This resource can be downloaded from the OATSIH website:
www.health.gov.au/oatsih/pubs/index.htm



RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Audit of current training and breastfeeding support and infant nutrition—for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and other health professionals providing health care to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women*

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Assessing present curricula to ascertain whether current training is sufficient in content and depth; and
- ▶ Assessing the need for further curriculum or resource development to better assist training in breastfeeding support and appropriate infant nutrition.

PROJECT 1B REVIEW OF CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICE CURRENTLY USED

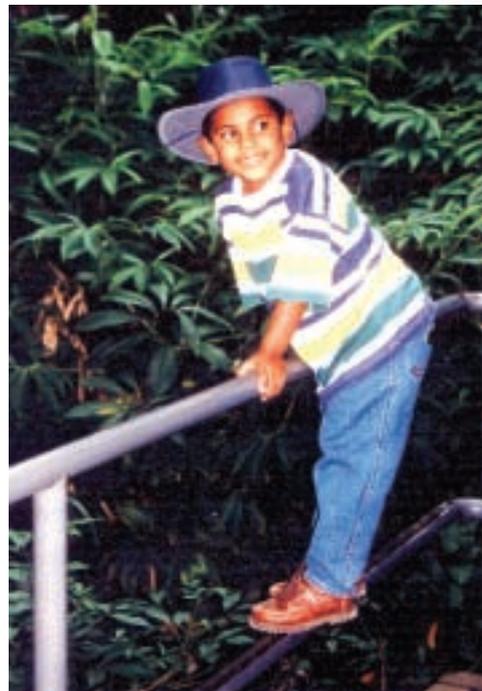
METHOD

The Department of Health and Aged Care commissioned the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) to undertake this project. The review was conducted at the same time, and in conjunction with, the audit (detailed earlier).

The major aim of the project was to review current interventions and identify

best practice which are currently used by community based Aboriginal health service providers in promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate infant nutrition.

The approach for the review took into account the culturally valid understandings of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in relation to health and health care especially relating to infant nutrition. Background information was collated using a literature search, a scan of policy documents and other relevant papers. A semi-structured guide for telephone interviews and an intervention assessment tool enabled data to be collated and analysed.





The project team developed appropriate research tools and placed calls for contributions nationally, including Indigenous media, as well as at major conferences. Relevant contact lists were obtained from the Commonwealth and State Governments, Indigenous organisations and other sources. Health care providers were identified by the Indigenous advisers to the project and included services such as hospitals, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, community health services, GP practices, obstetric and paediatric services, child care centres, health promotion officers and pharmacies. All State and Territory Health Departments and each region of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) were selected to participate in the review. Community based non-government organisations were drawn from a list provided by the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia (NMAA).

In addition, invitations to contribute to the review were mailed out to specific organisations. The mail-out resulted in a comprehensive coverage on the basis of geographic setting, service type and catchment target groups.

These resources can be downloaded from the OATSIH website:
www.health.gov.au/oatsih/pubs/index.htm

RESOURCES PRODUCED

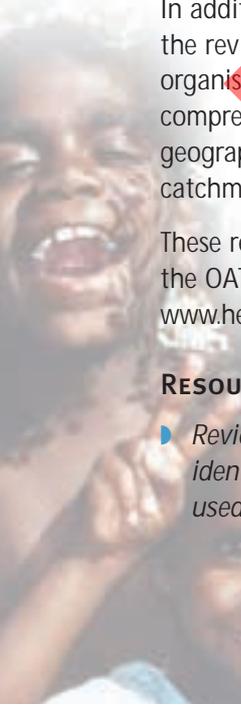
- ▶ *Review of current interventions and identification of best practice currently used—by community based Aboriginal*

and Torres Strait Islander health service providers in promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate infant nutrition

- ▶ *Stories and ideas from around Australia – Giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies the best start in life: supporting breastfeeding and good food choices for infants*

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Identifying problems and issues relating to effective breastfeeding intervention strategies currently in existence;
- ▶ Identifying best practice currently in existence and detailing these in *Stories and ideas from around Australia*; and
- ▶ Providing recommendations to develop and sustain an environment which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers to breastfeed and to provide appropriate food for their babies.



PROJECT 2 NATURALLY: THE FACTS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
AGED CARE
DECEMBER 1996 – MAY 1997**

OBJECTIVES

To develop a companion document to the NHMRC's *Infant feeding guidelines for health workers* in order to assist health workers and GPs in providing consistent and practical breastfeeding advice to the public.

METHOD

This document was developed by the Department of Health and Aged Care and contains 20 fact sheets derived from the 1996 National Health and Medical Research Council's *Infant feeding guidelines for health workers*. In addition to the fact sheets, there is a booklet containing the World Health Organisation's *International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes* with an interpretation of the WHO Code for health workers in Australia.

The fact sheets have been developed as a practical tool for use during health professional/GP consultations with mothers. They cover practical advice for the establishment of breastfeeding and suggestions for overcoming difficulties which may arise during the initial breastfeeding period.

The resource was distributed as part of a collaborative project between the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia (NMAA) to increase breastfeeding rates in Australia by improving the breastfeeding knowledge of general practitioners, and the management of breastfeeding problems encountered by them. The fact sheets were disseminated to GPs, nurses, midwives and other health professionals.

Hard copies of this resource is available from AusInfo:

AusInfo
GPO Box 84
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Phone: 132 447
Fax: 02-6295 4888
e-mail: teleinfo@dofa.gov.au

This resource can also be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- *Naturally – the facts about breastfeeding*

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Producing high quality, practical fact sheets on breastfeeding information for health professionals; and
- Reinforcing consistent and practical breastfeeding information to health professionals.



PROJECT 3 NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL (QIC);
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL ON HEALTHCARE
STANDARDS (ACHS);
AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES INC
(ACMI)**

SEPTEMBER 1997 – DECEMBER 1998

OBJECTIVES

To develop a national, outcome-focused standards module for antenatal and postnatal care which addresses the continuum of care from the hospital to community health care settings, taking into account inter-sectoral linkages.

METHOD

The project was conducted by a consortium consisting of The Quality Improvement Council, The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and the Australian College of Midwives Incorporated.

The development of the draft module and guidelines was done in consultation with the project's expert National Reference Committee. Consultations were held with service providers such as hospitals and community health centres, consumers and other relevant stakeholders. The first drafts of the resources were sent to over 900 individuals and organisations. The final versions of the resources were provided to the expert National Reference Committee for approval before publication.

Maternal and child health facilities throughout Australia were invited to nominate for selection as pilot sites to test the resources before they were disseminated nationally. The decision to include a facility for the pilot was based on having sites in different states/territories and including sites with differing characteristics including their function, size, and urban/rural location. Three sites piloted the ACHS Guidelines and three sites piloted the QIC Module. An evaluation of the pilot was conducted and the outcome of this evaluation assisted in the development of the final version of the resources.

A pamphlet was produced which was sent to all participants involved in the development of the standards and





relevant agencies providing maternal and child health services. The QIC and the ACHS Board endorsed the module and guidelines. These resources were then publicised through those organisations' journals, newsletters and training programs.

Hard copies of the ACHS Guidelines for Maternal and Infant Care Services can be obtained from:

Australian Council on Healthcare Standards
5 Macarthur Street
ULTIMO NSW 2007
Ph: (02) 9281 9955
Fax: (02) 9211 9633
e-mail: achs@achs.org.au

Hard copies of the QIC Maternal and Infant Care Services module can be obtained from:

Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation
Australian Institute for Primary Care
5th Floor
Health Science Building 2
Latrobe University
BUNDOORA VIC 3086
Ph: (03) 9479 3700
Fax: (03) 9479 5977
e-mail: qic@latrobe.edu.au

These resources can also be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Maternal and Infant Care Services Module*
- ▶ *Guidelines for Maternal and Infant Care Services*
- ▶ *Maternal and Infant Care Services Module – Notes and Examples of Current Accepted Practice*

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Developing standards which can be integrated into existing accreditation programs and review processes;
- ▶ Providing a useful accreditation framework for a variety of services, whether community or hospital based; and
- ▶ Applying the standards to a wide range of service delivery including antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care as well as infant care up to the age of 12 months.



PROJECT 4 NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING EDUCATION/PROMOTION FOR FAMILIES

NURSING MOTHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
OCTOBER 1997 – DECEMBER 1998

OBJECTIVES

To produce and distribute a variety of resources targeting Australian families, including those from rural and remote areas, as well as ethnic, cultural and disadvantaged socioeconomic groups in Australia.

METHOD

Draft materials produced were extensively tested on all target groups before being finalised.

Once the material was finalised, extensive publicity was undertaken. The material was publicly launched and the NMAA used its networks both nationally and locally to stimulate public awareness of the project. Publicity was also generated through newsletters, radio interviews, press releases, conferences and professional journals.

The material was widely distributed geographically and targeted specific outlets to ensure that previously hard-to-reach families were accessed. The material was distributed through at least 5,712 outlets Australia-wide. Distribution included local NMAA groups, health professionals, GP surgeries, child health centres, community agencies, multi-





cultural organisations, educational institutions, alternative health practitioners, retail and food outlets, and Aboriginal health workers. Individual requests for material were generated by publicity around the project.

Hard copies of the material are available from the NMAA:

Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia
National Headquarters
PO Box 4000
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146
Ph: (03) 9885 0855
Fax: (03) 9885 0866
e-mail: nursingm@nmaa.asn.au

These resources can also be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ 2 series of tip cards in Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Turkish and Spanish
- ▶ *You can Breastfeed Your Baby* booklet for those with lower literacy
- ▶ *Let's give our Baby the Best* comic booklet aimed at young parents
- ▶ 2 posters with captions *Mothers Milk perfect anytime anywhere*

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- ▶ Raising public awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding as well as providing information on how to establish and sustain breastfeeding

with effective support, particularly in the target groups;

- ▶ Producing high quality resources targeted at Australian families, particularly sub-groups of the population;
- ▶ Extending and strengthening networks with existing health education delivery and target groups to ensure effective distribution and sustainability of the resources; and
- ▶ Strengthening and establishing networks with all forms of breastfeeding educators and community workers.



PROJECT 5 EMPLOYER SUPPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF WORKPLACE
RELATIONS AND SMALL BUSINESS
DECEMBER 1997 – APRIL 1998**

OBJECTIVES

To produce an insert for the *Work and Family* newsletter of the Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business on the subject of supportive workplace initiatives for women who are breastfeeding.

METHOD

The Department of Health and Aged Care and the Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business collaborated to produce a newsletter insert on supportive workplace initiatives for breastfeeding women.

The insert is a four page feature based on the Work and Family Unit's *Guide to Combining Breastfeeding and Work* (Department of Industrial Relations, 1996).

The insert was included in the *Work and Family* newsletter produced by the Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business and was distributed nationally to approximately 3,000 employers and other interested persons/organisations.

The insert can be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Combining Breastfeeding and employment* insert for the *Work and Family* newsletter

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Promoting the health benefits to both mother and baby of the continuation of breastfeeding after the mother's return to work, together with the benefits to employers;
- ▶ Outlining ways in which employers can support women employees to combine breastfeeding and paid employment;
- ▶ Providing examples of workplaces which support breastfeeding; and
- ▶ Promoting the availability of the Work and Family Unit's booklet, *Guide to Combining Breastfeeding and Work* (Department of Industrial Relations, 1996).



PROJECT 6 HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

NURSING MOTHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

MAY 1998 – JANUARY 1999

OBJECTIVES

Produce an education kit targeting community-based health professionals working with breastfeeding families as well as continuing education for health professional groups. Dissemination included all practising GPs, paediatricians, baby health nurses and pharmacists.

METHOD

Draft materials and a feedback questionnaire were sent to a sample of general practitioners, pharmacists, paediatricians, child health nurses and lactation specialists. The type of material

produced needed to be relevant and simple to use.

Once finalised, the resources were disseminated to:

- ▶ 23,300 general practitioners, pharmacists and child health nurses in Queensland and NSW
- ▶ 962 paediatricians
- ▶ 845 child health nurses across Australia

Hard copies of the material are available from the NMAA:

Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia
PO Box 4000
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146
Ph: (03) 9885 0855
Fax: (03) 9885 0866
e-mail: nursingm@nmaa.asn.au





These resources can also be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Best practice guide to common breastfeeding problems* – user-friendly guide for health professionals for the management of common breastfeeding problems
- ▶ *Lactation Resource Directory* – a guide to further breastfeeding information and resources
- ▶ *Continuous Home Evaluation of Clinical Knowledge (CHECK)* module
- ▶ *Continuing Education for Breastfeeding for Pharmacists* module
- ▶ *Continuing Education for Breastfeeding for Child Health Nurses* module
- ▶ *Continuing Education for Breastfeeding for Pharmacy Assistants* module

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Delivering high quality breastfeeding educational resources to 30,000 Australian health professionals;
- ▶ Creating links between organisations involved with breastfeeding families;
- ▶ Sending a positive message to health professionals and the general public about breastfeeding; and
- ▶ Creating closer links between health professional associations with consumer-based associations.



PROJECT 7 ANTENATAL EDUCATION BREASTFEEDING PACKAGE



**THE FAMILY HEALTH COALITION,
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY
JUNE 1999 – SEPTEMBER 2000**

OBJECTIVES

To provide resources and information to antenatal educators and health professionals who inform and support women and men during the antenatal period.

To promote the use of educational resources that are based on recent biological and social research in breastfeeding and adult learning theory.

METHOD

A project team worked closely with an independent advisory committee to oversee the development of the material being produced.

The effectiveness of the resources was tested using focus groups. The focus groups comprised a diverse group of people, including specialist and adult educators; trained antenatal educators from a large maternity health care provider; and a disparate group of antenatal educators from three states/territories across Australia. Feedback from these focus groups assisted in the development of the final resources.

A package of the resources, which included the educators manual, video and poster, was sent to 2,500 antenatal educators (via national maternity services units and antenatal education organisations). The video and poster were distributed to obstetricians and gynaecologists (via the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists distribution list).

The resources are being updated regularly over the next five years and hard copies are available at cost price from:

The Centre for Family Health and Midwifery
University of Technology, Sydney
PO Box 123
BROADWAY NSW 2007
Ph: (02) 9514 2977
Fax: (02) 9514 1678



These resources can also be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Breastfeeding and you: A handbook for antenatal educators* – educational strategies, tools and lesson plans including materials and strategies for use with people of non-English speaking backgrounds
- ▶ *Breastfeeding and you: preparing the way – a video for pregnant women and their families* – to promote the importance of social, emotional and relationship issues in breastfeeding

- ▶ *Breastfeeding and you: preparing the way* poster – to accompany video for display in waiting rooms

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Delivering high quality breastfeeding resources and education to 3,000 antenatal educators and obstetricians; and
- ▶ Providing a mechanism to inform certain groups of the population of the benefits and importance of breastfeeding as well as raising awareness of other important breastfeeding issues.



PROJECT 8 COMBINING BREASTFEEDING AND PAID EMPLOYMENT



**LUMINIS PTY LTD, ADELAIDE
UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 1999 – OCTOBER 2000**

OBJECTIVES

To produce resources that:

Inform women from a variety of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds that:

- ▶ They can continue to breastfeed on returning to paid employment from maternity leave
- ▶ There are benefits to themselves and to their babies in continuing to breastfeed on return to paid employment after maternity leave
- ▶ There are steps they can take to maximise their success at combining breastfeeding and paid employment.

Inform employers and workplaces of:

- ▶ The benefits of supporting female employees who wish to continue breastfeeding their babies on returning to paid employment
- ▶ The various workplace practices that will support the continuation of breastfeeding among female employees.

METHOD

The booklet and poster were tested on focus groups consisting of working women and human resource managers.

Interviews were also conducted with interested individuals.

The kit was distributed to approximately 50,000 employers of medium to large businesses (ie: those with 20 or more employees). The kit was distributed via human resource managers, chief executive officers and union representatives. The focus of the distribution was to reach women from low socio-economic and diverse cultural backgrounds.

Industry sectors having the highest proportion of females in their workplace were identified using the Australian Bureau of Statistics data. The workplaces containing the highest number of women included the retail industry, health and community services, property and business services, education sectors and manufacturing.



Hard copies of these resources can be obtained from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care:

Department of Health and Aged Care
Population Health Division

Publications Distribution Officer

MDP 129

GPO Box 6848

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Ph: 1800 020 103

Fax: (02) 6289 8360

e-mail: phd.publications@health.gov.au

These resources can be downloaded from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Balancing breastfeeding and work* booklet — aimed at employers and employees on ways of continuing breastfeeding
- ▶ *Balancing breastfeeding and work* A4 poster — for displaying in workplaces as a general awareness-raising tool



- ▶ *Balancing breastfeeding and work* flier — featuring key issues on combining breastfeeding and paid work, also translated into Turkish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic and Spanish

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Delivering high quality breastfeeding resources to employers and employees of medium to large businesses across Australia;
- ▶ Sending a positive message to employers and employees about breastfeeding and returning to work;
- ▶ Encouraging employers to develop and implement policies and procedures for balancing breastfeeding and work; and
- ▶ Raising awareness in employers and employees of breastfeeding issues relating to returning to work.



PROJECT 9 MONITORING BREASTFEEDING: RECOMMENDED INDICATORS AND QUESTIONS FOR USE IN AUSTRALIA



A CONSORTIA OF QUEENSLAND,
SYDNEY AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITIES
OCTOBER 2000 – JUNE 2001

OBJECTIVES

To develop a background paper, with recommendations, reflecting the health rationale for monitoring selected aspects of breastfeeding and to evaluate current practice and national consensus on breastfeeding definitions, measurement, indicators and other data needs.

METHOD

A National Reference Group including scientists, researchers, users and suppliers of data and State health representatives who use and collect data on breastfeeding will be invited to participate in consultations. A small Technical Working Group has also been established to provide advice on the preparation of the background paper.

Data sources for the background paper will be obtained from National Health Surveys (conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics), State-based population surveys and other health department records.

A draft background paper will be produced and national consultation will be sought. Once a final draft has been endorsed by key stakeholders, the paper will be finalised and distributed to major stakeholders.

This resource will be available to download from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

RESOURCES PRODUCED

- ▶ *Background paper: towards development of a national system for monitoring breastfeeding in populations*

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Outlining the range of information about breastfeeding that Australian policy makers require from a monitoring system, and the purposes for which this information will be used;
- ▶ Providing the health rationale for monitoring selected aspects of breastfeeding;
- ▶ Summarising information about breastfeeding data currently available and routinely collected, analysing the extent to which current information meets users' needs; and
- ▶ Recommending actions to improve measurement instruments currently used to monitor breastfeeding.



CONCLUSION

The National Breastfeeding Strategy has initiated and supported a number of important activities to promote and protect breastfeeding in Australia. The resources which have been produced as a result of the Strategy have been designed to be relevant over many years and will provide valuable information to future mothers and their families. Due to the Strategy's multi-faceted approach, greater coverage of important breastfeeding issues has been achieved.

The Strategy also complements other breastfeeding activities undertaken by the Commonwealth Government; this, together with other child and family health initiatives, will ensure that the promotion and protection of breastfeeding in Australia will continue.

Photo courtesy of NMAA, photographer, Heather Snow



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RESCINDED