



Media Release

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Are Norwegian breasts better than Australian breasts?

Whether they look better in a bikini is debatable. However, when it comes to their practical use, Norwegian breasts are beating Australian ones hands down. Over 90% of Norwegian mothers breastfeed their babies at 3 months of age, but only 64% of Australians do so.

With World Breastfeeding Week being celebrated in over 120 countries around the world from 1–7 August the question is being asked: 'Are our Australian breasts failing us?'

Absolutely not, according to the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA). Nearly 90% of Australian mothers choose to breastfeed. However, large numbers give up, not through lack of trying, but through lack of help.

'Mothers (and their breasts!) do not fail to breastfeed. Our society fails to help them do it', said Margaret Grove, ABA President. 'Biologically all mothers have the same ability to breastfeed. The fundamental difference between ourselves and countries like Norway is the level of support breastfeeding mothers receive.'

In Norway there is an active government program to mobilise community awareness and practical support for mothers. Healthcare workers are well-trained in breastfeeding management, mothers can access 42 weeks paid maternity leave, advertising of infant formula is banned, most babies are born in breastfeeding-friendly accredited maternity wards and breastfeeding in public is seen as normal.

The World Breastfeeding Week theme is '**Mother Support: Everyone Wins!**'

'When a mother is supported and able to breastfeed everyone wins — the mother, the baby, the family, the health system and the environment', said Ms Grove. 'Support can be at an individual level or through such programs as *Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation* or becoming a *Breastfeeding Welcome Here* venue. People can visit www.breastfeeding.asn.au for ideas.'

The Australian Breastfeeding Association is one organisation standing up and helping mothers. It provides 7-day telephone Helplines in each state, run by volunteer mothers trained as breastfeeding counsellors.

The federal government is also standing up to be counted, announcing recently it will fund the expansion of the ABA state Helplines to a national toll free service.

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