

Annual report

2023-24



1964 
2024 

Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

*celebrating 60 years of
trusted breastfeeding support*

Our Impact 2023-24

210k+
families reached

2
million
website users



1426
parents attended
a local or online
breastfeeding
education class

132
Accredited
Breastfeeding
Friendly
Workplaces

15k+
health professionals
connected with ABA

12,000
new mum2mum
app downloads

125
ABA local groups



Our Impact 2023-24 *continued*

52,392

calls received by
ABA's National
Breastfeeding
Helpline

5216

'chats' received
by ABA's real-time
LiveChat service

712

fully qualified
volunteer
breastfeeding
counsellors and
educators

25,200

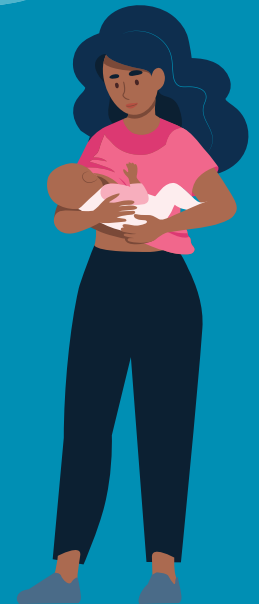
ABA professional
website users

173

trainee volunteer
breastfeeding
counsellors and
educators

1459

health
professionals
engaged in ongoing
education



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President's report

It has been another exciting year for the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA). The ABA Board, together with Executive Officer Victoria Marshall-Cerins, has overseen new and ongoing projects so we can continue to support breastfeeding as well as ensure the future of ABA.

2024 is the Association's 60th anniversary year. We are so proud of the practical mother-to-mother support ABA has provided for over 60 years. Today, we provide continuing education for health care workers, and support hundreds of thousands of families each year with up-to-date, evidence-based information. The Association also works to affect policy and societal change to make it easier for mothers to successfully breastfeed for as long as they choose.

Our 60th anniversary led us to reflect on how the Association has continually adapted to meet changing needs of mothers and families over time. We recognise our inspiring founders Mary Paton, AM, Jan Barry, Glenise Francis, Pat Paterson, Pauline Pick and Susan Woods. Their energy and foresight turned a vision into reality. Over the years our incredible volunteers, staff and members built a unique and remarkable organisation with an ongoing mission to support, educate and advocate for a breastfeeding inclusive society.

'Our 60th anniversary led us to reflect on how the Association has continually adapted to meet changing needs of mothers and families over time.'

In July 2023 we launched the Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Amongst key achievements in 2023-24 was the implementation of our new membership model. This approach takes into account who our members are and what they want from their membership. We have now established membership categories for parents, our supporters, and our volunteers. In making this change, we created a new free introductory membership for parents complementing our digital-first Virtual Village Plus offering for expectant parents and Virtual Village for parents of young children.

To ensure ongoing relevance, the ABA Local Groups 2030 project was launched to plan for future needs of families in local communities. Support continued for ABA local groups to re-engage with families in communities, and help address lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Virtual Village offerings expanded with the introduction of 'The first 72 hours' online learning module, new premium pregnancy content in ABA's mum2mum app and the launch of our new book *Breastfeeding: a practical guide* in digital and hard copy formats.

Over the last 12 months, our breastfeeding friendly programs which support breastfeeding in the community, were

'This year we continued our work to enhance diversity and inclusion within the Association by commencing work on a Reconciliation Action Plan.'

rejuvenated and brought under the banner of Breastfeeding Friendly Australia. We welcomed the new Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Service recognition program and the re-launched 'Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere' venue recognition and 'Baby Care Room' programs. Our well-established Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace accreditation program also underwent significant process improvements in 2023-24.

ABA continued its advocacy work throughout 2023-24. In September 2023, ABA held an in-person briefing for the Federal Government at Parliament House in Canberra, on the outcomes of the 2023 World Health Organization WHO Code Congress held in Geneva. Our ABA WHO Code Taskforce project team continued our advocacy for the full implementation of the WHO Code in Australia. One way the team did this was by resourcing interested stakeholders in making submissions to the ACCC's public consultation on the reauthorisation of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula (MAIF) Agreement.

In August 2023, we promoted World Breastfeeding Week with the theme, 'Enabling breastfeeding - making a difference for working parents' and in early 2024, ABA released our Paid Parental Leave position

President's report *continued*

statement. This outlined the need to fully support mothers with adequate paid leave, enabling them to adopt government recommendations for exclusive breastfeeding to 6 months and continued breastfeeding for at least 12 months.

This year we continued our work to enhance diversity and inclusion within the Association by commencing work on a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Our 'Community protection for Infants and young children in bushfire emergencies' project has also brought to fruition many new and timely resources.

ABA relies on federal government funding to operate our National Breastfeeding Helpline services, train volunteers to provide these services and provide continuing education to health professionals. As a requirement of our renewed funding to 30 June 2025, we supported an external evaluation of the service, with completion due in November 2024.

ABA's Board oversees strategic direction, finances, governance and risk management, and ensures the Association's operations are well-managed.

Our directors bring varied backgrounds and experience to their role and I thank them for their commitment and giving freely their

time and expertise. In November 2023, we welcomed Lynn Ng to the Board and Sally Eldridge and Louise Brown were re-elected. We sincerely thank directors Margaret Grove and Belinda Chambers, who stepped down this year for their contributions. In particular we recognise Margaret for her 6 years of dedicated work, including five as President, and acknowledge her amazing contribution guiding the Association through the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2024, she was awarded an Honorary Membership in recognition of her incredible impact during two different periods on the Board and as President, her extensive volunteer work in training and over 40 years as a breastfeeding counsellor. This year the Board also conferred Honorary Memberships to Karin Collinson, Elisabeth Wilson, Lee King, Pam Halnon and Wendy Burge; all extremely worthy recipients.

A huge thank you to everyone for their extraordinary contributions to the work of the Association throughout the year; our members, volunteers, staff, and supporters. We have an amazing national staff team, led ably by our Executive Officer Victoria Marshall-Cerins, and a small, committed team of staff across the branches supporting our dedicated branch presidents. Together we continue to make a difference!

Cate Uhe, ABA President



Board of directors 2023–24

Margaret Grove, National President

National President 2019 until 24 November 2023

Cate Uhe, National President

National President from 25 November 2023

Elected Director in 2019; re-elected 2022

Louise Brown, Vice President in 2023

Elected Director in 2020; re-elected 2023

Leila Forde, Honorary Secretary

Elected Director in 2021

Dominique Bougoure, Honorary Treasurer

Appointed Director in 2021; re-appointed 2023

Daile Kelleher, Company Secretary

Appointed Director in 2020; re-appointed in 2022 and 2024

Belinda Chambers

Elected Director in 2022; resigned 6 June 2024

Katie Cross

Elected Director in 2021

Sally Eldridge

Elected Director in 2020; re-elected in 2023

Genevieve Finey

Appointed Director in 2022; re-appointed 2024

Lynn Ng

Elected director from 24 November 2023

ABA is a key implementation partner to the *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond* (ANBS). Our 2023–24 annual report showcases the breadth and impact of ABA’s activities across all three priority areas of the strategy.

Executive Officer’s summary

The year 2023–24 was a significant one for the Association. On 13 February 2024 we commenced our year-long celebrations of ABA’s 60th birthday, on the 60th anniversary of the first meeting of the Nursing Mothers’ Association. The second half of the financial year saw many special occasions bringing together past members, volunteers and supporters in acknowledgement of NMAA/ ABA’s extraordinary contribution to women’s and family health in Australia.

Structural enablers

Community education and awareness

ABA’s national network of 125 local peer support groups are the local face of ABA. Their community education work serves to raise awareness of the needs of breastfeeding women. In 2023–24, groups delivered talks to community organisations, schools and childcare centres and offered ABA information sessions to local health professionals.

ABA’s trained volunteers also raised awareness of the Association’s supports to more than 6500 expectant parents at PBC Expos in Australia’s state capital cities.

Our two annual campaigns, World Breastfeeding Week (August) and National Mothering Week (May) highlighted the importance of breastfeeding-friendly environments for women combining

breastfeeding and work and celebrated ABA’s 60-year contribution across the generations.

Prevent inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes

ABA’s WHO Code Taskforce project’s bold goal is the legislation of the full provisions of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the WHO Code) into Australian law. In September 2023, ABA delivered a briefing on the global congress on the WHO Code at Parliament House, Canberra. This event launched a year of advocacy to prevent the reauthorisation of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas (MAIF) Agreement and ensure its replacement with legal measures that encompass the WHO Code.

Policy, advocacy and research

This year, the *Community Protection for Infants and Young Children in Emergencies* project delivered community stakeholder events in Eurobodalla and developed a comprehensive collection of resources for emergency relief workers and responders, pregnant women and caregivers in readiness for national distribution.

Settings that enable breastfeeding

Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI)

ABA’s new eLearning package, *Supporting the Breastfeeding Mother in the Neonatal Period* was launched this year. The package fulfils

health facilities’ compulsory staff education requirements for BFHI accreditation and has been well received by health services seeking re-accreditation.

Health professionals’ education and resources

ABA offers many education options for health professionals caring for women and babies. Our 2024 Health Professional Seminar series, *Breastfeeding: nurturing, nutrition* was offered again in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth with 780 in-person and online attendees.

In 2023–24, students in our Diploma of Breastfeeding Management course and standalone workshops came from a wide range of disciplines including midwifery, general practice, nursing, emergency and neonatal medicine. The course enables practitioners to build on breastfeeding management skills supporting best practice care of mothers and babies.

More than 554 learners completed 1376 different learning modules as a way of enhancing their professional development. That’s 2500 hours of professional development education! And we continued to provide health professionals with access to comprehensive, evidence-based resources and information via our dedicated health professionals website including our professional journal, *Breastfeeding Review*.

Executive Officer's summary *continued*

Breastfeeding-friendly environments

ABA's Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces (BFW) program saw significant growth in 2023-24, with the total number of accredited organisations rising to 131.

Our new recognition program for Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care providers was launched in August 2023 during World Breastfeeding Week. This program offers providers a range of resources, including an online module for educators to help support breastfeeding mothers and their children in care. So far, 39 services have signed up, with 120 more in the pipeline.

This year 285 venues joined the Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere (BWE) program including 79 libraries; a 96% increase on last year! In March 2024, we relaunched the updated Baby Care Room recognition program for community premises that provide suitable feeding and changing facilities for breastfeeding mums and caregivers. Twelve new baby care rooms signed up, giving them access to new resources.

Individual enablers

Universal breastfeeding education, support and information services

Throughout the year a remarkable team of 470 trained breastfeeding counsellors gave over 22,000 hours to support 52,392 calls to

ANBS priority areas

1 Structural enablers

- 1.1 Community education and awareness
- 1.2 Prevent inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes
- 1.3 Policy coordination, monitoring, research and evaluation
- 1.4 Dietary guidelines and growth charts

2 Settings that enable breastfeeding

- 2.1 Baby Friendly Health Initiative
- 2.2 Health professionals' education and training
- 2.3 Breastfeeding-friendly environments
- 2.4 Milk banks

3 Individual enablers

- 3.1 Universal access to breastfeeding support services
- 3.2 Breastfeeding support for priority groups

Source: *Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and Beyond* (ANBS)

ABA's 24/7 National Breastfeeding Helpline from families and health professionals. We extended our real-time messaging service LiveChat by 2 hours a week and took 5216 chats from parents seeking information, support and reassurance.

ABA local groups supported hundreds of expectant parents to prepare for breastfeeding and caring for a newborn, through in-person Breastfeeding Education Classes, delivering 98% customer satisfaction. ABA local groups also delivered more than 1571 community social activities and breastfeeding support events for parents and families and provided access to discounted breast pump hire.

The new release of the ABA mum2mum app grew throughout 2023-24 by just under 1000 new downloads per month. Parents saved



around 165,000 feeds during the year and the most common resource section accessed was for the 0-3 months age group.

Breastfeeding support for priority groups

ABA's Helpline services continued to reach priority groups, with 2.43% of contacts from First Nations families and more than 11% of contacts by Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) families in 2023-24.

This year through the support of NSW Health, ACT/NSW Branch updated the popular *How Breastfeeding Works* booklet and translated it into several languages. ABA was also asked by the Victorian Department of Health to deliver Community Breastfeeding Mentoring workshops to the Victorian CALD community and the health practitioners who support them.

Throughout this special year, the Association has continued to adapt to meet the changing needs of Australia's parents as they make informed decisions about how to feed their children. Our 2023-24 annual report showcases ABA's extraordinary, ongoing impact. I would like to particularly acknowledge the team of dedicated ABA volunteers who give of themselves and their time, to support the health and wellbeing of Australia's families and our communities 365 days a year. Thank you as always for all that you do.

Victoria Marshall-Cerins, Executive Officer

Structural enablers for breastfeeding

'Our 60th anniversary has been a time to reflect and acknowledge the changes in society that have impacted mothers, babies and families. For over 60 years ABA has provided practical mother-to-mother support backed up by up-to-date and evidence-based information to mums, parents and families. Six decades down the track, ABA remains an organisation with a diverse and dedicated team including hundreds of highly trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors, breastfeeding educators and office bearers.'

**Victoria Marshall-Cerins,
Executive Officer, Australian Breastfeeding Association**

Community education and awareness

ABA 60th anniversary celebrations

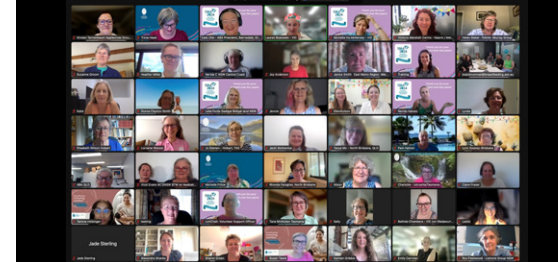
ABA's celebrations kicked off on the day of the 60th anniversary of the Association's first meeting, held in Melbourne on 13 February 1964. The occasion of NMAA/ABA's birthday launched our 12-month celebration of 60 years of trusted breastfeeding support.

The founder of the Australian Breastfeeding Association, Dr Mary Paton AM, had her first child in the 1960s and struggled to breastfeed. This made her think about how breastfeeding support could be given to new mothers. She founded the Nursing Mothers' Association (NMA) in Melbourne in 1964 with the aim to support and educate mothers on a mother-to-mother basis as well as educate the community.

In the early years, the Association talked to 300 sisters from baby health centres in Melbourne and arranged introductions to hospitals, medical and nursing schools, made mention of the Association in the Medical Journal of Australia and quietly spread the word in government circles.

The Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia name changed to Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) in 2001, retaining its core aims and clear purpose of being recognised as the authority for breastfeeding information and support in Australia.

ABA has adapted to community changes over time but still maintains the core principles of



ABA's nationwide 60th anniversary celebration on Zoom

the original Association. The recently launched Newborn Virtual Village program connects and supports new families from every corner of the country, and the ABA mum2mum app provides personalised, online breastfeeding information to mothers, parents and families at their fingertips.



Current and former branch presidents of WA Branch who attended a 60th anniversary high tea event at the University of Western Australia with over 90 past and present volunteers



Volunteers from Crystal Brook Group, SA, from left to right: Stephanie Rontaunay, Emma Kupsch, Bronny Perry, Chrissy Mackinnon and Bek Heard



Celebrations at Kingaroy Group, QLD



Attendees at Her Excellency, the Governor of NSW's Official Reception at NSW Government House

2024 saw the culmination of planning, coordination, and organisation by the 60th Anniversary Committee, resulting in many activities for our 60th anniversary. This included 60th logo and theme design; Endless Love™ Rose selection, naming, licensing and promotion (with 545 labels distributed); 60th anniversary group projects; *Essence* magazine articles; website content; sourcing talent to record stories for *Essence* and conference; volunteer surveys and communications across branches and events.

One of the highlights for the committee was Her Excellency, the Governor of NSW's Official Reception at NSW Government

House. There were 95 people in attendance, including founders Mary Paton and Glenise Francis, as well as current and former position holders from ACT, NSW, Victoria, and South Australia.

Formed in 2019 at the Board's invitation, a core group of interested and committed volunteers were later joined by representatives nominated by Branch Presidents: Debbie Court, Alison Newton (Sneddon), Nitty Brown, Kirsten Tannenbaum, Leanne Taylor, Laura Hughes, Amy Lantry, Jeanette Loxton, Charlotte Fielding, Kerrie Donlon, Kirsty-Anne Randell, Mary Peterson and Melanie Carter.

ABA is grateful for their contributions.

60th Anniversary Committee



Orange Group current and former volunteers celebrate. Back row left to right: Maria Ryan, current Group Leader; Fiona Lawless, Eve Blore and Helen Corben, former breastfeeding counsellors; and Debbie Mckeown, former volunteer helper. At front: Beryl Jackson, former breastfeeding counsellor

ABA's 60th anniversary celebration in Orange, NSW

In June, the ABA Orange Group in NSW held a celebration for ABA's 60th anniversary. Many volunteers, members and families attended to mark this milestone.

One group of attendees worked out that ABA has had a local group presence in Orange for over 54 years!

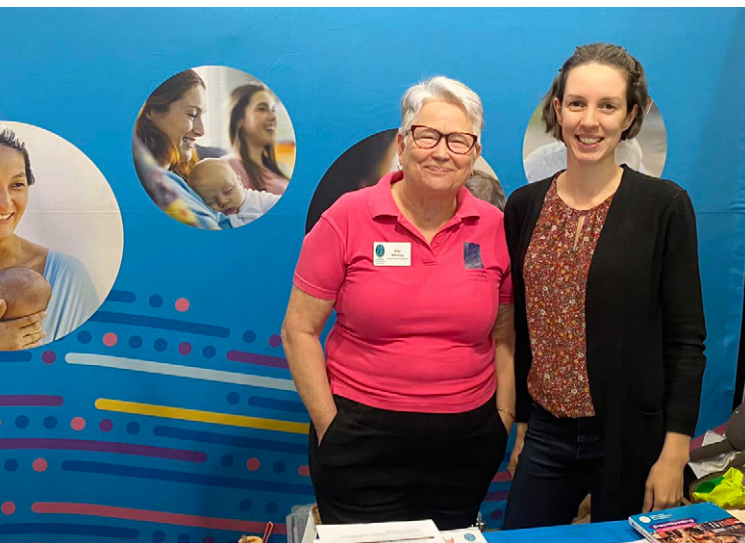
The ABA Orange Group continues to thrive with mums enjoying our face-to-face meetings and the sense of community they receive.



PBC Expos

Having a presence at baby expos has always been a great way to raise expectant parents' awareness about ABA and the wrap-around support offered by ABA volunteers, both in the community and via our Helpline services. The ABA booths at expos are staffed by passionate volunteer breastfeeding counsellors, educators and trainees who present breastfeeding talks and offer information to expo attendees.

In 2023-24, over 82,000 mothers, parents and their support people attended the Pregnancy Babies and Children's (PBC) Expos at 11 events in all state capital cities. ABA connected directly with more than 6500 PBC attendees.



Volunteers Stephanie Davy and Mandy Bat at PBC Expo Melbourne

PBC Expo Brisbane

PBC Expo is an energising place to be. It is awash with expectant parents who are all excited about their impending arrival/s.

At the Brisbane expo there were many things for expectant parents to look at from bassinets to prams and everything else in between. There are also several services, like ABA, letting passers-by know of the ways in which we can support them in the weeks, months and years ahead.

We hosted a talk about the 'Early daze', which provided information on what those first few days and weeks look like in terms of breastfeeding and parenting. This was well received by participants.

Left: Volunteers Kay Whitby and Jessica Darlington at PBC Expo Brisbane

Volunteer story

I love volunteering at the Expo to encourage prospective parents to think about breastfeeding and introduce them to all ABA has to offer. It's nice to show them we are also mothers and passionate about providing peer support. So many people attend, it's wonderful to potentially impact such a large number.



Jessica Darlington, PBC Expo volunteer

Community talks

Supporting breastfeeding families in early childhood education

In September 2023, Rebekka Mitchell, Breastfeeding Counsellor in ABA's WA Branch, presented a talk to early childhood education students to expand their breastfeeding knowledge. Many mums worry about how their breastfeeding journey will be affected when they return to work, and the support of those caring for their children is essential.

Through presentations like these, the volunteers from ABA's WA Branch are providing future childcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to support mums' and families' breastfeeding goals. The training organisation called the talk 'helpful and enriching' and are keen for us to attend again next year.

Volunteer story



The group had many questions and felt unprepared at the start of the session to talk to breastfeeding families. ABA provided a safe space for them to engage openly, and we ended the session with the students having tools to make parents comfortable and supported, as well as having gained valuable general breastfeeding knowledge.

**Rebekka Mitchell,
Breastfeeding Counsellor, WA**

Action on reconciliation

In October 2023, ABA established a working group to oversee the development of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). A group of 15 members including three members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commenced work on a 'Reflect RAP'.

The work started with an Association-wide mapping activity to identify historical and current activities, relationships and partnerships with First Nations families, communities and organisations. By collecting this data, we will be able to describe ABA's reconciliation journey to date. This will serve as a point of departure for our action plan which will be submitted to Reconciliation Australia in 2024-25.

The RAP Working Group also led the Association's acknowledgement of National Reconciliation Week from 27 May to 3 June 2024, with the creation of a dedicated webpage. Some of the data collected through the mapping activity was used to build a timeline of ABA's reconciliation activities and support for First Nations families over the past 60 years.



Positive breastfeeding media stories

ABA fosters stronger relationship with the ABC

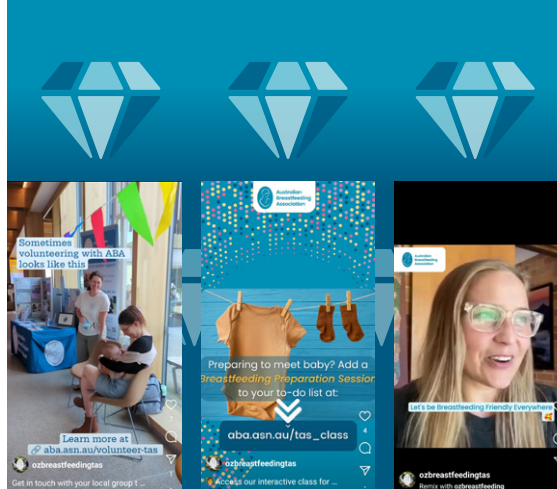
During 2023–24, we strengthened our relationship with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) resulting in a series of great stories covering a range of topics such as:

- How to minimise harm if drinking and breastfeeding during the holiday period
- Breastfeeding support in regional areas
- ABA’s 60th anniversary
- Supporting your loved ones to breastfeed by valuing it as work
- Lactation cookies and nursing teas and their impact on breastmilk supply
- Mastitis and treatment knowledge gaps

We look forward to continuing to strengthen this relationship as we work with the ABC to offer content and stories that normalise and promote breastfeeding.

ABA Tasmania Branch launches Instagram account

In late 2023 ABA Tasmania Branch launched @ozbreastfeedingtas, an Instagram account to promote local activity and ABA services to Tasmanians. Top performing content included the *Breastfeeding Friendly Everywhere* collaborative reel featuring Tasmanian Holly Rankin published in March, as well as the *Breastfeeding Preparation Session*



reel and the *Sometimes volunteering with ABA looks like this* reel both from May. With 124 followers ozbreastfeedingtas has made a promising entry into breastfeeding promotion in Tasmania.

ABA’s social media presence

In 2023–24, ABA’s social media presence grew, and Facebook remains the strongest performer. ABA’s Facebook account has just over 122,000 followers and user-generated content continues to perform well. ABA’s Instagram account has almost 40,000 followers and was used widely during our festive appeal 2023 and tax appeal 2023–24 and National Mothering Week 2024 campaigns.

ABA’s Meme Team Working Group and National Social Media Working Group continue to provide relatable content and parenting tips that connect with mums and families across Australia.

Our X platform has just over 6000 followers and LinkedIn almost 2000 followers. TikTok will be explored in the coming 12 months as another platform for ABA to utilise.

Our national campaigns

World Breastfeeding Week August 2023 ‘Enabling breastfeeding – making a difference for working parents’

World Breastfeeding Week takes place each year from 1 to 7 August, and in 2023 the theme was, ‘Enabling breastfeeding – making a difference for working parents’. Throughout the week, we took the opportunity to highlight the importance of breastfeeding-friendly environments for parents who are navigating their transition back to work.

This theme also aligned with the role that paid leave and other workplace supports play in ensuring women have the support they need to continue breastfeeding once they return to work.

ABA local groups held a range of events and activities for local mums, parents and families.

Talk for health professionals in Gladstone, Queensland

The ABA Gladstone Group celebrated World Breastfeeding Week in 2023 by delivering a professional development workshop for local midwives, nurses, and other health professionals about effective support for mothers in the early days. The workshop was well received with participant feedback indicating that the workshop was helpful and relevant.



Staff at the Royal North Shore Hospital attending the presentation during World Breastfeeding Week 2023

Talk at North Shore Hospital, St Leonards, NSW

During World Breastfeeding Week 2023 (WBW23), ACT/NSW Branch volunteers gave a talk to staff at the Royal North Shore Hospital about breastfeeding and supporting parents with navigating the transition back to work, in line with the WBW23 theme.

It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with health professionals and the hospital system, as well as an opportunity for connection and networking in shared support of mothers, babies, parents and families.

National Mothering Week 2024 '60 years of endless love'

In 2024, National Mothering Week (NMW24) took place from 6 to 12 May 2024, and was all about celebrating mums, recognising the mothering experience, and holding space for mum-to-mum connection. It was also about reminding the broader public about the importance of providing support to mums at every stage of motherhood.

2024 is ABA's 60th anniversary year. With this milestone in mind, this year's NMW theme was **60 years of endless love**, highlighting the diverse and evolving nature of motherhood over the past six decades.

From the traditional role of housewife and stay-at-home mum to the 'back-to-nature' lifestyles of the 60s and 70s, the impacts of the women's liberation movement and the emergence of today's working mums and mummy influencers, ABA has been there to support and empower the many faces of motherhood.

Reflecting on the challenges faced, breakthrough moments experienced, and the shifting attitudes towards breastfeeding across generations, one constant remains; the endless, nurturing love of motherhood.

Our NMW24 campaign focused on three generations of mothers and the experiences



Lauren with baby Celia

they had with their breastfeeding journeys. Across generations, research highlights the continued importance of timely information and support for breastfeeding mothers like the three mothers profiled in our campaign. From pregnancy to postpartum, returning to work, or preparing for a new pregnancy, ABA continues to empower women with education, support and community, and stands by mothers every step of the way.

ABA WHO Code Taskforce project

Since September 2021, ABA has been delivering the ABA WHO Code Taskforce project.

In September 2023, Victoria Marshall-Cerins, ABA Executive Officer and Naomi Hull, Senior Manager Breastfeeding Information and Research delivered a stakeholder briefing at Parliament House, Canberra on the outcomes of the World Health Organization and UNICEF's Global Congress on the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the WHO Code). The briefing outlined the importance of the WHO Code in protecting breastfeeding and the key steps required to see the full provisions of the WHO Code implemented into Australian law.

In March 2024, the Infant Nutrition Council submitted an application for re-authorisation of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas (MAIF) Agreement to the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) ahead of its expiry in August. Then in April, the Department of Health and Aged Care published the long-awaited final report into their review of the MAIF Agreement and found that it was no longer fit for purpose.

ABA prepared submission guidance and hosted an interactive webinar for project partners and ABA volunteers to support their individual submissions as well as finalising our own submission.



'This year, ABA's WHO Code Taskforce steering committee has been proactive in providing guidance to a range of partner organisations to ensure that the ACCC received many submissions to their public consultation process about reauthorisation of the MAIF Agreement. It has been a great opportunity for ABA to advocate for a better approach to regulating the marketing of breastmilk substitutes in Australia.'

Jane Scott, Emeritus Professor, Public Health Nutrition, School of Population Health, Curtin University

Once submissions closed, there was significant media coverage, referencing the responses of several prominent medical and public health bodies who, like ABA, called for an end to the MAIF Agreement and the implementation of the full provisions of the WHO Code.

ACCC's final determination about the future of the MAIF Agreement is due to be released in November 2024.

Right: Caitlyn with baby Kaylee



Consultations and submissions

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Birth Trauma

ABA makes submissions and engages in consultations to inform and advise key policymakers, particularly governments, on priority health policy issues.

In April 2024, ABA was asked to attend the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Birth Trauma to present on the work of ABA, the importance of breastfeeding and the intersection between birth trauma and breastfeeding. Birth trauma can negatively impact breastfeeding and breastfeeding can be a source of healing following a difficult birth.

Inquiry into diabetes

ABA is part of the Infant and Toddler Food Research Alliance (ITFRA) that made a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport inquiry into diabetes in Australia.

Steering committee of the Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal Care (LEAPP) Guidelines Group

ABA sits on the steering committee of the Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal Care (LEAPP) Guidelines Group. The LEAPP guidelines provide up-to-date, reliable recommendations and resources for health professionals providing frontline care for women during and after pregnancy. A significant role of steering committee members is to approve recommendations, on behalf of their organisations, for inclusion in the guidelines.

Professional collaborations

Health professional conferences

To support the professional development of health professionals as well as promote ABA services and resources, our Breastfeeding Information Team submits abstracts to external conferences. If the abstracts are accepted, members of the team speak at these conferences, or make poster presentations.

In October 2023, Dr Susan Tawia presented at the Lactation Consultants of Australian and New Zealand (LCANZ) conference. Susan spoke about 'Smoothing the bumps: using a consensus process to develop best practice guidelines for preventing and treating breast inflammation and mastitis'. The presentation was very well received and positioned ABA as a leading provider of up-to-date information amongst health professionals.

The team also staffed a busy exhibition table promoting ABA professional development opportunities for health professionals, National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services, the mum2mum app and online Virtual Village offerings for mothers, parents and families.



Dr Susan Tawia speaking at the Lactation Consultants of Australian and New Zealand (LCANZ) conference, October 2023

Professional collaborations *continued*

Australian College of Midwives Conference 2023

The Australian College of Midwives held their annual conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre in September 2023. ABA had a trade display table in the Exhibition Hall promoting ABA products and services to the 600 midwives, other health professionals and researchers who attended. There was a lot of interest in what was new, and we were proud to share the updated book *Breastfeeding: a practical guide*.

South Australian ABA volunteer, Emily Hendry, joined the conference and helped staff the trade table, answering attendees' questions as well as sharing flyers about our products and services.

Our collaboration with PHAA

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has been an active member of ABA's WHO Code Taskforce. When the Infant Nutrition Council applied to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for the reauthorisation of the MAIF Agreement, PHAA joined with ABA to develop a guide to assist partnering organisations with their own submissions to the ACCC consultation process. Restricting the marketing of infant formula in Australia to protect the rights of parents and families to clear information about how best to feed their child, free from

'The PHAA is privileged to work with like-minded advocacy organisations and individuals in our work to stop Australians getting sick and keeping them healthy.'

Leanne Coombe, PHAA Policy and Advocacy Manager

commercially driven industry influence, and the rights of the child to an optimal diet and care, is a vital public health issue.

Our collaboration with Cohealth

ABA's Victoria Branch is part of a working group with Cohealth, the City of Maribyrnong Maternal and Child Health Service and GenWest to promote breastfeeding.

The group developed a series of social media posts for World Breastfeeding Week 2023, featuring real local families talking about breastfeeding.

The photos were so beautiful that the working group sought permission from the featured families to use them as posters. The working group chose seven key messages about breastfeeding, which were then translated into Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese. The



posters are printed with the message in all four languages and are being displayed in 'Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere' venues across Melbourne's west.

Research

'Your journey: becoming a parent' survey

In May 2024, ABA conducted an online survey entitled 'Your journey: becoming a parent', giving women an opportunity to tell us about their experiences during pregnancy and the first year with their baby. Participants were invited to share their insights on what information, support and resources made a difference to them as they became parents.

Key findings included:

- The pregnancy and early parenting experiences of respondents were incredibly diverse.
- The type of information or support and the method of delivery, in combination, were found to be important.
- In-person service delivery remains popular. Most women chose in-person antenatal education, and many said they would have liked more in-person support and an opportunity to meet other mums in their area during pregnancy and after the birth.

'I feel that knowing about the ABA resources helped me a lot. I'm not sure parents are aware of ABA as a trusted resource that stands out amongst all the social media and online advice!'

'In my first days as a mother, I was so glad that I had attended an ABA breastfeeding education session while pregnant - it gave me a great deal of confidence going in to breastfeeding - knowing what to try myself and knowing when to ask for help ... My son and I had a very smooth breastfeeding journey, thanks to the confidence the education class gave me, and we're still breastfeeding at 8 months and planning to continue.'

- Those who were aware of ABA's services and resources utilised and valued them. However, many were not aware of some or all services or discovered them later than needed. The ABA website was described as reliable and trustworthy.
- Health professionals were a common source of information and support, but the helpfulness of this was compromised if their breastfeeding knowledge was poor or outdated.

The findings of the survey will help to guide ABA's activities through 2025 and beyond.



554

people completed the survey

'I achieved my goals! We've had massive success breastfeeding ... I have exclusively breastfed and kept up my supply without needing additional help. Thank you, ABA!'

'Just keep doing what you guys are doing and hopefully more and more expecting parents know about the services available to them.'



Community Protection for Infants and Young Children in Bushfire Emergencies Project

ABA's activities in local communities and close working relationship with new parents have made us aware of the vulnerability of babies and young children and their families in emergencies. In mid-2022, with funding from the Australian Government, ABA launched the Community Protection for Infants and Young Children in Bushfire Emergencies Project to address gaps in Australia's emergency preparedness and response.

Across the second year of the project, ABA's Bushfire Project Team have been working with emergency, health and government agencies in Eurobodalla Shire, NSW, to improve preparedness to support the parents of infants and young children in emergencies.

Community engagement and advocacy have been at the heart of the project from the outset. Our team has collaborated closely with the Eurobodalla community, forging partnerships that have been instrumental in our advocacy. A diverse range of individuals from across the community have attended project events, including a series of community breastfeeding mentoring workshops and community planning workshops delivered in Eurobodalla.

A comprehensive collection of resources for emergency relief workers and responders, pregnant women and caregivers is also being developed and distributed nationally.

Left: Kate Turtiainen, Local Project Officer for the ABA Bushfire Project, with SES mascot, Paddy Platypus

The growing collection already includes a research report, evacuation kit lists, emergency facts sheets, eLearning modules, guidance documents and infographics, with more to come.



100

learners have completed the *Disaster support for babies, toddlers and caregivers* eLearning module since it was launched in September 2023



28

individuals in Eurobodalla, NSW, attended ABA's nationally accredited 10961NAT Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring

Community Protection for Infants and Young Children in Bushfire Emergencies Project *continued*



ABA's Bushfire Project Team with Louise Hattan, Coordinator of Children's Services for Eurobodalla at Playdates with Emergency Services community event

'I was so pleased that a local workshop was on offer in Malua Bay, a thorough workshop and well presented. Great display of resources and very consultative throughout all stages of the project. We appreciate this groundbreaking project being delivered in our regional area.'

Project stakeholder, Eurobodalla Shire

'Eurobodalla is so lucky to have amazing community-minded people who are strong advocates for women and children. I am so proud to have had the opportunity to work with you and learn from your programs.'

Workshop attendee



Eurobodalla mum, SES volunteer and project supporter, Caroline Booth, with her son at a Playdates with Emergency Services community event

Volunteer story

I'm a volunteer with the ABA Eurobodalla Group and a local mum. In my volunteer role, I helped at the project launch and the Playdates for Emergency Services. ABA's Bushfire Project has been incredibly beneficial for our local community. During the 2019-20 bushfires, many residents had to evacuate to emergency centres with little notice, often finding themselves unprepared, especially those with young children and infants. Since then, many in our community have used the evacuation kit lists and other resources from the project to ensure they have the necessary items packed for their baby or toddler and are well prepared for emergencies.



Kim with daughter Minah

Kim, ABA volunteer



28

individuals attended community planning workshops in Eurobodalla, NSW, representing various community organisations and services

Settings that enable breastfeeding

'The ABA training modules are comprehensive, and I found they focus on the aspects of breastfeeding that women need the most support with. The modules have really boosted my skills and confidence in providing breastfeeding assistance to mothers on the ward.'

Barwon Health, Geelong

Baby Friendly Health Initiative

Baby Friendly Health Initiative eLearning module

The Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy, 'Settings that enable breastfeeding' begins with an Action Area: The Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI). The action is to increase the implementation of BFHI in hospitals and community health services and to move towards integrating BFHI into national facility accreditation.

ABA launched its interactive eLearning module series in 2023: Supporting the Breastfeeding Mother in the Neonatal Period. The learning package includes eight modules (approximately 8 hours) of high quality, evidence-based online material that reflects the BFHI competency framework. This fulfils the compulsory staff education requirements for facilities seeking BFHI accreditation or re-accreditation. The series is easily integrated into health facilities via ABA's Learning Management System and what's more, ABA can provide completion data for individual staff members. Discounts apply to larger groups of staff members.

In 2024 we have promoted the eLearning package to all the BFHI accredited health services

in Australia via direct email with the offer of a 'taster', which gives access to one module of choice for a limited time period. The response to our promotion resulted in high numbers of tasters being requested and significant sales of the package. We are continuing promotions Australia-wide to non-accredited facilities and in response to individual inquiries.



Annual Health Professional Seminar Series 2024

In March 2024, ABA held the Annual Health Professional Seminar Series, *Breastfeeding: nurturing, nutrition*. It was again delivered live in person in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Perth and made available online from the end of March to the end of May 2024. Although registrations opened later than in previous years, there was an increase in attendance numbers in 2024 in all but two locations.

Feedback from attendees indicates they appreciate the opportunity to network with others while gaining relevant skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the educational and work-practice relevance of topics covered each year are highly valued, with 58% of attendees previously engaging in the series.

ABA would like to thank our 2024 presenters, Dr Nina Chad, Dr Treasure McGuire, Maddie O'Connor, Evelyn Volders, Emily Carrolan, Leila Chirgwin, Professor Karleen Gribble, and Dr Susan Tawia, for dedicating their time and expertise to this series.

The 2024 program and presenters received incredibly positive feedback, with over 80% of attendees evaluating the material presented as very good or excellent. Furthermore, attendees' feedback indicated the seminars as being highly engaging and providing an environment for learning and discussion. ABA is excited for what future seminar series will bring.

Attendance statistics

Brisbane	129
Melbourne	186
Perth	74
Sydney	119
Online	272
Total	780

'ABA conferences never disappoint! I always come away more educated and inspired to continue to support families in the process of assisting their babies to thrive.'
2024 seminar delegate

'An excellent seminar with thought-provoking presentations and excellent discussion with attendees.'

'It was good receiving current updated information. There were some interesting presentations, particularly the work of ABA with the disaster management review.'

'Overall content was excellent. Great to attend a day of education where I learned something new from each presentation. Not always the case when I have been attending conferences for 30+ years.'
2024 seminar delegates



Diploma of Breastfeeding Management

During 2023–24, we were very pleased to continue to deliver the 10960NAT Diploma of Breastfeeding Management. The diploma course builds on the breastfeeding management skills of health professionals to enable them to support breastfeeding mothers more effectively. Current learners come from a wide range of professional backgrounds including midwifery, nursing, general practice, neonatal medicine, lactation consulting, physiotherapy, speech pathology and pharmacy. Our learners are from many parts of Australia, including metropolitan, regional, and remote areas.

During 2024, ABA was pleased to recognise the importance of health professionals in supporting breastfeeding mothers by offering ABA's 60th anniversary discounts on diploma fees at enrolment and on instalments paid as learners progress through the course.

The diploma course continues to be delivered via online formats using virtual workshops, the ABA learning management system and individualised support for learners. Feedback showed that health professionals valued the combination of theoretical knowledge and evidence-based practical strategies for management of breastfeeding issues. Learners also commented that the assessment tasks were relevant to their workplaces and prompted them to reflect on work practices and implement improvements.

Health professional workshops

ABA was proud to present workshops for health professionals throughout 2023 and 2024, led by internal and external guest speakers who generously shared their knowledge and skills. We delivered eight online workshops over the year, allowing health professionals and midwifery students from anywhere around Australia to upgrade their knowledge and skills in lactation management. During discussions in workshops, health professionals spoke about how the needs of their communities have led them to undertake professional development and how they are looking forward to providing improved services to mothers and babies in their communities.

The online and flexible formats of the workshops allow health professionals from around Australia to access professional development without the need to travel. The workshops present up-to-date evidence-based lactation management, and practical strategies that health professionals can implement in their clinical practice. Participants also valued being involved in multidisciplinary discussions during the workshops. Thirty-six health professionals and students not enrolled in other courses with ABA registered for these workshops. Medications and breastfeeding, Assessing breastfeeding and Managing breastfeeding were the most popular workshops this year.

eLearning modules

The range of eLearning modules available through ABA enables health professionals to upgrade their knowledge in specific areas to meet their unique practice needs. Health professionals are increasingly taking advantage of the convenience of accessing the modules any time that suits them. Many of the topics on offer are specialised, but clearly there is broad need for this information from our learners. With 28 different modules on offer, there is expansive coverage of current topics including breast surgery and breastfeeding, disaster support for babies and toddlers and key updates to the treatment of mastitis.

In 2023–24, 554 learners completed 1376 different learning modules. That's over 2500 hours of professional development education.

'Highly recommend everyone listen to this and understand the background and importance of the WHO code in protecting women and children.'

Michelle - from a review of *The WHO Code: 40 years on* eLearning module

Professional website, printed resources, and booklets

Booklets for families

In 2023, ABA's series of 21 in depth, evidence-led booklets for families were published as eBooks for the first time. Over 1750 printed and digital copies were sold, with the five most purchased titles being:

- *Breastfeeding: expressing and storing breastmilk*
- *Breastfeeding: sleep*
- *Breastfeeding: when your baby refuses the breast*
- *Breastfeeding: reflux*
- *Breastfeeding: and crying babies*

Our updated booklets capture changes to information and latest research.

Resources for health professionals

Our professional website, **abaprofessional.asn.au**, provides a dedicated platform for health professionals to access professional development opportunities and comprehensive resources to enable them to engage in best-practice care of mothers and families.

Our collection of feature articles, fact sheets, one of a kind eLearning modules and the full back catalogue of ABA's peer reviewed journal, *Breastfeeding Review*, attract visitors from across the world.

Our professional members continue to value the support ABA provides to them in their roles:



Over 1750
booklet copies sold



Peak of 544
professional members in 2023-24

Health professional resource bundles

In May 2024, ABA designed a collection of ABA resource bundles for health professionals. These bundles are available via the Marketplace Shop tab on the ABA website. The bundles are part of a broader strategy to make online selection and purchase of resources clear and straightforward for health professionals and to ensure ready access to the most suitable materials for their practice.

Each of the six resource bundles is designed to meet health professionals' expected clinical practice needs for providing breastfeeding support. Bundles have been curated for midwives, student midwives, child health nurses, GPs, paediatricians and obstetricians. Each bundle is discounted compared to purchasing the resources individually. Bundles also include key ABA consumer information materials for sharing with clients.



Breastfeeding Review

ABA's peer reviewed academic journal, *Breastfeeding Review* publishes original research, case studies, reviews, letters, commentaries, and discussions. In 2023-24, 11 original research papers were published from research groups in Australia, Malaysia, Israel, India, Colombia, Japan, and the United States. Two particularly interesting papers from the November 2023 edition were: 'Maternal media device use during breastfeeding and infants' social and emotional development' and 'It was never resolved: A qualitative investigation of long-term breastfeeding-related distress.'



Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces

Over the last 12 months, ABA received 75 expressions of interest from organisations wanting to become accredited as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace (BFW). Out of these, 13 organisations signed up and 12 successfully achieved new accreditation.

ABA now has 131 accredited organisations, demonstrating employer commitment to supporting breastfeeding in the workplace. Among these, 47 organisations have achieved the Best Practice standard accreditation.

These numbers reflect significant growth and a strong commitment from various organisations to promote and support breastfeeding, ensuring that more workplaces across the country are becoming more inclusive and accommodating for breastfeeding mothers.

‘We have received welcomed feedback from team members regarding our implementation of an adequate space and facility where parents have the privacy, space and time to breastfeed.’

Aleksandra Teixeira, Senior HR Advisor, Jones Lang LaSalle



Alev Byrne, Senior Associate from Moray & Agnew Sydney office

We are proud to have successfully gained accreditation as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace with ABA. This accreditation aligns with our family-friendly policies and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to maintain an environment where our employee career aspirations are met, employee well-being is respected, and we help balance work and personal responsibilities.

National Managing Partner Geoff Connellan from Moray and Agnew Lawyers

Breastfeeding Friendly Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Service recognition

During World Breastfeeding Week 2023, ABA launched a new program called Breastfeeding Friendly ECEC Service recognition. This program offers services a range of resources, including an online module for educators to help support breastfeeding mothers and their children in care. So far, 39 services have signed up, with 120 services having submitted an expression of interest.

‘We ensure all families know that we are here to support them to continue to breastfeed once they have returned to work.’

Barefoot Early Childhood, QLD

‘Having breastfeeding-friendly ECEC service recognition will allow us to provide educators and families with support around breastfeeding, and assist us with creating a safe, welcoming environment for mothers to breastfeed their children.’

Bonnyrigg Child Care, NSW

Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere

This year 285 venues signed up to be recognised as a Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere (BWE) venue, an increase from 145 venues in the previous year.

Among these, 79 libraries joined the initiative. Additionally, Magenta Marshall MLA, the State Member of Parliament for Rockingham in WA, has joined the BWE initiative and received her recognition sticker for her office from local ABA volunteers.



From left to right: Mitchell Theunissan, ABA volunteer Shelby Higgins holding Zef Theunissan, Magenta Marshall MLA, State Member of Parliament for Rockingham, and Delma Smith, Breastfeeding Counsellor and Breastfeeding Educator, WA



285

venues signed up to support Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere

'I want my office to be accessible and inclusive to everyone in our community. Joining the Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere movement aligns perfectly with this vision. This initiative by the Australian Breastfeeding Association is vital for young mums to feel safe and supported while breastfeeding in the community.'

Magenta Marshall MLA, State Member of Parliament for Rockingham

'At MOVE Moonee Valley, we believe in creating inclusive environments where all community members feel welcome and supported. The Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere initiative aligns perfectly with our values, ensuring that breastfeeding mothers have a comfortable and accepting space to nourish their children. By participating in this program, we demonstrate our commitment to promoting health, well-being, and inclusivity for all.'

Jaye Hansford, Community Engagement & Inclusion Coordinator, City of Moonee Ponds

Baby Care Rooms

In March 2024, we relaunched the redesigned and updated Baby Care Room recognition. Twelve new baby care rooms signed up, with access to new resources. This program recognises community premises across Australia that provide suitable feeding and changing facilities for breastfeeding mums and caregivers.



Individual enablers for breastfeeding

Universal breastfeeding education, support, and information services

Breastfeeding Helpline

Throughout the 2023–24 year a remarkable team of 470 trained, dedicated peer breastfeeding counsellors contributed an average of 43 hours each, volunteering their time to offer unwavering support to mothers, families, and health professionals through ABA’s National Breastfeeding Helpline.

The service provided by ABA volunteers continues to uphold exceptionally high standards, with 97% of callers saying that they would call back again if needed, 98% recommending the service to other families and an overall satisfaction rate of 94%.

ABA is proud of the results of the 2023–24 caller survey which shows that 91% of callers to the Breastfeeding Helpline felt reassured by the volunteer they spoke with and 86% left the call feeling less worried.

After the call I felt	2023–24
Less worried	86%
Less stressed	84%
More confident	80%
Reassured	91%
More knowledgeable about breastfeeding	82%
More determined to continue breastfeeding	75%



During the 2023–24 financial year:

52,392

calls were made to the National Breastfeeding Helpline

77%

of all calls were supported

Over 20,000

hours were generously dedicated to ABA’s Breastfeeding Helpline alone

‘The most fulfilling part of being a volunteer counsellor on the other end of the phone is offering a compassionate and non-judgmental space where callers can work through their thoughts. It’s powerful to know that just by being there to listen, I can make such a significant difference. It’s especially wonderful when mothers return for support, expressing how invaluable and comforting the helpline has been for them.’

**Kirsty-Anne,
Breastfeeding Counsellor**

Breastfeeding Helpline *continued*

These results highlight the incredible difference that ABA's volunteers make to the lives of others.

During the financial year, 44% of callers noted that, without the free-call Breastfeeding Helpline, they would have had to rely on their GP or other health services, often incurring costs for their family. ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline plays a significant role in reducing the burden on the Australian healthcare system.

Top 5 reasons for contacting Helpline 2023-24

1	Sore breast or nipples
2	Information on feeding patterns
3	Reassurance
4	Expressing and/or storing breastmilk
5	Concern with frequency of feeds

'I felt heard and supported and left the conversation feeling reassured and confident which made the world of difference because I felt so alone and like I was failing.'

Renee, Breastfeeding Helpline caller, 2024

'The counsellor genuinely wanted to help me like a friend would.'

Melanie, Breastfeeding Helpline caller, 2024

As in previous years, the most common reason for reaching out to ABA's Breastfeeding Helpline was to seek support in treatments for sore breasts or nipples, including breast inflammation or mastitis.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers who dedicate their time to the Breastfeeding Helpline, ensuring that mothers, their families and health professionals receive reassurance, information and support for their breastfeeding questions every day of the year. The service that they provide is nothing short of incredible.

'The counsellor I spoke to was kind and compassionate and made me feel much better after speaking with her. I was emotional and stressed and I got off the phone feeling much calmer and like everything would be ok.'

Rachel, Breastfeeding Helpline caller, 2024

Right: Johanna calling the Breastfeeding Helpline



LiveChat

ABA's LiveChat is accessible through our website breastfeeding.asn.au. It is staffed by trained volunteers who dedicate their time to help mothers and their families to find the information that they need to achieve their own breastfeeding goals. Our volunteers offer reassurance, share from a large collection of evidence-based articles and videos and link families with relevant support services.

In 2023-24 ABA extended its LiveChat service by an additional 2 hours per week. This support and helpful information resource is available every weeknight 8 pm to 10 pm AEST as well as during daytime hours each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12 pm to 2 pm AEST.

During 2023-24, 5216 chats were initiated, with 96 volunteers supporting 97% of all these chats. The service maintained a very high satisfaction rate among parents, achieving a 95% overall satisfaction rate throughout the year. Additionally, 89% of parents reported that the support they received from volunteers helped to resolve their concerns or issues.

The most common reason for parents to reach out for support via LiveChat was for reassurance (25%).

Of all those contacting the support service, 23% noted that if ABA's LiveChat had not been available, they may have stopped breastfeeding their baby.

After the chat I felt	2023-24
Less worried	83%
Less stressed	87%
More confident	88%
Reassured	93%
More knowledgeable about breastfeeding	73%
More determined to continue breastfeeding	76%

ABA's LiveChat continues to deliver an outstanding service to Australian families thanks to the unwavering dedication of ABA's trained volunteers. Their selfless investment in assisting individuals daily, is deeply valued not only by ABA, but by countless families who rely on their support. ABA is very grateful and appreciative of all the volunteers who give their time to LiveChat and is proud to be able to offer families such a wonderful service.

'The support person I spoke to today was great and had some good suggestions. She was also supportive, kind and listened/ read the problem in detail before jumping in with information.'
Katherine, LiveChat visitor 2024



LiveChat volunteer, Catherine

Top 5 reasons for contacting LiveChat 2023-24

- 1 Reassurance
- 2 Information on feeding patterns
- 3 Sore breast or nipples
- 4 Concern with length of feeds
- 5 Concern with frequency of feeds

'Such a valuable support to mums when we need reassurance and someone to empathise with us'
Brooke LiveChat visitor 2024

Breastfeeding ... with ABA podcast

ABA's podcast and blog is created by parents, for parents. In each of the 30 episodes, our volunteers, experts and guest speakers dive into a breastfeeding or early parenting topic, from what to expect in the early days, to normal baby sleep, juggling work and breastfeeding, weaning and more.

We also hear stories of breastfeeding experiences from real parents. The podcast and blog are evidence-backed, but also explores the personal stories of a diverse range of parents, grandparents and community members using a range of interview and conversation formats. The podcast sustains an average of over 100 plays per day, across 30 episodes.



Average number of plays per day

exceeds 100

Highest plays on a single day in 2023-24 was

997

mum2mum app

During 2023-24, ABA's mum2mum app continued to grow with just under 1000 new downloads a month.

The mum2mum app shares over 240 premium articles, supporting mothers through their early pregnancy right through until toddlerhood and everything in between.

There are videos covering topics such as cup-feeding and the many positions mums may like to try when breastfeeding, as well as many articles and tips to support a mother's well-being.

During the 2023-24 year around 165,000 feeds were saved, and the most common resource section accessed was covering the 0-3 months age group.

Via mum2mum premium, our ABA Virtual Village members have access to extended features such as, the ability to meet up with local families for connection and support – a feature ABA looks forward to promoting into the coming year.

Right: Kate using the app



Breastfeeding Education Classes

ABA's face-to-face Breastfeeding Education Classes (BECs) have continued to be extremely successful and popular among expectant parents across the nation. Classes were delivered in most states and territories across Australia, including Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory.

Class content and resources were updated at the end of the previous financial year. These new and improved classes have been very well received. This is evident in the evaluation

results, with 96% of participants either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they would recommend the class to a friend and 98% agreeing that the class met their expectations.

A major increase in knowledge and confidence to breastfeed is also evident, with participants knowledge of breastfeeding increasing on average from 41% to 79%, and their confidence to breastfeed increasing from 41% to 81% after attending a face-to-face class.

The table below provides an outline of the number of face-to-face BECs held and the participants who attended throughout the reporting period.

Breastfeeding Education Classes 2023-24

Branch*	Number of BECs held	Number of participants
VIC	35	320
ACT/NSW	14	91
QLD	33	278
SA	5	54
NT	11	114
WA	16	110

*TAS - continued to provide sponsored registration for online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions in 2023-24 in lieu of face-to-face classes.



Jacqui Waine (left) and Lauren Hollington from Randwick Group, NSW at a local Breastfeeding Education Class

'We have been consistently running BECs in Hamilton for several years and have noticed the great impact it has had on those mothers and families who attend. They have come away from the class with a greater understanding of how breastfeeding works, normal newborn behaviour and where to go for help if they need it. We also find these mothers will reach out, call the Helpline and attend group meetings as they are aware of the local group and ABA's wider offerings, leading to better support and mothers meeting their breastfeeding goals.'

Cassie Frankin, Breastfeeding Educator and Regional Representative, Hamilton Group, VIC

'Difficult to imagine how it could be better. Class facilitators were excellent.'

Jess, VIC



'BECs are one of my favourite volunteering activities. There's nothing better than meeting pregnant mums and their support people face to face, and to encourage and reassure them while reframing common misconceptions. It's been gratifying to see the huge leap in diversity pre and post COVID, with families attending reflecting the population in Melbourne. It shows that ABA's efforts to be culturally relevant and respectful are succeeding and we're reaching a wider audience.'

Lynn, VIC

'It was fantastic; so informative, very enthusiastic, genuinely interested presenters who want to make the breastfeeding journey more manageable for expectant mothers and their partners.'

Leyla, QLD

Left: Jacqui, with baby Asher, attended a Breastfeeding Education Class for Tarragindi Group in Queensland, to demonstrate breastfeeding in person and to talk about learning together to meet breastfeeding goals.

Breastfeeding Education Classes in South Australia

The Adelaide Northern Suburbs Group held a BEC at Tea Tree Gully Library in August 2023. The session was facilitated by Carolyn Kirby (Breastfeeding Educator) from the Mt Baker Group, and Corinne Reynolds (Breastfeeding Counsellor) and Ashley Schroeder (Trainee) from the Adelaide Northern Suburbs Group.

Mothers attended from all over Adelaide, some travelling over an hour to the venue. In total there were 15 attendees (9 mothers and 6 partners), all expectant parents for the first time.

These parents were fortunate enough to be the second group to use the new BEC presentation here in Adelaide. All the information provided in the presentation was clearly set out and easy for attendees to follow along and understand.

The focus on building a village and linking this back to the services ABA provides was very well done and the QR codes allowed attendees quick and easy access to this information on our website.

Feedback at the end was very positive with most attendees commenting that they had no prior breastfeeding knowledge and now felt more confident and better informed about what to expect in the early weeks. One mother explained that she had been particularly worried about mastitis after hearing stories from other mothers but following the class felt reassured and confident that she knew what to do and where to go for more support if she needed.

ABA Virtual Village

Breastfeeding Preparation Session (online)

ABA's weekly online Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions (BPS) have continued to maintain a high level of attendance and satisfaction.

Seventy-nine amazing ABA breastfeeding counsellors, educators and trainees were supported to deliver 54 Breastfeeding Preparation Sessions in 2023-24. These sessions helped to prepare more than 459 expectant parents for the practicalities of breastfeeding and caring for a newborn. All ABA Virtual Village members can access these sessions at a nominal price. ABA Virtual Village is our digital-first membership offering, providing support to parents from day 1 to day 1000.

The evaluation results indicate that on average, participants' knowledge of breastfeeding increased from 48% to 74% after attending a BPS. Their confidence to breastfeed also significantly increased from 47% to 74%.

ABA has continued to offer BPS for special situations for parents expecting multiples and mothers impacted by diabetes. These sessions were held on a quarterly basis and supported 45 expectant parents.

Based on evaluation, the LGBTQIA+ session was modified and converted into an online module. The module is now available 24/7 and

A wonderful interactive resource that helped me practically prepare for my BF journey. I would highly recommend attending the virtual or face-to-face session.

Erica, QLD

free for ABA Virtual Village members to access. Along with the information contained on preparing to breastfeed, the module includes a series of videos with five new parents from the LGBTQIA+ community talking about their experiences learning to breastfeed and adjusting to parenthood.

We look forward to empowering and supporting more expectant parents through the program and seeing the gain in knowledge and confidence to breastfeed continue to rise in the future.



459+

expectant parents prepared online for the practicalities of breastfeeding and becoming a parent

Volunteer story



The ABA BPS is informative, interactive and easy to follow. The content covered is well suited to the target audience of expectant mothers. I enjoyed presenting the BPS with my co-host and interacting with participants online.

Having the opportunity to be a Q&A mum was also a great way to share tips and tricks I have learnt during my own breastfeeding journeys.

Stephy, Trainee

The first 72 hours - ABA's learning and support program

During National Mothering Week 2024, we released Part 1 of a new online learning and support resource for the first 72 hours after giving birth. Part 1 of the resource focuses on the first 24 hours. The resource is designed to provide new parents with a step-by-step guide for the early hours with their newborn. It includes practical information about what parents might expect and support for navigating this unique time.

'The video demonstrations were helpful and the mums' experiences with first feeds were also good.'

ABA Virtual Village *continued*

A series of videos can be found throughout the resource showing new mothers talking about their experiences during this time and what worked and didn't work for them.

The online learning and support resource covers information on:

1. getting breastfeeding started, including skin-to-skin contact
2. getting to know baby's needs in the first 72 hours
3. physical and emotional changes experienced after birth
4. health care for mum and baby in the first 72 hours
5. where to access further support.

The resource is free for all ABA Virtual Village members and can be accessed at anytime, anywhere, and as often as needed.

Since it launched in early May, 80 users have accessed the resource. From the feedback received so far, the resource has proven to be very well received with **100%** of users either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would recommend it to a friend. In addition to this, feedback indicates the videos of mothers sharing their experiences during this time was a common highlight.

Part 2 of 'The first 72 hours' is expected to launch in 2025.

Did you know?

- The first 72 hours
 - Newborn Virtual Village
 - Connect & Share Virtual Village
- are free for all ABA Virtual Village members. ABA Virtual Village is our digital-first membership offering, providing support to parents from day 1 to day 1000.

Newborn Virtual Village

ABA's Newborn Virtual Village has continued to be extremely popular among new parents in the vital days and weeks after giving birth. The sessions are held twice a week, during the day, and cover a range of important topics related to breastfeeding and becoming a new parent.

Forty-four ABA breastfeeding counsellors, educators and trainees were supported to deliver 97 online sessions in 2023-24. These sessions helped to support 769+ new parents in establishing breastfeeding and adjusting to life with a new baby.

The evaluation results showed a high level of satisfaction among attendees, with 95% of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing they would recommend the session to a friend. The results also indicate an overall increase in participants' knowledge after attending a Newborn Virtual Village session.

Connect & Share Virtual Village

We continued to offer monthly Connect & Share webinars, designed for parents beyond the newborn stage throughout 2023-24. These evening sessions provide parents, who may have returned to work, with the opportunity

Volunteer story



Being a presenter for Newborn Virtual Village has given me a much wider perspective on how I can assist new parents with some of the most common issues they struggle with. I've had many new mums, as well as mums-to-be, come into the sessions feeling clueless and leaving feeling more confident and empowered. This also motivates them to lean on ABA's many other services when they need reassurance and support, through their child's early years.

Adele Larive-Ismail,
Breastfeeding Counsellor

to learn more on crucial breastfeeding and parenting topics.

Eleven ABA breastfeeding counsellors, educators and trainees were supported to deliver 11 Connect & Share webinars. This included two free special events for World Breastfeeding Week and National Mothering Week. These two events alone pulled over 238 attendees.

Feedback showed a high level of satisfaction from attendees, with 90% of participants strongly agreeing or agreeing they would recommend the session to a friend. The results also indicated that on average, participants' knowledge of the topic covered increased from 46% to 74% after attending a Connect & Share webinar.

ABA local groups

ABA's network of local groups is pivotal in delivering tailored breastfeeding support across Australian communities. These local groups are essential components of each state's breastfeeding support system, offering services designed to meet community-specific needs. Prior to 2023-24, parents wishing to access ABA's local in-person supports had to be financial members of the Association. In November 2023, ABA local groups were opened to all families free of charge via our new Introductory membership.

Over the last 12 months, groups hosted free social events and organised breastfeeding support gatherings. They arranged educational talks with schools and to child health nurses, such as the presentation given by Portland Group, in Victoria, to a Year 11 class at a local school.

These activities build community connections and provide hands-on support to breastfeeding families. In Victoria, ABA's Dandenong Breastfeeding Centre Drop-in service is the only free lactation service in the Dandenong region for mums to visit after leaving hospital. One third of families using this service are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ABA local groups also facilitated breast pump hire and offered in-person counselling at various events, which was crucial for

Volunteer story



Jacquie Ducat (left) and Cara Lewis, co-Group Leaders of ABA's Diamond Valley Group, VIC, receiving an award from the Shire of Nillumbik local council

Here at the Diamond Valley ABA group, we were proud finalists for Nillumbik Council volunteer group of the year due to the community work we do.

Diamond Valley Group, VIC

addressing immediate breastfeeding challenges and ensuring families had necessary resources. Canberra Group piloted an online breast pump hire process with remarkable success, a precursor for an upcoming expanded program.

The national Breast Pump Hire Working Group launched a major project to take breast pump

'Attending our monthly ABA meetups was such an important part of my first year as a mother. It was a place I could turn up, a sleep-deprived mess, and be welcomed and supported. Every month new breastfeeding issues would arise, so the opportunity to speak to an ABA lactation consultant and counsellors was very helpful.'

'The information provided by the guest speakers is valuable for new mums and those with young children alike. Now my daughter is a toddler, we attend when we can, and she enjoys playing with the other children.'

'Breastfeeding a child is a wonderful experience, but it requires the support of a community, and that is what this group provides.'

Jackie, Randwick Group, NSW

hire online, successfully scoping the project, showcasing it across ABA, and securing funding for implementation in 2024-25.

The Bendigo Group in Victoria developed a relationship with a local library that is now offering a breastfeeding drop-in at Baby Rhyme Time at two venues a month across the geographic area covered by the group.

ABA local groups continued

Local groups bridge the gap between ABA’s national services and local needs. They enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of breastfeeding support across Australia, significantly impacting local families. Their efforts contributed to the delivery of the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy (ANBS) by ensuring that support is personalised and community-focused.

ABA’s local groups are vital in providing localised, practical support and advocacy, strengthening the state’s breastfeeding support network, and fostering a breastfeeding-friendly culture.

Number of events for parents 2023–24

ACT/NSW	QLD	SA/NT	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL
463	245	118	117	415	213	1571



Adelaide Northern Suburbs Group, SA



Camden-Wollondilly Group, NSW

‘I attend the Adelaide Northern Suburbs Group and have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the ABA family for the past 3 years. The community is warm and welcoming, with no judgment whatsoever, and provides a comfortable environment for everyone. I highly recommend attending one of their meetings. They’re always informative, educational, and fun. The volunteers always do their best to answer any questions to the best of their abilities. I have made some lifelong friends, and I am so appreciative.’

Kayla, Adelaide Northern Suburbs Group, SA

Volunteer story



Breast pump hire means I can make a real difference to support local families to provide breastmilk to their babies.

Linda, Breastfeeding Counsellor and Breast Pump Hire Officer, Hobart and Surrounds Group, TAS

‘ABA services have been key to helping my successful breastfeeding journey. Being able to access quality evidence-based information and support has helped me overcome challenges and allowed me to give my child the best start in life by breastfeeding. Being able to access regular in-person support through ABA groups and meet with other breastfeeding parents has been very valuable.’

Nina, Northern Perth Group, WA

Essence magazine

Essence, ABA's flagship publication for all Virtual Village, Friends of ABA and volunteer members continues to enjoy strong readership. The publication is delivered each quarter to thousands of families and health professionals.

The publication has a variety of informative articles focusing on the lived experience of breastfeeding mums, to evidence-based information pieces on broad subject matters.

Many issues also feature lighter content covering brelfies from our social media accounts, recipes, and key events across ABA.

In 2023–24 popular stories included:

- Looking back through the *Essence* archive and profiling snapshots of motherhood over 60 years as part of celebrating ABA's 60th anniversary
- Tips for travelling whilst breastfeeding
- Supporting breastfeeding women in emergencies
- Results from the National Breastfeeding Helpline Services Survey
- A personal account of a young mum who expressed to feed her baby
- Beccy Barta's story of welcoming her fourth baby by home birth
- Katya Daniel's personal story on overcoming acute mastitis and breast abscess



Our member eNewsletter

ABA eNews is a digital newsletter delivered every month to all ABA members including our new Introductory members. It is filled with informative breastfeeding and parenting articles, volunteer profiles, recipes, a What's On section and stories from the ABA community.

With the inclusion of our new Introductory members in November 2023, our digital engagement increased significantly in 2023–24. ABA eNews now reaches more than 19,000 ABA members, with a monthly open rate of around 45%.



22,451

copies of *Essence* delivered online, direct to members

6500

copies of *Essence* magazine landed in letterboxes

Breastfeeding: a practical guide

In 2023, ABA's classic book for parents, *Breastfeeding ... naturally*, was completely updated and redesigned to deliver ABA's trusted breastfeeding information in a fresh new format. A dedicated team, led by long-term volunteers Keith and Joy Anderson, spent countless hours reviewing research and gathering the experiences of breastfeeding mums and their supporters to create a wonderful new companion for every woman's breastfeeding journey.

Breastfeeding: a practical guide covers every step of the breastfeeding journey, from pregnancy right through to weaning. It answers common questions about how breastfeeding works, getting started and overcoming common challenges, and is filled with practical tips and real-life images. The book, which is available in both print and digital format, has been warmly received by parents, health professionals and ABA volunteers alike.



275

copies of *Breastfeeding: a practical guide* were sold in 2023–24, since publication in October 2023.



Volunteer story

My name is Beccy. I am a mum of four, breastfeeding counsellor, co-group leader and designer for *Essence* magazine. I consider my 'claim to ABA fame' as being on the cover of *Breastfeeding: a practical guide*. It is a fantastic resource for parents and I consider it an honour to have my photograph on the cover; I still get such a rush of excitement whenever I see it! Volunteering with ABA brings me so much joy. I especially love being part of my local group, working with the *Essence* magazine team, and the wonderful friendships I have made through both.



'I wanted to take the time to say how impressive the new book is. It's concise, easy to read, full of great information and imagery and so well referenced. The cover photo is spot on, and the language is clear. I love it. It's a testament to the passion and love of those who put it together.'

Rosemary, ACT



Community Breastfeeding Mentoring Course

The 10961NAT Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring (CBM workshops) is a nationally recognised course that covers mentoring skills and basic breastfeeding information. CBM workshops are designed for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and individuals and groups who work with them.

During the 2023-24 financial year, we were delighted to be called upon by the Victorian Department of Health to provide education and skills to the Victorian CALD community and the health practitioners who support them.



'Interactive nature, engaging facilitators.'
CBM workshop participant

'It was a great workshop at a good pace.'
CBM workshop participant

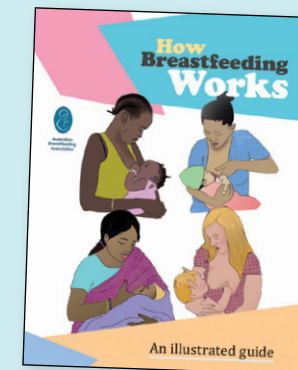
'The handouts were very helpful & interesting to read. I felt well supported.'
CBM workshop participant

'The information provided was easily understood and role-playing made it easier to retain it.'
CBM workshop participant



How Breastfeeding Works booklets

Working with NSW Health, ABA ACT/NSW Branch received a one-off payment to update the *How Breastfeeding Works* booklet and translate this resource into several languages. This publication is used as a primary breastfeeding education resource across NSW health facilities providing families with up to date, easy to understand breastfeeding information.



Helpline and LiveChat

A key focus for ABA is ensuring support for all mothers and their families, including those within priority communities. ABA has developed a range of materials specifically tailored to families for whom English is their second language, to younger mums and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. These materials and resources consist of breastfeeding information and contact details for all families to access breastfeeding support.

The table below shows the percentage of callers from each of these priority groups who have contacted the Helpline services over the 2023-24 year.

Helpline services combined 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

Aged 25 and under	3.85% of contacts
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families	2.43% of contacts
Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	11.05% of contacts

Our data indicates that contacts aged 25 and younger tend to use ABA's LiveChat service rather than the Breastfeeding Helpline. Conversely, families where English is a second language are more likely to contact the Breastfeeding Helpline before LiveChat.

Deadly Dads

Deadly Dads® Workshops: a unique, interactive workshop facilitated by Aboriginal men, for Aboriginal men.

Research clearly indicates that support from fathers improves breastfeeding outcomes. Participants of these workshops learn (amongst other things) about empathy, active listening, usual infant behaviour, nutrition, and family foods.

We have continued to work to raise awareness around this valuable program via events such as the Pregnancy Babies & Children's (PBC) Expos and the 2024 Health Professional Seminars.

The last 12 months have seen an increase in enquiries from organisations nationally. Updated marketing and information collateral means we can better engage key stakeholders.

'Excellent. The workshop promotes Aboriginals men's role within a family unit.'

Deadly Dads attendee

'This is not just woman's business. This is family business.'

Deadly Dads attendee

'This workshop is needed in the community. It should be part of antenatal care.'

Deadly Dads attendee



Volunteer training and support

'The best aspect of the ABA training has been the exceptional support and advice provided by the trainers. I can confidently say that I have been highly satisfied with their unwavering dedication and guidance throughout the course. Whenever I faced challenges or felt like my progress had stalled, the trainers were always there to offer their expertise and encouragement. Their commitment to helping me succeed has been truly invaluable.'

Alice Clement

Volunteer training

ABA volunteer training experienced an exciting resurgence particularly in terms of course recruitment and progression this year.

Through frequent 'Volunteering with ABA' promotion sessions alongside active follow-up of expressions of interest, we saw enrolment numbers more than double from the previous year.

A more streamlined approach to training delivery and assessment was rolled out across the course, giving trainees the opportunity to progress through units at a faster pace. In addition, a new program of intensive mentoring was introduced to learners as they work through the first unit and to those who extend their enrolment and need additional support.

Continuous improvement was made to training and assessment materials, following the valuable feedback from learners and through validation and moderation sessions completed by our trainers and assessors.

Our annual Quality Indicator Survey reported even higher satisfaction rates among learners and training personnel than in previous years. Learners valued the exceptional support and advice provided by the trainers (91.3%) and the flexibility of the course. Their overall satisfaction rating of ABA courses rose this year to an amazing 92.5%.



Overall learner satisfaction rating for ABA courses rose this year to an amazing

92.5%

ABA would like to acknowledge the generous support received from the Australian Government. Without this ongoing funding, ABA would not be able to provide the exceptional quality and support it provides to hundreds of thousands of families each year on their breastfeeding journey.

Volunteer reporting

The 2023-24 volunteer reporting survey was completed by 764 volunteers and trainees with an almost 100% completion rate, which was the best completion rate to date.

Of our volunteers:

- One third of volunteers spend 2 to 4 hours a week in their volunteer activities with ABA
- 9% are over 65 years and continue to volunteer and give back to ABA
- 52% used their ABA skill set in their paid workplace during the reporting period, with 93% of these using effective communication skills gained from ABA.

Volunteer continuing education

In 2023–24, two in-person 2-day residential branch conferences were delivered by VIC and WA Branches. Keynote presentations from VIC Branch conference were live-streamed for all volunteers to access.

Thirty-four new online professional development activities were provided for volunteers to view.

Six breastfeeding counsellors achieved their Certificate of Counselling Practice, completing at least 60 hours within 12 months, on the Breastfeeding Helpline.

New professional development resources were created to support volunteers with new

‘Fabulous to be able to meet with other regional representatives and to hear what they are doing. I felt very privileged to be taking the breastfeeding educator trainees through the units and to see how well equipped they are to support mums with breastfeeding information. I am thankful for having some amazing women in my region who just get on and volunteer.’

Heather, ABA volunteer

initiatives and services including Breastfeeding Helpline calls, diversity and inclusion and volunteers returning to their role activities.

Eleven issues of *Talkabout*, ABA’s internal newsletter and professional development publication were published

Live sessions were delivered to support volunteers interested in working on ABA’s national LiveChat service.

Branch conferences

Victorian volunteers celebrated ABA’s 60th anniversary at the annual VIC Branch Conference in February. Frances Fiddian joined the conference to celebrate her 50th year with ABA. The conference provided professional development sessions including presentations on mastitis by Professor Lisa Amir, infant mental health by Frances Bilbao, supporting Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders by Kerry Morrison and Elizabeth Anders, diabetes by Dr Anita Moorhead, and perinatal health by Jenny Addy from Panda.

Our volunteers also appreciated hearing about lived experiences of various breastfeeding challenges. Jennifer Hurrell, Branch President, led a Leaders’ Weekend in June, providing opportunities to co-design solutions with groups and regional representatives and upskill on group administration, recruitment and succession planning, and psychological safety.

Volunteer support

During 2023–24, ABA has focused on acknowledging the breadth of experience of ABA’s volunteers, from our directors to our counsellors, educators and volunteer members who support ABA, mums, and families.

This past year we have focused on prioritising initiatives that reflect the principles of the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033. ABA has continued to align with best practice, re-engaging and revitalising our volunteer workforce whilst broadening opportunities.

By capturing the many volunteering activities in ABA and increasing the number of local volunteer roles, such as group activities organiser, group communications facilitator, and community engagement liaison, ABA is ensuring that volunteers have a positive and fulfilling volunteering experience and one that matches their interests and availability.

‘ABA will always hold a special place in my heart. My early parenting years were made easier and more enjoyable by the community, friendships, and sense of purpose I found in volunteering.’

Bonita, ABA volunteer, VIC

Thank you

Appeals

ABA has two national fundraisers each year, the festive appeal and the tax appeal. In 2023-24 these appeals were successful despite the continued challenging economic climate.

Festive appeal 2023

The theme for our 2023 festive appeal was 'Changing lives one family at a time', which enabled ABA to raise funds and campaign to increase awareness of the Association's services to breastfeeding families.

ABA's services are made possible by passionate ABA volunteers, who made themselves available throughout the holiday season. This campaign showcased Lucy Geng, breastfeeding mum, ABA volunteer, student midwife, and nurse, who benefited from ABA's services when she had her first baby and she joined her ABA local group. The appeal raised \$14,322, which was 15% more than the 2022 festive appeal.

Reference: breastfeeding.asn.au/festive-appeal2023

Tax appeal 2024

This year to commemorate ABA's 60th anniversary, our tax appeal theme was, '60 years, 60 days, 60K!'. The ambitious \$60,000 target reflected our commitment to sustaining vital ABA programs and continuing our support of mums, parents and families for another 60 years. This appeal highlighted our celebratory message reflecting on ABA's journey of supporting families across six decades. From our humble beginnings to our present-day, Australia-wide initiatives, ABA has empowered generations of mums and babies on their unique breastfeeding journeys. Our tax appeal raised an astonishing \$58,000!

Donations have always played a pivotal part in enabling our offerings, informing expectant parents with world-class breastfeeding education and resources, and contributing to our capacity to engage and educate local health professionals about breastfeeding.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we rely on the generosity of donors who share our vision. We thank them as we could not achieve what we do without the generous support of the people who share our vision and commitment to continue our work in the community.

Corporate and pro bono partners

In our support of Australia's mums and families, ABA has been supported by partners and sponsors who share our values. All ABA partners are proudly WHO Code-compliant and are subject to evidence-based assessments.

ABA is delighted to have continued support from ARDO Medical Laborie (OB), as a supporter of ABA's health professional seminars and official prize donor for the Pregnancy Babies and Children's (PBC) Expos. ABA continues to work collaboratively with PBC Expo, enabling ABA to have a presence to over 82,000 attendees across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra and directly connecting the ABA stand with over 6500 parents throughout the year.



Thank you *continued*

ABA acknowledges our long-standing donation partner, Petals Florist Network. Through generously donating 10% of their flower value to our organisation, they in turn assist the wonderful volunteer work that enables ABA to continue its support of breastfeeding mums, parents, and families.

ABA would like to thank Majestic Computer Technology, and Launtel, who support ABA's ICT and telecommunications needs on a national level as we continue to improve our communication and resource provision channels, managing the ABA website, Helpline and LiveChat systems, and supporting a largely remote volunteer and staff workforce.

ABA is also deeply appreciative of the pro bono legal counsel provided by Russell Kennedy Lawyers.

Donors

We would like to extend a special 60th anniversary thanks to the 60 individuals and foundations who have provided significant support this year.

Aaron Gribble	Gregory Burton, SC	Mandy Collins-Woolcock
Alyssa O'Neill	Heather Bryde	Mary Apostolopoulos
Andrew Wandel	Heidi Harwood	Mary Webb
Anna Schell	Helen Henry	Megan Elliott-Rudder
Anna Womersley	Helen Wilson	Melanie Carter
Annalise Thomas	Hilke Dalstra	Mica Huynh
Anthea Fleming	Holly O'Dea	Naomi Hull
Bettina Stewart	Jacki McAvenna	Olga Wilson
Beverley Jan	Jane Franklin	Patrice Laslett
Bruce Hampton	Jennifer Hurrell	Penny Zucchi
Catherine Barry	Jenny Davies	R McHugh
Catherine Bowman	Joanne Smith	Ray Kerr
Catherine Warburton	John Gruner	Roslyn Avery
Clare Frew	Kate Peterson	Ruth Thomas
Cliona Conway-Kearnes	Kathryn Dan-U'Ren	Sally Carratt
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Drummond Foundation	Kirsti Stephens	Sue Robinson
Edward Paull	Konica Kumar	Suzanne Groom
Elizabeth Oei	Kristina Mudge	The Lyle Foundation
Estefania Rieder Batista	Lachlan Byrne	Wei Kang
	Lyndall McCormack	

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launtel

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Images

We thank the following photographers and contributors for the use of their images in this report.

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Nerida Carter, NSW Government House, page 11

Antonia Norton, page 15

Jody Haines, photo on poster, page 18

Judith Lee, pages 29 (repeated on cover) and 31

Natasha Peterson-Jones, page 33 (repeated on cover)

Erin Bailey, Camden-Wollondilly Group, page 36

Rebecca Barta, photo at right, page 39

Yvette O'Dowd, photo of book spines, page 39

Jasmine Keath Photography, photo on book's cover, page 39

Natalie Edge Photography, two photos, page 40

1964 
2024 

Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

*celebrating 60 years of
trusted breastfeeding support*