



Raising the Nation's Breastfeeding Rates

Public hearing on Monday 7 May Parliament House, Canberra

At the upcoming public hearing the House Health Committee will examine research which indicates women could benefit from more breastfeeding education and support before and after child birth to encourage exclusive breastfeeding for six months as recommended by the World Health Organisation.

The Chair Alex Somlyay is a strong supporter of the health benefits of breastfeeding.

"We need to examine why breastfeeding rates drop significantly in the first few months and establish what can be done to increase these rates to ensure Australian children receive the best start to life they can possibly have." Mr Somlyay commented.

The Women's Electoral Lobby believes there is a workforce issue associated with these low rates. Women are having to return to work after 3 months and are not in a position to continue breastfeeding. The Women's Electoral Lobby indicate greater support and flexibility is needed from employers.

The Australian Rural Nurses and Midwives will appear to discuss the importance of the role of the midwife and how their guidance can help women to persevere with breastfeeding.

The Australian College of Midwives highlight the flow on effects from low breastfeeding rates cost the health system millions every year. Children who are not breastfed are at higher risk of developing eczema, diabetes, gastroenteritis, diabetes and lymphatic cancer.

The Committee will also hear from the Dietitians Association of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia who both believe they play a vital role in supporting breastfeeding in the community and educating women in best practice breastfeeding.

The Committee is very interested in strategies to better support breastfeeding mothers, and looks forward to hearing from experts in this field.

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE *Venue:* Committee Room 1S3, Parliament House, Canberra

- 10.30 am** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- 11.00 am** Dieticians Association of Australia.
- 11.25 am** The Australian College of Midwives
- 11.50 am** Women's Electoral Lobby Australia Inc.
- 12.10pm** Australian Rural Nurses and Midwives

This hearing will be webcast live on 7 May on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media interview with the Chairman:

Please contact Mr Somlyay's office on (02) 6277 4727 or his electorate office (07) 5471 6611.

For further information on the inquiry: Contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4145 or email haa.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/haa/breastfeeding/index.htm>