

From:
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Subject:

AMM

I am pleased to see that the House of Representatives is undertaking an inquiry into the issue of breastfeeding. I breastfed 2 children at the end of the 1970s and at that time there was very little support apart from the support that I received from the Nursing Mothers Association (now Australian Breastfeeding Association).

In the intervening years there seems to have been very little progress in the rate of breast feeding and only marginally more support for new mothers to initiate or maintain breast feeding.

Even at the time that I was breast feeding there were considerable research findings to indicate that there were significant benefits to babies and their mothers through breastfeeding. I assume that under your terms of reference (a) - the extent of the health benefits of breastfeeding - that the health benefits to the mother will be examined along with those to the child.

Having worked in a professional role for many years with children with disabilities and their families, I was frustrated by the lack of support for breastfeeding for the families of these children who were already at significant risk of health problems that can use vast quantities of the resources of our health services. The benefits to this group of children and their families and the initiatives to encourage breastfeeding in this group should be also be thoroughly examined. The support for these families needs to occur in the intensive care nurseries around the country and also by the non-government agencies that support these families in many other ways.

Again, I wish to applaud the move to thoroughly examine this issue. I will be interested to read of the submissions and outcomes.

Anne Mackay