

**Submission no. 170**AUTHORISED: 28/3/07 *Pz*

I, Lana van Galen wish to submit the following points in regards to improving the state of breastfeeding in Australia.

- The Australian Breastfeeding Association should be funded as the main resource for information and world's best practice in regards to breastfeeding.
- Parents need to be taught in antenatal classes how to breastfeed and all the possible difficulties that may arise, and how to find help should they require it.
- Myths used in ignorance or as excuses to cease breastfeeding need to be debunked.
- A Human Milk Bank should be free and available in all hospitals.
- Breastfeeding is well know to boost an infant's health but a resent study in the UK of 96,648 nurses who gave birth between 1986 and 2002 and who had spent at least two years of their lives breastfeeding were 19 per cent less likely to suffer a heart attack than those who hadn't breastfed at all, independent of any of the usual risk factors for heart disease. New Scientist, No2591 Australia 17<sup>th</sup> February.
- Teach women how to breastfeed, and all teen ages the importance of breastfeeding. This is not a 'women's' issue, or even for parent's alone.
- Children, teenagers, adults, parents, grandparents and all medical fields need to be introduced, informed and encouraged to support breastfeeding. This should be incorporated into regular personal health education in primary and secondary schooling and reiterated throughout the community as general information.
- Acceptance of breastfeeding as normal baby care requires the entire communities understanding of how important it is. A national television campaign declaring Australia's support for breastfeeding and showing

success stories of breastfeeding.

- Approval and support from the women's partner, and the greater community, are two of the most important factors influencing a women's decision to breastfeed.
- The fact that breasts primary function is for breastfeeding needs to be an idea expressed through media and advertising.
- The impact of artificial baby formula needs to be exposed as the commercial product that it is, rather than as an equal alternative to breastfeeding.
- The marketing strategies of artificial baby food companies need to be examined to expose false, misleading, pervasive or unethical practices.
- The negative effects of formula feeding, including the fact that many effects are yet unknown, need to be emphasized in a way similar to the anti-smoking campaign.
- Formula feeding should be recommended as a last resort medical alternative to breastfeeding and require a medical certificate to be obtained from a pharmacy.
- The incidence of eating disorders, in particular obesity, should be examined to discern their relationship to formula feeding.
- The higher incidence of allergies, asthma, ear, nose and throat infection and immunity need to be examined in relation to non-breast-fed babies and children.

Regards

LanavanGalen

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