



The health benefits of breastfeeding

Public hearing on Monday 26 March Parliament House, Canberra

Following concerns about the length of time some women breastfeed, the House Health Committee will hold its first public hearing for the inquiry into the health benefits of breastfeeding in Canberra on 26 March.

Chairman, Alex Somlyay, said the inquiry is exploring the health benefits of breastfeeding and considering how the government can take a lead in improving the national health by supporting and promoting the practice.

“Although rates of breastfeeding have increased from the low levels of the 1960s and 1970s, currently half of the women who commence breastfeeding have stopped by three months,” Mr Somlyay said.

Mr Somlyay said this falls short of the World Health Organisation recommended level of exclusive breastfeeding for six months.

“Studies have also shown that there are significant economic and social benefits to be gained from breastfeeding.”

The Inquiry will explore the extent of these health benefits as well as gaining more information on the long term benefit of breastfeeding to the Australian health system.

The Committee will hear from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the National Health and Medical Research Council, Dr Julie Smith and a private citizen. The hearing is open to all members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Venue: Committee Room 2R2, Parliament House, Canberra

- **10.30am – 11.10am** Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing
- **11.10am – 11.50am** NHMRC
- **11.50am -12.10pm** Dr Julie Smith
- **12.10pm – 12.30pm** Private citizen
- **12.30pm** End of program

For media interview with the Chairman:

Please contact Mr Somlyay's office on (02) 6277 4727.

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/healthfunding/index.htm>