



Queensland Health to appear

Brisbane public hearing – Tuesday 17 April 2007

Following concerns about some women not being encouraged to breastfeed for the first six months of an infant's life, a federal parliamentary inquiry into the health benefits of breastfeeding will hear from Queensland Health in Brisbane next week.

Chairman of the House of Representatives Health Committee, Alex Somlyay, looks forward to investigating Queensland Health's views on the breastfeeding issue at a public hearing in Manly.

Mr Somlyay says the inquiry is exploring the health benefits of breastfeeding and considering how the federal 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," he said.

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

The Committee will hear from the Queensland branch of the Australian Breastfeeding Association, as well as leading academics and lactation practitioners. The hearing is open to all members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Venue: Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, 578 Royal Esplanade, Manly, Qld

- 1.00pm – 1.45pm Queensland Health
- 1.45pm – 2.15pm Australian Breastfeeding Association, Qld Branch
- 2.15pm – 2.45pm Virginia Thorley
- 3.00pm – 3.30pm Professor Desley Hegney and Maxine O'Brien
- 3.30pm – 4.00pm Bayside Breastfeeding Clinic, Robyn Noble
- 4.00pm – 4.30pm Community statements

For media interview with the Chairman:

Please contact Mr Somlyay's electorate office on (07) 5471 6611 or parliament house (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/breastfeeding/index.htm>