

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to offer my views to your inquiry into how breastfeeding can be better supported. I am a mother of two and both have been exclusively breastfed - my oldest until he was 14 months and my youngest three months and counting!

I feel that there are a number of ways in which breastfeeding could be encouraged.

The first is to provide decent paid maternity leave to working mothers - six months minimum. We are so far behind other countries in this regard it is not funny. I firmly believe that many mums would just find combining breastfeeding and paid work simply too hard and choose their family finances over breastfeeding. This is of course completely understandable, but with paid maternity leave they would be encouraged to go on.

The second is to ensure that all workplaces have a place - not a toilet!! - where breastfeeding mothers can go and express. This could take the form of making sure that all workplaces have a "Breastfeeding Policy" similar to an "OH and S " policy. I have worked in a workplace where we had a specific room - it was comfortable and such a benefit to us feeding Mums - there were a couple of us there at the time expressing a few times a day.

My third comment is that anything to do with breastfeeding should be able to be claimed as a tax deduction. This should cover maternity bras, subscriptions and donations to the Australian Breastfeeding Assoc, books on breastfeeding, breastfeeding clothing and breast pumps. None of these things are things you would be buying if you didnt want the best possible option for your child.

Thankyou for the chance to air my opinions. I wish you all the best with this very important issue.

Nina Hooper