



NEW SOUTH WALES NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY FEDERATION NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH



POSITION STATEMENT ON SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES

Re-Endorsed by Annual Conference 2021

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association
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Position Statement on Supporting Breastfeeding Employees

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association recognises the importance of breastfeeding for the health of infants and mothers. Employees who are lactating mothers are entitled to lactation breaks for breast feeding, expressing milk or other activities necessary to the act of breastfeeding or expressing milk and this is in addition to any other rest period and meal break.

Support is provided for the aim of the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy: 2019 and beyond to "build a society in which systems and settings support and value breastfeeding as the normal way to feed infants and young children"¹.

IT IS THE POSITION OF THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION THAT:

1. Workplace initiatives, which facilitate and promote the continuation of breastfeeding by supporting breastfeeding employees, should be provided.
2. Workplaces should provide flexible working arrangements and other conditions, including leave arrangements, to support breastfeeding employees. Employees needing to leave the workplace during time normally required for duty to seek support or treatment in relation to breastfeeding and the transition to the workplace may utilise sick leave or access flexible working hours, where applicable.
3. In accordance with award provisions, workplaces should provide appropriate facilities, including a private area set aside for the purpose of breastfeeding, expressing and storage of expressed breast milk. Facilities such as a table, refrigeration, a sink, and a comfortable, upright chair should be provided where practicable. Where it is not practicable to provide these facilities, discussions between the manager and employee will need to take place to attempt to identify reasonable alternative arrangements for the employee's lactation needs.
4. Workplaces should provide appropriate breaks for the purpose of breastfeeding or expressing breast milk. A full-time employee working 4 hours or less on any one day is entitled to a maximum of two paid lactation breaks of up to 30 minutes each day. A part-time employee working 4 hours or less on any one day is entitled to only one paid lactation break of up to 30 minutes on any day so worked.
5. Employees experiencing difficulties in effecting the transition from home-based breastfeeding to the workplace will have telephone access in paid time to a free breastfeeding consultative service, such as that provided by the Australian Breastfeeding Association's Helpline Service or the Public Health System.



6. Workplaces should facilitate arrangements that assist each employee to meet their infant feeding goals. This should include a requirement for all employees to assist in providing a positive atmosphere of support for breastfeeding employees. Managers need to meet with lactating employees to plan and discuss their working hours and, in the case of employees working offsite, to negotiate an acceptable work arrangement that suits both parties.
7. It is an expectation that all staff members show breastfeeding women respect and dignity and refrain from behaviours that discriminate or pass judgement on parenting choices.
8. Workplaces should display and distribute information, where appropriate, to inform employees who are pregnant or considering pregnancy².

NOTES:

This policy should be read with reference to the:

- [NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977](#)
- [Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999](#)
- [Crown Employees \(Public Service Conditions of Employment\) Reviewed Award 2009](#)

REFERENCES:

1. [COAG Health Council \(2019\). Australian national breastfeeding strategy: 2019 and beyond](#), p10.
2. [Australian Breastfeeding Association \(2020\). Breastfeeding friendly workplace.](#)