



BREASTFEEDING – It's Time to Talk

'Breastfeeding – It's Time to Talk' was the theme for the 2011 World Breastfeeding Week and is being used to launch this information and Sutherland Shire Council's Breastfeeding Policy.

The theme acknowledges the importance of communication to enhance perceptions and knowledge about breastfeeding throughout the broader community. It aims to bring the dialogue to life between caregivers of the past, present and future to enable the ongoing promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding. (Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

As you are aware it is unlawful to discriminate against another based on age, gender, race, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or carer responsibilities. From 21 June 2011 amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) added breastfeeding as a separate ground of discrimination in certain areas of public life, including employment. As such, **it is now unlawful to directly or indirectly discriminate against a woman who is breastfeeding, which includes expressing milk.**

This information has been created to ensure all staff are aware of their obligations when dealing with internal staff and members of the public.

Internally, a Breastfeeding Policy has been created to support both the employee and the manager in facilitating a breastfeeding/expressing arrangement to encourage and assist women in caring for their baby when returning to work.

Do you work with members of the public in areas such as, catering/hospitality, beaches, libraries or the leisure centres? If yes then this impacts you.

This legislative change means that you need to ensure you manage all situations involving breastfeeding/expressing with care.

For example, if a customer complained about observing another customer breastfeeding you must advise them they have the right to breastfeed and it is against the law to discriminate against the breastfeeding mother. If required, you could discuss options with the complaining customer such as moving them to a different table/area. If the customer is still not happy, direct the customer to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to discuss the legislation.

The outcome of having this information available and being applied appropriately will ensure Sutherland Shire Council:

- Supports our external community
- Encourages and assists women in caring for their baby when returning to work
- Promotes an environment where communication about breastfeeding requirements is encouraged between a manager and their employee
- Provides flexible options on how to manage breastfeeding/expressing in the workplace, and
- Meets legislation.

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This information was created in a joint effort by your Personnel Department and the Fair Workplace Team

Do you have a question?

Personnel – 9710 0506 or Fair Workplace – 9710 0679
or email fairworkplace@ssc.nsw.gov.au

