

## PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

# Office Procedural Circular No. 22 Workplace breastfeeding policy

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### Document History

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## **Part 1—Introduction**

### ***Background***

1 The Australian Government recognises that breastfeeding is important in establishing good health throughout life and encourages, supports and promotes breastfeeding in the Australian community. Research has shown there are significant benefits when breastfeeding employees are supported. These include:

- (a) reduced absenteeism because babies are generally healthier;
- (b) lower staff turnover and higher morale;
- (c) increased productivity due to reduced periods of maternity leave;
- (d) enhanced recruitment and retention strategies;
- (e) maintenance of the skills base;
- (f) demonstrated employer commitment to equal opportunity and workplace diversity.

2 OPC aims to provide a family-friendly workplace that enables mothers to balance breastfeeding and their work responsibilities.

3 OPC is able to show an ongoing commitment to providing a supportive environment for breastfeeding women by gaining accreditation from the Australian Breastfeeding Association (*ABA*) as a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace'. Achieving and maintaining accreditation is based on compliance with criteria for suitable workplace facilities and policies, as assessed by trained representatives of the ABA.

4 This Circular provides guidance for the provision of workplace facilities, and practices which support breastfeeding women to meet both their work and family commitments.

## **Part 2—Provision of workplace facilities**

5 OPC's first-aid room provides appropriate, private (lockable) facilities for employees to feed a baby, express milk, change nappies, etc. This room is furnished with the following:

- (a) a sink for washing of hands and equipment;
- (b) a small refrigerator for the storage of breast milk;
- (c) a small table to support breastfeeding equipment;
- (d) a power point needed for the operation of a breast pump and the refrigerator;
- (e) a cupboard for storage of equipment and supplies;
- (f) comfortable seating for breastfeeding.

- 6 Employees using these facilities have the responsibility to:
- (a) supply appropriate storage containers for expressed breast milk and to clearly label these containers before placing them in the refrigerator; and
  - (b) observe any other guidelines for the use of the room.

7 It is noted that OPC does not intend that an employee would care for a baby at work for extended periods as a substitute for other child care arrangements. Further, if an employee's baby is brought to OPC for feeding, that employee is responsible for looking after the baby. It is not part of the duties of any other staff to look after the baby.

## **Part 3—Other**

### ***Other support***

- 8 OPC will also provide:
- (a) information about our breastfeeding policies in our induction program; and
  - (b) a “comeback pack” for staff commencing maternity leave that would include information on our own policies, and low-cost resources from the ABA.

9 Naomi Carde has a Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education (Counselling). Naomi is able to provide counselling, information and support to staff on breastfeeding and related issues.

10 If Naomi Carde is unavailable the ABA has trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors available on the National Breastfeeding Helpline 24 hours per day that can provide information and support. Call 1800 mum 2 mum – 1800 686 2 686 (1800 686 268 for VoIP callers) or visit [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au) for email counselling and contact details in your state.

11 As OPC management recognises that the individual needs of mother, carer and baby will vary, we are committed to provide flexible work arrangements that will meet the needs of the employee as well as operational requirements. Therefore, employees are encouraged to discuss their individual circumstances with FPC or another member of the SMT.

### ***Related policy documents***

- OPC No. 40—Flex Time
- OPC No. 63—Workplace Diversity Program
- OPC No. 65—Flexible Working Hours
- OPC's workplace agreement

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