

ANU Gender Institute grant follow up report: Encouraging innovation in breastfeeding support: report and outcomes

PART A	Brief outcomes report
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Name of grant winner: **Julie Smith**

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Title of grant: **Workshop and research project: ‘Encouraging innovation in breastfeeding support; a workshop on best practice policies for workplaces, childcare and mother and child health’**

Website link: http://www.acerh.edu.au/programs/Economics_of_Work.php

Encouraging innovation in breastfeeding support: report and outcomes

Forum: ‘From Rights to Reality, Protecting Breastfeeding in Workplaces and Childcare’

A forum titled ‘From Rights to Reality, Protecting Breastfeeding in Workplaces and Childcare’ was held on Thursday, 9 May 2013, between 10.15am to 5.15pm at ANU University House. The forum was a platform to discuss new research on best practice support for breastfeeding in workplaces and childcare settings, including the effects of time stress on health. The forum was supported by an ANU Gender Institute grant and was presented by the Australian Centre for Economic Research on Health (ACERH). The forum program contains details of the speakers and their presentations. The program and all presentations are available on the ACERH website: http://www.acerh.edu.au/programs/Economics_of_Work.php.

The Director of ACERH, Professor Jim Butler, opened the event. Presenters include researchers at the ANU, Flinders University, University of NSW, Queensland University of Technology, and the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).



The ANU was considered as a case study based on preliminary results from four surveys of the university’s workplaces and childcare services.



A panel of policy experts then led a discussion on how health, childcare and employment policies and practices might bring human rights protocols into reality for new mothers and their young children. The panel was chaired

by Peter Martin, National economics correspondent for *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Canberra Times*, and panelists were Dr Helen Watchirs (ACT Human Rights Commissioner); Ms Sandra Burgess, ACT Health Directorate ACT, Breastfeeding Strategic Framework Project Officer; Dr Judith Galtry, (Adjunct Fellow, ACERH, ANU).



Other participants in the forum (12) comprised postgraduate students, ANU research and professional staff, staff from ACT Health and volunteers from the Australian Breastfeeding Association. Feedback on the event was positive, and all respondents of the evaluation survey (6) gave 'excellent' or 'good' ratings to key aspects of the forum including 'quality of presentations', 'panel discussion', 'relevance to you and your work' and 'overall forum experience'. Most useful for participants were the short well-timed presentations, informal breaks, detailed panel discussion, and the presentations providing practical information and putting mothers' perspectives in research. Respondents would have liked more time for questions and wider, earlier publicity about the forum.

Research Study on Support for Breastfeeding Mothers in ANU Workplace and Childcare settings

The research component of the project aimed to document the experiences of employees at the ANU, as the basis for recommendations for the ANU on providing best practice support from breastfeeding in its workplace and childcare settings.

A series of surveys were conducted to assess the level of breastfeeding support offered in ANU workplaces and childcare services, and the barriers and enablers to breastfeeding experienced by ANU employees, and mothers using ANU childcare. The four online surveys targeted;

- 1) ANU HR managers,
- 2) ANU employees,
- 3) Directors of childcare services located on ANU campus, and
- 4) Mother clients of these ANU childcare services.

Both quantitative data and qualitative data were collected in the surveys.

Complete data was received from 30 mothers using ANU childcare services, and 36 mothers employed by the ANU. All 4 ANU childcare services responded to the survey. Only one ANU manager completed the employer survey.

Survey data is now being currently being further analysed as the basis for a 1000 word report with recommendations for the ANU's Diversity and Inclusion Unit.

An abstract based on analysis of data from the survey of childcare services has been accepted for a presentation at the Australian Breastfeeding Association's golden jubilee national conference and at the Melbourne Convention Centre from 1-3 August 2014. <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/liquidgold/program> .

Gender Institute Seminar

Research findings will be presented at a future Gender Institute Seminar focused on the significance for gender equity practices at the ANU.