

CONTEXT

The Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) engaged HMA to

'... undertake an independent evaluation of the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat service run by the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).'

The ABA is a volunteer-based organisation that provides information, education and support services to initiate and maintain breastfeeding. The ABA offers two key services delivered by trained volunteers: the National Breastfeeding Helpline (24/7) and the web-based LiveChat service (select times on weekdays). These services provide support, education and advice to breastfeeding mothers and families across Australia.

The Australian Government has funded the ABA for the National Breastfeeding Helpline since 2008. Although volunteers staff the Helpline and LiveChat, funding from the Department supports the training, travel, and infrastructure. For instance, the funding pays the tuition fees for every new volunteer to obtain a Certificate IV in Breastfeeding Education, ensuring counsellors and educators are well trained.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The aims of the evaluation are to:

- identify and assess the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services provided by the ABA
- provide recommendations to improve the National Breastfeeding Helpline and LiveChat services to ensure its ongoing sustainability.

PROJECT METHOD AND TIMING

The Evaluation of the National Breastfeeding Helpline commenced in March 2024 and is scheduled to be completed by September 2024. HMA will take a staged approach to the evaluation, including the development of a detailed evaluation plan underpinned by a program logic, a cost-efficiency analysis of the services, and data collection from a range of sources, including stakeholder consultation and consumer surveys. The final report will make recommendations to inform the future of breastfeeding services in Australia.

The table on the following page presents the project methodology and timing.

DATE		STAGE	METHOD
2024	10 Apr	1	Project Initiation and Set up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan • Project information bulletin • Status update template
	8 Apr – 28 Jun	2	Scoping Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary consultations with ABA personnel • Desktop analysis and Literature review • Preliminary Consultation Report including preliminary consultations, program logic, evaluation framework & consultation framework • Ethics submission

	3 Jun – 12 Jul	3	Development of data collection instruments
	15 Jul – 6 Sep	4	Data Collection and Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data analysis • Cost-efficiency analysis • Stakeholder consultations • Volunteer focus group • Consumer survey • Consumer focus group • Interim report
	9 Sep – 27 Sep	5	Draft and Final report

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact HMA or the Department if you would like further information.

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