

Supporting Breastfeeding in Charles Sturt

CONSULTATION REPORT

ZOCK
MELON

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Introduction

The following report outlines the key findings from a consultation process that occurred between March and May 2015 by OPAL Charles Sturt. It was informed by a similar consultation by OPAL Campbelltown that occurred in 2013.

This report has been compiled by Kristy Schirmer, Principal Consultant, Zockmelon who facilitated six of the seven community consultations in partnership with OPAL staff.

Terms of reference

1. This consultation seeks to document the barriers and enablers to breastfeeding in the Charles Sturt community.
2. The consultation seeks feedback from:
 - a. Mothers in the Charles Sturt area who have or currently are breastfeeding, but also includes perspectives from:
 - i. Those who have not breastfed, to identify potential barriers
 - ii. Those who may choose to do so in the future
 - iii. Fathers and carers
 - b. Staff of the City of Charles Sturt
 - i. Those who have or have not breastfed
 - ii. Those who may choose to do so in the future

Methods

Consistent with the terms of reference, the consultation process involved speaking directly with the community and also to staff. A face to face engagement process (Appendix A) and survey tool was utilised for both stakeholder groups.



Record of consultations

Seven separate consultation sessions were held with local mothers and babies utilising existing services in the Charles Sturt area. One face to face consultation was held with staff.

Facilitation of the discussion was undertaken by Kristy Schirmer (consultant) and notes by Camilla Leaver or Stephanie Leggett (OPAL Charles Sturt). Camilla Leaver (OPAL Charles Sturt) facilitated one of the community sessions. The discussion notes were typed up in the following hours after the consultation to assist with recall and accuracy.

Overall approximately 55 mothers actively contributed to discussions during the face to face consultations, with some leaving early while others stayed for the duration of the consultation.

From observation of the focus groups, the majority of mothers were first time mothers of children under 12 months of age, however there were participants with 1-2 year olds as well as second time around (or third) time around parents. There were some grandparents in the community consultations however they didn't generally participate. In one of the consultations there were around two fathers present who joined the discussion.

A survey was undertaken with staff and members of the community. A Facebook post was used to promote the community survey.

Key statistics:

- Overall during the consultation stage the project **made contact with approximately 400** people.
- The project was informed by **direct feedback from 100** people.
- Of this, **21% were staff, 79% were community**.
- The **majority of our feedback was received face to face** (58% of total feedback collected over 8 sessions).
- 40% was through surveys (2 surveys) with a total of 40 respondents
- 2% through Facebook (1 post).



Face to face consultations

Date	Group	Number present (excluding facilitators)	Number participated in discussion / direct feedback
30/3/2015	West Lakes Library Baby time	80	15
1/4/2015	Findon Library Baby Time	80	8
7/4/2015	Civic Centre Library Baby Time	35	7
9/4/2015	Hindmarsh Library Baby Time	50	9
10/4/2015	Henley Beach Library Baby Time	60	6
4/5/2015	Charles Sturt staff	3	3
19/5/2015	Cafe Tuesday, Seaton	Approx. 15	Approx. 6
28/5/2015	English as a Second Language group	Approx. 9	Approx. 4

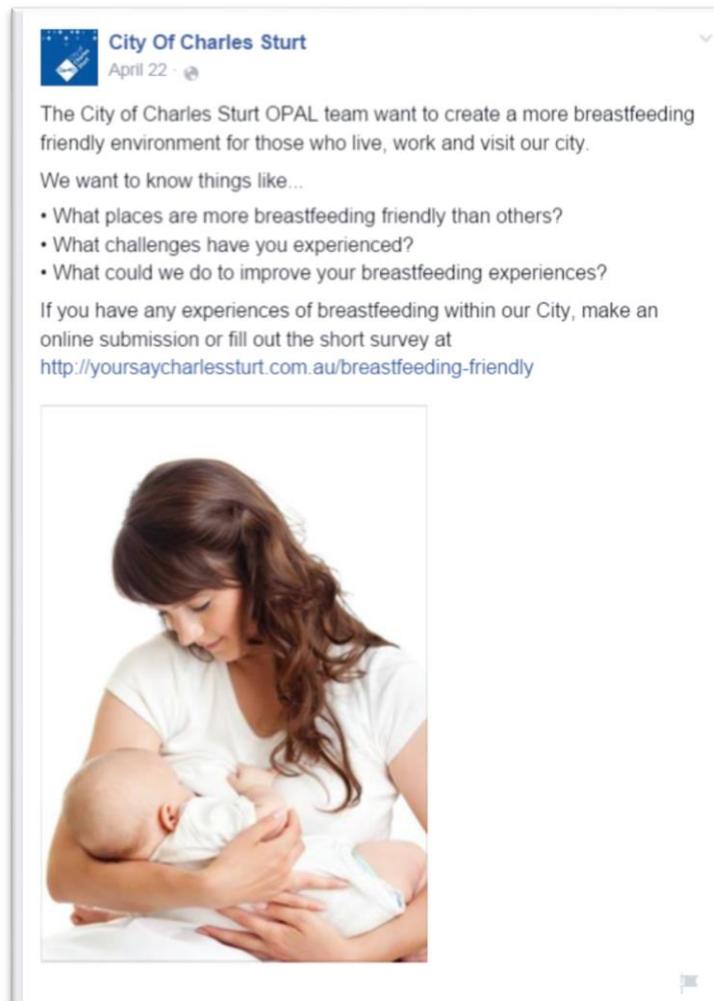
Survey based consultation

Facebook	67	2
Staff survey		18
Community survey		22
TOTAL	400	100

Facebook

On 22nd April 2015 the City of Charles Sturt posted an update on their Facebook page (link to original post: <https://www.facebook.com/CityOfCharlesSturt/photos/a.361287670558609.81672.354773051210071/905262126161158/?type=1&theater>) to promote the Community Survey. This was the primary distribution method for the community survey. The post reached (was seen by) 1,897 people, and resulted in:

- 47 likes
- 10 shares
- 10 comments
- On the original post (2 direct feedback)



Screenshot of Facebook post about the community survey which resulted in 67 engagements (likes, comments and shares) and 2 direct feedback comments.

Media

News of the project was seen by a wider audience of approximately 69,000¹ through a news story on 9 News Adelaide. The clip of the news story can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daiHuasTfaI>

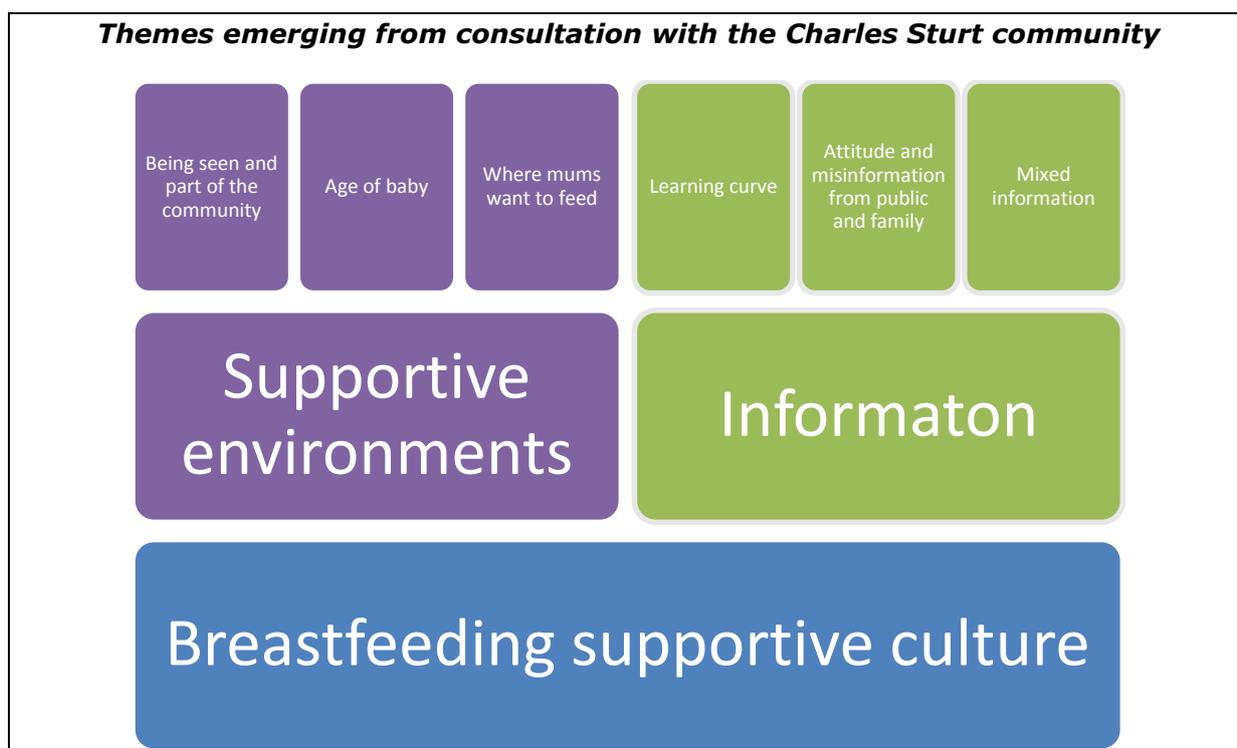
¹ <http://www.tvtonight.com.au/2015/05/thursday-14-may-2015.html>

Results

Part 1 – Charles Sturt Community

A **breastfeeding supportive culture** underpinned the results of the community based consultation.

'Information' and 'Supportive environments' were the two key subthemes, and within each of these the other themes were able to be classified. Each of the key quotes and notes were able to be classified into one of the 6 sub themes.



Supportive Environment sub themes

Being seen and part of the community

Description of this theme:

This is possibly the most frequently discussed of all the sub-themes that emerged from the consultation. Mums and families spoke about feeding behind closed doors and away from the public eye, rather than being in amongst the general population. Mothers identified the importance of seeing breastfeeding in order to normalise it, the anxiety self-conscious mothers feel feeding in public, and perceived looks from passers-by. Feedback indicated that breastfeeding in the community can be fraught for many mothers.

- "I used to just feed in the car" (mum at West Lakes)
- "I opted to express and feed with a bottle instead of breastfeeding" (Mum at Findon)
- "I avoid breastfeeding in public - I try and plan around it" (Mum at Civic)

- *"If it (breastfeeding session) is not smooth, easy and quiet, people might think I don't know how to feed"* (Mum at Henley)
- *"Seeing others breastfeeding and thinking 'how come it works for them' and doesn't work for me?"* (Mum at Henley)

Not all mums had issues with feeding in public

- *"You get more relaxed with feeding in public with the second child"* (Mum at Hindmarsh)
- *"Now I couldn't give a stuff what people think"* (Mum at Hindmarsh)
- *"When I became more familiar with breastfeeding my other 4 kids, I became a lot more comfortable to feed my baby anywhere as long as there was a seat to sit on, as you learn how to feed more discretely with more experience"* (Facebook comment)

The so called 'looks', or perception of looks, from others demonstrated that breastfeeding is not seen as a normal thing to do in public.

- *"I got a few looks when I was out and about"* (Mum at West Lakes)
- *"It only took a few 'looks' and that was me, done!"* (Mum at West Lakes)
- *"People like to stare"* (Mum at Seaton)
- *"This is the only occasion in your life where it becomes normal to get your breasts out in public. It takes a while to get used to!"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"I think the less people have to breastfeed out in the open...the better and more comfortable they will feel."* (Community survey respondent)
- *"Societal pressure to 'cover up' as breasts are seen more as sexual objects"* (Community survey respondent)

The perception of looks from others was a contributor to body consciousness and embarrassment:

- *"If I had to I'd sit there going beetroot red. I feel very self-conscious"* (Mum at Civic)

One mother also reported not fitting in with other mothers if they were breastfeeding:

- *"Not many people breastfeed & when you have a baby you realize how few do. By 8 weeks hardly anyone continues & those that are mostly mix feed. Because so few people do it, you feel like the odd one out and people are very rude and make comments. I tend now to only go to places I know are "pro-breastfeeding" or have great parent rooms so I miss out on new places and am restricted in where I go."* (Community survey respondent)

Age of baby

Description of this theme:

Mothers reported difficulty feeding both newborn babies and older babies (anything older than 3-4 months). This means that aside from a brief 1-3 month old age bracket, feeding babies can typically be challenging when they are still 'getting the hang of it' or if their baby is distractible. In other words, mothers reported that almost all babies can be challenging at times to feed.

- *"Is not easy to be discreet especially if you're feeding a newborn or a squirmy toddler"* (Community survey respondent)



- *"I tend to feed less in public now my baby is older"* (Mum at Findon)
- *"It can be distracting, then they swing their head around and there you are - exposed!"* (Mum at Seaton)

Where mums want to feed

Description of this theme:

Participants were very clear on the features of breastfeeding supportive environments, both in community places and spaces and defined breastfeeding facilities such as parenting rooms.

Cafes:

- *"If they do good coffee"* (Mum at West Lakes)
- *"I usually go to a bigger, larger cafe with more space and breastfeed at the table"* (Mum at Findon)
- *"I don't look for it but when it's there it makes me feel welcome"* (in relation to 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' signs) (Mum at West Lakes)
- *"Breastfeeding stickers are not just for the breastfeeding women, it's for all the other patrons to know that breastfeeding is ok"* (Mum at Henley)

Parenting rooms:

- *"I need to pull up my clothes (dress) and move it (my clothing aside) so I prefer somewhere private, a private room not in public"* (Mum from Muslim Women's Group)
- Hot water is needed for parents who are gavage feeding prem babies
- Option for private spaces were important for mothers if expressing, using nipple shields, taking a long time to feed, or even when just finding their feet.
- Needs to be comfortable
- Soap and/or hand sanitiser
- Provision of wipes
- Cleanliness e.g. changing nappy bins, toilet area not crammed with other things
- Toddler toilets
- Wipe-able pillows/cushions
- Somewhere to keep older kids safe and entertained (e.g. gated areas, activity stations on the wall)
- Power points for expressing equipment
- Room for a pram
- West Lakes is *"Rolls Royce of Parenting rooms"* (Mum at West Lakes)
- Nice feel, carpet, rooms with curtain, microwave if needed. Not feeling like you are breastfeeding in a toilet. It's also a good "chill out" spot
- Less decoration and free from stimulation when trying to feed
- Security or alert button for the safety of mums in parenting rooms
- Chairs with no arms for longer babies and feeding twins
- Feeding area should always be separate from toilets
- *"If there are better facilities, you'd take the time to drive there"* (Mum at Hindmarsh)
- *"If there was a place that was good and supportive you will go back there and tell other mums"* (Mum at Hindmarsh)
- Would be great to have breastfeeding facilities at schools

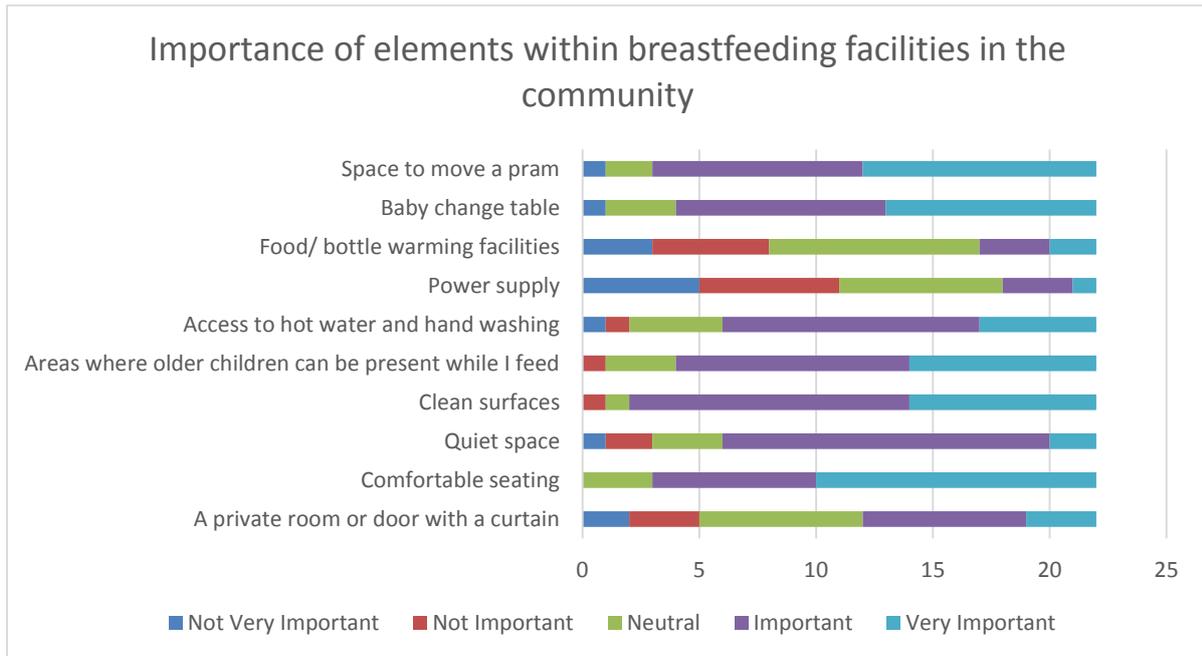
Outdoor spaces:

- When outdoors, shade is needed for hot days



- Park benches with backs are the best for being comfortable for long feeds
- *"In public spaces like parks, some options for privacy would be good"* (mum at Hindmarsh)
- Change tables

The community survey also gave some good insights into priority features of breastfeeding spaces. The top priorities were: cleanliness, comfortable seating, quiet, and space to move a pram. Change tables, and areas for older children to be present/safe were also important.



Information sub themes

Learning curve

Description of this theme:

Mothers reported the learning curve they experienced when their babies were born, which in part related to their own expectations of breastfeeding, and were in part compounded by inconsistent information and support from others.

- That you need to keep persisting because breastfeeding is not easy to start with
- There are many ways to breastfeed (expressing, gavage feeding, bottle, cup, and breast)
- *"I just thought it was this magical connection"* (Mum at Findon)
- Not all people knew that breastfeeding was protected by law in the library based consultations, however 95% of survey respondents said they were aware of this
- Mothers reported varying advice and experiences from GPs, Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS), Parent Helpline
- *"I am the only person in my family who has breastfed"* (Mum at Henley)

Attitude and misinformation from the public and family

Description of this theme:

Misinformation not just in the broader community, but from family and friends, was identified as a frustration for mothers.

- *"Breastfeeding is not 'in' anymore"* (Mum at Henley)
- Opinions of others e.g. not feeding past 6 or 12 months.
- *"People need educating. My partner doesn't understand why I still breastfeed"* (Mum at Seaton)
- *"Can't we teach children in schools that boobs aren't to be sexualised"* (Mum at Seaton)
- *"More information definitely needs to be out there for new mums. They need to know how normal it is, how other cultures around the world do it where there is no fall back to formula"* (Community survey respondent)

Mixed information

Description of this theme:

Mothers gave many examples where they had received inconsistent, inaccurate or mis-timed information from health professionals. Key times included pregnancy, early post-partum, and for second time parents.

- Mixed experiences from hospital with each hospital mentioned having different services for breastfeeding support, advice, information and education
- Mothers showed keenness for more breastfeeding services in pregnancy so it's not such a shock when the baby is born
- Mothers suggested that services should be integrated and cross promoted e.g. though Council, CaFHS and immunisation clinics.
- Getting GPs on board so they gave consistent advice
- Support needed for second time mothers, especially if breastfeeding the first baby didn't work as planned
- Timing of support doesn't coincide with help. E.g. mothers feel left without support if breastfeeding issues arise after their universal contact visit

Recommendations from the community to the City of Charles Sturt

Community members were very forthcoming with ideas and suggestions for Charles Sturt to take on board. These suggestions are all listed as follows:

- *"It would be good if you could inform council if you had a bad experience at a place"* (Mum at West Lakes)
- Lactation consultants at local services that mums attend, e.g. library services, immunisation clinics
- Breast pump hire or information on local options
- Educating the public and dealing with prejudices
- Pictures of facilities available to visualise it in order to plan in advance
- Help parents become more aware of services that already exist (e.g. information online, Child and Youth Health (CYH), Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA))
- Start a mother's group at a community centre
- Improvements in council facilities e.g. parenting rooms at libraries



- List of parent rooms and breastfeeding friendly places
- Consider exposure to elements at beachside – mothers reported a lack of suitable space to feed in Henley/Grange
- *"The parents room in the 'Henley Pavilion' is great for nappy changes but isn't really a very nice place to breastfeed - windowless, stark, probably full of germs - I wouldn't want to sit and feed him in the bathroom at home either"* (Community survey respondent)
- Supporting a post-natal depression group
- *"Second time mums support group"* with the second you have to make more of an effort to tap into mother's groups.
- A breastfeeding blog
- Lactation consultant / outreach at immunisation clinics *"because you always have to wait after immunisations"* (Mum at Seaton)
- *"A one stop shop - like a 'Second Story' (Youth service) for parents"* (Mum at Seaton)
- Show and tell for equipment e.g. re-usable breast pads, sharing nursing bras.
- Recipes for increasing supply of breastmilk
- *"Tips about good spots to breastfeed"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"Posters in buses and on your billboards about breastfeeding being welcome in the community and the importance of it being visible"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"Maybe council could host a breastfeeding info session or catch up morning tea for new mums so they can meet others and practice feeding in public."* (Community survey respondent)
- *"As an employer it [Council] should ensure that it supports its employees in breast feeding"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"A place to breastfeed quietly at public events. I have had to use a St. John's ambulance vehicle before"* (Community survey respondent)
- Better facilities in libraries
- *"Lead by example and have change and nursing facilities where possible in council buildings and toilets. Maybe have lactation rooms for staff as well?"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"Host a 'Breastfeeding sit in' to promote feeding in public - make it so that it is a normal thing to do"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"Do something to celebrate national breastfeeding week"* (Community survey respondent)
- *"Information given to new migrant mums that they are able to breastfeed in public if they feel comfortable to do so"* (Community survey respondent)

Please note that several participants expressed gratitude that the City of Charles Sturt was showing an interest in supporting breastfeeding:

- *"It's great that Council is interested"* (Mum at West Lakes)
- *"I think it's wonderful the Council is thinking about this"* (Community survey respondent)

Part 2 – Charles Sturt Staff

Around 22 people contributed to the staff consultation (3 in the face to face consultation, and 18 via survey).

The staff survey contained questions relating to how staff thought the City of Charles Sturt can support breastfeeding for the wider community, and for themselves as staff members.

Staff views on how Charles Sturt can support breastfeeding in the community

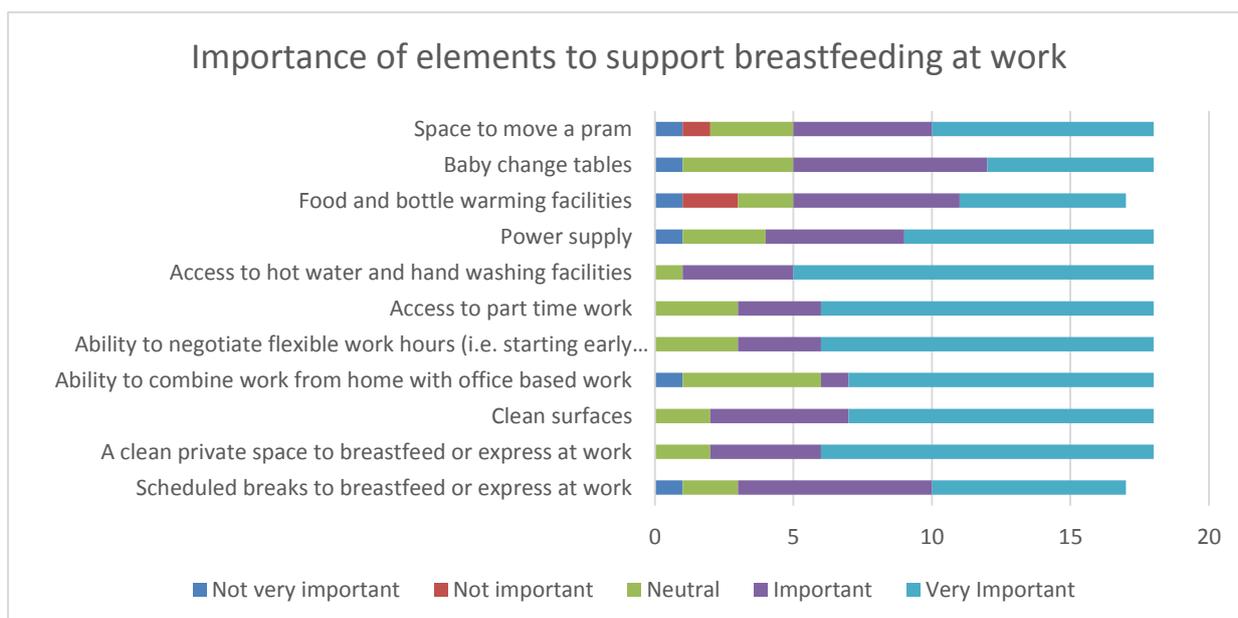
Provision of suitable facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically, in council locations like libraries and civic centre
Supporting a positive culture in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Council could play a role in helping to educate the public about supporting breastfeeding, and the importance of this to babies and mothers" Role of the media "The media has the power to change public opinion and to educate at the same time." Education and awareness raising

When staff were asked to name breastfeeding friendly locations, it is worth noting that not all locations listed were within the Council area, including Marion and Burnside shopping centres.

Staff views on how Charles Sturt can support breastfeeding for staff

Physical facilities, flexibility and workplace ethos and policy were the key elements staff described as supporting a supportive culture for breastfeeding in the workplace.

Via the survey staff also gave some more quantitative insights into what should be in place to best support breastfeeding in the workplace which included hot water and hand washing, a clean and private space, scheduled breaks, and flexible work hours.



Theme	Comments from Staff Survey
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing a private room in the Depot and Civic Centre for breastfeeding • Have private spaces to allow ease of expressing and fridge available that staff can store expressed breast milk & sterilizing capabilities • Provide places to breastfeed and express. Especially at the libraries! Predominately a female work place there is generally someone pregnant or with small children at only one time. Staff have been embarrassed expressing milk in work rooms without locks because the alternative is doing it on a toilet • A room or space in the workplace that is private with a comfortable chair for feeding a baby (E.g. brought in by other parent or carer) or for expressing milk • Provide access to private areas where mothers feel comfortable to breastfeed • Have a designated area for mums and bubs • By providing a space to express and keep milk and time to do it. • Icon logo stickers on doors to show breastfeeding friendly zone and facilities available • Room or a portable concertina screen with comfy chairs should be in centres, libraries and at events
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible working hours are absolutely critical for many new mothers, including regular breaks for mothers who need to leave work to breastfeed (if this is requested/needed) • Offer extra paid morning and afternoon breaks. Have a small room dedicated to this that mothers can use • Offer part time hours over full time, extra paid breaks and a room for mothers to utilize
Workplace ethos and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By promoting a mother friendly work place and being clear on the guidelines and facilities to support this • Have understanding and supporting leaders/managers

Not all respondents of the survey were supportive of provisions or support of breastfeeding by employees. For example one employee stated, *"I believe the work place is just that, a work place"*. However, of the 18 staff survey responses there was one expressly negative respondent towards the initiative.

It is worth noting that some community members also highlighted the role and importance of Charles Sturt taking a leadership role.

- *"As an employer it should ensure that it supports its employees in breast feeding"*
- *"Lead by example and have change and nursing facilities where possible in council buildings and toilets. Maybe have lactation rooms for staff as well?"* (Separate comments from community)

Summary of recommendations from community and staff

Key areas	Foster breastfeeding supportive environments for the Charles Sturt community	Make information about breastfeeding accessible, local and timely	Support breastfeeding for City of Charles Sturt staff
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support a culture of seeing breastfeeding in public including through using breastfeeding images (without a cover) such as in 'Hello, I'm Charles Sturt' images and other council materials. 2. Support further implementation 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' stickers and promotion in public places and businesses. 3. In libraries, create breastfeeding comfortable spaces, able to be made private if chosen, with room for a pram and toys for older children. 4. Investigate provision of breast pump hire and/or reusable breast pad hire through library services. 5. Investigate provision of private breastfeeding spaces when planning community events. 6. Future builds or upgrades of public toilets should include change table facilities. 7. Support the development of breastfeeding supportive infrastructure (private rooms separate to toilets) in all newly developed public spaces. 8. Work with local restaurants/cafes and services so they know 'what mums want' and can cater to parents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer lactation consultant or CaFHS services at immunisation clinics to provide breastfeeding information and support where mothers and babies already go. 2. Develop a print and web based repository of all services for new mothers and mothers of children (especially under 2s). This would include, library services, playgroups, CaFHS services, ABA Breastfeeding Welcome Here locations, helplines, ABA groups, parent rooms/baby change locations, other parenting groups. 3. Develop a strategy to distribute this information to new parents in the Charles Sturt area during pregnancy (via hospitals or the pregnancy information line run by CYH). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with the Australian Breastfeeding Association to seek advice on what steps need to occur to achieve workplace accreditation. 2. Make small steps towards supporting breastfeeding mothers by offering to create temporary or permanent lactation rooms and milk storage facilities. 3. Ensure that women going on maternity leave are aware of their options and can plan for their return to work in advance. 4. Flexible work options should be discussed by default with breastfeeding mothers. 5. Training and information provided to staff, in particular those in leadership roles, about the importance of supporting breastfeeding in the workplace. 6. Where improvements are made, celebrate these with the community who are keen to see their council leading by example.

Appendix A

Line of questioning

1. What do you think the phrase 'breastfeeding friendly' means and what does it mean to you?
2. Thinking about the shops, services, parks, restaurants, medical centres etc. in the Charles Sturt/West Lakes/Woodville/Hindmarsh/Findon/Henley area, what kinds of places are more breastfeeding friendly than others?
3. Have you ever been anywhere publicly breastfeeding and had either a positive or negative experience?
4. Lots of mothers report not feeling comfortable breastfeeding in public, why do you think this is?
5. Have you changed your plans ever or done something different to avoid feeding in public, either in the area or anywhere else?
6. Are you aware of the 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' Stickers from the Australian Breastfeeding Association and do you look out for them? (show example)
 - a. Were you aware of these when you were pregnant or only since having your baby?
7. Generally speaking, what do you think needs to change to better accommodate for breastfeeding mums?
8. Has the ease of breastfeeding in public changed from when your babies were first born?
9. If you could do any one thing to help support and promote breastfeeding in the West Lakes/Findon/Hindmarsh/Woodville/Henley area what would it be?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to breastfeeding services and supporting breastfeeding?
11. What could the Council do to support breastfeeding?
12. Additional questions:
 - a. What's been your biggest learning curve about breastfeeding and becoming a new mum?