
From: Antonia Norton
Sent: Thursday, 12 November 2015 5:51 PM
To: Adjudication
Subject: A91506 & A91507 - Infant Nutrition Council - submission

Categories: Submission

Submission regarding the ACCC's plans to renew the MAIF Agreement.

Dear Commissioner

As a mother and community member who values the importance of breastfeeding for babies as an important and best start to their lives I am concerned about what I have witnessed in terms of the marketing of infant formula in Australia (as well as in other countries) and what that does to undermine breastfeeding and mother's confidence in their ability to feed their babies. I have seen this first hand in many even very well informed mothers and know that the marketing is a powerful tool and needs to be regulated where there is a public health interest.

I believe that the current MAIF Agreement is unsuitable and should be properly reviewed not simply given a rubber stamp to continue for another extended period – 10 years is far too long and perpetuates the existing problems that have existed for too long already, way into the future.

That the MAIF agreement only applies to signatories, does not include all parties involved in marketing (such as retailers) and doesn't cover all formula such as milk for toddlers, effectively means that marketing to mothers of babies is still happening and rendering the MAIF agreement ineffectual.

Voluntary regulation simply does not work, the whole process lacks transparency and breaches are ignored or go unchecked and without consequence.

I call on the ACCC to allow any extension of the MAIF Agreement to be short term only such as for 12 months with a complete review of its impact and requiring inclusion of up to date issues such as new forms or advertising in social media etc, changes in recommendations and current reviews to be reflected in any new agreement. Community consultation should be part of the process of any review and effective and strengthened protections that have long been needed must be implemented in any long term agreements.

Please ensure that mothers who are vulnerable in wanting to care for their children are not subjected to unscrupulous marketing tactics by the big manufacturers of infant and toddler formula.

Regards
Antonia Norton