

Media Release

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Where is breast best ? – in Norway

Speaking from her home in rural Victoria today, Madeleine Love, Victorian Senate Candidate for What Women Want (Australia), said “Australian women work harder than women in any other developed nation to be successful at breastfeeding, but poor birthing services and inappropriate parenting advice is really hurting them. New mothers should not think their bodies are to blame, and have a right to feel very, very angry”, she said.

“With over 50% of birth units closed in remote rural Australian over the past ten years, women are increasingly travelling hundreds of kilometres to give birth during labour or seek obstetric care in tertiary units, resulting in financial and social constraints such as separation from family and community. We are now seeing a significant increase in postnatal depression and a sharp decrease in breastfeeding rates”, added Ms Love.

While 80% of Norwegian women are breastfeeding at 6 months¹, the number in Victoria has dropped to 46%², although nearly every first-time mother had begun breastfeeding. “Australian women are inundated with inappropriate birthing and parenting literature from the UK and the USA where birth is becoming big business and breastfeeding success is rare” Ms Love said.

Ms Love advised, “When Federal Member for Shortland, Jill Hall, asked a question in parliament recently arising from the Federal Breastfeeding Inquiry, government members interjected, and the Speaker had to remind them that Ms Hall was raising a serious question.”³

What Women Want senate candidates from Vic, SA, ACT, NSW and QLD will be attending Parliament House Canberra this Friday September 28 to support Victorian Midwife Janie Nottingham’s campaign tour and rally (www.uar07.co.nr) which will see women and midwives from across Australia gather to voice their concerns with Australia’s maternity crisis. Ms Love will be travelling with the tour to Seymour, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Albury and Wodonga from Wednesday September 26.

“What do women want ? Women want to feel confident in their bodies, to be with their families during pregnancy and birth and to remain connected to their local communities. Women want to bring birth back home to remote rural Australia” added, Ms Love.

(ends) www.whatwomenwant.org.au

Written and authorised by Sally-Anne Brown 66 Godson Avenue, Blackheath NSW 2785

¹ “Spedkost 6 maneder” survey, Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, published 2003

² Maternal & Child Health Services Annual Report 2005-2006 Statewide

³ 16 August 2007, House of Representatives Chamber, **Votes and Proceedings, Hansard**, P 57