

**MEDIA ALERT**  
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## **ACU to award breastfeeding support founder Mary Paton her first honorary doctorate**

Australian Catholic University (ACU) will tomorrow award an Honorary Doctorate to Natalie Mary Paton AM, the founder of the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).

Mrs Paton, who founded the Nursing Mothers Association in 1964, later renamed the ABA, will receive a Doctor of the University in Sydney tomorrow (October 17).

It will be Mrs Paton's first honorary doctorate from an Australian university.

"I am so amazed and so honoured to be receiving this honour from ACU," Mrs Paton said.

Mrs Paton established the Nursing Mothers' Association after her own struggles to breastfeed her first child.

"I expected to breastfeed because I believed it was the right thing to do, physically and psychologically, but it wasn't successful," Mrs Paton said.

"I realised emotionally this was a shocking thing for my daughter, I could really see that she was hurt by it."

In 1964, inspired by an article in the Readers' Digest on a new comprehensive book about breastfeeding and a support group in the United States, Mary convinced five other mothers to form the Nursing Mothers' Association in Melbourne.

Six decades later, the now national organisation, which changed its name to the Australian Breastfeeding Association in 2001, has supported and educated thousands of families in breastfeeding education and support.

"My proudest moments are when I meet past and current members who then tell me the affect the organisation has had on them and their families," Mrs Paton. "So many will say, 'I never thought I'd be able to nurse, it has changed my life for the better'."

Mrs Paton will receive her honorary doctorate before ACU health graduates from Sydney, nearly 70 years after graduating as an Occupational Therapist.

She is expected to give an Occasional Address to the graduating cohort and will focus on her experience of growing the ABA from the ground up.

"It was an enormous challenge, no money, no office or equipment, just three books and the acquired knowledge of six mums," Mrs Paton said.

"It is possible for one person to make a difference not necessarily building an organization but as you graduates enter your profession and career, your journey can be full of satisfaction and pleasure as you treat and support your patients."

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