

Stars raise voices in ballads for babies



BREAST BEST ... Marea Ryan, director of the Mothers Milk Bank at John Flynn Private Hospital, with a fundraising CD and the new milk pasteuriser. *Picture: BRAD WAGNER*

Cream support breast milk CD

AUSTRALIAN musicians are singing the praises of a Gold Coast initiative set to help tens of thousands of babies.

The songs of 19 female artists – including Deborah Conway, Missy Higgins and The Waifs – have been specially recorded for a CD which will be sold to raise money to establish the nation's first stockpile of breast milk.

Director of the Mothers Milk Bank project, Marea Ryan, a midwife, lactation consultant and nurse unit manager at John Flynn Private Hospital at Tugun, said she hoped CD sales would help provide the \$350,000 needed.

Although a lot of the equipment

By BELINDA LAVIS

has already been donated, start-up costs are significant.

She predicts the milk bank could be operating within one month of funds being obtained.

The first priority would be to supply babies at Gold Coast, Tweed and Brisbane hospitals with pasteurised breast milk.

"The vision is to see all babies receiving human milk for at least the first six months, which lays the foundation for their future health," said Ms Ryan.

"That will give them enough protection for up to two years of immunity."

She decided to establish a breast milk bank in Australia after

the heartbreaking irony of watching one mother unable to produce enough milk for her sick baby while another was pouring her excess supply down the drain.

Milk banks are available in almost every other country, and Ms Ryan was determined to see the same in Australia.

"Our priority is for sick and pre-term babies, and children allergic to cows' milk protein or who have other illnesses," she said.

The CD is being launched nationally at the Gold Coast Arts Centre on Saturday, May 27, from 5.30pm.

Tickets cost \$35 and are available from the arts centre box office on 5588 4000 or online at www.gcac.com.au.