Dear Members & Supporters,

Welcome to our October FASD Newsletter.

The NOFASARD Management Committee is pleased to announce Vicki Russell has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer. Previously employed as National Project Manager, Vicki has been with NOFASARD for the last twelve months and in this time, NOFASARD has evolved in organisational complexity reflecting a shift in leadership roles and duties. A side benefit to a change in title is that it will clarify for our longer term external associates/network members, the separation of my role as Chair and Vicki’s standing within the Organisation, in that it matches a typical and well understood not for profit incorporated association governance model. Each month Vicki will contribute a short report outlining some of NOFASARD’s activities and this month’s report can be found in the national news and media section of this newsletter.

Secondly, some extensive uploading of information to the new NOFASARD website platform has been completed. The website will now be known as the Australian FASD Clearinghouse and while still a work in progress the aim is to continue to be a primary source of both national and international quality, evidence-based information and resources relating specifically to FASD for both service providers and families. If you notice a resource missing in any of the completed sections of the website or have ideas about any other sources of information please let us know. We welcome your contributions of information for sharing with others.

Of special interest in this month’s newsletter is a link to a guest blog on the Drinktank website written by paediatrician, Dr. James Fitzpatrick. James shares his views on the important role men play in helping to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. NOFASARD congratulate James for this very mindful article.

One of the most common difficulties for parents/carers of children affected by FASD is finding service providers who have experience in this area. NOFASARD maintains a small but growing data base of health professionals including paediatricians, neuropsychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and other service providers who have experience working with families living with FASD. Some states are better represented than others. If you know a service provider or you are a service provider with experience in this area we would love to hear from you. Please email admin@nofasard.org.au or call 1300 306238. We can assure you that the list will not be for general
publication and will only be used by NOFASARD staff when providing information for individual cases.

Remember that we would love to hear your news and your personal stories and will discuss ways in which these can be shared ensuring your privacy is protected. The deadline for articles for our November newsletter will be November 28th (contact admin@nofasard.org.au). It would be great if we could include a story each month!

We are always keen to expand our network so please encourage your family, friends, colleagues and network to join NOFASARD and support FASD prevention in Australia. Your information is private.

Happy reading!

Kindest regards,

Sue Miers
Chair

NOFASARD is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Health System Capacity Development Fund
Contents

Of Special Interest
Drinktank Guest blog – Manning up to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

National News and Media
Report from NOFASARD CEO
Our Changing Children – blog from Keith Bartley, Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Child Development (SA)
Facilities for Children and Young People with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Dept Education and Child Development (SA)
NIDAC Consultation forum on Drug & alcohol issues Melbourne Tuesday, 11 December
Psychology: drinking and pregnancy – ABC Audio recording October 26
From NZ - BABIES + BOOZE – A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Youth Social Media Awareness Campaign

International News & Media
Drinking it In an article from the UK especially for educators
Two Chicago high school students develop a novel treatment method to reduce the negative effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and a new understanding of genetics behind the disease

Australian Research

International Research
Effect of Predictive Cuing on Response Inhibition in Children with Heavy Prenatal Alcohol Exposure
A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study of Spatial Working Memory in Children with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure: Contribution of Familial History of Alcohol Use Disorders

Conferences & Courses
International
The 5th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder,- Vancouver 2013
Consensus Development Conference on Legal Issues of FASD, Edmonton, September 18 - 20, 2013
First International Conference on Prevention of FASD September 23 - 25, 2013 Shaw Conference Centre Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Of Special Interest

Drinktank Guest blog – Manning up to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders – Paediatrician Dr. James Fitzpatrick shares his views on the Drinktank website blog about the important role men play in helping to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Read article

National News and Media

Report from NOFASARD CEO
An update of NOFASARD activities from Vicki Russell who has been appointed as the Organisation’s Chief Executive Officer. Previously employed as National Project Manager, Vicki has been with NOFASARD for the last twelve months and in this time, NOFASARD has evolved in organisational complexity reflecting a shift in leadership roles and duties. A side benefit to a change in title is that it will clarify for our longer term external associates/network members, the separation of my role as Chair and Vicki’s standing within the Organisation, in that it matches a typical and well understood not for profit incorporated association governance model. Read Vicki’s Report

Our Changing Children – blog from Keith Bartley, Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Child Development (SA) This blog raises the issue of the increasing number of children coming through the education system with complex needs especially those with FASD.

Read blog

Facilities for Children and Young People with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Dept Education and Child Development (SA) This Factsheet has been created to assist designers, and school staff who will need to make adjustments to the learning environment to accommodate students with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Read Factsheet

NIDAC Consultation forum on Drug & Alcohol Issues Melbourne Tuesday, 11 December
Associate Professor Ted Wilkes, Chair of the National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC), extends an invitation to people working within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drugs sector to attend this Consultation on Drug & Alcohol Issues. Should you have concerns relating to FASD NOFASARD encourage you to attend this forum and “speak up”.

Further details
Psychology: drinking and pregnancy – ABC Audio recording October 26
ABC Ballarat resident psychologist Damien Adler explains that in some cases drinking alcohol while pregnant can lead to a very serious condition called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Syndrome.
Listen to audio
(back)

From NZ - BABIES + BOOZE – A Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Youth Social Media Awareness Campaign
Wallet-sized cards with key prevention messages and links to the You-Tube videos have been produced for this campaign following extensive consultation with communities and young people in NZ. More information and links to videos
(back)

International News & Media
(back)

Drinking it In an article from the UK especially for educators by Carolyn Blackburn who is a member of the early childhood research group at Birmingham City University. Read the article
(back)

Two Chicago high school students develop a novel treatment method to reduce the negative effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and a new understanding of genetics behind the disease. This research is being presented at the 2012 American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) Annual Meeting and Exposition in Chicago, Ill., Oct. 14 – 18. More than 8,000 attendees are expected at the largest conference dedicated to the pharmaceutical sciences. Full story
(back)

Australian Research
(back)

In this study participants indicated clear support for use of the UW diagnostic criteria for FAS in Australia. These findings should be used to develop guidelines to facilitate improved awareness of, and address identified gaps in the infrastructure for, FASD diagnosis in Australia. Read more
(back)

International Research
(back)

Effect of Predictive Cuing on Response Inhibition in Children with Heavy Prenatal Alcohol Exposure
This investigation provides evidence of impaired behavioural and neural processing of sequential information in fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, which can help improve inhibition in typical populations. Read more
(back)
A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study of Spatial Working Memory in Children with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure: Contribution of Familial History of Alcohol Use Disorders

Conferences & Courses

International

The 5th International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Vancouver 2013
Research: Results and Relevance Integrating Research, Policy, and Promising Practice Around the World will be held in Vancouver from February 27 to March 2, 2013 The conference goal is to highlight international research and promising practice and enhance scientific collaborations around the world. The Call for Abstracts is now open Deadline For Abstract Submissions: May 31, 2012
For further information or the Conference website

FASD and the Law: A Conversation about Current Research and Practices, Vancouver: Tuesday 26 February 2013 (Day prior to the 5th International Conference on FASD). This free event will take place at The Law Foundation of British Columbia, 1340-605 Robson Street, Vancouver. Significant criminal justice and other legal developments have occurred in relation to FASD in a number of jurisdictions over the past few years. The Canadian Bar Association presented its resolution on FASD in 2010. This was followed in 2012 by the American Bar Association's resolution. Moves are now afoot to follow this with resolutions in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. This is an invitation to all who are engaged in working with FASD in the context of the law or who are interested in the subject to come together to discuss these developments and share ideas about how to move forward on the difficult issues surrounding justice for those with FASD. Please mailto:faslaw@uw.edu to indicate you will attend and if you'd like to talk about the work you are doing on FASD and the law.

This conference is a 3-day juried hearing of evidence and scientific findings that allows for the engagement and collaboration of citizens, decision makers in government, and the justice system in addressing a specific set of key questions on legal issues of FASD. Read more

First International Conference on Prevention of FASD September 23 - 25, 2013 Shaw Conference Centre Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Professor Elizabeth Elliott from Westmead children's Hospital will be one of the guest speakers at this first international conference to address the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of FASD. The conference will serve as an international knowledge exchange and networking forum for those interested in FASD prevention, bringing together key experts from around the globe. Further information and call for abstracts
CEO Report October

The granting of 3 year Commonwealth funding from the Department of Health and Ageing has directed our efforts to developing NOFASARD as an organisation able to meet the challenge as the peak community organisation for FASD in Australia. I can report that work is progressing towards the development of an activity tool able to capture all activities generated internally and from incoming inquiries, requests for information and support, requests for education and training and community partnerships and collaborations.

NOFASARD now has administrative assistance in place to improve the member network database and we anticipate being able to share resources and consult with people from distinct groups from the wide range of community sectors represented. The development of a new NOFASARD Strategic Plan is on track as is an Operational Plan which will help guide NOFASARD activities as these build across the next three years.

In October, two workshops were delivered in Lilydale, Victoria and one in Devonport, Tasmania to some 46 participants. The former targeted foster carers in one session and non-government workers in the afternoon. I am continually in awe of the foster care community, their passion and commitment to improving outcomes for children. Workshop requests are already booked for 2013. One of the interesting developments is participation as an advocate in care plan meetings focused on the needs of children diagnosed or at risk of an FASD.

NOFASARD is also the recipient of project funding from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) to develop a pilot ‘train the trainer’ project in Tasmania aimed at building the knowledge and skill capacities of service providers who support foster carers in their care of children living with an FASD or at risk of fetal alcohol exposure. A reference group is established and this group guides and enhances the project through its development with representation from paediatrics, Child Protection and Out of Home Care; neuropsychology, Aboriginal Health and non-government placement support agencies. Using a participatory research model, four focus groups were held, two with foster carers and two with service providers. The rich information gathered will inform training program content and groups have agreed to meet again in the post evaluation period. Evaluation is being undertaken by Myriad Research, Tasmania. If 12 service providers undertake training and in turn, train 5-6 of their colleagues, an estimated 60 service providers will be better skilled to support and sustain children in the one placement, a well-established protective factor in reducing risk factors in the lives of children. The longer term goal is to have a resource with national application.

Vicki Russell
CEO NOFASARD

(back)