

# **FINDINGS FROM THE 2020 SENATE INQUIRY INTO**

## **Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

**REPORT SUMMARY:** “Whilst [efforts since 2012] reflect a national willingness to understand FASD, broaden public understanding, and support the development of pioneering programs and models of care in local communities, FASD remains a serious yet entirely preventable disability that continues to have profound and long-lasting consequences for individuals and their families, carers and communities across Australia. Overall, FASD interventions have been ad hoc and inconsistently applied across Australia, and there is still limited awareness of FASD in the community.”



### **An Invisible Epidemic**

“There is a critical need for prevalence data and a robust study of the economic and social impact of FASD to ensure budgetary measures and policy efforts are appropriate and effective.”

### **Alcohol and Pregnancy**

“Myths regarding the ‘safe’ use of alcohol during pregnancy have been perpetuated in the community, including by health professionals, and the alcohol industry.”

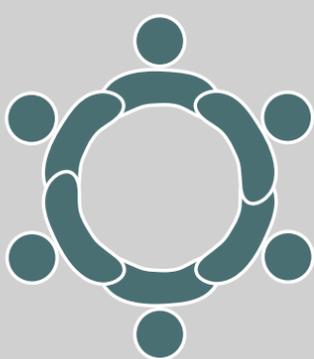
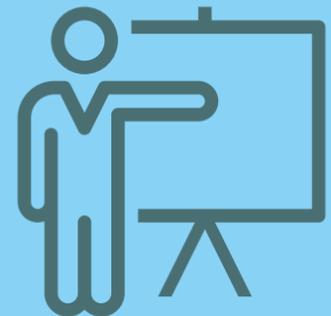


### **Prevention**

“Prevention efforts must fundamentally aim to shift societal attitudes and behaviour around alcohol consumption in the broader Australian community.”

### **Health Professionals**

“The committee is of the view that building the capacity of health professionals to identify and prevent harmful alcohol consumption during pregnancy should be prioritised”



### **Diagnosis**

“There are limited multi-disciplinary FASD diagnostic services in Australia and wait lists are long.”

### **Support and Assistance**

“Access to assistance must be urgently improved to help people with FASD and their families to meet the extensive costs of FASD supports.”



### **Child Protection and Justice Systems**

“There should be routine screening for FASD within the youth justice and child protection systems.”

### **First Nations Communities**

“Alcohol-related harm in First Nations communities is strongly linked to the impacts of colonisation, entrenched poverty and inter-generational trauma.”



# Recommendations

NOFASD Australia conducted a thematic analysis of Senate Inquiry submissions. The following statements from the Senate Inquiry report are recommendations made which align with the resulting themes.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities**

Allocate specific funding aimed at supporting First Nations community-led projects to prevent and manage FASD.

The National Disability Insurance Agency undertake consultation and a co-design process with First Nations organisations to improve its Remote Community Connectors Program.

## **Cost of FASD**

Fund an independent study into the social and economic cost of FASD in Australia.

## **Prevalence**

Fund a FASD Prevalence Study to determine the national prevalence of FASD cases, including both known cases and those considered 'at risk'.

## **Intervention**

Allocate funding for the development and delivery of practical parenting programs to complement existing supports and the FASD hotline.

Implement mandatory reporting of maternal alcohol consumption.

Ensure all schools can deploy and resource FASD-specific strategies and assistance to support educators.

## **Diagnosis**

Undertake a national audit of current FASD diagnostic services and funding to identify priority areas and inform a longer-term and sustainable funding model.

Fund the implementation of a trial for a model of tiered FASD assessment utilising primary health care services.

## **Justice System**

Fund an independent study into best-practice diversionary programs and alternative therapeutic facilities for individuals with FASD or suspected FASD.

Screen all children and young people entering the youth justice and child protection systems for FASD.

## **Prevention**

Implement marketing, pricing and taxation reforms as set out in the National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028.

Run a public education campaign with respect to the roll-out of mandatory pregnancy warning labels.

Fund the development of FASD education resources to be used in secondary school curriculums.

## **Systemic Change**

Develop a broader strategy and budget for a national public education campaign.

Provide all educators with professional development training in the awareness, understanding and management of FASD.

Include FASD in the List of Recognised Disabilities.

**Read the full Senate report here:**

<https://www.nofasd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Senate-Inquiry-into-FASD-released-17.03.2021.pdf>

