

# **FINDINGS FROM THE 2019 SENATE INQUIRY INTO Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

## ***FINDING: FASD is a systemic issue; it is created by wider social issues and is not limited to one community***

“Indigenous Australians commonly experience high levels of racism, from relatively minor incidents such as being called racist names, through verbal abuse, to serious assault. There is a strong association between racism and poor mental health and alcohol misuse.” (Central Australian Aboriginal Congress)

“Many health professionals are reluctant to ask about alcohol use in pregnancy, don’t know what to advise or where to refer and are uncertain about how to treat.” (FASD Research Australia)

“Some had experience of their midwife approving of the occasional glass of wine and many regarded the amount of information provided by the healthcare professional on the issue as limited.” (FARE)

“Confusion in the community still exists about whether drinking alcohol while pregnant is safe, likely to be exacerbated by the alcohol industry’s misrepresentation of the evidence on the risks.” (PHAIWA and Cancer Council WA)

“Families and schools are generally not equipped to deal with children with FASD and do not receive adequate education and help.” (Aboriginal Legal Services of Western Australia Limited)

“The alcohol industry targets women through a number of strategies including the creation of new products, lifestyle messages underpinned by gender stereotypes, offers of stereotypical feminine accessories, and messages of empowerment.” (The Alcohol and Drug Foundation)



# ***FINDING: Systemic issues require government-led, whole-of-community responses***

**“Governments, Federal, State and Territory must lead the way in responding to challenges which FASD presents in the Australian community by adequately resourcing interventions, diagnostic clinics, advocacy and support agencies and identifying law reform and policy changes required.” (The Alcohol and Drug Foundation)**

## ***Recommendations***

"Standardise General Practitioner care to ensure information on the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy is part of standard check-ups and cervical screening testing from the time a women reports she is sexually active."  
(Australian Health Promotion Association)

"There is a need of measures to de-stigmatise FASD. People with FASD can progress in life very successfully with the right supports and contribute to their communities in many positive ways."  
(Australian Human Rights Commission)

- "Measures to support health professionals to engage in conversations with their patients about alcohol consumption during pregnancy;



- Measures to increase health professionals' awareness of FASD diagnosis and management, including dissemination of the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD and information about specialist FASD diagnostic centres;

- A coordinated national approach to reducing FASD, including wider efforts to reduce the availability, affordability and accessibility of alcohol; and



- Collection of nationally consistent and representative FASD data."  
(Australian Medical Association)

**Read the quoted senate submissions here:**  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Community\\_Affairs/FetalAlcoholSpectrumDi/Submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/FetalAlcoholSpectrumDi/Submissions)

