

# National Indigenous FASD Resources Project SNAPSHOT FOR COMMUNITIES

## What were some of the project's aims?

- Identify, through consultation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers' needs in addressing the issues of alcohol, pregnancy and FASD;
- Identify, through consultation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's and men's needs and issues in FASD health promotion and prevention;
- Identify, through consultation, the types of resources that would assist health professionals and community members in addressing the issues of alcohol, pregnancy and FASD at the local level.

## How did we go about the project?

- Established a reference group, including members from national and local Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander health services and other service providers;
- Identified and reviewed existing FASD health promotion resources;
- Identified the processes required to develop templates for use in the creation of culturally secure and appropriate, evidence-based alcohol and pregnancy/FASD resources;
- Carried out extensive national consultations with health (and other) workers and community members;
- Carried out a workshop with health professionals to trial the templates of resources;
- Evaluated responses to the consultation process and development of the templates of resources.



## How many consultations did we carry out and where?

- We carried out 17 consultations in QLD, NSW, TAS, VIC, SA and the ACT;
- The average length of consultation was 3 hours although some extended up to 5 hours;
- Overall, we consulted with approximately 210 participants.

## What are the key findings from the consultations?

### *Knowledge, awareness and raising the issues of alcohol, pregnancy and FASD*

- The term 'Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders' and its acronym 'FASD' is not well known by community members and in some instances health professionals were also unfamiliar with FASD as an umbrella term for issues around alcohol and pregnancy;
- Acknowledgement that community members are aware that there are risks associated with drinking alcohol during pregnancy;
- Acknowledgement that the effects on the baby of drinking alcohol during pregnancy are little known or understood.

### *Existence and appropriateness of available resources*

- The majority of community participants told us that they had not seen any resources that address the issues of alcohol, pregnancy and FASD in their local communities;
- Some of the resources that had been seen were noted as not being culturally safe or appropriate for individual communities.

### *Best and worst advice to give someone about FASD*

- Everyone believed that telling women not to drink during pregnancy was the best advice and should be accompanied with advice around the consequences of drinking and possible effects on the child;
- Community members called for all messages to be hard-hitting, blunt and to the point;
- Health professionals believed that a less direct and confrontational approach was preferable.

### What did we learn?

- Consistency in the messages around alcohol, pregnancy and FASD is very important;
- Sensitivity is important when dealing with these issues BUT these messages need to be clear and effectively demonstrate the dangers of drinking in pregnancy;
- FASD issues should be addressed as part of an approach to highlighting the use of alcohol in the community more generally, and to the social circumstances and determinants of health in communities;
- Evidence-based information around alcohol, pregnancy and FASD will have its greatest effect when delivered to young people as part of a wider educational strategy around sex education and family planning issues;
- There was a strong desire for using technology to develop and circulate information and education both between and among health professionals and out into communities;
- People want to have a choice of culturally safe, generally positive materials to draw on so they can develop their own locally relevant resources, using artwork, colours, forms of words and local contacts.

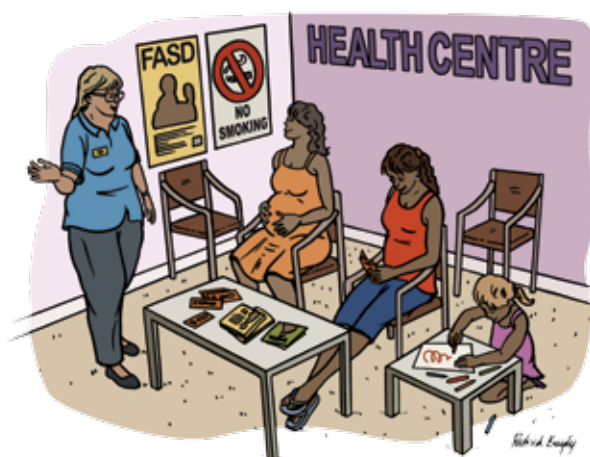


### What have we developed as a result of these consultations?

We have developed an iPad/Web PosterMaker app aimed primarily at helping health professionals develop resources that address the issues of alcohol, pregnancy and FASD for staff and community members:

- The PosterMaker app has a range of pre-loaded evidence-based messages and culturally relevant images that can be combined with a database of colours, shapes and fonts to create locally-relevant posters;
- Users can upload their own images and texts for use in their own posters;
- The app contains a series of training videos on how to create your own posters;
- This app can also be used by others working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – for example, youth workers, teachers, alcohol and other drug workers – as an educational tool with the young people with whom they are working;
- Importantly, community members can collaborate with local health professionals to create their own posters to suit their needs around alcohol, pregnancy and FASD in their local communities.

You can find the FASD PosterMaker in the Apple store, or at [www.fasdpostermaker.com.au](http://www.fasdpostermaker.com.au).



For further information about this project contact Dr Lynn Roarty, National Drug Research Institute, Email: [l.roarty@curtin.edu.au](mailto:l.roarty@curtin.edu.au); Tel: 08 9266 1614.

For further information about the National Drug Research Institute, visit [www.ndri.curtin.edu.au](http://www.ndri.curtin.edu.au).

The National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Substance Misuse Prevention and Service Improvement Grants Fund.