# FASD inquiry findings endorsed: now for swift action

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Australia’s leading alcohol research and education body has welcomed the report; FASD: The hidden harm, Inquiry into the prevention, diagnosis and management of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders tabled in Parliament today and called on the Government to move quickly to adopt its recommendations. Endorsing the House of Representatives Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee report, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) says that in recommending strict timeframes for the introduction of mandatory alcohol warning labels and efforts to increase Australia’s diagnostic capacity, the Committee has recognised the urgent need to address this devastating disability now. FASD, a non-diagnostic term representing a range of conditions that result from prenatal alcohol exposure, is the most common preventable cause of non-genetic developmental disability in Australia. FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn praised the thorough and inclusive process which engaged with Australia’s leading FASD experts, health professionals, people with FASD and their carers, and echoed the report’s recommendations saying what is needed now is action. “The Committee is to be congratulated for further highlighting the gaps in the prevention, diagnosis and management of FASD and bringing the public’s attention to Australia’s invisible disability, but this is just the first step in a much longer journey. If this report is to be of enduring value, the Government must act upon its recommendations,” Mr Thorn said. In September this year FARE launched the Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Action Plan 2013-16, a fully-costed $37 million dollar national plan to address the gaps in the prevention and management of FASD. The first recommendation of the Inquiry report states the needs for a national plan, and acknowledges the value of FARE’s Action Plan, stating that ‘…the actions from this plan are a useful adjunct to the recommendations of this report’. Mr Thorn says the Commonwealth Government needs a comprehensive plan going forward but can act on some of the recommendations now. “The Legislative and Governance forum on Food Regulation (FoFR) will meet in Brisbane on 7 December. As recommended in the Report, FoFR must task Food Standards Australia New Zealand to start the process for the introduction of government-mandated alcohol pregnancy warning labels at that meeting if the deadline is to be met,” Mr Thorn said. FARE has also called on the Government to fund and commence trialing an $852,000 FASD diagnostic tool which has been awaiting government approval for over a year, and to commit funding for a comprehensive national plan in the 2013-14 Budget.

### Metadata