# Review of ACT health programs for children and young people

The Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing of the ACT Legislative Assembly earlier this year announced it would conduct a review of current programs, health screening and support for ACT children and young people, as well as the ACT’s part in the national program combatting FASD. FARE supports the aims of this inquiry to identify and review current preventative programs for screening diagnosis, assessment and treatment in the ACT for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).  FARE welcomes the efforts of the ACT Government, particularly their support of the Pregnant Pause promotion program that has helped to raise awareness of FASD and support mums-to-be in going alcohol free, and their efforts to implement mandatory pregnancy health warnings on all alcohol products, but more must be done.

The prevalence of FASD in Australia is largely unknown and believed to be significantly underreported. When a child or adult receives a diagnosis of FASD there are no recording or reporting mechanisms for that diagnosis. To provide appropriate services for people with FASD, more information is needed on the prevalence of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and the numbers of people with FASD. The ACT has an opportunity to collect and collate data are provide health practitioners and researchers with more information to inform treatments and support facilities.

Early intervention and a stable, nurturing home are important factors in protecting children with FASD from some of the secondary disabilities they're at risk of later in life. For people with FASD and their carers, having access to disability support funding, services and early intervention programs results in better outcomes throughout their lives. However, the ACT does not have FASD diagnostic services or support services available for those living with FASD.

## FARE Recommended:

1. Implement relevant recommendations of the Senate Inquiry into Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for FASD, that reported in March 2021.
2. Support the National Campaign on Alcohol, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding and find opportunities to promote and implement the campaign across the ACT.
3. Improve data collection to better inform policy and program development (including data on prenatal alcohol consumption, in an informed, supportive, confidential and voluntary manner).
4. Fill the gaps left by National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) barriers to access and difficult eligibility through advocacy and policy actions.
5. Implement improved FASD screening, assessment and support in paediatric, youth justice, adult criminal justice and population-wide settings.

[view the submission](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/FARE-Submission-to-Review-of-ACT-health-programs-for-children-and-young-people.pdf)

[view the act government inquiry report](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1998153/HCW-Committee-report-V5-Tabling-3-May-2022.pdf)