



MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL FASD AWARENESS DAY AND NATIONAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS PROMOTE ALCOHOL-FREE PREGNANCY

8 September 2017: On the 9th hour of the 9th day of the 9th month of every year, International FASD Awareness Day is marked around the world to raise awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and to spread the message that no amount of alcohol use is safe for a developing baby.

This week, two innovative public health campaigns, [Pregnant Pause](#) and [Women Want to Know](#) were rolled out nationally in Australia to reinforce that message and to ensure that vital conversations about going alcohol-free during pregnancy will continue on longer after the day itself*.

Dr Sharman Stone, the Australian Government's Ambassador for Women and Girls says Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the most common preventable cause of non-genetic, developmental disability in Australia, and can be prevented by not consuming alcohol during pregnancy.

"Children born with FASD have a range of learning, behavioural and developmental disabilities that can affect them for the rest of their lives, so it is vital, not only that we are supporting those families and carers, but also that we are investing in prevention. We need to be supporting mums-to-be and ensuring they receive clear and consistent advice that it is safest not to consume alcohol while pregnant," Dr Stone said.

International FASD Awareness Day was initiated by the parents and carers of children with these disorders to create an understanding of the effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol and the resulting disabilities.

The *Pregnant Pause* and *Women Want to Know* campaigns were developed by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE). New funding from the Commonwealth Government will see both public health campaigns expand their footprints nationally in September, with a range of creative television, radio, billboard and online advertisements, and resources provided to health professionals.

The *Women Want to Know* project encourages health professionals to routinely discuss alcohol and pregnancy with women and to provide advice that is consistent with the [National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol](#).

Pregnant Pause is a consumer-facing campaign that encourages Australians to go alcohol free during their pregnancy, or the pregnancy of their partner, family member, friend or loved one.

FARE Director of Policy and Research Amy Ferguson praised the Commonwealth Government for investing in two national preventive health campaigns that support and encourage pregnant women to go alcohol free during pregnancy.

"Awareness and understanding of Australia's drinking guidelines remain low, with one in four Australian women continuing to drink alcohol after becoming aware of their pregnancy. I am pleased to see the Commonwealth investing in these valuable campaigns, but there is still work to be done. It is my hope that the successful roll-out of these campaigns will lead in turn to a more comprehensive



and sustained national effort that will share this important prevention message around the country, Ms Ferguson said.

Pregnant Pause Project Officer Kamara Buchanan said that Pregnant Pause is helping women make more informed decisions about their own health and the health of their child.

“I took a Pregnant Pause while pregnant with my two children, so I am excited about the potential this campaign has to now reach, support and impact pregnant women all around Australia. I hope to see more women and their loved ones make the pledge to go alcohol free so we can prevent FASD in Australia,” said Ms Buchanan.

Dr Stone, Ms Ferguson and Ms Buchanan and are available for interview.

Media contact:

Jeremy Henderson 0425 559 710

Campaign Digital marketing assets available on request.

*In 2014 FARE received a grant from the ACT Government under the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program to pilot the Pregnant Pause campaign in the ACT. FARE subsequently secured a three year grant from the ACT Government to further develop the program. The Women Want to Know project was first funded by the Australian Government Department of Health in 2012 and the Department has provided ongoing funding to develop and evaluate the Women Want to Know project resources. In 2015 the project was also supported by the ACT Government under the ACT Health Grants Program.



The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation’s greatest preventive health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy.