



## ***New Inquiry into Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)***

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or FASD as it is commonly referred to is the subject of a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. The Committee received a joint referral from the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin and the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon, to inquire into the incidence and prevention of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The terms of reference highlights three main areas that the Committee will investigate:

- **Prevention strategies** - including education campaigns and consideration of options such as product warnings and other mechanisms to raise awareness of the harmful nature of alcohol assumption during pregnancy
- **Intervention needs** - including FASD diagnostic tools for health and other professionals, and the early intervention therapies aimed at minimising the impact of FASD on affected individuals, and
- **Management issues** - including access to appropriate community care and support services across education, health, community services, employment and criminal justice sectors for the communities, families and individuals affected by FASD.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is the umbrella term for the entire range of disabilities including birth defects and brain damage that may arise due to prenatal alcohol exposure.

Committee Chair Graham Perrett MP commented that “FASD is recognized as the one of the most common preventable causes of birth defects and brain damage in children which is why the inquiry will have a strong focus into prevention strategies including education campaigns.

Intervention needs are also a priority area for people and their families living with the disabilities associated with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The Committee will investigate what is currently being done in this area to minimize the impact of FASD on affected individuals in addition to looking at management issues such as access to appropriate community care and support services.

The Committee is also concerned that due to the lack of clear cut information available on FASD patients may not be receiving targeted and integrated support to meet their complex needs.”

The Committee invites submissions to the inquiry by **9 December 2011** however submissions will be accepted throughout the duration of the inquiry. For the full terms of reference and advice on making submissions see the Committee’s website at [www.aph.gov.au/spla](http://www.aph.gov.au/spla) or contact the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 2358**.

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**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Graham Perrett MP, on (07) 3344 2622 or 0408 883 312.

**For background information**, please contact the **Secretariat of the Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs:**

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