

**SUBMISSION FROM – The National President, WCTU Australia Ltd,**  
**Prevention Strategies**

Our organization has been concerned for many years about this condition known as FASD and the consequent loss of a potentially normal life for those affected plus the enormous social cost to the community and the health system.

We believe that prevention is the best way – the fence at the top of the cliff rather than an ambulance at the bottom. Strategies need to be put in place with education in Secondary Schools through to community groups, highlighting the potential danger of drinking alcohol when pregnant or when hoping to become pregnant. Education aids such as leaflets and Dolls replicating the condition, are very important and need to be readily available at low cost but technology needs to be used to the full with TV Advertisements (such as used for road trauma), websites, Facebook, Twitter etc also apps for mobile phones Education needs to target male as well as female so that males are supportive of their partner's choices.

The cause needs “Ambassadors” who are recognisable and who are competent to constantly give a message.

There is also a need to endeavour to change parts of our culture and make binge drinking unpopular especially with young people and to raise the awareness of non-alcoholic drinks which can be appropriate for a celebration or a party. These drinks are now available in not only non-alcoholic wines but also beers and cocktails.

**The implementation of requiring warning labels on all alcohol sold in Australia would give women a reason and a backup when refusing a drink. These labels are mandatory in 15 other places of the world and in voluntary use in a further 6. In fact, Australian alcohol sold in the USA requires such a warning label by order of their Surgeon General. We would favour the one similar to used in France with the graphic showing a diagonal line being superimposed on an image of a pregnant woman holding a glass– “Say No to alcohol” the message. Other messages might be “Pregnancy and alcohol don’t mix” – “There is no safe time to drink during pregnancy” “Alcohol may harm your baby for life”**

Poisons are labelled. Prescription drugs are accompanied by leaflets explaining their effects and possible side-effects. The public has the right to the latest information regarding alcohol and pregnancy for the protection of unborn children.

On their own warning labels may not prevent all pregnant women from drinking alcohol. However, they are relatively low cost and a link in the chain of educational measures.

**INTERVENTION** We believe that there needs to be strategies in place for the diagnosis of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder without making the mother guilty but for the sake of the child and early intervention therapies. Doctors need to have appropriate training to recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other conditions at the earliest possible stage. This would lead to appropriate community care and support services implemented at the earliest possible time.

*We would urge the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs to recommend a National approach including Warning Labels, Education, Diagnostic Tools and Management Services*

Mrs Ellen Chandler of  


