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Submission 084

NORTHERN TERRITORY FAMILIES AND CHILDREN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs
Inquiry into Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
House of Representatives,
PO Box 6021,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

To whom it may concern

I am writing as the Chair of the Northern Territory Families and Children's Advisory Council, a group of expert practitioners and community members involved in the fields of Child Protection, Paediatrics, Out of Home Care and the Non-Government sector.

We congratulate the Standing Committee on bringing the important issue of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) into public focus through this inquiry.

We write in particular to support a number of submissions already received by the inquiry. These are:

- Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (submission #38)
- NPY Women's Council (submission #74)
- Royal Australasian College of Physician's (submission #27)
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network (submission #47)
- Ms Prue Walker (submission #29)

We believe these submissions most closely represent the views held by NTFCAC members.

While we support these submissions in principle, none of the submissions that we reviewed placed enough emphasis on specialist therapeutic services within the NT. We strongly support the development of specialist therapeutic services for children with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the Northern Territory.

We also believe that a broader approach needs to be taken towards children suspected of having FASD – particularly as a FASD diagnosis can be difficult to make. This suggests a need for therapeutic services to be more accessible to all children exhibiting symptoms, whether a FASD diagnosis can be made or not.

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We also believe there is a place for more information on FASD to be given in schools to ensure that women are aware of the impact of the alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Given the number of FASD cases in the Northern Territory and our high rates of alcohol consumption, we believe that a public hearing within the Northern Territory would be a valuable exercise for the Standing Committee to undertake. NTFCAC members would be happy to assist the Standing Committee in arranging for this to occur.

Yours Sincerely



A small, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Liza Balmer', located to the left of the printed name.

Liza Balmer
Chair