

MEDIA RELEASE
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‘Strong Born’ a new campaign supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to yarn about FASD

Today, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) supported by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), will launch the *Strong Born* campaign aimed at raising awareness of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, and safe breastfeeding practices.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) has long been an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health priority and NACCHO has been working with FASD clinical, cultural and community experts across Australia, to design *Strong Born*.

The campaign was designed in collaboration with representatives from various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which informed the development of resources to make yarning about this complex topic, easier.

NACCHO CEO Pat Turner said, “The *Strong Born* campaign is about raising awareness and understanding of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and reducing stigma and shame.

“The campaign includes culturally appropriate health information for women and families, educational materials for our Aboriginal health care workers, and guidance for health care providers that work with Aboriginal communities.

“In collaboration with our regional and remote member organisations, we’ll also support opportunities to bring our communities together to create safe places for yarning about the impacts of alcohol on pregnancy.

“Growing strong healthy mums and bubs leads to healthy communities. Our communities need to understand the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, and where to go for support, so they can ask for help if they need it.”

FARE CEO Caterina Giorgi commented, “Far too many Australians have FASD and there continues to be misinformation about alcohol, pregnancy and breastfeeding. It is great to have the opportunity to collaborate with NACCHO on this important campaign as part of the broader *Every Moment Matters* initiative, which provides evidence-based health information about alcohol, pregnancy and breastfeeding.”

Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler said, “The Australian Government is proud to support the *Strong Born* campaign. Preventing the harm caused by alcohol, particularly when it comes to developing babies is incredibly important – not only for women, but for the whole community.”

To further explain the importance of the *Strong Born* campaign, Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy stated, “FASD is often referred to as the invisible disability but as far as many families and communities are concerned, it’s a very visible part of daily life. It’s important that people understand that FASD is not confined to a particular community or

demographic; it is a disorder that crosses socioeconomic, racial and educational boundaries. That said, the AMA tells us that in some high-risk Indigenous communities the prevalence may be as high as 12 per cent. All kids deserve the best start to life and the Strong Born campaign is an important campaign to keep raising awareness and taking the shame out of talking about these complex issues.”

Campaign resources will be made available to all rural and remote Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

The *Strong Born* campaign is endorsed and funded by the Australian Government.

To find out more about the Strong Born campaign, visit www.naccho.org.au/FASD

Available for interview:

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