

Australia invests \$37.2 M for Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder support

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The funding to expand FASD diagnostic services was announced in the 2020–21 Budget

The Australian government is investing more than \$37 million for Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) diagnostic services to increase access and reduce waiting times, as well as launching a new National Awareness Campaign for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Women.

FASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol. It is a preventable disorder which can have a terrible, lifelong impact on mothers, their babies and families.

FASD babies suffer increased risk of premature birth, as well as permanent damage to their brain and other critical organs. More than 2 per cent of Australian babies may be born with some form of FASD.

From November 30, in an Australian first, a new awareness campaign has started to increase awareness of the risks associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy and breastfeeding. The campaign aims to support and inform women to make healthy choices while planning and during a pregnancy to reduce the risk and the incidence of FASD.

Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt, said the Morrison Government was providing \$27.4 million to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), who will deliver the campaign.