

Insight Learning Academy
60 Dixon Road
Glenview

20 January 2008

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
PO Box 10559
Wellington 6036

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: **Submission – Labelling of Alcoholic Beverages with a Pregnancy Health Advisory Label**

I am a tutor at Insight Learning Academy, and have been involved with F.A.S.D. (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) for the past 10 years. I have worked in the Salvation Army Bridge Programme for six years as a Dual Diagnosis worker, which was when I first became aware of F.A.S.D.

Following this I was a Life Works coach for the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand – Coromandel/Taupo area and again became aware of the widespread incidence of F.A.S.D. Many of these parents told me that they were unaware of the effects of alcohol on the fetus during pregnancy. In my current job I teach students who failed the school system and have noticed the high incidence of F.A.S.D and its associated learning disabilities.

These F.A.S.D. students of child bearing age have told me that since learning about this disorder not only were they shocked to learn about the effect of alcohol on the fetus, but were determined not to place their own unborn children at risk of the brain damage that has affected them all their lives, and that is entirely preventable.

I support ALAC's submission regarding placing warning labels on all alcohol sold in New Zealand and believe that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Our schools and prisons are full of these brain-damaged children who have no idea of consequences of their actions, as their left brain function does not connect to the right brain function. These children suffer from short attention spans and are easily led into lives of crime.


F.A.S.D is proven to cause damage and the cost to society is significant, not only to the individuals but to society as a whole, including ongoing special education needs, medical needs, psychiatric needs just to name a few, all being funded by the New Zealand taxpayer.

The result of drinking alcohol during pregnancy is a critical, preventable, public health issue that causes distressing, permanent and preventable primary and secondary disabilities. Reducing the harm of F.A.S.D must become a Government priority. Secondary disabilities include mental health disorders, educational failure, alcohol and drug problems, employment problems and trouble with the law.

In a society today where we have so much emphasis on reducing child abuse in any shape and form, the effect of F.A.S.D can only be seen as another form of preventable abuse.

It is a small cost to label alcohol if it will prevent the significant cost of lives with reduced opportunities, then at least the person consuming the alcohol is doing so with the awareness that they are risking the future of their own children by doing so. In time the pressure of New Zealand's social conscience will eventually prevent this behaviour being seen as acceptable.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Colleen Bolt'.

Colleen Bolt