

## MAKING FASD HISTORY: A MULTI-SITE PREVENTION PROGRAM

### SUMMARY: Health promotion in Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Health promotion can help to reduce the burden of disease and mortality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Prevention approaches specific to prenatal alcohol exposure (PAE) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) are urgently needed in Australia. This includes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Previous research has shown that prevention activities should be:

- Culturally sensitive
- Community led and informed
- Consistent with national guidelines

As part of the “[Making FASD history: A Multi-Site Prevention Program](#)”, four health promotion television commercials (TVCs) were developed by the program team based at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation (Congress) in Alice Springs. The campaign was based on local needs and guided by local Aboriginal Congress staff, and by feedback from the local community. The TVCs addressed alcohol use, PAE and FASD. They portrayed a journey from planning a pregnancy to conception, birth, and the development of a healthy young man.

The TVC scripts were originally piloted at ‘yarning’ sessions with Alice Springs community members in 2019. This ensured that the TVCs were relevant, acceptable, clear and understandable. People in the yarning sessions thought the scripts were suitable for the Alice Springs community. The yarning sessions revealed that the TVCs evoked responses in line with the following themes: strength; resonance; whole of community focus; pride; “it’s okay to say no”; and, the role of men in preventing PAE.

Based on the success of the piloting phase, the TVCs were filmed by a local production company. Community members were the actors in the TVCs. The TVCs were launched in late March 2020 and ran for 10 weeks. They aired on local television stations between 6pm and 10pm, during popular TV and news programs. Following the success of the TVCs, radio commercials were developed using the messaging from the TVCs. In June 2020, the radio commercials were recorded and broadcasted on local Alice Springs radio.

This research found that health promotion approaches to PAE and FASD which have a focus on the role of men in preventing PAE, and the pride of saying no to grog, resonated with Alice Springs community members. The use of local talent and familiar and recognisable settings increased the acceptability of the health promotion TVCs.

Future research will evaluate the relevance, appropriateness, and impact of the health promotion TVCs delivered in Alice Springs. This will be done using community ‘yarning’ sessions and an online survey.

*References available on request.*

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