

**Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie**  
Minister for Regional Services,  
Sport, Local Government and Decentralisation  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

8 October 2018

Dear Minister

## **MANDATE GOVERNMENT DEVELOPED ALCOHOL PREGNANCY WARNING LABELS**

We the undersigned, as key stakeholders with an interest in women's health, call on the Forum on Food Regulation (the Forum) Ministers to support the mandating of government developed pregnancy warning labels on all alcohol products.

Women have a right to know if a product is going to cause harm to their unborn child. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is associated with a range of adverse consequences, including miscarriage, stillbirth, low birth weights and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Yet not enough women are aware of these harms.<sup>1</sup>

Currently 52 per cent of all alcohol products do not have pregnancy warnings. This comes seven years after Forum Ministers asked for alcohol producers to apply them voluntarily. Of the products that do have labels, consumers find them difficult to see and view the warnings as more of a polite suggestion than a Government recommendation.<sup>2,3</sup>

At the upcoming Forum meeting on October 11, it is essential that you vote for pregnancy warning labels to become mandatory on all alcohol products and task Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to develop an effective, consumer-tested labelling standard.

Yours sincerely

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DIRECTORS, FASD RESEARCH AUSTRALIA CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE, AUSTRALIAN PAEDIATRIC SURVEILLANCE UNIT

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS

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### **Jody Wright**

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### **Sam Biondo**

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### **Ms Cathy Ferguson**

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### **Will MacGregor**

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### **Christine Lesnikowski**

PERSONAL, MIDWIVES

### **Dr John Boffa**

SPOKESPERSON, PEOPLE'S ALCOHOL ACTION COALITION

### **Dr Erin Lalor**

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### **Marilyn Head**

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### **Kerri Nuku**

KAIWHAKAHAERE, TE RUNANAGA O AOTEAROA, NZNO



<sup>1</sup> Holland, K., McCallum, K., & Walton, A. (2016). 'I'm not clear on what the risk is': women's reflexive negotiations of uncertainty about alcohol during pregnancy. *Health, Risk & Society*, 18 (1-2), 38-58. doi:10.1080/13698575.2016.1166186

<sup>2</sup> Tinawi, G. et al (2018). *Highly deficient alcohol health warning labels in a high-income country*.

<sup>3</sup> Hall & Partners (April 2018). *Understanding of consumer information messaging on alcohol products*.