New pregnancy warning labels on alcohol will protect Australian children

The Public Health Association of Australia commends the Australian and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation ministers who voted today for stronger mandatory pregnancy warning labels on alcohol.

The decision will have a lasting impact on future generations of Australian children born without Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

PHAA CEO Terry Slevin commented: “We very much welcome this decision to protect the health and future of thousands of Australian children today through approving stronger and more visible pregnancy health warnings on alcohol.”

“This decision is one that is based on sound evidence for effective warning labels that will help to deter pregnant women from consuming alcohol and protect their baby from the damaging effects this can cause through Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.”

“It’s been a long road to this decision, with mandatory labels having been discussed for more than a decade. Finally, this label will provide clear, visible information to help increase awareness of the harms caused by consuming alcohol during pregnancy.”

“It is also fantastic to see an example of Australian leaders supporting a preventive health policy which is based on evidence. It will save the country countless future costs in the health care and other sectors, and we hope to see more such policies in future.”

“We congratulate the hundreds of organisations who have campaigned tirelessly for this change and the thousands of individuals who have shown their support – this was a joint effort to advocate for the public’s health and all those involved should be proud of this achievement,” Mr Slevin concluded.

Background

Many Australians are unaware of the harms caused to babies by consuming alcohol during pregnancy, which can lead them to live a life of disability with physical and cognitive impairment.

All research and evidence has pointed to the effectiveness of red colour, contrast and wording in creating an effective and noticeable warning label.

PHAA has campaigned with nearly 200 other organisations and nearly 4000 individuals including prominent community leaders for improved mandatory pregnancy warning labels on alcohol sold in Australia, calling for a more visible warning that is larger and contains three colours – red, white and black – to enhance its effectiveness in warning pregnant women of the dangers of drinking.

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