

FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

179. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the recent House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs report into foetal alcohol spectrum disorders, titled “FASD: The Hidden Harm”.

- (1) Is the minister aware that WA does not have a diagnostic tool for determining the prevalence or incidence of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder?
- (2) What is WA’s response to the committee’s recommendation to immediately roll out a national FASD diagnostic and screening tool?
- (3) Does the minister agree with the committee’s recommendation to include FASD in the list of recognised disabilities and ensure access to support services for those affected by FASD and their carers; and, if not, why not?
- (4) If yes to (3), has WA made the changes necessary to comply with the recommendation?
- (5) Will the government respond to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Education and Health’s fifteenth report on FASD; and, if not, why not?
- (6) If yes to (5), when?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

On behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health, I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Health —

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The diagnostic tool is yet to be released by the commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.
- (3) No. The list of recognised disabilities is a commonwealth government responsibility. Consideration has not been given to this matter. Children affected by FASD can display a range of symptoms and problems from mild to severe. Children with severe presentations may already be eligible for Disability Services Commission support if they meet the commission’s eligibility criteria.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) A Department of Health response to the recommendations of the EHSC report was not tabled in Parliament, due to Parliament being prorogued. After a recent review of that earlier drafted response, it is no longer current. It requires updating in view of the considerable whole-of-government progress in the development of implementation plans that will address many of the recommendations from the EHSC report. Implementation of all the EHSC report recommendations requires cross-sectorial engagement and may require additional funding to be allocated for services; cross-sectorial engagement includes 14 state and national agencies.
- (6) Not applicable.