

## THE MARULU STRATEGY: MAKING FASD HISTORY IN THE REMOTE FITZROY VALLEY COMMUNITIES

### Authors:

Presenters: Fitzpatrick JP<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Elliott EJ<sup>1,2,4</sup>, Oscar J<sup>5,6</sup>, Latimer J<sup>1</sup>.

Authors: Fitzpatrick JP, Oscar J, Carter M, Carter E, Latimer J, Elliott EJ, Wright E, Boulton J.

<sup>1</sup>The George Institute for Global Health, Sydney, Australia.

<sup>2</sup>Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

<sup>3</sup>Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

<sup>4</sup>The Sydney Children's Hospital Network (Westmead), Sydney, Australia

<sup>5</sup>Marninwarntikura Womens Resource Centre, Fitzroy Crossing, Australia

<sup>6</sup>University of Notre Dame, Broome, Australia

**Introduction and Aims:** Aboriginal community leaders concerned about high rates of FASD in the Fitzroy Valley in remote north Western Australia developed the Marulu FASD Strategy. This community-led strategy to 'Make FASD History' in the Fitzroy Valley aims to reduce alcohol use in pregnancy to <10% by 2018; establish sustainable regional FASD diagnostic capacity within existing services; and establish therapy/support programs in the school, home and clinical environment. A secondary objective is to document this strategy and develop resources for implementing this strategy in other sites.

**Design and Methods:** A multi-level strategy was developed including: local FASD prevention, diagnosis and support; and higher-level capacity building and advocacy. Prevention activities are being led through Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services. These are comprised of three distinct but interrelated initiatives. Diagnosis was progressed through the Lirilwan Project FASD Prevalence study. To coordinate therapy/support, the 'Marulu Unit' was established through Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre. School/education leaders have initiated a FASD Education Network.

**Results:** Alcohol use in pregnancy has declined between 2002/2003 (55%) and 2010/2011 (37%). Data on current alcohol use (2013/2014) will be presented. The clinical capacity for FASD diagnosis has been established in the Kimberley region, therapy programs delivered in the health, school and home environments, policy has been influenced locally and nationally and short films were produced to raise FASD awareness.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** The Marulu Strategy represents a comprehensive, long-term and community-led approach to FASD Prevention, Diagnosis and Therapy/Support. The cumulative results over the past 9 years are significant. We present a process that may be adopted by other communities in Australia and internationally in addressing FASD.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** The projects being undertaken as part of the Marulu Strategy are funded through the NHMRC, WA Department of Health, WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Royalties for Regions WA, CAGES Foundation and McCusker Charitable Foundation.

No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.