



FASD-CAN

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Care Action Network

Chairperson's Annual Report 2024-2025

Over the past year, FASD-CAN has experienced both consolidation and growth. We have continued our advocacy for individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in Aotearoa New Zealand, while expanding support services, strengthening partnerships with other disability and community organisations and contributing to national policy and research. Despite funding uncertainties and systemic challenges, our commitment to improving life for those with FASD and their whānau remains unwavering.

Under the leadership of CEO Stephanie James-Sadler, our operational team has delivered impactful programmes across the motu. We provided personalised support through navigators in Tāmaki Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau, facilitated regional support groups, responded to enquiries, and offered caregiver training. A notable achievement was the development of an online resource to assist individuals with FASD transitioning into adulthood.

Our Individuals Development Programme, now named Titoki, has expanded significantly. Through weekend camps, participants explored identity, future pathways, and deepened their understanding of FASD. Led by kaimahi and three kaiarahi, the programme also produced a manifesto advocating for systemic changes. Participants have raised awareness through media, a conference presentation, and training videos for police and mental health and addiction professionals. Social events such as 'pizza nights' in Tamaki Makaurau and Wellington have further fostered community.

Workforce development remained a priority, with the delivery of 'masterclasses' for educators and workshops for justice, mental health and addiction professionals. We launched a new NZQA qualification with Toitū te Waiora, now being rolled out nationally. Our involvement in advisory groups within Corrections and Police enables lived experience to inform justice system practices.

Awareness efforts included contributions to media reports, a front-page feature in The Listener and presentations to community groups. For the first time, some landmarks across New Zealand were illuminated in red on FASD Day, symbolising growing recognition.

Strategically, FASD-CAN played a central role in shaping the upcoming FASD Action Plan (2025–2028), organising hui to ensure lived experiences were considered. We engaged with Ministers and officials to advocate for FASD recognition as a disability eligible for support services. Although progress was halted due to a government review, we continue to push forward. We also supported a petition for pregnancy warning signs in liquor outlets and made written and oral submissions on several legislative bills.

This was our first full year under our new CEO. We have a passionate, knowledgeable and stable team. We welcomed three new Board members—Darryl Roycroft, Michele Daly, and Harmony Moki—bringing expertise in communications, psychology, cultural leadership, and management. Christine Woods was appointed as a strategy and governance advisor. We finalised a new constitution to comply with the Incorporated Societies Act and strengthened our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi through policy

development, practices and Māori leadership. The policy addresses people, processes, programmes and partnerships.

Our work is enabled by numerous volunteers, two advisory groups, and members whose lived experience contributions are the foundation of our work.

Financially, we maintained stability in a challenging funding environment and continued with our strong focus on delivery despite limited funding. We continue to advocate for sustainable investment in FASD support and services.

Looking ahead, the new Action Plan offers significant opportunities. We will monitor its implementation closely, ensuring that lived experience remains central. Our focus will be on securing disability support eligibility, providing direct support to people with FASD and their whanau, contributing to workforce and policy development, and ensuring FASD is recognised and supported across society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Henderson', written in a cursive style.

Dr Leigh Henderson
Chair, FASD-CAN

17 September 2025