

**PRESS RELEASE**

*Aware.org together with FARR encourages South Africans to work together towards a FASD free country*

**Johannesburg, 09 September 2020** – South Africa has the highest rate of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders (FASD) globally, according to research published in the [American Medical Association journal JAMA Paediatrics](#) .

The 9th of September is International FASD Awareness Day and the Association for Alcohol Responsibility and Education (aware.org.za) together with Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR) is calling on all South Africans to join in on a global movement to support the prevention of FASD and the harm caused by consuming alcohol during pregnancy by working towards a FASD free nation.

International FASD Awareness Day is commemorated in order to create awareness around alcohol-related harm during pregnancy. There is no safe amount of alcohol recommended for a pregnant mother to consume during pregnancy. It is the responsibility of mothers, fathers, families, traders and communities to ensure that pregnant women are adequately supported during their pregnancy. It takes a village to raise a child.

An estimated six million people in South Africa are affected by FASD, according to research conducted in South Africa, it is indicated that prevalence rates in different communities range from 2,7% to 28% yet the condition is 100% preventable.

"We as aware.org and FARR urge women who are planning to fall pregnant and those who are pregnant to avoid alcohol at all costs. There is no sufficient education and awareness regarding FASD, but it is the responsibility of our communities to ensure that we create a FASD free South Africa" says Mrs Ingrid Louw, CEO of the Association for Alcohol Responsibility and Education (aware.org.za).

Aware.org, is mandated to address the concerning rise of FASD in the country, which is one of its six key pillars in the fight against alcohol harm, as well as educating and creating awareness with regards to promoting a culture of responsible alcohol consumption in South Africa.

“Harm caused by prenatal alcohol abuse is lifelong. People living with FASD have permanent brain and possibly other organ damage, resulting in developmental, learning and behavioural problems which disables the affected person and has a devastating effect on the family. This condition can be prevented by providing the necessary information and support to women of childbearing age to have planned, alcohol-free pregnancies. Families and communities should stand together in creating these safety nets of support and care” says Dr Leana Olivier, CEO of FARR (Foundation for Alcohol Related Research).

“In recognition of International FASD Awareness Day, aware.org together with FARR are asking South Africans to make effort in learning and creating awareness about FASD across the continent. With the advent of COVID-19, now more than ever, we need to look after each other and it is our collective responsibility to listen, learn and support”, concludes Louw.

#AwareOfTomorrow

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### **About aware.org**

First launched as the Industry Association for Responsible Alcohol Use (ARA) in 1989, it was relaunched in 2017 as the Association for Alcohol Responsibility and Education (aware.org.za) The organisation is a registered non-profit, public benefit organisation (PBO). Its members include the leading manufacturers and retailers of the alcohol industry in South Africa. The body’s aim is to reduce alcohol related harm through education, awareness, ongoing research and on the ground interventions together with strategic partners Aware.org operates both in the formal and informal sectors to ensure compliance with internationally recognised industry alcohol-related harm goals and good governance practice, engaging closely with affected communities to prevent Underage Drinking, Drink Driving and Walking, Binge Drinking, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Responsible Trade Facilitation.

### **About FARR**

The Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR) was founded in 1997 as the first FASD research organization in SA. Its main focus areas include Research, Awareness, evidence-based Prevention and Training. FARR has conducted 16 FASD Prevalence Studies to date in SA and has 13 project centres in the Free State, Northern-, Eastern and Western Cape Province. The Training Academy offers training to communities, NGO’s, students and professionals across South Africa.