



## **President's Report**

It has been another remarkable year for the Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association (RFFADA). Over the past twelve months, 350 individuals and organisations (members and supporters from NOFASARD) agreed to be registered as members of our association. There are more individuals and organisations wishing to become part of both the rffada and NOFASARD on a daily basis. This dramatic increase in membership is an indication of the growing concern and commitment to the area of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) in Australia.

As our membership is well aware, FASD remains a prevalent yet little known or acknowledged disability in Australia. Throughout this, the commitment by the RFFADA to evidence based research and practice has remained strong. This year, the RFFADA has worked in partnership with the University of Queensland, the Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation and the Telethon Institute of Child Health Research (TICHR) to ascertain the knowledge of FASD within the Criminal Justice System in Queensland and Western Australia. Meanwhile, in partnership with the TICHR and the Department of Health and Ageing our founder and executive officer, Anne Russell was put forward as a consumer representative by Sue Miers from NOFASARD and engaged as one of the Senior Consultants developing screening and diagnostic guidelines on FASD for Australia. We eagerly anticipate the development of these guidelines that will be completed in August this year.

Sponsorship from the Enterprise Management Group (EMG) to prepare training on FASD resulted in funding that delivered training in FASD to a growing list of agencies in search of information and support in this much needed area. Organisations that received training in FASD this year included: Network of Drug and Alcohol Agencies, ITEC Employment, Australian Mental Health Agencies, Australian Association of Special Education (NT Division), Cavalry Riverina, Community Enterprises Australia, Centrelink and Carers Associations in Cairns and Townsville. Additionally, several parent and carer groups across Australia received training on FASD.

The RFFADA website was upgraded this year and is now the main conduit for organisations across Australia requesting training and information on FASD.

The work of the RFFADA was further recognised through sponsorship by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. This resulted in a presentation in Brisbane that was attended by 200 people and the donation of laptops.

The year ahead for the RFFADA is filled with as many prospects as it is challenges. We will continue to work hard to secure resources that will ensure FASD remains high on the social, political and health agendas. Included in this endeavour, will be our registration as nationally recognised fund raising organisation.

My sincere thanks to the RFFADA board members for remaining committed to the cause. They are Sue and Tony Miers, Gary Johnson, Janet Hammill, Cathy and Renee Ramsay and Vicki Russell. On behalf of the RFFADA board, I extend my acknowledgment to Anne Russell for her unwavering dedication. She not only strived for, but reached what the board have described as an inspirational list of achievements within the area of FASD.

We look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

**Sonia Berton**  
**President**  
**RFFADA**