**From:** Christine Rogan
**Sent:** 31 March 2016 4:31 p.m.
**To:** Fannz . <fannz@ahw.org.nz>
**Subject:** FASD update 31 March 2016

Kia ora FANNZ

This update pays tribute to the *RIGHT* to justice of all those with FASD and honours those who work hard on their behalf. In particular it applauds the fight to free Mr Teina Anthony Pora, a loving, humble, beautiful person with FASD, from the tyranny of injustice he endured for 23 years.

**In Dark Places – The confessions of Teina Pora and an Ex-Cop’s Fight for Justice**

This book, by Journalist Michael Bennett documents the years of ‘Something deeply amiss…’ in the Pora case. The fight for justice culminates in Teina’s eventual diagnosis of FASD, providing crucial missing evidence for the Privy Council to unequivocally quash his conviction.  This was the key to answering the question posed at the beginning of the book, *“Why did Teina Pora walk into the interview room and start that conversation with the cops? Why did he steadily dig himself deeper and deeper into a hole there was no climbing out of?”* (p 11).

Published by Paul Little Books [www.paullittlebooks.co.nz](http://www.paullittlebooks.co.nz) and available in all good book stores, this is a must read for everyone who cares about knowledge and justice for all.

**FASD and Suggestibility – Tips for criminal justice interviewers**

If ever there was a case to illustrate the perils of suggestibility for a person with FASD, it was the false confessions of Teina Pora and his subsequent conviction for a terrible crime he did not commit. S*uggestibility* is defined as *‘The ability to be easily persuaded to take another’s position* (Clare & Gudjonsson, 1993).  An article published in the [Journal of Law Enforcement by Brown et al (2016)](http://jghcs.info/index.php/l/article/view/463/401)  explains the inherent risk of suggestibility for those with FASD and tips on how this can be avoided.

**Positive factors associated with reduced contact with criminal justice**

Confirming earlier studies, a study of a small group of adults with FASD involved with the criminal justice system (CJS) in Ontario Canada, has found that early diagnosis and lower substance use were factors associated with reduced contact with the CJS. <http://www.jptcp.com/pubmed.php?articleId=530>

**Learning about FASD and justice from NZ and other countries’ experiences**

In 2015, West Australian Children’s Magistrate Catherine Crawford, visited New Zealand, Canada and the USA to learn more about FASD assessment and judicial practices. Her comprehensive report is available to download:

<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/media/fellows/Crawford_C_2014_Youth_affected_by_fetal_alcohol_spectrum_in_criminal_justice_system_2.pdf>

**FASD Case Law Internationally**

There is now a significant body of sentencing law that advocates and judicial officers can rely, based upon expert opinions provided by mental health assessors, when imposing sentences upon offenders with FASDs <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352552516000086> (abstract only).

**Low life expectancy found for those with FAS**.

Not to end this update on a negative note but a Canadian study indicating an average life expectancy of 34 years for those with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome makes grim reading.

[Life Expectancy of People with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome](http://www.jptcp.com/pubmed.php?articleId=531). Thanh & Jonsson (2016).

The good news it is largely ***preventable!***

Kia kaha

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