

# of a FASD Diagnostic Service

Dr Heidi Webster (Director, Child Development Service, SCHHS)

Ms Jessica Doak, Lead Researcher & USC Master of Clinical Psychology student

Professor Mary Katsikitis (Psychology Discipline Leader, USC)

Dr Andrew Wood (Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, USC)

Acknowledge the families of CDS, in particular kinship carer Aunty Judith Shea who has given me permission to share her photograph, story and

- Qualitative approach to evaluate the FASD assessment process for families of children assessed using the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD
- Aimed to identify how families experienced the FASD diagnostic process, and to provide insight into the ongoing difficulties for families following diagnosis
- Capacity for the family to engage in a post-diagnosis management plan also investigated
- Paper submitted for Publication 2019

# SUNSHINE COAST, QUEENSLAND

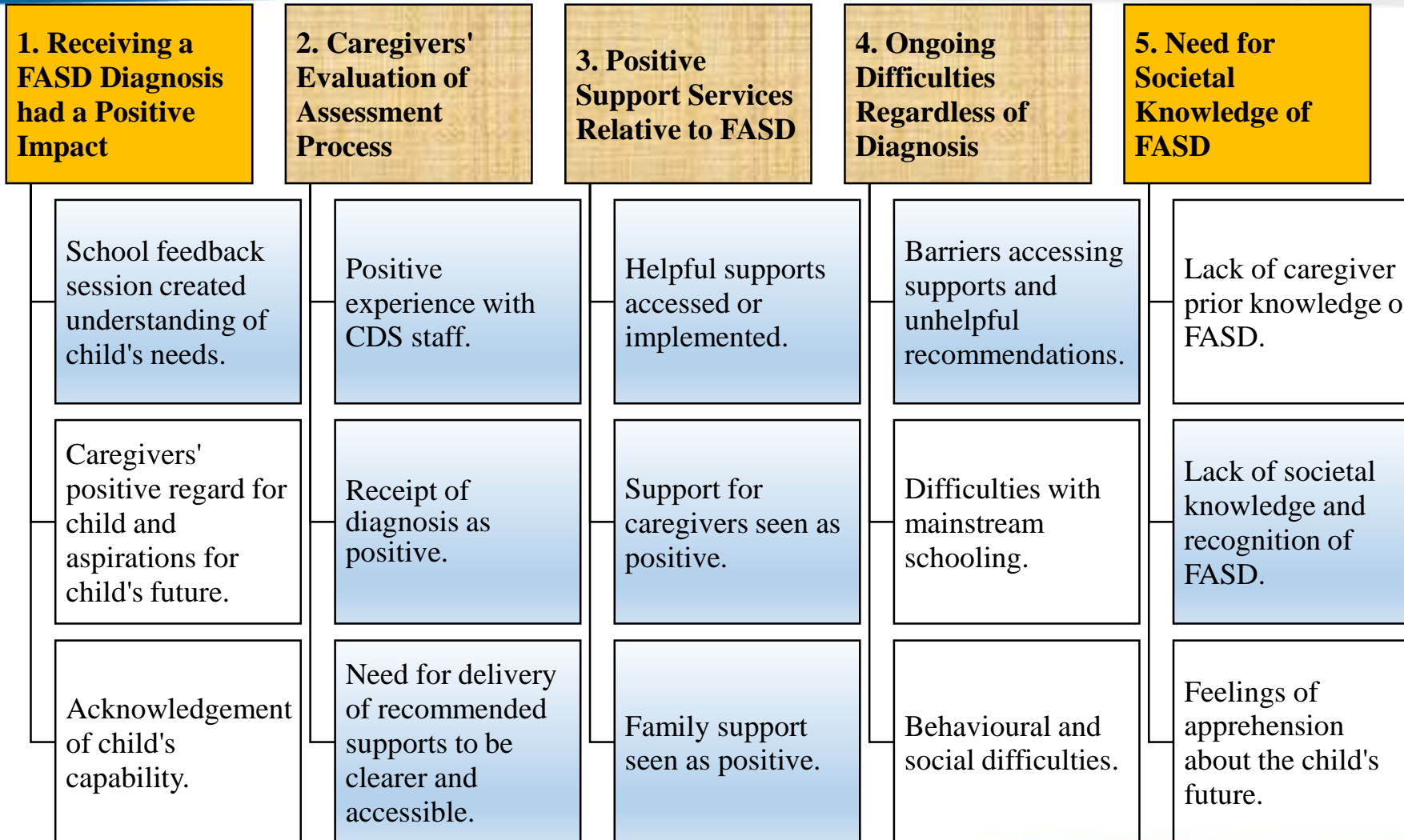


# Clinic Process – Specialist FASD clinic within CDS

- Children referred to Community-based Child Development Service by GP/ Paed if concerns regarding behaviour or development.
- PAE is investigated/assessed as part of the CDS intake process - then leads to referral to the FASD MDT team
- FASD assessment and support process over three phases:
  - (1) conducting the assessment;
  - (2) diagnosis; family feedback; school feedback by 2 team members +carers
  - (3) follow-up with Paediatrician 6 months later (may be ongoing).

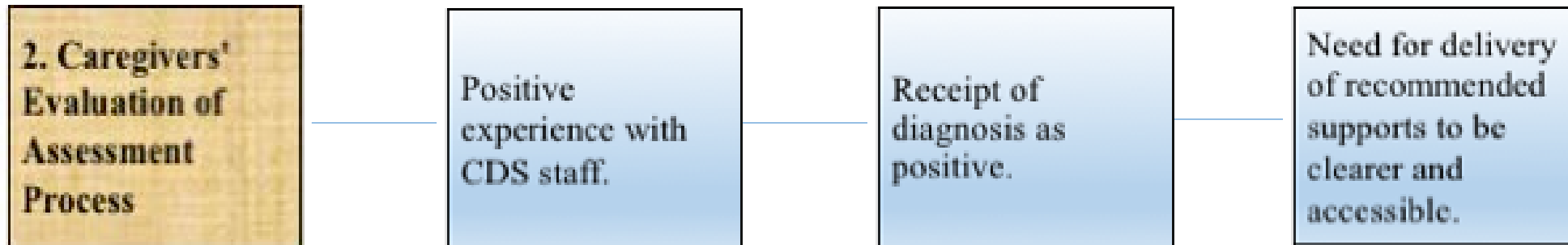


# Result S



**1. Receiving a FASD  
Diagnosis had a Positive  
Impact**

School feedback session  
created understanding of  
child's needs



**“I did not feel judged at all. By any of the team because, you tell them the truth about your children and when you do, that’s the last thing you wanted... to feel horrible about it”**

**“Hearing about the diagnosis ... made me ... make sense of everything ... In his eyes nothing’s different .... But, for us, we can put a name to what’s going on”**

**“Recommendations can be followed? I’m not really sure. They [CDS staff] probably did point it out at the meeting ... it’s a lot of info to take in though”**

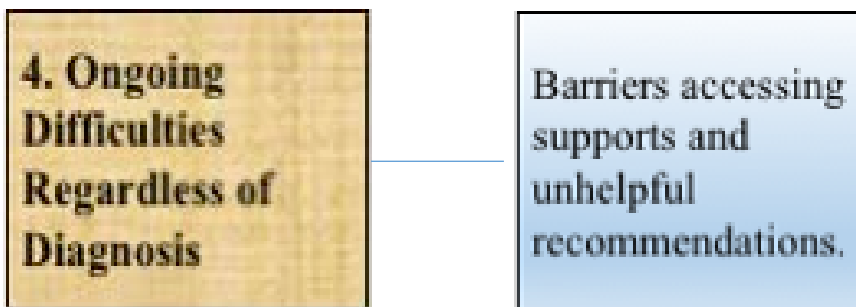


### 3. Positive Support Services Relative to FASD

Helpful supports  
accessed or  
implemented.

Support for  
caregivers seen as  
positive.

Family support  
seen as positive.



**“They [the recommendations] weren’t ever an option to access for us... being, a young family ... [the child] and my husband have disabilities...**

**So, I'm a full-time carer ... being a low- income family, we didn't have that [the recommendations] as an option”.**

**Clinic now provides - additional post-diagnosis feedback sessions to carers**

- goal-setting session to talk about their priorities for their child in the context of diagnosis and recommendations**
- help with formulating a management plan that is actionable**
- Social worker phone support afterwards**

## 5. Need for Societal Knowledge of FASD

Lack of caregiver  
prior knowledge of  
FASD.

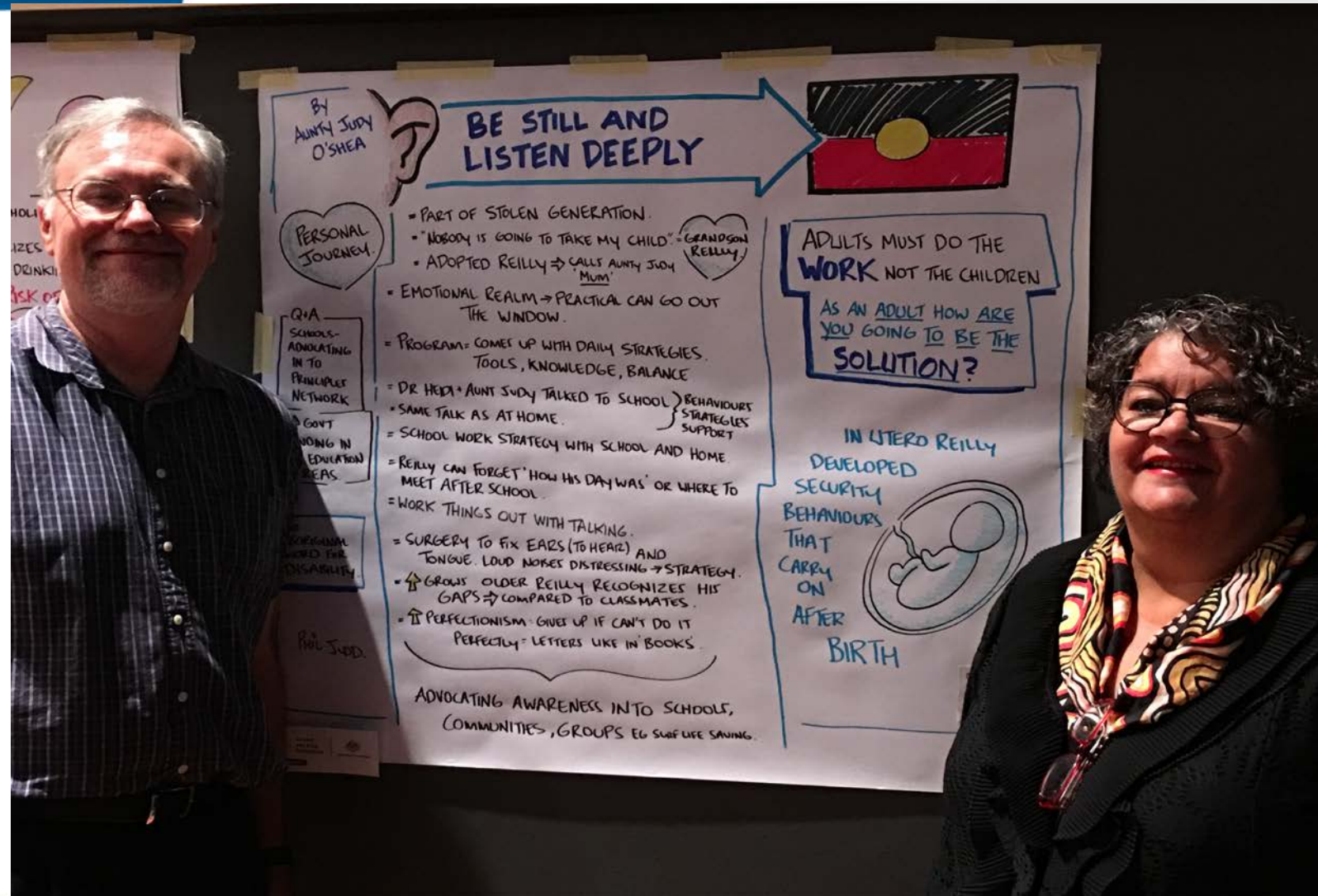
Lack of societal  
knowledge and  
recognition of  
FASD.

Feelings of  
apprehension  
about the child's  
future.

# AUNTY JUDY SHEA

FORMATION of  
SUNSHINE  
COAST  
LOCAL DRUG AND  
ALCOHOL ACTION TEAM

COMMUNITY FORUM –  
FASD :  
A Sunshine Coast  
Conversation





**“As a professional this is a huge world to be in, it is personal now as a carer - am I equipped?**

**How do I grow my child?**

**I'm tired of explaining and feel I am always making excuses for him.**

**We need to increase the knowledge from a Local, State, Commonwealth and Federal level to all Australians like SIDS, cancer and mental health.**

**It is imperative we have for all staff at our schools, understanding, currency knowledge, tools and strategies.”**

**For our kids with FASD - it's not the kids who need to do the work, it's the adults around them who must do the work, to be the solution for them.**

- **Improvements to communication of post-diagnostic recommendations**
- **Establishment and promotion of social/family supports**
- **Overcoming barriers to support through service provider networks**
- **Inclusion of carers in educating the broader community, including schools, in FASD and what life is like for these children and their families**

# Thank you

**Dr Heidi Webster**

**Clinical Services Director**

**Sunshine Coast Child Development Service**

**Caloundra Health Service, West Terrace, Caloundra QLD 4551**

**[Child-Development-Service@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Child-Development-Service@health.qld.gov.au)**

**[Heidi.Webster@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Heidi.Webster@health.qld.gov.au)**