Stronger Families and Communities Strategy

The Evaluators' National Newsletter

December 2005

BACKGROUND

This is the first in a series of regular newsletters about the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) 2004-2009 National Evaluation. This newsletter and the SFCS National Evaluation are funded under the Australian Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

The National Evaluation is being conducted by a Consortium comprised of the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and research advisers. Local evaluators appointed for Communities for Children sites and Invest to Grow projects are also required to contribute to the National Evaluation.

The National Evaluation will evaluate the (SFCS) as a whole and each of the three strands: Communities for Children, Invest to Grow and Local Answers. The National Evaluation will evaluate the SFCS in relation to the Outcomes Framework developed by FaCS. The Outcomes Framework aligns with the National Agenda for Early Childhood and its four priority areas, Healthy Families with Young Children, Early Learning and Care, Supporting Families and Parents, and Creating Child Friendly Communities.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The development of the National Evaluation Framework is now complete. The consultation for the Framework has been extensive and many valuable contributions have been incorporated. A copy of the Framework is available from the FaCS website, and also to download at the link below.

There are two electronic discussion lists now operating. The 'e-valuate' list is a resource developed specifically to support local evaluators. 'CAFCA-chat' provides general support to the SFCS network. Both these lists are moderated by CAFCA staff and we welcome your contributions and feedback. Instructions for joining the discussion lists are on the CAFCA website. A questions and answers page has also been posted on the CAFCA website.

The Piloting of the evaluation instruments is nearing finalisation for the following: Family Study, Service Coordination Study, Partnership Model Study and Service Users Study. The pilot sites include Miller (NSW), East Gippsland (VIC) and Mirrabooka (WA). The pilot has been used to test the instruments themselves as well as the administration process. It is expected that the modified instruments will be available in early 2006, and revised copies will be made available on the CAFCA website.

The National Evaluation has been approved by the UNSW and AIFS Ethics Committees, and the documentation related to this approval will be made available on the Consortium National Evaluation website. The data collection will commence with the Baseline Service Mapping early in the New Year and the Family Study in February.

PUBLICATIONS

National Evaluation website: http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/evaluation/sfcsevaluation.html
FaCS SFCS website: http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/sfsc-sfcs_evaluation_update.htm

New downloads available at the site:

* Draft instruments: http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/evaluation/questionnaires.html
* The National Evaluation Framework (PDF 611K): http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/evaluation/pubs/framework.pdf
* National Evaluation Questions and Answers: http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/evaluation/faqs.html

CONTACT

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