

The Evaluators' National Newsletter

June 2007

Welcome to the June 2007 edition of *The Evaluators' National Newsletter*. This series of regular newsletters provides information about the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) National Evaluation. This newsletter and the National Evaluation are funded under the Australian Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004 - 2009.

NATIONAL EVALUATORS' NEWS

It's difficult to believe but we are close to completing the second year of the National Evaluation! The work continues to progress well and we would again like to thank SFCS Facilitating Partners, project staff, service providers and Local Evaluators for your fantastic contribution to this project. This newsletter provides a summary of the main activities undertaken by the National Evaluators over the past six months.

Service mapping - The National Evaluators recently asked Facilitating Partners to check the baseline service mapping for their site. Thank you to all who have returned the revised information. The baseline service mapping has now been completed. The service mapping will be repeated towards the end of 2007 to determine changes in the range and type of services available in the sites.

Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) is the core component of the outcome evaluation for the Communities for Children (CfC) sites and is referred to as the 'Family Study' in the SFCS Evaluation Framework. Interviewer training for the second round of SFIA was conducted on 1 February 2007 in Melbourne. The training was attended by members of the National Evaluation team who provided an overview of the SFCS, answered questions relating to the questionnaire and took part in training exercises. We have been very fortunate in this round to have the same interviewers from the first round of the study and many were looking forward to seeing the families again.

Round 2 interviews began in March and were completed in May 2007. Response rates were excellent.

The information website for SFIA participants is available at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/sfia>.

Promising Practice Profiles (PPP) - The second call for submissions to the *Promising Practice Profiles* commenced on 15 June 2007. Project staff and Local Evaluators from CfC, Invest to Grow (ItG) and Local Answers (LA) are invited to submit their practices for consideration in the PPP.

Following the first round of submissions, a PPP Reference Group was formed to oversee the validation process for the selection and peer review of submissions. The group comprises four volunteer Local Evaluators from across the country and a representative from both FaCSIA and SPRC. All submissions received in round 1 have been externally validated by a PPP Peer Review Panel. This external validation ensures that the practices accepted on to the PPP webpage are credible and of high quality.

Teleconferences and workshops will be conducted to explain the PPP submission requirements and discuss where to find information and resources to help you to prepare your submission. Please refer to the Events and Evaluation Activities section in this newsletter for further information and contact details.

Submission requirements are available on the PPP webpage at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/ppp/ppp.html>.

Fieldwork in CfC sites - During October and November last year, the National Evaluators conducted fieldwork in 10 CfC sites, the same sites in which the Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) study is being conducted. The fieldwork was designed to complement data collected with the Snapshot Questionnaires about service coordination in the sites. It was also linked to the Partnership Model Study to help understand whether and how various methods of organising local partnerships facilitate working together, service planning and service delivery.

In each of the 10 sites, the National Evaluators conducted interviews with key personnel. These included senior managers and project managers of Facilitating Partners, CfC committee members, service providers, community members, local government representatives and FaCSIA state and territory officers. In total, 95 face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted. We would like to thank all interviewees for your time and goodwill in making this important contribution to the evaluation.

LOCAL EVALUATORS' NEWS

Following the launch of the **SFCS Local Evaluators Extranet** in September last year there has been a steady flow of contributions from Local Evaluators this year. Thank you to all who have contributed and we hope to see more contributions in the coming months.

Contributions since January 2007 include evaluation tools and reports from five CfC sites: Lismore and Murwillumbah, NSW; Dubbo, Narromine, Wellington, NSW; Launceston/East Tamar, Tas; and East Gippsland, Vic.

The extranet page is password protected and restricted for use by Local Evaluators as a specific forum to share evaluation ideas, experiences and documentation with other Local Evaluators. If you are a Local Evaluator we encourage you to register for password access and to participate by providing resources that you think would be useful for the SFCS. To register or to access the page, go to <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/lee/lee.html>.

EVENTS AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

SFCS Facilitating Partners, Project Holders and Local Evaluators are invited to attend *Promising Practice Profiles* teleconferences & workshops held by the National Evaluators throughout July-August 2007. Feedback we received at the round 1 workshops was very positive and has assisted us in designing this round of support.

Teleconferences are planned to assist in the preparation of submissions for *Promising Practice Profiles*. The teleconferences will be tailored to suit the specific needs projects funded under each of the streams - Communities for Children, Invest to Grow & Local Answers. This will enable a more specific discussion of criteria, evidence, literature and other issues relevant to each stream.

Workshops are designed to be more general and cover issues affecting all three streams. Depending on expressions of interest, these may also be tailored to specific streams. In both cases, workshops will provide an overview of the submission process, provide an opportunity to discuss your own practice and provide information to assist your submission.

** If you have a suitable venue for a workshop we would greatly appreciate to hear from you. Our sincere thanks to the generous people who were able to provide venues for the first round of workshops - we look forward to seeing you again.

If you would like to attend a workshop or teleconference please email ppp@aifs.gov.au or phone the CAFCA Research Officer on 03 9214 7888. Dates and locations will be communicated through *e-valuate* and *CAFCA-chat*.

RESOURCES & PUBLICATIONS

National Evaluation website: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/evaluation/sfcsevaluation.html>

SFCS website: http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/sfsc-sfcs_evaluation_update.htm

Resources available at the CAFCA website:

- => Questionnaires: <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>
- => Stronger Families in Australia participant site: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/sfia>
- => NGO Forum presentations: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/evaluation/networkresources.html>
- => Promising Practice Profiles (PPP) site: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/ppp/ppp.html>
- => Resources for PPP: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/ppp/pppresources.html>
- => SFCS Local Evaluators Extranet: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/lee/lee.html>

CONTACT

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please email Ren Adams on cafca@aifs.gov.au.



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