



Australian Government
Australian Institute of
Family Studies



10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference

9–11 July 2008 • Melbourne Exhibition Centre

program & abstracts



families through life

www.aifsconference08.com



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Families Through Life.

The conference will focus on five major themes – Family Relationships; Children, Youth and Patterns of Care; Families and

Work; Families and Community Life; and Violence and Protection Issues. These are the themes around which the Institute's current work is organised. They are closely related to national policy priorities and areas of particular research interest. Within the framework of these broad themes there are sub-themes covering an extensive range of topics related to families that allow a broader scope for discussion.

The conference is an important means by which the Institute fulfils its role of carrying out research and promoting the identification and understanding of factors affecting family wellbeing in Australia. Such a gathering also provides an important link between such diverse groups as service providers, government and non-government decision-makers and advisers, and academia.

This year's conference comes at a time of great change in the social supports, policies and programs for families in Australia. These changes are not only to the substance of the policies and programs, but also in the way in which they are being developed in Australia.

Over the next three days, over 160 presentations will be made by Australian and international researchers. The conference will feature world-class keynote speakers:

- **Andrew Cherlin**, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA;
- **Peter Whiteford**, Professor at the Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW, and former Principal Administrator, Social Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris; and
- **Ruth Weston**, PSM, General Manager (Research), Australian Institute of Family Studies.

New to the conference program this year is two panel sessions with eminent panellists. On Thursday, the Social Inclusion panel will include:

- **Rhonda Parker**, Aged Care Commissioner, Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance, Department of Health and Ageing;
- **John Pascoe**, AO, Chief Federal Magistrate, Federal Magistrates Court of Australia;
- **Muriel Bamblett**, AM, Chair, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC);
- **Tony Nicholson**, Executive Director, Brotherhood of St Laurence and member of the Social Inclusion Board; and
- **Serena Wilson**, First Assistant Secretary, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

And on Friday, the Work and Family panel includes:

- **Willem Adema**, Senior Economist, Social Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris;
- **Elizabeth Broderick**, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission;
- **Grant Fitzner**, Chief Economist and Director of Analytical Services, Department for Communities and Local Government, UK;
- **Susie Babani**, Group General Manager, Human Resources, Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ); and
- **Sharan Burrow**, President, Australian Council of Trade Unions;

I would like to thank the presenters, guest speakers and panellist for their contribution to the program and what we hope will be an interesting and informative conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the very generous contribution made to the Institute for the organisation of this conference by the ANZ Bank, and support from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; and the Attorney-General's Department.

Professor Alan Hayes
Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies

Australian Institute of Family Studies 2008 Conference Organising and Scientific Program Committee

Professor Alan Hayes, Director

Dr Matthew Gray, Deputy Director (Research)

Ruth Weston, General Manager (Research)

Dr Daryl Higgins, General Manager (Research)

Diana Smart, General Manager (Research)

Robert Johnstone, Manager, Human Resources

Robin Jeffs, Library & Web Manager

Grace Soriano, Senior Research Officer

Chelsea Cornell, Research Officer

Carole Jean, Librarian

Nicky Berg, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Directors

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Conference Secretariat



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The Host



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) was established in February 1980 to promote the identification and understanding of factors affecting marital and family stability in Australia. The Institute contributes to family wellbeing in Australia by undertaking high-quality research that informs the Australian Government and the community, and influences policy, services and support for families. The Institute is a national and international leader in identifying, developing and providing timely and reliable information about issues affecting families in Australia.

4 General Information

ATM

There are ATM machines along the concourse of the Conference venue and across the road in the Crown Entertainment Complex.

Business Centre

The venue has a small Business Centre for photocopying or faxing. Please see the main reception desk of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre (MEC) on the ground floor.

Catering

Catering is included in the registration fee. Delegates will receive morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. All catering will be served in Exhibition area on the ground floor of the Conference venue.

In addition, full delegates and delegates registered for Wednesday only will be invited to the Welcome Reception at 6.00pm on Wednesday 9 July.

Chairpersons

Please ensure that you are available in your presentation room at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the session.

Conference Dinner

The Conference dinner will be held at the RACV Club at 501 Bourke Street in the city on Thursday 10 July. If you have pre-purchased your ticket, your Entry Card will be in your name badge pack. If you wish to purchase tickets, a limited number will be available from the Registration Desk for \$100 each.

Disclaimer

The Institute and the Conference Secretariat reserve the right to change the conference program at any time without notice. The program is correct at the time of printing.

Exhibition Area

The Exhibition area is located on the ground floor of the MEC. All catering will be served from within this area to ensure maximum delegate attendance and participation.

Media

Cut-Through Communication has been appointed as the media consultants for the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Please direct any media requests to:

Cut-Through Communication
info@cut-through.com.au

Rebecca Nicholson: 0409 216 053
Sandra McKay: 0407 350 022

Name Badges & Satchels

Delegates should report to the Registration Desk on arrival to collect their name badge and satchel. For security purposes, delegates, exhibitors and speakers must wear their name badges at all times during the conference.

Parking

There is ample on-site car parking at the MEC. If you are in by 9.00am then the fee is \$10.00 per day. Please note that you park your car at your own risk. Entrance to the car park under the venue is via Normanby Road.

Posters

Posters will be featured within the Exhibition area. Posters featured on Wednesday and Thursday will be grouped according to theme and will change each day, so please ensure you take time to read the displayed posters each day.

Wednesday 9 July

Set up 8.00am – 9.30am
Dismantle from 5.30pm

Thursday 10 July

Set up 8.00am – 9.00am
Dismantle from 5.30pm

Poster Sessions

Posters sessions are scheduled for 12.30pm – 1.00pm on Wednesday and Thursday. Authors are asked to remain by their poster during these times to answer any questions delegates may have about the content.

Presentations Available

Abstracts and presentations (where author's permission is obtained) will be available on the AIFS website following the Conference:
www.aifs.gov.au

Public Transport

Tram routes:

Route 96 – St Kilda to East Brunswick

Route 109 – Port Melbourne to Box Hill

Route 112 – West Preston to St Kilda

Trains: Southern Cross and Flinders Street stations are both a short stroll from the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. These stations are major hubs for suburban, regional and interstate rail services. Directions and ticketing information is available from MEC staff. For tram and train timetables see:

www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au

Registration Desk

Conference Reception phone number: (03) 9235 8813.

The Registration Desk is located at the top of the stairs, outside the main auditorium on Level 2 of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. It will be staffed by a member of the

conference organising team at all times as follows:

Wednesday 9 July 7.30am – 6.00pm
 Thursday 10 July 8.00am – 6.30pm
 Friday 11 July 8.00am – 5.00pm

Speakers

Please report to the Registration Desk in the first instance to collect your name badge and then to the Speaker Preparation Room at least two hours prior to your session.

Speaker Preparation Room

All speakers are asked to check in to the Speaker Preparation Room at least two hours prior to their session to download or check their presentation. The Speaker Preparation Room is located in Meeting Room 4 on Level 2 and is open at the following times:

Wednesday 9 July 7.00am – 6.00pm
 Thursday 10 July 7.00am – 4.30pm
 Friday 11 July 8.00am – 4.30pm

Smoking

There is no smoking within the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

Taxis

There is a taxi rank outside the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

Silvertop Taxis 13 1008
 13CABS 13 2227

Venue

Melbourne Exhibition Centre
 2 Clarendon Street
 Southbank

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare



29 Thynne Street
 Bruce ACT 2601
 (02) 6244 1000
 info@aihw.gov.au
 www.aihw.gov.au

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is the national agency for information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare.

We work closely with the Departments of Health and Ageing; Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Veterans' Affairs and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, as well as state and territory departments covering health, housing and community services and with various non-government agencies.

Barnardos - Practice Development Centre



60-64 Bay St
 Ultimo NSW 2007
 02 92182327
 info@lacproject.org or
 scarf@barnardos.org.au
 www.lacproject.org
 www.scarf.org.au

Barnardos Australia is committed to assisting vulnerable children in Australia. We provide direct services to children who are vulnerable to losing their family because of abuse or neglect and to those young people who are becoming homeless and detached from adult society. Barnardos, in partnership with the University of NSW has developed two Case Management systems LAC (Looking after Children) and SCARF (Supporting Children and Responding to Families) to improve quality standards in service delivery. These are known as Guided Practice Systems.

Better Health Channel



50 Lonsdale Street
 Melbourne VIC 3000
 www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

The Better Health Channel is one of Australia's leading health and medical information websites. Known for its comprehensive and trustworthy information, it has over 1,700 fact sheets, hundreds of healthy recipes, health tools and much more – all quality assured by the Victorian Government.

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)



PO Box 7576
 Canberra Business Centre
 ACT 2610
 Toll Free: 1300 653 227
 (calls from mobile phones charged at mobile rates)
 TTY: 1800 260 402

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is the Australian Government's principal source of advice on social policy and is responsible for about a quarter of the government budgetary outlays. FaHCSIA work in partnership with other government and non-government organisations in the management of a diverse range of programs and services designed to support and improve the lives of Australians. FaHCSIA is responsible for coordinating a whole of government approach to programs and services for Indigenous Australians, and has a central role in the Australian Government's arrangements in Indigenous Affairs. Through the Office for Women, FaHCSIA also provides policy advice to the government on issues affecting women in Australia.

6 Program at a Glance

Day 1 Wednesday 9 July 2008

0730	Registration Opens						Auditorium Foyer
0930-1030	Welcome Address						Auditorium
1030-1100	Morning Tea						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1100-1300	Concurrent Session 1						
	Auditorium	Level 5, Suite 1	Level 5, Suite 2	Meeting Room 1	Meeting Room 2	Meeting Room 3	Hospitality Suite 1
	Is Caring a Hazard? (Symposium)	Parenting & Early Intervention (Symposium)	Social Inclusion (Symposium)	Young People	Relationship Breakdown	Care Arrangements	Evaluation (Symposium)
1300-1400	Lunch						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1330-1400	Poster Session						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1400-1530	Keynote 1 – Professor Andrew Cherlin , Sociology and Public Policy, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, USA						Auditorium
1530-1600	Afternoon Tea						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1600-1800	Concurrent Session 2						
	International Policies on Work and Family	Family Structures	Child Support	Early Intervention	Caring and Work (Symposium)	Getting Research Into Practice (Symposium)	Out-of-Home Care
1800-1930	Welcome Reception						Exhibition Area, Concourse

Day 2 Thursday 10 July 2008

0800	Registration Opens						Auditorium Foyer
0900-1100	Concurrent Session 3						
	Family Law Decision-Making	Schools and Sexual Assault Prevention (Symposium)	Community Life	Domestic Violence	Growing Up in Australia – LSAC (Symposium)	Housing and Place	Australian Education Development Index (AEDI) (Symposium)
1100-1130	Morning Tea						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1130-1300	Keynote 2 – Ruth Weston , PSM, General Manager (Research), Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australia						Auditorium
1300-1400	Lunch						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1330-1400	Poster Session						Exhibition Area, Concourse
1400-1530	Concurrent Session 4						
	Social Inclusion	Indigenous Communities	Australian Temperament Project (Symposium)	Relationship Services	Retirement	Culturally Sensitive Family Services and Dispute Resolution	Work and Family

1530-1600 **Afternoon Tea** Exhibition Area, Concourse

1600-1700 **Panel: Social Inclusion** Auditorium

- Rhonda Parker, Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance, Department of Health and Ageing
- John Pascoe, AO, Federal Magistrates Court of Australia
- Muriel Bamblett, AM, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
- Tony Nicholson, Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Serena Wilson, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

1700- 1800 **Concurrent Session 5**

Auditorium	Level 5, Suite 1	Level 5, Suite 2	Meeting Room 1	Meeting Room 2	Meeting Room 3
Homelessness	Social Inclusion	Violence and Family Law	Parenting	Child Protection Data	Father Engagement (Symposium)

1900-2400 **Conference Dinner** RACV Club, 501 Bourke St, Melbourne

Day 3 Friday 11 July 2008

0800 **Registration Opens** Auditorium Foyer

0900-1030 **Keynote 3 – Professor Peter Whiteford**, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW, (previously with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris) Auditorium

1030-1100 **Morning Tea** Exhibition Area, Concourse

1100-1230 **Panel: Work & Family** Auditorium

- Willem Adema, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris
- Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination
- Grant Fitzner, Department for Communities and Local Government, UK
- Susie Babani, ANZ Bank
- Sharan Burrow, Australian Council of Trade Unions

1230-1315 **Lunch** Exhibition Area, Concourse

1315-1515 **Concurrent Session 6**

Climate Change (Symposium)	How Australian Children and Families are Faring (Symposium)	Parenting and Care	Issues in Child Protection (Symposium)	Gender, Work and Care	Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People	Family Relationships
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1515-1530 **Afternoon Tea** Exhibition Area, Concourse

1530-1630 **Concurrent Session 7**

Child Relocation Family Law Disputes	Young People	Family Tax Benefit	Family Relationships	Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care	Youth Transitions	Brain Development
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1630-1645 **Closing Address** Auditorium

Day 1 Wednesday 9 July 2008

0730	Registration Opens	
0800-0930	Poster Set Up	
0930-1030	Welcome Address	Room: Auditorium
1030-1100	Morning Tea	Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
1100-1300	Concurrent Session 1	
1100-1300	Is Caring a Hazard to Your Mental Health? (Symposium)	Room: Auditorium
	Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring	
	Chair: Daryl Higgins	
	Discussant: Lee Emerson	
1100-1130	Carers' Mental Health: National Data on Carers of a Person with a Disability Who Receive Government Assistance Ben Edwards, Daryl Higgins	
1130-1200	The Subjective Wellbeing of Family-Based Carers: A National Disgrace Robert Cummins	
1200-1230	'So That's How I Found Out I Was a Young Carer and That I Actually Had Been a Carer Most of My Life.' Identifying and Supporting Hidden Young Carers Ciara Smyth, Bettina Cass, Megan Blaxland	
1230-1300	Addressing Carers Health and Wellbeing Joan Hughes, Colleen Sheen	
1100-1300	Emotion-Focused Parenting Interventions: Improving Emotional, Social and Behavioural Functioning in Preschoolers and Pre-Adolescents (Symposium)	Room: Level 5, Suite 1
	Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring	
	Chair: Linda Bencic	
1100-1130	Tuning in to Kids: An Emotion Focused Parenting Program Sophie Havighurst, Katherine Wilson, Ann Harley, Margot Prior, Ann Sanson	
1130-1200	Tuning in to Kids: Design and Outcomes Sophie Havighurst, Katherine Wilson, Ann Harley, Ann Sanson, Margot Prior	
1200-1230	The Impact of "Tuning in to Kids" on Anxious Children Sophie Havighurst, Galit Hasen, Katherine Wilson, Ann Harley, Margot Prior	
1230-1300	Tuning in to Teens: A Parenting Intervention Targeting Pre-Adolescents' Emotional Competence Sophie Havighurst, Elizabeth Pizarro, Christiane Kehoe, Ann Harley, Monica Hedges	
1100-1300	Setting the Parameters of Social Inclusion in Australia and Putting Family Violence and Sexual Assault on the Agenda (Symposium)	Room: Level 5, Suite 2
	Theme: Violence & Protection Issues	
	Chair: Antonia Quadara	
1100-1130	Defining the Parameters of Social Inclusion in Australia – and Putting Family Violence and Sexual Assault on the Agenda Zoë Morrison	
1130-1200	Violence and Social Inclusion Marion Frere	
1200-1230	The Power of Social Inclusion in Responses to Indigenous Family Violence Kylie Cripps	
1230-1300	Discussion	

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- 1100-1300 **Young People**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Meeting Room 1
 Chair: Elly Robinson
- 1100-1130 Family Resilience in Families where a Child has a Disability
Kristy Muir, Jacqueline Tudball
- 1130-1200 Young People and their Families: Building Strong Bonds
Elly Robinson, Angela Scarfe, Marika Miles
- 1200-1230 Interparental Conflict and Children's Outcomes: The Pros and Cons of Silence
Magdalena Kielpikowski, Jan Pryor, Paul Jose
- 1230-1300 A Qualitative Investigation of Young Adults' Accounts of the Development of Relationships with Stepfathers
 Ruth Kinniburgh-White, **Claire Cartwright**
-
- 1100-1300 **Relationship Breakdown**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Meeting Room 2
 Chair: Matthew Gray
- 1100-1130 It's All About the Kids: Caring for Children After Separation
Jeremy Robertson, Jan Pryor, Janine Moss
- 1130-1200 Divorce and the Wellbeing of Older Australians
David de Vaus, Matthew Gray, Lixia Qu, David Stanton
- 1200-1230 Supervised Contact Centres in New Zealand: Families' Experiences
Megan Gollop, Nicola Taylor
- 1230-1300 Different Histories, Similar Stories: Separated Mothers Speak About Disputes Over the Care of their Children
Vivienne Elizabeth, Nicola Gavey, Julia Tolmie
-
- 1100-1300 **Care Arrangements**
 Theme: Families & Paid Work Room: Meeting Room 3
 Chair: Ruth Weston
- 1100-1130 Sole Mothers' Time Allocation to Work and Childcare in Contrasting Policy Regimes
Lyn Craig, Killian Mullan, Denise Thompson
- 1130-1200 Paid and Unpaid Work in Australian Households: Towards an Understanding of the New Gender Division of Labour
Jenny Chesters, Janeen Baxter, Mark Western
- 1200-1230 Paternity Leave and Father's Involvement in Infant Care: Time Diary Evidence From Australia
Amanda Hosking, Gillian Whitehouse, Janeen Baxter
- 1230-1300 Mothers' Use of and Beliefs About Child Care for School Aged Children
Kelly Hand
-
- 1100-1300 **Evaluation and Evidence-Based Childhood, Early Intervention and Community Development Services (Symposium)**
 Theme: Families & Community Life Room: Hospitality Suite 1
 Chair: Judy Cashmore
- 1100-1130 Promising Practice Profiles: An Experiment in Building the Evidence Base for Early Childhood, Early Intervention and Community Development Services
Grace Soriano, Haley Clark, Sarah Wise
- 1130-1200 Evaluating Community-Based Programs – Challenges and Lessons from the Front Line
 Sallie Newell, **Anne Graham, Judy Cashmore**,

1200-1230 Evidence for Policy and Funding in Community Services – Evaluation Experiences and Challenges in DoCS

Marilyn Chilvers

1230-1300 Involving Practitioners in External Evaluations

Ilan Katz

1300-1400 **Lunch**

Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse

1330-1400 **Poster Session**

Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse

Theme: Family Relationships

Defining Priorities for Fatherhood Research in Australia

Richard Fletcher, Ilan Katz

Towards a Better Understanding of Families in New Zealand

Lisa Melville, Hannah McConnell

Establishing a Statewide System to Monitor Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing: Using Data to Drive Policy and Planning

Anastasia Gabriel, Linda Hayes, Joyce Cleary

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Negotiating Welfare to Work Under Australian's Working Together: Parents' Struggles for Recognition of Care

Megan Blaxland

Improving Choices for Carers Through Workforce Participation

Joan Hughes, Colleen Sheen

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Parent-Child Relations and Child Outcomes: Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Uma Krishnan

Reviewing the Research Literature to Inform Family Policy: Undertaking a Realist Review

Richard Fletcher, Natalie Close, Anet Babkhani, Paul Ward

Is Anybody out there? Who Supports Families When Things Get Tough?

Constance Jenkin

Two Studies Evaluating the Contribution of Audio CASI (Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing) to the Process of Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making in Child Protection Practice and with Children Living Away from Home

Murray Davies, Derek Brookes

Theme: Families & Community Life

Think National Act Local

Colleen Turner, C Yuksel

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Adult Survivors of Sexual Abuse - Criminal Trial Versus the Need for Therapeutic Intervention - UK Guidelines

Chris Holley

Changing Tracks: Changing Violent Behaviour Changing Lives

Vanda Francke

1400-1530

Keynote 1: Multiple Partnerships: Their Causes and Consequences for Adults and Children

Professor Andrew Cherlin, Sociology and Public Policy, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, USA

Room: Auditorium

Chair: The Honourable Chief Justice Diana Bryant

1530-1600 **Afternoon Tea**

Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse

1600-1800	Concurrent Session 2	
1600-1800	International Policies on Work and Family Theme: Families & Paid Work Chair: Michael Alexander	Room: Auditorium
1600-1630	Influencing Workplace Change: The New Zealand Experience Cath Edmondson, Sarah Young , Dairne Grant	
1630-1700	A New Gender Equality Agenda for Australia Sarah Squire	
1700-1730	What Mothers Want: Exploring the Policies Mothers Say Would Help After the Birth of a Child Jennifer Baxter , Gillian Whitehouse, Jennifer Renda, Michael Alexander, Marian Baird	
1730-1800	The Right to Request Flexible Working in the United Kingdom: A Review of the Evidence and Lessons for Australian Policymakers Grant Fitzner	
1600-1800	Family Structures Theme: Family Relationships Chair: Robyn Parker	Room: Level 5, Suite 1
1600-1630	Family Diversification in Australia -The Increasing Share of Blended and Step Families Joanna Forster-Jones	
1630-1700	Not the 'Other' Mother: How Language Constructs Lesbian Co-Parenting Rhonda Brown	
1700-1730	The Social and Demographic Characteristics of Cohabitors in Australia: Towards a Typology of Cohabiting Couples Sandra Buchler , Janeen Baxter, Michele Haynes, Mark Western	
1730-1800	Overview of Recently Released ABS Statistics on Aspects of Families Heather Crawford	
1600-1800	Child Support Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Chair: Kelly Hand	Room: Level 5, Suite 2
1600-1630	The Relationship Between Child Support Compliance and its Predictors: Evidence From Two Waves of Data Ibolya Losoncz	
1630-1700	The Australian Child Support Scheme as it Relates to Single Mothers: Historical Development and International Comparisons Hayley McKenzie , Kay Cook	
1700-1730	It's Not Just About the Money: Non-Residential Father's Perceptions of Paying Child Support Belinda Hewitt , Kristin Natalier	
1730-1800	The Interaction of Child Support with Housing Outcomes for Parents Apart Maggie Walter , Maryann Wulff, Margaret Reynolds	
1600-1800	Early Intervention Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Chair: Ren Adams	Room: Meeting Room 1
1600-1630	Partnerships in Early Childhood: A Longitudinal Study of a Relationships Based Approach to Early Intervention in Multiple Children's Services Greg Antcliff , Cathy Thompson, Kylie Valentine, Tom Logden, Linda Harrison	

- 1630-1700 Innovative Intervention Strategies for Children and their Families in “Brighter Futures”
Clare Rogers
- 1700-1730 Evaluation of an Intensive Family Based Service
Sue Leahy, Merran Butler
- 1730-1800 The Importance of a Strong and Positive Relationship Between Parents and Early Childhood Professionals to Enable Children to Reach Their Full Potential
Pat Jewell

1600-1800 **Balancing Caring Responsibilities and Work: Caring for a Person with a Disability and Employment (Symposium)**

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Room: Meeting Room 2

Chair: Ben Edwards

Discussant: Bettina Cass

- 1600-1630 Caring and Women’s Labour Market Participation
Matthew Gray, Ben Edwards
- 1630-1700 What Kinds of Jobs Help Carers Combine Work and Employment?
Trish Hill, Cathy Thomson, **Michael Bittman**, and Megan Griffith
- 1700-1730 What Formal Support Services Do Employed Carers Need?
Cathy Thomson, Trish Hill, Michael Bittman, Megan Griffith
- 1730-1800 Discussion

1600-1800 **Getting Research into Practice in the Child Protection and Child & Family Welfare Sector (Symposium)**

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Room: Meeting Room 3

Chair: Fiona Arney

- 1600-1630 Developing a Road Map for Research: Identifying the Priorities for a National Child Protection Research Agenda
Fiona Arney, Leah Bromfield
- 1630-1700 The “Cultures in Context” Model of Research Use
Fiona Arney, **Kerry Lewig**, Prue Holzer
- 1700-1730 Research Use in the Australian Child and Family Welfare Sector: Findings From a Recent Australian Study
Fiona Arney, Kerry Lewig, **Prue Holzer**
- 1730-1800 Innovative Techniques for Facilitating Research Use in Practice: A Panel Discussion
Daryl Higgins, Peter Walsh, Fiona Arney, Robyn Mildon

1600-1800 **Out-of-Home Care**

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Room: Hospitality Suite 1

Chair: Claire Berlyn

- 1600-1630 Views of Children and Young People in Care: A Landmark Study in Queensland
Lee Tennent
- 1630-1700 An Outcomes Study of Victorian Children in Out-of-Home Care Using the Looking After Children Assessment and Action Records: Process, Challenges and Results
Sarah Wise, Ruth Champion
- 1700-1730 Making a Life After Care: The Provision of Support Across the Life Course
Suellen Murray, Elizabeth Branigan, Jenny Malone
- 1730-1800 Academic Performance of Children in the Care of the State: How Do They Compare?
Nicole Hunter

1800-1930 **Welcome Reception**

Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse

Day 2 Thursday 10 July 2008

0800 **Registration Opens**

0800-0900 **Poster Set Up**

0900-1100 **Concurrent Session 3**

0900-1100 **Family Law Decision-Making**

Theme: Family Relationships

Room: Auditorium

Chair: Lawrie Moloney

0900-0930 Children's Participation in Decision-Making About Parenting Arrangements After Separation
Judy Cashmore, Patrick Parkinson, Judi Single

0930-1000 Are we there yet?: An Analysis of Relocation Judgments in Light of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006

Patricia Eastal, Kate Harkins

1000-1030 Conversations Between Judges and Children in Family Law Proceedings

Michelle Fernando

1030-1100 Children Tell Us About 'Having a Say' in Family Law Decision Making

Robyn Fitzgerald, Anne Graham

0900-1100 **Talking About Sex: Sexuality, Young People and Preventing Sexual Violence (Symposium)**

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Room: Level 5, Suite 1

Chair: Zoë Morrison

Discussant: Moria Carmody

0900-0930 Talking About Sex: Sexuality, Young People and Preventing Sexual Violence

Anastasia Powell

0930-1000 Why Not One-Offs? Evaluation of a Whole-School Approach to the Prevention of Sexual Assault

Renee Imbesi

1000-1030 Sexual Ethics: Building Young Women and Men's Capacity to Negotiate Sexual Intimacy and Prevent Sexual Violence

Moir Carmody

1030-1100 Recognising Moral-Ethical Vision in Primary Relationship Violence Prevention

Susan Evans

0900-1100 **Community Life**

Theme: Families & Community Life

Room: Level 5, Suite 2

Chair: Ren Adams

0900-0930 Factors That Contribute to the Communication Gap Between Migrant Elderly and Aged Care Service Providers

Klaudia Vainshtein

0930-1000 Using a Family Inclusion Model to Achieve Long Term Sustainable Outcomes for Disadvantaged Young People Participating in JPET

Candice Haigh

1000-1030 Preschool Education: Who is Attending Preschool and Does Attendance Influence Early School Performance?

Mandy Yap, Nicholas Biddle

1030-1100 Community Engagement and Volunteering – A Whole of Community Approach to Delivering Sustainable Outcomes for Vulnerable People

Alison Normanton, **Judith Latta**

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- 0900-1100 **Domestic Violence**
 Theme: Violence & Protection Issues Room: Meeting Room 1
 Chair: Prue Holzer
- 0900-0930 Arresting Policies: Implications of Pro and Mandatory Arrest Policies for Victims of Domestic and Family Violence
Rochelle Braaf
- 0930-1000 The Rewards and Challenges of Developing and Implementing a Programme of Action for Preventing Family Violence in New Zealand
Rajen Prasad
- 1000-1030 Feeling Safe, Being Strong – Helping Children Build Safe, Happy and Healthy Relationships
Chris Storm
- 1030-1100 Anglicare Victoria: Responding to Family Violence
Constantine Tsingas, David Giles
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- 0900-1100 **Family Life Through the Lens of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (Symposium)**
 Theme: Families & Community Life Room: Meeting Room 2
 Chair: Diana Smart
 Discussant: Michael Bittman
- 0900-0930 Profiling the Developmental Contexts of Children Across a Socio-Economic Gradient
Tamara Blakemore
- 0930-1000 Parental Time with Children and Children's Activities: An Analysis of Australian Time Use Diaries of 4–5 Year Olds
Jennifer Baxter
- 1000-1030 The Health, Financial and Relationship Wellbeing of Australian Couples: Does Marriage Matter?
Linda Bencic, Robyn Parker
- 1030-1100 Discussion
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- 0900-1100 **Housing and Place**
 Theme: Families & Community Life Room: Meeting Room 3
 Chair: Siobhan O'Halloran
- 0900-0930 The Silent Migration: Hearing the Voices of Young Families Who Have Moved to Non-Metropolitan Australia
Karen Healy, Anne Hampshire, Annette Michaux, Amanda Donnett
- 0930-1000 'I'll Try and Make it Feel More Like a Home': Families Living in Caravan Parks
Graeme Stuart
- 1000-1030 Living on the Fringes: Women's Expectations and Experiences of Managing Their Children's Health and Wellbeing in the Outer Suburbs
Fiona Andrews
- 1030-1100 Most Watched: Preliminary Findings of a Work-in-Progress on Family Representations in High Rating Programmes on German TV
Katrin Viertel, Margrit Schreier, Petra Lietz

0900-1100	The Development, Validation, Evaluation and Use of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as a National Measure of Early Childhood Development (Symposium) Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Chair: Suzanne Vassallo	Room: Hospitality Suite 1
0900-0930	Using the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as a Measure of Early Childhood Development Across Australia Sharon Goldfeld , Mary Sayers, Frank Oberklaid, Sally Brinkman, Sven Silburn	
0930-1000	Validity of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Sally Brinkman , Sven Silburn, David Lawrence, Mary Sayers, Sharon Goldfeld, Frank Oberklaid	
1000-1030	The I-AEDI Project: Validation of the Cultural Adaptation of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) for Use With Indigenous Children Sven Silburn , Sally Brinkman, Colleen Hayward, Sue Ferguson-Hill, Elizabeth Crom	
1030-1100	How Can Communities, Schools and Teachers Use the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Mary Sayers , Sharon Goldfeld, Frank Oberklaid, Sally Brinkman, Sven Silburn	
1100-1130	Morning Tea	Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
1130-1300	Keynote 2: Families Through Life: Complications, Risks and Opportunities Ruth Weston , PSM, General Manager (Research), Australian Institute of Family Studies Chair: Alan Hayes	Room: Auditorium
1300-1400	Lunch	Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
1330-1400	Poster Session	Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
	Theme: Family Relationships Stepfamily Practice – Is There an Evidence Base? Steve Martin, John Bamberg Between Generations: Exploring the Dynamics of Value Transfer and/or Transformation using a Cultural-Historical Theoretical Framework Hilary Monk Through the Looking Glass – A Partnership in Parenting Project Pam Murphy, Kaye Colmer	
	Theme: Families & Paid Work Victoria's Baby Boom Joyce Cleary, Anastasia Gabriel, Linda Hayes	
	Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Choices For Young Carers Joan Hughes, Colleen Sheen "Something Has Changed Around Here!" A Family, School and Community Partnership: An Integrated Model of Restorative Practices and Family and Community Group Conferencing for Promoting Student Engagement and Wellbeing in rural Victorian Communities Helen Butler, Sheryl Hemphill, Angela McCullagh, Shandell Blythe, Mandy Knight, Maree Cribbes, Alison Miller, Barry McIntosh, Kevin Mack	
	Theme: Families & Community Life A 'Soft Entry' Approach to Enhancing Child, Family and Community Life: Towards Evidence for Change Ann Ingamells Building Social Cohesion in Two NSW Communities: A Longitudinal Evaluation of a Community-Based Intervention Genevieve Nelson, Andrew Anderson, Annette Michaux	

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- 1400-1530 **Concurrent Session 4**
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- 1400-1530 **Social Inclusion**
 Theme: Families & Community Life Room: Auditorium
 Chair: Matthew Gray
- 1400-1430 Deprivation, Social Exclusion and the Well-Being of Australian Families
Peter Saunders, Yuvisthi Naidoo, Anna Zhu
- 1430-1500 Child Social Exclusion: An Updated Index from the 2006 Census
Justine McNamara, Ann Harding, Robert Tanton, Anne Daly
- 1500-1530 Social Inclusion: Towards an Australian Approach
Alan Hayes
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- 1400-1530 **Indigenous Communities**
 Theme: Violence & Protection Issues Room: Level 5, Suite 1
 Chair: Ren Adams
- 1400-1430 Child Protection in the Northern Territory: Current Events and Future Directions
Adam Tomison
- 1430-1500 Aboriginal Healing Project
Erin Statz Cronin
- 1500-1530 Addressing Child Sexual Assault in Indigenous Communities – Learning from the Canadian Experience
Mandy Young
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- 1400-1530 **What is Life Like for Young People Today?: Insights from the Australian Temperament Project**
 Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Room: Level 5, Suite 2
 Chair: Diana Smart
- 1400-1430 The Nature of Positive Development in Emerging Adulthood
Mary Hawkins, Primrose Letcher, Ann Sanson, Diana Smart, John Toumbourou
- 1430-1500 Patterns of Risk Taking and Adjustment Problems from the Mid-Teens to the Mid-Twenties: Trends from the Australian Temperament Project
Diana Smart, Ann Sanson
- 1500-1530 How Well do Parents and Young Adults Get Along Together? Views of Young Adults and Their Parents
Suzanne Vassallo
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- 1400-1530 **Relationship Services**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Meeting Room 1
 Chair: Robyn Parker
- 1400-1430 Putting Governments in the Marriage Business: What's Happening in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom
Elizabeth Van Acker
- 1430-1500 Accessing Information and Support for Couple Relationships in New Zealand
Carla Guy
- 1500-1530 What's Missing Between 'Strategy' and 'Task'? A Practice Framework to Guide Screening and Assessment in the New Family Relationship Centres
Gail Winkworth, Morag McArthur

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- 1400-1530 **Retirement**
 Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Room: Meeting Room 2
 Chair: Jessica Fullarton
- 1400-1430 Asset Rich, But Income Poor: Australian Housing Wealth and Retirement in International Context
Bruce Bradbury
- 1430-1500 Social, Psychological and Health-Related Determinants of Retirement in Middle and Late Adulthood: Findings from a General Population Sample of Australian Men and Women
Sarah Gill
- 1500-1530 The Family Life of Academics: Gendered Priorities and Institutional Constraints
Maureen Baker
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- 1400-1530 **Culturally Sensitive Family Services and Dispute Resolution**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Meeting Room 3
 Chair: TBA
- 1400-1430 A Cultural Shift? Family Dispute Resolution for Culturally Diverse Families
Susan Armstrong
- 1430-1500 Family Court Dispute Resolution Meetings: A Micro Analysis of Process
Liz Trinder, Alan Firth, Christopher Jenks
- 1500-1530 Culture, Kids and Health Care: A Multi-Cultural Approach
Sharon Chalmers
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- 1400-1530 **Work and Family**
 Theme: Families & Paid Work Room: Hospitality Suite
 Chair: Chelsea Cornell
- 1400-1430 The Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Relationship Breakdown and Re-Partnering of Mothers with Young Children
 Jennifer Baxter, **Matthew Gray**
- 1430-1500 Working But Poor: Trends in the Number and Characteristics of Working Poor Families in Australia, 1997-2006
Alicia Payne
- 1500-1530 Flexible Work Arrangements: A Study of New Zealand Families and their Experiences with Flexible Work
Nita Zodgekar
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- 1530-1600 **Afternoon Tea** Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
- 1600-1700 **Panel: Social Inclusion** Room: Auditorium
 Chair: Richard Aedy
- Rhonda Parker, Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance, Department of Health and Ageing
 - John Pascoe, AO, Federal Magistrates Court of Australia
 - Muriel Bamblett, AM, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
 - Tony Nicholson, Brotherhood of St Laurence
 - Serena Wilson, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister

1700-1800	Concurrent Session 5	
1700-1800	Homelessness Theme: Families & Community Life Chair: Antonia Quadara	Room: Auditorium
1700-1730	Family Homelessness and Citizenship Violet Kolar , Kath Hulse	
1730-1800	Public Perceptions and Attitudes to Homelessness in Australia Deb Batterham	
1700-1800	Social Inclusion Theme: Families & Community Life Chair: Zoë Morrison	Room: Level 5, Suite 1
1700-1730	The Social Engagement of Aged People in Australia Roger Patulny	
1730-1800	Marital Splits and Children's Living Standards: New Evidence for Australia Gerry Redmond	
1700-1800	Violence and Family Law Theme: Family Relationships Chair: Rae Kaspiew	Room: Level 5, Suite 2
1700-1730	Preparing Victims of Violence for Family Dispute Resolution in the New Australian Family Law System Rachael Field	
1730-1800	Evaluation of Magellan: A Case-Management Response to Allegations of Child Abuse in Family Court Proceedings Daryl Higgins	
1700-1800	Parenting Theme: Family Relationships Chair: Kelly Hand	Room: Meeting Room 1
1700-1730	Engaging Fathers in the Stronger Families and Community Strategy Claire Berlyn , Sarah Wise	
1730-1800	For the Want of a Nail: 'Parenting' the Overlooked Policy in Australia's Social Policy Agenda? Sue Edwards	
1700-1800	Child Protection Data Theme: Violence & Protection Issues Chair: Prue Holzer	Room: Meeting Room 2
1700-1730	Contact With the Child Protection System: A Longitudinal Analysis of South Australian Child Protection Data Nancy Rogers , Ros Wilson, Craig Hirte	
1730-1800	25 Years of Child Abuse and Neglect Data from the Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane: Abuse Trends and Associated Demographic Variables Melissa Faulkner , Jennifer Crimmins	
1700-1800	Father Engagement Competencies in Family Relationship Centres: Concepts, Training and Violence Allegations Theme: Family Relationships Chair: Lawrie Moloney Discussant: Ilan Katz	Room: Meeting Room 3

- 1700-1720 'Father Engagement' In Family Relationship Centres
Richard Fletcher, Jennifer StGeorge
- 1720-1740 Description of "Male Specialist Training" for Counsellors and Dispute Resolution Practitioners
Jonathan Toussaint
- 1740-1800 Identification, Assessment and Referral of Domestic Violence Cases at an Urban Family Relationship Centre
Julie Dale

1900-2400 **Conference Dinner** RACV Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne

Day 3 Friday 11 July 2008

- 0800 **Registration Opens**
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- 0800-0900 **Poster Set Up**
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- 0900-1030 **Keynote 3: Assistance for Families: An Assessment of Australian Family Policies From an International Perspective**
Professor Peter Whiteford, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW (previously with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris)
Chair: TBC Room: Auditorium
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- 1030-1100 **Morning Tea** Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
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- 1100-1230 **Panel: Work & Family** Room: Auditorium
Chair: Matthew Gray
- Willem Adema, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Paris
 - Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination
 - Grant Fitzner, Department for Communities and Local Government, UK
 - Susie Babani, ANZ Bank
 - Sharan Burrow, Australian Council for Trade Unions
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- 1230-1315 **Lunch** Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
-
- 1315-1515 **Concurrent Session 6**
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- 1315-1515 **The Human Face of Climate Change: Drought and Families, Children and Communities**
Theme: Families & Community Life Room: Auditorium
Chair: Matthew Gray
- 1315-1335 Climate Change & Social Cohesion: What Has the Drought Taught Us?
Daniela Stehlik
- 1335-1355 Climate Change & Children: Wellbeing Futures on the Driest Continent on Earth
Lyndall Strazdins, Tony McMichael
- 1355-1415 Still Like a Pebble in My Shoe: Continued Stress on Children and Families in Times of Drought
John Dean, Helen Stain
- 1415-1435 Her Beauty and Her Terror – The Wide Brown Land For Me! The Individual and Family Wellbeing of Australian Rural and Regional Families in Drought
Ben Edwards, Matthew Gray, Boyd Hunter, David De Vaus
- 1435 -1515 Discussion
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- 1315 -1515 **How Are Australian Children Faring: Insights From Two National Longitudinal Studies**
Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Room: Level 5, Suite 1
Chair: Diana Smart

- 1315-1345 Do Australian Children Have More Problems Today Than They Did 20 Years Ago?
Diana Smart, Ann Sanson
- 1345-1415 Determining the Effect of Housing Costs on the Well-Being of Australian Families and Children
Sebastian Misson
- 1415-1445 Parenting Contributions to Children's Health Outcomes
Melissa Wake, Ann Sanson, Katherine Smith, Donna Berthelsen
- 1445-1515 Footprints in Time – Following the Developmental Pathways of Indigenous Children
Fiona Skelton

1315-1515 **Parenting and Care**

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Room: Level 5, Suite 2

Chair: Grace Soriano

- 1315-1345 Generational Differences in Multi-Partnered Childbearing
Edith Gray, Ann Evans
- 1345-1415 Parenting and Children's Rights: Implications for Parents and Governments of the Children's Convention
Sue Edwards
- 1415-1445 Social Gradient, Lifestyle and Obesity in Four Year Old Children
Jude Brown, Michael Bittman
- 1445-1515 Informal Solutions: The Diverse Experience of Caring
Joanna Forster-Jones

1315-1515 **Issues in Child Protection (Symposium)**

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Room: Meeting Room 1

Chair: Daryl Higgins

- 1315-1345 Child Protection in Australia: The National Child Protection Data Collection
Cynthia Kim, Prue Holzer, Marie Connolly
- 1345-1415 Statutory Child Protection Data: Explaining Differences Across Australian Jurisdictions and Within Australian Jurisdictions Over Time.
Cynthia Kim, **Prue Holzer**, Marie Connolly
- 1415-1445 Child Protection and Child Homicide: Complexity and Response
Cynthia Kim, Prue Holzer, **Marie Connolly**
- 1445-1515 Project Safehands – What Are the Queensland Police Doing About Child Abuse?
Charysse Pond

1315-1515 **Gender, Work and Care**

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Room: Meeting Room 2

Chair: Jennifer Baxter

- 1315-1345 Rethinking Care: A Critical Analysis of Family Policies and the Negotiation of Dependency
Joan Garvan, Kerreen Reiger, Sinem Temel
- 1345-1415 Young Australian Women's Aspirations for Family and Work in the 21st Century
Melissa Johnstone, Christina Lee
- 1415-1445 The Deal: Gender, Entrepreneurial Business and Family Life
Dina Bowman
- 1445-1515 It Didn't Really Work: Children's Experiences of Changes in Mothers' Working Patterns
Tess Ridge

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- 1315-1515 **Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People**
 Theme: Families & Community Life Room: Meeting Room 3
 Chair: Elly Robinson
- 1315-1345 Kid's Lives in Adult Space and Time: How Work and Community Accommodate Teenagers in Suburban Australia
Philippa Williams, Ken Bridge, Barbara Pocock
- 1345-1415 Doing Things Together: Children's Participation in Home and Out-of-School Activities in Their First Year in School
Beverley Broughton
- 1415-1445 Social Information Processing, Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Style, Perspective Taking and Empathy Among High-Risk and Low-Risk Persistently Antisocial, and Non-Antisocial, Young Adults
Effie Zafirakis, Mary Ainley, Diana Smart
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- 1315-1515 **Family Relationships**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Hospitality Suite 1
 Chair: Lixia Qu
- 1315-1345 How Do I Look?' Links Amongst Body Image, Family Functioning and Parent-Child Relationships in Teenage Girls
Carla Crespo, Jan Pryor, Magda Kielikowski, Paul Jose
- 1345-1415 Conversations: A Pilot Support Group for Suicide Bereaved Parents Caring for Their Children
Barbara Friday, Pat Jewell
- 1415-1445 Socioeconomic Patterns of Partnering in Australia
Genevieve Heard
- 1445-1515 Parental Cohabitation and Children's Wellbeing
Lixia Qu, Ruth Weston
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- 1515-1530 **Afternoon Tea** Room: Exhibition Area, Concourse
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- 1530-1630 **Concurrent Session 7**
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- 1530-1630 **Child Relocation Family Law Disputes**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Auditorium
 Chair: Daryl Higgins
- 1530-1600 Experiences of Parents After Court Decisions About Relocation
Juliet Behrens, Bruce Smyth, Rae Kaspiew
- 1600-1630 When a Divorced Parent Wants to Relocate With the Child
Sanford Braver
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- 1530-1630 **Young People**
 Theme: Young People Room: Level 5, Suite 1
 Chair: Linda Bencic
- 1530-1600 The Consistent Values and Changing Concerns of Young Australians: Some Implications for Policy and Practice
Anne Hampshire, Kathryn Di Nicola
- 1600-1630 Young People Not Fully Engaged in Education and/or Employment – Who is Really at Risk of a Poor Long-Term Outcome?
Jocelyn Pech

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- 1530-1630 **Family Tax Benefit**
 Theme: Families & Paid Work Room: Level 5, Suite 2
 Chair: Jennifer Baxter
- 1530-1600 Balancing Work and Family: Maternity Leave, Childcare Subsidies and Family Benefits
Jennifer Buckingham, Jessica Brown
- 1600-1630 Family Tax Benefit Part B: Where to From Here?
Helen Hodgson
-
- 1530-1630 **Family Relationships**
 Theme: Family Relationships Room: Meeting Room 1
 Chair: Ruth Weston
- 1530-1600 Under the Same Roof: Multi-Generational Families in Australia
Eleanor Bettini, Alexia Tribe
- 1600-1630 Financial Accounts, Money Management and Control in Intimate Relationships
Supriya Singh, Clive Morley
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- 1530-1630 **Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care**
 Theme: Violence & Protection Issues Room: Meeting Room 2
 Chair: Siobhan O'Halloran
- 1530-1550 The Impact of Community Child Health Engagement: Child Protection Outcomes for
 Children of Substance Using Mothers
Tamara Callaghan, Jennifer Crimmins, Maree Crawford, Robert Schweitzer
- 1550-1610 Grandparents and Relative Carers – Challenges in Working With the Extended
 Family in the Interests of the Child
Sue Kirkegard
- 1610-1630 Infants in Care and Family Contact
Meredith Kiraly, Cathy Humphreys, Rhona Noakes, Jim Oommen
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- 1530-1630 **Youth Transitions**
 Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Room: Meeting Room 3
 Chair: Sebastian Misson
- 1530-1600 Stepping Into Adulthood: A Comparison of Youths From Stepfamilies With Other Young
 Australians
 Peng Yu, **Paula Mance**
- 1600-1630 New Narratives of Early School Leavers
Janet Taylor
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- 1530-1630 **Brain Development**
 Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring Room: Hospitality Suite 1
 Chair: Ilan Katz
- 1530-1600 Brain Malleability and Investment in Early Childhood
Ilan Katz, Gerry Redmond
- 1600-1630 Inconsistencies in Legal and Social Outcomes in Non-Accidental Brain Injury
 (Shaken Baby Syndrome) Cases
Amanda Stephens
-
- 1630-1645 **Closing Address** Room: Auditorium

• **Concurrent Session 1 - Auditorium**

Is Caring a Hazard to Your Mental Health? (Symposium)

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Daryl Higgins

Discussant: Lee Emerson (Manager, Carers Branch, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

Carers' Mental Health: National Data on Carers of a Person with a Disability who Receive Government Assistance

Ben Edwards, Daryl Higgins (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Ben Edwards is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Since joining the Institute in 2004, Ben's research has focused on how neighbourhoods and communities influence children and their families as well as how ill health such as disability and cancer affects families. Ben also has expertise in statistical analysis of complex data including longitudinal and family data and provides statistical advice to other researchers at the Institute.

Daryl Higgins is a General Manager (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Dr Higgins is a Registered Psychologist, and has been conducting research in child and family welfare - particularly child maltreatment - for the past 15 years. He has responsibility for overseeing the management of a range of projects at the Institute focused on child protection, childcare, children and parenting, family life, caring for a family member with a disability, and research utilisation in the child and family welfare sector. He was responsible for evaluating the Family Court of Australia's Magellan case-management system for responding to allegations of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse of children that are raised in post-separation parenting matters.

Carers for a person with a disability have higher levels of depression and stress than non-carers. In Australia, it is estimated that there were 474,600 primary carers to a person with a disability in 2003. In 2007 there were 116,614 people receiving Carer Payment and 393,263 receiving Carer Allowance, a 145% and 102% increase since 2000. With population ageing the number of carers is projected to increase even more in coming decades. In this study, data were compared from a representative survey of 1,002 carers who receive government payments to care for a person with a disability with data from a survey of 9,442 people from the general population. Logistic and multiple regressions were used to compare rates of mental

health problems and vitality between carers and the general population while controlling for demographic characteristics. In addition, logistic and multiple regressions were performed on data from the survey of carers to identify risk factors for poor mental health and vitality that were particular to caregiving. Compared to the general population, carers were at significantly greater risk of a mental health problem and had lower levels of vitality even after controlling for demographic characteristics. For carers, the risk factors for poor mental health and lower levels of vitality were: caring for a person with a disability with greater care needs, experiencing greater levels of financial stress, having lower levels of support and reporting more problems in family functioning. Carers are at greater risk of mental health problems and lower energy levels than the general population.

The Subjective Wellbeing of Family-Based Carers: A National Disgrace

Robert Cummins (Deakin University)

Robert Cummins has held a Personal Chair in Psychology at Deakin University since 1997. He has published widely on the topic of Quality of Life and is regarded as an international authority in this area. Professor Cummins is a Fellow of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies and the Australian Psychological Society. He is on the editorial board of eight Journals and is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Happiness Studies. His current research program is directed towards theory development concerning the quality of life construct, and how such understanding can be used to improve the life experience of people who are medically or socially disadvantaged.

This paper concerns the subjective wellbeing of family-based carers in Australia. The research to be reported is the product of a partnership between Carers Australia, Australian Unity, and Deakin University. It concerns a survey conducted in 2007 in which 10,939 questionnaires were distributed to known carers and 4,107 were returned in time for processing. Two major outcome variables were measured as Subjective Wellbeing and psychopathology. The major result is that Carers have the lowest collective wellbeing of any group we have yet discovered in seven years of studying the Australian population. Consistent with this, they have a median rating of moderate depression. Carers seem to face a double jeopardy in all dimensions of life, in that they are more likely to experience hardship and are more severely affected by such experience. For example, over one third of those who are employed are very worried about losing their job, and their average household income is lower than is normal within the general population. Thus, their ability to pay for household essentials, save money, and have financial security, are

all severely comprised. In sum, this is a highly disadvantaged and large group of citizens whose level of wellbeing is so low that it not only compromises their own functioning but also the functioning of the care recipient and the family as a whole. More financial and service resources are desperately needed to allow these families to experience a reasonable level of life quality. The full report is available from http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol/index_wellbeing/Survey_17.1.pdf

'So That's How I Found Out I Was a Young Carer and that I Actually Had Been a Carer Most of my Life.' Identifying and Supporting Hidden Young Carers

Ciara Smyth, **Bettina Cass**, **Megan Blaxland** (University of NSW)

Bettina Cass is Professorial Fellow at the Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW. Her research and publications focus on Australian and international studies of welfare and family policies, including income support and community services; informal and formal care for children, older people and people with a disability; ageing and retirement income policies; policies which make a difference for low-income children. Her current ARC – funded research projects with teams at the Social Policy Research Centre include studies of Young Carers, Grandparents as primary carers Children's perspectives. With a team at SPRC, she is completing a study of "Active ageing: the social and economic dimensions".

Megan Blaxland is a Research Associate at the Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW. Her research interests include income support and welfare to work programs in Australia and Europe, formal and informal care, and feminist and everyday life research methodologies. With her colleagues at the SPRC, she is currently involved in two ARC projects which examine the Australian policy environment in which informal care takes place: Grandparents as Primary Carers of their Grandchildren and Young Carers: Social Policy Impacts of the Caring Responsibilities of Children and Young Adults.

A common theme in the literature on care-giving is the issue of 'hidden' carers - that is, people who undertake informal caring roles and responsibilities for a person with a disability, yet do not identify themselves as carers. One reason carers do not identify themselves as carers relates to the nature of the caring relationship. When providing care for a family member or close friend, intra-familial and social bonds of love and reciprocity often mitigate against viewing the relationships of care and support as anything other than a 'normal' familial or intimate social relationship. Non-identification amongst young carers is complicated

further by societal norms surrounding care-giving. Whereas adults are expected to provide care to other adults and children, children and young people are not expected to be care-givers but rather care recipients: to be a young carer transgresses social norms and expectations. An implication of not identifying oneself as a carer is that many young people remain 'hidden' and beyond the reach of services and supports designed to help them in their caring role. This isolation and lack of support can have potentially negative implications for young carers, affecting school retention, further education, employment, future earnings, social contacts, with consequent impacts on mental health and well-being. This paper examines the circumstances and experiences of young carers in Australia, drawing messages from analysis of the literature on young carers, the impacts of their care-giving and the issues of hidden carers. It draws on qualitative research with young carers carried out through focus groups in NSW and South Australia with 68 children and young people with care-giving responsibilities (aged 11-24) and also on focus groups conducted with service providers and policymakers drawn from across Australia. The aim of the paper is to explore the contexts surrounding identification/non-identification as a care-giver by young people, in order to generate ideas for identifying and supporting hidden young carers.

Addressing Carers' Health and Wellbeing

Joan Hughes, Colleen Sheen (Carers Australia, Canberra)

Joan Hughes has worked for 15 years (13 as CEO Carers NSW and 2 as CEO Carers Australia) to improve the family carer environment through the introduction of state and federal government policies and programs to assist carers and the people they support. In 2004 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research ageing and caring in the UK, USA and Canada.

Introduction: Family carers generally have poorer health and wellbeing than non-carers. Carer health and wellbeing situation: 2007 and 288 research indicated that caring for a person with a disability, a chronic condition, a mental illness, terminal illness or who is frail has a detrimental impact on their own health and wellbeing. This impact increases with the length of time spent caring. Even continual caring for just over one hour a day is detrimental. A health and wellbeing survey of 4000 carers for the Australian Wellbeing Index revealed that as a group carers scored nearly 20 percentage points (58.5) lower than normative range. It was below other groups with a low wellbeing index – "unemployed" people (66.6) and people "alone and unemployed" (60.0). Carers are more than 40% more likely to have at least one chronic health condition when compared to non-carers a 10-year longitudinal study revealed. Evidence illustrates that carer health and

wellbeing is a population health issue. The availability of Australia's 2.6 million carers and choices available to them are critical to the sustainability of Australian health and community care systems.

Conclusion: National targeted population health programs and interventions, including an annual health check, and carer identifiers in general practice software, are required to improve carer health and wellbeing.

• **Concurrent Session 1 - Level 5, Suite 1**
Emotion-Focused Parenting Interventions: Improving Emotional, Social and Behavioural Functioning in Preschoolers and Pre-Adolescents

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Linda Bencic

Tuning in to Kids: An Emotion Focused Parenting Program

Sophie Havighurst, Katherine Wilson (University of Melbourne), Ann Harley (ParentsLink at MacKillop Family Services, Melbourne), Margot Prior, Ann Sanson (University of Melbourne)

Sophie Havighurst is the Principal Investigator on the Tuning in to Kids and Tuning in to Teens research trials. She is also a Chief Investigator on the CAMHS and Schools Early Action (CASEA) program with Austin and Bendigo Health – an early intervention with Prep-Grade 3 children with emerging conduct problems. She is a child clinical psychologist and Lecturer at *Mindful: Centre for Training and Research in Developmental Health* at the University of Melbourne where she coordinates and teaches post-graduate courses for child and adolescent mental health workers. She also supervises research thesis students and works in private practice.

Emotions are a fundamental part of being human – and every person has the capacity for a huge range of emotional experience and expression. Parenting or caring for a child is a particular kind of emotional journey, bringing its own special rewards and challenges. For many parents, connecting with children during emotional moments is one of the most rewarding but also most challenging parts of parenting. The *Tuning in to Kids* program was developed by Sophie Havighurst and Ann Harley and has been evaluated in a number of trials since 2000. The program was designed to help parents teach their children how to understand and manage emotions in order to improve children's emotional competence, social skills and behaviour. This presentation will outline the theoretical basis behind

this program, and provide a brief overview of the content of the intervention. The program explores how 'tuning in' to children's feelings can teach them important lessons about their emotional experience. 'Tuning in' also helps parents to be closer to their children – because emotional moments are valued and treated as a central way children communicate their needs. These skills are also vital for parents to use in their own emotional care. This presentation provides an introduction to emotion-focused parenting. The three presentations that follow show outcome data from efficacy trials of the program: with a community sample of parents with preschool children; with a sample of parents with preschool children who have anxiety problems; and with a community sample of parents with pre-adolescents.

Tuning in to Kids: Design and Outcomes

Sophie Havighurst, **Katherine Wilson** (University of Melbourne), Ann Harley (ParentsLink at MacKillop Family Services, Melbourne), Margot Prior, Ann Sanson (University of Melbourne)

Katherine Wilson, PhD, is an Investigator and Project Manager on the Tuning in to Kids research program, based at *Mindful: Centre for Training and Research in Developmental Health, Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne*. She has been involved with this project since its initial pilot study at the *Parenting Research Centre* (formerly the *Victorian Parenting Centre*). She has significant experience in parent education, assessment of parenting, and project management of early intervention research with preschool children and their parents. She also has post-graduate qualifications and experience in primary and special education.

The aim of this paper is to describe the research design and report some important findings from the *Tuning in to Kids* (TIK) study. The research evaluates a community-based intervention developed to build emotion coaching skills in parents and teachers of preschool children. Child outcomes in emotional competence and behavioural functioning are examined. The research uses a cluster randomised controlled trial design. Eleven clusters of preschools in low- to mid-SES areas were recruited in waves from March 2006-July 2007. Using a minimizing procedure to account for differing preschool enrolment numbers and response rates, half the preschools in each cluster were randomized to intervention and half to control. Parents from intervention preschools attended TIK in the school term following recruitment. Almost 80% attended 5-6 sessions. Parents from control preschools attended a program 9-months later. The sample comprised 218 children (116 boys) aged 4.0-5.11 years (intervention =106). Assessment included questionnaire data collected from parents pre-intervention; post-intervention ($n = 185$); and at 6-month follow-up (n not

yet known), with teacher data collected pre-intervention and at follow-up. Assessment of the child's emotion knowledge and a parent-child structured home observation task was conducted pre-intervention and at follow-up ($n = 170$). Results indicate increases in parent emotion coaching and reductions in parent emotion dismissing responses and child behaviour problems found post-intervention are maintained at follow-up. Program retention rates indicate high acceptability of the program. We conclude that *Tuning in to Kids* is a valuable addition to currently available parenting interventions aiming to prevent child behaviour problems.

The Impact of "Tuning In To Kids" on Anxious Children

Sophie Havighurst, **Galit Hasen**, Katherine Wilson (University of Melbourne), Ann Harley (ParentsLink at MacKillop Family Services, Melbourne), Ann Sanson, Margot Prior (University of Melbourne)

Galit Hasen completed a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Jewish Studies) in 2003. Her Honours thesis explored emotions in academic settings. She is currently completing a combined Masters and PhD degree in clinical child psychology at the University of Melbourne. Her PhD thesis investigates the emotional competence of anxious children and evaluates the efficacy of the *Tuning in to Kids* parenting program with this sample.

The aim of this study is to investigate the efficacy of the *Tuning in to Kids* (TIK) parenting program with anxious children. The TIK program teaches parents how to be aware of their child's emotions and how to help their child learn to regulate their emotional experiences. Preliminary results of pre-intervention data indicate that anxiety levels are high among preschool children in this sample – with 31% showing risks for anxiety disorders. This study includes a sample of 4 and 5 year old children with elevated anxiety who were identified from a larger community sample through parent-report on the Spence Preschool Anxiety Scale. Information was gathered through parent-report questionnaires and observations of a parent-child interaction task. Time one data indicates that while some aspects of anxious children's emotional competence differs from the community sample children, greater differences were found in the way that parents responded to their child's and their own emotions in the parents of anxious children. The focus of this paper will be on outcome data collected at times two and three, after half of the parents completed the TIK parenting program. Immediately post program (time two), both groups of children (wait-list and intervention) increased in their anxiety levels. However at nine months follow-up (time three), the intervention group were found to have

decreased anxiety compared to the control group. This offers some preliminary support that an emotion-focused parenting program may be efficacious for children at risk for anxiety disorders.

Tuning in to Teens: A Parenting Intervention Targeting Pre-adolescents' Emotional Competence

Sophie Havighurst (University of Melbourne), Elizabeth Pizarro (Dianella Community Health, Melbourne), **Christiane Kehoe** (University of Melbourne), Ann Harley (ParentsLink at MacKillop Family Services, Melbourne), Monica Hedges (Centre for Adolescent Health, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne)

Christiane Kehoe completed her Bachelor of Social Science with honours in Psychology at Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia. Her honours theses explored parents' emotional intelligence, emotion-related socialisation practices and their relationship to adolescent emotional intelligence. She has been working as a research assistant on the 'Tuning in to Kids' study at Mindful, Centre for Training and Research in Developmental Health, the University of Melbourne at Austin Health and is currently completing her PhD at Melbourne University investigating the efficacy of the 'Tuning in to Teens' parenting program in preventing internalizing disorders in adolescents.

Changes in parent-child relationships often occur during adolescence due to physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes in the child that challenge parents and often result in conflict and family disconnection. Recent studies have found that emotion-focused aspects of parenting appear to be protective for adolescents during this period of development and may assist the young person to regulate and understand their emotions. This pilot study investigated the feasibility of and impact on parent-child outcomes of a six-week group parenting program focused on promoting emotional competence. Sixty-six grade six students (aged 11 to 13 years) and one of their parents/primary carers were recruited from schools in lower socioeconomic areas of the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne. Parents were cluster-randomised (by school) into either a six-session parenting group program (*Tuning in to Teens*), or a single information session about their child's transition to high school (*High School Transitions*). Parents and their pre-adolescent child completed questionnaires before and after the intervention. The measures addressed pre-teen behavioural and emotional outcomes, parent emotion socialisation of their children, parent emotional and general health outcomes, and family conflict. Parents in the intervention condition reported significant improvements in emotion focused parenting and reductions in criticism. The Grade 6 children of these

parents also reported that their parents were less punishing and were less overwhelmed by their children's emotions. Parents and children reported reductions in the child's emotional and behavioural difficulties. Various feasibility issues relating to prevention and prevention research with this population are discussed.

• Concurrent Session 1 – Level 5, Suite 2

Setting the Parameters of Social Inclusion in Australia and Putting Family Violence and Sexual Assault on the Agenda (Symposium)

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Antonia Quadara

Defining the Parameters of Social Inclusion in Australia – and Putting Family Violence and Sexual Assault on the Agenda

Zoë Morrison (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Zoë Morrison is the Co-ordinator of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA), at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Zoë completed her PhD in 2002 as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, UK, on 'social exclusion', and then worked at Oxford as a college lecturer in Human Geography and Research Fellow in International Gender Studies. She has worked at the Victorian Law Reform Commission recommending changes to family violence laws, at Monash University on a report on successful academic women, and in 2005 she conducted an independent investigation into sexual assault and abuse issue in the Anglican Church in Adelaide, delivering what became known as 'the Morrison report' with recommendations for change to church practice and procedures. Her current research is looking at how we should define the parameters of social exclusion in Australia, which includes framing family violence and sexual assault as social exclusion issues.

'Social inclusion' has always been a flexible concept, and subject to multiple meanings. As it quickly gains currency in Australian political and policy circles, I suggest we examine anew the contributors to inequality and disadvantage in Australia, and what we mean by those very terms. This paper will argue that preventing and responding better to family violence and sexual assault need to be 'joined up' to social inclusion initiatives. Firstly, I will present a theoretical argument about the components of social exclusion and social injustice, pointing out that social exclusion is about more than 'just economics'. I will argue that narrow

conceptions of social justice and inequality may be partly responsible for structuring a conceptual separation of family violence and sexual assault from more 'mainstream' recognized issues of social injustice. Secondly, I will briefly describe the prevalence of family violence and their effects, using this as an opportunity to point out that while these are clearly 'gender issues', they are also issues pertinent to children's well-being and the well-being of the Australian families. Thirdly, I will explain why family violence and sexual assault are also 'social exclusion' issues. I will consider the evidence of a correlation of family violence and sexual assault to socio-economic status, and I draw on the examples of well-recognized facets of social exclusion: homelessness, mental illness and disability. Fourthly, I will explain why the experience of trauma, through experiencing family violence and/or sexual assault, could be said to be the quintessential experience of social exclusion (that is, trauma *is* social exclusion). Finally, I will suggest practical ways to 'frame' family violence and sexual assault within the current Australian social inclusion agenda, specifically through issues of work-place participation, child well-being, 'strengthening families', 'strengthening communities', and law and order issues, as well as the issues already mentioned (of homelessness, mental health, disability and overall disadvantage). I will discuss the advantages and drawbacks of framing these issues through these aspects of the social inclusion agenda, before concluding.

Violence and Social Inclusion

Marion Frere (VicHealth)

Marion Frere is the Deputy Director of the McCaughey Centre: VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing and leads the Centre's research on the impact of violence and discrimination on mental health and community wellbeing. Dr Frere joined the McCaughey Centre in 2006 having spent three years as a senior manager in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. Prior to that, she was a Research Fellow at the Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne. McCaughey Centre: VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

This paper will examine what happens when the concept of social inclusion is viewed through the lens of violence. It will argue that the ways in which violence is conceptualised and experienced impacts upon the relationship of individuals to community activities and institutions and to the building of neighbourly and community relations. It will propose therefore that understanding the ways in which violence is experienced, represented and regulated in particular groups and communities is key to improving social

inclusion. Strongly multi-disciplinary, this paper will connect humanistic and social science analysis (meanings, relationships, structures) to health and social planning. The findings will be drawn from a systematic review of the social inclusion literature in Australia and overseas (through the lens of violence) and will include analysis of the theoretical and policy implications of integrating the analysis of violence more closely with the analysis of social inclusion. While the focus of the paper will be on interpersonal violence, particularly family or intimate partner violence, its methods will call into question the common conceptual distinction between intimate (private) violence and community (public) violence, examining the potential that family or intimate partner violence has a collective impact. It will also call into question the distinction between the trauma of major collective violence (such as war) and the trauma of the multiple and mundane violence of family and intimate partner abuse. Indeed, it will argue that the “everyday” nature of family and intimate partner violence shapes subjectivity and affects the ways in which individuals participate in everyday life. Furthermore, it will question how “everyday life” becomes, in itself, shaped by violence, changing the patterns of sociality and calling into question the foundations upon which we build social inclusion. The paper will ask: How can we understand the meaning of concepts such as trust, support, participation and belonging for individuals, families and communities experiencing high levels of violence? How can a more nuanced understanding of the impact of violence on social inclusion improve our policy response for particular groups and communities?

The Power of Social Inclusion in Responses to Indigenous Family Violence

Kylie Cripps (Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit)

Kylie Cripps BA (Hons) PhD is an Indigenous Post Doctoral Research Fellow at the Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit.

Community led initiatives responding to violence in Indigenous communities have long advocated for approaches that are socially inclusive and implicitly recognise that Indigenous men, women and children are interconnected through a system of kinship and mutual obligations, and remain so even after violence has occurred. These initiatives recognize and respond in various ways to the multiplicity of factors that prevent Indigenous people from participating fully in social, economic and civic life and which have been identified as being linked to the high incidence of violence within Indigenous communities. The 2007 Social Justice Report provided 19 examples of Indigenous initiatives that have sought to break the cycle of violence. These initiatives whilst tackling the problem from a variety of

angles shared some common features and provide insight into how initiatives can be framed in a socially inclusive way. The initiatives detailed by the Social Justice Report were:

- developed by and for the community in which they operate;
- recognised the diversity of Indigenous people and the importance of community engagement in decision making processes;
- built on community knowledge and strengths, valuing in particular Indigenous staff expertise and networks;
- were based on partnerships with government and non-government organisations; and
- responded in a flexible and holistic manner to the multiplicity of factors contributing to the occurrence of violence and to the many people affected by it (Calma 2008: 189-192).

These examples illustrated how self determination and empowerment can make a positive difference in Indigenous communities affected by violence. This paper will explore in more detail how social inclusion can be achieved when responding to the complexities inherent in Indigenous experiences of violence.

• Concurrent Session 1 – Meeting Room 1 Young People

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Elly Robinson

Family Resilience in Families Where a Child has a Disability

Kristy Muir (University of NSW), **Jacqueline Tudball** (National Prescribing Service)

Kristy Muir has a BA (Hons) and PhD from the University of Wollongong. Kristy has expertise in conducting qualitative and quantitative research and mixed-method evaluations with vulnerable groups, such as people with mental illness and disability. She is currently evaluating and conducting research in the areas of mental illness, cultural diversity, disability, families and communities.

Jacqueline Tudball is a social and public health researcher with specialist skills in qualitative and mixed methods, particularly for research with children. She has a BA (Hons) from Swinburne University of Technology and a PhD from the School of Public Health & Community Medicine, UNSW. Jacqueline’s primary research interest is the nexus between social and technological aspects of the management of childhood chronic disease within the family context. She is

currently Senior Evaluation Officer (Social Science) at the National Prescribing Service.

Families where a child has a disability can experience significant stress and social, financial and emotional vulnerability. The concept of 'family resilience' has been identified by policy makers as a characteristic that enables families to meet the challenges they face. The literature describes family resilience as a three-step process: experiencing a crisis/adversity; drawing on strengths and resources; and adapting and resuming family functioning. Understanding how disability agencies can most effectively contribute to family resilience is a current and important consideration in disability and family policy. This paper is based on research conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, for the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Policy and Research Working Group. Interviews were conducted with parents of children with disability and disability agency representatives to examine: the resilience concept and its practical aspects for families; and the relationship between inter- and intra-family strengths and resources. This paper explores how families draw on their own (intra-) strengths and resources and those within the community (inter-) to counter adversity and negotiate the family resilience process. It discusses the unique finding that while community resources (particularly services) can help support families, they may also hinder family resilience if availability, accessibility and quality are inadequate. This paper concludes with policy suggestions as to how disability agencies may facilitate family resilience where families have a child with a disability.

Young People and their Families: Building Strong Bonds

Elly Robinson (Australian Institute of Family Studies), Angela Scarfe, Marika Miles (Jesuit Social Services)

Elly Robinson has experience in the development and production of learning materials and resources for practitioners, service providers, students and the broader community. She has worked as a youth worker and teacher in both remote and inner-urban Australian settings, as the Co-ordinator of the Education and Professional Services Unit at Jesuit Social Services, and as a Senior Project Officer in the Education and Training Unit, Centre for Adolescent Health. Elly is currently the Manager of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Research on risk and protective factors for health and wellbeing in adolescence clearly indicates that a supportive family is important. Parent/family 'connectedness', for example, is considered a protective factor against mental health issues, substance use and

suicidal behaviour. Paradoxically, involvement of family in services and programs for young people, particularly those with complex needs, is often unplanned and/or may be considered peripheral to service delivery. This presentation will commence with a review of research that signifies the critical influence of the bond between young people and their families, particularly parents. The urgent need to reconsider the perceptions of family and attitudes towards family in many areas of work with young people will be discussed. The Strong Bonds project, an initiative of Jesuit Social Services, was conceptualised in response to this perceived need in the youth-work field for a better understanding of the dynamics between young people and their families, and how this knowledge may be integrated into practice for positive outcomes. The presentation will conclude with an overview of the project and future directions.

Interparental Conflict and Children's Outcomes: The Pros and Cons of Silence

Magdalena Kielpikowski, Jan Pryor, Paul Jose (Victoria University of Wellington)

Magda Kielpikowski is a PhD candidate at the School of Psychology and the Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. Magda is interested in the dynamic nature of family systems. Her research focuses on interparental conflict that is *silent*, rather than verbal or physical, and on its impact on the wellbeing of family members.

A large body of evidence may be summoned to document detrimental effects of parental verbal and physical conflict on children. At the same time, it is now accepted that conflict is a normal and expected part of interpersonal relations. Therefore, of consequence to wellbeing is not whether conflict occurs or not, but how it is conducted. To parents seeking to contain the fallout of disagreements the non-verbal non-physical form of conflict may seem an appealing alternative to arguments and aggression. This type of conflict, however, is still poorly researched in the context of families, and some indications are already available of its harmful effect on children. In this study we attempt to address this research gap by investigating the perspectives of parents and children on *silent* conflict. Our data are drawn from questionnaires of 135 couples and their adolescent children. Using newly developed psychometric measures we examine the links between silent parental conflict and children's adjustment problems taking into account perceptions of parent-child relationships and family functioning. The findings generally support our hypotheses of deleterious effects of silent parental conflict on young people's wellbeing and of the protective role of positive relationships with parents. We discuss the implications of our findings for researchers and practitioners interested in constructive management of parental conflict.

A Qualitative Investigation of Young Adults' Accounts of the Development of Relationships with Stepfathers

Ruth Kinniburgh-White (Auckland District Health Board), **Claire Cartwright** (University of Auckland)

Claire Cartwright is the Director of the Clinical Psychology programme at the University of Auckland and supervised this research. Claire is a qualitative researcher and conducts research within the field of marriage transitions. Ruth Kinniburgh-White is a Clinical Psychologist at the Kari Centre, Auckland District Health Board. This paper is based on research she completed as part of Doctorate in the Clinical Psychology program.

This study aimed to develop increased understanding of stepchildren's views of the development of relationships with stepfathers. Twenty-five young adults from stepfamilies took part in narrative interviews that collected their stories of relationships with stepfathers. The interview data were analyzed using two methods of analysis. A thematic analysis allowed for an investigation of the common core themes that emerged across the participants' stories. These included the importance of perceptions of the stepfathers' personal qualities; stepfather warmth and support; discipline issues; and perceptions of his impact on the family. The narrative analysis examined the individual trajectories of the relationships, as told by the participants. Five types of narratives were defined. These ranged from narratives of Continuous Positive Regard through to narratives of Continuous Struggle. The results suggest that some stepfathers and children had relationships that began well and continued to strengthen across the years; other relationships were consistently of low quality; some were difficult initially but gradually improved; others started well, deteriorated, often during adolescence, and then recovered as the participants matured. A small number of relationships were experienced as abusive. It will be argued that these qualitative results challenge the "no-effects" of stepfather hypothesis.

• Concurrent Session 1 – Meeting Room 2 Relationship Breakdown

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Matthew Gray

It's All About the Kids: Caring for Children After Separation

Jeremy Robertson, Jan Pryor (Victoria University of Wellington), Janine Moss (New Zealand Families Commission)

Jeremy Robertson is a Senior Research Fellow at the Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families. Prior to joining the Roy McKenzie Centre in 2003 Jeremy had worked on a range of research projects concerned with family transitions and their impact on children. His PhD, from the University of London, was concerned with stepfathers parenting of stepchildren. He is currently evaluating an education programme for separating parents.

The aim of the study was to explore how couples made arrangements for the care of their children after separation. It focused on couples who made the decision about arrangements between themselves, without recourse to the Family Court. Using qualitative methods the researchers interviewed a volunteer sample of thirty-nine parents (including 8 couples). Parents were asked how they decided on their current post separation parenting arrangements and what factors they considered important in influencing the nature of the arrangements. Interviewers also discussed changes in arrangements over time, satisfaction with current arrangements and needs for information on separation. A relatively high proportion of the parents in the study had shared care arrangements (at least a 30-70% split of overnights). Most reported making the decision regarding ongoing childcare between themselves, without the involvement of anyone else. Some had made use of counselling services and reported that this had helped them focus on the post separation parenting, rather than on relationship issues. A predominant theme emerging from the interviews was the prioritization of children's needs and best interests. Both mothers and fathers included children's ongoing contact with both parents as being in their best interests. Couples reported putting aside relationship issues and working to keep these issues separate from ongoing parenting responsibilities. While research has often focused on conflicted couples this exploratory study suggests that further study of successful post separation parenting might help guide parents through this very stressful time.

Divorce and the Wellbeing of Older Australians

David de Vaus (La Trobe University), **Matthew Gray**, **Lixia Qu** (Australian Institute of Family Studies), **David Stanton** (Australian National University)

David de Vaus is the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University. Professor de Vaus has published research on cohabitation, living arrangements of children, intergenerational transfers, families and ageing, retirement, family values, and on other areas of family life.

Matthew Gray is the Deputy Director (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Dr Gray has published widely on economic and social policy issues, including the determinants of labour force status, welfare reform in the United States, economic consequences of divorce, work and family, and changes in the living arrangements of Australian children since 1946. He has also worked on economic and social policy issues related to Indigenous Australians.

Lixia Qu is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Her research examines trends in family transitions.

David Stanton is a Visiting Fellow in the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University where he runs courses in social policy. He is also a Consultant Social Security Planner and Policy Analyst operating as Stanton Strategic Solutions. From August 2004 to June 2005 he was Deputy Chair of the Ministerial Task Force on Child Support and he held the position of Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) from May 1999 to January 2003. David has worked for the Australian Government in various positions over some 36 years up to the equivalent of Deputy Secretary level. He started in the Australian Public Service with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and then with the Department of Social Security (DSS). He held various Division Head Positions with DSS for some 12 years, including as Head of the (then) research and policy Division of the Department (Development Division), the Family Programs Division, Performance and Control Division and Evaluation and Services Division. He also worked on the service delivery side of DSS having been Director of DSS for NSW from 1987 to 1990. David has also worked as a Social Policy Consultant/Economist with International Agencies (including the International Labour Office and the Asian Development Bank) in such countries as China, Egypt and Trinidad and Tobago. He was a member of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) Advisory Committee on Social Security Research for some 10 years.

As the first generation that experienced high rates of

divorce reaches retirement age, the number of older Australians who have experienced divorce at some point in their lives will increase dramatically in coming decades. The impact of this is compounded by the structural ageing of the Australian population.

Experience of divorce has been shown to have an adverse impact upon living standards in later life (de Vaus, Gray, Qu and Stanton 2007). There are reasons for believing that divorce, in certain circumstances, may also increase the likelihood of experiencing social isolation. There are likely to be gender differences in the consequences of divorce in older age. This paper extends the work into the financial consequences of divorce to examine the connections between divorce, a wide range of measures of wellbeing and the level of support received from families, friends and neighbours. Data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA) are used. The effects of an ageing population combined with those approaching retirement having much higher rates of divorce than preceding generations will mean that the issues relating to the consequences of divorce for older people will be of high public policy relevance.

Supervised Contact Centres in New Zealand: Families' Experiences

Megan Gollop, Nicola Taylor (University of Otago, New Zealand)

Megan Gollop is a Research Fellow at the Children's Issues Centre at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. She has a psychology and counselling background, and has been involved in developmental and social research with children since 1990. Megan has worked as a researcher at the Children's Issues Centre since 1996 on a variety of research projects, predominately relating to socio-legal issues. Her current research interests include: issues for families following parental separation/divorce, relocation following parental separation, children and young people's perspectives, and family discipline and guidance of children.

Supervised contact centres provide supervision during contact between children and parents where there is concern for the child's safety, problems with contact, or if assistance is needed to build a positive parent-child relationship. As part of a NZ government review of the sector in 2005, research was undertaken to explore the factors contributing to an effective supervised contact centre; to investigate why families discontinue their attendance at such centres; and to ascertain what types of contact arrangements they utilise once they have left a centre. Data was collected from past and present clients (parents and children) and staff in four supervised contact centres using interviews, focus group discussions, and written questionnaires. This

paper reports on the interview data relating to how families experienced the constraints of attending a supervised contact centre and the role that staff played in these experiences. The issue of why and how families discontinued their attendance at the supervised contact centre and their subsequent contact arrangements will also be discussed. The parents, caregivers and children were generally satisfied with the service they received from the centre they utilised. It was the staff who had a major impact on families' satisfaction. While transition and change in the families' contact arrangements was common, their move out of the centre was often sudden with little planning. Most of the families who had left a centre were having safe, unsupervised contact, but they nevertheless reported ongoing safety concerns and problems with contact.

Different Histories, Similar Stories: Separated Mothers Speak About Disputes Over the Care of their Children

Vivienne Elizabeth, Nicola Gavey, Julia Tolmie (University of Auckland)

Vivienne Elizabeth is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Auckland, NZ. She has researched and published in the area of gender, family relationships and violence. The paper she is presenting at the conference arises out of an inter-disciplinary, qualitative research project that examines women's experiences of custody disputes, including their interactions with the variety of professionals that make up the contemporary family court system. The project was prompted by Carol Smart's (2006) observation that mothers' voices have become increasingly muted as researchers and policy-makers focus on fathers' experiences and claims. Nicola Gavey is an Associate Professor in the Psychology and Julia Tolmie is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law.

The study upon which this paper is based examines separated mothers' experiences of disputes over care and contact. The context for this research project is a cultural and legal shift in the way mothers and fathers are positioned in relation to their children; over the last 10-20 years fathers have been increasingly defined as essential to the social and material well-being of their children. In this paper, we present findings from in-depth interviews with separated mothers and show that there are remarkable similarities, as well as differences, in the experiences of two groups of mothers: mothers whose former partners have a history of being violent and mothers whose former partners do not have such a history. The similarities in mothers' experiences pose two interconnected challenges that we address here. First, the similarities challenge the way in which separated parents are constructed within custody law and practice. Second, and relatedly, it raises

questions about how we conceptualize the power relations that structure post-separation parenting. On this basis of this work, we argue it is time to move beyond a dichotomized viewpoint of post-separation parenting that juxtaposes those that are 'normal', egalitarian and co-operative with those that are 'pathological', conflictual, and violent. We suggest that such a model not only disguises the similarities in the experiences of separated mothers, but it also disguises the way in which separated fathers use a variety of non-violent tactics of power over separated mothers in struggles over care and contact arrangements for their children.

• Concurrent Session 1 – Meeting Room 3 Care Arrangements

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Chair: Ruth Weston

Sole Mothers' Time Allocation to Work and Childcare in Contrasting Policy Regimes

Lyn Craig, Killian Mullan, Denise Thompson (University of NSW)

Lyn Craig is an Australian Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Her research interests include the gendered time impacts of children, work-family balance, the division of domestic labour, and comparative family and social policy. She is author of *Contemporary Motherhood: the Impact of Children on Adult Time* (Ashgate).

Balancing the competing time demands of work and family is especially difficult for sole mothers. Given their particular vulnerability to time and money pressures, sole parents are also particularly affected by social policies, which will influence their decisions and actions in relation to paid work, unpaid work and family care. This paper aims to explore the effects of different policy contexts upon sole and couple mothers' time allocation to paid work and domestic labor, and upon the quantity and composition of care they provide their children. It compares maternal time use in four countries with differing policy approaches to work and family: Australia, USA, France and Sweden. Using multivariate regression analysis of both harmonized multinational time-use data and of the national time use data from each of the countries, it explores differences both between the countries in the time sole and couple mothers spend in work and care, and differences between sole and married mothers within each of the countries. The paper finds that despite broad cross national differences in total maternal time spent in paid

work, unpaid work and childcare, *within* France, Sweden and Australia there was no sole mother child care time penalty. In contrast, within the US sole and married mothers' child-care time was significantly different. The implication is that in the US sole mothers are limited in their ability to provide their children with the same amount and quality of care that other US children receive.

Paid and Unpaid Work in Australian Households: Towards an Understanding of the New Gender Division of Labour

Jenny Chesters, Janeen Baxter, Mark Western (University of Queensland)

Jenny Chesters bio is a PhD Student and Research Assistant at the University of Queensland's Social Research Centre. The vision of UQSRC is to develop and sustain national and international levels of excellence in interdisciplinary social science research and evidence-based policy research drawing on innovative quantitative (and increasingly qualitative) approaches to data collection, data analysis and data modelling.

Recent changes in the labour force participation rates of men and women give rise to new questions regarding the division of labour in Australian families. Over the last few decades we have seen a marked increase in the labour force participation rates of women and a decline in the labour force participation rates of men. In the majority of households both partners are now engaged in paid employment. Our research, and that of others, has shown that these changing labour force participation rates have not automatically led to a radical reorganisation of the domestic division of labour, suggesting that women are adding their paid work hours to their unpaid work hours, effectively doing a 'second shift'. Therefore, it is timely to consider how couples divide total work for the household, that is, the combination of paid and unpaid work. In this study, we use data collected in a 2005 national Australian survey to examine whether women in dual earner families have higher total workloads than men in dual earner families. We find that in "new traditional" households women continue to undertake a larger proportion of unpaid work. In dual full-time earner households, however the gender gap in men's and women's total workload is far less evident. We conclude that the second shift is most apparent in "new traditional" households. In dual full-time earner households on the other hand, there is a new gender division of labour that reflects women's declining involvement in unpaid work and increased involvement in paid work.

Paternity Leave and Father's Involvement in Infant Care: Time Diary Evidence from Australia

Amanda Hosking, Gillian Whitehouse, Janeen Baxter (University of Queensland)

Amanda Hosking is currently completing a PhD in the School of Social Science and the Social Research Centre (UQSRC) at The University of Queensland. Her research explores how motherhood and fatherhood influences employment outcomes, as well as how employment characteristics influence parents' experiences of family life in Australia.

Much of the debate around parental leave policies has focused on the extent to which their usage challenges or consolidates gendered patterns of paid and unpaid work, with recent analyses concerned with the propensity of fathers to take leave and the effects of fathers' leave taking on gendered divisions of household labour. In this paper, we explore whether Australian fathers' use or duration of leave around a child's birth is associated with father's involvement in parental care when the child reaches age 4 to 17 months. We draw on detailed time-diary data collected for infants at wave 1 of the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children (LSAC) in 2004. We examine how long infants are with their father from 7am - 8pm and how much of this time is taken up by the routine tasks of physical care (bath, nappy change, dress, feeding, drinking and eating) and interactive care (held, cuddled, soothed, read, talked to, sung to and where the infant is crying or upset). Regression results show that fathers who took no leave or a short leave of up to one week around the birth do not spend any less time with an infant on either of our measures than fathers who took a long period of leave lasting three weeks or more. Infants' time in their father's care with the mother absent is found to be significantly lower where the father works long hours and significantly higher where the mother is working full-time or long part-time hours.

Mothers' Use of and Beliefs about Child Care for School Aged Children

Kelly Hand (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Kelly Hand is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies and is responsible for the Family Law Evaluation's Service Provision Project. Prior to this Kelly has worked in the work and family research program at the Institute, with a focus on mothers' employment decisions and child care use.

The issue of how mothers of school age children may coordinate childrearing with other activities such as paid work has received less attention in the research and policy literature than ways in which mothers handle

the childrearing needs of pre-school age children. In addition, little is known about how issues around the provision of out-of-school hours care (OSHC) impact on mothers' employment participation and decision-making. An understanding of these matters is clearly important, given their ongoing relevance to the development of family sensitive policy. The *Family and Work Decisions* study is a large-scale study combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Sixty-one mothers from Victoria and South Australia took part in in-depth interviews about their work and child care. The in-depth interviews took a life course perspective, asking mothers to describe their work-family decisions and/or intentions at different key stages of their lives, such as when their youngest child commenced school. Using these in-depth interview data, this paper examines the different issues that are important to mothers in caring for children once they reach school age, as well as the ways in which those with paid work coordinate their work with their care responsibilities. It includes the perspectives of mothers of primary and secondary school age children and also considers the intentions of mothers whose children are yet to commence school. In addition to examining these work-family decisions or intentions, this paper explores these mothers' perceived access to, and beliefs about, OSHC as well as their views about how their apparent level of OSHC access affects their labour market participation.

• **Concurrent Session 1 – Hospitality Suite 1**
Evaluation and Evidence-Based Early Intervention and Community Development Services

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Judy Cashmore

Promising Practice Profiles: An Experiment in Building the Evidence-Base for Early Childhood, Early Intervention and Community Development Services (Symposium)

Grace Soriano, Haley Clark, Sarah Wise (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Grace Soriano is a Senior Research Officer with the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS). She is currently working on the Promising Practice Profiles (PPP) component of the national evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS). Prior to this she has worked on the Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) national survey component.

Haley Clark is a Research Officer who is also working on the PPP.

Sarah Wise is a developmental researcher in the area of parenting and child development in day care, out-of-home care and other developmental contexts. She has been a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 2001. She has recently completed a PhD (Psychology, University of Melbourne) on the topic of attachment and wellbeing in foster care children. Sarah Wise is the CAFCA Manager and has oversight of the SFCS national evaluation at AIFS.

The Promising Practice Profiles (PPP) is one component of the national evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS), a large-scale Australian Government initiative guided by the National Agenda for Early Childhood, which aims to give families, their children and communities the opportunity to build a better future. The PPP is an innovative process designed to identify programs and services across the four service streams of the SFCS that have adopted practices or ways of working that are demonstrably linked to key service objectives. In one convenient location, the PPP process documents these 'promising practices' to serve as valuable learning tools for policy makers, practitioners, service providers and key stakeholders in the fields of early childhood, early intervention and community development. The current paper reports on three key elements of the PPP process: call for submissions, independent peer review and development of the profile documents. Promising practices identified through three submission and review cycles are summarised in relation to their service objectives. For this purpose, the four priority areas of the National Agenda for Early Childhood have been adopted as the analytical framework; Healthy Young Families, Early Learning and Care, Supporting Parents and Families and Child-Friendly Communities. The paper concludes with a critical analysis of the PPP process and the value of the profile documents as a resource for the field.

Evaluating Community-Based Programs – Challenges and Lessons from the Front-Line

Sallie Newell, **Anne Graham** (Southern Cross University), **Judy Cashmore** (Southern Cross University and University of Sydney)

Sallie Newell is a Senior Research Officer with the Centre for Children & Young People.

Anne Graham is the Director of the Centre for Children & Young People and Head, School of Education, Southern Cross University. She has Masters Degrees in Education and a PhD in sociology and substantial expertise working and researching with children and young people across a broad range of areas including divorce transitions, social and emotional well-being and

child and youth participation. She contributes to a number of national & international child and youth-focused bodies.

Judy Cashmore is an adjunct Professor at Southern Cross University, Chair of the Centre for Children & Young People's Advisory Board and a research-only Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Sydney. Judy has a PhD in developmental psychology, a Masters degree in education and her research has focused on children's perceptions of their involvement in legal proceedings concerning child protection, child sexual assault and family law.

Over recent years, government funding for community-based support programs has increasingly been directed through non-government organisations (NGOs) – with an obligation on them to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of funded programs, rather than just planning and implementing them. While this allows for more locally-relevant and responsive programs, which most NGOs are comfortable developing and delivering, the emphasis on formal evaluation and reporting of program effectiveness can be more challenging – for both NGOs and external evaluators. The Centre for Children and Young People has supported a number of government-funded NGOs in meeting such evaluation obligations. This paper will outline the range of programs supported, the evaluation methods used and the various findings. It will also highlight some of the philosophical, practical and ethical challenges (faced by the NGOs and by the Centre), how we have approached these, what we have learned in the process and recommendations for future approaches. Examples of issues to be discussed include the types of data NGOs collect, their previous experiences with external evaluators, their need to tailor programs to meet clients' needs, funding levels and timeframes, concerns about diverting resources from service delivery and ethical issues which all constrain the use of "standard" outcome-focussed evaluation methods. Furthermore, evaluation implies a shift in focus from "making" a difference to being able to "demonstrate" it and the dependence of future funding on demonstrated program effectiveness can create pressure for "positive" results. The Centre's approach in dealing with these issues in a rural and regional area is outlined.

Evidence for Policy and Funding in Community Services – Evaluation Experiences and Challenges in DoCS

Marilyn Chilvers (NSW Department of Community Services)

Marilyn Chilvers is the Executive Director of the Economics, Statistics and Research Directorate within the Service System Development Division of the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS). She has

Bachelor and Masters degrees in Economics and Statistics, and education, research and evaluation experience in the tertiary education and government sectors. Marilyn leads her Directorate in providing high quality modelling, analyses and research to underpin the policy and program directions of the Department, and to support reforms to the Department's funding arrangements for the provision of community services by the non-government sector. Her move to DoCS in 2003 followed six years at the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research where she held management positions in Statistical Services and Research.

Government agencies need to demonstrate the outcomes achieved for their clients and to show accountability for their funding. The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) is the largest child protection agency in Australia and in 2002/03 received an additional \$1.2 billion funding package over six years to boost child and family services. A key challenge for DoCS is to allocate funding in order to maximise beneficial outcomes for children and families. At the commencement of the reform, the evidence base for funding decisions was not well developed, and DoCS itself had only a small research capacity, no economic or statistical analysis function, and no in-house evaluation capacity. The Department now undertakes rigorous analyses and relevant process, outcome and economic evaluations to improve policy and practice, and to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and effectively. The Economics, Statistics and Research Directorate (ES&R) coordinates all evaluation activities within DoCS. In this paper, the development of a systematic approach and framework to meet the challenge of co-ordinating the evaluation needs and activities of a large government department, along with some associated tools and processes (such as Evaluation Guidelines, Benefit Estimation Database, Costing Manual, and an annual Evaluation Agenda) are described. The paper will also outline a number of evaluations that DoCS has undertaken - ranging from small in-house ones to large ones undertaken through contracts with external consultants - and will highlight the issues encountered and the approaches used for their resolution in these evaluations.

Involving Practitioners in External Evaluations

Ilan Katz (University of NSW)

Ilan Katz is Professor and Director of the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. He has had many years of policy, practice and research experience relating to children, families and communities in the UK and Australia. His main research interests include evaluations of government

interventions, parenting, community and social capital, child protection, international comparison of child welfare systems, parents with mental health problems, and race and ethnicity. His current research includes the evaluations of Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, the NSW DoCS Brighter Futures program and headspace.

This talk will address the issues around the Evaluation/Policy/Practice relationship in the context of the evaluation of large scale complex interventions for children and families. In theory the relationship between policy, practice and evaluation is quite straightforward. Policies are developed and implemented, and evaluation feeds into the further development and refinement of new policies and programs so that they are firmly based on rigorous research evidence. Yet the actual relationship is far more complex and problematic. Policy development must take into account broader political and economic considerations, and the influence of interest groups as well as research evidence. In particular the pace of policy making does not fit well with evaluation. Often major decisions about programs need to be made long before definitive evaluation findings are available. On the other hand practitioners' main concern is to get the job done and help vulnerable children and families. For them evaluation can be seen as both an unnecessary bureaucratic burden and a threat to the continuation of the program. Evaluators need to be arms length in order to make objective judgments about the program, but need data which is collected comprehensively and consistently across the program. Yet evaluators, policy makers and practitioners rely on each other and cannot achieve their goals without each other. This talk will address these tensions, provide a theoretical basis for conceptualizing the role of evaluation in policy and practice, and will provide case examples of how these issues can be minimized.

• Poster Session 1 – Wednesday

Theme: Family Relationships

Defining Priorities for Fatherhood Research in Australia

Richard Fletcher (University of Newcastle), Ilan Katz (University of New South Wales)

A one day seminar "Developing Fatherhood Research In Australia" sponsored by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth was attended by experienced researchers and policy makers in April 2008. The aims of the seminar were to clarify priorities in regard to fatherhood research and to establish an *Australian Fatherhood Research Network* to progress research on fatherhood in Australia. Four topics were

presented as candidates for a short list of priorities: (1) Existing parenting programs: What are the benefits (if any) of including fathers into parenting programs? What competencies are required for practitioners to engage with fathers? (2) Research methods in the area of fatherhood: Can we combine disciplines such as endocrinology and psychiatry with social science methods and approaches? (3) Policy-related research on fathers: What sort of research will advance policy supporting fathers and make policy advisors more aware of the implications for fathers' role in policy? and (4) Basic processes in fatherhood which attitudes, behaviours and knowledge among fathers impact favourably on mothers and babies/children? This interactive presentation aims to continue the process by presenting the results of the April seminar and inviting discussion and debate on the draft priorities and on the scope and operation of the *Australian Fatherhood Research Network*.

Towards a Better Understanding of Families in New Zealand

Lisa Melville, Hannah McConnell (Statistics New Zealand)

In 2006, 70 per cent of New Zealand households contained at least one family nucleus, however, it has been acknowledged that "household data are seriously limited in the insights they can give us about families" (Ministry of Social Development (2004) New Zealand Families Today). There is pressure to improve knowledge about the family through an increased policy and research focus on family issues, including the establishment of the New Zealand Families Commission and the key governmental theme 'Families, Young and Old'. This paper discusses family and household statistics in New Zealand today and for the future. We outline what can currently be seen in family statistics and what is required to produce relevant family statistics to meet the needs of statistical data users. Statistics New Zealand is currently focused on the development of topics which will gain a greater insight into families in New Zealand today. This includes: the collection of more detail on particular family structures (for example the ability to identify stepfamilies); the collection of data on people living in more than one household; and the acknowledgement that families are more than just the people with whom a person lives. The paper also discusses the collection of information about children with parents living in different households and family support networks which extend beyond the household.

Establishing a Statewide System to Monitor Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing: Using Data to Drive Policy and Planning

Anastasia Gabriel, Linda Hayes, Joyce Cleary (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)

The role of data in shaping policy and setting government agendas is critically important. Systematic monitoring of the health, development and wellbeing of children/adolescents both as a population, and in particular understanding vulnerable populations, is fundamental to government's capacity to make sound choices. The Victorian Government has developed an Outcomes Framework for Victoria's children and adolescents aged 0-18. This Framework is an ecological model that places the child at the centre of family, community and society and is comprised of 35 outcomes in the domains of safety, health, learning, development and wellbeing. Based on the Outcomes Framework, the State of Victoria, Australia has developed a comprehensive, across-government system, the Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS), whose aim is to monitor and report on the safety, health, development, learning and wellbeing of children and young people in the state. The objectives of VCAMS are to:

- Build a statewide, integrated monitoring/reporting system that is directly linked to policy and planning.

- Develop ongoing data collection strategies to address data gaps.

- Ensure data are available, analysed and utilised for policy, planning, evaluation and research.

- Report regularly on how Victoria's children and adolescents are faring.

By focusing on vulnerable populations, developing a rigorous and relevant set of indicators, and ensuring that data are accessible and robust; VCAMS will make a substantial contribution to keeping children and youth on the policy and political agenda.

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Negotiating welfare to work under Australian's Working Together: Parents' struggles for recognition of care

Megan Blaxland (Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW)

In Australia from 2003, parents claiming income support whose youngest child was aged 13 or more were subject to new, compulsory measures. For the first time parents faced mandatory employment requirements while in

receipt of state assistance. As a result, the majority of parents who were already managing their family, employment and study lives were required to sign a contract in which they agreed to continue to do so. This paper is based on 33 in-depth interviews with 16 Parenting Payment claimants with teenage children. These parents attended adviser meetings during which they agreed to compulsory employment-oriented activities. I explore reasons why parents might have elected not to disclose information to advisers, the contexts in which they might be comfortable or feel compelled to disclose personal information and the reasons why care responsibilities may not have been adequately explored in adviser meetings. Family and personal care matters were the most difficult to disclose while frequently having the most profound effect on the activities a parent might engage in. Disclosure or non-disclosure affected how the adviser understood their situation and what was accommodated in their agreement. I argue that parents' interactions with personal advisers, the core site of negotiation of the welfare to work experience, is infused with "struggles for recognition", as Axel Honneth terms it. The framework of recognition is used to examine the asymmetrical conditions for agency and negotiation by parents within this policy regime which in different ways seems to both confirm and deny the autonomy of parent claimants.

Improving Choices for Carers through Workforce Participation

Joan Hughes, Colleen Sheen (Carers Australia, Canberra)

Colleen Sheen has been the senior policy advisor at Carers Australia for the past 2 years and has aimed to influence the development of a national policy framework for carers. She has an extensive background in policy issues and communication in population health and primary health care organisations.

Around 2.6 million family carers in Australia provide 1.2 billion hours of unpaid care to people with disabilities, chronic conditions, mental illnesses or who are frail - 2 million are workforce age. Caring can mean reduced opportunity for workforce participation and reduced income. Carers' workforce participation rates are lower than for non-carers. One in five employed carers had reduced their hours of paid work. The same proportion reported a reduction in income associated with caring. Carers are over-represented in the lower household income quintiles and under-represented in the top income quintiles. Many rely on government pensions as their sole income source, and many have incomes over \$200 a week less than the Federal Minimum Wage. In the next 25 years the number of Australians with disabilities over 65 years will grow by 150%, and the number of people over 85 years by 200%. The number of

potential family carers is projected to increase, but not enough to meet this demand. Our ageing population and carer availability will impact significantly on workforce participation and productivity. Governments and businesses need to ensure adequate alternative care and carer-friendly work practices to support carer workforce participation. In 2007, the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission recommended a Family Responsibilities and Carers' Rights Act, and a review of carers superannuation. The new Federal Government's Office of Work and Family, and its Social Inclusion Agenda are opportunities to influence reform to balance care, work and family life for carers.

Theme: Children, Youth and Patterns of Caring

Parent-Child Relations and Child Outcomes: Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Uma Krishnan (New Mexico State University)

Research on parent-child relations and the effect on child outcomes within a collectivist social orientation is scarce. Most research report that conflict increases in adolescence because of the need for behavioural and psychological autonomy that comes with individuation. However, in collectivist cultures independence and autonomy are not encouraged, but instead the socialization of children emphasizes conformity, interdependence, filial piety and group harmony. Therefore, conflict may be low in collectivist cultures, and may not correlate negatively with child outcomes. To understand parent-child relations in collectivist cultures better, this study examined parent-adolescent conflict (incidence and intensity) and adolescent functioning (self-esteem, delinquency, academic achievement and depression) in a sample of 208 Malay, Indian-, and Chinese- Malaysian adolescent-parent dyads by gender. No significant relationships were noted for the Chinese groups, or for the outcome variable, depression. Negative correlations were noted between conflict incidence (Malay males-fathers, Malay females-mothers, and Indian males-mothers) and self-esteem. Conflict intensity was negatively correlated to delinquency whereas conflict incidence was positively correlated. When both were high, delinquency was high. Positive correlations were noted between conflict incidence (Malay females-fathers) and academic achievement. Conflict incidence, when intensity was low, facilitated higher self-esteem and lower delinquency.

Reviewing the Research Literature to Inform Family Policy: Undertaking a Realist Review

Richard Fletcher, Natalie Close, Anet Babkhani (University of Newcastle), Paul Ward (Flinders University)

This presentation uses a case study of a Realist Review addressing the benefits of father-involvement to reflect on evidence-based policy and service delivery for families. It is widely accepted that interventions in the areas of health and welfare should be "evidence based". Randomised control trials (RCTs) have become accepted as the gold standard for evidence and there are established protocols for researchers conducting systematic reviews of evidence pertaining to treatments and interventions. However, there is also growing recognition that interventions addressing complex social issues cannot be properly evaluated by RCTs, which, by their nature, minimize complexity and, even when taken together, cannot explain why the intervention worked or under what circumstances it is likely to work again. Policy analysts have recently begun commissioning reviews to address precisely the question of 'what works for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects, and how?' One form of such a review, a Realist Review, seeks to unpack the multiple assumptions that are implied in complex social interventions to allow each element to be tested by reference to evidence. In this paper the processes involved in a Realist Review will be described. A proposed intervention to involve fathers in Children's Centres (where multiple services for children are located) in order to improve family wellbeing was assessed through a Realist Review. The example reveals how a realist review can steer policy to question widely held assumptions and to address key aspects of complex interventions. The case also provides insight into the larger question of evidence-based practice.

Is Anybody Out There? Who Supports Families when things get Tough?

Constance Jenkin (Jesuit Social Services)

Many families experience difficulty caring for children throughout their lives. Key family transitional stages, such as the birth of a child, entering early childhood services and beginning primary and secondary school can add to this difficulty. REACH Conversation Starters (FACSIA funded) took an action research approach to explore why families access some services and not others. Key services used by families at these stages include maternal and child health, childcare, kindergarten and primary and secondary schools. The project identified one key message i.e. 'Parents only attend and seek support from services where they have formed good relationships with professionals through informal, positive, welcoming interactions'. The project further uncovered factors that impacted on professionals' capacity to form these relationships.

There is an increase in the diversity of family groups that professionals are expected to work with, adding to the complexity of their role;

Many school staff acknowledges a need for greater understanding of the impact of disadvantage on the learning outcomes and general wellbeing of children and young people. Staff reported feeling afraid and lacking confidence when interacting with some parents ;

The demands of the teaching curriculum do not allow teachers the opportunity to consider their capacity to influence the development of 'the whole child' ;

There are few supports and educational services available to assist professionals build relationships with parents and families.

This paper will discuss the benefit of assisting professionals to work holistically with families and children.

Two Studies Evaluating the Contribution of Audio CASI (Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing) to the Process of Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making in Child Protection Practice and with Children Living Away from Home

Murray Davies (The Viewpoint Organization, UK), Derek Brookes (Relational Approaches, Melbourne)

This paper describes two studies evaluating the contribution of audio CASI (computer assisted self-interviewing) to the process of children and young people's participation in decision making in child protection practice and with children living away from home. In both studies, children and young people use audio CASI for review meetings. Audio-CASI is known to be effective in collecting data about sensitive subjects 145 children and young people completed questionnaires about their experiences of using audio CASI; social work practitioners and managers involved in the cases also completed questionnaires about the contribution of the methodology to young people's participation in the review process. Young people are positive about using audio CASI to record their views and feelings; they reported it helped them to think about their feelings and that it was 'a good way to get people to hear what I think' Managers and practitioners in both studies felt that using audio CASI and the data obtained led to effective participation and influence by children and young people in care and child protection planning. In conclusion, young people consider that audio CASI contributes in meaningful ways to their experience of participation in the decisions of the planning processes for their care and protection. Managers consider that young people's participation in meetings and their influence on plans was improved.

Theme: Families & Community Life

Think National Act Local

Colleen Turner, C Yuksel (Broadmeadows UnitingCare)

Communities for Children (CfC) is a National initiative of the Australian Government. The initiative aims to support families with young children within select disadvantaged communities. The initiative is in the process of being evaluated both nationally and locally. The national framework for CfC has five anticipated outcomes. These are:

healthy young families,

supporting families and parents,

early learning and care,

child friendly communities,

family and children's services working effectively as a system.

Broadmeadows is one of the 45 sites established across Australia. A Local Interim Evaluation report outlines how the CfC site has worked towards achieving broad national evaluation outcomes by developing and implementing local models of service delivery and collaboration. The report demonstrates positive examples of children and their families engaging with each other in programs provided in their neighbourhood. The poster includes a summary of results from the local evaluation that measures the impact of the initiative on local families and children. Findings of this study indicate that: parents and children became more involved with their neighbours; children were more sociable; and parents felt more supported post involvement in the range of activities in Broadmeadows. These local findings are placed in the context of the national outcomes anticipated for the initiative.

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Adult Survivors of Sexual Abuse - Criminal Trial Versus the Need for Therapeutic Intervention - UK Guidelines

Chris Holley (South Staffordshire & Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)

Survivors of sexual abuse often have a need for therapy at the same time that they may be reporting the offences to the UK police. So can the criminal justice system and therapists work adjacently to meet a common goal, being that the needs of the client (or "witness", in police terms) are met? Concerns have been raised about the possibility of therapy prejudicing the outcome of a trial; vulnerable adults' confidential mental health records have been exposed in criminal trials; and practice guidance has been required to give

reassurance to the legal profession that therapeutic intervention has not tainted the evidence given in court. In 2002, the UK Home Office/Crown Prosecution Service/Department of Health produced practice guidelines "Provision of Therapy for Vulnerable or Intimidated Adult Witnessed Prior to a criminal Trial". It has particular implications for any practitioner working with adult survivors of sexual or domestic abuse with particular regard to documentation, and advises about the type of intervention considered appropriate, and indeed interventions that may be viewed negatively by the courts. This important guidance has received little attention in respect of training in the UK within therapeutic and support settings, and many Organisations have no knowledge of its existence. The poster will therefore provide practitioners, within either statutory or voluntary agencies, with the required knowledge to ensure that their client's best interest has been taken into account – from a UK perspective – if their reporting of sexual (and any other) offences, to the police, results in a criminal trial.

Changing Tracks: Changing Violent Behaviour Changing Lives

Vanda Francke (University of NSW & Royal Brisbane Hospital)

Changing Tracks: Changing Violent Behaviour Changing Lives: AnglicareWA's therapeutic service delivery to perpetrators of family and domestic violence is informed predominantly by the Compassion Power model, Invitations to Responsibility model and feminist socio-political ideology of the Duluth model. Changing Tracks is a 22 week programme.

Anglicare WA Practice Philosophy: Victim and children's safety is the highest priority. AnglicareWA's service provision in family violence is underpinned by the concept of a gender/power dichotomy informed by feminist theory, which advocates for equality in relationships and for the responsibility of personal actions. The Duluth model is the framework for practice outlining power and control. Changing Tracks at AnglicareWA uses the Compassion/Power model developed by Dr Steven Stosny. This therapeutic model has been extremely effective in enabling emotional regulation resulting in extensive reduction in physical violence. Alan Jenkins' Model, 'Invitations to Responsibility' is also used enabling a client to rationalise for themselves what has not worked in the past and what is positive about taking responsibility. Research indicates group programmes for men are more effective than individual or couple counselling approaches to address violence. Intervention with perpetrators is thus primarily group based.

Evaluation: AnglicareWA has undertaken and completed a research program on the efficacy of their programmes

with the assistance of Murdoch University's Psychology Department, and the research outcomes are positive and continue to be so. AnglicareWA remains committed to the development of "Changing Tracks", and to continuing to 'test' the validity and reliability of their program outcomes.

• Keynote 1 – Andrew Cherlin - Auditorium Multiple Partnerships: Their Causes and Consequences for Adults and Children

Chair: The Honourable Chief Justice Diana Bryant

Andrew Cherlin is a Professor of Sociology and Public Policy, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Professor Cherlin has published widely on the sociology of families and public policy. He is an eminent scholar on many aspects of family life and relationships, particularly marriage and divorce, and issues such as the well-being of parents and children in low-income families and the changing nature of marriage and family life over the past century. In 2003 he received the Distinguished Career Award from the Family Section of the American Sociological Association.

Over the past few decades, rising rates of cohabitation, persistent if somewhat lower rates of marriage, and high rates of partnership dissolution have combined to increase greatly the number of cohabiting and marital partnerships over the average adult's lifetime. This change has been most noticeable in the United States, where rates of multiple partnerships are probably the highest of any wealthy nation. Comparative data, however, suggest that rates of multiple partnerships in Australia, while not as high as in the U.S., are substantial. Some speculations on the causes of this trend in the United States will be presented. The implications for the adult life-course will be examined. And the consequences for children's well-being of experiencing a series of parents' partners entering and exiting the household will be discussed. The presentation will conclude with some thoughts about the appropriate public policy response.

• Concurrent Session 2 - Auditorium

International Policies on Work and Family

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Chair: Michael Alexander

Influencing Workplace Change: the New Zealand Experience

Cath Edmondson, **Sarah Young**, Dairne Grant (New Zealand Department of Labour)

Cath Edmondson, **Sarah Young** and Dairne Grant work in senior policy roles in the New

Zealand Department of Labour. They are responsible for delivering the Government's Work-

Life Balance programme. Together Cath, Sarah and Dairne have a range of experience across central government policy areas in New Zealand including labour market, education, women's affairs and housing. The New Zealand Government has over the last 4 years been undertaking a range of initiatives to make sure that New Zealand's workplaces are attractive, innovative and productive and that all people have opportunities to participate in well-paid and meaningful employment.

This paper provides a snapshot of these initiatives, their impact and lessons learnt about implementing government programmes in workplaces, particularly in relation to families and people with caring responsibilities. To provide a context for discussion, the paper gives a brief picture of New Zealand workplaces including the predominance of small and medium enterprises, the issues of productivity, skills shortages, increasing participation, and population changes and what this means for employers and employees dealing with work-life balance issues and caring responsibilities. The range of government programmes addressing workplace issues for people with caring responsibilities is outlined, followed by a discussion of the impact of a range of policy approaches. These include: Regulation - the paper draws on what we've learnt from a recent evaluation of parental leave in New Zealand and from research and consultation as part of the development of the flexible work arrangements legislation. Influence - the paper reflects on our high level work with social partners to promote work-life balance and flexible work initiatives and also reviews what we have learnt from specific workplace intervention programmes focused on workplace change. The paper then discusses the key learnings from our experiences with regulation and workplace change programmes and what these mean for the future direction of government policy.

A New Gender Equality Agenda for Australia

Sarah Squire (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sydney)

Sarah Squire is a Senior Policy and Research Officer in the Sex and Age Discrimination Unit at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). Her most recent work is in the area of work and family policy, and she was the principle author of HREOC's *It's About Time: Women, men, work and family* final paper. Prior to this role she worked as a Policy Adviser at the then federal Office of the Status of Women (now Office for Women). She holds a PhD from La Trobe University and has published nationally and internationally on a range of gender issues.

In November 2007 the federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick and her team at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission began a five month national "Listening Tour" to hear the views of the Australia community on three gender equality themes. Community feedback was sought on the following broad themes - economic independence for women, work and family balance across the life cycle and freedom from discrimination, harassment and violence. This paper reports on the Listening Tour's findings, which are drawn from a series of focus groups, public consultations and blog entries from HREOC's online consultation tool. The views of researchers, policy makers, business leaders, non-government organisations and ordinary men and women from diverse backgrounds have been fed into the development of a new national gender equality agenda. This paper will present the key findings from the Listening Tour and outline the future directions of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's work in the context of the new workplace relations environment and developments in the area of paid leave entitlements for parents.

What Mothers Want: Exploring the Policies Mothers Say Would Help After the Birth of a Child

Jennifer Baxter (Australian Institute of Family Studies), Gillian Whitehouse (University of Queensland), Jennifer Renda, Michael Alexander (Australian Institute of Family Studies), Marian Baird (University of Sydney)

Jennifer Baxter is a demographer who joined the Australian Institute of Family Studies in February 2005 as a Research Fellow. Dr Baxter's previous work experience includes more than fifteen years in the Commonwealth Public Service, having worked in a number of statistical and research positions. Dr Baxter's current research interests include analysis of issues relating to parental employment (including changes over time, within-family decision-making, the

role of income support and child care), and the analysis of employment transitions.

The birth of a child brings enormous changes to families, with mothers usually reducing their involvement in the labour market (at least for a period), with the resultant financial pressures that can ensue. This paper considers the extent to which mothers reported certain employment conditions and policy options that would have helped them during these critical months following the birth of a child, using data from the 2005 Parental Leave in Australia Survey. This survey was nested within Wave 1.5 of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, and parents of young children (aged 15 to 29 months at the time of the survey) were asked a range of questions about their use of leave and engagement in the labour market around the birth of these children. The policy options addressed were: access to paid and unpaid maternity or paternity leave, better access to part-time work or family leave options, better breastfeeding facilities at work, higher or some maternity payment, and more accessible, affordable or better quality child care. The paper considers whether mothers with particular characteristics (including those of the families they come from) are more likely to have expressed a wish for particular policies.

The Right to Request Flexible Working in the United Kingdom:

A Review of the Evidence and Lessons for Australian Policymakers

Grant Fitzner (Department for Communities and Local Government, UK)

Grant Fitzner is an Australian-born but Whitehall-based economist and senior civil servant. He is Chief Economist and Director of the Analytical Services Directorate at Communities and Local Government. Prior to that, he worked as Director of Employment Market Analysis and Research for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, where he was responsible for providing the evidence base for UK government policy on employment relations; he also chaired the WERS Steering Committee. Grant has worked as a senior macroeconomist and currency strategist at HSBC, and as a senior economist and policy analyst for the Federal government in Canberra.

Work-life balance has moved from margin to mainstream of policy making in the United Kingdom over the past decade, with politicians from all parties eager to signal their support for working parents and a desire for further reforms. This paper examines that experience, with particular attention to the introduction in 2003 of the right of working parents with young children to request working flexibly. The paper analyses a wide range of primary and secondary data, including

the Third Work-Life Balance Employer and Employee Surveys, commissioned by the author. Since 2003 there has been a marked acceleration in employer provision of flexible working arrangements in the UK, and some increase in take-up. Flexible working is now more the norm than the exception; 56 per cent of British employees say they've worked flexibly in the past year. As a result, requests are increasingly handled informally by employers. Employees working flexibly are more likely to be 'very satisfied' with their working hours. There is also evidence flexible working has encouraged women returners to stay with their existing employer. However, some areas of concern were identified. Awareness of the detail of the right appears quite low. Second, there is a gendered employer provision of flexible working arrangements, and high refusal rates encountered by male private sector requests to work flexibly. We conclude that flexible working provides greater choice – particularly for working women – but may also reinforce existing gender relations in the care of children. Some potential policy implications of these findings are discussed.

• Concurrent Session 2 – Level 5, Suite 1

Family Structures

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Robyn Parker

Family Diversification in Australia - The Increasing Share of Blended and Step Families

Joanna Forster-Jones (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

Non-traditional couple families with children are becoming more widespread in Australia. These include families with step children and families that consist of both step children and the couple's natural children (blended families). Measuring the prevalence of these non-traditional families is difficult. However a new family-blending variable in the 2006 census gives us a more accurate picture than before. Using new census data, it is evident that these non-traditional families are more common than previously thought, currently numbering over a quarter of a million families. The new data raises the proportion of children who do not live with both parents from a previously estimated one in five children to between one in four and one in three. Furthermore, with growth rates well above those of intact families, step and blended families are likely to become a prominent feature of Australia's social landscape in the future. This paper explores the strengths and weaknesses of previously available data for these family types, and of the new census family-

blending variable. Standard census counts are disaggregated to produce previously unpublished figures for step and blended families by the sex of the step-parent. Finally, the research possibilities gained from a robust census variable for family-blending are explored.

Not the 'Other' Mother: Language used to Define, Describe and Give Meaning to Lesbian Non-birth Mother Relationships

Rhonda Brown (La Trobe University)

Rhonda Brown is a lecturer in community nursing at La Trobe University as well as a counsellor and family therapist with a small private practice. She is an experienced clinician and educator with background in community and psychiatric nursing, academic and community education and has extensive experience working with lesbians and their families. Rhonda is currently undertaking a PhD studying lesbian non-birth parents and their relationships with their children and within their family. She is particularly interested in the language and meaning of these relationships both within and outside the family.

While lesbians have been parenting for a long time, it is only relatively recently that they have received public attention and that a language has emerged for lesbian motherhood. Lesbians continue to be marginalised in the absence of legal and social recognition of their families. This is particularly so for lesbian non-birth mothers as evidenced by the lack of widely accepted language to adequately define and describe their roles and relationships with their children. Without legal and social recognition or accepted and recognisable language the lesbian co-parent is rendered invisible. She is forced to continually define her position within the family if she wants to have a legitimate role in her children's lives in the public world. This paper presents findings from recent Australian qualitative research which used multi-generational family interviews with twenty-five lesbian-parented families in Victoria to explore how parents, children and grandparents, describe and present their families in public contexts. Findings suggest that there are multiple labels used for the lesbian non-birth mother and language changes in different contexts and overtime. The paper will explore how language is used to define, describe and give meaning to roles and relationships of lesbian non-birth mothers within social and kinship networks and wider community. Through claiming language and telling their stories lesbian non-birth mothers give meaning to their lives; affirm their identity; and present their relationships as visible and valid.

The Social and Demographic Characteristics of Cohabiters in Australia: Towards a Typology of Cohabiting Couples

Sandra Buchler, Janeen Baxter, Michele Haynes, Mark Western (University of Queensland)

Sandra Buchler is a PhD candidate in the School of Social Science at The University of Queensland. Her PhD examines cohabitation in Australia, specifically the trends and implications for family outcomes.

In a twenty year period, from 1982 to 2001, the proportion of couples cohabiting in Australia rose from 4.7 % to 12.4 %. This represents a substantial shift in patterns of family formation. Not only are more people living in cohabiting relationships, it is becoming the norm to live in such a relationship either instead of or before committing to marriage. Over 75% of couples now live together prior to marriage compared to only 16 percent in 1976. We use data from Wave 1 of the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey to investigate how de facto (cohabiting) couples differ from people of other marital statuses on a number of demographic measures. We also examine whether there are distinct groups within the category of cohabiting. We find that cohabiting couples differ from married, single and separated, divorced or widowed people on a number of measures, such as age, religiosity, ethnic background, education, income and fertility intentions. Furthermore, our results show that there are different types of cohabiting couples, ranging from younger people who see cohabitation as a 'trial marriage', and intend to marry, to older people who have been previously married and who have no intention of re-marrying. The demographic characteristics of these groups also differ substantially. The paper concludes that the recent rise in cohabiting relationships, and diversity amongst these groups, is a reflection of the fundamental changes in patterns of family formation and the changing status of marriage in the life course.

Overview of Recently Released ABS Statistics on Aspects of Families

Heather Crawford (Australian Government Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Heather Crawford is an Assistant Director in the Family and Community Statistics Section of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2008 marks Heather's 20th year in the ABS. She has previously worked in survey development, management and dissemination on a range of interesting surveys including the Labour Force Survey, the first Survey of Aspects of Literacy and the first Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation. For the past five years Heather has been developing expertise in the field of family statistics.

A range of statistical information recently released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics will enable research in areas covered by major themes of the 2008 Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference. This presentation will highlight recently released statistics which describe family forms; relationship transitions; and exchanges of care and support between family members, whether living in the same household or not. The presentation will focus on the *2006-07 Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey*, the *2006 Time Use Survey*, and the *2006 General Social Survey*. The statistics can be used to explore questions such as:

how many Australian children live with both natural parents, in a one-parent family, or in a step or blended family?

what are children's visiting arrangements with parents living elsewhere?

how many Australians experienced parental separation or divorce as children?

how do Australians use their time to balance paid and unpaid work responsibilities?

how are families changing over time?

The *2006-07 Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey* provides information about family structures, including step, blended and grandparent families and the children living in these families, and family formation, change and dissolution. The *2006 Time Use Survey* is a rich source of information on how Australians use their time, including information on how time is allocated to paid and unpaid work and family responsibilities. The *2006 General Social Survey* provides information about support provided to family members living elsewhere.

• Concurrent Session 2 – Level 5, Suite 2

Child Support

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Kelly Hand

The Relationship between Child Support Compliance and its Predictors: Evidence from two Waves of Data

Ibolya Losoncz (Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

Joint financial responsibility for children after separation involving the payment of child support is one part of the focus of recent reforms by the Australian Government to encourage the continuing involvement of both parents in the upbringing of their children. Most Australian and international research has found a

strong positive association between child support compliance and contact between children and non-resident parents. Attachment of the non-resident parent to the other parent and the child prior to separation, satisfaction with post separation parenting arrangements and low parental conflict have also shown a consistent positive association with compliance. However, in terms of the causal directions of these relationships, empirical evidence to date is limited and lacking in consistency. Using structural equation modelling techniques and data from the first two waves of Growing Up in Australia, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) survey, this paper examines the predictors of compliance with child support obligations with an emphasis on the underlying mechanisms/interactions between child support compliance and its predictors. This work will build on preliminary analysis by the author which found frequent and scheduled contact between the child and the non-resident parent to be the strongest predictor of child support compliance. While low parental conflict and involvement of the non-resident parent in the upbringing of the child was also found to be predictive of child support compliance, instead of a having a direct relationship, the effect of these variables are mediated by contact between the child and non-resident parent.

The Australian Child Support Scheme as it Relates to Single Mothers: Historical Development and International Comparisons

Hayley McKenzie, Kay Cook (Deakin University)

Hayley McKenzie is a PhD Scholarship holder in the School of Health & Social Development, in the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University, under the supervision of Kay Cook, Lecturer.

Child support payments have the ability to influence the economic wellbeing of single parent families on low incomes. Erratic and unstable child support payments, experienced by a significant proportion of low income child support recipients, can therefore greatly influence the living conditions of these families. As such, it is imperative that child support policies and systems are explored to identify their potential intended and unintended effects. Whilst the financial provision for children in Australia has been established since the 1940's, this paper will focus on the concept of child support and thus explore its development through the Family Law Act and the subsequent introduction of the Child Support Scheme. These two highly documented policies will be explored and analysed, generating a review of the emergence and development of child support in Australia from 1975 to present. In addition, this paper will also incorporate comparisons with international child support systems including those of

New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Sweden. The two analyses of the Australian Child Support Scheme will be undertaken from a pragmatic feminist perspective. This combined approach will enable the concepts of 'practical' and 'ideal', and 'equality' and 'empowerment' to be explored in reference to the child support system for single mothers and their children.

It's Not Just About the Money: Non-Residential Father's Perceptions of Paying Child Support

Belinda Hewitt (University of Queensland), Kristin Natalier (University of Tasmania)

Belinda Hewitt is from the University of Queensland Social Research Centre.

Most research into child support is based on the experiences of residential mothers and children. The little we know about post-separation fathering often comes from mothers reports. This is problematic as many child support reforms focus on changing the behaviour of non-resident parents (usually fathers) without a complete understanding of the complicated factors that influence their willingness to pay, which extend beyond capacity to pay.

Method: Semi-structured interviews conducted between November 2006 and July 2007 with 27 separated or divorced non-residential fathers in Brisbane and Tasmania.

Results: Most fathers agree that continued financial support of their children is important, other factors complicate their willingness and happiness to pay child support. Child support is a difficult component in the lives of all respondents due to the financial costs, but also the symbolic dimension of money, which in the case of child support is associated with the loss of the provider role. This is evident in three ways. First, many fathers question whether the money they pay in child support is being spent appropriately. Second, those with regular contact with children express a sense of unfairness that their own costs associated with supporting their children are not properly acknowledged. Third, many emphasise the purchase of "extras" for their children which they see as a continuation of their provider role.

Conclusion: Our results suggest the importance of incorporating symbolic dimensions of fatherhood and money, as well as capacity to pay, into policy reforms aimed at changing non-residential parents child support behaviours.

The Interaction of Child Support with Housing Outcomes for Parents Apart

Maggie Walter (University of Tasmania), Maryann Wulff, Margaret Reynolds (Monash University)

Australian family forms and structures are diversifying. A key aspect of this new terrain is the substantial number of Parents Apart (parents of a child whose other parent lives elsewhere) whose housing needs need to match their altered parenting practices. As a source of income and/or financial obligations child support is an important aspect of parental abilities to secure appropriate housing. Yet child support's affect on the multiple dimensions of post-separation housing outcomes is under-researched. Most existing research is limited to resident parents, especially sole mothers, with a relative absence of material on the housing outcomes of Parents Apart who are non-resident (mostly fathers) or those who have repartnered (resident and non-resident). This paper presents results from the quantitative phase of a study into the impact of the receipt or payment of child support for Parents Apart on parental housing. Using data from HILDA Wave 4 the AHURI funded project investigated the contribution of child support, government income support and housing assistance on the housing outcomes of Parents Apart. The results indicate significant differences in housing outcomes, firstly, between Parents Together (non-separated parents) and all Parents Apart, and, second, between resident and non-resident Parents Apart. Child support was also associated with housing outcomes for all Parents Apart but varied in its impact depending on whether the Parent Apart was resident and non-resident and, for resident Parents Apart, by the amount of child support received.

• Concurrent Session 2 – Meeting Room 1

Early Intervention

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Ren Adams

Partnerships in Early Childhood: A Longitudinal Study of a Relationships Based Approach to Early Intervention in Multiple Children's Services

Greg Antcliff (The Benevolent Society, NSW), Cathy Thompson, Kylie Valentine, Tom Logden (University of New South Wales), Linda Harrison (Charles Sturt University)

Greg Antcliff is a registered psychologist and Senior Manager with the Benevolent Society. Greg manages a range of programs in Central and Eastern Sydney

including high need child protection services, early intervention programs, early childhood services, volunteer home visiting and community based programs.

This paper presents the final results of the two year longitudinal study of the Partnerships in Early Childhood Program (PIEC) program in 14 child care and preschool centres in disadvantaged communities. International and Australian research has shown that quality early childhood programs can foster children's lifetime development and educational attainment, minimise the risk of abuse and neglect, and reduce the likelihood of future criminality (Galinsky, 2006, Heckman & Masterov, 2004, Schonkoff & Phillips; McCain & Mustard, 1999). The PIEC Program is funded by the Commonwealth Government of Australia through the Invest to Grow Initiative of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. The PIEC program builds on the existing strengths, skills and resources of early childhood service providers in disadvantaged communities to promote strong, healthy relationships between children, children's services staff, families and communities. PIEC is a relationships-based intervention designed to reduce problem behaviors and has similar aims to established, behavior-based programs such as Triple P Positive Parenting Program (Saunders, 1999) and the Incredible Years). PIEC adopts training, resources and staff supervision models from the Circle of Security intervention (Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman & Powell, 2002), which incorporates the concepts of a 'secure base' and a 'haven of safety' Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1988). A child and family worker works in the early childhood centre to train staff in attachment concepts that relate to children's exploratory and security needs. The program also supports families in relationships and parenting by connecting isolated families and linking them to appropriate local services and programs. The results of both the process and impact evaluation will be discussed along with a cost benefit analysis of the intervention. Key learning's and implications for social policy will also be discussed.

Innovative Intervention Strategies for Children and their Families in Brighter Futures

Clare Rogers (Prevention and Early Intervention, Department of Community Services)

This presentation aims to provide an overview of the "Brighter Futures" evidence-based, targeted early intervention program developed to support vulnerable young children and their families across NSW by the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS), the largest statutory child protection service in Australia. Brighter Futures provides targeted support to vulnerable families who are at risk of entering or

escalating within the child protection system. Services like home visiting, supported playgroups and access to child care support families who have young children and who face specific problems such as domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse, and mental health issues. A growing body of Australian and international research shows that prevention and early intervention interventions can prevent family situations from moving along the child protection continuum and can provide many other long-term benefits for children and families. It can promote healthy child development, increase resilience, reinforce family relationships and prevent the need for more intensive services later on. By providing support early in children's lives, or early on in the development of potential problems, these families can be lead to a better future. This presentation provides a description of:

the principles and key features underpinning the model, including services and supports provided to families

working in collaboration with Lead Agencies and non-government organisations (challenges and achievements)

the evaluation methodology used in Brighter Futures by a consortium led by the Social Policy Research Centre from the University of New South Wales.

Evaluation of an Intensive Family Based Service

Sue Leahy, Merran Butler (NSW Department of Community Services)

Sue Leahy is Manager of evaluation within the economics, statistics and research directorate within the NSW Department of Community Services. In this role she undertakes and manages a number of sensitive and complex evaluations. She has a background in organisational research and development evaluation function within government and non-government sectors.

The Intensive Family Based Service (IFBS) is a family support program within the NSW Department of Community Services provided to Aboriginal families whose children are at risk of entering an out-of-home care placement due to protective concerns, or where the children have been placed in out-of-home care and have a case plan goal of restoration. The evaluation tested the impact of the program on subsequent child protection reports or out-of-home care placements. It examined whether the program was more effective on the basis of the length of intervention, or for particular reported vulnerabilities. The evaluation found the program to have contributed significantly to a reduction in the number of child protection reports for children and young people following an IFBS intervention. Significant impacts on reported issues of carer drug and

alcohol and carer mental health were observed. The program was demonstrated to reduce the likelihood of out-of-home placements by up to one third where children and young people had had a prior placement in the care system in the 12 months prior to the intervention. Interventions of 12 to 16 weeks were shown to have the lowest proportion of children and young people receiving a placement in the post intervention period. The evaluation concluded that the program is a highly culturally appropriate intervention, but that strategies to improve service levels and develop planned exit pathways for program families were needed. The economic analysis concluded that the benefits generated from the IFBS program outweigh the costs.

The Importance of a Strong and Positive Relationship Between Parents and Early Childhood Professionals to Enable Children to Reach their Full Potential

Pat Jewell (University of Melbourne)

Pat Jewell has a background in teaching in the area of early childhood and has worked in the field of parenting for over 20 years focusing her work on enhancing relationships within families. Pat is the author of three publications: "Getting Good Speech Going", "Out of the Mainstream" and "From Strength to Strength". Pat teaches at Swinburne University in the Child and Family Studies Division and is the Victorian State Director of NAPCAN Australia. Pat is a project worker with Jesuit Social Services and currently working on her Master of Education focusing on relationships between parents and early childhood professionals.

Recent family literature has guided our understanding about how children learn in the context of relationships. (Grille, 2005) The most important relationship is recognized as the safe and nurturing relationship of the child with the child's parents. When young children are in the care of other adults a positive and nurturing relationship between the parents and these adults is very important to the child's optimal development, "the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievements" (Kasting, 1994, p146). There has been academic interest in understanding the relationships between early childhood professionals and their parents. The literature has identified that despite knowing the importance of a positive relationship with parents early childhood staff find these relationships difficult. (Jensen and Kiley, 2005 Powers, 2005). Many areas have been identified where these relationships struggle. My Masters Study, examined one possible area of struggle, asking the question "Does the "images" early childhood staff and parents have of each other contribute or become a barrier to an equitable

relationship developing"? This paper will share the findings from one of the data collection methods used in the study, journals. Both parents and early childhood staff were asked to record their interactions and experiences with each other over several months. The journal provided a different lens through which to analyse the data which challenged the study question and previous academic understanding about relationships between early childhood staff and parents.

• Concurrent Session 2 – Meeting Room 2 Balancing Caring Responsibilities and Work: Caring for a Person with a Disability and Employment (Symposium)

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Ben Edwards

Discussant: Bettina Cass (Professorial Fellow, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW)

Caring and Women's Labour Market Participation

Matthew Gray, Ben Edwards (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Matthew Gray is the Deputy Director (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Dr Gray has published widely on economic and social policy issues, including the determinants of labour force status, welfare reform in the United States, economic consequences of divorce, work and family, and changes in the living arrangements of Australian children since 1946. He has also worked on economic and social policy issues related to Indigenous Australians.

To date there has been relatively little Australian research into the impact of caring responsibilities on the labour force status of carers. There has been even less research specifically on the labour force status of carers who receive an Australian Government payment directed for caring, a group of particular policy interest. In this paper we use data from a new large-scale survey of Australian carers who receive Carer Allowance or Carer Payment to analyse various aspect of their labour market participation. This paper provides a detailed description of the labour force status of carers. In particular, we find that more than half of carers who are not in paid employment would like to work. This has important implications for the design of income support payments to carers and the extent to which resources should be expended attempting to help carers find employment. Second, the extent to which having caring responsibilities has a causal impact upon labour force

participation is investigated. We find that almost half of the carers who were not employed at the time of the interview were employed just prior to commencing caring. Of those who had stopped employment after commencing caring, the majority said that providing care was the main reason for leaving that job. Third, information on job changes that employed carers have made as a consequence of their caring responsibilities is analysed. Finally, the implications of paid work for the income of carers are examined.

What Kinds of Jobs Help Carers Combine Work and Employment?

Trish Hill, Cathy Thomson (University of NSW), **Michael Bittman** (University of New England), Megan Griffith (University of NSW)

Michael Bittman is a Professorial Fellow in the Discipline of Sociology at the University of New England. His interest in time spent in caring led to a collaboration with Cathy Thomson, supported of a succession of ARC Linkage Grants in partnership with CarersNSW and various New South Wales State Government Departments. Michael Bittman and Cathy Thomson discovered a distinctive carers' 'time signature' and with the help of Trish Hill extended this idea to reveal the number and location of 'isolated' carers (i.e. carer did not self-identify as carers). This team has been studying the care of the elderly and people with disabilities for over a decade. Joined by Megan Griffith, mostly recently they began researching the dynamics of juggling care and employment.

Projections suggest that the majority of families in the future will be affected by caring responsibilities during their working lives. However, little is known about the difficulties of combining paid work with care of adults or children with disabilities. This paper is designed to help fill this gap by providing information about what job characteristics promote or inhibit maintaining employment while caring. Using a nationally representative longitudinal data set, the *Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) Survey, this paper traces the effects of the onset of care on labour force participation. This study used multivariate techniques to analyze five clusters of influences that might affect carer employment; namely, (1) the intensity of care responsibilities; (2) the employees' own characteristics; (3) the characteristics of their employment; (4) their workplace arrangements; and (5) the employee's rating of the stress, satisfaction and security associated with their job. The results showed that moderate to intensive caring responsibilities and less work experience militate against maintaining labour force participation in the face of caring responsibility. Working as a casual employee, and in a job without supervisory responsibilities, with poor leave

arrangements, no flexibility in hours and low job security all decrease the probability that carers remain in employment.

What Formal Support Services do Employed Carers Need?

Cathy Thomson, Trish Hill (University of NSW), Michael Bittman (University of New England), Megan Griffith (University of NSW)

Trish Hill is a Research Fellow at the SPRC and has conducted research on informal carers since 2002 examining carers' formal service use, their health, financial wellbeing and participation in employment over time, and young carers.

Cathy Thomson is a Research Fellow at the SPRC and has undertaken research on carers for over a decade through Australian Research Council grants on the time use of carers, identifying isolated carers, negotiating caring and employment and young carers.

Care in the community presumes the availability of (unpaid) informal carers. In the last decade, however, there has been a simultaneous policy emphasis on economic and social benefits of employment, evident in the 'welfare reform' and the participation agenda. These twin policy objectives are in considerable tension, which manifest in lives of employed carers. Access to information and formal support might assist carers in juggling the demands of paid work and caring responsibilities. However research in Australia is yet to identify which services and support might assist carers. This paper uses a multi-variate analysis of the *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* to study the pattern of employed carers' use of formal services. Information from this survey is also used to study employed carers' unmet demand for formal services. Preliminary findings indicate that the greater the number of formal services used by the care recipient, the greater the probability that their (co-residential) carer will participate in the labour market. A detailed picture of the formal services and informal support that are most influential in maintaining carers participation in the labour market and the areas of highest unmet need is presented.

• Concurrent Session 2 – Meeting Room 3

Getting Research into Practice in the Child Protection and Child and Family Welfare Sector (Symposium)

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Fiona Arney

Developing a Road Map for Research: Identifying the Priorities for a National Child Protection Research Agenda

Fiona Arney (University of South Australia), Leah Bromfield (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Fiona Arney is the Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia. She is responsible for the Centre's Research and Strategic Evaluation area and is involved in a range of multidisciplinary projects examining the prevention of, and response to, child abuse and neglect, with a particular emphasis on the translation of research into action. Her research interests include: parenting in a new culture; child and adolescent development and wellbeing; the evaluation of programs in child and family services; and supporting resilience and strengths in children, parents and families.

Increasingly in the child protection sector, governments and leaders in the field are talking about the need for 'evidence-based' or 'evidence-informed' policy and practice. But does a quality evidence-base exist? Cashmore, Higgins, Bromfield and Scott (2006) concluded that it was not possible to claim an adequate evidence-base for sound policy and practice decisions in child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care, or to be able to single out particular areas as a priority for research. Further, they identified the need for "a 'road map' to identify priorities and provide some direction and a systematic framework for research and to situate this area of research within a broader context with theoretical underpinnings" (p. 9) as one of the crucial areas for development. In this paper, the authors summarise briefly the findings from national research; and the research priorities identified at national forums and by other Western nations who have similar models of child protection. Findings from a new national survey of policy makers and practitioners regarding their views on the research priorities for child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care are presented. The challenges and opportunities, and the next steps needed for the development of a national child protection research agenda are discussed.

The "Cultures in Context" Model of Research Use

Fiona Arney, **Kerry Lewig** (University of South Australia), Prue Holzer (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Kerry Lewig is a Research Assistant at the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia. She holds a Masters Degree in Organisational Psychology with research experience in work satisfaction, engagement, work stress and burnout in the services sector and the volunteer sector. Her recent research focus has been in the area of research utilisation and she has completed a literature review in this area as well as a study looking at the use of research by policy makers and practitioners in the child protection field.

Existing theoretical frameworks for understanding research use have focussed on the three communities: research, policy and practice. For example, Shonkoff's three cultures perspective, argues that research use is best facilitated by two-way personal communication at the interfaces between the three communities. However, an exclusive emphasis on the individual interactions between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners may understate the influence of the social, institutional and political contexts within which policy and practice decisions are made. In this paper Kerry describes the "*Cultures in Context*" research use model. The model, developed by the authors of '*Research Use in the Australian Child and Family Welfare Sector*' (Holzer, Lewig, Bromfield, & Arney, 2007), broadens the perspective on research use from a narrow focus on relationships between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers, to include a more expansive consideration of the contexts in which research is – or is not – used. This is especially important in fields such as child protection where contextual influences (such as values and politics) play a significant role. The model groups these contextual factors under 6 headings: organisational culture/climate; pragmatics; individual attributes; purveyors of information; the nature of the evidence; and linkage and exchange mechanisms. The model also recognises that research must compete with other types of knowledge, including, but not limited to: practitioner knowledge, policy community knowledge, organisational knowledge and service user knowledge. Finally, the model attempts to show the proximal and distal influences on children and families involved in the child and family welfare system by placing the key actors and settings within concentric circles, situating children and families at the centre, and then moving outwards to include practice (service provision), policy, and legislation.

Research Use in the Australian Child and Family Welfare Sector: Findings from a Recent Australian Study

Fiona Arney, Kerry Lewig (University of South Australia), **Prue Holzer** (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Prue Holzer is a Senior Research Officer for the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. She has completed a Bachelor of Social Science majoring in Psychology and Sociology, and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology. Prue's research interests include: evaluating the effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs; research use in practice; national comparisons of child protection systems across Australia; and national comparisons of trends in statutory child protection data both across Australian jurisdictions and within Australian jurisdictions over time.

This paper presents the results of an extensive exploration of research use in a sample of Australian child and family welfare professionals (including, practitioners, policy-makers, and other types of professionals). The first phase of the project involved a quantitative survey of 495 child and family welfare professionals. This survey indicated that the majority of professionals in the sector use research and endorse the importance of research in their work. The second phase of the project involved in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of professionals drawn from the first stage of the project. Professionals were asked about the degree to which they accessed and applied research; the way/s in which they accessed and applied research; and facilitators and barriers to research use. The data were analysed according to the "Cultures in Context" research use model developed by the present authors on the basis of existing research use literature. The findings were largely consistent with trends reported in international studies. Organisational factors, pragmatic constraints and individual values and assumptions were found to be influential in relation to a professional's capacity and/or preparedness to use research. The barriers to research use were less consistent between practitioners, policy-makers and other professionals than were the facilitators of research use. The perceived support of management and colleagues to use research was a particularly important facilitator for practitioners. The paper concludes with suggestions as to how organisations can encourage research use in practice and policy decision-making.

Innovative Techniques for Facilitating Research use in Practice: A Panel Discussion

Daryl Higgins (Australian Institute of Family Studies), **Peter Walsh** (NSW Department of Community Services), **Fiona Arney** (University of South Australia), **Robyn Mildon** (Parenting Research Centre)

Equipped with the knowledge that organisational support is an essential ingredient in the promotion of research use and evidence-based practice, various organisations have taken steps to make the human services workplace more "research friendly". A panel of experts will discuss approaches to facilitating research use in practice. The panel will comprise: Mr Peter Walsh, Manager of the NSW Department of Community Services Research to Practice Unit; Dr Daryl Higgins, General Manager Research, Australian Institute of Family Studies; and Robyn Mildon, Program Manager at the Parenting Research Centre.

• Concurrent Session 2 – Hospitality Suite 1 Out-of-Home-Care

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Claire Berlyn

Views of Children and Young People in Care – A Landmark Study in Queensland

Lee Tennent (Qld Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian)

Lee Tennent is a Senior Research Officer at the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Queensland where she has worked for the last two years. Much of her work during this time has focused on the Views of Children and Young People in Care surveys. Lee has a PhD from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) where she worked as a researcher for 16 years. Lee's research interests are broad but include investigating children and young people's experiences of alternative care, children's social capital sense of community and achieving best practice integrated service provision for families with young children.

This presentation describes ground-breaking research conducted by the Queensland Commission for Children and Young people and Child Guardian. The aim of this ongoing research is to investigate and document the views of children and young people in alternative care (foster care, residential care and detention centre care) in Queensland and to identify changes in these views over time. The research features a repeated cross-sectional longitudinal design. The first phase was conducted in 2006, the second in 2007. To date, a total of

4882 children and young people have participated in the study. The research employs a survey methodology to gather information on participants' background characteristics, placement histories and perceptions of their current placement, Child Safety Officers, the care system in general, and the Commission's Community Visitor (CV) program. Questionnaires tailored to the comprehension and literacy levels of the participants are administered to children and young people in care by CVs during their scheduled visits. Data collected reveals high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the care system and improvements in some areas over time. However, a range of issues such as contact with family, lack of involvement in decisions and lack of long-term planning continue to impact negatively on perceptions of the placement experience. Findings from the study continue to be used to inform policy and practice decision-making among stakeholders in the Queensland child protection system. The study also demonstrates to children and young people that they have an important voice in shaping the future directions and priorities within the system.

An Outcomes Study of Victorian Children in Out-of-Home Care Using The Looking After Children Assessment and Action Records: Process, Challenges and Results

Sarah Wise (Australian Institute of Family Studies), Ruth Champion (Department of Human Services, Victoria)

Sarah Wise is a developmental researcher in the area of parenting and child development in day care, out-of-home care and other developmental contexts. She has been a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 2001. She has recently completed a PhD (Psychology, University of Melbourne) on the topic of attachment and wellbeing in foster care children.

Looking After Children (LAC) is a model of assessment, case planning and review for children who are required to live away from their birth families that originated in the United Kingdom in the early 1990s. The core of the LAC model is a series of age-related documents called Assessment and Action Records (A&ARs). Within seven developmental dimensions, the A&ARs identify specific objectives that promote positive child development, which are matched to the parental tasks required to help children achieve them. Since 2002 the LAC A&ARs have been used in out-of-home care services in Victoria. This paper presents findings from an innovative project designed to produce aggregate outcomes data from 614 A&ARs completed for children living in out-of-home care in Victoria in 2007. The paper documents the process and challenges in establishing a database based on items from the A&ARs as well as the quality of data that was available for analysis. Outcomes data are

presented across the seven developmental areas specified within the A&ARs, including emotional and behavioural functioning, educational outcomes. The status of Victorian children involved in the current study is discussed in relation to children in out-of-home care in other jurisdictions in Australia and Canada, and in relation to Australian children generally. The paper concludes with a critical analysis of the utility of the A&ARs as a tool to monitor outcomes for children in out-of-home care and to target improvements to out-of-home care services. The status of 614 children in out-of-home care in Victoria.

Making a Life after Care: The Provision of Support Across the Life Course

Suellen Murray, Elizabeth Branigan, Jenny Malone (RMIT University)

Suellen Murray is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Social Research at RMIT University. She has extensive experience in qualitative research methodologies including archival research and in-depth interviewing and her specialist areas of research interest include the history of Australian social policy, the history of domestic violence services and social policy concerning domestic violence. Elizabeth Branigan and Jenny Malone worked with her on the ARC-funded research project from which this paper is drawn.

Elizabeth Branigan is a Post Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Social Research at RMIT University. Her academic expertise is multi-disciplinary and covers the fields of anthropology, sociology, family and gender studies. Her specialist areas of research interest include marginalised families (particularly single mother families and Indigenous families), financial abuse of women and women, families and welfare.

Jenny Malone is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Applied Research at RMIT University. She has most recently worked on projects in the areas of history, social policy and the labour market. Jenny is a social worker and has worked in the community sector, with particular experience in the area of homelessness and women.

There is a considerable body of research that documents the contemporary experiences of children leaving out-of-home care and their need for support during this transition. In contrast, for those who grew up in orphanages and other forms of institutional care in earlier times, there has been little research concerning leaving care nor indeed what happened across their lives since that time. This paper draws on the findings of a research study undertaken in partnership with MacKillop Family Services which has collected life history interviews with forty people, now aged in their

forties to their seventies, who grew up in Catholic Homes in Victoria. It also draws on the recommendations of the Australian Parliament's report on children who grew up in institutional care, *Forgotten Australians*. Many of the research participants were not able to draw on the support of their family after leaving care, and this has had implications for housing, financial security and emotional support, implications which, for some, have had life-long effects. For others, their experiences of growing up in institutional care included interrupted education and the trauma of abuse, which have also had long-term effects. In this paper, we discuss both those areas where people experienced difficulties, and the resourcefulness they drew on to address them, and those areas where further attention is required. Our findings have implications for people who grew up in care in past decades, but also suggests issues for consideration for children who are leaving care today and into the future.

Academic Performance of Children in the Care of the State: How do they Compare?

Nicole Hunter (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

Background: There is a lack of evidence about the outcomes of child protection services, in particular, their impact on the educational outcomes of children in the care of the state. Education provides an important gateway to future employment and life opportunities. However, for many children in the care of the state, disrupted school attendance is common, and lost educational opportunities can have a cumulative effect as children move through the various stages of education and development.

Methods: This pilot study examined the academic performance (as assessed by literacy and numeracy test scores) of children in years 3, 5 and 7 who were on guardianship and custody orders. This research involved interdepartmental linkage of administrative data across multiple jurisdictions—the first Australian study in this field to have done so.

Results: It was found that children on orders had poorer academic performance than all children sitting the reading and numeracy tests, and were considerably less likely to achieve the national benchmarks. The influence of factors such as Indigenous status, sex, living arrangements (e.g. foster care) and length of time on orders was also explored.

Conclusion: Although only a pilot study, the disparities revealed provide evidence of poor academic achievement among children on guardianship/custody orders. They make a compelling case that further work is needed to fully identify and understand the factors that influence these patterns. Stage 2 of this project, which has already commenced, will incorporate a

longitudinal perspective on how educational performance changes over a period of time on orders.

• Concurrent Session 3 – Auditorium Family Law Decision-Making

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Lawrie Moloney

Children's Participation in Decision-Making About Parenting Arrangements After Separation

Judy Cashmore, Patrick Parkinson, Judi Single (University of Sydney)

Judy Cashmore is an Associate Professor in the Law School at the University of Sydney. She is a developmental psychologist who has written widely on issues concerning children, including their experience of the legal and out-of-home care systems. She is a member of the Judicial Commission of NSW.

Patrick Parkinson is a Professor of Law at the University of Sydney. He has written widely on issues concerning family law and child protection. He was the Chair of the Family Law Council from 2004-07 and chaired the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support in 2004-05. He was also the Chair of the Community Welfare Legislation Review in NSW, which led to the enactment of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Judi Single is a research associate in the law school at the University of Sydney and a child psychologist. She conducted most of the interviews with parents and children in the research program concerning children's participation in decision making about parenting arrangements after separation.

The aim of this study was to examine the attitudes of parents, children, mediators, lawyers and judges involved in the family law system to the participation of children in decision-making about parenting arrangements when parents no longer live together. Ninety parents were recruited through family lawyers; 47 children were also interviewed. All had resolved their disputes in the 12 months prior to participating in the study, some through agreement and others through judicial determination. About 80 mediators and lawyers, and 20 judges, were also interviewed. The great majority of parents believed that children should have a say. However, resident parents were more likely to support the active participation of children than non-resident parents who were more likely to be concerned about pressure and manipulation by the resident parent. In practice, older children had considerable influence over

the arrangements made in the aftermath of separation and how changes were negotiated over time. Children who had experienced violence, abuse or high conflict were the most insistent that their voices be heard in the process and least satisfied with having their views conveyed through counsellors or lawyers. Most mediators, lawyers and judges supported the idea of children's voices being heard but were sharply divided on whether judges should talk with children directly.

Are we there yet?: An Analysis of Relocation Judgments in Light of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006

Patricia Easteal (University of Canberra), **Kate Harkins** (Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department)

Patricia Easteal teaches law at the University of Canberra. Her multidisciplinary research examines 'justice' for women and other minorities. She has written over 100 academic journal articles and chapters and 13 books including *Real Rape, Real Pain: Help for Women Sexually Assaulted by Male Partners* (2006), *Less Than Equal: Women and the Australian Legal System* (2001), *Balancing the Scales: Rape, Law Reform and Australian Culture* (1998), *Shattered Dreams, Marital Violence Against Women: The Overseas-born in Australia* (1996), *Voices of the Survivors* (1994), *Killing the Beloved: Homicide between Adult Sexual Intimates* (1993).

Kate Harkins recently received her LLB with Honours from the University of Canberra. Currently employed as a Policy Officer at Commonwealth Attorney-Generals Department, she hopes her work will contribute to positive change in Australian family law.

Family law is riddled with controversy; however no case type generates more polarity in the community and is more difficult for adjudicators to resolve than decisions involving relocation. These are matters in which the parent (usually the mother) with whom the child(ren) spends the most time wishes to move and the other parent objects. First in 1995 and then in 2006 major reforms to the *Family Law Act* legislated for continued contact and shared responsibility by both parents. To those ends, the 2006 changes include a new two-tiered test (s 60C) for determining a child's best interests and a presumption of shared parental responsibility (s 61D) which, if not displaced, requires the court to consider the child spending equal or significant time with both parents (s 65DAA). We look at what effects these amendments have had upon relocation decisions. We find that there does appear to be a shift in outcome. Significantly, the proportion of males who successfully sought an injunction to prevent a move grew whilst the number of females successfully seeking to move dropped. We examine which best interest factors are

considered and whether variables such as allegations of spousal violence and child abuse, the amount of time the child spent with the contact parent prior to the relocation application, the distance of the move and expert reports appear to be influential in affecting outcome. We conclude that there is no consistent approach with judges having different methods of applying the new sections. The majority address the considerations in s 65DAA at the same time as determining whether relocation is in the child's best interest. The Full Court Appeal decision in December 2007 does not appear to clarify the approach to be taken by judges.

Conversations between Judges and Children in Family Law Proceedings

Michelle Fernando (University of Tasmania)

Michelle Fernando is a PhD student in Family Law. Michelle returned to full time study in 2006, after practicing as a family lawyer at the Hobart firm Dobson, Mitchell & Allport for 4 years. Michelle's thesis looks at the various ways in which children are and can be involved in family law proceedings, assessing Australia's compliance with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and particularly focusing on changes made by the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006. The material in this paper will form part of her thesis.

Why do judges in children's proceedings hear from every interested party, except the child who is the subject of the hearing? This paper looks at why examples of judges speaking directly with children are so limited, despite specific acknowledgment of the practice in the *Family Law Rules* 2004. The paper highlights the benefits of such conversations taking place in appropriate circumstances, especially given the Family Court's duty to take the views of children into account and Australia's obligations pursuant to Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Research has shown that many children want to speak with judges and feel involved in the decision-making process. It is my argument that this practice has benefits for the family law system, as well as children and their families. The paper discusses the three main criticisms of the practice, arguing that such criticisms are outdated, unfounded or outweighed by the potential benefits. The Family Court's less adversarial trial system which commenced in 2006 has created the ideal environment in which conversations between judges and children can occur. My argument is that increased dialogue between them will lead to an empowerment of children in a situation where they otherwise have little control, and decisions being made which are truly in children's best interests. The biggest hurdle remains, however; persuading judges to embrace the practice when the

majority have adhered to a traditional reluctance to speak with children. Until an attitudinal shift occurs, little is likely to change.

Children Tell us About 'Having a Say' in Family Law Decision Making

Robyn Fitzgerald, Anne Graham (Southern Cross University)

Robyn Fitzgerald and **Anne Graham** are from the Centre for Children and Young People at the Southern Cross University in Lismore.

This paper reports on a recent research project which explored children's understandings and experiences of supervised contact and of their participation in the decision making processes that surround supervised contact. The paper begins with an overview of the study and a summary of the findings in relation to the key research questions: What are children's experiences of having a say? What are children's views and understandings of having a say? Did children want a say in the decision for them to have supervised contact? How did having (or not having) a say feel? The discussion then focuses on a key finding from the study that suggests children's understandings of participation are often expressed in dialogical terms. In other words, the children in this study perceived participation as taking place in and through particular forms of dialogue or conversation that provides for them, and for what they have to say, to be acknowledged, recognised and respected. With these findings in mind, we suggest that when we talk about 'children's participation' in the difficult and complex context of supervised contact, we need to focus more closely on the ways in which we invite, engage and interpret dialogue and conversations with children. The paper concludes by exploring some of the implications for both researchers and practitioners when we assign *conversation* to a central role in the conceptualisation and practice of participation.

• Concurrent Session 3 – Level 5, Suite 1

Talking About Sex: Sexuality, Young People and Preventing Sexual Violence (Symposium)

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Zoë Morrison

Discussant: Moria Carmody

Talking About Sex: Sexuality, Young People and Preventing Sexual Violence

Anastasia Powell (University of Melbourne)

Anastasia Powell's research interests include primary prevention of violence against women, young women's experiences of sexual relationships, and domestic violence law and policy. Her doctoral research explored young people's perceptions and experiences of love/sex relationships, with a view towards education and prevention of sexual pressure and coercion. Anastasia has presented many conference papers and published work in this field. Currently, she is employed on a research project exploring the history of domestic violence policy in Australia (based at the Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University) and lecturing in criminology at The University of Melbourne.

Despite ongoing emphasis in public debate on the 'dangers' of youth sex in terms of pregnancy and disease, Western society continues in many ways to be reluctant to talk to young people about sex. The 'appropriateness' of delivering sexuality education to young people and the risk of inadvertently encouraging youth sex continues to be debated in the United States (US), and within Australia where school sexuality education continues to be inconsistently delivered, and teachers are not necessarily specifically trained or resourced for the task (Milton et al 2001; Family Planning Victoria et al, 2005). Indeed, the aims and content of sexuality education remain subject to considerable disagreement in the context of often widely divergent community opinion, with the views of young people themselves rarely canvassed or considered (Monk, 2001). Moreover, content regarding sexual consent and sexual violence is not routinely included in school sexuality education. This paper draws on interviews and focus groups with 117 young people from urban and rural Victoria to explore the potential role of sexuality education in primary prevention of sexual violence. Young people's own experiences and views towards sexuality education and the prevention of sexual violence are considered. It is argued that there is a need for an alternative framework with which to approach young people, sexuality education and the prevention of sexual violence; one which engages young men and

women as active agents in their sexual choice-making and capable of reflection upon these choices.

Why Not One-offs? Evaluation of a Whole-School Approach to the Prevention of Sexual Assault

Renee Imbesi (Centre against Sexual Assault House)

Renee Imbesi has coordinated the CASA House Prevention Program for over four years and has previously worked in women's, children's and community-based organisations in Melbourne and South Asia. Renee has previously presented a range of conference papers and is currently developing components of the Program for publication.

The CASA House Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools utilises a whole-of-school community approach to the prevention of sexual assault. The aims of the Prevention Program are to reduce the incidence of sexual assault in school communities and enhance the capacity of secondary schools to respond to sexual assault. In this paper I examine the findings of medium-term and longitudinal evaluation and present evidence to contribute to the field of violence prevention. Evaluation was conducted 6 months, one and two years following student programs. Tested evaluation tools were implemented in several schools to indicate program effects on students' knowledge, comfort with communicative behaviours and attitudes. These tools included written surveys, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that the program's positive impact on students' knowledge and awareness of sexual assault issues and their ability to articulate and discuss them was, for the most part, sustained. Overall the results suggest that program impacts are maintained best in an environment where others in their school community are exposed to the same program messages and processes. The prevention program has a positive impact on young people's knowledge, awareness and ability to engage in critical discussion about gender, violence, consent and other issues related to sexual assault. Young people's sexual decision-making is heavily influenced by social and gender-based pressures, which directly affect their ability to engage in respectful sexual behaviour. Evaluations suggest that the program's impact is best sustained in the context of school-wide programs to promote respect and equality.

Sexual Ethics: Building Young Women and Men's Capacity to Negotiate Sexual Intimacy and Prevent Sexual Violence

Moira Carmody (University of Western Sydney)

Moira Carmody has worked in the area of interpersonal violence since 1983. She has been a sexual assault counsellor, coordinator and policy advisor to state governments. Since 1995 when she joined academia she has been teaching, researching and publishing on the prevention of interpersonal violence especially sexual assault. She has published many articles, chapters and reports locally and internationally. Associate Professor Carmody is the chief researcher on a three year research and education project on sexual ethics and violence prevention in partnership with NSW Rape Crisis Centre funded by the federal government.

This paper reports on a three Australian Research Council funded project aimed at finding alternative ways to educate young women and men about sexual assault prevention. The project began with qualitative interviews of a diverse sample of young women and men aged 16-25 from rural and metropolitan Sydney. The findings of these interviews informed the development of a six session three hours per week education programme based on a sexual ethics framework developed by the author. The programme brought together international research and best practice from the fields of sexuality and sexual assault prevention education. The aim of the programme was to enhance the capacity of young people to make ethical decisions in sexually intimate encounters. A key aspect of the research design was rigorous evaluation of the programme run in rural and suburban Sydney. Pre and post testing was carried out with all 44 participants and most importantly six months after completing the programme. Results indicate significant improvement in participants self confidence to negotiate for their own needs and recognizing the needs of their partner. Most importantly 52% of participants reported changes in their behaviour in sexual and potential sexual encounters or relationships and the continuing application of the sexual ethics framework. An overview of the main findings will be provided and reflections on the project will be discussed which may be of interest to human service workers in the field of sexuality and violence prevention education.

Recognising Moral-Ethical Vision in Primary Relationship Violence Prevention Work?

Susan Evans (University of Western Sydney)

Susan Evans has worked in the human services field for nine years, primarily in the field of family violence prevention. For the past three years, Susan has critically engaged her field experience via undertaking a PhD. Her current research stems from broader questions of

morality and ethics in the human services field. The role of religion and spirituality, as important dimensions in people having desirable human relationships, is an important focus in Susan's research. Susan is interested in how violence prevention workers recognise the role of moral and ethical worldviews, when they promote desirable alternatives to violence in relationships.

What values should or could human service workers working in violence prevention promote about what is desirable in human relationships? What moral-ethical frameworks or authorities should or could inform these values? Many human service scholars concerned with ethics would agree human services professionals have a responsibility to understand and articulate adequate grounds when they name 'wrongs' in human relationships. It seems important, also, that human service workers understand the grounds that inform their promotions of *desirable* ways to be in relationships. In this paper, I argue that promoting desirable relationships for the purposes of primary violence prevention has a *patent moral and ethical dimension*. This dimension of violence prevention work is under-recognised in the literature, however it can be shown that educative-type violence prevention work actively promotes 'good' and desirable relationships. The important question then is: what makes relationships 'good'? Based on qualitative interviews with thirteen Australian violence prevention workers, this paper will demonstrate that workers draw from an array of moral-ethical authorities to shape promotions of the 'good' relationship in prevention work. These moral-ethical authorities are often individually or subjectively derived; and sometimes fit uncomfortably with (secular) worldviews in the prevention field, or, contrast dominant ethical frameworks featured in the human services' ethics tradition. If it is recognised that promoting desirable relationships in violence prevention work involves promoting *moral-ethical visions*, I consider the field must engage in (inter-disciplinary) conversation about the question of proper grounds when promoting 'good' alternatives to violence in relationships.

• Concurrent Session 3 – Level 5, Suite 2

Community Life

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Ren Adams

Factors that Contribute to the Communication Gap between Migrant Elderly and Aged Care Service Providers

Klaudia Vainshtein (Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing)

This paper will review factors that contribute to the communication gap between elderly people, their families and aged care service providers. The information has been gained from more than 100 information sessions and number of community consultations conducted by the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing. The Australian population is ageing and a proportion of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are increasing at an even higher rate. It is predicted that by 2011 nearly 23 per cent of Australians aged over 65 will be from a culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; in 2021-30%.

Aged care service providers are already experiencing challenges in communication with CALD elderly and their families. In Victoria 21% of older people speak other than English at home and in some local government areas around 50%. As older people have limited English they rely on their language of origin or family members for communication with service providers. How effective is communication between elderly people, their families and aged care service providers? Our small study and extended practices have proven that there is confusion that takes place in the interaction between service providers and CALD elderly, thereby creating a communication gap between providers, elderly people and their families. The presentation will demonstrate some strategies that can reduce the communication gap between CALD elderly people, their families and aged care service providers.

Using a Family Inclusion Model to Achieve Long Term Sustainable Outcomes for Disadvantaged Young People Participating in JPET

Candice Haigh (Service to Youth Council Inc, Adelaide)

Candice Haigh is currently Manager of JPET and PSP Programmes at Service to Youth Council Inc (SYC). Candice has been working in the juvenile justice arena since 1998. On her emigration to South Australia in 2005 Candice worked in the Guardianship of the Minister Alternative Care sector before moving to SYC in 2007.

Candice's qualifications include a BA (Hons) Sociology and Psychology (Bradford University, UK) and a Masters in Criminal Justice Studies (University of Leeds, UK) where she completed a dissertation entitled A Critical Examination of the Juvenile Justice System in England and Australia with particular reference to the notion of restorative justice.

By drawing on literature from the UK and Australia, this paper will examine the benefits of engaging families when working alongside some of the most disconnected and disadvantaged young people. The JPET programme is funded by the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The focus of the programme is on young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness *and/or* who have various non-vocational barriers precluding them from successfully accessing education or employment opportunities. Some of these young people have already significantly disengaged from their families when they become linked to JPET, while others still have the potential to successfully restore these fragmented relationships. In these latter cases, by assisting the family or guardians to support the young person, JPET staff can provide positive outcomes for young people at risk of further disengagement. Families play a crucial role in a young person's development, health and wellbeing and can greatly impact on their future options. This examination is hoped to be the basis of further more in-depth study into this issue.

Preschool Education: Who is Attending Preschool and Does Attendance Influence Early School Performance?

Mandy Yap, Nicholas Biddle (Australia National University)

Mandy Yap commenced as Research Officer at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the ANU in December 2007. Prior to that, she was a researcher at the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM). While she was at NATSEM she worked on diabetes modelling, children and social exclusion, need for aged care, income inequality, fertility trends and Indigenous disadvantage. Her work at CAEPR involves looking at socioeconomic and population change for the Indigenous population. She has a Bachelor of Applied Economics (Honours) from the ANU and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Canberra.

Early childhood education has long been identified as a key driver in child development throughout schooling years and beyond. However, until now, there has been little data to test the extent to which this holds in Australia and, more importantly, whether the benefits of preschool are consistent across the population. We use the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children (LSAC) to

investigate the importance of preschool in child schooling outcomes, as measured by literacy and numeracy in Year 1. The analysis involves a two stage estimation process. The first stage looks at who attends preschool, including individual, family, school and neighbourhood level circumstances on the probability of attending preschool amongst the 4-5 year old age cohort in the LSAC. The second stage considers whether preschool attendance is associated with better performance in literacy and numeracy in Year 1 after controlling for a range of other characteristics of the child. By using such a methodology involving two waves of the LSAC, we are better able to control for some of the selection effects that result from parents or guardians having some control over whether children attend preschool. We also test whether the general associations holds for minority groups of the population. We find a positive relationship between having attended preschool and a range of outcome measures. However, the strength of that relationship varies substantially depending on the measure used and the extent to which other characteristics of the child and their social and family settings are controlled for.

Community Engagement and Volunteering - A Whole of Community Approach to Delivering Sustainable Outcomes for Vulnerable People

Alison Normanton, Judith Latta (Family Life)

Alison Normanton commenced as Family Services Coordinator with Family Life in 2003 and is currently Program Manager for their new office in Chelsea, Victoria. During her tenure with Family Life, Alison has managed Federal Government contracts, engaged Monash University as a research partner and has delivered substantiated positive outcomes for vulnerable people.

Judith Latta commenced as Community Relations Manager of Family Life in 2005. Her portfolio includes management of donors, supporters and a best-practice Volunteer program involving 270 volunteers who enable the community programs.

The aim of Family Life's community engagement and volunteering strategy is to engage volunteers and community partnerships in order to enable and resource innovative programs that deliver improved and sustainable life-outcomes for the most vulnerable families. In response to the needs of the most vulnerable people in our local community, Family Life develops innovative program models. Critical to the success of these program models is the support of volunteers and community partners. The Family Life volunteer program offers best-practice methodologies and employs a strategic approach to engaging the good will of community engagement and partnerships.

Research by Monash University found that 100% of the babies in Family Life's Community Bubs program for at-risk babies, were able to remain living safely at home. This outcome was only achievable, thanks to the support of trained Family Support volunteers. The success of Family Life's YouthWorx Social Enterprise is also dependent on the commitment of dedicated volunteers. YouthWorx supports disengaged young people. Thanks to the support of volunteers, 45% of those young people who presented with the most complex issues have progressed to education or employment and more active participation in the community. A further example of volunteer engagement to deliver positive outcomes is Family Life's Creating Capable Communities in which volunteers from all walks of life help create and then strengthen communities where none had previously existed. In the last financial year, Family Life volunteers contributed over 30,000 hours in labour and expertise, which can be valued as a community contribution of \$750,000. Participation in the programs yields positive benefits for the volunteers too, with volunteers reporting increased wellbeing and satisfaction. When a whole community invests its financial and in-kind resources to support its most vulnerable members, the vulnerable become 'able' and the community becomes stronger.

• Concurrent Session 3 – Meeting Room 1

Domestic Violence

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Prue Holzer

Arresting Policies: Implications of Pro and Mandatory Arrest Policies for Victims of Domestic and Family Violence

Rochelle Braaf (Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse)

Rochelle Braaf works for the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is located at the University of NSW. It is a national organisation, providing high quality information about domestic and family violence issues and practice. The primary goal of the Clearinghouse is to prevent domestic and family violence. We do this by supporting specialist and generalist service providers, government agencies, researchers, advocates and activists in their efforts, through the dissemination of information and research, and through facilitating discussion.

This presentation will focus on research undertaken to investigate arrest policies designed to better protect victims of family and domestic violence, which limit victim and police discretion in favour of arrest where

there has been a violence incident. A review of research from the United States (US), where many jurisdictions have mandatory arrest policies for domestic and family violence, found some negative outcomes. Many US jurisdictions have experienced a rise in the number of arrests of women victims of violence, with devastating implications for them including a reluctance to engage with the criminal justice system in the future. This issue is of increasing concern in Australia where a number of jurisdictions employ pro-arrest policies and where some jurisdictions are moving to limit victim and police discretion further. Already, some Australian services report and police statistics indicate a rise in the number of women arrested for domestic and family violence offences. Does this trend represent a change in women's behaviour or changing perceptions held by police officers and the broader community? The VicHealth community attitudes survey (2006) found a shift in community attitudes indicating that more people now consider that women are as violent as men in their relationships – a view not borne out by homicide or police statistics, or community crime and violence surveys. Men's rights groups have similarly advocated that women are as violent as men. This paper will canvass the reasons for moves to limit victim and police discretion, the outcomes of mandatory and pro arrest policies for victims and consider future directions in arrest policies.

The Rewards and Challenges of Implementing a Programme of Action for Preventing Family Violence in New Zealand

Rajen Prasad (New Zealand Families Commission)

Rajen Prasad is the Chief Commissioner of the New Zealand Families Commission.

He was the Race Relations Conciliator and a Human Rights Commissioner from 1996 to 2001. He has spent his professional life in social policy and the social services, and was an Associate Professor at Massey University. His last position was as a full-time member of the Residence Review Board. Dr Prasad has extensive professional practice experience with families as a family and social worker. He has conducted substantive research into alternate family care of children and other family related matters. Dr Prasad was born in Fiji and came to New Zealand in 1964, and maintains close and significant relationships with the leaders of many cultures.

The National Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established in June 2005 to make improvements to the way family violence is addressed and how to eliminate family violence in New Zealand. This is a significant commitment by key government agencies, non-government agencies, the judiciary, the Children's Commissioner and the Chief Families

Commissioner. The Taskforce issued its First Report in July 2006 and Ongoing Programme of Action in February 2008. This report presents achievements to date and uses research and best practice to outline plans for the coming years. The vision that the Taskforce has been building on since 2005 is one where all families and whanau have healthy, respectful, stable relationships, free from violence. Action is being taken on four fronts: leadership, changing attitudes and behaviours, safety and accountability and effective support services. In 2005 the Families Commission identified preventing family violence as one of the key issues facing New Zealand families over the next five to 10 years and accordingly included this as one of the Commission's key priorities. The Families Commission jointly leads a nationwide Campaign to change attitudes and behaviours around family violence. This paper discusses the challenges and constraints in developing and implementing a multi-agency long term programme of action. Using the experiences of the Families Commission, this paper will examine, how research and best practice has informed the Taskforce's actions. This paper will also consider some of the complexities in working in a collaborative partnership with multi-agencies within government and non-government organisations and detail the tensions in achieving the Taskforce's vision.

Feeling Safe, Being Strong - Helping Children Build Safe, Happy and Healthy Relationships

Chris Storm (Bethany Community Support)

Chris Storm is the Feeling Safe Being Strong Project Officer at Bethany Community Support in Geelong. She has been working in the community services sector for over 25 years in a broad range of areas including juvenile justice, youth work, housing, research, family violence, counselling, education, outreach, volunteer support and crisis intervention and support. Her qualifications include a BA, Dip VET, Grad Dip Ed and a M.Ed in Experiential Learning and Development. In addition to her involvement with the Feeling Safe Being Strong program, Chris is also involved in the delivery of various Community Services units across several qualification levels at the local TAFE, including the Diploma of Community Welfare.

"Feeling Safe Being Strong" (FSBS) is a (family) violence primary prevention and early intervention program that targets primary school students in years 3 and 4. The 10 session program is conducted within the host school and works with the entire grade rather than simply identifying and isolating those students who have been identified as having experienced family violence. The intention is to promote and encourage the development of positive strategies and safe responses to violence, and to create an environment that maximises the

development, health and resilience of all children. FSBS is innovative in its approach, flexible in its delivery and able to cater for a wide range of primary school curriculum requirements.

Anglicare Victoria – Responding to Family Violence

Constantine Tsingas, David Giles (Anglicare Victoria)

Con Tsingas commenced as Manager of Social Policy and Research with Anglicare Victoria in August 2003. Prior to joining Anglicare Victoria he was involved in research within Local Government and aged care. In his earlier career he worked for twelve years with people with disabilities and two of those overseas.

Given the widespread and damaging nature of family violence and the fact that it is so often a feature of the profile of client families with whom Anglicare Victoria works, it commissioned a research project on family violence designed to provide: (1) an assessment of the difference exposure to the broader family services and violence prevention programs within Anglicare Victoria makes to reducing the incidence of family violence (2) an increased appreciation of the impact of family violence on social and family functioning for children, young people, women and men receiving services from Anglicare Victoria. The project's research methods involved interviews with 16 Anglicare Victoria clients victims of family violence, 16 clients who had committed family violence and 21 family services practitioners working with a client experiencing family violence; fifteen focus groups with family services practitioners, and examination of an existing statewide data base to ascertain whether family violence was a presenting issue for Anglicare Victoria clients experiencing a range of issues including mental illness and financial hardship. The results confirmed that cultural beliefs and exposure to family violence can influence future generations to engage in family violence. In addition, the research highlights the efficacy of violence prevention and support programs. Family violence is a serious and widespread social problem. However, through broad ranging, sustained and evidence-based approaches, both the incidence of family violence and its damaging effects can be lessened in our community.

• **Concurrent Session 3 – Meeting Room 2**
Family Life through the Lens of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (Symposium)

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Diana Smart

Discussant: Michael Bittman (University of New England)

Profiling the Developmental Contexts of Children Across a Socio-Economic Gradient

Tamara Blakemore (Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

Tamara Blakemore joined the Research & Analysis Branch of FaHCSIA in 2004 and in her role as Senior Research Analyst has completed various social policy research projects using LSAC data. Tamara completed her PhD using data from another Australian Longitudinal study of children; The Mater University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy Outcomes. She brings to her work a background in Psychology and Social Work and has been an active participant in the design and development of LSAC questionnaires and datasets. Tamara has been a visiting fellow at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the ANU and has recently been selected as a member of the ARACY New Investigators Network.

The link between children's outcomes and the contexts in and through which they develop, is consistently demonstrated in the research literature. Contexts or environments, such as the family, the community and school, are suggested shape children's outcomes via the availability of resources central to the tasks of development. Key resources identified as significant influences on child development include: human capital, psychological capital, social capital, time and income. Neither the contexts in which children develop nor the capital available within them are equal across socio-economic gradients. Social exclusion can occur when the contexts or environments into which babies are born, and children and adolescents grow up, limit their opportunities and eventual outcomes. A preliminary step in understanding populations at risk for social exclusion is to profile developmental contexts across the socio-economic gradient and the factors within these contexts that influence children's chances. This paper uses data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) to present a preliminary, descriptive overview of the capital and contexts that characterise the development of children across a socio-economic gradient.

Parental Time with Children and Children's Activities: An Analysis of Australian Time Use Diaries of 4-5 Year Olds

Jennifer Baxter (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Jennifer Baxter is a demographer who joined the Australian Institute of Family Studies in February 2005 as a Research Fellow. Dr Baxter's previous work experience includes more than fifteen years in the Commonwealth Public Service, having worked in a number of statistical and research positions. Dr Baxter's current research interests include analysis of issues relating to parental employment (including changes over time, within-family decision-making, the role of income support and child care), and the analysis of employment transitions.

Parental time with children contributes to children's development and is positively associated with children's wellbeing. However, the amount of parent-child shared time does not necessarily capture its 'quality'. Parents, in their time with children, might be teaching them, encouraging and nurturing them and physically caring for them. At other times parent and child may be engaging in less developmentally-focused activities. While this parent-child time is often analysed using adults' time use data, it is also possible to analyse this time from the child's perspective. This paper uses just over 5,000 time use diaries of 4-5 year old children, collected in the first wave (2004) of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). These diaries captured details both of the children's activities and of who was with them in each 15-minute period across a day, with some diaries for weekends and some for weekdays. The 'who with' data were used to compile measures of parent-child time, that is, times when the mother or the father was with the child. The activity data were used to describe the nature of the parent-child time. These data were analysed using descriptive techniques to show how the timing of mothers' and father's time with the child and children's activities intersect. Further, these data were analysed to determine whether parents' and children's characteristics were associated with more or less parent-child time or the nature of that parent-child time. Throughout, mother-child and father-child time were considered separately, as was weekend and weekday time.

The Health, Financial and Relationship Wellbeing of Australian Couples: Does Marriage Matter?

Linda Bencic, Robyn Parker (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Linda Bencic is the Design Manager for the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Previously Linda worked as the Research Coordinator for the Graduate Careers Council of Australia conducting and reporting on a range of national surveys relating to higher education outcomes including the *Graduate Destination Survey*, *Course Experience Questionnaire* and *Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire*. Linda's career also includes teaching at primary and tertiary levels as well as various research projects at RMIT and the University of Melbourne in the areas of student attrition, educational assessment, program evaluation, workplace trainer and assessor competency standards.

Robyn Parker, is a Senior Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Prior to her appointment at AIFS, Robyn lectured in research design and statistics, personality and social psychology at Monash University. She is a member of the International Society for the Study of Personal Relationships, the National Council on Family Relations, and the Australian Association for Social Research. Robyn's research activities concentrate on the marital relationship, with a special focus on the trajectory of relationships across the life span, and the evaluation of premarriage programs.

A large body of literature attests to a range of differences between married and unmarried couples. Collectively, the research points to married people being happier, healthier and better off financially than those not married. One conclusion drawn from this data is that marriage in and of itself confers a range of benefits on married couples that the not-married do not enjoy (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). However, there are certain flaws in the way in which much of the research is conducted, in particular the groups against which comparisons are made. Typically, married participants are compared to those who are single (never married), separated, divorced or widowed, and the findings generally support the notion that being in a couple relationship is 'better' than not being coupled. Since couples in de facto relationships vary from legally married couples in terms of their demographic profile, and from each other with respect to their commitment to their partner (Penman, 2005) treating them as a homogeneous group, or including them with married participants for the purposes of analysis, may confound the findings. As the initial step in the ongoing exploration of the relationships of the couples

participating in LSAC, this paper reports on comparisons of married, de facto and single/sole parents with respect to their health, and their financial and (for coupled parents) relationship wellbeing. Aspects of these three domains will be compared for the parents of infants and the parents of kindergarten-aged children.

• Concurrent Session 3 – Meeting Room 3 Housing and Place

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Siobhan O'Halloran

The Silent Migration: Hearing from Young Families Who've Made the Move to Non-Metropolitan Australia

Karen Healy (University of Queensland), Anne Hampshire (Mission Australia), Annette Michaux (The Benevolent Society), Amanda Donnett (University of Queensland)

This study aims to understand the experiences of young families who have migrated to regional and rural areas of Australia. Over the past three decades, thousands of families with young children have relocated to non-metropolitan areas across Australia. This trend has been strongest in coastal parts of New South Wales and Queensland though significant inland migration also been observed (Stimson et al., 2001). Research indicates that the trend is due to a combination of factors including rising housing costs in the cities and perceptions of enhanced quality of life in regional and rural communities. In this paper, we provide a snapshot of the demographic shift of young families to non-metropolitan areas. Drawing on quantitative analysis of recent Census data, we will address notable features of this trend such as increased concentration of disadvantage in some high growth regional and rural centres and increased commuting within non-metropolitan regions. We will turn then to findings from qualitative field research undertaken with young families at four non-metropolitan sites in New South Wales and Queensland. We will discuss what we have learnt from listening to young families who've made the move regarding their reasons for moving and their experiences of social exclusion and social inclusion. We conclude with policy and practice implications for enhancing the social inclusion of young families who relocate to non-metropolitan areas.

“I Try and Make it Feel More Like a Home” - Families Living in Caravan Parks

Graeme Stuart (University of Newcastle)

Graeme Stuart has worked at the University of Newcastle's Family Action Centre since May 2003. Until recently he worked with the Caravan Project, which supports permanent residents of caravan parks by providing programs for children and adults, home visiting, information and referral, community development and community education. He is now the team leader of community research focusing on the integration of research and service delivery. He has 20 years experience in community work with a particular interest in community development, youth work and nonviolence. His PhD explored the implications of nonviolence for youth work practice.

Families who live in caravan parks as a last resort often face significant marginalisation and disadvantage; at the same time caravan park communities have numerous strengths that can help support families. This paper will discuss research exploring positive aspects of park life, strategies used by residents to make the most of caravan parks and principles of best practice for community workers supporting park residents. The research involved in-depth interviews with 11 residents, all of whom had moved into a caravan park as a last resort, a national best-practice forum attended by 60 service providers supporting caravan park residents, and in-depth interviews with 11 community workers. The residents identified a range characteristics or strategies that assisted with park life including the sense of community, the friendships they formed, being adaptable, having a positive attitude and the importance of balancing personal space with community involvement. Strategies identified by the community workers included recognising the importance of building relationships with residents, being creative and flexible, taking programs to caravan parks and working with park managers. Although caravan park life can be very challenging, especially for families with young children, they play an important role in providing accommodation for marginalised families. Rather than focusing on the deficits and problems with caravan parks; policy makers, researchers and service providers would do well to also consider the strengths of caravan park communities.

Living on the Fringes: Women's Expectations and Experiences of Managing their Children's Health and Wellbeing in the Outer Suburbs

Fiona Andrews (Deakin University)

Child health and development outcomes have been linked with residential location. This study aimed to explore families' views and experiences of their

residential location and to map how this influenced their children's health using Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecology Model. In depth interviews were conducted with 15 mothers of preschool-age children living in an outer Melbourne municipality. Thematic analysis revealed contrasts between factors that influenced families' choice of residential location (macrosystem affects) and their experiences of raising children in the municipality (exosystem, and microsystem affects). Decisions to live in the municipality were strongly influenced by ideals around family, home-ownership and space. The municipality was perceived to be 'a good place to raise children'. In reality though, women spoke of the difficulties they experienced in accessing general practitioners, maternal and child health nurses, childcare and kindergartens. Whilst wide open spaces had attracted them to live in the area, they spoke of limited places to go with their children and limited transport options. The distance from the city coupled with long working hours also meant that most fathers were absent for long periods during the week and even on weekends and thus had very little involvement in raising their children. In summary, this study provides an interesting insight into the mismatch between families' perceptions of the how their residential location might influence their children's health and their actual experiences. This suggests another area of complexity to be considered in trying to understand the relationship between children's health outcomes and residential location.

Most Watched: Preliminary Findings of a Work-in-Progress on Family Representations in High Rating Programmes on German TV

Katrin Viertel, Margrit Schreier, Petra Lietz (Jacobs University Bremen, Germany)

Katrin Viertel M.A., is a Research Associate at Jacobs University Bremen. She has been working as a media journalist for many years and is currently a PhD candidate in communication sciences at Jacobs University.

Like most developed countries, Germany is facing a demographic decline. In 2006, the average number of children per woman decreased to an all time low of 1,33. The starting point of the study is that with an average TV viewing time of 220 minutes per German per day and a presumed effect of mass media on its consumers, could it be that media representations of family life affect people in their child-bearing age which might keep them from having children? This paper investigates what representations of family life are shown in those programmes on German TV that are most watched by people in their childbearing age, namely 14 - 49 year olds. A category scheme designed to cover the most important aspects of family life was

constructed for content analysis; this will be briefly described first. In a second step, preliminary results will be presented of the application of this category scheme to a first corpus of material which consists of programmes on German TV that viewers in the selected age group actually watched the most within a previously specified week. Finally these results will be related to the results of a content analysis that applies the same category scheme to a second corpus of material, a purposely constructed programme week of the first German public channel entitled "Children are the future".

• Concurrent Session 3 – Hospitality Suite 1

The Development, Validation, Evaluation and Use of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as a National Measure of Early Childhood Development

Theme: Children, Youth & patterns of Caring

Chair: Suzanne Vassallo

Using the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as a Measure of Early Childhood Development across Australia

Sharon Goldfeld, Mary Sayers, Frank Oberklaid (Murdoch Children's Research Institute and University of Melbourne), Sally Brinkman, Sven Silburn (Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research)

Sharon Goldfeld MBBS (Hons) Monash University 1989, Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 1997, Grad Dip Epi Bio University of Melbourne 1998, PhD University of Melbourne 2003, Fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine 2007. Sharon's career spans the research and policy divide. She was awarded the prestigious Harkness Fellowship, has worked in research, policy and practice, completing her PhD in health services research, and is a practicing community paediatrician. She is the Senior Medical Advisor in Child Health in the Victorian Government, and has vigorously pursued the need for better data on children in Australia. She is the National AEDI Program Director leading the development and implementation of the national AEDI program and is co-investigator on an ARC discovery grant to establish small level SES data relevant to children.

Since 2004 the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) has been completed in 60 communities as part of the Australian Early Development Index: Building Better Communities for Children project undertaken by the

Centre for Community Child Health (a key research centre of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute) in Melbourne in partnership with the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth and funded by the Australian Government and supported by Shell Australia. The AEDI is based on the Canadian Early Development Instrument (EDI) and is a community measure of young children's development. Teachers of children in their first year of formal schooling complete the checklist on each child after they have had a chance to observe their development. AEDI data have now been collected on more than 37,000 children by over 2,000 teachers and 1,000 government and non-government schools. In recognition of the national and international work undertaken to date, the Rudd Government has committed to the national rollout of the AEDI over the next three years. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the development of the AEDI and outline the steps that will be taken in rolling out the AEDI to obtain a national snapshot of early childhood development.

Validity of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

Sally Brinkman, Sven Silburn, David Lawrence (Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research), Mary Sayers, Sharon Goldfeld, Frank Oberklaid (Murdoch Children's Research Institute and University of Melbourne)

Sally Brinkman is a Senior Research Fellow with the Curtin University Centre for Developmental Health at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth. She collaborated with Professor Magdalena Janus since 2002 in the original adaptation of the Canadian Early Development Index for use in Australia. Since then she has overseen the roll-out of the AEDI to almost two thirds of Western Australian communities and played a key roll on the steering committee for the national AEDI project where she contributes specialist analytic and applied epidemiological expertise. She is currently contracted as a consultant to UNESCO and World Bank projects developing internationally comparable methods for measuring and monitoring early child development outcomes at a population level.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is an adaptation the Canadian Early Development Instrument originally developed by Janus and Offord (2000). This teacher-completed checklist is used to describe the proportion of children within defined communities who are developmentally vulnerable on entry to primary school. It assesses overall developmental status and functioning in five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge. This paper describes a

series of validity studies of the AEDI conducted with a sub-sample of 642 children from the national Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) age 4 cohort. It reports findings regarding the validity of the AEDI as: a) an indicator of early child development outcomes at ages 4-5 years; and b) as a predictor of school learning, behavioural and social outcomes at ages 6-7 years. Comparative measures assessed within the LSAC include the Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory (Peds-QL), Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Academic Rating Scale (ARS), parent ratings of reading, writing and numeracy, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), and the "Who am I" Developmental Assessment (WAI). The strength of the correlations of the AEDI scores with other independently validated measures of key aspects of early child development shows this teacher reported index to have robust construct and concurrent validity at ages 4-5 years and that it is predictive of children's school learning and behavioural outcomes at age 6-7 years.

The I-AEDI Project: Validation of the Cultural Adaptation of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) for use with Indigenous Children

Sven Silburn, Sally Brinkman, (Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research), Colleen Hayward, Sue Ferguson-Hill, Elizabeth Cromie (Telethon Institute for Child Health Research)

Sven Silburn heads the Curtin University Centre for Developmental Health based at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth. This is an internationally recognized centre of excellence in applied research into children's health and positive development. Professor Silburn was a lead investigator on the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey, whose findings have been used widely in advocating policy directions for Indigenous child health, mental health and education. He is presently a member of the design team for the national Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) and the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC). Other current projects include the national implementation of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) and its adaptation for Indigenous children. His particular interest is in making sure that the emerging new knowledge of children's early development is used to guide policy and practice to improve the longer-term health outcomes of all Australian children.

The Indigenous AEDI project is an extension of the existing Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) program which has been operating in Australian schools since 2004. This paper describes the qualitative

and quantitative methods being used in adapting the AEDI to derive a culturally equivalent measure of Indigenous children's early developmental status relevant to their successful learning at school. The project also aims to ensure that the Indigenous version of the AEDI can collect information on Indigenous children's culturally related ways of learning and behaving that will be helpful in creating successful learning environments for them at school. Field trials of the preliminary Indigenous adaptation of the AEDI are being undertaken with around 600 Indigenous children in metro, country and remote community sites in WA during 2008. The transferability and appropriateness of the trial I-AEDI instrument and its accompanying administrative and community engagement and feedback processes will be evaluated in other States and Territories during 2009. This study is one of the first of its kind to develop and test culturally appropriate questionnaire items and scales which are inclusive of Indigenous perspectives of children's development and culturally valued ways of learning, as well as measuring the relationship between Indigenous children's early developmental status and their subsequent school learning outcomes.

How can Communities, Schools and Teachers use the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

Mary Sayers, Sharon Goldfeld, Frank Oberklaid (Murdoch Children's Research Institute, University of Melbourne), Sally Brinkman, Sven Silburn (Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research)

Mary Sayers joined the Centre for Community Child Health in early 2004. She holds a BA and a Masters by Research (focusing on the impact of labour market reform on women with young families in the workplace). Mary is the National AEDI Program Manager and has coordinated the national AEDI implementation through the AEDI National Support Centre. To date the AEDI has been completed in 60 Australian communities on over 37,000 children in the first year of school. Before joining the Centre she worked in children and family policy and programs for the Australian Government.

Between 2004 and 2007 the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) was completed in 60 geographic areas, encompassing more than 470 local communities, from seven states and territories across Australia as part of the Australian Early Development Index: Building Better Communities for Children project undertaken by the Centre for Community Child Health (a key research centre of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute) in Melbourne in partnership with the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth and funded by the Australian Government Department of Families,

Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and supported by Shell Australia. The AEDI is a community measure of young children's development measuring five domains: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; and, communication skills and general knowledge. The purpose of the AEDI is to measure the health and development of children to help communities assess how well they are doing in supporting young children and their families and measure their progress over time in improving children's outcomes. This paper provides a summary of how communities, schools and teachers can use the AEDI in their efforts to improve child development outcomes, based on the findings from the national evaluation undertaken by the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH, 2007). This evaluation found that there were a number of benefits for communities, schools and teachers in implementing the AEDI.

• Keynote 2 – Ruth Weston

Families through Life: Complications, Risks and Opportunities

Chair: Alan Hayes

Ruth Weston is General Manager (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Australia. For more than 25 years, Ruth has been conducting research extensively at the Australian Institute of Family Studies on family transitions and wellbeing in Australia. This has included couple and family formation, fertility decision-making, parent-adolescent relationships, and relationship breakdown - particularly the emotional and financial consequences of marriage breakdown. Her research contributed to the initial development - as well as recent amendments to - the Child Support Scheme in Australia.

While life may never seem to be particularly easy, many of the difficulties that elderly people are likely to have encountered over the course of their lives appear to be markedly different from those that are experienced by younger generations today. Today's life is full of "busyness", entailing multiple roles and responsibilities within and outside family. The pace of social, economic and technological development over the last few decades has been unprecedented - and the pace of our own lives is considerably faster than that experienced in previous times. In addition, traditional family life milestones are less obvious, and the course that family life takes today is far less predictable than in the past, with some "stages" such as leaving home and partnering being repeated for large numbers of the population. In short, our lives are very complicated. These complications may be seen as both risks and

opportunities. This paper focuses on family life complications in this "land of droughts and flooding rains" with its ageing population and areas of social division. Particular attention is given to repercussions of couple relationship trajectories - including repercussions for grandparents and for those holding step relationships. The paper concludes with a discussion of some of the means by which risks may be transformed into opportunities, and with recommendations regarding future research directions.

• Poster Session 2 – Thursday

Theme: Family Relationships

Stepfamily Practice: Is There an Evidence Base?

Steve Martin (Stepfamily Association of Victoria), John Bamberg (Murdoch Children's Research Institute / Centre for Adolescent Health)

Stepfamily Association of Victoria Inc (SAVI) is an innovative community organization working on the margins with stepfamilies adjusting to massive ongoing changes. SAVI commenced as a self-help support group in 1981 and is now a professionally resourced organization providing information, support, education and counselling for stepfamilies and training for professionals, with a strong focus on prevention and early intervention. SAVI has strong anecdotal evidence that its programs reflect best practice. However, the modern trend for services is to demonstrate evidence based practice. To accomplish this aim, SAVI obtained philanthropic trust funding from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust to resource an external evaluation of its education and training programs, and chose the Program Logic process of evaluation. By using the Program Logic Model, SAVI was able to identify service delivery strategies and the assumptions that have informed current practice. The Model compares expected and actual service outcomes and identifies areas for further research, development and study. The Program Logic Model indicates how an organization works and aids in the identification of the theory and assumptions that underpin its service delivery. The model links outcomes with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the program (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2001). This paper will present SAVI's experience of this practice reflection process, resultant outcomes and future directions for stepfamily service delivery and research.

Between Generations: Exploring the Dynamics of Value Transfer and/or Transformation using a Cultural-historical Theoretical Framework.

Hilary Monk (Monash University)

Throughout history, societal practices have been transferred and transformed. The intergenerational family/household has an important although not exclusive role in perpetuating the transmission of these societal practices. The research presented in this paper draws on the work of Vygotsky (1934/1987; 1978) and neo-Vygotskians in the areas of families' funds of knowledge (Moll & Greenberg, 1990) and institutions, motives and goals (Hedegaard, 2005). The notion of family funds derived originally from anthropology in relation to family funds of economy (Wolf, 1966) relates to the historically accumulated knowledge and skills shared in and through families/households that form the basis of their economic, political and social platforms. The family funds concept has been adapted and used in the field of education with particular emphasis on family funds of linguistic (Moll & Greenberg, 1990) and mathematical (Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil & Moll, 2001) knowledge. This qualitative case study (a work in progress) explores further conceptualization of the notion of family funds with a focus on the process dynamics occurring as family/household values and beliefs are appropriated, transferred and/or transformed between generations during child-rearing. Framed within Australian multi-generational families/households consideration is given to factors that mediate and/or motivate value transmission. The study is designed in five phases with data generation occurring as an iterative process through the use of interviews, photographs and video footage. This paper grapples with some of the theoretical and methodological issues associated with designing multi-generational research using a cultural-historical epistemology.

Through the Looking Glass - A Partnership in Parenting Project

Kaye Colmer (Lady Gowrie Child Centre), Pam Murphy (Through the Looking Glass Project)

The 'Through the Looking Glass' (TtLG) is an attachment based parenting project based at Lady Gowrie Child Centre Adelaide. In 2005, funding was secured from the Commonwealth Government's Stronger Families and Communities, Invest to Grow Strategy expanding the project across centres within Adelaide and interstate for a 3-year period. Over this period, it was anticipated that approximately 30 groups would be provided with up to 200 families participating. The project has been a health, education and welfare collaborative early

intervention strategy that utilized the existing infrastructure and universality of child care settings to intervene with families where there was an identified compromised attachment relationship between the parent and child/ren (0-5). The program provided intensive psychosocial support, therapeutic intervention and childcare as a package for vulnerable families in order to develop and support secure attachment relationships between parent and child. The program was designed to achieve specific outcomes for parents, children and child care staff and a participatory action research methodology was adopted where a series of pre and post project measurement tools, surveys, interviews and observations were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from mothers, children and project staff. Specific appropriated standardized instruments that measured a range of psychological and behavioural dimensions were also used. Data from the evaluation study provide evidence that the intervention has achieved the expected outcomes with positive impact demonstrated for mothers, which has been sustained beyond the intervention. Data also demonstrate improvements in children's wellbeing and involvement.

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Victoria's Baby Boom

Joyce Cleary, Anastasia Gabriel, Linda Hayes, (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)

The number of births in Victoria has exceeded 70,000 for the first time since the early 1970s. This 'baby boom' has taken most by surprise. Data from all three sources of birth notifications in Victoria was examined and analysed to determine the extent of the increase and investigate what we know about the cohort of new children and the families into which they are born. One dataset, the Victoria's Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH) is the most current source of birth notifications in Victoria. Analysis of the birth notifications to Victoria's MCH Service shows a significant increase in the number of births in recent years. From 2000-01 to 2006-07 there has been a net increase of 15% in the number of birth notifications. The most significant increase has been observed over the past two years, showing a 10% increase from 2004-05 to 2006-07. Major changes in age-specific fertility rates were observed. These changes that have been more pronounced and occurred more rapidly in Victoria. Our understanding of the socio-demographic characteristics of this new cohort of children and families is limited by the existing data collections. It is not yet clear whether this increase will continue and further work is underway to investigate this. However, the impact of this increase will carry throughout the lifespan of these individuals and service planning and service delivery from early childhood

through late adulthood will need to take this into account.

Theme: Youth & Patterns of Caring

Choices for Young Carers

Joan Hughes, Colleen Sheen (Carers Australia, Canberra)

Around 350,000 children and young people aged under 26 years help care in families where someone has an illness, a disability, a mental health issue or who has an alcohol or other drug problem, but there are insufficient services to meet their needs. The average age of carers under 18 is 12-13 years. Many young carers see themselves as daughters or sons, brothers or sisters who are part of a family rather than as a young carer. They often take on this role because no-one else is available. Their caring can have a negative impact, including reduced life choices and limited career opportunities. The major factor is the lower school retention of young carers aged 15-25 moving into vocational or tertiary education (4%) compared with the general population (23%). When families aren't well supported, children and young people can miss out on opportunities to go to school, do homework, spend time with friends, have a job or further their studies. They can experience high levels of stress, feel confused and uninformed. Their physical and mental health can be affected as a result of caring without adequate support. Consultation with young carers identified three primary areas of need: access, coordination of services, and eligibility for support. The presentation will explore ways to assist young carers and their families within appropriate family support models.

“Something has changed around here!” – A Family, School and Community Partnership: An integrated model of Restorative Practices and Family and Community Group Conferencing for Promoting Student Engagement and Wellbeing in Rural Victorian Communities.

Helen Butler (Australian Catholic University), Sheryl Hemphill (Murdoch Childrens Research Institute & Deakin University), Angela McCullagh, Shandell Blythe and Mandy Knight

(Family and Community Group Conference Convenors), Maree Cribbes, Alison Miller (Wodonga Network Schools) Senior Sergeant Barry McIntosh and Senior Constable Kevin Mack (Wodonga Police)

The partners recognise that better educational and health outcomes are achieved for young people when a collaborative partnership exists between families and the broader school community. Using Restorative

Practice and Family and Community Group Conferencing this project aims to build new relationships between young people, families, schools and community organisations to break the cycle of disengagement and disadvantage, through early intervention. This presentation will be of interest to policymakers, Juvenile Justice, police, school leaders and others interested in the development of the whole child within strong communities. It will outline the approach taken and present stories of how the school-community partnership has already created positive outcomes for children, young people and, importantly, for families, schools and community. The partners are currently seeking research funding as this collaboration provides a valuable opportunity to (a) examine the effectiveness and impact of these approaches, and (b) understand the processes needed for community organisations to work together effectively across sectors.

Theme: Families & Community Life

A ‘Soft Entry’ Approach to Enhancing Child, Family and Community Life: Towards Evidence for Change

Ann Ingamells (Griffith University)

‘Soft entry’ is a term that can be broadly understood as signalling universal, non-stigmatising modes of accessing activities and services. Whilst a literature search will yield little, the term has become especially applicable to the Communities for Children (CfC) program, which provides support to 0-5 year old children, their families and communities. Anecdotal feedback from one site indicates that what makes soft entry approaches so popular with parents is “meeting other parents, realising you are normal”, “hearing how other people deal with things that you struggle with”, “having people ring you up and invite you to do other things with them”, “knowing someone else who struggled with the same things as you and found a way of dealing with it”. Parents say it mattered to them that –they do not have to register for attendance, do not have to sit in a circle and introduce themselves, are not assessed and do not have to have problems in order to be there. The question must be asked however, whether such community building processes lead to change in families, are as attractive to families facing serious challenges and can provide a contribution to the evidence base. This paper presents evaluation material about a number of soft entry approaches in one CfC site to examine the approach, look at underpinning theory, consider the kinds of families served by the approach, and to address questions of evidence.

Building Social Cohesion in Two NSW Communities: A Longitudinal Evaluation of a Community-Based Intervention

Genevieve Nelson, Andrew Anderson, Annette Michaux
(The Benevolent Society, Sydney)

The Benevolent Society is a large NGO, which works in communities across metropolitan and rural New South Wales. As an organization, we are committed to building socially cohesive and connected communities as a way of overcoming social and economic exclusion. Due to the large amount of confusion however in the social cohesion literature, there is limited evidence of a clear, well-documented research framework that has evaluated the effectiveness of interventions aimed at addressing this exclusion via building social cohesion. This paper outlines a research framework to be adopted by *The Benevolent Society* in the evaluation of its social cohesion interventions in two disadvantaged communities in NSW. Components of the framework include: utilizing a clear, multidimensional definition of social cohesion; evaluating the impact of social cohesion longitudinally; adopting a mixed-method approach to research; and examining the regional and socioeconomic differences in the communities receiving the intervention. Such a framework will elucidate those factors that successfully build cohesion in communities as well as the impact of this increased cohesion on social and economic disadvantage.

• Concurrent Session 4 – Auditorium

Social Inclusion

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Matthew Gray

Deprivation, Social Exclusion and the Well-Being of Australian Families

Peter Saunders, Yuvisthi Naidoo, Anna Zhu (University of NSW)

Peter Saunders is a Research Professor in Social Policy at the University of NSW's Social Policy Research Centre. His research interests include the measurement, causes and consequences of poverty; budget standards and household needs; income distribution and economic inequality; economic aspects of social security; social policy and the welfare state; comparative social policy, including in OECD and East Asian countries; public finance, including taxation policy and the role of government in the economy; international comparisons of government size and economic performance.

This paper draws on data from two related surveys to

provide a picture of the extent and nature of deprivation and social exclusion among Australian families with children. The surveys were conducted in 2006 and asked participants to identify which of a long list of items are essential – things that no-one should have to go without in Australia today. Those items regarded as essential by a majority of respondents are used to identify who is deprived (going without) and excluded (missing out) in the community generally, and among a smaller group of the clients of welfare services. Attention will focus on those indicators that are likely to have the most adverse effects on children, and the characteristics of those families facing the most severe forms of disadvantage will be identified. The indicators of disadvantage will then be compared with other information (collected in the two surveys) on several dimensions of the subjective well-being of the respondents, the quality and satisfaction with the area in which they live, and the incidence of disruptive life events such as separation, unemployment and accidents or illness. The analysis will aim to relate the incidence of disadvantage as reflected in deprivation and exclusion to adverse outcomes and events that are suggestive of a stressful life for the families involved and examine how these translate into low levels of well-being, or are resisted by resilient families.

Child Social Exclusion: An Updated Index from the 2006 Census

Justine McNamara, Ann Harding, Robert Tanton, Anne Daly (University of Canberra)

Justine McNamara is a Senior Research Fellow at the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) at the University of Canberra. Justine works with the regional modelling team, and has been involved a number of projects examining aspects of economic disadvantage, particularly in relation to children and families.

The development of regional measures of child social exclusion for Australia are underpinned by increasing research and policy interest in indicators of child well-being, multidimensional measures of poverty, and spatial differences in disadvantage. The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling at the University of Canberra has developed a small area index of child social exclusion, a concept which encompasses multiple dimensions of poverty, and the cumulative nature of many aspects of disadvantage. This paper describes a recently updated version of the index, based on new data from the 2006 ABS Census of Population and Housing. Variables incorporated in the index include family type, education level and employment status of the child's parents, housing tenure and household income. We will present results displaying the regional distribution of child social exclusion risk in 2006, and analyse the

characteristics of those areas (both urban and rural) which experience both the most and the least risk of child social exclusion.

Social Inclusion: Towards an Australian Approach

Alan Hayes (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Alan Hayes took up his appointment as Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies in September 2004. With qualifications in Psychology, Professor Hayes has longstanding research and policy interests in the pathways children and their families take through life, and the role of families in supporting and sustaining development across life. The role of vulnerability and resilience in shaping developmental pathways has been a particular focus. Much of his work has focused on disadvantage, with a longstanding interest in prevention and early intervention. The impact of relationship breakdown on children is a particular interest, and the factors that impede access to opportunity continue to be a key focus. Professor Hayes holds a Chair of Early Childhood Studies at Macquarie University, where he was also foundation Dean and Head of Division at the Australian Centre for Education Studies (ACES). He has been the chair, deputy chair or a member of four Australian Government Ministerial Advisory Councils, including the Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council (CCCAC), the Australian Council for Children and Parenting (ACCAP), the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SF&CS) Partnership and the Australian Families and Children Council (AFCC). For the NSW Government, he chaired the committee that successfully established the Institute of Teachers in 2004 and was a member of the NSW Child Protection Council.

This paper explores social inclusion and exclusion and sketches some directions for an Australian social inclusion policy agenda. After providing a brief overview of the concept of social exclusion and some of the issues surrounding its definition, the presentation will examine international approaches, with particular reference to the UK and the EU social inclusion agendas. One of the central insights of social inclusion agendas internationally is the imperative to respond both to the needs of particular groups and particular policy context. International experience provides a useful perspective on the kinds of approaches that can be undertaken. However, insights from other countries cannot replace the process of identifying the needs and challenges that are specific to the Australian context. Analyses of international experience, and initiatives elsewhere in Australia, are valuable in improving existing services and considering directions for development of an Australian approach to social inclusion. It is important that Australia critically

considers the international experiences to build on what has worked and avoid some of the problems that others have encountered.

• Concurrent Session 4 – Level 5, Suite 1

Indigenous Communities

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Ren Adams

Child Protection in the Northern Territory: Current Events and Future Directions

Adam Tomison (Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services)

Adam Tomison is well-known as an expert in preventing child abuse and other family violence, and the development and operation of child protection and family support systems. Over the past two decades he has worked with a range of government, non-government organisations and advocacy groups across Australia, and at times, overseas. He managed the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at AIFS for some years and is currently Director of Policy and Service Development in the Northern Territory Government's Families and Children's Services.

Over the past two years, significant concerns have been raised about the incidence of sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. As a result, the Territory is undergoing a period of significant Australian Government intervention and Northern Territory Government reform activity. The author provides an overview of the outcomes of the NT Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse, and the future of child protection in the Northern Territory in light of the Australian Government's intervention and the NT Government's 'Closing the Gap' Generational Plan of Action. Within a context of the lessons that can be learned from other nations' work with indigenous peoples, consideration is given to: describing the broad child protection reform agenda; highlighting key initiatives being developed to better protect the Territory's Aboriginal children.

Aboriginal Healing Project

Erin Statz Cronin (Western Australian Department of Health)

Background: The Aboriginal Healing Project is a joint Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Health WA initiative to work towards increasing the safety of women and children in Indigenous communities.

Method: The project is based on community

development principles and action research methods. There are five project sites in regional WA (Bunbury, Mandurah, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, and Hedland). Each project site employs an Indigenous project officer to consult and work with the local community to address issues of concern using therapeutic method as identified by the group. As each region is different, each project has developed its own local ways of working on a common goal. A mid project evaluation has recently been completed to determine if the project was meeting the outcomes set out by the Commonwealth and state government.

Results: Over the past two years the project has grown and developed in each region. The monitoring aspect of the evaluation has recorded over 1188 individuals attending group sessions with over 301 individual sessions run to date (Feb 06 – Nov 07). When addressing issues of family and domestic violence, the approach used by this project has proven highly successful in engaging community members in dialogue where many before had failed.

Conclusion: This project is still developing and changing. Further funding is being sought to continue to support local empowerment and change. The action research approach used in the development and evaluation of the project has proven highly successful.

Addressing Child Sexual Assault in Indigenous Communities – Learning from the Canadian Experience

Mandy Young (NSW Attorney General's Department)

Mandy Young is a Kamilaroi woman from Quirindi NSW. She has worked in the fields of child protection, domestic violence and sexual assault for a number of years in NSW in many different roles. This includes roles as a: child protection caseworker; hospital Social Worker (in Ireland); sexual assault counsellor; policy developer; policy manager; and program manager. Mandy recently managed the development and implementation of the NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce and currently is Manager Domestic and Family Violence for the NSW Attorney General's Department. In 2007 she was awarded a Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to examine child sexual abuse responses in Indigenous Canadian communities.

In 2007, the researcher travelled to Canada to examine alternative responses to child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities. The focus of the research was on holistic healing circle models and other community based initiatives that respond to child sexual assault issues within the Hollow Water (Manitoba) and Mnjikaning (Ontario) communities. The workshop will provide an outline of the programs observed including

all aspects of interventions from victim, to family and offender supports and the broader community's involvement in the process. It will also consider how these alternative justice/community models interface with the existing child protection and criminal justice systems. The research has identified 10 key principles for working with Indigenous communities to address child sexual assault. It will also outline the lessons learned from Canada for current service providers of child sexual abuse programs in Aboriginal communities and consider how a similar healing model could be implemented in an Australian context.

• Concurrent Session 4 – Level 5, Suite 2

What is Life Like for Young People Today? Insights from the Australian Temperament (Project Symposium)

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Diana Smart

The Nature of Positive Development in Emerging Adulthood

Mary Hawkins (Murdoch Children's Research Institute), Primrose Letcher, Ann Sanson (University of Melbourne), Diana Smart (Australian Institute of Family Studies), John Toumbourou (Deakin University and Centre for Adolescent Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute)

Mary Hawkins is a Research Officer working at The Murdoch Children's Research Institute located at Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital. Dr Hawkins has a background in psychology and has a particular interest in the development and validation of outcome measures for use in research. In addition to her work on the Australian Temperament Project, she is undertaking research for the International Youth Development Study, conducting data analyses and preparing papers for publication. Mary will present "The nature of positive development in emerging adulthood". This is based, in part, on a paper that has been accepted for publication in the Australian Journal of Psychology.

There has been a burgeoning interest in positive development among children and youth in recent times. Positive development is not simply the absence of disease or disorder, but refers to the attainment of healthy psychosocial functioning. Greater understanding of the nature and levels of positive development among today's Australian youth can inform health promotion efforts aiming to facilitate personal development and responsible social behaviour. The current study investigated positive development among participants in the Australian Temperament Project in late

adolescence/early adulthood. Confirmatory factor analysis identified five distinct facets of the overall construct of positive development: civic action and engagement, social competence, life satisfaction, trust and tolerance of others, and trust in authorities and organizations. While there was substantial variation within the sample, most young people displayed high levels of social competence and life satisfaction and were moderately trusting, but few took part in civic activities. Stability and change in the nature and levels of positive development from late adolescence to the mid twenties were investigated. While a similar picture of positive development emerged at 23-24 years, this was more elaborated and reflected adaptive engagement with the new roles and responsibilities of adult life. Considerable stability was found in levels of positive development from late adolescence to the mid twenties, but change was also evident in some areas.

Patterns of Risk Taking and Adjustment Problems from the Mid-teens to the Mid-twenties: Trends from the Australian Temperament Project

Diana Smart (Australian Institute of Family Studies),
Ann Sanson (University of Melbourne)

Diana Smart is a General Manager (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies with responsibility for the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children and the Australian Temperament Project. She joined the LSAC study in 2007 after a long association with the Australian Temperament Project. Prior to this, Diana conducted research for the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's Education Unit and the Victorian Education Department's Curriculum and Research Branch, and was a Lecturer in Psychology at Rusden State College (now part of Deakin University). Diana research interests include child and youth adjustment, developmental transitions and pathways, and the fostering of social competence and social responsibility.

Concern is often expressed about the progress of young people in Australia today. Unlike the

1960s and 1970s, during which time most young people had settled into stable career paths,

married and become parents by their mid twenties, nowadays the twenties tend to be a period of lengthy further education and training and prolonged financial and material dependence. Employment opportunities have become more uncertain, with expectations that individuals will traverse multiple career paths during their working life. Many young people are postponing marriage and family life. The early 20s can be a period of considerable risk taking and health disruption, with rates of mental health problems, accidents and injuries, and substance use often reaching lifetime peaks. These

impose a heavy burden of disease (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006). Until recently, few life course Australian studies have matured sufficiently to allow investigation of across-time trends in the rise and fall of problem behaviours. The Australian Temperament Project, a longitudinal study that has followed young people's development from infancy to adulthood, provides a valuable opportunity to chart developmental trajectories over adolescence and early adulthood. This paper reports patterns of antisocial behaviour, substance use, depression and anxiety from the mid teens to the mid twenties, both singly and cumulatively.

How well do Parents and Young Adults get Along Together? Views of Young Adults and their Parents

Suzanne Vassallo (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Suzanne Vassallo is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies and Project Manager of the Australian Temperament Project (ATP). Suzanne has worked at the Institute since 2001, working predominantly on the ATP and research related to parenting, family relationships, and child/youth development. More recently, Suzanne has been involved in the development of a new longitudinal study of Australian separated parents as part of an evaluation of the family law reforms. Prior to working at the Institute, Suzanne was employed as a Research Fellow in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. Suzanne has a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology and is a Registered Psychologist.

Parent-child relationships change considerably over the life span. Such changes are particularly apparent during young adulthood, a period typified by growing independence from parents and a move towards the adoption of adult roles. While a large body of research has examined changes in parent-child relationships over adolescence, surprisingly, much less attention has been given to the nature of these relationships during young adulthood. Given that young adulthood, like adolescence, may be a period of great change for many young people, changes in parent-child relationships might be expected at this time. Furthermore, past research that has focused on this issue has predominantly relied on young adult's reports alone. Little is known about how parents perceive their relationships with their young adult children, and how they view their parenting role/s at this time. The Australian Temperament Project (ATP), a longitudinal community study, which has followed the development of a large cohort of Victorian children from infancy to young adulthood, provides an opportunity to explore this issue from the perspective of both parents and young adults. During the most survey wave, when participants

were aged 23-24 years, information was collected from both parents and young adults about the quality of their relationships with each other. Parents were also asked to reflect on how they perceived their current parenting role. Using this information, along with other data collected over the course of the ATP, three main questions will be explored in this paper: (1) What is the quality of relationships between parents and young adults? (2) Do parents view these relationships more positively than young adults or vice versa? and (3) How do parents perceive their parenting roles once their children become young adults?

• Concurrent Session 4 – Meeting Room 1

Relationship Services

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Robyn Parker

Putting Governments in the Marriage Business: What's Happening in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom

Elizabeth Van Acker (Griffith University)

Recently, governments have become interested in marriage beyond regulating it as a legal institution. The aim of this paper is to provide a broad overview of how government policies in Australia, the US and the UK have developed marriage and relationship education (MRE) initiatives as a solution to the problem of family breakdowns. It analyses the different policy approaches taken by the three countries, thereby illustrating the challenges for governments in their attempts to strengthen marriage and relationships. Program development is contingent on how the value of matrimony is conceptualised and on whether governments view support or promotion of marriage as appropriate. My paper employs a problem definition approach to demonstrate how marriage support programs have adopted nationally specific trajectories. It found that marriage promotion is a clear goal of federal policy in the US, where the government funds education programs that endeavour to strengthen marriage as a preventative measure before relationships break down. Through this strategy, the government is also attempting to reduce welfare dependency. By comparison, there is less public support for MRE programs in Australia. Here the major policy target is early prevention at the point of marital breakdown. In the UK, however, MRE programs have been quite strongly resisted as the government focuses on improving the well being of children, regardless of the marital status or sexual orientation of the parents.

Accessing Information and Support for Couple Relationships in New Zealand

Carla Guy (New Zealand Families Commission)

Carla Guy is a Senior Policy and Research Analyst at the Families Commission. Carla has worked in family policy, research and operational policy specialising in relationship support, children's rights and family violence prevention. Educated at Victoria University of Wellington, Carla graduated with a BA Honours degree in Social Policy and Criminology.

Consultation with the New Zealand relationship education and counselling sector in 2007 highlighted a gap in knowledge about how people access relationship support. This paper presents key findings from research designed to address this gap. The paper will discuss findings from interviews with 50 people about their experiences of seeking information and/or support for past and current couple relationships. Study participants were aged between 20 and 65 years, and were from different cultural backgrounds (Maori, European, Pacific peoples), sexual orientation, and life stages. The study utilised a Life History Calendar methodology asking participants to reflect back over their relationships and identify the support they sought at key life transition points which impacted on the relationship including cohabitation, marriage, birth of children, and changing health status. The study aimed to develop insight into the barriers and enablers to accessing support for relationships. It explored support sought from family and friends, church and faith institutions as well as social and therapeutic services. It also canvassed access to information and resources. The study analysed changes in support seeking behaviour across multiple relationships and life stages. This research has provided the Families Commission with access to the views of family members on supporting relationships and information about how they have navigated unique relationship challenges. It will inform the Families Commission's future work on policy, advocacy, and the provision of public information.

What's Missing Between 'Strategy' and 'Task'? A Practice Framework to Guide Screening and Assessment in the New Family Relationship Centres

Gail Winkworth, Morag McArthur (Australian Catholic University)

Gail Winkworth and Morag McArthur are from the Institute of Child Protection Studies at the Australian Catholic University.

To prevent the all too familiar 'strategy to task' phenomena that occurs in other crisis driven human services the Institute of Child Protection Studies was

commissioned by the Attorney General's Department to develop a Screening and Assessment Framework to underpin the development of local screening and assessment procedures, for the new Family Relationship Centres. The presenters discuss the important elements of a comprehensive framework in an area of complex practice in which there are risks to both service users and staff. These busy new Centres have been rolled out right across Australia. They are underpinned by an assumption that with some early assistance most separating families are able to develop satisfactory parenting arrangements and that they benefit from access to a broader range of services. However, family relationship work can be volatile and it is essential that Centres adopt sound screening and assessment methods to protect children and adults from harm. Despite considerable time invested in identifying strategic directions history shows there is a tendency in busy human service agencies to move quickly to an array of 'tools' and procedures of variable effectiveness. The Practice Framework developed by the Institute is specifically designed to enable Centres to address screening and assessment issues for family members and to ensure that 'tasks' in the form of procedures and instruments are developed to reflect both local realities and national and international best known practice.

• Concurrent Session 4 – Meeting Room 2

Retirement

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Jessica Fullarton

Asset Rich, but Income Poor: Australian Housing Wealth and Retirement in International Context

Bruce Bradbury (University of New South Wales)

Bruce Bradbury is a Senior Research Fellow at the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales. Recent research includes work on child poverty and children's consumption, young motherhood, Australian poverty trends, family dynamics and intra-household consumption patterns.

For the last half-century, home ownership has been considered a central pillar of Australian retirement planning. Has led to an excessive amount of wealth being locked up in housing? This paper looks at patterns of own-home wealth across the lifecycle in Australia and across nations. Using data from the three most recent ABS Household Expenditure Surveys, and controlling for rises in average house prices, most cohorts tend to have the same housing wealth as the

previous cohort when they were at the same age. The exception is between the currently retired and the 'baby-boomers'. The latter group has houses that are around 10-15 per cent more valuable than the older cohort at the same age. Within the older cohorts, there is no evidence that people are running down their housing wealth. Using data from the Luxembourg Wealth Study, the cross-sectional distribution of own-home wealth is compared across Australia and 8 other rich nations. Australia stands out as having a relatively high level of home ownership and housing wealth among the elderly. Combining this with the relatively low incomes of the Australian elderly, it is shown that Australian consumption patterns are indeed atypical. Among the elderly, own-home wealth is a much greater proportion of disposable income in Australia than in all the other countries.

Social, Psychological and Health-Related Determinants of Retirement in Middle and Late Adulthood: Findings from a General Population Sample of Australian Men and Women

Sarah Gill (Australian National University)

Sarah Gill is a psychologist and PhD Candidate at the Centre for Mental Health Research, at The ANU. Her project investigates the relationship between workforce participation and mental health in middle-aged to older adults, with a focus on the social and health-related factors that may influence this relationship. Sarah's research interests include the health promoting effects of social and workforce participation, and the intersection between epidemiological and psychological research.

Aim: This study investigated the relative influence of social, psychological, health- and job-related factors in people's decision to retire.

Background: Increasing rates of early retirement and population ageing necessitate a greater understanding of the reasons for workforce exit amongst people from middle to late adulthood, and the characteristics of those who stay at work. Previous studies have concentrated on physical health and job-related predictors of retirement and little is known about the relative influence of social and psychological factors. Mental health in particular is an important characteristic to consider when identifying possible barriers to workforce participation.

Methods: We tested a range of social, psychological, financial and health-related predictors of workforce exit using longitudinal data from 45 to 75 year-old individuals in the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey. We also considered how these predictors may differ with age,

including above and below conventional retirement ages. Time to workforce exit was analysed using Survival Analyses.

Results: A range of personal attributes was associated with an increased risk of retirement, including having fewer psychosocial resources. The strength of these predictors was found to vary with age and gender. The relative influence of these and job-related factors is also presented.

Conclusions: The findings of this study inform retirement policies aimed at encouraging continued workforce participation. By identifying personal characteristics that may facilitate or impede continued participation, we also provide valuable information about the health and wellbeing of people who leave the workforce.

The Family Life of Academics: Gendered Priorities and Institutional Constraints

Maureen Baker (University of Auckland)

Since the 1970s, women have formed a growing percentage of university graduates and more female graduates are entering high-level careers and moving into the senior ranks of their chosen careers. However, numerous studies from the English-speaking countries have found that women are more likely than men to make employment concessions for family responsibilities, regardless of their educational attainment or employment aspirations. Using full-time academic staff working in universities as examples of highly educated professionals with strong career commitment, this paper investigates the impact of family circumstances on academic careers. Studies from several countries indicate that the family status, rank, salary and attrition rates of women academics typically differ from their male counterparts. Gender segregation also remains in many university departments, especially at senior ranks. These studies suggest that gendered differences in professional status reflect varying family and personal priorities, the division of labour at home, and a variety of institutional practices that favour those without family responsibilities. Through a review of international research on family life and academic careers, supplemented by qualitative interviews with New Zealand-based academics, this paper explores the choices and constraints involved in personal life and academic work. The paper aims to contribute to the growing body of research on balancing work and family life, as well as the continuing gender gap in academia.

• Concurrent Session 4 – Meeting Room 3 Culturally Sensitive Family Services and Dispute Resolution

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Chelsea Cornell – can't be her b/c she's chairing the next session, below

A Cultural Shift? Family Dispute Resolution for Culturally Diverse Families

Susan Armstrong (University of Western Sydney)

The *Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006* promised to bring about a 'cultural shift in how family separation is managed', largely through mandated family dispute resolution. The Act also overtly identified the importance of culture to the parenting and well being of children. This paper examines the potential for culturally responsive family dispute resolution in the context of Family Relationship Centres. Research suggests that culturally and linguistically diverse families have not generally utilized mediated dispute resolution following separation. How might compulsorily mediated dispute resolution accommodate the needs of these families? What is culturally responsive family dispute resolution? How might family dispute resolution practitioners reconcile the legislative emphasis on shared parenting with cultural expectations? How will they facilitate children maintaining their cultural connections? How might accessible, sensitive and responsive service provision to culturally diverse families be achieved? This paper considers these questions and suggests ways that culturally responsive family dispute resolution might be achieved.

Family Court Dispute Resolution Meetings: A Micro Analysis of Process

Liz Trinder, Alan Firth, Christopher Jenks (Newcastle University, UK)

Liz Trinder is a Reader in Family Studies at Newcastle University in the UK. She has a longstanding research interest in family relationships following parental separation, from a psychosocial and socio-legal perspective. Alan Firth and Christopher Jenks have a background in applied linguistics, with expertise in using conversation analysis to explore task-based institutional interactions, including negotiation. All three joined Newcastle University in 2007.

Background: In 2007 there were 26,344 in-court conciliation (or court-based dispute resolution) meetings in England for parents in dispute about child contact arrangements. These meetings typically have high agreement rates in comparison with out of court

mediation, possibly indicating undue pressure on parents to reach agreement. To date, however, there has been very little research exploring the conciliation process. The aim of this paper is therefore to shed light on how, concretely, outcomes emerge in conciliation meetings.

Method: We draw on 15 hours of audio-recordings of in-court conciliation sessions collected in two county courts in England in 2004/5. Using conversation (or micro) analysis we explore the talk-based interactional processes through which agreements are achieved, negotiated and/or impeded.

Findings: The focus of this paper, in particular, is on how participants orientate towards a focus on the future or the past. We note how the contact-orientated, problem-solving approach of court social workers leads them to concentrate on the future (what should happen next). In contrast, many parents, especially resident mothers, focus on the history of the case, including past unreliability and risky or abusive behaviours. We explore how these tensions are played out and the relative effectiveness of the strategies adopted by court social workers and parents in meeting their goals.

Conclusion: The future orientation of the conciliation process has significant implications for risk assessment procedures. The study is supported by ESRC grant RES-000-22-2646.

Culture, Kids and Health Care: A Multi-Cultural Approach

Sharon Chalmers (University of Western Sydney)

Sharon Chalmers is a Research Fellow with the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney where she leads the Centre's work in the area of cultural diversity, community relations and health care. She has worked extensively over the past three years on health-related projects and has expertise in the areas of health care, cultural diversity, gender and sexuality. Dr Chalmers also has a doctorate in Japanese contemporary culture and has written extensively in the areas of health, ethnicity and gender relations.

This paper brings together the findings from a recently completed ARC Linkage grant that investigates the range of practices and potential cultural 'mismatches' at the interface of health service provision and children/young people's health care. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods including short and long-term in-depth interviews, focus groups, clinical observations and a large multi-lingual (8 languages) telephone survey that was developed from the previous qualitative research findings. This paper explores what's at stake when communication breaks down between health professionals and children and their families from

culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are living with a long-term chronic illness. I will illustrate how both positive and negative cultural stereotypes are inscribed onto different children and their families resulting in descriptions such as good/compliant and difficult/non-compliant. This is done with little reflection to the underlying values and ways of communicating that the staff employed. While the rhetoric of both hospitals (SCH & CHW) is for a child and family-centred philosophy, there is some discrepancy when the child and the family do not live up to the expectations, values and practices of the organizational and professional cultures which operate throughout the hospital system.

• Concurrent Session 4 – Hospitality Suite 1 Work and Family

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Chair: Chelsea Cornell

The Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Relationship Breakdown and Re-Partnering of Mothers with Young Children

Jennifer Baxter, **Matthew Gray** (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Matthew Gray is the Deputy Director (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Dr Gray has published widely on economic and social policy issues, including the determinants of labour force status, welfare reform in the United States, economic consequences of divorce, work and family, and changes in the living arrangements of Australian children since 1946. He has also worked on economic and social policy issues related to Indigenous Australians.

While the majority of children live in stable couple families, some experience changes in the relationship status of their parents, even while they are young. Some experience their parents' relationship breakdown and some experience the re-partnering of one or both parents. There are many ways this might impact on children, but an important aspect is how such transitions are associated with parents' changes in financial wellbeing. This paper focuses on this association between relationship breakdown or re-partnering and changes in financial wellbeing. We also consider changes in parent's participation in the paid labour market as part of this. The analyses make use of two waves of data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), the first wave having been collected in 2004, and the second in 2006. Changes in relationship status of parents, in labour market

participation and in financial wellbeing are examined for this two-year time period. As LSAC is a study of young children, the analysis provides insights about this important time in children's lives.

Working but Poor: Trends in the Number and Characteristics of Working Poor Families in Australia, 1997-2006

Alicia Payne (University of Canberra)

Having a job has long been regarded as one of the best routes out of poverty. But is this still true today? While poverty in Australia has generally been associated with being out of work, poverty persists among working households. The expansion of Government family payments over recent years has helped to lift many families out of poverty, shifting the profile of Australian poverty towards single people. However, the most recent ABS data shows that almost 60 per cent of people in working poor households are in couples with children. With a focus on the family experience of working poverty, this paper presents analysis of the ABS Survey of Income and Housing 2005-06 and examines trends in working poverty through analysis of the five previous surveys starting in 1997-98. The study analyses income poverty based on the OECD half-median household income poverty line. Drawing on the most recent data and research the paper explores the background to these trends, and the context of working poverty in Australia.

Flexible Work Arrangements: A Study of New Zealand Families and their Experiences with Flexible Work

Nita Zodgekar (New Zealand Families Commission)

Nita Zodgekar is a Senior Policy and Research Analyst. Previously Nita was at the Ministry of Education where she was a Senior Policy Analyst and was involved in tertiary and schooling policy and strategy development. Educated at Victoria University of Wellington Nita graduated with a BA Hons degree in Social Policy and is pursuing a Masters in Public Policy.

The demand for quality flexible work is increasing as more people engage in further education and training; more women take up paid work, skill shortages grow and the population ages. However, there is limited research in New Zealand on the family factors that influence the amount or type of flexibility needed to support families in different circumstances, or on the impact that flexible work arrangements can have on families. This paper presents research the Families Commission undertook in 2007/08 to explore how flexible working arrangements can best support family wellbeing and what the barriers and success factors relating to take-up of flexible working arrangements

are. The findings revealed a range of impacts that varying degrees of workplace flexibility can have on families, and explored how these differ over a range of family types. A mixed method approach was adopted using 11 focus groups, 15 case study narratives and a 15 minute telephone survey of 1000 people. Focus groups and narratives enabled us to explore the influences that affect people's decisions to take-up flexible work arrangements, and identified issues that are genuinely important to families as they balance paid work and family responsibilities. The quantitative research complemented the qualitative findings by allowing us to get population estimates of some of the trends found in the qualitative work. The comprehensive nature of this study is providing the Families Commission with a robust evidence-base for developing targeted advocacy to support families to make choices about balancing their involvement in paid work and family life.

• Panel: Social Inclusion 4 – Auditorium

Chair: Alan Hayes

Social inclusion policy frameworks have been adopted in the UK and Europe since the second half of the 1990s. In Australia, the interest in social inclusion or exclusion has been more recent, although clearly there has been a long standing interest in assisting disadvantaged groups. The Australian Government has recently established the Australian Social Inclusion Board and a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. This session on social inclusion brings together an eminent group of panelists who will discuss the application of social inclusion policies in the Australian context.

Tony Nicholson - Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and a member of Australian Social Inclusion Board.

Rhonda Parker - Aged Care Commissioner

John Pascoe - Chief Federal Magistrate

Muriel Bamblett - Chair Person of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Association

Serena Wilson, First Assistant Secretary, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Tony Nicholson, Executive Director, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Tony Nicholson, BA, BSW, has dedicated almost 28 years to improving conditions of those living on or close to the edges of society. A feature of his work has been his ability to collaborate with colleague social justice organizations, governments and businesses to achieve reform in public policy and service delivery to the benefit of disadvantaged Australians. Tony spent 14 years as Chief Executive Officer of Hanover Welfare Services, a

Melbourne based organisation regarded as Australia's leading agency in the field of homelessness. Tony is currently Executive Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne. He brings to the task of leadership at the Brotherhood a strong record of service development and innovation, research and policy analysis and compelling advocacy on behalf of those disadvantaged in our community. Tony and his colleagues at the Brotherhood have for several years been at the forefront of knowledge development and practice of a genuinely Australian approach to social inclusion.

Rhonda Parker, Aged Care Commissioner

Rhonda Parker was appointed Australia's first Aged Care Commissioner in April 2007. The Commissioner's interest in ageing and the 50+ market began during her time as a member of the Western Australian parliament, where she served three years in the cabinet. As Minister for Seniors, she developed the first across-government plan on ageing for Western Australia and was instrumental in developing Australia's first National Healthy Ageing Strategy, released in 2000. After leaving politics Rhonda was Chief Executive of the Positive Ageing Foundation of Australia, an organisation dedicated to the research and promotion of successful ageing. In 2005 the Foundation merged with the Centre for Research into Ageing at Curtin University of Technology, where Rhonda was appointed an Adjunct Associate Professor. During this period, Rhonda also established her consultancy, working with industry and government around the country to provide strategic advice on the impact of the ageing demographic, as well as delivering her 'Science of Successful Ageing' seminars to the 50+ population. Rhonda also served as a director of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, and has been a member of the Australian Speakers Bureau, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and the Australian Institute of Management.

John Pascoe, Chief Federal Magistrate

Mr John Pascoe was appointed as Chief Federal Magistrate on 14 July 2004. John Pascoe is a graduate of the Australian National University and, after admission as a solicitor, became a partner in the legal firm, Stephen Jaques & Stephen in 1977. Prior to his appointment, Mr Pascoe was Managing Director in the national law firm, Phillips Fox and has been a solicitor whose practice has been in commercial law, risk management and government regulation. He has broad commercial experience, including a period as CEO of a public company and has been Chairman of a number of listed companies and statutory authorities. He is was Deputy Chancellor and a member of the Council of the University of New South Wales and Deputy Chair of the Institute of Early Childhood Foundation. He is a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Duke of Edinburgh's

Award International Foundation (UK). He was appointed a member in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 1994 and an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2002. He was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2003.

Muriel Bamblett, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

Muriel Bamblett, a Yorta Yorta woman, has been employed as CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency since 1999. From 1997 - 1999 Muriel was the Chairperson of VACCA. Muriel is active on many boards concerning children, families and the Indigenous community. Muriel is the current Chairperson of SNAICC, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care - the peak agency representing Indigenous Child and Family Services and Chairperson of the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Council for Child and Family Support. Muriel is the recipient of a number of awards including Robin Clarke Memorial Awards for inspirational Leadership in the field of Child and Family Welfare 2003 and was awarded an AM (Membership in the General Division) in the Australia Day Honours 2004 for her services to the community, particularly through leadership in the provision of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Serena Wilson, First Assistant Secretary, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Serena Wilson is the First Assistant Secretary of the Social Policy Division in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Social Policy Division provides policy advice to the Prime Minister on health, education, skills and employment assistance.

Since joining the APS as an administrative trainee (graduate) in 1986, Serena has worked largely in social policy advising roles in the Departments of Housing and Construction, Community Services and Health, Social Security, Family and Community Services, Employment and Workplace Relations and more recently Prime Minister and Cabinet.

• Concurrent Session 5 – Auditorium

Homelessness

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Antonia Quadara

Family Homelessness and Citizenship

Violet Kolar (Hanover Welfare Services, Melbourne),
Kath Hulse (Swinburne University of Technology)

Violet Kolar has a background in sociology and a Masters in applied social research. Violet has worked as a researcher at Hanover Welfare Services for several

years and was recently appointed to the role of Assistant Manager Research. Violet has extensive experience in the area of homelessness and family research. She has published widely and has presented at numerous conferences, both in Australia and overseas.

This paper presents findings from a collaborative project between Swinburne University's Institute for Social Research and Hanover Welfare Services. The aim was to investigate the day-to-day lived experience of citizenship from the perspective of families who experienced homelessness. In-depth interviews were conducted with a small sample of female-headed sole parent families. All parents had full-time care of at least one child. They were asked about the level and type of interaction they and their children had with a range of institutions such as, Centrelink, schools, children's services and welfare agencies. At the time of interview, families were living in transitional housing, 'medium' term accommodation that is dependent upon the availability of permanent housing. The length of time in transitional housing can vary. The only certainty for families was uncertainty, an important theme that emerged from the study a long with the need for stability and security, desire for respect, feelings of powerlessness and hope for the future. The findings challenge us to think differently about homelessness, and to develop services that are more responsive to people's needs and aspirations as citizens; that is, as belonging to a community and having the right to participate in its social, economic and political life. Hanover Welfare Services is a prominent Melbourne-based provider of services to people experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. Underpinning the service provision is a comprehensive research agenda. An important component of that agenda focuses on human rights and citizenship.

Public Perceptions and Attitudes to Homelessness in Australia

Deb Batterham (Hanover Welfare Services, Melbourne)

Deb Batterham is a Researcher in the Research and Organisational Development team at Hanover Welfare Services. Deb has worked at Hanover for the last five years, undertaking program evaluation and research related to homelessness.

This paper presents findings on community attitudes to homelessness. The aim of this research is to gauge community attitudes so as to enhance advocacy. Most research into public perceptions of homelessness has been conducted in the United States and to a lesser extent in the UK. This is the first attitudinal research of this type to be conducted in Australia.

The data presented are drawn from two national large scale omnibus telephone surveys. Questions on attitudes to homelessness were included in the

Australian Survey of Social Attitudes conducted by Australian National University (ANU). Close to 3000 Australians participated in this survey. A study involving six focus groups validated by a telephone survey of 1000 Australians was also undertaken. Participants were asked about their perceptions of homeless people and their experiences, as well as their attitudes about the causes of homelessness and perceived responsibility for solutions. While many believed individual factors led to homelessness (e.g. poor decision making, lack of effort), many also identified reasons beyond individual control such as domestic violence, economic problems, family breakdown, and shortages of affordable housing. Government and public services were most commonly, but not solely, seen as responsible for addressing homelessness. Implications of this research for advocacy and influencing public perceptions will be discussed. Hanover Welfare Services is a leading Melbourne-based provider of services to people experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. Public perceptions and attitudes towards homelessness are a prominent component of Hanover's research agenda.

• Concurrent Session 5 – Level 5, Suite 1

Social Inclusion

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Zoë Morrison

The Social Engagement of Aged People in Australia

Roger Patulny (University of NSW)

Roger Patulny is a Research Associate at the Social Policy Research Centre. He has extensive experience in quantitative analysis of large-scale Australian and international datasets. He has published widely on the theory and quantitative analysis of social capital, and related topics including volunteering and trust, and has recently held a position at the University of Surrey, UK, researching social and political trust in the UK and Europe. He has also worked on a number of projects involving families and children, including the evaluation of the NSW Families First Program, and the present FACSIA Stronger Families and Communities Program.

Aim: This study will examine the social engagement of older people in Australia.

Methods: With an ageing population, it is important to know whether people in Australia remain fully engaged in society as they age. Despite studies into aged volunteering, active ageing and ageing in place, the full range and extent of involvement of aged people in general social activities remain unclear. Using descriptive and multivariate analysis of the ABS General

Social Survey (2002 and 2006), this study explores the patterns of aged social engagement, in terms of contact, trust and support from and for others, volunteering, and participation in community events.

Results: Results suggest that aged people volunteer and are supported by family at rates similar to the rest of the population, but are less likely to support others, be involved in activities, or attend cultural/community events and venues.

Conclusion: Aged people maintain strong connections with family and the community, but are at risk of living 'sedentary' lives with reduced engagement in wider community activities.

Marital Splits and Children's Living Standards: New Evidence for Australia

Gerry Redmond (University of NSW)

Gerry Redmond has been at the Social Policy Research Centre since 1997. Before that he was a social policy researcher both in the UK Department of Social Security and at the University of Cambridge. Between 2001 and 2006 he was at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, where he did research on children's well-being in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The main focus of his research is child poverty and well-being in Australia and in other countries, both through statistical analysis of survey microdata and through the comparison of policies, laws and institutions across countries.

This paper, taken from research for FaHCSIA, addresses two questions. First, it considers the circumstances and living standards of Australian children who have a non-resident biological parent, the 'target group' for the Child Support Agency, and the role that child support plays in supporting their incomes. Second, it examines the dynamics of what happens to the living standards of parents and children involved in a marital or relationship separation. How do incomes and living standards of parents and their children compare before and in the year after separation, and what is the role of child support in raising children's living standards in the year after separation? The analysis uses cross-sectional data from the first wave of the HILDA survey to address the first question, and panel data from the first five waves of the survey to examine the second question, where between-wave changes in marital status and living arrangements are examined. Findings are generally in line with those for other rich countries: children's living standards decline after separation, the role of child support in supporting children's living standards is generally modest, and a high proportion of parents with resident children report receiving no child support at all (a smaller, but still significant proportion of non-resident parents report not paying any). However, a high proportion of children do appear to stay with their

non-resident parent quite regularly, particularly in the first year after separation, suggesting that they do share to a degree in the living standards of both parents.

• Concurrent Session 5 – Level 5, Suite 2

Violence and Family Law

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Rae Kaspiew

Preparing Victims of Violence for Family Dispute Resolution in the New Australian Family Law System

Rachael Field (Queensland University of Technology)

Rachael Field is a senior lecturer in the Law School at QUT, and a doctoral candidate under the supervision of Prof Hilary Astor at the University of Sydney. Rachael's key research interest is in feminist analyses of alternative dispute resolution, but she is also committed to researching and writing about women and the law generally, domestic violence, and family law. Another area of interest is legal education. Rachael is also currently President of the Management Committee of Women's Legal Service, Brisbane, having been a member of the committee since 1994.

In the new family law system, which now effectively mandates pre-filing family dispute resolution (mediation), increasing numbers of women will find themselves representing their own interests in disputes relating to children. We know that gender issues can impact on mediation outcomes and that, for example, victims of family violence can face significant disadvantages in the process. However, despite some exemptions from participation in family dispute resolution for victims of family violence, many victims will now find themselves negotiating without legal representation in mediation processes, particularly those delivered through Family Relationship Centres. This paper explains why that is the case and explores some implications for the justice of family dispute outcomes reached in this way. The paper also considers how lawyers and workers in community legal organisations, amongst others, can assist clients who are victims of violence to achieve better, and more appropriate, outcomes in family dispute resolution by helping them to prepare for the mediation process.

Evaluation of Magellan: A Case-Management Response to Allegations of Child Abuse in Family Court Proceedings

Daryl Higgins (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Daryl Higgins is a General Manager (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. He was previously manager of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and before that, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. Daryl completed his PhD in 1998 on the topic of 'multi-type maltreatment', looking at the overlap between the various forms of child abuse and neglect, and their relationship to psychological adjustment problems in the immediate and long-term. He has been researching sexuality, child sexual abuse and family violence for the past 15 years. He is a registered Psychologist.

The Family Court of Australia's *Magellan Project* is a world-first experimental project, designed to address the needs of children and families where allegations of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse are raised during residence and contact disputes. A consortium of agencies in Victoria developed and implemented the new approach in pilot of 100 cases (evaluated in 2001 before progressively rolling out the case-management approach nationally). In the first stage of the current evaluation, interviews and focus groups were conducted with Judges and other key stakeholders involved in the Magellan case-management system. The second stage of the research involved conducting a file review and comparison of 80 finalised cases that have gone through the Magellan process, with 80 Magellan-like cases (i.e., those involving similarly serious allegations of physical abuse or sexual abuse) from NSW prior to the introduction of Magellan. Quantitative data were collected about *processes* that are believed to be critical to the success of Magellan (such as the number of judicial officers involved; the number and type of expert reports, particularly timely reports from the statutory child protection authority). Data about the *outcomes* were also measured (e.g., duration of the matter, number of different court events, number proceeding to judicial determination, etc.). As well as discussing the key themes that emerged, and the results of the case-file comparison, broader issues of the intersecting roles of police, criminal courts, juvenile courts, child protection services, and the family law system will be discussed.

• Concurrent Session 5 – Meeting Room 1 Parenting

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Kelly Hand

Engaging Fathers in the Stronger Families and Community Strategy

Claire Berlyn, Sarah Wise (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Claire Berlyn commenced as a Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies in October 2007. Claire attained a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Hons.) at the University of Tasmania, achieving first class honours and the University Medal. Whist her background is in sociology and history and has ranged across a number of fields including the study of public health practices in contemporary Australia and working with children with disabilities and children in out-of-home care, Claire is now working with the Communities and Families Clearing House Australia and the National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Sarah Wise is a developmental researcher in the area of parenting and child development in day care, out-of-home care and other developmental contexts. She has been a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 2001. She has recently completed a PhD (Psychology, University of Melbourne) on the topic of attachment and wellbeing in foster care children.

Engaging Fathers in the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) is one component of the national evaluation of the SFCS led by the Social and Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales. The study was designed to evaluate the nature and context of father engagement with SFCS programs and services by exploring provider and consumer perspectives on key themes relating to challenges and best practice in engaging fathers as well as client needs and satisfaction. The current paper reports findings from the quantitative research that suggests how well the SFCS, across its diversity, is managing to engage with fathers. Qualitative data is also presented, which provides an account of fathers' lived experience of participation with SFCS programs and services. Contextualisation of fathers' experiences is provided through exploration of the perspectives of service managers and staff in relation to the responsiveness of services and programs to the interests and needs of fathers, as well as to perceived outcomes. The paper concludes with some recommendations that should enhance father engagement in early childhood, early intervention and community development services.

For the Want of a Nail: 'Parenting' the Overlooked Policy in Australia's Social Policy Agenda?

Sue Edwards (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)

Sue Edwards came to the parenting portfolio in 2005 after many years of experience in both the community sector – child and family welfare and homelessness – and in a range of social policy areas in the Commonwealth and State Government. She is the author of a number of articles on social policy issues, was co-author of *Profile of Young Australians: Facts Figures and Issues*, and a significant contributor to *Adoption Australia*.

It is what parents 'do', more than who they are, that makes the difference to child outcomes. Australian social policy encompasses many areas that impinge on children and families: women, youth, children, marriage and divorce, ageing, but overlooks 'parenting'.

Using documentary analysis relating to families, income support, parenting and child wellbeing, as well as evidence from LSAC and ATP, this paper will explore the significance of parenting in child outcomes and the need for parent-centered policies in Australia's social policy framework. Although parenting is the most important influence on outcomes for children and young people, most governments associate parenting support with crisis interventions, and overlook the need to provide parenting support throughout a child's life. Times are changing however. The UK Government's *Every Child Matters: The Next Steps* recognizes that Parenting Support should be universal and accessible and include a focus on key transition points in a child's or parent's life. In Victoria, the Government has prioritized investment in children and undertaken significant reforms through the Every Child Every Chance process, but overarching policy affirming parenting and providing accessible timely support for all parents, not just bad parents or parents of little children, is lacking. Parenting should be designated as a domain of public policy and all necessary measures adopted for supporting parenting and creating the conditions necessary for positive parenting. It is time to put away the concern that 'parenting' is a private matter alone.

• Concurrent Session 5 – Meeting Room 2 Child Protection Data

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Prue Holzer

Contact with the Child Protection System: A Longitudinal Analysis of South Australian Child Protection Data

Nancy Rogers, Ros Wilson, Craig Hirte (South Australian Department for Families and Communities)

This paper will report on findings from a study analysing longitudinal child protection data held by the South Australian Department for Families and Communities. The study has analysed data relating to children born in three different years – 1991, 1998 and 2002. The aims of the study were to identify:

1. the extent to which the three birth cohorts had come in contact with the statutory child protection system
2. the nature, extent and outcomes of these contacts
3. the extent to which children subject to notifications went on to having other contacts with the statutory welfare system (including juvenile justice) and the relationship between identified variables and outcomes/other contacts and
4. changing trends and patterns over time (between the three cohorts).

The study has produced a range of findings with high relevance to child protection policy and practice. These findings will be reported and policy questions identified. For example, children born in the later cohorts are far more likely than those born in 1991 to be the subject of at least one notification and also to be notified at a far earlier age. This trend is particularly strong for Aboriginal children. Is this due to increased abuse in the community, or a greater readiness to notify? Is the notification system effectively identifying children most at risk? What are the implications for families and the community, as well as child protection systems?

25 Years of Child Abuse and Neglect Data from the Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane: Abuse Trends and Associated Demographic Variables

Melissa Faulkner (Griffith University), Jennifer Crimmins (Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane)

Melissa Faulkner completed her Bachelor of Psychology with Honours at Griffith University in 2004. Melissa is currently completing her PhD in Psychology, whilst conducting research in child protection within her role as Senior Research Officer at the Child Advocacy

Service, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District.

This study reviews 25 years of data collected by the Brisbane Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team. Forming in 1980, the SCAN team was designed to provide an inter-agency forum for the discussion of complex cases of suspected and recognised child abuse. Records of 6669 children's cases reviewed by the SCAN team from the years of 1980 to 2005 were coded for analysis within the study. The analysis of this data was undertaken with a focus on examining demographic features of children presenting to the SCAN team, and in addition tracking general trends within the data throughout the 25 years under investigation. Results indicated that overall, children presenting with concerns of abuse were more likely to be female, to be from a single-parent household and to have suffered the abuse from an alleged perpetrator who was of intra-familial origin. The most common presenting concerns over the 25 year period were found to relate to physical abuse, closely followed by neglect and sexual abuse respectively. Both child gender and perpetrator relationship to the child within each abuse category was also examined, and is reported upon in further detail within the body of the report. Likewise, trends over the 25 year period in terms of presenting concern types are also presented. This data provides a visual display of both the demographic features of children who came to the attention of the RCH SCAN team over this period, and the abuse and neglect trends evident within this period.

• Concurrent Session 5 – Meeting Room 3

Father Engagement Competencies in Family Relationship Centres: Concepts, Training and Violence Allegations

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Lawrie Moloney

Discussant: Ilan Katz (Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW)

The default position of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006 is that children are able to spend substantial and meaningful amounts of time with each parent following separation. The legislation also requires (except where violence or abuse is alleged) that from July 2007, former partners make a bona fide attempt to resolve parenting disputes through family dispute resolution processes. To this end, the establishment of 65 Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) has been approved and funded. In this symposium three

aspects of father engagement in the context of FRCs will be presented: the results of a focus group study asking practitioners to define and explain 'father engagement' in their work; a description of the male-specialist training for FRC practitioners; and two case studies illustrating how domestic violence issues are assessed.

'Father Engagement' in Family Relationship Centres

Richard Fletcher, Jennifer StGeorge (University of Newcastle)

Richard Fletcher - Following his plumbing apprenticeship Richard studied science at Sydney University and taught science in NSW, Kenya and the United States before joining TAFE to work with marginalised groups. He pioneered domestic violence prevention within Health Promotion and Men's and Boys' Health as areas of study. He has lectured on Health Research and Male Health Studies to teachers, nurses, occupational therapists, and medical students. He is currently Leader of The Engaging Fathers Research Program at the Family Action Centre (University of NSW) and is completing his PhD on fathers' attachment to infants and children.

Introduction: Recent policy reforms in the family law area highlight the need for equal parental engagement in resolving separation disputes to ensure the best outcome for children. However, fathers and mothers attending the new Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) for dispute resolution may have different approaches to mediation and counselling and service providers' beliefs and stereotypes about men's emotions may inhibit fathers' involvement.

Methods: Focus groups with counsellors and mediation consultants from regional and urban centres examined 'father engagement' in the context of family dispute resolution. Notes and transcripts from the groups were analysed to identify practitioners' understanding of 'father engagement' and methods of ensuring that fathers were fully engaged in the dispute resolution processes.

Results: Practitioners were sensitive to differences between men and women and to the stereotypical beliefs that may be held by community members. The most important ways in which fathers could be engaged in the mediation process involved two steps: one involved showing the father he was respected by the service, validating his role as father, and the second involved 'reframing' his beliefs about fathering in the context of the new legislative climate.

Conclusion: Practitioners' competencies at engaging fathers in the context of shared parenting may be described in terms of three types of professional knowledge – empirical, self and ethical.

Description of “Male Specialist Training” for Counsellors and Dispute Resolution Practitioners

Jonathan Toussaint (Interrelate Family Centres, NSW)

Jonathan Toussaint is an experienced counsellor and educator specialising in the psychology of men and family relationships. He has worked in the corporate and community sectors for many years at both clinical and leadership levels and has extensive experience in adult education. Jonathan is an Executive Manager with Interrelate, where he is responsible for the management of men’s services, sexuality education and professional training.

Interrelate Family Centres have developed a three day training program for their practitioners (counsellors and mediation consultants) to equip them to engage with fathers involved in family disruption or dissolution. The training includes information and skill development leading to attitudinal shifts regarding males’ ability to engage in emotional work and increased confidence among practitioners in engaging males’ in the processes of renegotiating relationships. The “Male Specialist Training” includes two days of didactic and experiential material followed by a day of role plays and simulations to assess practitioner competencies. The didactic components include: the development of male identity; typical male coping mechanisms and defenses; and male-male and male-female communication. Experiential exercises include role plays with male subjects focusing on reactions to expressions of male anger and withdrawal. The assessment process consists of a set of role plays where performance is measured against criteria such as “Ability to use re-framing and strength based language” and “Ability to present a confident and assertive manner e.g. matching client’s language and style”

Identification, Assessment and Referral of Domestic Violence Cases at an Urban Family Relationship Centre

Julie Dale (Sutherland Family Relationship Centre)

Julie Dale - After having four children Julie returned to formal education as a mature aged student where she gained her Diploma in Community Welfare at St. George TAFE and completed Mediation training with the Community Justice Centre. Working with the Community Justice Centre for nine years Julie mediated family, neighbourhood, workplace and small claims disputes. Julie spent seven years at Georges River Community Service where she held firstly the position of community worker and than Centre Manager. Julie has carried out additional training in the areas of domestic violence, mental health, parenting education and advocacy.

This paper addresses issues of screening for family violence in the context of the increasingly complex cases that are presenting at Family Relationship Centres. It describes the use of assessment tools, history taking and how multiple appointments are arranged. It also examines the role of clinical expertise in assessing for family violence throughout the family dispute resolution process, while continuing to focus on the needs of the children. The paper describes the concept of shuttle mediation and other precautions that are put in place to ensure safety and to address power imbalances. It presents two case examples – one in which referral and support were provided to a woman who had been traumatised by an incident, and the other in which mediation proceeded although violence had been identified.

• Keynote 3 – Peter Whiteford - Auditorium Assistance for families: An Assessment of Australian Family Policies from an International Perspective

Chair: TBC

Peter Whiteford - Peter has been appointed as a Professor at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW. Previously he was Principal Administrator, Social Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, and he has also worked at the University of New South Wales and at the University of York in the United Kingdom, as well as in the Department of Family and Community Services. Peter is an expert in family assistance policies, welfare reform, and other aspects of social policy, particularly ways of supporting the balance between work and family life. He has published extensively on various aspects of the Australian system of income support. His research has also concentrated on international comparisons of systems of social protection and comparisons of poverty and income distribution.

In all OECD countries governments provide a range of assistance to families with children. This assistance can take a variety of forms, including direct cash assistance (income-tested or universal), support through the tax system, and the provision of services either free or at reduced cost. The objectives of assistance differ across countries, but there are important elements in common, including providing support for the direct costs of raising children, alleviating child poverty, compensating for the indirect costs of children in terms of their impact on the earnings of parents, increasing fertility, promoting gender equity and supporting the

employment of parents (among other goals). The fundamental objective of this support, however, is to assist families in their caring responsibilities in order to enhance the wellbeing of children. While Australia has much in common with other countries, its system of family assistance has a number of distinctive features – spending has increased rapidly: a decade ago overall spending levels were around the OECD average, but spending is now amongst the highest in the OECD; the structure of assistance is also amongst the most progressive in the OECD in the extent to which assistance is directed to low income families with children; and relative to many other countries a very high proportion of assistance is provided in the form of cash transfers rather than as tax reductions or in the form of government services. The system is relatively effective in terms of the extent to which it reduces child poverty, but in common with a number of other English-speaking countries there is a relatively high proportion of families with children where no parent is in paid employment. This paper addresses the question whether – given the substantial resources now devoted to family assistance in Australia – there are ways to reform family programmes to better achieve their fundamental objectives. The paper reviews a number of policy areas, including the effectiveness of the system in preventing and alleviating child poverty, the reconciliation of parents caring responsibilities with employment, and the balance between support through cash payments, taxation support and services.

• Panel: Work & Family - Auditorium

Chair: Matthew Gray

How families balance work and family life and the role that governments can play in assisting is a hotly debated topic. An eminent group of panelists has been assembled who will provide their perspectives on key issues affecting work and family balance

Willem Adema, senior economist at the OECD and an author of the recent series of Babies and Bosses Reports will provide an overview of work and families policies across OECD countries and discussed where Australia fits.

Elizabeth Broderick (Sex Discrimination and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission)

Grant Fitzner - Chief Economist at the UK Government Department of Communities and Local Government)

Liza Carroll - First Assistant Secretary, Office of Work and Family, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Susie Bababi - General Manager, Human Resources, ANZ

Sharan Burrow - President, Australian Council of Trade Unions

Willem Adema, Senior Economist, Social Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Directorate for Employment, Labour & Social Affairs Paris. Willem is currently responsible for labour market and social policy reviews of Israel and Russia; the OECD Social Expenditure Database for which he developed the framework for analysis of private and net (after tax) social spending indicators; and, the development of the on-line OECD Family database (www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database), which is being developed into a comprehensive tool for cross-national analysis of family outcomes and family policies. He has written extensively on a wide range of labour market, fiscal and welfare policy issues and was editor of the first issue of *Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators*. Willem was project manager and editor of the OECD Babies and Bosses Reviews on the reconciliation of Work and Family Life in OECD countries for which he prepared a synthesis issue in November 2007. From late 2005 until early 2008, he was Head, Asian Social and Health Outreach working closely with the Joint OECD/Korea Regional Centre for Health and Social policy in Seoul. Willem graduated from the Erasmus Universiteit in Rotterdam, and holds a doctorate from St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford. Willem is married to Caroline with three sons: Andries, Ruben and Samuel.

Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination. Elizabeth Broderick is a lawyer, mentor and innovative leader, 2001/02 Telstra NSW Business Woman of the Year and Australian Corporate Business Woman of the Year. Prior to her appointment as Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, Elizabeth was a partner at one of Australia's leading law firms, Blake Dawson and developed the firm's business case for flexibility in the workplace. Her efforts contributed to creating a workplace where more than 20 percent of the law firm's workforce now uses flexible work arrangements. She established the first Legal Technology Group within a law firm in Australia and is widely recognised as a leader in the delivery of online legal services to educate individuals about the law. More recently she has travelled the length and breadth of Australia listening to women and men's concerns about gender equality and age discrimination. In 2008, she was part of Australia's delegation to the United Nations for the Commission on the status of women. Elizabeth has developed mentoring programs for teenage girls at State High Schools in Sydney and later a mentoring program for female university students. She has a particular interest in issues related to gender equality, women in business,

work and life balance and corporate social responsibility. She is a regular speaker at international and domestic conferences. Elizabeth is married and has two young children.

Grant Fitzner, Chief Economist and Director of Analytical Services Department for Communities and Local Government (UK Government). Grant was recently appointed Director of Analytical Services at Communities and Local Government and is also the Head of Profession for the Department's economists. As head of the Analytical Services Directorate he leads a team of around 85 professional analysts (economists, statisticians, social researchers, geographers and IT specialists) and around 25 support staff responsible for delivering evidence and analysis on housing and regeneration. Prior to joining Communities and Local Government, Grant has held a number of senior economic, strategy and research posts in the public and private sector. He was Director of Employment Market Analysis and Research at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform between 2003 and 2008, where he led a multidisciplinary team of analysts responsible for developing a robust evidence base for employment relations policy. Grant initiated the Fair Treatment at Work Survey, the first large-scale official survey of unfair treatment, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment at work. He also chaired the Steering Committee for the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) - described by Harvard professor Richard Freeman as "the gold standard survey of personnel and labour relations". Grant joined the UK senior civil service in 2003. Before that, he was a senior economist and currency strategist with HSBC. He has also worked as a senior economic adviser and policy analyst for the Australian government, and as principal researcher for a think tank. He was awarded an Australian Public Service Medal in 1997 for his contributions to research. Grant is a regular public speaker; he has written about employment issues, job satisfaction and well-being, income inequality, macroeconomics and investment strategy. He holds a Master of Commerce (Economics and Finance) from the University of New South Wales and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Adelaide.

Susie Babani, Group General Manager, Human Resources (ANZ). Susie worked for HSBC from 1989 to 2007 in England, China, Canada and the USA. From 2004, she was Chief Operating Officer, Global Resourcing, East Asia, where she was responsible for five business process offshoring sites in China, Malaysia and the Philippines, as well as compliance, communications and call centre strategy. Previously, Susie was Executive Vice President, Human Resources, based in New York where she led the HR function for North America. A key focus area during that period was building a strong diversity culture within the

organisation as well as a variety of due diligence and post acquisition integration activities. As Global Head of HR, HSBC Asset Management, Susie led a virtual HR team across three continents and seven countries. She also served as Senior Vice President Human Resources, HSBC Bank Canada and Head of Human Resources, HSBC Offshore, based in Jersey, Channel Islands. Prior to joining HSBC, Susie worked in both generalist and compensation roles in the engineering, financial services and retail sectors. Susie was educated in the UK and has a Post Graduate Diploma in Management Studies. Susie enjoys travel, theatre, museums, art and music.

Sharan Burrow, President, Australian Council of Trade Unions. In May 2000, Sharan Burrow became the second woman ever to be elected President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). In November 2006, Sharan was elected President of the global union body, the International Trade Union Confederation. The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 154 countries and territories and has 307 national affiliates. In December 2004, Sharan became the first woman president of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which joined with the World Confederation of Labour to form the ITUC in November 2006. Sharan was born in 1954 in Warren, a small town in western NSW, into a family with a long history of involvement in unions and the struggle to improve the lives of working people. Her great, great grandfather participated in the shearers' strike of 1891/92, becoming one of the first organisers for the Australian Workers' Union and standing for the state seat of Cobar for the fledgling Australian Labor Party in 1896. Sharan studied teaching at the University of NSW in 1976 and began her teaching career in high schools around country NSW. She became an organiser for the NSW Teachers' Federation, based in Bathurst, and was President of the Bathurst Trades and Labour Council during the 1980s. Sharan was elected Senior Vice-President of the NSW Teachers' Federation and became President of the Australian Education Union (AEU) in 1992. She represented the AEU on the ACTU Executive through the 1990s. Sharan was previously Vice-President of Education International from 1995 to 2000. Education International is the international organisation of education unions representing 24 million members worldwide. In 2000, Sharan also became the first woman to be elected President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Asia Pacific Region Organisation. She is currently President of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights, a member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation and a member of the Stakeholder Council of the Global Reporting Initiative. As part of her ILO responsibilities, Sharan chairs the Workers' Group of the Sub-Committee on Multinational Enterprises.

• **Concurrent Session 6 – Auditorium**

The Human Face of Climate Change: Drought and Families, Children and Communities (Symposium)

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Matthew Gray

Climate Change and Social Cohesion: What has the Drought Taught Us?

Daniela Stehlik (Curtin University of Technology)

Daniela Stehlik is Foundation Chair in Stronger Communities at Curtin University of Technology. As inaugural Director of the Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities she leads a team of social scientists working in sustainability and conservation; strengths-based practice models and place and community resiliency. Professor Stehlik's involvement in community development activities, and the impact of change on communities has led to a number of publications focusing on issues associated with social sustainability, community capacity building and evidence based policy. She is particularly interested in the generative capacity of women's energy and enthusiasm as an important component of community resiliency.

From 1995 to 1997, the first Australian in-depth sociological study of the impact of drought on farm families was undertaken in New South Wales and Queensland. At the time, this eastern seaboard drought was being named as the worst in the century. It was an historical event, as it was a signpost to major changes in drought policy, including the determination that it was no longer a 'disaster' but a fundamental ongoing risk that needed to be managed. Since then, more severe droughts have been experienced and our technologies for measuring and anticipating dry events have become more sophisticated. Our social policy responses have also changed while the whole nation has become more informed about the potential impacts of climate variability. The impacts that were previously experienced only by rural communities are now being shared in the city, where water shortages have become a fact of life. This paper reflects on the 1990s study specifically in relation to the wider impacts of drought on rural communities; the expectations of the land managers in the 1990s as to the future of such communities and the social and environmental policy decisions and reactions made then that are now underpinning our current experiences. It suggests that the remarkable community resiliency to climate change and variability evident in the 1990s needs to be better understood, and its potential harnessed as Australia moves into a drier and hotter future.

Climate Change and Children: Wellbeing Futures on the Driest Continent on Earth

Lyndall Strazdins, Tony McMichael (Australian National University)

Lyndall Strazdins is a clinical psychologist, with expertise in population mental health, children's wellbeing, work and family, and time impacts of health and environmental policy. She has developed an innovative research agenda, publishing two of the first studies to have tested intergenerational linkages between parents' work and children's well-being, a model now being extended to the intergenerational impacts of climate change. Dr Strazdins is currently a Fellow at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (at ANU) and is the team leader of the Work, Families and Health research program.

In parts of Australia exposure to long-term drying and drought is now almost certain, as is increased fires, storms, flooding and sea level rises. Warming is happening faster than originally anticipated; already higher temperatures, water shortages and changes in ecosystems have been observed, placing Australia at the forefront of climate change-related impacts. Likely effects on human health have been well documented. It is expected that climate change will lead to increased loss of life and injury. Furthermore, changes in ecosystems may increase the reach of malaria and other communicable diseases. But most analyses have focussed on adults and their physical health. Likely impacts on mental health (especially depression and trauma) and the possible wider and indirect effects of social and economic changes have so far been neglected, and all are consequential to children. This paper scopes the potential effects on children's wellbeing. There are unique dimensions to climate change confronting children. There are likely to be stresses placed on family relationships if families or parents move to avoid loss of livelihood. Indigenous, remote and rural families may be at particular risk, as will be poorer families with fewer resources to cope with food and water costs. Recent research also shows that children and young people are anxious and fearful about climate change, and there could be inter-generational impacts. We do not know how living with the consequences of climate change will affect the way children view previous generations. Further, children will be exposed earlier and for a greater proportion of their lives compared to adults, adding a longer term perspective to wellbeing impacts.

Still like a Pebble in my Shoe: Continued Stress on Children and Families in Times of Drought

John Dean (Greater Southern Area Health Service, Wagga Wagga, NSW), **Helen Stain** (University of Newcastle)

John Dean B Soc Sci (Soc Wel), M Child & Adol Wel, Grad Dip Psy, Post Grad Dip Psy, is a Clinical Leader for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services of the Greater Southern Area Health Service based in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. After a long history in farming in central New South Wales, John has focused his studies on the welfare of children and adolescents and their psychological development and wellbeing. His research interests include innovations in supporting families in rural and remote locations.

Helen Stain B Psych (Hons), M Psych (Clinical), PhD, is Senior Lecturer (Research) with the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) in Orange, New South Wales and Senior Clinical Psychologist for Consultation Liaison Psychiatry services with Greater Western Area Health Service (GWAHS). Dr Stain leads a program of research in child and adolescent mental health with a particular focus on young people at risk for psychotic disorders as well as the mental health and functioning of rural children and families. She is currently Chief Investigator on two NHMRC funded grants, one of which is an RCT for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy aimed to prevent the onset of psychosis in young people.

Drought can be viewed as an environmental adversity likely to cause distress for residents in the community. This study extends the initial research carried out by the authors in 2004 that explored the emotional impact of drought on children and adolescents in rural NSW. Both studies arose from research conducted with farming communities in the Central West of NSW. Focus groups, survey questionnaires, and self-report measures were used with students and parents throughout the rural and remote southwest region of NSW to gain a better understanding of the social and emotional impacts of drought. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to measure the impact of the drought on emotional distress, peer relationships, behaviour and hyperactivity in the students. Students' (N = 76) current levels of emotional distress [M=3.1, SD=2.4] were significantly greater than the first study sample [M=2.6, SD=2.5, $t=2.62$, $p<.05$] and Australian Norms [M=2.4, SD=2.0, $t=3.49$, $p<.01$]. Students discussed the impact the continuing drought had on them, their families and their communities. They revealed the mental health impact of a circumstance that includes many of the effects of other natural disasters. Responses from students and parents indicated increased difficulties

since the 2004 study. The authors conclude that the impact of such a severe and prolonged drought is best understood as outcomes of a natural disaster. The unique relationship between farming families and their land increases the impact of drought and its many associated stresses to the point where, for many, their normal coping skills fail.

Her Beauty and Her Terror - The Wide Brown Land for Me! The Individual and Family Wellbeing of Australian Rural and Regional Families in Drought

Ben Edwards, **Matthew Gray** (Australian Institute of Family Studies), **Boyd Hunter** (Australian National University), **David De Vaus** (La Trobe University)

Ben Edwards is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Since joining the Institute in 2004, Ben's research has focused on how neighbourhoods and communities influence children and their families as well as how ill health such as disability and cancer affects families. Ben also has expertise in statistical analysis of complex data including longitudinal and family data.

Matthew Gray is the Deputy Director (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Dr Gray has published widely on economic and social policy issues, including the determinants of labour force status, welfare reform in the United States, economic consequences of divorce, work and family, and changes in the living arrangements of Australian children since 1946. He has also worked on economic and social policy issues related to Indigenous Australians.

Boyd Hunter is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University. He specialises in labour market analysis, social economics and poverty research.

David de Vaus is the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University. Professor de Vaus has published research on cohabitation, living arrangements of children, intergenerational transfers, families and ageing, retirement, family values, and on other areas of family life.

The most recent drought has been one of the most severe on record with large parts of southern and eastern Australia experiencing dry conditions since 1996. Moreover, "For the agriculturally important Murray-Darling Basin, however, October 2007 marks the sixth anniversary of lower than average rainfall totals, with the November 2001 to October 2007 period being its equal driest such six-year period on record." While there have been many studies of the impacts of drought, these have mostly focused on the macro-economic impact or the impacts in very specific sectors

or geographic locations. There are very few large-scale surveys that provide a focus on the impact of droughts on the wellbeing of families and communities in rural areas of Australia. It is also important to consider people who are not directly involved in primary production but are potentially negatively impacted upon by the drought. To improve our understanding of the impact of drought on families and communities in rural and regional Australia and the implications for policy, 8000 rural and regional individuals were surveyed between September to December 2007, stratified according to the level of drought in the area. In this paper we describe our study, outline our definition of drought and then examine the association between drought and individual and family wellbeing. Specifically, we test whether there is an association between drought and financial hardship, employment, mental health problems and the quality of couple and family relationships for three groups: farming families, families with a person employed in agriculture and families where no individual is employed in agriculture. We then discuss the implications of these findings.

• Concurrent Session 6 – Level 5, Suite 1

How Are Australian Children Faring: Insights from Two National Longitudinal Studies

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Diana Smart

Discussant: Alan Hayes (Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Do Australian Children have more Problems Today Than They Did 20 Years Ago?

Diana Smart (Australian Institute of Family Studies),
Ann Sanson (University of Melbourne)

Diana Smart is the General Manager (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies with responsibility for the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) and the Australian Temperament Project (ATP). She joined the LSAC study in 2007 after a long association with the ATP. Prior to this, Diana conducted research for the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's Education Unit and the Victorian Education Department's Curriculum and Research Branch, and was a Lecturer in Psychology at Rusden State College (now Deakin University). Diana's research interests include child and youth adjustment, developmental transitions and pathways, and the fostering of social competence and social responsibility.

It is commonly believed that Australian children are not

as healthy or happy as they were in previous generations. The rising rates of problems such as obesity, depression, suicide and substance use lead many to believe that today's children are faring worse than yesteryear's children. But there is little actual information to test this view. Two landmark longitudinal studies, the Australian Temperament Project (ATP) and Growing up in Australia, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), asked similar questions about children's personality and behaviour, enabling a rare comparison of children born 20 years apart, in differing eras. Data from the first two LSAC data collection waves were used (0-1 and 2-3 years for the Baby cohort, and 4-5 and 6-7 years for the Kindergarten cohort), as was data from the 1st, 4th, 5th and 6th ATP waves (0-1, 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8 years respectively). The comparisons revealed that most children from both studies were progressing well in terms of their temperament style and externalising and internalising behaviour problems, with very few showing signs of significant problems. According to parent reports, children of the 2000s were doing as well and perhaps a little better than children of the 80s. According to teacher reports, children of the 2000s were slightly more likely to display difficult behaviour than children of the 80s, although they tended to be less anxious. Generally, the differences found were not quantitatively large and the two cohorts of children appeared to be progressing similarly.

Determining the Effect of Housing Costs on the Well-Being of Australian Families and Children

Sebastian Misson (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Sebastian Misson has been the Data Manager of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, managed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, since 2003. He has authored papers on weighting, data management and the development of the LSAC Outcome Index. Prior to this, he worked at the Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society and the Australian Council for Educational Research on large quantitative research projects.

The issue of 'housing stress' has created considerable media interest in recent times due to Australia's ongoing property boom. There can be little doubt that the perceived positive effects that living in better homes and neighbourhoods might have for children's development are among the motivating factors behind parental housing decisions. However, these benefits may come at a substantial financial cost. This paper uses data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) to explore the effects of housing costs on Australian families and children. It presents findings

from LSAC that look at the effect of housing costs on parental mental health and children's social and emotional well-being.

Parenting Contributions to Children's Health Outcomes

Melissa Wake (Centre for Community Child Health, University of Melbourne and Murdoch Children's Research Institute), Ann Sanson (Centre for Community Child Health and ARACY Research Network), Katherine Smith (Centre for Community Child Health and University of Melbourne), Donna Berthelsen (Queensland University of Technology)

Melissa Wake, Associate Professor, is a paediatrician and researcher whose focus is community-based strategies for common childhood conditions, especially in the areas of language/literacy, hearing loss, overweight/obesity, and early mental health. She is a foundation member of the LSAC Consortium Advisory Group and leader of its Health Design Team. She has published extensively from the LSAC data, with her LSAC obesity work recently selected by the National Health & Medical Research Council for its 2008 '10 of the Best' publication.

Aims: To determine the relative impact of mothers' and children's health exposure on Australian children's physical, social/emotional, and learning outcomes.

Methods: Cross-sectional analyses of Wave 1 data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) involving 5107 infants and 4983 4-5 year olds. In multivariable analyses adjusted for sociodemographic variables, we examined associations between prenatal, postnatal and current child and maternal health on the LSAC Outcome Index (OI). The OI is a composite measure which includes an overall Index as well as three separate domain scores, tapping physical development, social and emotional functioning, and learning and cognitive development.

Results: Child health – Infants and children experienced substantial physical health problems, e.g. low birth weight (5%), pre-term birth (7%), special health care needs (14%), overweight/obesity (21%), and asthma (15%). Current (eg asthma and healthful nutritional behaviours) and perinatal (pre-term birth) problems predicted lower OI scores, especially for the 4-5 year olds. Maternal health - Serious psychological distress predicted poorer, and better maternal general health and enjoyment of physical activity predicted better, child Outcome Index scores. Pre-natal health, smoking/alcohol use, and meeting nutritional and physical activity guidelines contributed relatively little.

Conclusions: Impacts of child health were often greater in the Social-Emotional and/or Learning Domain than in the Physical Domain, emphasising the importance of

children's health to all aspects of their functioning. Weaker influences in the first year of life suggest that intervention in the early years (i.e. between infancy and preschool) may help prevent the impacts of poorer health developing.

Footprints in Time - Following the Developmental Pathways of Indigenous Children

Fiona Skelton (Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

Fiona Skelton has worked on the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs from its initial funding in 2003. This has involved work on: content development, community consultations, sample design, Steering and Design Committee input and support, commissioning the literature review, Torres Strait trials, managing the pilots conducted in NSW and Queensland (in partnership with the Australian Bureau of Statistics), conducting qualitative pilots and evaluating the design. Fiona has a Bachelor of Social Science.

How is early childhood experienced by Indigenous children? In terms of parenting and household composition, home language or languages, child care and early education, health, nutrition and cultural input, Indigenous children can grow up under a unique set of circumstances (Warrki Jarrinjaku, 2002; Zubrick et al. 2004). What are we exploring in *Footprints in Time* and, as importantly, how are we doing this study? *Footprints in Time*, the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (managed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) commences Wave 1 data collection in 2008. The study will involve quantitative and qualitative interviewing of the families and carers of around 2200 Indigenous children in eleven urban, regional and remote communities around Australia. Annual interviews will occur over a minimum of 4 years as the children grow. This paper shares the insights from the project's own footprints: the community and stakeholder consultations, the pilot research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples, and the exploration of ways to provide input and feedback from participants, governments and service providers. What's being done differently in this research? How do we involve communities and families? What sorts of data are being collected and when will it be available? And, finally, what sorts of decisions might the research be able to inform?

• **Concurrent Session 6 – Level 5, Suite 2**

Parenting and Care

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Grace Soriano

Generational Differences in Multipartnered Childbearing

Edith Gray, Ann Evans (Australian National University)

Edith Gray is a Fellow at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute at The Australian National University. Her research focuses on family demography and she has written numerous papers on issues relating to fertility and work and family issues. Current projects focus on parity progression, re-partnership and contraceptive use.

In Australia, there are no studies that explore fertility in the context of relationship formation. We know little about the proportion of children born within first or later relationships, or the effect of children from previous relationships on childbearing within current relationships. This paper addresses patterns of childbearing in relation to marriage. We explore the extent to which children are born within marriage, across more than one marriage, and the timing of births in relation to marriage. An additional consideration is the effect to which prior children and relationships impact the nature of subsequent family formation decisions. To look at the effect over time we compare across birth cohorts. We use data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA). At the time of first interview, respondents are asked about their prior fertility and marriage histories. HILDA contains very little information on cohabitation histories of respondents except where marriage is preceded by cohabitation, so the data do not allow us to explore the complexity of childbearing across different relationship types. We examine fertility and marriage across the life course focussing on the following questions:

What proportion of first births occurs before first marriage, during first marriage and after first marriage?

Across how many relationships do individuals have children?

How do previous children of both partners affect fertility?

Given the widespread pattern of cohabitation in Australia, this paper highlights the limitations of analysing data that does not include cohabitation histories.

Parenting and Children's Rights: Implications for Parents and Governments of the Children's Convention

Sue Edwards (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)

Sue Edwards came to the parenting portfolio in 2005 after many years of experience in both the community sector – child and family welfare and homelessness – and in a range of social policy areas in the Commonwealth and State Government. She is the author of a number of articles on social policy issues, was co-author of **Profile of Young Australians: Facts Figures and Issues**, and a significant contributor to **Adoption Australia**.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) contains provisions that have direct repercussions for parenting – but in no way undermine the central role of parenting in child outcomes. UNCRC reinforces and endorses the primary role of parents in raising children. Children's rights are first and foremost protected within the context of the family and the state giving proper support to families. Through an analysis of UNCRC, and Government actions to give effect to UNCRC, this paper will explore the significance of Australia's ratification of UNCRC for its support of families and parenting. UNCRC clearly sets out what parents should do in the best interests of the child. It also prescribes a two-fold role for Governments: to recognise and support parent's role in bringing up children and to intervene to protect children where neglect or abuse is occurring. To date, most Governments worldwide have concentrated on the second role and endeavoured to respond to the first with fiscal solutions. While financial support is an essential aspect of family support, parents are increasingly calling for information and assistance with parenting. In the best interests of the child, the right of parents to appropriate support from Governments to fulfil their parenting responsibilities is not only consistent with UNCRC, but must be given prominence. The view underlying UNCRC is that Governments have a responsibility to ensure that parents have access to the resources and conditions that enable them to exercise their parenting role in a positive manner.

Social Gradient, Lifestyle and Obesity in Four Year Old Children

Jude Brown, Michael Bittman (University of New England)

Jude Brown is a Research Fellow at the University of New England. She has had a broad range of quantitative research experience spanning the disciplines of Psychology, Social Policy and Sociology. Jude has worked on a number of projects using the LSAC data, most of

which have utilised the rich diary data. Projects include exploring the association between children's physical activity patterns and obesity; parent's job quality, parenting style, children's activities and well being; the balance between scheduled extra curricula activities and children's school preparedness and mental health; and methodological issues associated with the analysis of time use data.

In recent years there has been growing concern about the increase in the numbers of overweight and obese children. In adults, obesity like other health problems appears to follow a social gradient with occupation, education and income being important predictors of obesity. However, in children the direct association between socio economic status (SES) and obesity is less clear while factors such as maternal weight and children's patterns of activity dominate. Drawing on sociological theory it can be argued that lifestyle may be an important mediator between SES and obesity because lifestyle is theoretically linked to social class and status. The aim of this study is to consider the associations between measures of parental socio-economic status (occupation, income, education), and children's lifestyle and obesity in four-year old children. With children's lifestyle being predominantly measured in terms of the time children spend in a variety of sedentary (e.g. watching television) or active (e.g. walking or riding bicycles) activities. Analysis in MPLUS was conducted using questionnaire and diary data from Wave 1 of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). A path analysis revealed complex associations between parental SES and children's weight status. Predominantly, there were two pathways. The first appears to work through maternal weight while the second works through the extent to which children engage in the sedentary activities of watching television or using a computer (screen time) ($p < 0.05$). It is concluded that children's activities may mediate between parental SES and children's weight status.

Informal Solutions: The Diverse Experience of Caring

Joanna Forster-Jones (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

Family members and friends provide a substantial amount of on-going care for children, parents, siblings and spouses with disability and long-term health conditions. The estimated 2.6 million informal carers in Australia do not represent a homogenous group of people—the experience of caring is affected by factors such as the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the carer and the care recipient, the relationship between carer and care recipient, the level and type of care provided, and the nature and amount of support available for both carers and care recipients.

This in turn affects the personal wellbeing of the carer and their capacity to effectively undertake the caring role. Research and anecdotal evidence from advocacy groups has shown that carers face more challenges in personal wellbeing than the general population (Cummins et al, 2007:2). Provision of appropriate support has the potential to greatly improve wellbeing outcomes for carers. However, to provide appropriate support, it is important to understand the nature and diversity of needs among carer sub-populations. For example, poor English proficiency may make older people from culturally diverse backgrounds hesitant about utilising formal support services such as respite care. However, regular respite care would be a high priority for carers of young children with disability, as many of these carers are active in the work force. This paper explores the extent to which current survey, census and administrative data can quantify the experiences and wellbeing of carer sub-groups, highlighting the gaps and limitations in available large-population collections containing carer data.

• Concurrent Session 6 – Meeting Room 1

Issues in Child Protection (Symposium)

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Daryl Higgins

Child Protection in Australia: The National Child Protection Data Collection

Cynthia Kim (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), Prue Holzer (Australian Institute of Family Studies), Marie Connolly (New Zealand Government)

Cynthia Kim is the joint head of the Children, Youth & Families Unit at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Cynthia's tertiary training is in Econometrics and Public Policy. Since joining the AIHW, she has contributed to chapters in Australia's Welfare 2005 and Australia's Health 2006, and more recently co-authored the Children, Youth and Families chapter in Australia's Welfare 2007. She played a major role in the production of the publication Australia's Young People: their health and wellbeing, and has been a leading figure in the AIHW's contributions to national Headline Indicators work in relation to children.

Cynthia Kim will commence the symposium by providing an overview of trends in Australian statutory child protection data over the past five years (2000/01-2005/06). Having done this, she will explain that despite variation across jurisdictions in rates of total notifications, investigations and substantiations, as well as children on orders and in out-of-home care, statutory

activity has, on the whole, increased over the past five years. The rates of frontline indicators (i.e., total notifications, investigations and substantiations) revealed the greatest increases of all indicators, but also the greatest variation over time within jurisdictions and the greatest variation across jurisdictions. In contrast, the rates of children on orders and in out-of-home care revealed the most consistent, if marginal, increases over the past five years.

Statutory Child Protection Data: Explaining Differences Across Australian Jurisdictions and within Australian Jurisdictions Over Time

Cynthia Kim (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), **Prue Holzer** (Australian Institute of Family Studies), Marie Connolly (New Zealand Government)

Prue Holzer is a Senior Research Officer for the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies. Prue has completed a Bachelor of Social Science majoring in Psychology and Sociology, and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology. Prue's research interests include evaluating the effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs, research use in the child protection sector, and national comparisons of child protection systems across Australia.

Prue's presentation is based on a research project conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies in collaboration with the Children, Youth and Families Unit at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (the '*NCPASS Comparability of Child Protection Data Project*'). The aims of the project were to: (a) examine the rates of total notifications, investigations and substantiations, and the rates of children on orders and in out-of-home care for the period 2000/01-2005/06; (b) analyse the differences in rates *across* Australian jurisdictions, and the differences in rates *within* Australian jurisdictions; and (c) identify and assess factors that may explain differences in rates across jurisdictions and within jurisdictions over time. Prue will commence with a discussion of broad social developments that are likely to have contributed to observed national increases. Having done this, Prue will highlight the way in which specific data shifts observed in Australian jurisdictions over the past five years (e.g., vast increases in rates of total notifications in some Australian jurisdictions) can largely be explained by system changes, rather than substantive increases in the occurrence of child maltreatment (i.e., the implementation of caller-defined notifications and the centralising of intake services). Prue will also consider the influence of other key factors in explaining differences across jurisdictions and within jurisdictions over time, including: (a) reform in the area child

maltreatment reporting protocols; (b) reviews of child protection services; and (c) developments in departmental intake structures. Prue's presentation is based on information collected from each Australian state and territory during the '*NCPASS Comparability of Child Protection Data Project*'.

Child Protection and Child Homicide: Complexity and Response

Cynthia Kim (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), Prue Holzer (Australian Institute of Family Studies), **Marie Connolly** (New Zealand Government)

Marie Connolly holds the position of Chief Social Worker within the New Zealand Government. Previously Marie was Associate Professor and Director of the Te Awatea Violence Research Centre at the University of Canterbury. Widely published, Dr Connolly has written several books in her area of scholarship, her most recent being *Morals, rights and practice in the human services* (2008) with Tony Ward. Marie's research interests include child and family welfare and she has a social work background in statutory child welfare.

Marie will provide a brief summary of the New Zealand child protection context, including frontline indicators and how they have changed over time, and reporting on research relating to child homicide. Drawing together similarities and differences with respect to the Australian experience, she will then discuss the implications of this from a practice perspective. This will include a discussion of the impact of child death reviews and how using child death reviews as the key mechanism for understanding risk for children has unintended consequences – potentially reinforcing risk-averse practices across a whole response system. Developing systemic child death reviews enables us to explore the complex and multi-faceted aspects of casework in these tragic situations, and Marie provides a systemic framework for child death reviewing that extends the examination across a set of related dimensions – the family system, the worker system, the organisational system and the wider system.

Project Safehands - What are the Queensland Police doing about Child Abuse?

Charysse Pond (Queensland Police Service)

Charysse Pond is a Detective Senior Sergeant in the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and is currently the Ipswich District SCAN Co-ordinator and Project Manager of "Project Safehands". Senior Sergeant Pond has over 17 years police experience and has worked in a number of areas throughout the State. As part of her career she has completed over 16 years as a Detective and has served in Mareeba, Cairns, the Sunshine Coast and Ipswich Districts. She has been involved in the investigation and prosecution of many serious offences

and from 1991 to 1995 worked in Far North Queensland where she was intrinsically involved in the investigation of child abuse matters within Indigenous communities. Senior Sergeant Pond has lived and worked in the remote Aboriginal community of Pormpuraaw in the Gulf of Carpentaria and has also performed the role of senior facilitator at QPS Detective Training which involves instructing detectives on the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences. Detective Senior Sergeant Pond is married with three young children.

“Project Safehands” is a joint cross-Government and local community initiative led by the Queensland Police Service aimed at raising awareness of the need for safe handling of children and community reporting of suspected physical abuse of children. In partnership with the Department of Child Safety, Department of Communities, and Queensland Health, this innovative prevention and early intervention campaign targets the safe handling of children aged 0-4 years and is designed to build both individual and community resilience to reduce and prevent child physical abuse. “Project Safehands” utilises a variety of social marketing strategies and communication mediums to engage, empower and support parents and families, and creates linkages with a range of local and state-wide government and non-government support services. This presentation explores the basis of the project in terms of service delivery collaboration, community engagement and principles of prevention and early intervention. It further reflects on key early learnings from the initial three months of implementation within the greater Ipswich District, including statistical and anecdotal feedback on key issues of community response, use of referral pathways and effectiveness of marketing and informational resources. Finally, the presentation outlines the critical aspect of programme analysis and evaluation in the context of refining and expanding “Project Safehands” for State-wide implementation.

• Concurrent Session 6 – Meeting Room 2

Gender, Work and Care

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Chair: Jennifer Baxter

Rethinking Care: A Critical Analysis of Family Policies and the Negotiation of Dependency

Joan Garvan (Australian National University), **Kerreen Reiger**, **Sinem Temel** (La Trobe University)

Joan Garvan is a PhD candidate in the Gender, Sexuality and Culture Program at ANU. She completed a Master of Arts, in Women’s Studies and Human Geography and became pregnant, for the first time, in the same year.

Now she is in the third year of a PhD study titled: **Ambivalence and contested representations: mother, child, and family in contemporary Australia.** Joan’s work experience includes some years with the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and Asia Partnership for Human Development.

Kerreen Reiger teaches social policy, gender and work, and family sociology in the School of Social Sciences and in Gender Sexuality and Diversity Studies at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She is the author of *The Disenchantment of the Home: modernizing the Australian Family 1880-1940* (OUP, 1985) and *Our Bodies Our Babies: the Forgotten Women’s Movement* (MUP 2001) as well as many articles and reports.

Sinem Temel has recently graduated with a Bachelor of Social Sciences from La Trobe University. She completed her Honours thesis on the impact of the Howard Government’s Industrial Relations Legislation on working families. She has a strong interest in social policy and looks forward to completing future research that will strengthen Australian communities.

Debates concerning the organisation of care are now firmly on the public agenda. Recent social and political changes include a decline in public provision and most importantly, a change in the family’s, especially women’s, capacity to care. This paper draws on feminist debates on mothering, the family and social policy, especially concepts of care ethics as concerned with social conditions that support human flourishing. We analyse recent directions in Australian family policy especially under the Howard Government, arguing that in spite of attempts at gender neutral language, deeply gendered constructions of the ideal worker and carer are evident in taxation measures and the work/family debate. The paper contrasts the policy assumption concerning rational choices¹ in managing caring and labour market demands with evidence of women’s actual experience. For the many women who continue to live within family forms that still structure dependency and domestic labour on gendered lines, the organisation of the family, in policy and in practice, is in tension with contemporary expectations of gender equality. This contradictory context frames their experience as mothers in particular, contributing to a disjuncture in their sense of self and impacting on their capacity to care. This paper argues that gender-equitable and effective family policies cannot be based on sex/gender sameness¹ assumptions and that a public ethic of care is essential to supporting the emotional and physical carework of families.

Young Australian Women's Aspirations for Family and Work in the 21st Century

Melissa Johnstone, Christina Lee (University of Queensland)

Melissa Johnstone received an MA from the University of Auckland in 2004 and is currently completing a PhD in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland. Her research interests primarily focus on gender, psychology and health; the demographic shifts surrounding paid work and family; and how young people in industrialized nations transition through the potentially volatile period of the lifespan, known as Emerging Adulthood. Melissa is currently researching the longitudinal aspirations, plans and life goals of young Australian women using data from the first three waves of the younger cohort of women from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (ALSWH).

Changes to the workforce participation, tertiary enrolments and childbearing patterns of Australian women underscore the need for research into the family and work plans held by younger generations of Australian women. This paper aims to assess young Australian women's aspirations for, and attitudes towards, family and work in the 21st century. This paper draws on quantitative and qualitative findings from the younger cohort of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (ALSWH). The analysis focuses on 7,790 women (initially aged 18-23years) who responded to all three surveys, sent in 1996, 2000 and 2003. We investigate the women's responses to the aspiration items for motherhood, employment and relationships and their comments regarding these topics. The majority of young Australian women aspired to a combination of family and paid work at all three surveys while there were some slight changes in number of children and types of employment aspired to, across surveys. Social and demographic differences existed between women with varying aspirations. Finally, the women expressed an increasing concern for their futures and a changing attitude towards the family unit across surveys. The findings show the work and family plans held by young Australian women, the consistency of these plans, how much these plans are conditioned by social factors and the importance of these plans to young Australian women. The findings, along with future research on the options chosen by this group of young women, have significance for policy debates in several areas including worker entitlements, maternity leave and childcare.

The Deal: Gender, Entrepreneurial Business and Family Life

Dina Bowman (Swinburne University of Technology)

Dina Bowman has a varied background in business, social policy, and tertiary education. Her research interests include economic sociology, business, gender, and care issues. She is completing a PhD thesis upon which this paper draws.

Introduction: In the popular imagination, male entrepreneurs are often celebrated as individual heroes of the market. Some also are cast as family men. Popular representations of entrepreneurs' wives tend to cast them as endlessly supportive, waiting patiently in the background. Occasionally, they are portrayed as 'gold-diggers'. Women as entrepreneurs tend to be lionized as 'superwomen' who combine market success with family life, while their husbands tend to be understood as unusually progressive.

Background: This paper draws on a study which explored the interrelationship of business and family life. It examined how men and women as entrepreneurs and as the spouses of entrepreneurs account for their business and family lives.

Method: The study was based on qualitative analysis of fifty interviews with entrepreneurs and their spouses. My analysis draws on Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus which provide a way to make sense of the contradictions and complexities of men's and women's accounts of business and family life.

Conclusions: My findings suggest the persistence of deeply embedded beliefs about what men and women 'should' do, especially as parents, despite institutional and structural change. These beliefs take the form of a gender-based 'deal' that frames control and use of resources (money, time, space, and care) that underpin engagement in business and family life. This study suggests new ways of understanding how men and women compete for resources, which, in turn, affects their accumulation of various forms of capital.

It Didn't Really Work: Children's Experiences of Changes in Mothers' Working Patterns

Tess Ridge (University of Bath, UK)

Tess Ridge is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy, in the Department of Social and Policy Sciences at the University of Bath.

Children living in workless, lone-mother families in the UK have a high risk of experiencing poverty. The Labour government's strategy to reduce child poverty relies heavily on welfare-to-work programmes. Underpinning this policy objective is a central assumption that employment is the best route out of poverty for children

and their families. However, the impact of mother's employment on children's lives, especially the lives of low-income children in lone-mother households is uncertain. To explore these issues this paper draws on new empirical findings from a qualitative, longitudinal study of low-income working family life in collaboration with Jane Millar at the Centre for Analysis of Social Policy, Bath. The study started in 2002/3 when the families left income support for employment and involves three waves of interviews (in 2004, 2005 and 2007), with an initial sample of 50 low-income lone mothers and 61 children. This paper draws on qualitative child data from the first two waves to explore the accounts of children whose mother's attempts to enter the labour market and stay in employment were unsuccessful. The paper examines how children experienced their mother's move into employment and the impact of 'failed' work transitions on their well-being and their perceptions of the value of work for them and their families. The findings show that lone-mothers entering low-paid employment in unstable labour market conditions can have important implications for their children, especially with regard to their financial, social and emotional well-being and, in some cases, for their perceptions of the value of employment.

• **Concurrent Session 6 – Meeting Room 3**
Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People

Theme: Families & Community Life

Chair: Elly Robinson

Kid's Lives in Adult Space and Time: How Work and Community Accommodate Teenagers in Suburban Australia

Philippa Williams, Ken Bridge, Barbara Pocock (University of South Australia)

Philippa Williams is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Work + Life, University of South Australia. Philippa is currently coordinating the Work, Home and Community Project, which explores relationships between work, home, services and community for men, women and children.

Aim: This study aims to address significant gaps in our understanding of how children live their lives within the spatial and temporal limitations imposed by an 'adult' world. By keeping work, home and community in equal focus it acknowledges that each of these spheres has the potential to provide resources and exert demands which will influence how a child experiences the world they live in and how they transition through adolescence

into adulthood.

Methods: One hundred and sixty six boys and girls aged between 11 and 18 years took part in focus groups concerned with how characteristics of home, local community and parental work impact on various aspects of their lives. Children were recruited from both public and private schools servicing three master planned communities and three traditional suburbs in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland.

Findings: There is a clear indication that children's lives are contingent upon adult space and time. What children do, how they do it, when they do it and who they do it with sits within, and sometimes butts up against, the spatial and temporal realities of their parents and other adults in their communities. The ability of teenagers to develop healthy social networks and to benefit from intergenerational closure will be discussed in relation to three key themes - 'contingent mobility', 'compromised kid's space' and 'contested public space'.

Conclusion: How teenagers are accommodated by community and work affects not only their wellbeing but the wellbeing of their family and their local community.

Doing Things Together: Children's Participation in Home and Out-of-School Activities in their First Year in School

Beverley Broughton (Queensland University of Technology)

Beverley Broughton is a lecturer in the School of Early Childhood at Queensland University of Technology where she teaches early language and literacy development and curriculum. Research interests are in children's development and the learning of cultural skills and practices, particularly the use of conventional systems of symbolic representation.

The activities that children participate in and the time spent on them can be considered as experiential niches that offer distinctive socialization experiences and learning opportunities. A mixed-method collective case study of the out-of-school activities of a group of children in their first year in school provided data on: the categories of activities that children engaged in at home and in the community; the ways in which parents shaped and managed children's participation in activities; parental and family values regarding activities; children's activity preferences; and the ways in which the community afforded particular types of activity participation. Results revealed the ways in which activity participation was organised by parents and negotiated with children to take account of children's developmental status, personal interests, preferences and agency and parental values and perceptions of appropriate and desirable experiences for their children. Some gender differentiation in types of activities was

noted. The range of activities reflected cultural and family values which emphasised maintenance of family cohesion and warmth, children's enjoyment, initiative and skills and building a network of friends. This small-scale study facilitated the consideration of adult and child perspectives on out-of-school activities and the ways these meshed together, and provided insights into the processes at play as children become involved and participate in such experiential niches.

Social Information Processing, Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Style, Perspective Taking and Empathy among High-risk and Low-risk Persistently Antisocial, and Non-Antisocial, Young Adults

Effie Zafirakis (RMIT University), Mary Ainley (University of Melbourne), Diana Smart (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Effie Zafirakis, BSc, Grad.Dip.Ed.Psych, LLB, Doctoral Candidate (Forensic Psychology), is a Lecturer at RMIT University in the JD Law and Administration of Criminal Justice Programs.

The present study examined the interpersonal functioning of three groups: high-risk persistently antisocial, low-risk persistently antisocial, and non-antisocial young people. Antisocial behaviour refers to acts such as theft, drug dealing, bullying and fighting. It was expected that the high-risk persistently antisocial group would display the greatest deficits in interpersonal functioning, the non antisocial group would display few or no deficits, and the low-risk persistently antisocial group would show an intermediate level of deficits between the high-risk persistently antisocial and non-antisocial groups. Participants for this study were drawn from the Australian Temperament Project and were 22-23 years of age. Participants were interviewed by telephone to assess, firstly, their thoughts and emotions in relation to situations depicting ambiguous social interactions, and secondly, empathy and perspective-taking as well as strategies adopted to resolve interpersonal conflict. Significant differences were found in relation to empathy and interpersonal conflict resolution. However, the three groups did not differ in their responses to ambiguous social interactions or perspective taking. In particular, the high-risk group showed lower levels of empathy compared to the non antisocial group. Both antisocial groups (high-risk and low-risk) reported higher levels of physically aggressive strategies in their interpersonal interactions than the non-antisocial group. The high-risk group also reported higher levels of non-physically aggressive tactics than the non-antisocial group. This study suggests that the level of risk for persistently antisocial behaviour was significantly related to differences in empathy and interpersonal conflict resolution in young adulthood.

• Concurrent Session 6 – Hospitality Suite 1 Family Relationships

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Lixia Qu

“How Do I Look?” Links amongst Body Image, Family Functioning and Parent-Child Relationships in Teenage Girls

Carla Crespo, Jan Pryor, Magda Kielplikowski, and Paul Jose (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

Carla Crespo is a Research Fellow at the Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families, at Victoria University of Wellington, NZ. Her particular area of interest is family rituals, and she works on family relationships in the Youth Connectedness Project at the Centre.

Body image and how it develops and changes during adolescence is a relevant matter to both therapists and researchers in the developmental and family field. This study investigates the longitudinal links between whole family functioning and relationship with parents, and body image in teenage girls. Data for the present study are drawn from the first two Waves (2006 and 2007) of the Youth Connectedness Project (YCP), a New Zealand longitudinal study following young people (in school years 6, 8 and 10) over three years. Participants were young girls who took part in this project and were included either in the youngest (10-11 years old) or the oldest cohort (14-15 years old); their self-reports of family functioning and satisfaction with body image (looks and weight) were collected in 2006 (Time 1) and one year later (Time 2). Two main hypotheses are investigated. First, we expect that family functioning at Time 1 is linked to more positive young girls' body image at Time 2. Second, we expect that positive relationship with caregivers at Time 1 is linked to more positive body image in young girls at Time 2. We will also examine if these links are different for girls in the two age cohorts but make no specific predictions in this regard. Results are discussed in a developmental and systemic framework, namely how the family's relational systems (whole family system and the parent-young person dyadic system) are connected to young girls' perceptions of their body as they grow up.

“Conversations”: A Pilot Support Group for Suicide Bereaved Parents Caring for their Children

Barbara Friday (Support After Suicide), **Pat Jewell** (Jesuit Social Services)

Barbara Friday is a social worker with thirty years experience as a counsellor, clinical supervisor and educator. She has had particular experience in the areas

of loss, grief and family counselling. Barbara is a counsellor and educator in the Support After Suicide program of Jesuit Social Services and has a private practice in counselling and clinical supervision.

Pat Jewell is a project worker with Jesuit Social Services and currently working on her Master of Education focusing on relationships between parents and early childhood professionals.

Parents face particular challenges in caring for their bereaved children when they are struggling with the grief of the death of their partner. This is particularly complex when the bereavement is a result of suicide. Literature has identified the importance of positive parenting support as a protective resource against adverse life events and group work has also been recognised as an effective source of support. Two programs of Jesuit Social Services (Support After Suicide and Parenting Australia) collaborated to design, facilitate and evaluate a psycho-educational support group program for suicide bereaved parents. The group was offered to parents receiving counselling from the Support After Suicide program. The focus was on the challenges of parenting in the context of suicide bereavement. Integral to the group program was the necessity for facilitators to respond to the emerging needs of parents during the group process. The group was evaluated along an action research model where the participants guided the content of the group. Following this pilot program, a second group was planned and facilitated. The input from two complementary yet different perspectives added to the richness of the program and the depth of support available to group participants. The paper will discuss the findings utilizing the experience of the two group facilitators and the active involvement of the participants.

Socioeconomic Patterns of Partnering in Australia

Genevieve Heard (Monash University)

Genevieve Heard completed her PhD in Sociology in 2007 through the Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University, in which she now works. She was employed in the Demography Section of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for several years before returning to study. Genevieve graduated with first class Honours in Sociology from the University of Tasmania in 2000.

This paper describes and considers the implications of recent socioeconomic patterns of partnering in Australia. It has long been recognised that men with better socio-economic resources enjoy an advantage in the marriage market. For women, the expectation is the opposite—after Becker (1981), it is assumed that female economic independence reduces the gains to union

formation; that educated women acquire a less traditional orientation and place less emphasis on family. Recently, however, a new socio-economic pattern has emerged in the US, such that tertiary-educated women are now more likely to marry than their less-educated counterparts. Similar trends have emerged in Europe, representing a reversal of the association expected by the female economic independence hypothesis. To what extent are these trends reflected in Australia? I address this question using data from successive censuses. The 2006 results reveal a continued and dramatic decline in partnering, particularly marriage, among women without post-school qualifications. Meanwhile, partnering has increased among women with degrees. In many age groups, the proportion of degree-qualified women who are partnered has equalled or overtaken the proportion among women without post-school qualifications. These results, international and Australian, mean that the relationship between socio-economic status and union formation is now increasingly positive, regardless of gender. They create concern that, for men and women alike, access to the means of family formation is increasingly dependent on economic resources. This paper considers the implications of these trends in the Australian context.

Parental Cohabitation and Children's Wellbeing

Lixia Qu, Ruth Weston (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Lixia Qu is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Her research examines trends in family transitions.

Ruth Weston is General Manager (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Australia. For more than 25 years, Ruth has been conducting research extensively at the Australian Institute of Family Studies on family transitions and wellbeing in Australia. This has included couple and family formation, fertility decision-making, parent-adolescent relationships, and relationship breakdown - particularly the emotional and financial consequences of marriage breakdown. Her research contributed to the initial development - as well as recent amendments to - the Child Support Scheme in Australia.

As the first generation that experienced high rates of divorce reaches retirement age, the number of older Australians who have experienced divorce at some point in their lives will increase dramatically in coming decades. The impact of this is compounded by the structural ageing of the Australian population. Experience of divorce has been shown to have an adverse impact upon living standards in later life (de Vaus, Gray, Qu and Stanton 2007). There are reasons for

believing that divorce, in certain circumstances, may also increase the likelihood of experiencing social isolation. There are likely to be gender differences in the consequences of divorce in older age. This paper extends the work into the financial consequences of divorce to examine the connections between divorce, a wide range of measures of wellbeing and the level of support received from families, friends and neighbours. Data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA) are used. The effects of an ageing population combined with those approaching retirement having much higher rates of divorce than preceding generations will mean that the issues relating to the consequences of divorce for older people will be of high public policy relevance.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Auditorium

Child Relocation Family Law Disputes

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Daryl Higgins

Experiences of Parents after Court Decisions about Relocation

Juliet Behrens (ANU College of Law), **Bruce Smyth** (Australian National University), **Rae Kaspiew** (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

Juliet Behrens is an Associate Professor in the ANU College of Law, where she has been teaching and researching family for 17 years, developing a particular interest in the legal system's response to allegations of family violence, and in other gender issues. She has written widely in the field, including most recently a co-authored book with Belinda Fehlberg, *Australian Family Law: The Contemporary Context*, published by Oxford University Press.

Bruce Smyth is an Associate Professor at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. He is currently involved in a large study of the recent child support reforms with Bryan Rodgers and Jeromey Temple.

Rae Kaspiew is a senior research fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. She specialises in socio-legal research in the family law area.

Background: This paper will present the results of a socio-legal project exploring the experiences of parents who have been the subjects of Family Court of Australia or Federal Magistrates Court of Australia decisions about relocation. This is a Discovery Project funded by the Australian Research Council. Australian family courts regularly decide whether to allow a parent to relocate with children despite opposition from the other

parent but no published Australian research has looked at the aftermath of these decisions.

Method: This project explores separated parents' experiences in the aftermath of a judicial decision about relocation. Specifically, we examine parents' perceptions of the impact of the decision on themselves, children and other family members and what has happened for the parents since the decision. The data are based on in-depth one-on-one interviews with parents who have been the subject of court orders about relocation between 2002 and mid-2005. We anticipate having data from approximately 40 such interviews. We will also be presenting data from the HILDA survey that shed light on situations where parents live away from their children, whether or not parents are separated from the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Survey.

Results and conclusion: The data collection and preliminary analysis phases of the project will be completed by April, when the analysis will be presented and workshopped at a symposium being organised by the researchers. We will then further develop our analysis, and will be in a position to present that final analysis at the AIFS conference.

When a Divorced Parent Wants to Relocate with the Child

Sanford Braver (Arizona State University, USA)

Sanford Braver is a Professor in the Psychology Department at Arizona State University in the US, where he has served for over 35 years. To support his work in the dynamics of divorcing families he has been the recipient of 17 competitively reviewed, primarily federal, research grants, totalling almost \$20 million US. His work has been published in close to 90 peer-reviewed professional articles and chapters and in the acclaimed 1998 book *Divorced Dads: Shattering the Myths* (Tarcher/Penguin-Putnam). Braver has received both the President's Award and the 2007 Distinguished Contribution to Research Award from the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

When a parent with whom the child primarily lives after divorce wants, for a legitimate and valid reason, to move to a faraway location, and the proposed move is opposed by a highly involved other parent because it clearly would threaten that parent-child relationship, family professionals are confronted with one the "knottiest and most disturbing problems" they ever face. Both in the US and around the world, inconsistent and confused attempts to legislate or set legal standards have prevailed. One judge recently called the legal response to this problem "a mess". But is there empirical research that can guide less tangled decision processes and outcomes for separated families? This presentation, by the primary author of the most-cited and influential study on the issue in the literature, will discuss his study

and related research on the effects of moveaways on children of divorce. This controversial research suggests that children are indelibly and permanently harmed by moves that separate them from one of their parents. Very recent and heretofore unpublished research that investigates public perceptions and norms about moveaways will also be presented. It shows, for example, that overwhelming US majorities agree that moveaways are harmful to divorced children, that the effects do not disappear with time, that good parents refrain from willingly moving their children away from the other parent, and that the modal legal decision, therefore, should be to prohibit the move, even when its purpose is legitimate, for example, to permit the primary parent to remarry.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Level 5, Suite 1

Young People

Theme: Young People

Chair: Linda Bencic

The Consistent Values and Changing Concerns of Young Australians: Some Implications for Policy and Practice

Anne Hampshire, Kathryn Di Nicola (Mission Australia)

Anne Hampshire is Mission Australia's National Manager of Research and Social Policy.

This presentation will share some of the data gathered through the annual surveys of young Australians that Mission Australia has been conducting since 2002. The survey is the largest annual survey of young Australians with close to 30,000 aged 11 to 24 years participating in 2007. It focuses on what young people value, their concerns, where they get advice from and who they admire. The data suggests significant consistency over time on what young people value and that these values are often at odds with popular stereotypes of young Australians. It also shows however that there are significant changes in what concerns them. The presentation will report on the data by gender, age, location and housing situation, as well as for the 1,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who participated. It will also reflect on some of the policy and practice implications of this data.

Young People not Fully Engaged in Education and/or Employment – Who is Really at Risk of a Poor Long-Term Outcome?

Jocelyn Pech (Australian Government Fair Pay Commission Secretariat)

Jocelyn Pech is the Manager, Safety Net Policy and Analysis Unit at the Australian Fair Pay Commission.

Over recent years, there has been considerable interest in the group of young people described as 'not fully engaged' (NFE) in education and/or employment, with some analysis tending to imply that all young people in this group are at risk of making poor longer-term transitions into employment and adulthood. However it is clear that, for many young people, the NFE state is not persistent, and simply reflects the fluid nature of young people's lives, as they make the transition from full-time school education to ongoing employment. Moreover, as the labour market has improved in recent years, there have been significant changes in the composition of the NFE group, with fewer young people unemployed and more working part-time. This paper attempts to identify more accurately the characteristics associated with the group of young people who do go on to experience poor long-term outcomes, using data from the HILDA longitudinal survey and/or the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth. Particular focus is directed at young people's early engagement with the labour force, in light of previous research findings that employment or unemployment in the first year out of school are important predictors of longer-term employment status.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Level 5, Suite 2

Family Tax Benefit

Theme: Families & Paid Work

Chair: Jennifer Baxter

Balancing Work and Family: Maternity Leave, Childcare Subsidies and Family Benefits

Jennifer Buckingham, Jessica Brown (Centre for Independent Studies, NSW)

Jennifer Buckingham is a Research Fellow with the Social Foundations programme at The Centre for Independent Studies an independent public policy 'think tank'. Jennifer returned to CIS in May 2005 after a year as schools editor at *The Australian* newspaper. Jennifer has published policy monographs on school choice, boys' education and school performance reporting and edited the CIS' State of the Nation series. She is also the author of *Boy Troubles* (2000), *Families, Freedom and Education* (2001) and *Schools in the Spotlight* (2003).

Jessica Brown is a Policy Analyst with the Social Foundations Programme at the Centre for Independent Studies. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) from the University of Melbourne, where she majored in Political Science. Jessica is also currently completing a Master of International Studies at the University of Sydney. Jessica's work at the CIS focuses on work / family balance.

Family policies across the industrialised world are extremely divergent, with varying emphases on maternity and parental leave, child care subsidies, cash benefits and tax breaks. This paper explores the family policy objectives of several industrialised countries, and assesses to what degree these policies have achieved their set objectives. What can Australia learn from our own experience as well as that of our international counterparts in designing effective family policy? We look specifically at the relationship between labour force participation and expenditure on children's services, and make recommendations in the key family policy areas of maternity/parental leave, child care and family benefits/tax breaks.

Family Tax Benefit Part B – Where to from Here

Helen Hodgson (University of New South Wales)

Helen Hodgson is a Senior Lecturer in Taxation at Atax (Australian School of Taxation) UNSW. Prior to 2004, she lectured in Tax Law at Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities in Western Australia, and was a Member of the WA Legislative Council from 1997 to 2001. With a background in accounting and taxation, she is currently enrolled in a PhD at UNSW with the aim of developing a proposal for a family tax transfer system. Published works include the development of the current system and analysis of proposals to reform Child Care funding. Other research interests include tax policy, small business taxation and professional ethics.

The Family Tax Benefit is an important component of family income. However the Family Tax Benefit Part B (FTB(B)) is not based on family income, but on the income of the secondary earner within the family, and could be regarded as a "legacy" provision that has remained from the tax rebates that were introduced in 1975. The focus of economic debate has largely moved from providing choice to mothers to encouraging them to enter the workforce. It could be argued that FTB(B) discourages mothers from working, as the entitlement is means tested based on their personal earnings. This is in addition to the disincentive effects that accumulate with the withdrawal of other family transfer payments as family income increases. It has also been argued that the FTB(B) disproportionately favours the wealthy, not only because the payment is not withdrawn as family income increases, but because a high income earner is

more able to support a non-working spouse. The Rudd Government has recently proposed that the FTB(B) entitlement will be withdrawn from families with a family income of more than \$250,000. In this paper I will review the FTB(B) and any proposals that emerge in the May budget in the context of the equity of the payment, the economic disincentive effect and its place in the suite of family transfer payments. I will also consider whether the payment should be totally restructured, and how that could be done.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Meeting Room 1

Family Relationships

Theme: Family Relationships

Chair: Ruth Weston

Under the Same Roof: Multi-Generational Families in Australia

Eleanor Bettini, Alexia Tribe (Australian Government Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Eleanor Bettini and **Alexia Tribe** work for the Australian Bureau of Statistics. They are on the production team of 'A Picture of the Nation: the Statistician's Report on the 2006 Census'.

Trends in family formation and breakdown have led to diversity in living arrangements. Apart from the 'conventional' family, where children are living with both their parents, some families include three generations living together in the same household, or grandchildren living with their grandparents only. These families form for different reasons, such as to provide care for children or the elderly, because of family breakdown, or housing and financial difficulties. Such living arrangements may have both costs and benefits for household members. For example, financial strain may be felt by retired grandparents who are the sole providers for grandchildren, while a lone parent with young children living with their own parent may benefit from their support with child care and living costs. Providing care to children and the elderly is a critical social issue in the context of population ageing, changes in labour force participation and continual change in the expectations and values that surround the formation of families. Furthering our understanding of the circumstances of individuals in households where there are intergenerational relationships is important in this context of social change. This paper explores and compares the characteristics of families that include resident grandparents, drawing on data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and the 2006 Family Characteristics Survey. It focuses on multi-generational families - their geographical distribution, income and resources, housing tenure and ethnicity.

Financial Accounts, Money Management and Control in Intimate Relationships

Supriya Singh, Clive Morley (RMIT University)

Supriya Singh's research focus is on money, banking and family relationships. Supriya is a sociologist and a qualitative researcher. She has led the Smart Internet Technology Cooperative Research Centre's project on banking, and also leads the Community Sustainability program in the Global Cities Institute, RMIT University.

The paper examines accounts with financial institutions as a lens to explore money management and control in marriage and de facto relationships in Australia. We draw on Waves 2 and 6 of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey to analyse changes in the pattern of accounts by marital status, gender and age. We connect these changes with financial decision making. We also draw on a qualitative study of banking covering 108 persons in Australia. We conclude there is only a limited relationship between the pattern of bank accounts, money management and control. Couples having joint accounts only are not likely to have independent management and control. Couples who have separate accounts only are not likely to manage and control their money jointly. The relationship between bank accounts, money management and control is complicated because people use bank accounts to separate different kinds of money according to source, use and meaning, rather than displaying management and control. Money from wages is separated from bonuses or inheritance. Money used for daily living expenses is separated from mortgage payments, holidays or remittances to parents overseas. Joint accounts continue to have a symbolic meaning of togetherness, whereas separate accounts signal the right to independent expenditure. But joint accounts may be operated only by one partner, whereas money in separate accounts is often used for joint expenditure. Hence couples use bank accounts as a way of negotiating jointness and separateness in intimate relationships, rather than flagging management and control.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Meeting Room 2 Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care

Theme: Violence & Protection Issues

Chair: Siobhan O'Halloran

The Impact of Community Child Health Engagement: Child Protection Outcomes for Children of Substance Using Mothers.

Tamara Callaghan (Child and Youth Mental Health Service, Brisbane), Jennifer Crimmins, Maree Crawford (Child Advocacy Service, Brisbane), Robert Schweitzer (Queensland University of Technology)

Tamara Callaghan completed her Masters of Clinical Psychology at the Queensland University of Technology. She has worked within Queensland Health as a researcher in the Child Advocacy Service and as a clinician in the field of Child Development. Tamara is currently working in Child and Youth Mental Health.

Maternal substance use has been associated with a range of ecological risk factors for the child. This paper reports on a study of child protection outcomes for 119 children of substance using mothers. The study focused on the relationship between engagement with child health services and child protection outcomes. Children of mothers who disclosed opiate, amphetamine or methadone use during a maternity admission were included in the study. Information relating to study group involvement with the Department of Child Safety and Community Child Health, during the first two years of life, was obtained from government databases. Statistical analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between type of maternal substance use, child health engagement and child protection outcomes. Over half of the first substantiated child protection notifications were recorded within the first month of the child's life. Child health engagement was overall associated with better child protection outcomes for children of methadone using mothers, but not for children of illicit substance users. This study provides support for increased attention to the provision of child health services for children of methadone using mothers, as well as optimism for the effectiveness of even one engagement with child health services in reducing child protection risk. Results indicate a need for more intensive interventions that attend to the complex systemic risk factors associated with maternal illicit substance use. Interventions that address the ecological risk factors for both the mother and infant must precede opportunities for child protection risk.

Grandparent and Relative Carers – Challenges in Working with the Extended Family in the Interests of the Child

Sue Kirkegard (Victorian Department of Human Services)

Sue Kirkegard is a Senior Policy Adviser within the Child Protection and Family Services branch of the Children Youth and Families division of the Department of Human Services in Victoria. Sue has been leading the review of Kinship Care policy for statutory clients that commenced in late 2006 and held consultations throughout Victoria during 2007. In February 2008 a Green Paper of a proposed policy and service design was released for public discussion. Sue commenced with the Division in mid 2006 following work in the Department of Housing and Community Building and a prior career in non-government peak organizations and in family and youth services in Victoria and nationally.

Background & Context: A 'Green Paper' policy for statutory kinship care has been released for discussion in Victoria by the Children Youth and Families division of the Department of Human Services, in response to the rise in children placed with extended family in kinship placements. This Green Paper will lead to a revised Kinship Policy. Relatives who take on care of a child are acknowledging a sense of reciprocal obligation to the child and perhaps the parent. When children are placed in such care following intervention by Child Protection, these family relationships create a different form of care to foster care, and require a different response by Government.

Findings and Conclusions: This paper discusses the findings of the Green Paper consultations regarding the challenges and opportunities that the service sector faces in supporting kinship placements: *The Child's View:* The child feels they are with family and not 'in care'. They have continuing family interaction. It is not unknown for children to reach early conclusions about how much they can or cannot depend on their parent/s, notwithstanding that they love them. *The Family Setting:* The wider family can provide support to the child in enduring and positive relationships, and help to safeguard the child by their knowledge. Family also can help to identify when a potential placement is not suitable. Family members are emotionally attached to and often have considerable knowledge of the child and parent.

Practicalities are pressing: Family have rarely been able to prepare to care for the child before placement becomes necessary. Finance, housing, childrens' needs, as well as changes to the carer's lifestyle, are all dealt with simultaneously. In this initial crisis period, information and practical resources make a difference. *Planning is not as linear as other care options:* Generally the child and

wider family know each other, and share views about the parents' capacity to resume care and meet the child's needs *from the moment the child is placed*. Also return to parents or continuing to live with a relative is often less a conflict of loyalties for the child than when care is with an outside person. *Professional Roles are different:* Scottish research notes that kinship care 'operates simultaneously in both the public domain of the state and the private domain of the family. However this is not easily achieved in reality. For example, workers with high caseloads may need to relate to several adults rather than one, segmented roles and change of workers are difficult for families, family knowledge of the child and of the parent may not be heard, or the extended family not necessarily involved in planning.

Infants in Care and Family Contact

Meredith Kiraly, Cathy Humphreys (University of Melbourne), Rhona Noakes (Victorian Department of Human Services), Jim Oommen (Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, Victoria)

Meredith Kiraly is a psychologist with thirty years experience in child and family welfare, specialising in out of home care practice, management and research. She has a Master of Behavioural Science gained by major thesis on the topic of staff selection in residential child care. She is currently on secondment from the Department of Human Services to the Alfred Felton Child and Family Welfare Research Project (University of Melbourne). Her work is in the area of Stability and Quality in Out of Home Care.

Contact between infants in protective care and their families has been raised as an issue by staff and foster carers of community service organisations, and by Child Protection practitioners. Concern has been expressed about the increasing number of court-ordered high level contact arrangements for infants, frequently involving the infants being transported, and about indications of stress in babies as a result. The issue is complex. High levels of contact may be needed to maximise the possibility of family reunification; however infants also need safety, tranquillity and stability in order to thrive. The question of the infants' best interests in these circumstances was seen as requiring further research. This research project has been developed by the Alfred Felton Chair in Child and Family Welfare, in partnership with the Department of Human Services Victoria (DHS), the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, and the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner. The subject has been investigated via a literature review, a detailed case file audit, case studies and focus groups. Exploration includes frequency of contact arrangements, location of visits and transport arrangements, quality of contact visits, problems and solutions. A collaborative process has been utilised with

active involvement of all the major stakeholders in research processes and/or the project reference group. Results will be presented, along with a description of the action research approach utilised to promote the use of findings in the Children's Court and DHS Child Protection policy and practice.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Meeting Room 3

Youth Transitions

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Sebastian Misson

Stepping into Adulthood: A Comparison of Youths from Stepfamilies with Other Young Australians

Peng Yu, **Paula Mance** (Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)

Society's image of a typical Australian family has changed considerably over the last few decades. Increasing rates of cohabitation, separation, divorce and remarriage have not only given rise to a complex array of family types which challenge the traditional concept of the family, but have also resulted in an increase in the prevalence of non-traditional family types. One such family type is the stepfamily. Given current estimates of the frequency of stepfamilies are likely to be low (9% of children lived in stepfamilies in 2004), the stepfamily is a significant family type in the Australian population, complete with a complex set of influences and demanding of analysis as a family type in their own right. Our research uses multivariate regression techniques to examine outcomes for youths with prior stepfather family experience using a unique data source collected in 2006, the Youth in Focus Survey. The survey includes 632 youths (15.5% of the wave 1 sample) who identify as having current or prior experience of living with a stepfather. Youths with prior stepfather experience were compared to those raised in intact and lone parent families on measures of educational attainment, educational aspiration and independence. We find that youths who had ever lived in a stepfather family have lower academic achievement and academic aspirations than youth living in intact families, and are more likely to be financially independent and living independently. Measures for youth from lone parent families were found to be at levels in between those observed for youth from intact and stepfather families.

New Narratives of Early School Leavers

Janet Taylor (Brotherhood of St Laurence)

The first hand stories of early school leavers can illuminate current policy issues for the crucial transition from school to work. The majority of young people in Australia finish Year 12, and those who leave school early are often portrayed as 'at risk' of social exclusion. The Life Chances Study illustrates the diversity of situations and experiences of early school leavers and explores this risk. The Brotherhood of St Laurence's longitudinal Life Chances Study has followed a group of some 140 young people from diverse backgrounds since their birth in inner Melbourne in 1990. Eight of these young people had left school by the age of 16. They have been interviewed six monthly since then, both in person and by phone, and their stories recorded. A narrative interview approach has been used. In addition longitudinal data is available to deepen the analysis. The findings complement earlier research on voices of early school leavers (Smyth J et al 2000; Hodgson D 2007), but with a focus on post-school experiences. The young people's individual pathways are diverse and complex and include experiences of trying to return to school, attempting TAFE and other post-school training, of trying to find work and of using employment services and other support agencies. The young people also discuss what would be helpful for service development to assist early school leavers. Analysis of this research is currently underway to highlight policy implications.

• Concurrent Session 7 – Hospitality Suite 1

Brain Development

Theme: Children, Youth & Patterns of Caring

Chair: Ilan Katz

Brain Malleability, Private and Public Investment in Early Childhood

Ilan Katz, Gerry Redmond (University of NSW)

Ilan Katz is Professor and Director of the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. He has had many years of policy, practice and research experience relating to children, families and communities in the UK and Australia. His main research interests include evaluations of government interventions, parenting, community and social capital, child protection, international comparison of child welfare systems, parents with mental health problems, and race and ethnicity. His current research includes the evaluations of Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, the NSW DoCS Brighter Futures program and headspace.

Gerry Redmond has been at the Social Policy Research Centre since 1997. Before that he was a social policy researcher both in the UK Department of Social Security and at the University of Cambridge. Between 2001 and 2006 he was at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, where he did research on children's well-being in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The main focus of his research is child poverty and well-being in Australia and in other countries, both through statistical analysis of survey microdata and through the comparison of policies, laws and institutions across countries.

There are increasing calls for governments to expend more resources on very young children. These are partly prompted by the 'brain malleability' thesis of early childhood development, which suggests that children learn easiest, and most, before the age of three, after which their brains are in large part 'hard-wired'. We do not examine the 'brain malleability' thesis, or the evidence for greater public investment in early childhood, advocated by economists such as James Heckman. Rather we focus on three methodological issues central to investment in children, which remain little researched in Australia or internationally: What constitutes an investment in children? While Heckman (and others) focus exclusively on *public* investment in children, we argue that *private* investment, particularly by parents, also needs to be taken into account. Private investment includes both *material investment* and *time investment*. How can material and other investments in children be counted? We examine how public and private time and material investments in children can be counted. The definition of 'investment' is carefully considered, and a number of alternatives are proposed, including those that only capture investments that are directly aimed at particular children, and those that are aimed at all family members, or even just at parents, but which may also indirectly benefit children. We show how it may be possible to quantify public, private and time investments. How does Australia compare? We identify datasets which compare Australia's past with current performance in public investment and with other OECD countries using OECD data not yet in the public domain.

Inconsistencies in Legal and Social Outcomes in Non-accidental Brain Injury (Shaken Baby Syndrome) Cases

Amanda Stephens (University of Sydney)

Amanda Stephens is undertaking a PhD at the University of Sydney, under the supervision of Patrick Parkinson and Kim Oates.

Background/Objectives: To determine medical, social and legal outcomes in suspected non-accidental brain injury (NABI) cases and to assess the use of medical and sociological evidence in the decision-making processes.

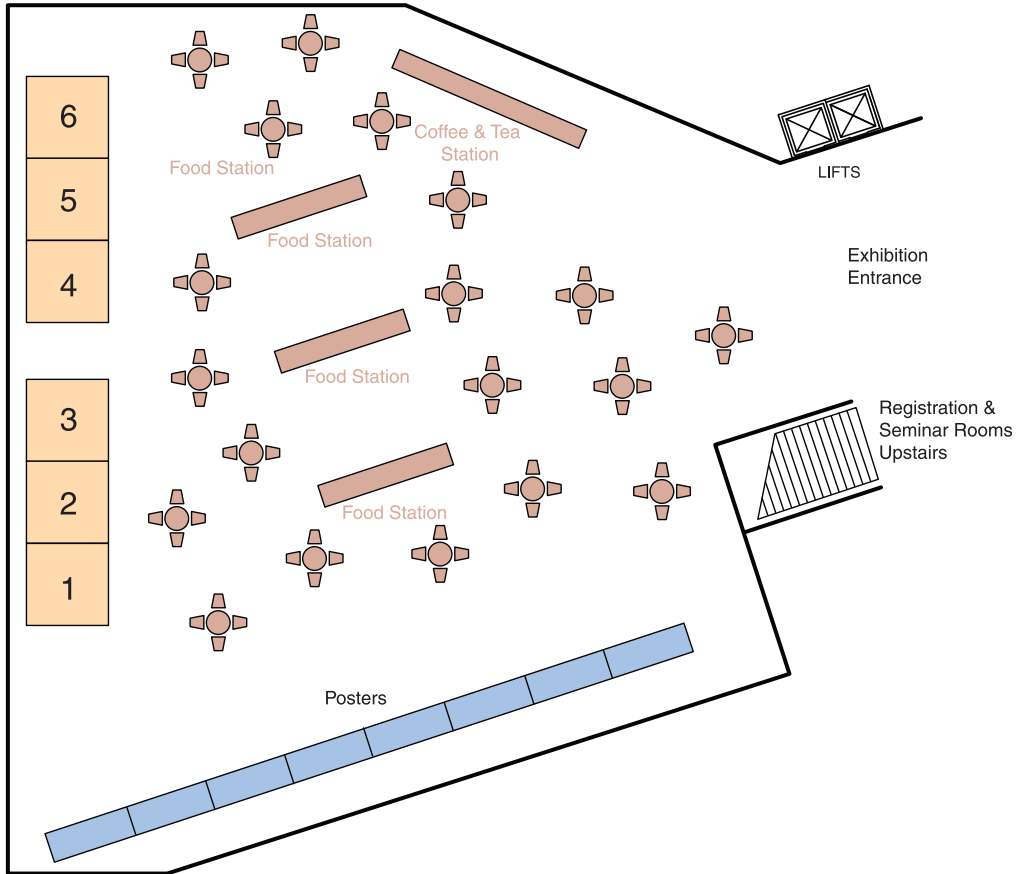
Methodology: A retrospective case review of children with suspected NABI (n=70) was performed. Data was obtained from; medical records, NSW Children's Court and criminal courts. An empirical quantitative study provided epidemiological and sociological data; types of injuries sustained, number of cases resulting in criminal prosecution, social context (socio-economic status, domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse issues etc) and number of families previously known to social services. The decision-making processes of social services and the courts, and the use of medical and sociological data therein, was qualitatively analysed in 20 cases.

Results: Medical outcomes included high rates of morbidity and mortality. Social and legal outcomes were diverse: a majority of cases were referred to the Children's Court whilst a minority of cases resulted in criminal prosecution. There was a trend for families with lower socio-economic status to suffer 'harsher' penalties (eg removal of children) but there was no significant correlation between injury severity and social/legal outcomes. There were multiple instances, within the courts, of poor understanding of medical and sociological evidence.

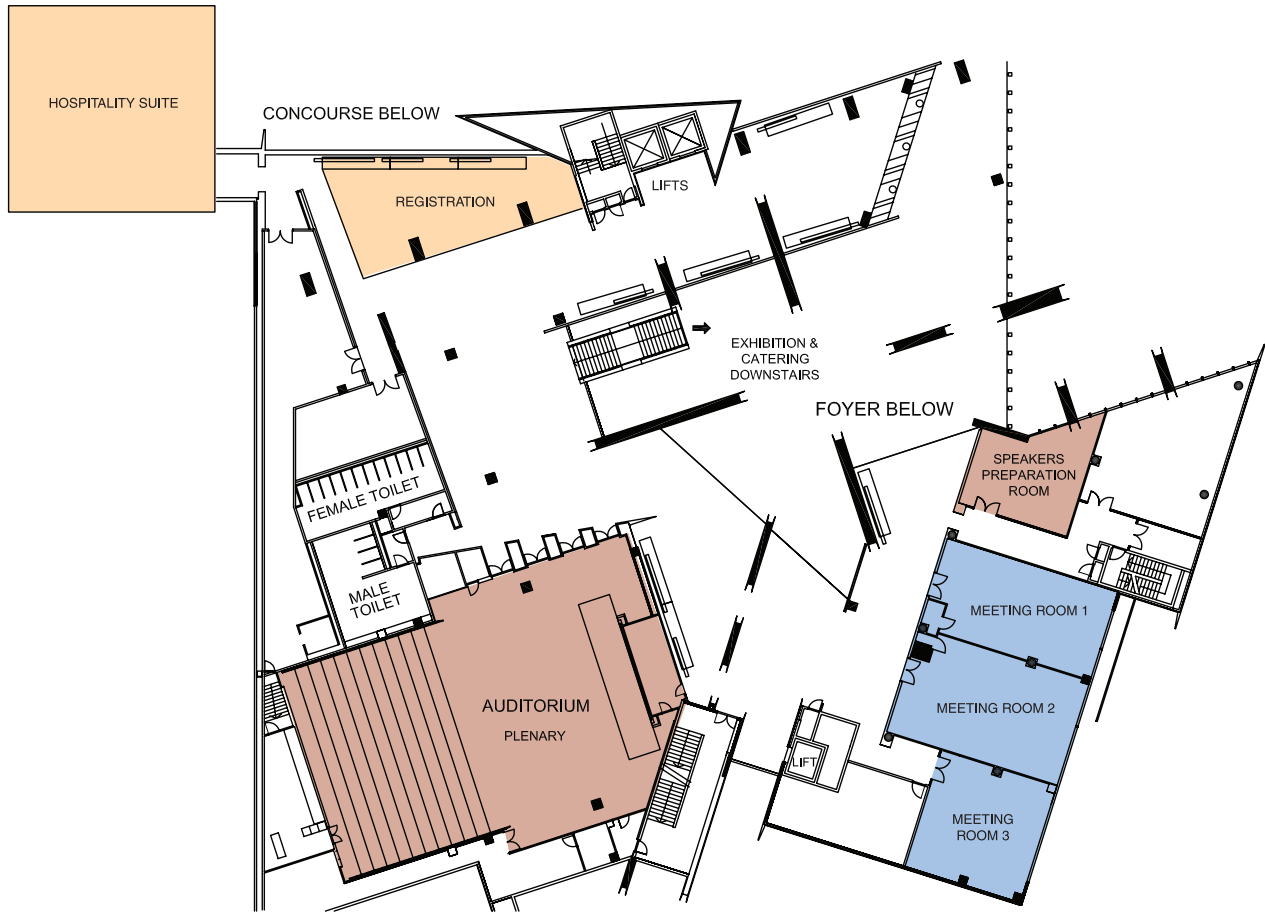
Conclusions: This study adds to knowledge of the sociological context of this type of abuse; this can aid the design of targeted interventions. The variation in social and legal outcomes despite similar medical findings implies the importance of social factors in decision-making. These insights can be used to improve inter-professional collaboration and standardisation of terminology and processes.



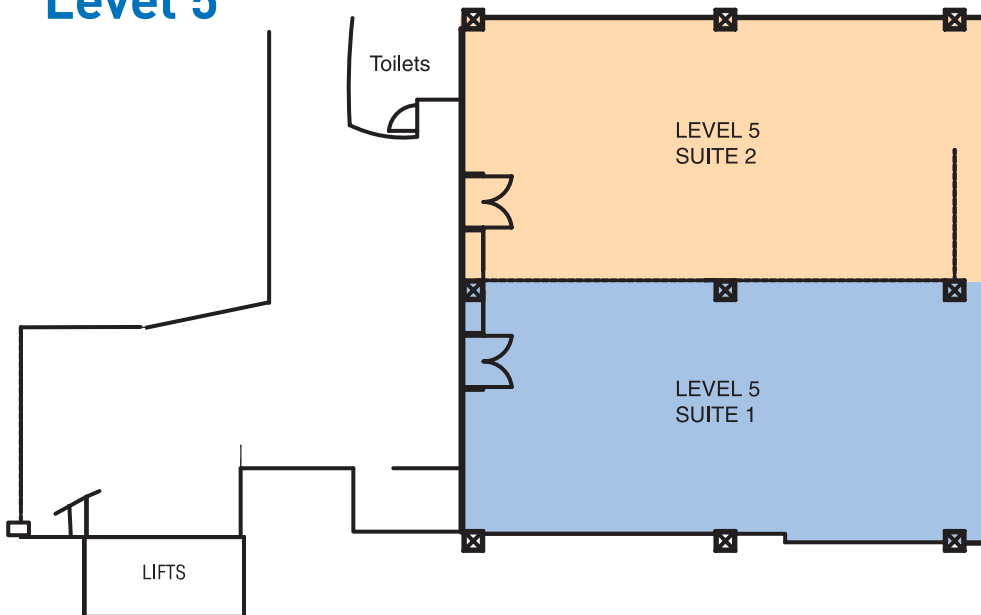
Level 1 - Ground



Level 2



Level 5





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