

A new family law system

Changes to the family law system have been introduced with the aim of strengthening family relationships and changing the way separation is managed.

Parents are being encouraged to work together to solve their problems outside of court where possible and to focus on the best interests of their children.

To support the reformed family law system, core services are being established across Australia. These services aim to help families deal cooperatively and practically with relationship issues and separations.

For more information about the reforms visit the website of the Attorney-General's Department (www.ag.gov.au)

The Australian Institute of Family Studies is an Australian Government statutory authority which originated under the Australian *Family Law Act 1975*. It was established in 1980 to promote the identification and understanding of factors affecting marital and family stability in Australia.

The Institute's primary activities include:

- researching and evaluating the social, legal and economic wellbeing of all Australian families;
- informing government and the policy making process about the Institute's findings;
- communicating the findings of the Institute and other family research to interested organisations and to the general community; and
- promoting improved support for families that enhances marital and family stability and prevents family disruption.



Australian Government
Australian Institute of Family Studies

Australian Institute of Family Studies
Level 20, 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Freecall 1800 352 275
Phone 03 9214 7888

Email familylawevaluation@aifs.gov.au
Web www.aifs.gov.au

Evaluation of the family law reforms



Australian Government
Australian Institute of Family Studies



Evaluating the reforms

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has been commissioned by the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to undertake an evaluation of the family law reforms.

The research program will build on baseline research conducted for the purpose by the Institute, as well as broader research conducted primarily for other purposes by a range of organisations, including the Institute.

A multidimensional research program has been formulated that has three key components:

- The Families Project (including the Separated Families Project);
- The Service Provision Project; and
- The Legislation and Courts Project.

Each of these components involves a series of studies that will allow a composite picture based on multiple perspectives to be developed.

A focus on families

The Families Project comprises broad-ranging research that attempts to determine how families are faring under the family law reforms.

Surveys of parents, including separated parents, will be conducted. A large-scale national longitudinal study will gather comprehensive data from the same separated parents on more than one occasion, and will contribute to a better understanding of the pathways that parents take following separation.

The service provision system

The Service Provision Project will examine the extent to which the new system of service delivery is meeting the objectives of the family law reforms.

This system includes the newly established Family Relationship Centres, Family Relationship Advice Line and Family Relationships Online, as well as expanded early intervention and post-separation services.

The research will focus on the perspectives of staff as well as experiences of clients.

Response of the legal system

The Legislation and Courts Project will examine the implementation of changes to the laws that govern post-separation parenting arrangements and processes in the family law courts (*Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006*).

Studies in the Legislation and Courts Project will involve gathering data from a variety of sources including legal system professionals.