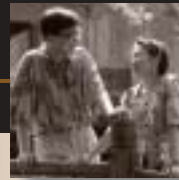
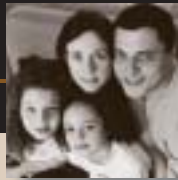


3

RESEARCH PROGRAM



RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Family Law Act (1975) requires the Australian Institute of Family Studies to conduct and coordinate research to further understanding of the factors affecting family and marital stability in Australia.

Over the last twelve months, the Institute's research activities have followed the principles established in the *Research Plan 2002–2005* which was approved by the Board of Management in July 2002. These principles are as follows.

The research conducted will:

- be founded on an understanding of the latest theoretical and methodological advances in the area;
- produce outcomes which will inform family policies and other policies likely to impact directly on family wellbeing; and
- provide opportunities for Institute leadership in family research as well as collaboration with government departments, other leading research organisations, and individual researchers.

The process of development of a new research project will:

- involve discussion with a comprehensive range of stakeholders across policy, service-delivery and research communities; and
- be considered in the context of resource availability, and other research activities and developments in the Institute.

Selected topics for research will:

- be consistent with the Institute's charter and overall strategic plan;
- be of critical and far-reaching concern for families in Australia today and in the foreseeable future;
- be current or emerging policy issues, and amenable to change through policy initiatives; and
- together aim for coherence and an overall balance across the areas of family functioning of concern to the Institute.

The Institute will undertake quality assurance through seeking external review of project proposals by those with expertise in the relevant domains from both a policy and a research perspective.

The Institute's research is organised into three broad programs:

- Children and Parenting Program
- Family and Marriage Program
- Family and Society Program

In addition, the Research Program is responsible for undertaking ongoing demographic trends analysis, and operating the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing facility to support research.

The Institute is also undertaking major contract research projects which are compatible with its objectives:

- Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children)
- National Child Protection Clearinghouse
- Stronger Families Learning Exchange
- Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This year was the first year of the Institute's new *Research Plan 2002–2005*. Implementing the new research plan has been exciting, productive and challenging. Taken overall, the range of research activities undertaken during the year has flowed directly from the new plan. Research projects have covered the full range of types and styles of research envisaged in the plan, and projects cover the range of themes and issues identified in the plan.

Considerable progress has been made both in completing projects that continued from the previous Research Plan and in implementing new projects. At the same time, research staff have continued to be active in producing high quality research outputs and placing these into the public arena.

A number of projects were completed during the year and these are detailed below. One of the notable project completions has been the work on social capital. The year saw the culmination of this project with the release of three Research Papers, nine conference presentations, consultations with the Productivity Commission and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the benchmarking of social capital in communities in a contracted research project for the New South Wales Department of Community Services. The work from this project has been widely used and played a significant role in the Productivity Commission's report on social capital.

A key element of the research activity over the year has been the development of projects envisaged in the Research Plan. This has involved stakeholder consultations, project design, and the collection and analysis of new data from national surveys. To improve

the processes of project development and monitoring, a new and comprehensive set of project management protocols has been implemented. These have been designed to ensure improved stakeholder consultation, improved measurement of project outcomes, and the progress of projects on time and on budget.

The implementation of the Research Plan has led to the design and development of the following new projects in 2002–2003: Children and Family Life; Family and Work Decisions Study; Caring for Children after Separation; Fertility Decision Making Project; and Intergenerational Exchanges of Older People. These are described in more detail below.

Alongside the initiation of new projects, work has continued on a number of major, established projects. Most notable of these projects is Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children), which has developed and piloted an extensive range of research instruments, and refined the research and sample design for the first wave of this project. The long-running Australian Temperament Project has continued to collect, analyse and disseminate data and research, and is continuing its collaboration with Crime Prevention Victoria on adolescent anti-social behaviour. The Child Care in Cultural Context and Child Care Choices projects and the Donor Insemination study have continued from previous years.

Structure of the research program

The Research Program is structured into three core program areas: Children and Parenting; Family and Marriage; and Family and Society.

Also under the Research Program are major contract projects with the Australian Government – Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children), the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

In addition to core and contract research, the Research Program is responsible for monitoring and analysing social and demographic trends. This research work tracks changes in family forms, patterns and behaviours, and places these within the wider context of social, economic and demographic change.

The Institute also runs a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility to support Institute projects and to undertake field work for external researchers.

Categories of research

The Institute’s research progress this year under the categories established in the Research Plan is discussed below. This is followed by detailed information on each program and project.

Three types of research is envisaged in the Research Plan – core, contract and collaborative – and all three have been undertaken over the year.

Table 3.1 Structure of Australian Institute of Family Studies Research Program 2002–2003

Program A	Program B	Program C	Contract research
<i>Children & Parenting (ongoing projects)</i>	<i>Family & Marriage (ongoing projects)</i>	<i>Family & Society (ongoing projects)</i>	Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children)
Australian Temperament Project (ATP)	Family Transitions Analysis	Families, Social Capital and Citizenship	Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA)
Child Care Choices	Fertility Decision Making Project	Family and Work Decisions	National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPCL)
Child Care in Cultural Context	Positive Family Relationships	Work and Family	Stronger Families Learning Exchange (SFLEX)
Children and Family Life	The Case for Marriage in Australia	Ageing and Intergenerational Exchanges within Families	
Follow-up Study of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination	Family Law Monitoring and Evaluation	Impact of Children on Family Labour Supply	
ATP/Crime Prevention Victoria (CPV)	Caring for Children after Separation	Dynamics of Low Income Parents	
ATP/Transport Accident Commission	Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA)		

Demographic Trends Analysis

Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility

Core research

Core research is funded entirely from the appropriation and focuses on specific research topics that have been identified in the Research Plan. Core research projects undertaken in 2002–2003 include Children and Family Life; Family and Work Decisions Study; Families, Social Capital and Citizenship; Caring for Children after Separation; and the Australian Temperament Project.

Contract research

Contract research continues to be an important part of the Institute's research program. It is undertaken when it accords closely with the Institute's goals and priorities. Major contracted research includes: Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children); the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; the National Child Protection Clearinghouse; and the Stronger Families Learning Exchange.

Other significant contracted research that flows from core research projects includes: work with the Victorian Transport Accident Commission and the RACV to investigate factors that contribute to differing patterns of driver behaviour among young people; work with Crime Prevention Victoria on pathways to antisocial behaviour; and work with the New South Wales Department of Community Services on measuring social capital in communities involved with the "Families First Communities 4 Kids" program.

Collaborative research

Collaborative research has been identified in the Research Plan as a valuable means of maximising the use of Institute resources, drawing on a broad range of expertise and ensuring that research is relevant to a range of stakeholders and the wider research community. Research in the year reflects this commitment.

Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children) involves extensive collaboration with researchers across Australia and overseas. This study's Consortium Advisory Group involves nine leading research organisations with expertise in child development. The Fertility Decision Making project is being conducted with the Office of the Status of Women. Child Care Choices is a collaborative project with two universities in New South Wales, the New South Wales Department of Community Services, and funding from the Australian Research Council (ARC). A new project on the dynamics of low income, welfare reliance and changes in family structure is being conducted (with ARC assistance) with the Department of Family and Community Services and the Australian National University.

Together with the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and the Australian Council for Educational Research, the Institute continues to be one of the three main research bodies involved in the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) longitudinal survey, funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services.

In addition to these substantial projects, other collaborative projects include a follow-up of children born by donor insemination (with Monash University); gay and lesbian families (with the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University); and relationship education and marriage outcomes (with the University of South Australia).

Policy-relevant research

All Institute research aims to be policy relevant, and particular attention has been given to this during the reporting year. Stakeholder consultations and presentations have been undertaken to improve this aspect of the research program.

Research on Caring for Children after Separation has direct relevance for a range of policy debates, as does the Fertility Decision Making Project. Research in the area of work and family aims to support the Australian Government's policy focus on these issues – for example, the Family and Work Decisions Study explores the links between understanding of the income support system and workforce participation. Work in the Australian Temperament Project on crime prevention and driver behaviour among young people has direct relevance for policy development. The Families, Social Capital and Citizenship Project has had a direct input on policy work in the area. Two Institute studies – Child Care Choices, and Child Care in Cultural Context – have implications for the way in which child care is provided for families.

By working in partnership with Government, the Institute is ensuring that the issues addressed in Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children) are of direct concern for the development of policy. Research work in the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, the action research projects of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, and the newly established Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault all have very direct and applied policy relevance.

Research methods

Institute research projects during the year have reflected the range of research designs and types that have been identified in the *Research Plan 2002–2003* as being appropriate for the Institute.

Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies

The Research Plan recognises the need for both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. The Institute's commitment to longitudinal research is evident in the central role it plays

in three major longitudinal studies – Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children), the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, and the ongoing Australian Temperament Project. In addition, two new studies – Caring for Children after Separation and the Fertility Decision Making Project – have been established to allow longitudinal follow-up should resources permit. Other studies, including the Family and Work Decisions Study, and the Children and Family Life Study, have been established as cross-sectional surveys.

Quantitative and qualitative methods

The emphasis of research at the Institute is on quantitative research that can provide estimates and analyses that can be generalised to the Australian population. However, qualitative studies are used where appropriate to explore in more depth issues related to the quantitative studies. To this end a series of focus groups has been employed in the Caring for Children after Separation project to provide better insight into some of the complexities of the arrangements in such families. The second phase of the Family and Work Decisions Study also uses in-depth case studies to explore in greater depth the considerations that come into play as parents make decisions about paid employment.

Primary and secondary data

The Research Plan identifies primary and secondary research as being core elements of the Institute's research agenda. Primary research involves the collection of data not available elsewhere, which enables the Institute to investigate matters that require the use of specialised datasets. During the year a great deal of time and resources have gone into designing and collecting new sets of data. These primary data projects include Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian

children), the Family and Work Decisions Survey, Children and Family Life, Child Care Choices, Fertility Decision Making Project, and Caring for Children after Separation.

In addition to collecting new data, the Institute conducted secondary analyses of existing data. The release of the 2001 census data provided important new information for the Institute's research. In addition, a range of Institute studies have drawn on the data collected in the first wave of the HILDA study. Other research has involved using Australian Bureau of Statistics data: the 1997 Time Use Survey, the 1998–1999 Household Expenditure Survey, the 1996 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, the 1997 Family Survey, and a range of ABS Labour Force Surveys.

All Institute research is theoretically grounded, uses an interdisciplinary approach and, where possible, involves liaison with other research organisations.

Research themes

Institute research is largely around three broad research themes. These themes – diversity, change, and interactions between families and broader social institutions – unite the research undertaken across the program areas.

Diversity

The theme of diversity, whether of family form, socio-economic background, geographic location, or cultural background, is evident in a wide range of projects.

Studies that specifically recognise the diversity of families in Australia include Child Care in Cultural Context; Employment in Lone Parent Families; Caring for Children after Separation; the Follow-up Study of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination; Survey of Gay and Lesbian Parenting; and studies of cohabiting relationships.

Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children) is designed to collect detailed information on children and their families across all family types, locations and backgrounds. Similarly, HILDA covers this broad spectrum.

Work has progressed throughout the year on a book which will be launched in the coming financial year, entitled *Diversity and Change in Australian Families: A Statistical Profile*. This forthcoming book will provide a broad overview of family diversity in Australia.

Family change

Family change is the second research theme identified in the Research Plan. The longitudinal studies in which the Institute is involved are all concerned with the nature and predictors of the transitions in family life experienced by individuals across the life course.

Other studies focus on changing societal trends, including: research on the changing patterns of employment among lone and couple mothers; changes in family forms; changing patterns of fertility; changing patterns of partnering; and the changing experiences of family stability among children. The book on diversity and change (mentioned above) also incorporates this theme.

Family interactions with broader social institutions

The links between family patterns and wider social institutions have been a core focus of the Families, Social Capital and Citizenship project. The Fertility Decision Making Project explores the way in which wider social changes and other institutional and economic changes impact on fertility behaviour. The Family and Work Decisions Survey explores the interactions between family forms, economic influences, the labour market and the income support system.

The Institute's Child Care studies examine links between families and the child care system. Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children) is collecting information on families' use of a wide range of family supports and services.

Quality management

One of the goals of the year has been to set in place processes to ensure and enhance the quality of Institute research. Several steps have been taken to this end. Training in statistical and qualitative research skills have been made available to staff as required. All research publications are subject to wide internal and expert external review. Stakeholder consultation has also been undertaken to improve the relevance of the research undertaken and to ensure that the questions addressed are the key questions.

A new set of project management procedures has been implemented to improve the management of projects, and to help improve the quality of the research designs, and the timeliness and efficiency of project implementation.

All research articles in the Institute's journal *Family Matters* are subject to full peer review prior to acceptance for publication. The journal is classified by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) as a fully refereed journal.

Ethics approvals

All new research projects in 2002–2003 were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee as conforming to the relevant ethics requirements (see Ethics Committee in Chapter 2 of this Annual Report.) The Committee considered and approved the Fertility Decision Making Project, Growing Up in

Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children), Children and Family Life, the Follow-up of Families Using Donor Insemination, Family and Work Decisions Stage 2, and the research projects and operations of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange Training and Support Team.

A number of other projects were approved using the expedited review procedures employed by the Committee. Projects receiving approvals using this process were Family and Work Decisions Project Stage 1, Australian Temperament Project, Fertility Decision Making Project questionnaires, Extension (pilot and inclusion of biomarkers study) of Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children), and the Caring for Children after Separation interview schedule.

No complaints were received from study participants regarding ethical aspects of Institute research during 2002–2003.

Dissemination

As well as conducting research, a key role of the Institute as identified in its Strategic Plan is to ensure that the research is disseminated effectively to a range of stakeholders. During the year dissemination activities have been undertaken through published articles in the Institute's journal *Family Matters*, academic journals, conference presentations, media reports and interviews, submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries, and reports for agencies that have contracted research.

Part of the dissemination strategy is to ensure that research is made available to the full range of stakeholders. The journal *Family Matters* plays a key role in addressing many of these audiences. In addition, the Institute's *Research Papers* series is directed more specifically at research and policy audiences. Research is also disseminated by reporting

research results widely in the media through interviews with print and radio journalists.

Presentations at research and policy conferences have been a further part of the dissemination strategy.

Details of these various forms of dissemination are provided in descriptions of program areas and research projects in the following sections.

Broad involvement in policy processes

Parliamentary submissions

During the year the Institute's research staff prepared a number of cross-program submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries. These are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Parliamentary submissions 2002–2003

Children's health and wellbeing

Sanson, A., Rosenbrock, C., Qu, L., Tomison, A. and Wise, S. (2003), House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs *Inquiry into Improving Children's Health and Well Being* (private briefing).

Cybercrime

Stanley, J. and Kovacs, K. (2003), Submission by the National Child Protection Clearinghouse to the *Cybercrime Inquiry*, Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission.

Ageing

Stone, W. (2003), Social capital, social support and ageing, Submission to the House of Representatives *Inquiry into Long-term Strategies to Address the Ageing of the Australian Population Over the Next Forty Years*.

Violence in Aboriginal communities

Stanley, J., Kovacs, K., Cripps, K. and Tomison, A.M. (2002), Child abuse and family violence in Aboriginal communities: Exploring child sexual abuse in Western Australia, Submission to the *Putting the Picture Together, Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*, published in Gordon, S., Hallahan, K. and Henry, D. (Appendix 13, pp. 534–624), Department of Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia.

Consultations

The Institute maintains a consultative role with individuals, government and non-government bodies. Staff conduct these consultations, either individually or as members of planning or advisory teams, to inform others of the Institute's research and research findings, and to provide advice on existing family research or on formulating research in areas not well covered by existing data. Such consultation is an indication of the Institute's involvement in the policy process.

In 2002–2003, consultations covering many broad issues took place between all Institute research programs and representatives of various international and national organisations or bodies (Table 3.3).

Visitors

In 2002–2003, a number of academics and representatives of government and non-government bodies from within and outside Australia met with Institute researchers to exchange ideas on a range of issues of relevance to each of the Institute's research programs. These visits provide the opportunity for the Institute to learn of the work of other researchers, share its own research findings, and help meet its objective of achieving and maintaining its place as a centre of excellence for research on family wellbeing (Table 3.3).

Representation at meetings and workshops

In addition to conference and workshop papers presented by staff (listed under the research projects in this chapter), Institute staff were invited to participate and share their expertise at workshops organised by government and non-government bodies, and university bodies. Similarly, Institute staff attended and represented the Institute at various conferences as part of their staff development and training program (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Consultations, visitors and representation

	Total No.
Consultations	144
Visitors	61
Representation at conferences, meetings and workshops	17

Note: Detailed listings are available on the Institute's website.

Summary

In summary, 2002–2003 has proved a very active and productive year for the research program of the Institute. Considerable progress has been made in implementing the new projects envisaged in the *Research Plan 2002–2005*.

Better project management is assisting with meeting timelines and improving the accuracy of publication targets. The Institute recognises the constant need to monitor and anticipate the research needs of policy

makers and others, and to engage in active stakeholder consultations, and is constantly seeking to identify better mechanisms for stakeholder consultations and feedback.

Also recognised is the need for flexibility as the Institute accepts the challenges of remaining responsive to new research needs as they arise while also making progress with ongoing and planned research. As noted in Chapter 1, room for such flexibility has been built into the Research Plan.

PROGRAM A CHILDREN AND PARENTING

The Children and Parenting Program focuses on ways in which factors within the family, such as diversity of family forms and the changing roles of parents, as well as changes outside the family, such as parental work and aspects of community life, affect children's interactions with their caregivers and their broader social world, and their development and wellbeing. This knowledge can provide a basis for policy frameworks and services than can best support parents and children.

Australian Temperament Project

(existing project)

The longitudinal *Australian Temperament Project (ATP)* aims to follow children's psychosocial development from childhood to adulthood, and to investigate the impact of personal, familial and environmental factors on adjustment and wellbeing. Commencing in 1983 at a child age of 4 to 8 months, 13 waves of data have been collected on the large representative sample by mail surveys over the first 20 years of life.

The Institute has housed the project since 2000, and is implementing it in collaboration with researchers from the University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital. The project aims to increase understanding of the ways in which children's development can be enhanced within the context of their families, and to reveal key transition points in developmental pathways, providing information which can underpin prevention and intervention initiatives.

Some of the key issues investigated are: the interrelationships of family characteristics, parent-child relationship and child characteristics; the development of healthy, socially competent functioning; connections between childhood behavioural and emotional problems and adolescent and adult adjustment difficulties; pathways to occupational and educational participation in young adulthood, the development of

interpersonal relationships, and family formation; and the development of civic mindedness and social responsibility.

During 2002–2003, the 13th data collection wave was completed. Young adult participants and their parents reported on many aspects of the young people's lives, including their living arrangements; educational, occupational and financial circumstances; relationships with parents, friends and romantic partners; aspirations for parenthood; social skills and life satisfaction; civic engagement and religious commitment; health; temperament style; experience of anxiety, depression and stress; and engagement in antisocial behaviour, substance use and other risk taking behaviours. Statistical analyses of the data have commenced and will continue across 2003 and 2004.

A sizeable number of dissemination activities have been undertaken during the past year. The ATP website has been operational since December 2002, and attracts a regular and increasing number of visitors. Five papers reporting ATP findings on a wide range of topics were presented at the Institute conference, and there have been three further conference presentations of findings during the reporting year. A paper on the nature and antecedents of social competence at 19–20 years of age was published in *Family Matters*. Research was also presented at the Institute's Seminar Series in April.

Growing media interest in the project has led to a number of interviews with radio and print journalists (see media report in Chapter 4). The annual newsletters for ATP participants and parents, which aim to inform participating families of current findings and future activities as well as maintaining engagement with the study, were distributed in December 2002.

A collaboration with the National Drug Research Institute of Australia, Curtin University Western Australia, has been completed, leading to a conference presentation and submission of a paper to an international journal. The research investigated the "Prevention Paradox", concluding that universal prevention strategies are needed for late adolescent alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use while more targeted strategies are appropriate for frequent cannabis use and illegal drug use.

Another ongoing collaboration with the Centre for Mental Health Research, Australian National University Canberra, investigating genetic influences on mental health outcomes continued to be productive. The genetic data for this project were collected in 1999. DNA analyses continue to be conducted and publications prepared for submission to international journals.

PUBLICATIONS

Jorm, A.F., Prior, M., Sanson, A., Smart, D., Zhang, Y. and Easteal, S. (2003), "Apolipoprotein E genotype and temperament: A longitudinal study from infancy to the late teens", *Psychosomatic Medicine*, vol. 65, pp. 662-664.

Smart, D. and Sanson, A. (2003), "Social competence in young adulthood, its nature and antecedents", *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 4-9.

McClowry, S., Halverson, C. and Sanson, A. (2003), "A re-examination of the validity and reliability of the school-age temperament inventory", *Nursing Research*, vol. 52, no. 3, May/June.

Smart, D. Sanson, A., Letcher, P. and Toumbourou, J. (2002), *Year 2002 Newsletter for ATP Members*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Smart, D. Sanson, A., Letcher, P. and Toumbourou, J. (2002), *Year 2002 Newsletter for ATP Parents*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

McGee, R., Prior, M., Williams, S., Smart, D. and Sanson, A. (2002), "The long-term significance of teacher rated hyperactivity in childhood: Findings from two longitudinal studies", *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 43, no. 8, pp. 1004-1017.

Smart, D. (2002), "Relationships, marriage and parenthood: Views of young people and their parents", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 28-35.

PRESENTATIONS

"Adolescent antisocial behaviour and depression: An examination of competing models", Poster paper presented at the XVIIth Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Ottawa, 2-6 August 2002 (D. Smart, A. Sanson, P. Letcher and J. Toumbourou).

"Aspirations for relationships, marriage and parenthood: Views of young people and their parents", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (D. Smart).

"Children's development and adjustment: Some lessons from longitudinal research", Presentation at the launch of the Report, *Boys aged 9-12 in the services of Anglicare Victoria: A three month population study*, Anglicare Victoria, St James' Conference Centre, Melbourne, 21 October 2002 (A. Sanson).

"Connections between child temperament, couple relationship quality and adolescent well-being: Reciprocity or independence?", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (R. Parker and D. Smart).

"Introduction to the Australian Temperament Project", Presentation at the launch of the *First report on patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour from the collaborative project between the Australian Institute of Family Studies and Crime Prevention Victoria*, Melbourne Convention Centre, Melbourne, 31 October 2002 (A. Sanson).

"Parent-child relationships and their connections to adolescent wellbeing", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (A. Sanson, P. Letcher and D. Smart).

"Risk and protection factors for adolescent substance use: When does the prevention paradox apply?", Paper presented at the Kettil Bruun Society Thematic Meeting, Fremantle, 24-27 February

2003 (T. Stockwell, J. Toumbourou, P. Letcher, D. Smart and N. McBride).

“Social competence in young adulthood: Development and antecedents”, Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (D. Smart and A. Sanson).

Child Care Choices

(collaborative project)

Consistency of care is considered a key determinant of good quality child care, yet for a variety of reasons an increasing proportion of children (approximately one-third by age one) are receiving multiple and changeable child care. A consortium involving Macquarie University's Psychology Department and Institute of Early Childhood, Charles Sturt University's School of Teacher Education, and the Institute received an Australian Research Council Linkage grant in 2002–2004 to conduct a longitudinal study designed to investigate the use of multiple and changeable care and the impact of such care on children, families, and care providers. The New South Wales Department of Community Services is an Industry Partner on this project. A key feature of the study is the inclusion of rural as well as urban services – a decision made in response to evidence that the issues surrounding multiple and changeable care are likely to be locality-specific.

Wave 1 of data collection on 600 families has been completed and already considerable interest has been shown in the study from government, the general public, media and fellow researchers.

Data on the complexity of arrangements entered into by families, their reasons and satisfaction in doing so and, most critically, evidence of how this impacts on children's wellbeing and development, will provide useful insights to inform governments in policy development for service delivery. The need to build in flexibility for family units

while not diminishing child development and wellbeing is a challenging current issue. This study is poised to contribute to debate and decision making in this area.

PUBLICATION

Bowes, J., Wise, S., Harrison, L., Sanson, A., Ungerer, J., Watson, J. and Simpson, T. (2003), Continuity of care in the early years? Multiple and changeable child care arrangements in Australia, *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 30-35.

PRESENTATIONS

“When are too many care settings too much? Outcomes for children in multiple and changeable child care”, Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Tampa, Florida, 24-27 April 2003 (L. Harrison, J. Bowes, J. Watson, S. Wise, A. Sanson, J. Ungerer and T. Simpson).

“Multiple and changeable child care in Australia: How much is there? Why does it happen?”, Presentation at the AIFS Seminar Series, Melbourne, 12 December 2002 (S. Wise, A. Sanson and Child Care Choices Research Team).

“The effects of multiple child care arrangements on young children: A comparative study of urban and rural Australian life”, Paper presented at the XVIIth Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Ottawa, Canada, 2-6 August 2002 (J. Bowes, L. Harrison, A. Sanson, S. Wise, J. Ungerer, J. Watson and T. Simpson).

Child Care in Cultural Context

(core research)

Cross-culturally, parents are known to differ in their beliefs about children, childrearing and the importance of children achieving different developmental tasks and goals. In Australia today, a substantial number of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds using child care services are exposed to two sets of cultural influences: the culture of the country of origin, and the culture of the host nation.

The Child Care in Cultural Context study focuses on the “match” between parents' cultural values, beliefs about children, and

care practices, and those of child care services, and the impact on children when child-related features of home and child care environments diverge. The value that parents from different cultural groups place on various characteristics of child care, and the functions they expect child care services to provide, are also examined.

Currently in the dissemination phase, this study continues to inform government, policy development and stakeholders in child care and contributes towards better understanding and good quality practices in child care environments. Many families from many different cultural backgrounds use child care as a child development centre and important family support agency in the rearing of their children. It is therefore important that the relationships between care providers and these families are based on respect and shared understandings. Learnings from this study contribute substantially to this goal.

PUBLICATION

Wise, S. and Sanson, A. (2003), "Partnerships with providers? Why parents from diverse cultural backgrounds choose family day care", in A. Mooney and J. Statham (eds.), *Family Day Care: International Perspectives on Policy, Practice and Quality*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.

PRESENTATIONS

"Cultural transitions in early child care: The developmental consequences of discontinuity between home and child care", Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Tampa, Florida, 24-27 April 2003 (S. Wise and A. Sanson).

"Why parents from diverse cultural backgrounds choose family day care; the transitions children experience between home and family day care settings; and the impact of home-child care transitions on child outcomes", Presentation to the Centre for Community Child Health Family Day Care Seminar, Moonee Valley Race Course, 5 March 2003 (S. Wise).

"Continuity of childrearing models across child care settings", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (L. da Silva and S. Wise).

"Cultural transitions in early childhood: The developmental consequences of discontinuity between home and child care", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (S. Wise and A. Sanson).

"Maternal, family and child influences on child care use among an ethnically diverse sample of Australian mothers", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (S. Wise).

"Navigating the differences between two socialising worlds: parent-caregiver conflict and partnerships in culturally diverse child care settings", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (K. Hand and S. Wise).

"Cultural transitions in early childhood: The nature and consequences of discontinuity between home and child care", Paper presented at the XVIIth Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Ottawa, Canada, 2-6 August 2002 (S. Wise and A. Sanson).

"Child care in cultural context: Exploring transitions between young children's social worlds", Paper presented at the XV International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, 7-13 July 2002 (K. Hand and S. Wise).

Children and Family Life

(core research)

This study examines the family life, development and wellbeing of children growing up in intact couple, single-parent, step-parent and same-sex parent families. Previously known as "Development in Diverse Families", the Children and Family Life study targets a large sample of primary school aged children (5-12 years) and their families, representing the different types of family under investigation. It aims to provide data about how these families are functioning, and the development and adjustment of children.

A description of differences across family types on child outcomes and risk and protective factors will be provided. It will test hypothesised predictors of child outcomes within different family types, and clarify the relative importance of family structure,

intra familial processes and external supports on child functioning. The study will collect data on inter-parental relationships, parent-child relationships, parental characteristics, family functioning and family transitions, as well as measures on children's adjustment and families' interaction with the broader society.

This rich data base will add to the knowledge on factors influencing how contemporary Australian families function and in turn the impact of family life on children, and provide an important foundation for policy direction.

PUBLICATION

Wise, S. (2003), *Family structure, child outcomes and environmental mediators: An overview of the Institute's Development in Diverse Families study*, AIFS Research Paper no. 30, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Children Conceived through Donor Insemination

(collaborative project)

Since one in 20 Australians is now born through IVF, understanding the development and dynamics of family life for this sizeable group of children is extremely important. Yet gaining access to this particular population can be difficult and quite vexed. The Institute is fortunate to have formed a strategic relationship with Professor Gabor Kovacs of the Monash Medical School, Box Hill Hospital, renowned for his contribution to the IVF research field from its early days.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Institute and Professor Gabor Kovacs has been signed. Under the agreement, the Institute will collect information on approximately 100 families and children where the child was conceived using donor insemination technology, and compare these children and their families with families and children involved in the Children and Family Life study on key outcome variables. A central

research question for this study is the extent to which "openness" about children's conception contributes to child and family well-being. The Institute Ethics Committee and Monash Ethics Committee have approved the conduct of the study. Recruitment of families by Professor Gabor Kovacs is underway.

It is expected that some ground breaking findings will emerge from this research which will assist in the understanding of this group and its particular needs.

Children in Need

(completed project)

The challenges of caring for children in out-of-home care have become increasingly well recognised, reinforcing the benefits of avoiding the need for out-of-home care if possible.

Finding ways of providing an earlier response to needy families, thus preventing entry of children into out-of-home care, has become a key policy objective for child protection and family support services in Australia. A collaboration between the Institute, Anglicare Victoria and the University of Melbourne, aimed to assess whether the UK Children in Need approach could help set an agenda for working with families in a systematic and holistic way. The project highlighted both the potential for this approach, and the systemic issues that need to be confronted in adopting it.

PRESENTATIONS

"Implementing comprehensive services for vulnerable children in Family support Services: Messages from a trial of the UK Children in Need approach in the state of Victoria, Australia", Paper presented at the Promoting Wellbeing and Monitoring Outcomes for Vulnerable Children Conference, 23-26 September 2002, Worcester College, Oxford (S. Wise).

"Patterns and correlates of non-parental childcare in Australia and the US", Presentation to the Workshop on the Impact of Non-parental Child care on Children, Canberra, March 2003 (S. Wise and A. Sanson).

"Foster parenting: Relationships with foster children, birth parents and placement agencies", Paper presented to the Department of Human Services out-of-home care forum, Melbourne, October 2002 (S. Wise).

Survey of Gay and Lesbian Parenting

(completed project)

A better understanding of different types of non-traditional parenting arrangements has assumed more importance as the general community has become more aware of their existence.

This survey was funded by a grant from the Department of Human Services, Victoria, and conducted by the Department of General Practice and Public Health of the University of Melbourne with input from the Institute. The study also received funding from the Lesbian Health Fund through the Gay and Lesbian Association of the United States to extend the data collection to New South Wales. The survey identified some of the challenges that same-sex parents and their children face, while suggesting that the children were generally doing well.

PUBLICATION

McNair, R., Dempsey, D., Wise, S. and Perelesz, A. (2002), "Lesbian parenting: Issues, strengths and challenges", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 40-49.

PRESENTATION

"The social context of lesbian parenting in Australia", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (S. Wise).

ATP / CPV

(contract research)

The very productive 12-month collaboration between the Australian Temperament Project (ATP) and Crime Prevention Victoria (CPV) has been completed, culminating

in the preparation of two commissioned reports and numerous dissemination activities to stakeholders, policy makers, practitioners and the research community.

The First Report on *Patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour* was launched in October 2002, and attracted considerable media attention. The First Report is available from the Institute and Crime Prevention Victoria web sites. The Second Report is being prepared for publication in the second half of 2003.

Due to the success of the first stage of this project, a second one-year collaboration with Crime Prevention Victoria has been negotiated and will produce a third report in the first half of 2004. As well, a sub-committee has been established to facilitate the translating of the findings and their implications into recommendations for policy and practice, and to produce a briefing paper on this issue.

PUBLICATIONS

Dussuyer, I., Vassallo, S., Smart, D., Sanson, A. and McKendry, B. (2003), "Patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour", *Crime Prevention Works*, vol. 1, Issue 1, pp. 6-7.

Smart, D., Vassallo, S., Sanson, A., Richardson, N., Dussuyer, I., McKendry, B., Toumbourou, J., Prior, M. and Oberklaid, F. (2003), *Patterns and Precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour: Second Report*, Report commissioned by Crime Prevention Victoria.

PRESENTATIONS

"Changing pathways: How at-risk children avoid becoming antisocial adolescents", Presentation at the AIFS Seminar Series, 17 April 2003 (D. Smart, S. Vassallo, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

"Developmental prevention: The contribution from longitudinal research", Paper presented at the National Crime Prevention Conference, Sydney, 12-13 September 2002 (I. Dussuyer, A. Sanson, D. Smart and S. Vassallo).

"Early intervention and prevention of adolescent antisocial behaviour: The role of individual characteristics and the family, school, and peer

environment”, Paper presented at the Beyond the Rhetoric in Early Intervention Conference, Adelaide, 26-28 March 2003 (I. Dussuyer, D. Smart, S. Vassallo and A. Sanson).

“Patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour”, Paper presented at the 16th Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference, Brisbane, 1-3 October 2002 (D. Smart, S. Vassallo, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

“Patterns and precursors of teenage antisocial behaviour”, Paper presented at the Role of Schools in Crime Prevention Conference, Melbourne, 30 September -1 October 2002 (S. Vassallo, D. Smart, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

“Patterns and precursors to adolescent antisocial behaviour”, Presentation at the Family and Community Support Branch, Victorian Department of Human Services, Melbourne, 10 September 2002 (D. Smart, S. Vassallo, I. Dussuyer and A. Sanson).

“Patterns and precursors to adolescent antisocial behaviour”, Presentation at the Crime Prevention Roundtable Series, Melbourne, 5 September 2002 (A. Sanson, D. Smart, S. Vassallo and I. Dussuyer).

“Preventing adolescent antisocial behaviour: The role of individual characteristics and the family, school and peer environment”, Poster paper presented at the 11th International Society for Research in Child and Adolescent Psychopathology Conference, Sydney, 25-28 June 2003 (D. Smart, S. Vassallo, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

“Preventing teenage antisocial behaviour: The role of individual characteristics and the family, school and peer environment”, Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (S. Vassallo, D. Smart, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

“Risk factors for physically aggressive and non-aggressive adolescent antisocial behaviour,” Paper presented at the International Society for Research on Aggression Conference, Montreal, Canada, 28-31 July 2002 (D. Smart, A. Sanson, J. Toumbourou, M. Prior and F. Oberklaid).

“Transitions to adulthood and initiation, persistence and desistance from antisocial behaviour”, Poster paper presented at the biennial meeting and conference of the Society for Research on Child Development, Tampa, Florida, 24-27 April 2003 (A. Sanson, D. Smart, N. Richardson and I. Dussuyer).

ATP/TAC/RACV

(new contract research)

A Memorandum of Understanding has been negotiated between the Australian Temperament Project (ATP) the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) to investigate the individual, family and peer factors which contribute to differing patterns of driver behaviour at 19-20 years (including risky driving), as well as family contributions to driver education and their influence on subsequent driving behaviour.

The project involves the collection of data as part of the 13th Australian Temperament Project survey wave, statistical analysis of the data collected and of the longitudinal data set, and the production of a commissioned report. The project commenced in June 2003 and will conclude in 2004.

Negotiating Work and Family

(completed study)

The Negotiating Work and Family study was contracted to the Institute by the Department of Family and Community Services. The contract involved a qualitative study focusing on child and parent perspectives of how parents balance work and family responsibilities. Although this study has been closed since June 2002, the findings continue to create interest and discussion as evidenced by the two invitations to present to new professionals entering the field.

PRESENTATIONS

“Work and family: The family’s perspective”, Guest lecture, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, 14 April 2003 (K. Hand).

“Work and family: The family’s perspective”, Guest lecture, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, 3 September 2002 (K. Hand).

PROGRAM B FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

The Family and Marriage program focuses on family stability, family transitions, and family law. Transitions include young people leaving home, and couple and family formation, dissolution and re-formation. Particular attention is given to factors that help explain diverse pathways (including the strengthening of relationships in their early stages), the way these pathways are negotiated, and their impact on family members. Central to this work is the evaluation of the impact on families of the *Family Law Act 1975*, particularly in relation to amendments. Trends are examined at societal, family, and individual levels.

Family Trends and Transitions

The Family and Marriage Program analyses broad trends in patterns of leaving home, couple and family formation, family stability, and family dissolution and re-formation, along with associated values, attitudes and beliefs. Aside from providing a window into society's core values, the monitoring and analysis of these trends are important for policy development.

Trends Analysis

(ongoing core project)

In the past year analyses of trends in family formation, transitions, and dissolution have generated a number of publications and presentations, with attention this year given particularly to the domains of partnering and of premarital cohabitation. In addition, Institute researchers have played an important role in interpreting for the media some of the broad trends in family transitions that are published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Staff also participated in advisory or reference groups established by the ABS to assist in the development of their surveys and presentation of findings. The Institute's work in the area of family trends continues to be cited in conferences and workshops both nationally and internationally.

PUBLICATIONS

de Vaus, D., Qu, L. and Weston, R. (2003), "Changing patterns of partnering", *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp.10-15.

Weston, R., Parker, R. and Qu, L. (2003), "Australia", in J.J. Ponzetti (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family*, vol. 1 (2nd edn), Macmillan Reference, New York.

Weston, R., Stanton, D. and Parker, R. (2002), "The Australian family: Yesterday, today and tomorrow - what the statistics suggest", Conference Proceedings of Family Services Australia National Conference, Darwin, 8-11 October 2002.

PRESENTATIONS

"Changing trends in marriage and commitment", Public lecture given to the Monash University Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology Professional Training Program for Civil Celebrants, Melbourne, 19 March 2003 (R. Weston and R. Parker).

"Does premarital cohabitation affect the chances of marriage lasting?", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (D. de Vaus, L. Qu and R. Weston).

"Families in Australia", Invited workshop presented at the ACHPER Health and Physical Education Conference, Melbourne, 28-29 November 2002 (R. Weston and D. Stanton).

"Premarital cohabitation and marital stability", Paper presented at the Department of Family and Community Services HILDA Conference, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 13 March 2003 (R. Weston, L. Qu and D. de Vaus).

"The Australian family: Yesterday, today and tomorrow - what the statistics suggest", Invited paper presented at the Family Services Australia

National Conference, Darwin, 8-11 October 2002 (R. Weston, D. Stanton and R. Parker).

“NCAC environmental scan: Families in Australia”, Invited paper presented at the National Childcare Accreditation Council’s Environmental Scan, Sydney, 25 September 2002 (K. Hand, R. Weston and S. Wise).

Fertility Decision Making Project (collaborative project)

As in other developed countries, Australia is experiencing a decline in fertility rates in the context of increasing life expectancy, and thus an ageing of the population in both relative and absolute terms. There is a great deal of speculation about the relative importance of factors contributing to the fall in fertility since access to effective contraception became readily available. Considerable attention has been given to life course trends in society, financial and non-financial costs of having children, and beliefs, attitudes and values that may discourage childbearing, but we know little about the relative impact of, and the interactions among, the factors that shape Australians’ fertility preferences, expectations and behaviour.

The Fertility Decision Making Project is being conducted in collaboration with the Office of the Status of Women in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and will seek to explain how the range of factors contributing to decisions about having children interact to help shape fertility trajectories. The project also aims to provide insight into policy-relevant issues with respect to how couples and families manage work and family commitments. A national, random sample of approximately 3,250 men and women aged 20-39 years will be interviewed by telephone. Partners of respondents who agree to participate will be surveyed by a self-complete mailed questionnaire. The project will be in the field in August 2003, with an expected completion date of June 2004.

A review of the relevant literature underlying this project was published in *Family Matters*.

PUBLICATION

Weston, R. and Parker, R. (2002), “Why is the fertility rate declining? A discussion of the literature”, *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 6-13.

Positive Family Relationships

Couples need to develop strategies for living together and for adjusting to change. The Family and Marriage Program examines relationships from various perspectives: strengthening relationships in their early stages, identifying factors that contribute to the trajectories of relationship quality and stability, and learning lessons from long-lasting marriages. Key aspects of this work include monitoring and evaluating policies in this area and disseminating information through publications, paper presentations, and media interviews.

The Case for Marriage in Australia (new core project)

This is a new two-stage project being conducted in partnership with Dr Michele Simons of the University of South Australia. It represents an Australian response to “The Case For Marriage” published in 2000 by American researcher Linda Waite and journalist Maggie Gallagher, in which they present results from a vast body of research supporting the contention that getting and remaining married is generally associated with better functioning and wellbeing of individuals, couples and families.

The broad research question to be addressed is whether such a case for marriage can be made in Australia. The first stage will examine whether the published findings of Australian research into marriage suggest that marrying confers a range of advantages on individuals and couples and if so, the

nature and extent of those advantages. The review is expected to reveal the gaps in Australian marital research that may lend themselves to future Institute projects. This review of the literature will be published in 2004. The concept brief for this project was under preparation towards the end of the financial year.

The second stage of the project will entail analysing available Australian datasets such as the Housing, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, the Fertility Decision Making Project, and the Australian national University's Negotiating the Life Course. The outcome of these analyses will be published late in 2004.

PUBLICATION

Parker, R. (2002), *Why marriages last: A discussion of the literature*, AIFS Research Paper no. 28, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

PRESENTATIONS

"Connections between child temperament, couple relationship quality and adolescent wellbeing: Reciprocity or independence?", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (R. Parker and D. Smart).

"Making marriages last", Paper presented at the Australian Psychological Society's Psychology of Relationships Conference, Melbourne, 16-17 November 2002 (R. Parker).

"The study of Australian Relationship Education Services Activities project", Paper presented at the Marriage and Relationship Education National Conference, Brisbane, 27-30 September 2002 (R. Parker and M. Simons).

Family Law

Monitoring and contributing to the debate on family law issues is part of the core function of the Family and Marriage Program. The scope of family law research has broadened to include not only marriage and divorce but also parental responsibilities to

children regardless of whether the parents have ever lived together or married.

In the reporting year, the main focus of family law research has been on the development of the *Caring for Children after Separation* project, and on the impact of policy reform on consumers of the family law system.

Caring for Children after Separation (core project)

As part of the broad policy shift towards encouraging post-separation co-parenting, there remains keen interest in ascertaining the nature, amount and quality of contact that non-resident parents have with their children. To date, however, little is known in Australia about some of the most rudimentary components of parent-child contact, such as the distinction between "day only" contact versus "sleepovers", and "holiday" versus "term-time" arrangements. Failure to make these distinctions can lead to inaccurate conclusions about both the amount and quality of contact that is occurring. The *Caring for Children after Separation* project hopes to address some of these gaps.

The main aims of the project are (a) to map the nature, amount, and quality of parent-child contact between non-resident parents and their children; and (b) to improve understanding of why a significant proportion of non-resident parents have little or no contact with their children. Second-order aims include (c) to explore the contact decision-making processes; (d) to identify the factors, issues, or trigger events that promote or impede contact; and (e) to examine the inter-relation, if any, between contact and child support.

Data are being collected from two sources: a series of ten focus groups (comprising 56 separated/divorced parents); and telephone interviews with 1,050 separated/divorced

parents from around Australia who have at least one biological or adopted child under 18 in 2003. Focus group interviews were conducted in February 2003.

Several research reports are planned, including a review of the shared parenting literature, a profile of patterns of parenting after separation, and an investigation into the contact-child support nexus. This work is very relevant in the context of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Child Custody Arrangements in the Event of Family Separation.

PUBLICATIONS

Smyth, B. (2002), "Research into parent-child contact after parental separation: Some methodological challenges", *Family Matters*, no. 62, Winter, pp. 33-37.

Smyth, B. and Ferro, A. (2002), "When the difference is night and day: Parent-child contact after separation", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 54-59.

PRESENTATIONS

"Patterns of parenting after separation", Invited presentation to staff of the Family Mediation Centre, Melbourne, 27 March 2003 (B. Smyth, C. Caruana and A. Ferro).

"When the difference is night and day: Some insights from HILDA into parent-child contact after separation", Paper presented at the Department of Family and Community Services HILDA Conference, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 13 March 2003 (B. Smyth and P. Parkinson).

"Children last? - Children, housing and family law in Australia", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (T. Altobelli and B. Smyth).

"When the difference is night and day: Some empirical insights into patterns of parent-child contact after separation", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (P. Parkinson and B. Smyth).

"Researching parent-child contact after separation: Where next?", Presentation at the Lone Fathers Association National Family Law Conference Canberra, 24 August 2002 (B. Smyth).

"Research into parent-child contact after parental separation: Some methodological considerations", Paper presented at the XVth International Sociological Association World Congress, Brisbane, 7-13 July 2002 (B. Smyth and B. Fehlberg).

PUBLICATIONS

(general family law monitoring)

Caruana, C. (2002), "Relationship diversity and the law", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 60-65.

Caruana, C. (2002), "Meeting the needs of self-represented litigants in family law matters", *Family Matters*, no. 62, Winter, pp. 38-42.

HILDA Survey

(ongoing collaborative project)

Institute staff continue to contribute to the ongoing design of the *Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) survey. HILDA is being conducted by a consortium of three research bodies: the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne (the lead agency), the Australian Institute of Family Studies, and the Australian Council for Educational Research.

Staff in the Institute's Family and Marriage program, in consultation with the Director and members of other Institute research programs, developed the family dynamics module of the survey and worked in partnership with the other members of the consortium in coordinating the overall questionnaire design. Wave 1 of the survey was completed in late 2001, gathering data from almost 14,000 people from 7,680 households around the country. Wave 3 is scheduled to be in the field in late 2003.

Since release of data from the first wave in late 2002, the HILDA data have been used extensively by researchers across Australia indicating its quality and value to a very wide range of policy questions. Institute research staff have used data to address a range of research questions, the findings of which

have been the subject of a number of papers and presentations. This work has involved collaboration with other researchers at various universities. The true value of the data, of course, will be realised after the second and subsequent waves are assessed.

The HILDA data have been used by research staff for ten paper presentations or publications which are listed elsewhere in this report and for some of the trends reported under the section on demographic analysis. In addition to this work the following paper presentation and publication were prepared.

PUBLICATION

Weston, R. and Wooden, M. (2002), "HILDA has arrived! New Survey on Australian Households and Families", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 66-73.

PRESENTATION

"The HILDA survey and research on families", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (R. Weston and M. Wooden).

PROGRAM C FAMILY AND SOCIETY

The Family and Society Program focuses on the relationship between the family and other social institutions. Changes in society have a direct impact on family life, just as changes in family life can have implications for other aspects of social organisation. To understand the contemporary family in Australia, we have to understand the changing relations between it and three sets of social institutions. Changes in any one of these three areas will have impacts upon the way in which families operate. Families contribute to, and are in turn affected by: the economy and market; the welfare system and interaction with government; and social life and the community. The Family and Society Program, therefore, focuses broadly on the relation between family change and economic and social change.

Families, Social Capital and Citizenship

(existing core project)

The key aims of the *Families, Social Capital and Citizenship* project are to document and understand the extent and diversity of family engagement in the community, economy, and in Australian political life. A primary goal is to explain different patterns of engagement and wellbeing among families in a range of circumstances, living in different sorts of communities. The research aims to inform the growing policy and social concern about the perceived erosion of community networks and civic society. As well, it aims to arm community groups and service providers with knowledge about social capital and how it can best be used to inform policy and practice to assist Australian families and communities.

The project has continued to play a pivotal role in the development of theoretically informed and empirically rigorous measurement tools for social capital throughout 2002 and 2003. Institute researchers have had significant input into the development of national and international data collections about social capital. Following on from the successful development of a social capital survey in 2000–2001, and the development of three analytic techniques in 2002, the

reporting year has seen the social capital thesis put to “the empirical test” in a series of research papers. Research Paper no. 31, *Social Capital at Work: How families, friends and civic ties relate to labour market outcomes*, explored how social capital acts to enhance individuals’ labour market position and job search behaviour and highlighted those groups most likely to miss out on these social capital related benefits in the labour market. Research Paper no. 32, *Family Change and Community Life: Exploring the links*, explored the conditions under which family life leads to community participation, trust and reciprocity, and can inform policy and research assumptions about the relationship between family life and community strengths.

The core work of this project has also provided a basis on which to advise and assist family and community practitioners about the role of social capital in assisting families and communities to prosper.

PUBLICATIONS

Hughes, J. and Stone, W. (2003), *Family change and community life: Exploring the links*, AIFS Research Paper no. 32, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Stone, W. (2003), “Sociology of childhood research: A book review of *Childhood poverty and social exclusion from a child’s perspective* by Tess Ridge”, *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 86-87.

Stone, W., Gray, M. and Hughes, J. (2003), *How family, friends and civic ties relate to labour market outcomes*, AIFS Research Paper no. 31, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

PRESENTATIONS

"Social capital poor? Reflections on the meaning and relevance of social capital for understanding disadvantage in Australia", Paper presented at the Social Policy in the City Seminar Series, Mission Australia, The Smith Family and the Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW, Sydney, 5 June 2003 (W. Stone).

"Dimensions, types and distribution of social capital", Presentation to the Community in Control Social Capital Workshop, hosted by the Victorian Department of Human Services, 8 April 2003 (W. Stone).

"Bonding, bridging and linking with social capital", Workshop Presentation to the Stronger Families Learning Exchange's National Workshop for Stronger Families Fund Projects, Melbourne, 1-3 April 2003 (W. Stone).

"Social capital and the link between family and community life", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (J. Hughes and W. Stone).

"Social capital: Towards a standardised approach", Paper presented at the Institute for Public Administration WA and WA Australasian Evaluation Society, Perth, 21 November 2002 (W. Stone and J. Hughes).

"Measuring social capital: Towards a standardised approach", Presentation to the 2002 International Evaluation Conference: Evaluation in Practice - Making a Difference, Wollongong, NSW, 29 October - 1 November 2002 (W. Stone and J. Hughes).

"The Families, Social Capital and Citizenship Project: An exploration of the nature and distribution of social capital in Australia", Presentation to the RMIT Social Capital and Public Policy Workshop, Melbourne, 18 October 2002 (J. Hughes and W. Stone).

"Families, Social Capital and Citizenship: An empirical investigation of social capital in family and community life", Paper presented at the XVth International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, 7- 13 July 2002 (W. Stone and J. Hughes).

Families First Survey

(completed contract research project)

During the reporting year the Institute undertook a tender research project to benchmark social capital in three urban communities, with the aim of informing

the development of models of service delivery to families in these areas.

The project, *Measuring Social Capital in Families First Communities 4 Kids*, was undertaken by the Institute for Families First, New South Wales Department of Community Services, and was conducted between May 2002 and January 2003. The project involved a series of community surveys and qualitative data collection. The community-based approach to measuring social capital provided an opportunity to link the ongoing work of the *Families, Social Capital and Citizenship* project more directly with service providers at a local level. It also enabled the project to inform policy and service providers about the facilitation of social capital and community capacity.

PUBLICATIONS

Stone, W. with Muggleton, J. (2003), "Measuring social capital in Families First Communities 4 Kids in the Inner West: Glebe community report", A project undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies for Families First - Inner West Department of Community Services NSW.

Stone, W. with Muggleton, J. (2003), "Measuring social capital in Families First Communities 4 Kids in the Inner West: Marrickville South community report", A project undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies for Families First - Inner West Department of Community Services NSW.

Stone, W. with Muggleton, J. (2003), "Measuring social capital in Families First Communities 4 Kids in the Inner West: Lakemba, Wiley Park and Punchbowl community report", A project undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies for Families First - Inner West Department of Community Services NSW.

Family and Work Decisions Project

(existing core project)

The *Family and Work Decisions* project, conducted by the Institute in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, is a study of how families with dependent children decide whether or not to participate in the paid labour market. The project adopts several

approaches to understanding this issue. The first strand of the project involves the analysis of existing secondary data to explore the determinants of mothers' labour force status and reasons for the changes which have occurred in recent decades. The second strand involves reviewing the international experience of welfare reform relating to families and labour force participation and the implications for Australian social policy.

The third strand focuses on people's knowledge and understanding of the income support system, the way in which it interacts with paid employment and decisions about labour force participation, living arrangements, and family formation. In order to answer these questions a survey of 2,400 partnered and lone mothers was undertaken. Results from this survey will be published in the coming financial year. A preliminary paper on "Understanding of the income support system: A study of lone and couple mothers" was prepared for presentation at the Australian Social Policy Conference in July 2003.

A particular focus of the study is the labour force and family decisions of lone mothers, a group of great policy interest but about whom there are few large-scale survey data available. The final strand of the project involves conducting follow-up qualitative interviews with seventy of the mothers who participated in the large scale survey. During the reporting year much of the development work for the follow-up qualitative interviews was undertaken. This survey will be undertaken during the coming financial year.

PUBLICATIONS

Renda, J. (2003), "Polarisation of families according to work status: Where does part-time employment fit in?", *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 16-21.

Gray, M., Qu, L., Renda, J. and de Vaus, D. (2003), *Changes in the labour force status of lone and couple Australian mothers, 1983–2002*, AIFS Research Paper no. 33, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Gray, M. and Stanton, D. (2002), *Lessons of US welfare reforms for Australian social policy*, AIFS Research Paper no. 29, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

PRESENTATIONS

"Changes in the labour force status of Australian mothers, 1983–2002", Presentation to the School of Economics and Marketing Workshop series, University of Canberra, Canberra, 21 May 2003 (M. Gray, D. de Vaus, L. Qu and J. Renda).

"Changes in the labour force status of Australian lone and couple mothers, 1985-96", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (M. Gray, D. de Vaus, L. Qu and J. Renda).

"Lessons of the US welfare reform for Australian social policy", Paper presented at the 31st Australian Conference of Economists, Adelaide, 30 September – 3 October 2002 (M. Gray and D. Stanton).

"Human capital and the lone-couple mother employment gap", Paper presented at the XVth International Sociological Association World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, 7-13 July 2002 (M. Gray, D. de Vaus, C. Millward and L. Qu).

Marginal Attachment in the Australian Labour Market

(completed collaborative project)

One of the key influences on the factors that affects the extent to which changes in labour demand affect other macroeconomic variables, such as wage inflation, is the degree of matching between potential employees and available jobs. The pool of potential employees is usually measured as the pool of unemployed workers. However, this ignores an important group of people who are not officially unemployed, but who do represent potential labour supply – the so-called marginally attached workforce – broadly defined as the people who are not currently in the labour force, but want to work and are available to take up employment.

This project involved two collaborations. The first collaboration with the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian

National University involved research on the extent to which the labour market behaviour of marginally attached workers is similar to that of the unemployed, using longitudinal data from the ABS Survey of Employment and Unemployment Patterns. This project resulted in the publication of the Reserve Bank of Australia Discussion Paper, "An exploration of marginal attachment to the Australian labour market".

A second collaboration with the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research analysed the importance of family, cultural and social environmental factors in determining the labour force outcomes of Indigenous people, and in particular marginal attachment. This resulted in a *Family Matters* article on "Family and social factors underlying the labour force status of Indigenous Australians".

While the project itself was completed during the previous reporting year, the published reports were completed in the current reporting year and for this reason have been included here.

PUBLICATIONS

Gray, M., Heath, A. and Hunter, B. (2002), *An exploration of marginal attachment to the Australian labour market*, Reserve Bank Research Discussion Paper no. 2002/7, Reserve Bank of Australia, Sydney.

Gray, M., Hunter, B. and Taylor, J. (2002), *Health Expenditure, Income and Health Status Among Indigenous and Other Australians*, CAEPR Monograph no. 21, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.

Gray, M. and Hunter, B. (2002), "A cohort analysis of the determinants of employment and labour force participation: Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, 1981-96", *Australian Economic Review*, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 391-404.

Hunter, B. and Gray, M. (2002), "Family and social factors underlying the labour force status of Indigenous Australians", *Family Matters*, no. 62, Winter, pp. 18-25.

PRESENTATION

"Health expenditure, income and health status among Indigenous and other Australians", Paper

presented at the 31st Australian Conference of Economists, Adelaide, 30 September – 3 October 2002 (M. Gray, B. Hunter and J. Taylor).

Work and Family

(new core project)

Continuing on from the *Family-Friendly Work Practices* project (completed in 2001-2002), research is being developed on the interaction of work and family life. One strand of this project uses data from the first wave of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey to examine links between aspects of work hours (most particularly, the number of hours usually worked and the satisfaction with this regime), other employment circumstances, family characteristics, perceptions of work-family balance and wellbeing across various other domains of personal and family life. A paper on "The impact of long working hours on employed fathers and their families" was prepared for presentation at the Australian Social Policy Conference in July 2003. Work on this project will continue during the coming financial year.

PRESENTATIONS

"Work and family life: An overview of recent research findings", Paper presented at the National Work and Family Conference, Darling Harbour, Sydney, 4 September 2002 (M. Gray).

Ageing and Intergenerational Exchanges within Families

(new core project)

The ageing of the Australian population has important implications for the provision of care for people in society, including: (a) the role of grandparents in providing child care; (b) the needs of and support for the growing elderly population; (c) financial and "in kind" support and transfers across generations; and (d) implications for the so called "sandwich generation" – that is, women, typically in their sixties, who have

multiple caring responsibilities such as taking care of ageing parents, their spouse and own children, as well as grandchildren.

Institute research into family exchanges focuses on the giving and receiving of emotional, social, material and financial support. It considers the internal processes of family interaction, such as family cohesion and solidarity, and how these impact on the interface between families and society – for example, in the spheres of welfare, health and child care services, and interaction with the labour force.

During 2002 work commenced on further developing this project. The first output of this project has been the paper “Measuring the value of unpaid household, caring and voluntary work of older Australians”, which was presented to an international research conference. The paper is currently being prepared as an Institute publication. In addition, the Institute prepared a submission on ageing for the House of Representatives *Inquiry into long-term strategies to address the ageing of the Australian population*. Further work in the area of ageing and the workforce is being planned which will be undertaken in the coming financial year.

PRESENTATION

“Measuring the value of unpaid household, caring and voluntary work of older Australians”, Paper presented at the 4th International Research Conference on Social Security, Antwerp, 5-7 May 2003 (M. Gray, D. de Vaus and D. Stanton).

Impact of Children on Family Labour Supply

(existing core project)

The *Impact of Children on Family Labour Supply* project is developing and empirically estimating models of family labour supply which combine information on financial incentives with information on non-financial determinants of the decision to participate in the labour market. Particular attention is being

paid to the impact of career breaks on the subsequent labour market outcomes of mothers. The project also examines the impact of relationship breakdown for how the costs of children are distributed between mothers, fathers and the government.

Labour market outcomes examined include the likelihood of being employed, hours worked if employed and hourly wage rates. Other outcomes such as job satisfaction are also being considered. During the year the conceptual basis for the project was developed and an initial paper presented. Further work is expected to be undertaken during the coming financial year.

PRESENTATION

“The implications of relationship breakdown for the distribution of the opportunity costs of children”, Paper presented to the Rethinking Expenditure on Children: Towards an International Research Agenda Conference, Australian National University, Canberra, 15-16 January 2003 (B. Chapman and M. Gray).

Dynamics of Low Income Parents

(new collaborative project)

The *Dynamics of Low Income, Welfare Reliance, and Changes in Family Structure of Parents with Dependent Children* project is a three-year Australian Research Council Linkage project which is being undertaken in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and the Australian National University. This project will build a new seven-year longitudinal database, from the Department's administrative records and supplementary surveys, for low-income parents with dependent children. This will allow analysis of the dynamics of, and interrelationships among, changes in family structure, income and welfare reliance.

The project will help policy makers evaluate the impacts of existing government income support and work related programs. This project is in the preliminary development stages.

Demographic Trends Analysis

Demographic Trends Analysis was established to undertake research into broad social and demographic trends that relate to family functioning and family change. A good understanding of these trends is important for policy and for the timely development and design of research projects.

In 2002–2003, considerable progress has been made towards the completion of a major publication outlining the diversity and changes in Australian families. In addition to publications, a popular, ongoing series of analyses on the Institute's website that provides up to date "*Family Facts and Figures*" has also been developed.

A set of up-to-date statistics using Institute, Australian Bureau of Statistics and HILDA data on themes relating to families have been produced on the following topic areas – Australian family types, Australian households, and marriage.

PUBLICATIONS

de Vaus, D.A. (2002), "Marriage, births and fertility", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 26-29.

de Vaus, D.A. (2002), "Fertility decline in Australia: A demographic context", *Family Matters*, no. 63, Spring/Summer, pp. 30-37.

de Vaus, D.A. (2002), "New families for changing times", *Family Matters*, no. 62, Winter, pp. 52-55.

de Vaus, D.A. (2002), "Marriage and mental health", *Family Matters*, no. 62, Winter, pp. 26-32.

Qu, L. (2003), "Expectations of marriage among cohabiting couples", *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 36-39.

PRESENTATIONS

"Cohabitation and mental health", Presentation to the School of Human Sciences, University of Surrey, England, 21 March 2003 (D. de Vaus).

"Cohabitation and mental health", Presentation to the Centre for Research on Family Relationships, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 22 March 2003 (D. de Vaus).

"For better or for worse but not for lunch: The impact of retirement on marital wellbeing", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (D. de Vaus and Y. Wells).

Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing

The Institute houses a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing facility to support Institute projects and to undertake field work for external researchers.

In 2002–2003 the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Unit conducted interviews for the following projects:

- *Healthy Retirement Project*. Interviewing of 400 people was completed for the final wave of the project for the La Trobe University Lincoln Gerontology Centre.
- *International Youth Development Study*. Interviewing of 2,750 parents of Victorian school children was completed for the Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Adolescent Health.
- *Multiple and Changeable Child Care*. About 650 parents with children in child care were interviewed for a consortium involving Macquarie University's Psychology Department and the Institute of Early Education, Charles Sturt's School of Teacher Education, the New South Wales Office of Childcare, and the Institute.
- *Measuring Social Capital in Families First Communities 4 Kids*. Interviewing of 360 people was completed for the project being undertaken for Families First, New South Wales Department of Community Services.

- *Health Behaviours and Outcomes in Ageing 2002*. Interviewing of 500 people was completed for La Trobe University Lincoln Gerontology Centre.

Other work completed by Survey Operations staff included:

- *Australian Temperament Project*. Nearly 400 people who did not respond to the recent data collection were followed up.
- *Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children)*. As part of the wave 1 pilot testing, around 20 cognitive debrief interviews were conducted with parents, teachers and child carers.
- *Family and Work Decisions*. Completed around 600 benefits calculations using Department of Family and Community Services software.
- *Caring for Children after Separation*. Transcribing audiotapes from several focus groups was completed.

CONTRACT RESEARCH

Part of the Institute's research strategy includes research funded by external funding sources. These projects are undertaken where they complement the general research priorities of the Institute. In addition to adding value to the other research activities of the Institute, these contracts provide the opportunity to undertake major, policy relevant research that it would otherwise be unable to embark on.

In 2002–2003 the Institute was engaged in four major contract-funded collaborative projects: *Growing Up in Australia* (the longitudinal study of Australian children); the National Child Protection Clearinghouse; the Stronger Families Learning Exchange; and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

Growing Up in Australia

This has been a very full year for *Growing Up in Australia* (the longitudinal study of Australian children), which will follow 5,000 infants and 5,000 four-year olds over seven years. Since signing the contract between the Institute and the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services in March 2002, much progress has been made. Further appointments have been made to the Project Operations Team, the design has been refined, instruments developed and considerable consultation and dissemination activities undertaken.

Partnerships

Some key relationships and partnerships have been forged that are central to the success of the study. The Institute continues to work in partnership with the Department of Family and Community Services in developing the study. The Department has convened a Steering Committee of key government agencies and stakeholders with the aim of consulting broadly about the implementation, content, operation and data analysis of *Growing Up in Australia*.

The Institute is leading a consortium of nine research institutions in designing and

implementing the study. Consortium partners are: the Australian Council for Educational Research; the Centre for Developmental Health (Curtin University/Telethon Institute for Child Health Research); the Queensland University of Technology; Macquarie University; Charles Sturt University; Australian National University's National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health and Centre for Mental Health Research; Murdoch Children's Research Institute; and the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. The inter-disciplinary Consortium Advisory Group for *Growing Up in Australia* continues to provide expert advice and input to both the content and the design of the study.

In order to recruit a nationally representative sample of 5,000 infants and 5,000 four-year olds, the Health Insurance Commission has agreed to assist by using the Medicare enrolment database to select the sample of children and their families. The main advantages of using the Medicare enrolment database are that: 98 per cent of Australian children are enrolled with Medicare by 12 months of age; it provides a cost effective method for finding the *Growing Up in Australia* target population; and the Health

Insurance Commission records are likely to remain up-to-date, enhancing the study's ability to track families over time. Strict privacy and security protocols have been developed for accessing the sample. In order to meet Health Insurance Commission timelines, the start of the first data collection was delayed by six months.

Close relationships have been formed with overseas longitudinal studies of children, such as the Millennium Cohort Study in the UK and the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. The Scientific and Policy and Advisory Group, made up of national and international experts from a broad range of disciplines, continues to provide high-level advice to ensure that *Growing Up in Australia* will be an international leader in longitudinal research.

Finally, to maximise the effectiveness and the potential to value-add to the primary modes of data collection, opportunities for data linkage are being explored wherever possible. To this end, the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) is working with us to link NCAC data with the *Growing Up in Australia* data, following very strict confidentiality and security procedures. This provides a unique opportunity to explore the link between children's outcomes and the quality of child care they have received. Other opportunities for data linkage that may be considered include links to hospital birth records, immunisation records, maternal and child health records and other health records.

Study design and implementation

Since the start of the development phase for *Growing up in Australia*, there has been extensive research undertaken, with the assistance of the leading researchers involved in the Consortium Advisory Group, into the best ways to address the key research questions.

A Sampling Design Team has worked with the Project Operations Team to finalise the sampling process, with the intent of ensuring the sample is as representative as possible of the population. One of the main strengths of the study design is that multiple informants will be used to gather comprehensive information across all domains, providing the most comprehensive data collection process ever undertaken in Australia.

The informants for the first wave of data collection will include: the primary care giving parent; the other resident parent or step parent; any non-resident parents; child care providers, both formal and informal; pre school or school teachers; the children themselves through physical markers and direct assessment tasks; and interviewers' observations of the home and external environment. In order to collect information on the two cohorts, 17 instruments have been developed.

Extensive pre-testing and piloting of these instruments occurred in 2002–2003, with a dress rehearsal of the full process of recruitment and data collection scheduled to take place between August and October 2003. The main wave of data collection will start in March 2004 with fieldwork to be completed by August 2004. Data are due to be publicly released in April 2005. Subsequent main waves will be conducted in 2006, 2008 and 2010 with a between-wave mail-back collection occurring in 2005.

Promotion and dissemination activities

A core priority has been to promote the study to a wide audience of researchers, policy makers, early childhood and education professionals and peak agencies, families and other people who may become involved in the study, and the general community.

Conference papers and presentations about *Growing Up in Australia* have been given by

members of the Project Operations Team and other Consortium members, both in Australia and overseas.

The email reference group, which is used as a regular vehicle to disseminate information about the study through a regular electronic newsletter and Discussion Papers, has almost doubled in size over the last 12 months.

A publicity and marketing strategy has been developed and will be implemented in the first half of the coming financial year. This will include media releases, publications in newsletters for families, teachers and child care workers, and mail outs of publicity information to relevant outlets.

Website

The website which was established in April 2002 has been expanded with information about the sample and data collection, the personnel responsible for the Study, links to related longitudinal studies worldwide, and the email reference group.

During the reporting year the second Discussion Paper on the proposed sample design and data collection and two newsletters were made available on the web. An information page for study participants was also added, providing information about the study, the types of questions parents and teachers will be asked, what involvement in the study will entail, privacy issues and how the study information will be used. More than 41,000 pages were accessed from the web site during the year.

Given the size and diversity of those providing input and advice to the study, communication and access to key documents is essential. To assist communication and the process of reviewing documents and questionnaires, a password protected web page was developed containing minutes of meetings, pretest and pilot instruments, survey documentation, technical reports, and promotional materials.

PUBLICATIONS

Sanson, A. (2003), "Growing Up in Australia: The first 12 months of a landmark study", *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 40-47.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE WEB

Sanson, A. (2003), "Largest ever longitudinal study of children", in Research News, Market Research Society of Australia newsletter, May 2003.

Soriano, G. (2003), "Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children", in Child Health and News Update, electronic Information Update no. 7, Child and Youth Health Unit, Queensland Health, April 2003, p. 11.

COMMISSIONED REPORTS

Discussion Paper no. 2 – Soloff, C., Millward, M., Sanson, A., LSAC Consortium Advisory Group and Sampling Design Team (2003), *Proposed study design and Wave 1 data collection*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report No. 8 – Millward, C. in conjunction with Colmar Brunton Social Research (2003), *Wave 1 Pilot Test Report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 8.1 Sub-Report – White, E. (2003), *Wave 1 Pilot Test Report on Biomarkers (Salivary cortisol)*, Sub-report in the *Wave 1 Pilot Test Report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 7 – Soloff, C. (2003), *Data collection and tender process*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 6 – Project Operations Teams (2003), *Year 2 Work Plan*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 5 – Project Operations Team (2002), *Data Linkage*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 4 – Millward, C. and Ferro, A. (2002), *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Instrument development and pre-testing (1)*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 3 – Sanson, A., Frey, D. and Soriano, G. (2002), *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Assessment of Marketing and Promotion Strategies*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

Project Report no. 2 – Soloff, C. and Millward, C. (2002), *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Sampling and Data Collection*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

PRESENTATIONS

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Presentation to the Regional Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Oslo, Norway, 20 June 2003 (A. Sanson).

“Child care in perspective in Australia: The new Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Paper presented at the biennial meeting and conference of the Society for Research in Child Development in Tampa, Florida, 24-27 April 2003 (A. Sanson, J. Ungerer and the LSAC Research Consortium).

“Growing Up in Australia – The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Presentation to the Health Insurance Commission, Canberra, 18 March 2003 (A. Sanson and C. Soloff).

“Finding the children for Growing Up in Australia”, Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (C. Soloff).

“Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Why do it? what is it? where is it at? what will it offer?”, Presentation at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (A. Sanson with Jan Nicholson, Project Operations Team and the Consortium Advisory Group).

“Growing Up in Australia: The study content - what are we asking who are we asking and why?”, Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (C. Millward).

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children - An Overview”, Talk presented to the Board of Berry Street Children’s Services, Melbourne, 10 February 2003 (C. Millward).

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: An overview of a major new research initiative”, Presentation to the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, Brisbane, 1-5 December 2002 (A. Sanson).

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Presentation to Frozen Futures? A conference exploring the effects of early stress on later outcomes, Australian Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc. and NIFTeY, University of Sydney, Sydney, 14-16 November 2002 (A. Sanson).

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Presentation to the ABS Victorian Social Statistics Consultative Group, Melbourne, 24 October 2002 (C. Soloff).

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: An introduction”, Presentation to the APA Biennial Conference, Sydney, 2-4 October 2002 (C. Soloff).

PRESENTATIONS CO-AUTHORED BY INSTITUTE RESEARCHERS AND PRESENTED BY CONSORTIUM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

“New approaches to cohort studies: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Presentation to the Public Health Research: A Foundation for Victoria’s Health Symposium, VicHealth, Melbourne, 26-27 March 2003 (presented by Dr Melissa Wake, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute).

“Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: An Update”, Invited presentation to the Australian Council for Children and Parenting (Advisory Committee to the Department of Family and Community Services), Canberra, 23 August 2002 (presented by Dr Jan Nicholson, Queensland University of Technology).

“The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children”, Presentation to the Workshop on Families, Law and Social Policy: Future research strategy, organised by School of Law, Griffith University, Brisbane, 11 July 2002 (presented by Dr Bryan Rodgers, Australian National University).

National Child Protection Clearinghouse

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse serves as an interchange point for information, research and initiatives supporting work in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention.

The Clearinghouse is funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services with the aim of informing policy, practice and research into

child abuse prevention. The Clearinghouse has operated from the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 1995.

The Clearinghouse undertakes research projects on child protection and the prevention of child abuse. In 2002–2003, the Clearinghouse has been involved in projects aiming to inform child protection reform processes, and to further understanding of the issues around how families with a child at risk of being maltreated access family support programs designed to prevent maltreatment.

Accessibility to child abuse prevention programs

In 2001–2002, the Clearinghouse began the development of an exploratory study to gain further understanding of the issues that affect the ability of families where a child is at risk of being maltreated to access child abuse prevention programs. Issues considered included how program design and implementation impacts on accessibility for the service user; factors associated with the service users themselves, such as knowledge of the program; and how identified barriers to accessibility could be overcome.

In 2002–2003, interviews were conducted with 33 service providers currently running group-based parent education or home visiting programs in New South Wales and Victoria, on their views about the issues affecting clients' access to services. Analysis of the interviews has been completed and a report is being prepared for publication and distribution to the Clearinghouse mailing list.

Australian Children's Contact Services Project

Children's contact services facilitate post-separation contact in situations of high parental conflict and/or risk to children. The Institute, in collaboration with Griffith

University, the University of Melbourne and the Attorney-General's Department, was funded under the Australian Research Council's Strategic Partnerships with Industry and Research Training (SPIRT) Support Scheme 2001 to evaluate the operation of children's contact services in Australia.

The study is investigating the ways in which these services are used and perceived by participants and key stakeholders, and the extent to which the use of these services results in positive outcomes, especially for children. Following the successful pilot testing of data collection methods and interview schedules, data collection has been undertaken in 2002–2003 with contact centre staff and client families in Victoria and Queensland. The project is due to be completed in June 2004.

Western Australian Government Inquiry

In 2001–2002, the Clearinghouse was contracted by the *WA Government Inquiry into Responses by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*, to provide a series of research briefs (literature reviews and analysis) on the subject of sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities. The contract was completed in May 2002. The research briefs were subsequently published as part of the final Inquiry Report in July 2002.

Additional projects

The Clearinghouse undertakes at least one research-related task per calendar year in agreement with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services. In 2002–2003, the Clearinghouse began two such research tasks.

The first was the production of a briefing paper that will provide an overview of the current state of knowledge on the effectiveness of programs that aim to prevent the

child abuse and neglect of children. The major work associated with this paper will be undertaken in 2003–2004;

The second was the production of ten Fact Sheets, based on questions frequently received by the Clearinghouse related to child abuse and its prevention. These will be produced in hardcopy and also be placed on the Clearinghouse website (and regularly updated). In 2002–2003, three draft Facts Sheets were prepared: “Child Abuse Statistics”, “Fatal Child Abuse”, and “Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse”. These are scheduled to be published online in 2003–2004.

Knowledge base

The Clearinghouse forms a knowledge base from which to inform policy, practice and research in child abuse prevention by collecting resources and providing access to information. The Clearinghouse compiles a comprehensive collection of the latest research and practice resources concerned with child protection and child abuse prevention. Both international and Australian materials are collected. Currently it holds over 6,000 records in its catalogue database related to child abuse/neglect, of which 1,321 were added during the reporting period. Another 4,906 items on these topics are indexed in the Institute’s *Australian Family & Society Abstracts* database, of which 330 items were added during the past year. The catalogue is widely accessible via the Institute’s website, while access to the database most commonly occurs via subscription to the RMIT’s Informit service.

Materials are made available to most clients by the interlibrary loan system, but service providers working in small non-government agencies receive special access to the collection via a membership service. Almost 100 organisations have signed up for membership and have made 150 requests for

materials from the Clearinghouse collection during the reporting period.

The Clearinghouse also maintains and develops a specialised Child Abuse Prevention Programs database to document child abuse prevention projects and activities. Information is collected on prevention programs to serve as models from which other program providers may benefit, and to provide a picture of child prevention activity throughout Australia. This information is incorporated into an electronic database with 1,300 items and mounted on the web site.

Communications

The knowledge base is used to generate a number of communications activities. The Clearinghouse produces paper copies of these publications. *Issues Papers* focus on a topic of particular relevance to the field, while *Newsletters* include feature articles plus information on the latest publications and resources, developments in policy or legislation, and forthcoming conferences and workshops. These and other information resources are disseminated through regular paper and electronic publications to a network of 7,802 clients registered on the Clearinghouse free mailing list. Interested people may join the mailing list to receive two *Issues Papers* and two *Newsletters* per year, or may access electronic copies on the website.

Up-to-date information on child abuse prevention is provided and maintained on the website. The site currently includes the full text of all Clearinghouse publications; dates for forthcoming conferences; a list of Australian and international organisations concerned with child abuse prevention (with links to their Internet sites); regularly updated bibliographies on specific aspects of the prevention of child abuse and neglect; and access to the Child Abuse Prevention Programs database.

Advisory services

Clearinghouse staff draw on the knowledge base to provide advisory services. The Clearinghouse's research staff are available to respond to more specialised questions. The use of the advisory service remains high, with a total of 1,361 requests responded to during 2002–2003.

A key role for the Clearinghouse is to provide advice on child abuse policy and practice issues to the Australian Government (and State and Territory governments). During the year, key policy advisory tasks have involved responding to requests for advice and information from government agencies and contributing to government inquiries.

The Clearinghouse also provides advice and support for service providers who run, or who plan to run, child abuse prevention programs. The service is designed to provide greater support to those agencies and groups who want to evaluate their prevention programs, but require research advice and support.

Networking/outreach

As a key aspect of networking/outreach activities, Clearinghouse research staff participate in relevant workshops, conferences and related activities, presenting papers and seminars and carrying out other promotional work as required. The Clearinghouse also provides education and training seminars, and has developed a particular emphasis on running seminars or training sessions in rural/remote areas throughout Australia. Networking is facilitated by the provision of the Child Abuse Prevention Programs database and the Clearinghouse mailing list database, which include contact details for participants.

An email discussion list, *childprotect*, provides service providers, government agencies and policymakers and researchers with

a venue to discuss research, policy and practice issues and facilitates discussion and dissemination of good practice knowledge. During the reporting period, 532 messages were posted to the list and the number of *childprotect* subscribers grew to 493.

Website

The Clearinghouse website continued to be well used during the year with 357,658 pages downloaded (including over 211,000 pages of Clearinghouse publications). In high demand were publications produced by the Clearinghouse. Its Issues Papers received more than 69,000 requests and articles in its Newsletters received 64,237 requests. Other pages receiving frequent use are regularly updated bibliographies covering 24 topics, a directory of links to organisations working to prevent child abuse and neglect, a listing of counselling services for parents and children, and forthcoming conferences and events, both at the national and international level. As a result of discussion on the *childprotect* discussion list, resources have been developed to provide information on police clearances and checks, internet safety, and contact numbers for each State and Territory to report incidences of child abuse.

PUBLICATIONS

Kovacs, K. (2003), "How accessible are child abuse prevention programs for families: An exploratory study", *Family Matters*, no. 64, Autumn, pp. 48-51.

Kovacs, K. (2003), "Domestic violence and child protection" (Review), *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, vol. 11, no. 1, Winter, p. 7.

Stanley, J. (2003), "The protection of children from offensive material on the internet", *Small Screen: News Digest of Australian Council on Children and the Media*, no. 184, March, pp. 1-2.

Tomison, A.M. (2003), *Preventing child abuse: Changes to family support in the 21st century*,

National Child Protection Clearinghouse Issues Paper no. 17, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Kovacs, K. (2002), "Overview of the Gordon Report", *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer, p.1.

Stanley, J. (2002), "Preventing children and young people lighting bushfires in Australia", *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer, pp. 6-11.

Tomison, A.M. (2002), "Mandatory reporting: A question of theory versus practice", *Developing practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*, no. 4, pp. 13-17.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE WEB

Tomison, A.M. (2002), "Evidence-based practice in child protection: What do we know and how do we better inform practice", published online at www.acwa.org.au.

COMMISSIONED REPORT

Stanley, J. and Kovacs, K. (2002), *Accessibility Report*, Commissioned by the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.

PRESENTATIONS

"Child sexual abuse in Australian indigenous communities", Invited plenary speaker at the Conference on Child Sexual Abuse: Justice Response or Alternative Resolution, Australian Institute of Criminology, Adelaide, 1-2 May 2003 (J. Stanley).

"What is the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault?", Presentation to the Victorian CASA Network, CASA House, Melbourne, 8 April 2003 (A. Tomison).

"Child protection and child abuse prevention - Key trends in policy and practice", Invited paper presented as part of the Executive Seminar Series no.1, NSW Department of Community Services, Sydney, 28 February 2003 (A. Tomison).

"Are we meeting family needs in Australia?", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (A. Tomison).

"Factors affecting families' access to child abuse prevention programs. An exploratory study", Symposium presented at the 8th Australian Institute of

Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (J. Stanley and K. Kovacs).

"Evidence-based practice in child protection", Paper presented at the launch of the Unconditional Care Training Package, supported by the Centre for Youth Affairs Research and Development, RMIT, Melbourne, 23 October 2002 (A. Tomison).

"Evidence-based practice in child protection", Paper presented at the Social Policy Themes Conference, Catholic Social Services, Melbourne, 14 October 2002 (A. Tomison).

"Are we meeting family needs in Australia?", Keynote address presented at the Family Services Australia National Conference on Connecting Families and Communities, Darwin, 8-11 October 2002 (A. Tomison).

"Evidence-based practice in child protection: What do we know and how do we better inform practice", Keynote Presentation to What Works? Evidence Based Practice in Child and Family Services' Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) Biennial Conference, Bondi Beach, NSW, 2-4 September 2002 (A. Tomison).

Stronger Families Learning Exchange

The Stronger Families Learning Exchange (SFLEX) aims to provide action research support to Stronger Families Fund projects, to contribute to the evidence base about the effectiveness of early interventions for families. It also provides a Clearinghouse to disseminate information and resources related to strengthening Australian families.

Funded as part of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, SFLEX provides information, resource sharing, training and advice on family wellbeing, community development, primary prevention and early intervention. Its primary stakeholders are Stronger Families Fund project staff and government officers working with these projects, but its services extend to the wider community concerned with family wellbeing. The two key

components of the Learning Exchange are the Training and Support Team (research team) and the Stronger Families Clearinghouse (library and information services).

Training and support team activities

The major component of the Learning Exchange is the provision of action research evaluation support to Stronger Families Fund projects, funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. The Institute has developed the Training and Support Team of researchers to support the funded projects. In addition to 14 projects allocated in 2001–2002, 32 additional Stronger Families Fund projects have been allocated in 2002–2003, giving a total project allocation of 46 projects. These projects are located in disadvantaged communities across Australia, many in remote areas; 13 projects involve working with Indigenous communities.

The Training and Support Team provides assistance to the allocated projects, help project teams to develop and carry out an evaluation of their project based on action research principles. Project teams are supported to undertake regular assessments of their work over the life of their project and to use the resultant learnings to plan or refine further activity. Specifically, advice and support is provided on: action research processes; research design and methods; the analysis and interpretation of data; and the production of project reports. In the longer term, the project is expected to generate national data (via the Institute) on effective practice and early intervention strategies. The results will inform government policy, community development and service delivery, and research practices.

In 2002–2003, Team members continued to establish relationships with newly funded projects, and to provide ongoing support to

all allocated Stronger Family Fund projects. Team members have undertaken several site visits to work with each of the 46 projects as required, maintaining regular contact (and providing support) between visits through the resources of the Institute.

Development of resources

The Training and Support Team has developed appropriate tools and resources to facilitate the work of the projects, including training materials for project workers. Work has also commenced on working collaboratively with projects on the design and development of a series of publications that will record project outcomes and provide learning resources for the projects. Team members have also continued to work with the Department of Family and Community Services officers at both the state, territory and national levels in relation to specific projects and in the documentation of broader themes and issues arising from the projects.

National workshop

As part of its contractual obligations, the Stronger Families Learning Exchange ran a three-day national action research training workshop on 1-3 April 2003 in Melbourne. This workshop was attended by approximately 120 people drawn from Stronger Families Fund project teams, community members and Department of Family and Community Services officers.

Clearinghouse collection and library services

A collection of literature and resources has been developed of Australian and international research, practice and policy related to the strengthening families subject area. As well, a small collection of practical “how to” resources has been established. Nearly 1,000 items were added during the reporting period to the collection of approximately 4,000

items. As well, records on these topics (6,907) are indexed in the Institute's *Australian Family & Society Abstracts* database.

Provision has been made for Stronger Families Fund project workers to have direct access to Institute databases and library services. A help desk responds to queries which may be in the form of phone calls, faxes or emails. Help desk staff assist with catalogue searches, provide reference information and undertake literature searches of bibliographic databases. Personnel from 31 projects have requested information or borrowed resources from the Clearinghouse. In the reporting period, 60 Stronger Families Fund personnel registered to obtain materials from the Clearinghouse and borrowed 166 items. In addition, a range of bibliographies were distributed both via the website and in hard copy (by post) to each project, and a general bibliography was compiled for distribution at the SFLEX National Workshop.

Databases

Three databases have been developed as part of the Clearinghouse operations.

Mailing list database. A stakeholder mailing list database of 7,125 individuals or organisations has been established.

Stronger Families Fund projects database. Because of the diversity of information and data being collected from the projects, unstructured web pages are being used for project data. Each project has been assigned its own web page on the password-protected section of the website.

Early intervention database. An early intervention database has been developed. The criterion for inclusion is "good practice" or "what works" in early intervention, as demonstrated by evaluation. Managers of early intervention projects who are happy

to depict "good practice" elements of their projects have been contacted to request permission to include this information in the database. Details of 50 such projects have been added to the database which is publicly available on the SFLEX website.

Publications, website and extranet

The Stronger Families Learning Exchange publishes six-monthly bulletins, in hard copy and electronic format. These contain theoretical or methodological articles, information about the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, Stronger Families Fund project descriptions and news, best practice and research. In the reporting period, two Bulletin issues have been compiled and published both in print and electronically; print copies of both issues have been distributed to the mailing list.

The website contains current information and links to resources on prevention, early intervention and capacity building, to support the stakeholders of the Stronger Families Fund projects and the wider community.

The website contains two sections – a public access section and a password-protected extranet. The public access website contains: descriptions of the objectives and functions of SFLEX; announcements; information about the Stronger Families Fund projects; Good Practice database; electronic resources and links; dates for forthcoming conferences; and electronic versions of the Bulletins. During the reporting period, this part of the website received 41,064 requests for electronic pages.

The password-protected part of the website, the extranet, is reserved for Stronger Families Fund personnel, the Training and Support Team at the Institute and to Department of Family and Community staff involved in the Stronger Families Fund projects. During the

year, developments on the site have included: pages for individual Stronger Families Fund projects demonstrating their work and activities (including photographs and stories); research and evaluation reports; the creation of a series of electronic training resources (80 items); links to full text resources; and the SFLEX Findings Series prospectus.

A wide range of documents developed by the Training and Support Team has also been made available to projects via the web, including those prepared for the action research workshop conducted in Melbourne in April and papers presented at the workshop. Special resources were compiled in response to requests from Stronger Families Fund project staff who visited the Stronger Families Clearinghouse, and an expanding series of annotated bibliographies was developed to highlight material available to projects via the Clearinghouse. The *sff-discuss* electronic discussion list has been established to facilitate communication and resource sharing between projects, their support teams and the Stronger Families Clearinghouse.

PUBLICATIONS

Branigan, L. (2003), "But how can you prove it? Issues of rigour in action research", *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, no. 2, Spring/Summer, pp. 12-13.

Munt, R.A. (2002), "Building community participation", *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, no. 2, pp. 3-5.

Turner, C. (2002), "Action research and better outcomes for community projects", *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, no. 2, pp.6-7.

PRESENTATIONS

"From margins to centre: Experiences with Action Research in government and community contexts", Paper presented at the Systemic Participatory Inquiry Research Action Learning (SPIRAL) Forum, Borderlands, Melbourne, 23 May 2003 (L. Branigan).

"Action Research: History and practice", Presentation to the Department of Community Work Forum, School of Social and Community Studies, Victoria University, Melbourne, 29 April 2003 (L. Branigan).

"Action research: History and practice", Presentation to the Department of Family and Community Services Forum, Perth, 7 March 2003 (K. Johnson and L. Branigan).

"From vision to methodology to practice", Symposium presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (C. Turner, G. Stern and L. Anderson).

"Translating methodology into action", Paper presented at the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (C. Turner).

"Using Action Research in community settings", Presentation to the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference on Steps forward for families: Research, practice and policy, Melbourne, 12-14 February 2003 (presentation by the SFLEX team).

"How large-scale action research projects can work effectively across community and bureaucratic contexts", Paper presented at the Action Learning Action Research and Process Management (ALARPM) Conference, Brisbane, 7 October 2002 (presentation by the SFLEX team).

PRESENTATIONS TO THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP

"Action Research – keeping it going" (K. Johnson and C. Turner).

"Creative methods of documentation" (M. Haviland).

"Developing and using key performance indicators" (M. Haviland).

"Finding new ways to report and telling stories" (M. Haviland and K. Bredhauer).

"From problems to opportunities" (R. Munt).

"Gathering information" (M. Haviland).

"Getting started with Action Research" (K. Bredhauer and L. Natoli).

"Helping participation happen" (T. Lienert).

"Interviews: Talking with people" (L. Branigan and K. Johnson).

"Involving children" (T. Ridge and K. Bredhauer).

"Involving parents in projects" (C. Turner and K. Bredhauer).

"Let's talk about setting up parent education groups"(K. Bredhauer).

"Parent Support Forum" (C. Turner and L. Branigan).

"Problem solving in groups" (L. Natoli).

"Reference groups that really work" (L. Branigan and K. Brown).

"Reflection and Action Research"(C. Turner and K. Johnson).

"Running and managing focus groups: A primer" (B. Smyth and A. Garrow).

"Rural and remote projects" (C. Turner and L. Natoli).

"Strategic questions" (Y. Wadsworth and K. Bredhauer).

"Using appreciative inquiry" (R. Munt).

"Using focus groups" (R. Munt).

"Where we work – urban projects" (K. Bredhauer and M. Haviland).

"Working across communities" (T. Lienert and L. Natoli).

"Working on housing estates" (C. Turner).

"Working with indigenous communities" (M. Haviland).

"Your community: A problem to be solved or a mystery to be embraced" (R. Munt).

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

The mission of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is to improve access to current information on sexual assault in order to assist policymakers and others interested in this area to develop evidence-based strategies to prevent, respond to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of sexual assault.

The *Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault* is funded by the Office of the Status of Women as part of its National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault in Australia. The contract between the Institute and the Office of the Status of Women was signed in

January 2003. The emphasis of the Centre is on all forms of sexual assault, particularly the sexual assault of women and girls over 15 years of age (the most commonly reported victims), and adult survivors of child sexual assault. The National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Institute already deals with the sexual assault of children and young people. The intention is that the Centre will not duplicate this work but, by studying adult sexual assault, it and the Clearinghouse will cover the issue of sexual assault in its entirety.

The objectives of the Centre are: to facilitate access, particularly electronic access, to national policy relevant data to inform strategies to more effectively respond to the issue of sexual assault; to establish a comprehensive evidence base, and provide information on research and best practice approaches for interventions in response to sexual assault; to stimulate debate among policymakers, academics and service providers about the most effective strategies to prevent, respond to, and reduce the incidence of sexual assault; and to raise awareness of sexual assault and its impact on the Australian community.

The first six months of the Centre's operation have been devoted to staff recruitment and the establishment of a number of resources and services – specifically: the development of the livery and branding for the Centre; the development of a draft website design and drafts of the first of the Centre's publications; and the identification and purchase of appropriate literature and other library resources. Work has also been done in relation to the creation of an external Reference Group able to provide expert advice on sexual assault issues as required. As part of its role, the Reference Group will assist with the identification of research priorities and advise on the promotion of

the Centre and its services to Australian community organisations and other potential stakeholders. The Centre's main services are summarised below.

Knowledge base, communications and networking /outreach

In order to inform initiatives and programs directed at improving the response to the issue of sexual assault, the latest research and practice literature, videos, legislation, reports, and training resources on sexual assault are being collected.

Currently the Institute holds approximately 600 records in its catalogue database related to child abuse/neglect. This includes Australian material incorporated into the Institute's computerised database, *Australian Family & Society Abstracts*.

In order to provide a picture of "good practice" activity throughout Australia, the Centre is collecting information on programs currently in operation that aim to improve the response to sexual assault. The programs are being incorporated into a public access database and will be available to the public within the Institute's library or via the internet. It is intended that the data will also be used to inform the work of other service providers who are developing or refining best practice models for responding to sexual assault, including those engaged in the development of support and/or prevention programs.

The knowledge base is used to generate a number of communications activities. The contract specifies two Issues Papers, two Briefing Papers and four Newsletters per year. These and other information resources of the Centre will be disseminated to a network of clients through regular paper and electronic publications. Interested people may join the Centre's free mailing list to

receive publications, or may access electronic copies on the website (no publications have yet been produced in the reporting year). The primary point of access for the Centre will be via its website, to be launched in 2003–2004.

The primary goal of networking/outreach activities is to identify relevant agencies and individuals with an interest or role in sexual assault, and/or who provide treatment services, prevention services or resources, and to establish and maintain contacts with relevant agencies and individuals. The Centre's research staff participate in relevant workshops, conferences and related activities, presenting papers and seminars and carrying out other promotional work. Key aspects of this role are the regular dissemination of information to network members, the promotion of the Centre's role and keeping abreast of emerging issues. As noted, an external Reference Group will provide advice on the promotion of the Centre with potential stakeholders.

Research and advisory services

The Centre's research staff provide specialist advice and information to the Australian Government, the Office of the Status of Women and other stakeholders as required. Specifically, this includes the detailed analysis, interpretation and review of current issues that impact on the response to sexual assault, and assisting service providers with program development and strategies for evaluation. The Centre is also developing an ongoing primary and secondary research program.

PRESENTATIONS

"What is the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault?", Presentation to the Victorian CASA Network, CASA House, Melbourne, 8 April 2003 (A. Tomison).

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PERFORMANCE

The following pages (56–70) of this report present in tabular form a summary of research project performance in the Institute’s three research programs and its contract research work. For each of the research projects in these four areas, project aims, outputs, outcomes and comments are recorded.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PERFORMANCE

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
PROGRAM A: CHILDREN AND PARENTING			
<p>Australian Temperament Project (ATP) <i>(commenced at the Institute in 2000, but has been in existence since 1983)</i></p> <p>Data collection</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Reporting</p>	<p>3 journal articles published</p> <p>2 <i>Family Matters</i> articles published</p> <p>2 newsletters published</p> <p>5 conference presentations</p> <p>1 presentation to Victorian Government department</p> <p>1 workshop presentation</p>	<p>Findings seen as providing up-to-date information and used as evidence base to support proposals for programs and resources</p> <p>Research cited in national and international publications</p> <p>Invited to contribute to international conferences and publications</p> <p>Findings discussed in the media</p>	<p>Thirteenth data collection wave completed</p> <p>Ongoing analysis and reporting</p>
<p>Child Care Choices <i>(commenced 2001; scheduled completion 2004)</i></p> <p>Data collection for Wave 1</p> <p>Analysis of data</p>		<p>Project team invited to submit for additional funding by NSW Department of Community Services with a view to continuing to inform policy development and service delivery in New South Wales</p>	

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Dissemination of findings via written papers</p> <p>Dissemination of findings via conference presentations and speaking engagements</p> <p>Development of protocols for Wave 2</p>	<p>1 <i>Family Matters</i> article published</p> <p>1 journal article published</p> <p>3 conference papers delivered</p> <p>1 Institute seminar presented</p>		
<p>Child Care in Cultural Context <i>(commenced February 2000; scheduled completion December 2003)</i></p> <p>Dissemination of findings via written papers</p> <p>Dissemination of findings via conferences and speaking engagements</p>	<p>1 book chapter published</p> <p>1 <i>Family Matters</i> article published</p> <p>8 conference papers delivered</p> <p>1 seminar presentation</p>	<p>Findings discussed in the media</p> <p>Research cited and reproduced in a number of publications in the child care field</p> <p>Interest by the National Childcare Accreditation Council</p> <p>Interest shown by Centre for Community Child Health in ongoing translational research initiatives with parents and caregivers from different cultural backgrounds</p> <p>Findings informing policy development and professional development initiatives at local, state and national levels particularly in relation to family centred practice and service delivery</p> <p>Key messages presented to Somali family day care practitioners</p>	

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Children and Family Life <i>(commenced July 2002; scheduled completion 2004)</i></p> <p>Background Research Paper</p> <p>Development of sampling plan and research protocol</p> <p>Recruitment</p>	<p>1 Institute Research Paper produced and distributed</p>		<p>Sampling plan finalised</p>
<p>Follow-up Study of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination <i>(commenced 2003; scheduled completion 2004)</i></p> <p>Development of nesting project plan and research protocol for study of Donor Insemination families</p>			<p>Collaboration with Monash University</p> <p>Ethics approval received and recruitment ready to begin</p>
<p>Children in Need <i>(completed 2002)</i></p>	<p>1 presentation at a government forum</p> <p>1 conference presentation</p> <p>1 government workshop presentation</p>		<p>There is a continuing flow of outputs from this completed project</p>
<p>Survey of Gay and Lesbian Parenting <i>(commenced January 2001; completed December 2002)</i></p> <p>Dissemination of findings via written papers</p> <p>Dissemination of findings via conferences and speaking engagements</p>	<p>1 <i>Family Matters</i> article published</p> <p>1 conference paper delivered</p>		<p>Collaboration with University of Melbourne</p> <p>Project funded by Victorian Department of Human Services</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>ATP/ Crime Prevention Victoria <i>(contracted research)</i> <i>(commenced December 2001; scheduled completion 2004)</i></p> <p>Data collection</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Reporting</p>	<p>1 journal article published</p> <p>3 presentations</p> <p>Project Advisory Group meetings, involving representatives from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, Victorian Government departments and services, research organisations and universities</p>	<p>Findings seen as providing up-to-date information and used as evidence base to support proposals for programs and resources</p> <p>Research cited in national and international publications</p> <p>Invited to contribute to international conferences and publications</p> <p>Findings discussed in the media</p> <p>Findings used to identify intervention opportunities and gaps in current services</p>	<p>Data collection achieved</p> <p>Ongoing analysis and reporting until 2004</p>
<p>ATP/ Transport Accident Commission of Victoria and Royal Automobile Club of Victoria <i>(contracted research)</i> <i>(commenced June 2003; scheduled completion 2004)</i></p> <p>Data collection</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Reporting</p>	<p>Memorandum of Understanding negotiated and signed</p>	<p>Project in development phase</p> <p>Project development commenced</p> <p>Data collection completed</p> <p>Ongoing analysis and reporting until 2004</p>	<p>Project in development phase</p> <p>Project development commenced</p> <p>Data collection completed</p> <p>Ongoing analysis and reporting until 2004</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Negotiating work and family <i>(completed 2002)</i></p>	<p>2 guest lectures delivered</p>	<p>Ongoing dissemination through invitations from interested parties</p>	
<p>PROGRAM AREA B: FAMILY AND MARRIAGE</p>			
<p>Family transitions analysis <i>(ongoing)</i></p> <p>Analysis and dissemination of information</p>	<p>1 review article on fertility in <i>Family Matters</i></p> <p>1 article on partnering in <i>Family Matters</i></p> <p>1 paper on family transitions in conference proceedings</p> <p>3 conference papers on family transitions</p> <p>2 conference papers on partnership formation</p>	<p>Work on fertility decision making cited in publications, and at international and national conferences and workshops</p> <p>Invitation to critically evaluate draft chapter, "Changing families", <i>ABS Social Trends 2003</i></p> <p>Numerous media interviews conducted and research cited in international print and electronic media</p> <p>Findings incorporated into educational video being presented in secondary schools</p> <p>Invitations to present papers on family trends issues</p> <p>Consultations with representatives from national and state bodies, state and federal government departments</p> <p>Publications on fertility have been cited at national and international conferences</p> <p>Work by Institute included in government reports and submissions</p>	<p>Ongoing analysis and dissemination of broad family trends and transitions</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Fertility Decision Making Project <i>(Collaborative project with the Office of the Status of Women) (commenced June 2002; scheduled completion June 2004)</i></p> <p>Planning and design of study</p>	<p>1 <i>Family Matters</i> article</p>	<p>Media interviews and reports</p>	<p>Project Brief (design and methodology) completed and interagency agreement signed</p> <p>Fieldwork company appointed</p> <p>Interview schedule designed and being piloted</p>
<p>Positive Family Relationships <i>(ongoing)</i></p> <p>Monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of information</p>	<p>1 Institute Research Paper published and distributed</p> <p>3 conference presentations</p>	<p>32 media interviews</p> <p>Research cited and reproduced in national and international print and electronic media</p> <p>Consultations with community-based agencies and service providers</p>	
<p>The Case for Marriage in Australia <i>(new core project) (commenced June 2003; approximate completion December 2004)</i></p> <p>In partnership with University of South Australia</p> <p>Stage 1: Literature Review</p> <p>Stage 2: Analysis of Australian datasets</p>			<p>In early stages of the project.</p> <p>Currently gathering research literature for Stage 1. Expected publication early 2004</p> <p>Stage 2 to commence by mid-2004</p>
<p>Family Law Monitoring and Evaluation <i>(ongoing)</i></p> <p>Monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of information</p>	<p>2 articles in <i>Family Matters</i></p>	<p>Consultations with national and international research bodies and universities, community and professional groups</p> <p>Invited to participate in family law research planning seminars</p> <p>Invited to review new book on post-separation parenting and national and international journal articles</p>	<p>Institute reports and books continue to be used by Family Court, international and national universities and research institutes</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Caring for Children after Separation Project (commenced 2002; scheduled completion June 2004)</p>	<p>2 articles in <i>Family Matters</i> 3 conference presentations (one invited) 2 conference proceedings 10 focus groups completed, transcribed and some analysis completed</p>	<p>Extensive stakeholder consultation invited to present on post-separation parenting patterns to practitioners Early project work and focus group data drawn on heavily by many stakeholders for the forthcoming Parliamentary Inquiry into a rebuttable presumption of joint custody</p>	<p>Project Brief and Scoping Documents (design and methodology) completed and approved Focus group component in write-up phase. To be completed early in 2003–2004 CATI component in pilot-test stage. To be completed early in 2003–2004 Fieldwork company appointed</p>
<p>Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) (commenced July 2002; ongoing)</p>	<p>10 papers and presentations based on HILDA data from Institute research staff 3 family trends charts on the Institute <i>Family Facts and Figures</i> web page Development of family dynamics component of the survey 1 article in <i>Family Matters</i> Development and ongoing management of the HILDA survey</p>	<p>HILDA dataset being used extensively by researchers in universities and government departments, and by Institute researchers collaborating across the three research programs Findings discussed in the media</p>	<p>The Institute's involvement in HILDA survey design and data collection and data analysis is ongoing</p>
<p>PROGRAM AREA C: FAMILY AND SOCIETY</p>			
<p>Families, Social Capital and Citizenship (commenced 2000; scheduled completion 2003)</p>	<p>2 Institute Research Papers produced and distributed 3 public lectures delivered 1 government briefing delivered</p>	<p>Research used to guide national, state and local data collection of social capital indicators Research findings being input into development of international social capital indicators</p>	<p>Ongoing data analysis and reporting throughout 2003</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
	3 conference papers delivered 1 House of Representatives submission produced and submitted	Research cited and reproduced in numerous publications, including government reports Invitations received to contribute to international publications Findings discussed in the media	
Measuring Social Capital in Families First Communities 4 Kids <i>(commenced 2002; completed 2003)</i>	3 Final Reports produced and delivered	Reports being used to assist modification of models of service delivery	Successful development and completion of project
Family and Work Decisions <i>(commenced February 2001; scheduled completion December 2004)</i>	2 Institute Research Papers produced and distributed 1 <i>Family Matter's</i> article published 5 conference papers/seminars delivered	Research cited in the Hansard Research cited in submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries Invited to participate in various policy development forums Research cited in numerous publications, including government reports Findings discussed in the media	Data collected and prepared for analysis on lone and couple mothers
Marginal Attachment in the Australian Labour Market <i>(commenced March 2001; completed June 2002)</i>	1 <i>Family Matter's</i> Article 1 Reserve Bank of Australia Discussion Paper published	Findings discussed in the media Findings cited in government and academic reports	
Work and Family <i>(commenced 2002; scheduled completion January 2004)</i>	1 conference paper delivered	Findings from <i>Family-friendly work practices</i> project disseminated through the media, cited in government reports, submissions to government inquiries and academic papers	

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
Ageing and intergenerational exchanges within families <i>(commenced 2002; scheduled completion December 2004)</i>	1 conference paper delivered 1 Institute Research Paper drafted 1 House of Representatives submission produced and submitted	Findings discussed in the media	
Impact of Children on Family Labour Supply <i>(commenced 2003; scheduled completion January 2003)</i>	1 workshop paper delivered	Findings discussed in the media	
The Dynamics of Low Income, Welfare Reliance, and Changes in Family Structure of Parents with Dependent Children <i>(commenced February 2003; scheduled completion December 2005)</i>			Project in development phase Contract signed Project Management Committee established Project development occurred

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS ANALYSIS (Supporting all program areas)

Ongoing	Book entitled <i>Diversity and change in Australian families: A statistical profile</i> – ready for review, editing and publication <i>Family Facts and Figures</i> established (and regularly updated and expanded) on the Institute website 5 <i>Family Matters</i> articles 3 conference presentations		
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Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>CONTRACT RESEARCH Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children)</p>			
<p>Growing Up in Australia (the longitudinal study of Australian children) <i>(Expression of Interest 2001; scheduled completion 2011)</i></p>	<p>Sample design and selection</p>	<p>Paper circulated widely to reference group and available on website</p>	<p>Sampling frame developed</p>
<p>Fieldwork agency contract, consultation, and oversight</p>	<p>1 Discussion Paper produced and distributed</p> <p>Project Report No 2 – <i>Sampling and data collection</i> submitted to the Department of Family and Community Services</p> <p>Project Report No 7 – <i>Data collection and tender process</i> submitted to the Department of Family and Community Services</p> <p>Development of training manual for data collection teams</p>	<p>Regular consultation between the Department of Family and Community Services, the Institute, and the Steering Committee (which is made up of key government agencies and stakeholders)</p> <p>Close consultation with the Consortium Advisory Group and design teams</p> <p>Consultations with other national and state organisations</p>	<p>Selection and signing of contract with fieldwork agency</p> <p>Planning for the dress rehearsal and main wave data collection</p>
<p>Instrument and methodology development and testing</p>			<p>Ongoing and collaborative process</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Data management</p> <p>Implementation of marketing and promotion strategies</p>	<p>Project Report No 4 – <i>Instrument development and pre-testing</i> submitted to the Department of Family and Community Services</p> <p>Project Report No 8 – <i>Wave 1 Pilot Test report</i> submitted to the Department of Family and Community Services</p> <p>Letters from Health Insurance Commission to recruit families for the dress rehearsal mailed out in late June 2003</p> <p>Project Report No 5 – <i>Data Linkage</i> submitted to the Department of Family and Community Services</p> <p>Posters and stakeholder brochure developed and widely distributed</p> <p>Information flyers for parents, respondent brochures for the study produced for the dress rehearsal</p> <p>Mail-out to services in dress rehearsal post codes occurred in late June 2003</p> <p>7 articles have been produced and will be published for a number of key early childhood publications and peak agency newsletters</p>	<p>Multiple media interviews</p> <p>The study was discussed in many government workshops and conferences as having potential to make an important contribution to the evidence base on child-related policies</p>	<p>Pre-test (September–October 2002) and pilot test (March–April 2003) completed</p> <p>Refinement of survey instruments in preparation for dress rehearsal and main wave data collection</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Liaison, consultation, information dissemination and reporting activities</p>	<p>1 article in <i>Family Matters</i></p> <p>16 conference papers/presentations</p> <p>2 electronic newsletters on the study website</p> <p>Distribution of media releases by Minister and the Institute</p> <p>Project Report No 3 – <i>Assessment of marketing and promotion strategies</i> submitted to the Department of Family and Community Services</p>	<p>Ongoing teleconferences and meetings with Scientific and Policy Advisory Group</p> <p>Monthly teleconferences and two face-to-face meetings with Consortium Advisory Group</p>	<p>Creation of Scientific and Policy Advisory Group comprising national and international experts from a broad range of disciplines</p>
<p>Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault</p>			
<p>Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) <i>(Collaborative project with the Office of the Status of Women) (commenced January 2003; scheduled completion June 2005)</i></p>	<p>1 promotional presentation to Victorian sexual assault services</p>	<p>Research staff invited to promote the Centre with peak bodies, attend research conferences, and join national conference organising committees</p> <p>The Centre received invitation to undertake contract research with VicHealth</p>	<p>The Centre will be fully operational in 2003–2004</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC) <i>(commenced 1995)</i></p> <p><i>Advisory</i></p>	<p>National Child Protection Clearinghouse</p> <p>1 Issues Paper</p> <p>2 Newsletters (including 3 authored review articles) produced and distributed</p> <p>Responded to 1,361 queries in the reporting period</p> <p>Provided program evaluation advice to 3 service providers</p> <p>Brief presented to Gordon Inquiry</p>	<p>9 media requests for background information and/or interviews</p> <p>Ongoing advisory role for the Australian Council for Children and Parenting</p> <p>Ongoing advisory role for Australian Government and State departments</p> <p>Significant consultation and advice to international agencies, governments, national bodies, the non-government sector and the child abuse research community</p> <p>Clearinghouse brief used extensively as part of the Gordon Inquiry</p> <p>Requests received from Indigenous agencies to contribute to conferences and provide advice on Indigenous family violence</p>	<p>The current three-year contract was due to end in December 2003, but has been extended until June 2004</p> <p>Project completed in 2002</p>
<p><i>Networking and outreach</i></p>	<p>3 submissions to government inquiries (2 House of Representatives, 1 West Australian)</p> <p>5 conference papers presented</p> <p>2 invited keynote addresses presented</p>	<p>Invitations to present keynote addresses and papers at national conferences</p> <p>Invited to join 2 international conference organising bodies</p> <p>Publications and presentations are regularly cited in research and policy publications</p>	

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
<p>Research</p>	<p>2 journal papers produced and distributed 1 <i>Family Matters</i> article</p>	<p>The Audit continues to be regularly referred to or cited by the Australian Council for Children and Parenting; the Department of Family and Community Services, and non-government agencies</p>	
<p>Accessibility to child abuse prevention programs (commenced 2001; scheduled completion October 2003) Data collection and analysis completed Final report drafted and published</p>	<p>1 article in <i>Family Matters</i> 1 commissioned report produced and distributed 1 conference paper presented</p>	<p>Conference paper has been cited by non-government peak bodies in policy material</p>	<p>Final report being prepared for publication</p>
<p>Australian Children's Contact Services Project (Collaborative project with Griffith University) (commenced 2002; scheduled completion June 2004) Development and piloting of all data collection instruments Data collection in progress</p>	<p>1 unpublished briefing paper produced</p>	<p>Family Court of Australia and the Australian Government Attorney-General's department have expressed strong interest in the project</p>	<p>Project extended by six months due to delays in funding and negotiations with key agencies</p>

Project aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Comments
Stronger Families Learning Exchange			
<p>Stronger Families Learning Exchange (SFLEX) <i>(commenced January 2002; scheduled completion June 2004)</i></p>	<p>Early intervention database developed with details of 50 projects</p> <p>2 Stronger Families <i>Bulletins</i> produced and distributed</p>		
<p>SFLEX Training and Support Team</p> <p>Ongoing collection and analysis of data from Stronger Families Fund projects</p> <p>Ongoing assistance to projects to interpret their data, to identify learnings, and to modify their projects and/or evaluation as necessary</p> <p>Development of project resources and "research findings" series of publications</p>	<p>Ongoing work with Stronger Families Fund projects to develop performance and outcome indicators</p> <p>7 conference papers presented</p> <p>Articles in 2 Stronger Families <i>Bulletins</i> published</p> <p>National workshop (including 26 Stronger Families staff presentations) successfully conducted</p> <p>Ongoing provision of action research advice and expertise on project design, implementation, evaluation and reporting to funded projects</p> <p>Series of online training materials produced (80 items)</p>	<p>Invitations received to brief (and train) Department of Family and Community Services staff on action research practice</p> <p>Requests received to undertake additional action research projects for state and Australian Government agencies</p> <p>Received invitations to present at conferences and to join action research professional associations</p>	