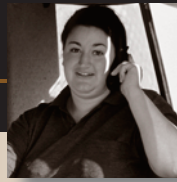
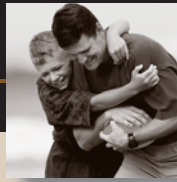


# 5

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION



## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The Institute's Communication and Information Program aims to improve public understanding and inform the policy process about factors affecting marital and family wellbeing through a comprehensive communication and information strategy.

The program is responsible for undertaking activities and achieving outcomes related to the broad communication objectives outlined in the Institute's *Strategic Plan 2002–2005*. As such, it is responsible for promoting the Institute, its role, research, products and capabilities. In the main, this is done through: publishing and disseminating Institute research; providing library and bibliographic services; maintaining and updating Internet and Intranet information; organising conferences and seminars; and coordinating media liaison.

The program also develops and maintains networks and resources, and provides print and electronic publishing services to support the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

### External review of the program

As reported in last year's Annual Report, in January 2004, the Institute commissioned Fenton Communications to undertake a review of the Institute's communications and information activities. The purpose of the review was to provide the Institute with information, including stakeholder feedback, as to the quality of the Institute's Communications and Information services and to use this information to effect further improvement and enable the planning of future activities.

The review was completed in July 2004, and a report forwarded to the incoming Director in September. The report has informed a number of changes already in the program, with a number of recommendations and observations already acted upon. With the decision to review the Institute's activities more broadly, the communication review has become part of that wider process.

### AIFS Conference 2005

The theme of the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, held in Melbourne on 9-11 February 2005, was "Families Matter". The conference was attended by 382 delegates, with more than 130 papers, and five workshops presented over the three days of the conference.

A major aim of the conference was to help advance the connections between research, policy and practice. The conference was an excellent opportunity for the Australian Institute of Family Studies to bring its own research to the attention of a broad audience, with Institute researchers contributing more than 20 papers to the program and convening a number of symposia.

The conference was opened by the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator the Hon. Kay Patterson, who delivered a major speech outlining the Australian Government's fourth term agenda and achievements to date. The Prime Minister sent a videotaped welcome to delegates.

The keynote speakers delivered thought-provoking and challenging addresses.

The opening keynote address was presented by Professor Linda Waite (the Lucy Flower Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center on Aging at the University of Chicago, where she also co-directs the Alfred P. Sloan Center on Parents, Children and Work). Professor Waite's paper, "Marriage, Family and Health", examined the links between marriage and health that underlie significant differentials in mortality between married and non-married people. The paper assessed the relationship between marriage and three key dimensions of health – physical health, emotional wellbeing, and cognitive function.

The Day 2 plenary session saw two of Australia's most significant contributors to work and family policy address the issue of balancing work and family life.

Dr Don Edgar (Director of the Institute of Family Studies from its establishment in 1980 until 1992, and since then, a Professorial Fellow with Monash University's Key Centre in Industrial Relations, an Adjunct Professor with RMIT's Centre for Workplace Culture Change, and now a writer and policy adviser to business and governments around the nation) presented a keynote address entitled "AIFS and the Work-Family Roundabout". This paper examined the development of the work and family debate over time, and the contribution of Institute and other research to government policy and organisational practice.

Following her 2000 Inquiry into paid maternity leave, the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Ms Pru Goward has turned her attention to the broader issue of work and family and the beginning of a new project titled "Striking the Balance: Women, Men, Work and Family". The Commissioner's keynote address, "Men, Women, Work and Family", outlined the challenges facing employers, employees and those seeking to re-enter the workforce.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion on the topic "Family policy in the Asia Pacific region". The Hon. Sussan Ley, MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Children and Youth Affairs, spoke about the Australian Government's philosophy and approach to family policy. The focus on early childhood intervention, in particular the National Agenda for Early Childhood, and the Government's commitment to enabling and supporting families in the choices they make regarding work and family life and the use of child care were discussed, as were the provision of income support and other payments at critical points in the family life cycle.

Director, Family Policy, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, Ms Charlotte Beck, provided a broad sweep of the policies and support system for families in Singapore in the areas of early childhood development, support given to strengthen families, work-life harmony, and the key changes currently being made in the social support system. The core of the family and social support system in Singapore has been education, health and housing. Singapore recognises that it is a small nation and that people are its main resource. The guiding principles for Singapore's social and family support systems have been to build self-reliance, but with mutual obligations within the family and between the family and the community in which they belong.

From New Zealand, Ms Elizabeth Rowe (former Interim Chief Executive Officer of the New Zealand Families Commission), and Mr Charles Waldergrave (Family Centre, Social Policy Research Unit in New Zealand), outlined the social policy setting for New Zealand family policy, and the problems facing their country. Population ageing, and issues of ethnic and inter-racial fairness were discussed. New Zealand has gone through a period of economic re-structuring and is competing successfully in a globalised market. This is a critical time of early prosperity and social inclusion to set generative and far-sighted policy parameters that enhance the lives of all New Zealand families.

During and immediately after the conference, research presented at the conference was reported in more than 800 media items. Feedback from conference delegates was very positive. As always, there is room for improvement, and delegates' comments in this regard will be considered in the planning of the next conference.

In order that those who were not able to attend the conference did not miss out on research presented, the Institute obtained as many papers as possible and made them available online. To June 2005, more than 80 papers had been received, and more than 70,000 papers downloaded from the Institute's website.

## Publishing

One of the most visible outputs from a research agency is its contribution to the literature. Throughout 2004–2005, the Institute continued to publish relevant and timely information in the area of family research.

The publishing program includes the Institute's research journal *Family Matters*, and titles published under the Institute imprint in its series publications. In addition, research undertaken by Institute staff, or by external researchers using Institute data, is published in Australian and overseas journals and conference proceedings, or appears in major Institute reports.

To ensure maximum reach and the widest possible readership for Institute publications, most material published in print form is also published electronically on the Institute's website. This occurs simultaneously in the case of free publications, or subsequent to initial print publication in the case of the subscription-based *Family Matters*.

In accordance with the Institute's long-held aim of presenting published material in a clear, accessible and attractive style, publications continued to adopt the highest editorial and design standards.

## Review processes

Again this year, works were published in accordance with the Institute's established publishing review policy. This policy, formulated and monitored by the Institute's Publications Committee, requires that drafts of all proposed new titles undergo rigorous internal and external review. Reviewers are asked to refer to the Institute's *Guide for External Review of Manuscripts* in preparing their evaluation reports.

Acceptance of all *Family Matters* material is subject to a formal review and assessment process, with reference to the Institute's *Criteria for Acceptance of Family Matters Articles*.

### ***Family Matters journal***

The research journal *Family Matters* is the Institute's main dissemination medium, its primary purpose being to keep its local and international readership informed about Institute research and activities. Thus the Institute places a high priority on its own research contribution to each edition.

It is also the role of *Family Matters* to keep its readership informed more generally of relevant family-related research by publishing articles from other Australian and overseas sources. In accordance with this policy, in 2004–2005 *Family Matters* continued to publish the work of external authors as well as reporting directly on Institute work.

Although designed to be accessible to a broad readership, *Family Matters* is a fully refereed academic journal, which is recognised by the Department of Education Science and Training for the purposes of Research Data Collection, and is included in the Register of Refereed Journals. The Institute holds copyright to all articles published.

The content of *Family Matters* provides a diverse range of perspectives and analyses of family research and policy options. In addition to research articles on a comprehensive range of family-related topics, regular columns include analysis of family trends, information and discussion of new developments in family law, and expert opinion/comment on family-related topics. Readers' letters to the editor are welcomed and may be published in *Family Matters*.

In accordance with the Institute's Strategic Plan 2002–2005, three editions of *Family Matters* were published in 2004–2005, in Winter, Spring/Summer and Autumn.

- *Family Matters*, no. 68, Winter 2004 (88 pages) contained a number of articles highlighting the wellbeing of adolescents. Included were articles on: factors involved in positive adolescent development; becoming adult and shaping new life patterns; and the aspirations and actualities of forming relationships. *The edition included five major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*
- *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer 2004 (104 pages) focused on the issue of fertility, drawing on findings from the Institute's Fertility Decision Making Project. Included were articles on: the factors shaping people's hopes, expectations and family decisions in the context of choices about having children, or not. *The edition included 13 major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*
- *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn 2005 (72 pages) focused on how families allocate time to work and family. Included were articles on: access to family-friendly work arrangements; and mothers' views on using formal child care. *The edition included seven major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*

### ***Family Matters reader feedback, subscriptions, and media interest***

Again this year, the general response to *Family Matters* – written and spoken, formal and informal – continued to be extremely positive, as did the more specific responses gathered during consultation on the Institute's Communications Review, undertaken in 2004. This encourages the view that the journal will continue to be the main "voice" of the Institute.

A subscription rate applies to *Family Matters* but, in accordance with the Institute's aim of reaching a wide and diverse audience, it is also distributed to an extensive free list comprising Members of Parliament, key policy makers and the media. Although marketing activities remained limited due to staffing changes and other Institute priorities, paid *Family Matters* subscriptions were maintained at about 2,000 over the year, with total distribution of about 3,500 copies per edition.

*Family Matters* always draws media attention with follow-up radio and press interviews and articles, and this year's three editions of the journal were no exception.

*Family Matters* continued to be available as an online subscription. All articles can be accessed in HTML and PDF format from RMIT Publishing's Informit e-Library, a specialist academic electronic publisher.

### **Series publications**

In addition to *Family Matters* and the *Annual Report*, the Institute produces two main series publications.

- *The Research Paper series* is an important means by which Institute research findings and methodologies are made public. The series enables the dissemination of Institute research (often during the course of a project) to policy makers, practitioners and researchers with the aim of encouraging dialogue with research and policy communities and thus obtaining review and feedback about the nature, direction and quality of Institute research. No new Research Papers were published in 2004–2005.
- *The Research Report series* comprises more substantial, finished works that report on research findings at major milestones in a research project, or at the completion of a project. Four new Research Reports were published in 2004–2005. These are listed under the Children and Parenting research program, and the Family and Marriage research program, elsewhere in this Annual Report.

### **Contract publications and reports**

The Institute publishes Issues Papers, Discussion Papers, Bulletins and Newsletters that emanate from its various contract research projects. These are reported elsewhere in this Annual Report under the 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.

During the year, the Institute also produced several commissioned reports which are listed under the relevant research projects.

## **Media liaison**

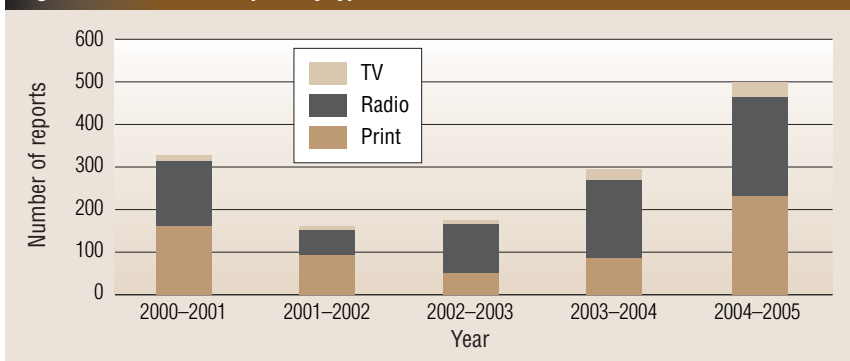
The print and electronic media are an important means by which the Institute communicates its research findings to the community. Contact with the media is undertaken in accordance with the Institute's media policy, and generally takes three forms: provision of information or comment about Institute research; comment about current research on families not undertaken by the Institute, including overseas research; and referral to other researchers or relevant agencies outside the Institute.

**Table 5.1** Media Reports by location 2004–2005

	Print	Radio		Television		Total		
		Interviews broadcast	Syndicated broadcasts	Interviews broadcast	Syndicated broadcasts	Clips	Syndicated broadcasts	Mentions
National	34	16	2720	9	293	59	3013	3072
Regional	10	38	18	1		49	18	67
Metropolitan	184	186	408	20	65	390	473	863
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>3146</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>3504</b>	<b>4002</b>

**Table 5.2** Media reports by type 2000–2005

	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	
Print		160	92	47	83	228
Radio		154	60	119	185	239
Television		12	7	5	26	31
<b>Total</b>		<b>326</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>498</b>

**Figure 5.1** Media reports by type 2000–2005

Press coverage of the Institute's research in 2004–2005 reached its highest level ever. With the Institute's conference in February 2005, the release of *Diversity & Change in Australian Families*, the first findings from *Growing Up in Australia*, a number of research reports, and three editions of *Family Matters*, the Institute's research has been prominently reported, and debated in metropolitan and regional media across Australia. Media outlets made over 1,000 requests for information or comment from the Institute. The Institute monitors national, metropolitan and regional print and electronic media. There were 498 reports or articles that included mention of the Institute's research or expertise recorded for the year.

## Library

The Institute's library aims to provide a proactive information service supporting the Institute's work and its high-quality collection of electronic and hard copy resources related to family research.

Primary stakeholders are Institute staff and clients associated with the Institute's Clearinghouse projects, but some services are provided to the wider community

– online catalogue, interlibrary loans, and a reference service. During business hours, the library is open to visitors by appointment.

### *Collection and services*

While hard-copy resources are still collected, the library collection is increasingly becoming a “virtual repository” of electronic reports, databases, conference papers, journals, and journal articles. During the year, the collection of both electronic and hard-copy items grew by an average of 350 items per month.

In order to improve access to the collection, the library’s online catalogue – available worldwide via the Internet – is enhanced by the addition of tables of contents, abstracts and extra thesaurus headings. The collection is promoted by the library’s participation in the National Bibliographic Database, the fundamental networking resource for Australian libraries. During the year, the catalogue received an average of nearly 80,000 “hits” per month.

Institute researchers’ requests for materials or information (205 per month) were mainly supplied from the library’s own resources (70 per cent). Remaining requests were supplied by cooperative arrangements with other libraries (21 per cent) or commercial document supply services (9 per cent). External clients also used the library, with about 108 items borrowed and 127 reference requests/literature searches per month.

Staff training included induction sessions for new staff members, presentations at monthly research meetings, and one-on-one demonstrations.

### *Research support initiative*

In order to take a more proactive and targeted role in supporting the Institute’s work, and to become more closely integrated with the research area, library staff were designated as “liaison librarians” for particular research projects. The scheme, which began in December 2004, has had uneven take-up in that researchers have received it favourably, but not all are yet using it fully.

### *Staff survey*

In November 2004, a questionnaire was distributed to Institute researchers in order to determine their use of, and level of satisfaction with, the library service. The response rate was 71 per cent. The level of satisfaction with the service was high, with 85 per cent very satisfied and 15 per cent satisfied.

### *Intergenerational project*

The library managed a project funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) Youth Bureau (Youth Research and Analysis section) entitled “Review of the psycho-social factors that influence the intergenerational transmission of socio-economic disadvantage and welfare dependence”. Its aims were to identify: the key psycho-social and ecological concepts and factors that help an understand of the transmission of entrenched social disadvantage; and, where possible, the relevant factors that may protect or moderate the transmission of welfare dependency.

The library carried out the literature review and provided all materials to Professor Robyn Penman who was sub-contracted to prepare a report. The report is soon to be published by Department of Family and Community Services.

**Publications**

Jean, C. (2004), "Book notes", *Family Matters*, no. 68, Winter, pp. 84-85.

Jean, C. (2004), "Book notes", *Family Matters*, no. 69. Spring/Summer, pp. 100-101.

Jean, C. (2005), "Book notes", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp. 68-69.

**Presentations**

"Training Workshop for Sirsi Serials Librarians", Presentation to Sirsi Serials Librarians Group (Vic), Melbourne, 29 April 2005 (A. Emmanouilidis).

"Australian Institute of Family Studies Library and its Clearinghouses", Paper presented at the Second Interlending & Document Delivery Practitioner's Workshop, Melbourne, 3 September 2004 (A. Emmanouilidis).

**Online information*****Bibliographic databases***

The *Australian Family & Society Abstracts (AF&SA)* is a bibliographic database established by the Institute in 1983 with the aim of providing Australia-wide and international access to research and information on Australian family issues. The database records citations and abstracts to the research, policy and practice literature about Australian families and the social issues that affect them.

*Australian Family & Society Abstracts* is an established information service in the social sciences and one of a number of national bibliographic databases providing access to Australia's research literature. Public access is provided via two database hosting services (one Australian and one in the United States) both offering Web and CD-ROM access. Subscribers to *AF&SA* include all Australian universities and state libraries, state and federal government departments and agencies, non-government organisations and professionals.

*Family & Society Plus* was officially launched at the national conference of Family Services Australia in October 2004. This database is an enhanced version of *AF&SA* database offering full text journal articles in addition to *AF&SA*'s citations and abstracts and links to freely available documents on the Web. Journal articles included are available in PDF and HTML formats and are supplied under licence from journal publishers. Since the launch of *Family & Society Plus* there has been strong interest from current *AF&SA* subscribers and from new subscribers interested in increased access to full text documents.

During 2004–2005 more than 4,000 new documents were indexed for the database bringing the total number of documents to 60,000. Of the documents indexed the year 49 per cent link directly to the full text report or article on the Web, demonstrating the growing trend for governments, tertiary institutions and non-government organisations to publish online on the Web.

***Internet developments***

The Internet team is responsible for a range of projects including the design and development of websites, the Institute's Intranet, and a number of email alerting and discussion lists.

Six websites are currently maintained. These are the Institute's main website, three sites for clearinghouse/communications projects (the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault), and two for research projects (Growing Up in Australia (the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children), and the Australian Temperament Project).

	1999–2000	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005
<b>Requests (hits)</b>	851,724	1,364,903	2,273,569	4,495,267	6,812,247	7,163,446
<b>Pages down-loaded</b>	582,657	951,572	1,363,555	1,650,658	2,601,564	2,458,789

Statistics of web use across all sites showed a 5 per cent increase in “hits” but a decrease in total pages downloaded. The Institute's main site was primarily responsible for the decrease in downloads with a drop of 21 per cent compared with last year. Other sites recorded increased use – for example, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (+100 per cent); National Child Protection Clearinghouse (+17 per cent); Stronger Families Learning Exchange (+20 per cent); Growing Up in Australia (+10 per cent).

The Institute's main website reports on Institute programs and activities, disseminates information from its databases, publications and resource collections, and promotes the development of networks with other individuals and organisations concerned with family research and policy. New content during the year included: “Parent child contact after separation” a new title in the *Family Facts and Figures* series; several Institute research reports; abstracts and reports from the Institute Seminar Series; and more than 70 papers from the Institute's biennial research conference held in February 2005. Regular services such as the “Forthcoming Conferences” page and the weekly journal abstracts list selected from *Australian Family & Society Abstracts* continue to be well used recording average accesses per month of 5,000 and 1,500 respectively.

### **Alerting service**

The Institute's email alerting service, *aifs-alert* keeps stakeholders up to date with the work and activities of the Institute. At the end of the financial year more than 1,100 people were receiving the weekly email.

### **Intranet**

During 2003–2004, the structure and content of the Institute's Intranet were reviewed, pages updated or removed, and a detailed A-Z index introduced to improve access. Work on the Intranet continued this year with a staff survey to ascertain frequency of use, whether required information was easily accessed, problems or difficulties finding information, and suggestions for improvements and new content. To assess the staff's experience of using the Intranet, usability testing was conducted with seven staff from different work areas. The resulting analysis of staff needs and different approaches to finding information led to a total redesign of the Intranet and a final report documenting the results of the survey.

**Representation at conferences, workshops and external committees**

Victorian E-Government Community of Practice seminar on Web statistics analysis, Melbourne, 20 April 2005 (D. Whithear).

Information Online, Sydney, 1-3 February 2005 (D. Whithear).

Victorian E-Government Community of Practice seminar hosted at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 13 August 2004 (D. Whithear).

Co-Convenor, Victorian E-Government Community of Practice Forum Member, House Committee, Childwatch International Children's House in Cyberspace (D. Whithear).

Member, Informit Online, Database Producers Committee (D. Whithear).

**Institute seminars**

In 2004–2005, in addition to various informal lunchtime talks by invited researchers, the Institute continued its series of seminars presenting contemporary issues in national and international family research. The seminars are designed to promote a forum for discussion and debate, and are free and open to the public.

Particularly welcome are overseas visiting researchers, who are able to provide international perspectives, and researchers from other organisations, who can add to the depth of knowledge about family-related research in Australia.

Again this year, a range of topics was covered, with the majority being presented by researchers from outside the Institute. The seminars were attended by audiences from different backgrounds, attracting between 30 and 50 participants each time, and providing opportunities to share research and discuss ideas. Where papers have been provided by the seminar presenters, these have been placed on the Institute's website and actively promoted.

**Institute seminar program 2004–2005**

Fourteen seminars were hosted by the Institute this year.

15 JULY 2004

**Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families**

**Lixia Qu**

Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Family Studies

*Facilitator – Christine Millward, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

19 JULY 2004

**Parental beliefs about emotion in three ethnic groups**

**Professor Amy G. Halberstadt**

Department of Psychology, North Carolina State University

*Facilitator – Sophie Havighurst, University of Melbourne*

19 AUGUST 2004

**Listening for justice: Stories of poverty in Australian families**

**Dr Mark Peel**

School of Historical Studies, Monash University

*Facilitator – Christine Millward, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

16 SEPTEMBER 2004

**How employed mothers allocate time for work and family**

**Dr Alison Morehead**

Senior Research Advisor, Australian Institute of Family Studies

*Facilitator – Michael Alexander, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

30 SEPTEMBER 2004

**One size doesn't fit all - tracking stages in community development from beginning to sustainability in diverse communities**

**Vivienne Cunningham-Smith and Nick Guggisberg**

Senior Manager, Barnardos, South Coast, and  
Community Development Worker, Albion Park

*Facilitator – Margo Northey, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

21 OCTOBER 2004

**Over-consumption, deferred happiness and downshifting**

**Clive Hamilton**

Executive Director, The Australia Institute, Australian National University

*Facilitator – Michael Alexander, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

11 NOVEMBER 2004

**Researching with children: Insights from the Starting School Project**

**Associate Professor Sue Dockett**

School of Education and Early Childhood Studies, University of Western Sydney

*Facilitator – Jan Duffie, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

9 DECEMBER 2004

**Unsupervised adolescent free time: The role of parental monitoring in reducing adolescent behaviours**

**Louise Hayes**

Psychologist, RMIT University

*Facilitator – Diana Smart, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

24 FEBRUARY 2005

**Involving children in social policy: A case study from Belfast**

**Dr Madeleine Leonard**

Senior Lecturer, Sociology and Social Policy, Queens University, Belfast

*Facilitator – Sarah Wise, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

17 MARCH 2005

**Gender and ageing: Caring roles and social relationships**

**Professor Sara Arber**

Co-director of the centre for Research on Ageing and Gender,  
University of Surrey, UK

*Facilitator – Christine Millward, La Trobe University*

14 APRIL 2005

**Attitudes to marriage and divorce in Australia: A 100-year retrospective**

**Dr Henry Finlay**

University of Tasmania

*Facilitator – Bruce Smyth, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

28 APRIL 2005

**Towards a national child protection research agenda and its translation into policy and practice**

**Dr Dorothy Scott**

Professor of Child Protection, Director, Centre for Child Protection, University of South  
Australia, Hawke Research Institute

*Facilitator – Dr Daryl Higgins, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

26 MAY 2005

**Children's contact services: Expectation and experience**

**Dr Grania Sheehan**

Socio-Legal Research Centre, Law School, Griffith University.

*Facilitator – Bruce Smyth, Australian Institute of Family Studies*

26 JUNE 2005

**Adolescents who sexually abuse their siblings: A study of family and individual factors, and the nature of abuse**

**Jo Hatch**

Children's Protection Society; Doctoral Student Melbourne University

*Facilitator – Melanie Heenan, Australian Institute of Family Studies*