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## RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



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

Over the year, the Institute's research activities have followed the principles established in the *Research Plan 2002–2005* which was approved by the Board 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.

Topics selected 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 and an ongoing demographic trends analysis unit, as well as major contract research projects compatible with the objectives of the research program.

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The year 2004–2005 was a productive one for the Institute’s research program, with research undertaken and published on a wide range of issues affecting Australian families. Significant progress was made on projects commenced in the previous year (2003–2004) and, in addition, a number of new projects and contracts were commenced.

The Institute’s links with key stakeholders in the Asian region have continued to grow during the reporting period. The Institute attended the first East Asia Ministerial Forum on Families in Vietnam; Institute researchers participated in the Asia Pacific Family Dialogue held in Malaysia; and the Institute presented a keynote paper to the Regional Family Policy Forum in Singapore. At home, the Institute hosted delegations from Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore and New Zealand.

In February 2005, the Institute’s biennial national conference on family research and policy was held in Melbourne. Entitled “Families Matter”, this 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies conference attracted researchers from all over Australia, and internationally. Many interesting papers were presented and the conference continued to be a focus for Australian family researchers. The diverse research undertaken by the Institute was showcased at the conference.

Another highlight of the year was the launch on 16 May 2005 of the first wave of data from *Growing Up in Australia*, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, by Senator the Hon. Kay Patterson, Minister for Family and Community Services. The *Growing Up in Australia* study data is now widely available to researchers and use of the data is growing.

The Institute’s current Research Plan is for the period 2002–2005 and is therefore nearing completion. In the first part of the next financial year, a new three-year research plan will be developed for the calendar years 2006–2008.

### Structure of the research program

The research program is structured into three major areas (Children and Parenting; Family and Marriage; and Family and Society) as well four major contract projects with the Australian Government – the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; *Growing Up in Australia*, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children; the National Child Protection Clearinghouse; and the Stronger Families Learning Exchange. The research program is also responsible for monitoring and analysing social and demographic trends – research that tracks changes in family forms, patterns and behaviours, and places these within the wider context of social, economic and demographic change.

In addition, the Institute received other contract funding to undertake research. For example, the Institute’s work on the Australian Temperament Project resulted in funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to undertake research on “Parenting influences on adolescent alcohol use”. Funding was received from the Department of Family and Community Services for research on the “Efficacy of Early Childhood Interventions”, “Attitudes to Child Support”, and “Australians Working Together (AWT) Parenting Payment Activity Requirement Evaluation”. The Australian Government Office for Women (formerly the

Office of the Status of Women), Department of Family and Community Services, funded a major project on “Fertility Decision Making” which resulted in the Institute’s widely used publication *It’s not for lack of wanting kids: A report on the Fertility Decision Making Project*.

## Research methods

Research staff at the Institute come from a wide range of academic disciplines, including psychology, sociology, demography and economics. This is a real strength of the Institute’s work. A wide range of research methods was used in the research, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. A feature of Institute research is the collection of new data not available elsewhere that enables the Institute to answer questions that would not otherwise be possible to address.

One of the most exciting developments in family research in Australia in recent years has been the establishment of large-scale longitudinal surveys. The Institute is at the forefront of this, being responsible for the development and management of *Growing Up in Australia*, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, and as a member of the consortium conducting the Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey. The Institute is also responsible for the Australian Temperament Project, a longitudinal survey of Victorian children now in its 22nd year.

## Policy-relevant research

All Institute research aims to be policy relevant. Four examples of Institute research used in public policy debate and development in 2004–2005 are as follows.

The Institute’s work on fertility decision making (reported above) was widely referenced in the media and cited in a number of government reports.

The Institute had significant involvement in the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, with an Institute researcher in the Family and Marriage program being a member of the taskforce, and the Institute’s work on post-separation parenting and family law being extensively used. The Institute was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services to undertake research on Attitudes to Child Support, and this was also used by the taskforce.

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse was commissioned by the Department of Family and Community Services to produce the report “Out-of-home care in Australia: Messages from research for the Community Services Ministers’ Advisory Council”. A major report for the Department of Family and Community Services on the “Efficacy of early childhood interventions” is likely to inform the development of policy in this area when it is published early in the next financial year.

The Institute has undertaken a collaborative project with the Transport Accident Commission of Victoria and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria on understanding young adults’ driving behaviour. This work has received extensive coverage.

## Quality management and ethics approvals

All research publications are subject to wide internal and expert external review, and stakeholder consultation improves the relevance of the research and ensures that the questions addressed are the key questions. 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.

In 2004–2005 the Ethics Committee reviewed several projects via the expedited review process and during a face-to-face meeting of the Committee as conforming to the relevant ethics requirements (see Ethics Committee in Chapter 2 of this Annual Report).

The Committee considered and approved the following research projects:

- Wave 2 of the Australian Working Together (AWT) Parenting Payment Activity Requirement Evaluation Study
- Attitudes to Child Support in Australia
- Two sub-studies of the Australian Temperament Study on “Precursors and consequences of heavy alcohol use in adolescence” and “Cognitive and emotional processes in social information processing among early onset aggressive and late onset aggressive youth”
- A nested study in the in-between wave of *Growing Up in Australia*, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, on Parental leave: Access, utilisation and efficacy in Australia
- Making decisions about motherhood: Teenage mothers tell their stories
- Best practice models in indigenous out-of-home care

Permission from the Ethics Committee was also sought and given for the following:

- Supplementary recruitment of families to the Children and Family Life Project
- Use of the Caring for Children after Separation data for a PhD of an Institute staff member
- De-confidentialising and depositing the Family and Work Decisions dataset with the Australian Social Science Data Archives

In March, the Ethics Committee, together with Institute senior researchers, prepared a joint submission to the National Health and Medical Research Council on the first draft of the *National Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (National Statement)*.

No complaints were received from study participants regarding ethics aspects of Institute research during 2004–2005.

## Publishing and dissemination

A key role of the Institute as identified in its Strategic Plan is to ensure that the research is disseminated widely and effectively in various formats to a range of stakeholders.

The research of the Institute has been published in Institute Research Reports, Newsletters, Issues Papers, *Family Matters* articles, articles in academic journals and book chapters. Outputs from Institute research have been widely disseminated at conferences in Australia and overseas. Papers have been presented in most states and territories of Australia. There has been considerable reporting of the Institute’s research in radio, television and print media, particularly on issues of fertility, family trends, post-separation parenting and child development.

All these, as well as conference presentations and other forms of written outputs, are listed in the table summarising research project performance in the next section.

## **National research priorities**

The Prime Minister announced Australia's first set of National Research Priorities in December 2002. These provide a vision of how research can contribute to Australia's future prosperity and wellbeing, enhance the quality and impact of Institute research by building critical mass in priority areas, and promote collaboration between research organisations and with industry.

The Institute's research falls mainly under priority area 2, *Promoting good health and wellbeing for all Australians* – in particular, under the goal of strengthening Australia's social and economic fabric.

In 2004–2005, the Institute provided a report to the Chief Scientist against its 2003–2004 implementation plan, and a revised implementation plan to address the national research priorities, which was subsequently endorsed by Cabinet and placed on the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training website.

## **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 3.1.

### ***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 2004–2005, consultation covering many broad issues took place between all Institute research programs and representatives of various international and national organisations or bodies (Table 3.2).

### ***Visitors***

In 2004–2005, 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 provided 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 3.2).

### ***Representation at conferences and meetings***

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 national and international conferences as part of their staff development and training program (Table 3.2).

### Representation on expert panels

A number of Institute researchers were invited serve as external reviewers for academic journals, including: *Australian Journal of Social Issues*; *Journal of Sociology*; *Journal of Family Studies*; and *Women Against Violence: An Australian Feminist Journal*.

Researchers were also invited to share their expertise on steering committees, expert panels, and government reference groups. Accordingly, the Institute was represented on the Australian Council for Children and Parenting (Chair); ABS Family Statistics User Advisory Group and Social Survey Reference Group; Brotherhood of St Laurence "Life Chances" Project Advisory Committee; Family Relationships Service Program Outcome Research Working Group; Project Management Group and External Reference Group for HILDA; Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support; Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group; Research and Ethics Committee, Family Court of Australia; Stronger Families and Community Partnerships (Deputy Chair); and State-wide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.1 Parliamentary submissions 2004–2005**

#### **Ethical conduct**

AIFS Ethics Committee and AIFS Senior Research Staff (2005), Submission to the Joint Working Party on the first draft of the *National Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (National Statement)*, National Health and Medical Research Council.

#### **Work and family**

Alexander, M., Baxter, J. and Weston, R. (2005), Submission to the *Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family*, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services.

#### **Family law**

Caruana, C. (2005), Submission in relation to the Discussion Paper *A New Approach to the Family Law System: Implementation of Reforms*, Attorney-General's Department.

#### **Sexual assault**

Heenan, M. (2005), Submission in response to the inquiry into *Improving Responses to Allegations Involving Sexual Assault*, Special Projects Unit of the Office of Ombudsman Victoria/Office of Police Integrity, Victoria.

#### **Child protection**

Richardson, N. and Bromfield, L. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Care and Protection of Children and Young People Act 2005*, Northern Territory Government Department of Health and Community Services.

#### **Child protection**

Richardson, N. and Higgins, D. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Legislation for the Regulation of Premium Mobile Phone Services*, Australian Communications Authority.

#### **Child protection**

Richardson, N., Higgins, D. and Bromfield, L. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Legislation for the Screening of Individuals who Work with Children in Tasmania*, Commission for Children, Tasmania.

#### **Child protection**

Richardson, N., Higgins, D. and Bromfield, L. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Working with Children Bill 2005 Discussion Paper*, Victorian Government Department of Justice.

#### **Child protection**

Bromfield, L. and Higgins, D. (2004), Submission to the *Victorian Child Protection Legislative Review*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services.

#### **Child protection**

Higgins, D. and Richardson, N. (2004), Submission on the *Draft Revised Code of Practice*, Internet Industry Association.

|  | <b>Number</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Consultations  | 102           |
| Visitors to the Institute                            | 74            |
| Institute representation at conferences and meetings | 23            |
| Institute representation on expert panels            | 34            |

*Note:* Detailed listings are available on the Institute's website [www.aifs.gov.au/publications/annual-report/](http://www.aifs.gov.au/publications/annual-report/)

## Summary

In summary, 2004–2005 has been a productive year for the Institute's research program. Considerable progress was made in implementing the new projects envisaged in the *Research Plan 2002–2005* and a number of new research contracts were signed.

The Institute recognises the continuing 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.

## 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 that can best support parents and children.

### Australian Temperament Project

*The Australian Temperament Project (ATP)* is a longitudinal study that focuses on young people's development from infancy to adulthood, and the role of family, peer and broader environmental influences in promoting adjustment and wellbeing.

The study commenced in 1983 at a child age of four to eight months, and since then 13 waves of data have been collected over the first 20 years of life. The Australian Institute of Family Studies has housed and taken the lead in the study since 2000, in conjunction with researchers from the University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

The aspects assessed range from assets and attributes such as interpersonal relationships, social skills, and civic engagement to problems and difficulties such as antisocial behaviour, substance use and depression. As the study participants embark on adult life, the study's focus has widened to encompass the key challenges of the "emerging adult" developmental period. These include employment and career development, intimate relationship formation and dissolution, fertility aspirations and parenthood, social and civic participation, and personal adjustment and maladjustment.

The 14th data collection, scheduled for 2006, will investigate these issues. Planning for this next data collection has commenced and will continue through 2005. This data, along with the information collected over the past 20 years, will enable the delineation of pathways to these important aspects of adult life.

There will be a four-year gap between the 13th and 14th ATP survey waves. Yet many major changes in young people's lives will occur over this period – for example, commencing employment, forming and leaving partnerships, becoming parents. To maintain up-to-date information about important life changes experienced by ATP participants during this time frame, a brief targeted data collection was undertaken late in 2004. Information about current educational and occupational circumstances, relationship status, parenthood, changes and stresses encountered, and future plans and aspirations was collected.

Statistical analysis and dissemination of findings from the longitudinal dataset continued through 2004 and 2005 and underpinned the three commissioned reports completed. Additionally, a report of young people's adjustment and wellbeing at age 19-20 years was published in *Family Matters*. Dissemination activities included a symposium showcasing ATP findings at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference.

### Publications

- Ruschena, E., Prior M., Sanson, A. and Smart D. (2005), "A longitudinal study of adolescent adjustment following family transitions", *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 353-363.
- Sanson, A. and Smart, D. (2005), "Risk and resilience: lessons from a 20-year longitudinal study", *The Victorian Education Magazine*, Term 2, pp. 3-4.
- Smart, D. and Sanson, A. (2005), "What is life like for young Australians today, and how well are they faring?", *Family Matters*, no.70, Autumn, pp. 46-53.
- Letcher, P., Toumbourou, J., Sanson, A., Prior, M., Smart, D. and Oberklaid, F. (2004), "Parenting style as a moderator of the effect of temperament on adolescent externalising and internalising behaviour problems", *Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, vol. 19-20, pp. 5-34.
- Sanson, A. and Smart, D. (2004), "Pathways to social and emotional wellbeing: Lessons from a 20-year longitudinal study", in *Research Conference 2004 - Supporting Student Wellbeing - Conference proceedings*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, pp. 72-79.
- Smart, D. and Sanson, A. (2004), *Year 2004 ATP newsletter for Young Adults*, Australian Institute of Studies, Melbourne.
- Smart, D. and Sanson, A. (2004), *Year 2004 ATP newsletter for Parents*, Australian Institute of Studies, Melbourne.
- Smart, D. (2004), "Where to now for the ATP Study?", *Family Matters*, no. 68, Winter, pp. 21.

### Presentations

- "Two sides of the coin: Growing up in Australia today", Paper presented at the Childhoods 2005: Children and Youth in Emerging and Transforming Societies Conference, Oslo, Norway, 29 June - 3 July 2005 (A. Sanson and D. Smart).
- "Why early in life is not enough: Timing and sustainability in early intervention and prevention", Presentation to Royal Children's Hospital EXPO 2005, Melbourne, 10-11 March 2005 (A. Hayes).
- "Precursors and correlates of differing patterns of anxiety from late childhood to late adolescence", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (P. Letcher, A. Sanson and D. Smart).
- "What is life like for young Australians today, and how well are they faring?", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (D. Smart and A. Sanson).
- "Social and emotional wellbeing in early adulthood: A report from the Australian Temperament Project", Presentation to the 2nd A21 Human Potential Project meeting, Melbourne, 4-5 November 2004 (M. Prior, A. Sanson and D. Smart).
- "Pathways to social and emotional wellbeing: Lessons from a 20-year longitudinal study", Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research Supporting Student Wellbeing Conference, Adelaide, 24-26 October 2004 (A. Sanson and D. Smart).
- "Children's temperament: Insights from the Australian Temperament Project", Presentation to the Western Community Child Welfare Branch, Bacchus Marsh, 30 September 2004 (D. Smart).

### Representation at conferences, workshops and external committees

- Invited participant, Under-age Drinking Forum conducted by the Department of Health and Ageing, Melbourne, 7 October 2004 (D. Smart).
- Member, Brotherhood of St. Laurence "Life Chances" Project Advisory Committee (D. Smart).
- Advisor, Measuring the Costs and Benefits of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Project, Australian Council for Adult Literacy (D. Smart).

## ATP / CPV collaboration

The collaboration between the Australian Institute of Family Studies and Crime Prevention Victoria has been completed. This project investigated the onset and consequences of adolescent antisocial behaviour, using the *Australian Temperament Project* longitudinal dataset.

In all, the project produced three commissioned reports, the last of which was completed in 2004–2005. Influential findings emerging from the three reports include the identification of differing developmental pathways, key transition points and risk and protective factors for antisocial behaviour; the overlap between differing types of problem behaviours (for example antisocial behaviour and substance use); and the phenomenon of resilience. Numerous dissemination activities have been undertaken to stakeholders, policy makers, practitioners and the research community over the life of the project.

### Publications

Smart, D., Vassallo, S., Sanson, A. and Dussuyer, I. (2004), "Patterns of antisocial behaviour from early to late adolescence", *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice*, report no. 290, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

Vassallo, S., Smart, D., Sanson, A. and Dussuyer, I. (2004), "At risk but not antisocial: Changes from childhood to adolescence", *Family Matters*, no. 68, Winter, pp. 13-20.

Smart, D., Richardson, N., Sanson, A., Dussuyer, I., Marshall, B., Toumbourou, J.W., Prior, M. and Oberklaid, F. (2005 in press), *Patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour: Outcomes and connections, Third report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Smart, D., Richardson, N., Sanson, A., Dussuyer, I., Marshall, B., Toumbourou, J.W., Prior, M. and Oberklaid, F. (2005 in press), *Patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour: Outcomes and connections, Third Report Executive Summary*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

### Presentations

"Connections between antisocial behaviour and involvement in victimisation incidents", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (N. Richardson, D. Smart, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

"Connections between adolescent substance use and antisocial behaviour", Paper presented at the 18th Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference, Wellington, New Zealand, 11-13 February 2005 (I. Dussuyer, N. Richardson and D. Smart).

"Motivations to comply with the law, attitudes towards criminal justice agencies, and antisocial behaviour in early adulthood", Paper presented at the 18th Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference, Wellington, New Zealand, 11-13 February 2005 (I. Dussuyer, N. Richardson and D. Smart).

"Patterns and precursors to adolescent antisocial behaviours", Presentation at the Catholic Schooling for the Future: Strategic School Community Partnerships Conference, Melbourne, 28 October 2004 (S. Vassallo, D. Smart, A. Sanson and I. Dussuyer).

### Representation at conferences, workshops and external committees

Member, Crime Prevention Victoria Research Advisory Council (A. Sanson).

## ATP/TAC/RACV collaboration

The collaboration between the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) of Victoria and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) is nearing completion. The project used the *Australian Temperament*

*Project* longitudinal dataset to investigate the personal, family and broader environmental factors associated with differing driving behaviours – in particular, risky driving, involvement in crashes and speeding.

The report commissioned by TAC and RACV has been completed and published as an Institute Research Report, launched in June 2005. One of the two additional activities commissioned has been completed and the second is close to completion. Dissemination of findings commenced in 2004–2005.

#### Publications

Smart, D. and Vassallo, S., Sanson, A., Cockfield, S., Harris, A., Harrison, W. and McIntyre, A. (2005), *In the driver's seat: Understanding young adults' driving behaviour*, AIFS Research Report no. 12, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Smart, D. and Vassallo, S., Sanson, A., Cockfield, S., Harris, A., Harrison, W. and McIntyre, A. (2005), *In the driver's seat: Understanding young adults' driving behaviour – Executive Summary*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

#### Presentations

“In the driver's seat: Understanding young adults' driving behaviour”, Presentation at the Launch of Report, Transport Accident Commission, Melbourne, 3 June 2005 (D. Smart, S. Vassallo, A. Sanson, A. Harris, S. Cockfield, A. McIntyre and W. Harrison).

“Risky driving among young adults: Trends and precursors”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (S. Vassallo, D. Smart, A. Sanson, A. Harris, S. Cockfield, A. McIntyre and W. Harrison).

“Psychosocial development and driving behaviours: Some results from the Australian Temperament Project”, Paper presented at the Road Safety Research Education, Policing and Enforcement Conference, Perth, 14-16 November 2004 (W. Harrison, S. Vassallo, D. Smart, A. Harris, S. Cockfield, A. McIntyre and A. Sanson).

## Child Care Choices

A consortium involving Macquarie University's Psychology Department and the Institute of Early Childhood, Charles Sturt University's School of Teacher Education, and the Australian Institute of Family Studies received an Australian Research Council (ARC) 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.

Now in its fourth year, the *Child Care Choices Research Project* has followed an initial 689 families with children aged up to three years. Analysis of the datasets and dissemination of the findings are continuing, including an article in a special edition of the journal, *The Australian Educational Researcher*, and conference papers given at the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development Conference in Ghent, Belgium, the Australian Psychological Society Conference in Sydney, and the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference in Melbourne. The project has gained strong interest from the media, policymakers, practitioners and the public.

The New South Wales Department of Community Services has provided new funding to extend the study in a further two projects (The Longitudinal Extension to Eight Years of the Child Care Choices Research Project, and The Child Care Choices

of Indigenous Families Research Project). The Institute's future involvement will focus on the analysis and presentation of findings from the first three waves of data collection. This includes a series of papers from the first wave of data collection, which are in progress.

#### *Publications*

Bowes, J. M., Harrison, L., Ungerer, J., Wise, S., Sanson, A. and Watson, J. (2004), "Child Care Choices: A longitudinal study of children, families and child care in partnership with policy makers", *The Australian Educational Researcher*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 69-86.

#### *Presentations*

"Why fathers and grandparents are included in children's weekly care arrangements", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (B. Edwards, S. Wise, J. Bowes, A. Sanson, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison and T. Simpson).

"The relation of multiple and changeable childcare arrangements to early communication skills", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (S. Wise, B. Edwards, J. Bowes, A. Sanson, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison and T. Simpson).

"Patterns of care for young children: Links to social, cognitive and emotional development", Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education, Frankston, 19-21 January 2005 (J. Bowes, A. Sanson, S. Wise, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison, J. Watson and T. Simpson).

"Introduction to the Child Care Choices study", Paper presented at the 39th Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Sydney, 29 September-3 October 2004 (J. Cohen, J. Bowes, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison, T. Simpson, A. Sanson and S. Wise).

"Multiple care, parental stress and family management of childcare arrangements", Paper presented at the 39th Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Sydney, 29 September-3 October 2004 (J. Bowes, J. Ungerer, S. Wise, A. Sanson, L. Harrison and T. Simpson).

"The influence of multiple childcare arrangements on children's communication skills and behavioural adjustment", Paper presented at the 39th Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Sydney, 29 September-3 October 2004 (S. Wise, A. Sanson, J. Bowes, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison and T. Simpson).

"The impact of multiple care on parent-child and carer-child relationships", Paper presented at the 39th Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Sydney, 29 September-3 October 2004 (J. Ungerer, L. Harrison, J. Bowes, S. Wise, A. Sanson and T. Simpson).

"Division of labor and parental stress in relation to multiple and changeable child care arrangements", Poster presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development Conference, Ghent, Belgium, 11-15 July 2004 (J. Bowes, A. Sanson, S. Wise, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison and T. Simpson).

"Understanding the influence of multiple childcare arrangements on child emotional and behavioural adjustment and communication skills", Poster presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development Conference, Ghent, Belgium, 11-15 July 2004 (A. Sanson, S. Wise, J. Bowes, J. Ungerer and L. Harrison).

## **Child Care in Cultural Context**

Since Australia is a society in which large numbers of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds use mainstream child care services, understanding the developmental impact of exposure to differing cultural influences at home and in child care is extremely important.

The *Child Care in Cultural Context* study focuses on the match between parents' cultural values, beliefs about children, and core practices, with those of teachers

and carers in formal child care services, and the impact on children when opinions and practices 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.

Outputs from this study will continue to inform government, policy development, and educators by contributing towards better understanding of good quality practices in child care environments. However, planned publication products have been delayed due to the absence of key project staff on maternity leave and lengthy review processes.

#### *Presentations*

“Parent perspectives on child care quality in a culturally diverse sample”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (L. da Silva and S. Wise).

### **Children and Family Life**

The *Children and Family Life* study examines the family environment, development and wellbeing of 1,248 children aged between 5 and 12 years growing up in intact, single-parent, step and blended families. It was designed to provide information about how contemporary Australian families function, and how children who are reared within different family forms are thereby affected. This rich database will provide an important foundation for policy and service development related to the provision of child and family supports.

Data collection has been completed, and analysis and reporting of findings commenced during the current reporting period. It is intended that a picture of the family context in which the study children are developing, highlighting differences across family types on measures such as parent characteristics, work and family balance, parenting behaviour and financial strain, will emerge from the first stage of analysis. It is intended that the second stage in the analysis will link key aspects of the family environment to children’s emotional, behavioural and social functioning. This will provide information as to whether the physical structure of families (such as number of parents in the household, for example) affects child wellbeing and development over and above intra-familial processes, and should emphasise where interventions need to be targeted to enhance family and child wellbeing.

#### *Presentations*

“Disruption of parental relationships, current family circumstances and children’s psychological adjustment”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (S. Wise and B. Edwards).

“Difficult child behaviour in three family types: Contributions of family structure and family processes”, Poster presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development Conference, Ghent, Belgium, 11-15 July 2004 (S. Wise and B. Edwards).

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

Member, External Review Panel, *Children Australia*, Melbourne (S. Wise).

## Follow-up Study of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination

Information from families and children where the child was conceived using donor insemination technology was sought by the Institute in the current reporting period after initial recruitment was carried out by Professor Gabor Kovacs from Monash Medical School, Box Hill Hospital. This extends the recruitment of “*Donor Insemination*” families that commenced in 2003–2004 in order to reach a sample of 100 families. Data collected from that survey will be compared with those collected from families and children in the *Children and Family Life* study on key dimensions of family functioning and child wellbeing. A central research question for this study is the extent to which “openness” about children’s conception contributes to child and family wellbeing. Findings from this study are expected to have implications for families accessing donor insemination technology and the children who are born as a result.

## Efficacy of Early Childhood Interventions

In collaboration with the Melbourne Institute, the Australian Institute of Family Studies has undertaken research for the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services to assist decision-making in relation to investing in early childhood interventions in Australia.

Gathering evidence on the efficacy, costs and benefits, and returns on investment, from various types of early childhood interventions is required to build and communicate the case for greater investment in children’s development. The principal objective for the project was to identify the type of intervention in early childhood that will pay long-term dividends (that is, produces benefits to program participants as well as the best return on public investment). The project also sought to evaluate methodologies for producing cost-benefit analyses of early childhood interventions. Information on the various types of interventions conducted in Australia and overseas was gathered along with information on the size of effects from these interventions. The appropriateness of existing methodologies for calculating rate of investment for early childhood interventions was evaluated.

Following its submission, the report has been prepared for publication in the Institute’s Research Report series, for publication early in the next financial year.

### Publication

Wise, S., da Silva, L., Webster, E., and Sanson, A. (2005 in press), *The efficacy of early childhood interventions, Report prepared for the Children’s Policy Branch, Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, AIFS Research Report no. 14, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.*

## Parenting Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use

The Institute was awarded a short-term contract by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to undertake a literature review of Australian and international research concerning parenting influences on adolescent alcohol use, and to identify implications for policy and practice.

Previously unpublished findings from the Australian Temperament Project were included and these added substantially to the Australian findings on this topic. The commissioned report has been completed and was published and released in December 2004 (see below).

The report described patterns and effects of adolescent alcohol use, and pointed to the critical role that parents can play in delaying the onset of such use and in guiding moderate subsequent use. A range of influences was reviewed (for example, parenting style, parental modelling, family environment, peer influences, and community/societal influences), and promising interventions described. The report was instrumental in stimulating debate and attracted considerable public and media attention.

**Publication**

Hayes, L., Smart, D., Toumbourou, J.W. and Sanson, A. (2004), *Parenting influences on adolescent alcohol use*, A report prepared for the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, AIFS Research Report no. 10, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, December.

## PROGRAM B FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

The Family and Marriage program focuses on three broad themes – family trends and transitions, positive family relationships, 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. As well as providing a better understanding of society's core values, the monitoring and analysis of these trends are important for policy development.

#### Trends in Family Transitions

In the past year, analysis of trends in family transitions has generated a number of publications and presentations, particularly in the domains of partnering, pre-marital cohabitation, childbearing, and relationship breakdown. This work has been undertaken in close collaboration with the Institute's *Demographic Trends Analysis* unit. In addition, Institute researchers have played an important role in interpreting broad trends through publications, paper presentations and media interviews. Staff also participated in advisory or reference groups established by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to assist in the development of their surveys and presentation of findings. Some of this work overlaps with the *Positive Family Relationships* theme (outlined below).

Media interviews for the year included discussions on young adults remaining at or returning home; difficulties young people have in establishing relationships, partnership formation and dissolution trends; links between personal wellbeing and marital expectations and status; trends in step and blended families; various aspects of fertility (such as national and international fertility rates and family size trends, older mothers, older fathers, childlessness, decisions about having children); and modern pressures facing parents.

#### Publications

Qu, L. and Weston, R. (2005), "Snapshot of couple families with stepparent-child relationships", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp. 36-37.

de Vaus, D. (2004), *Diversity and change in Australian families: Statistical profiles*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Morehead, A. (2004), "A review of new Australian Government initiatives for families with children", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 94-99.

Qu, L. and Soriano, G. (2004), "Forming couple relationships: Adolescents' aspirations and young adults' actualities", *Family Matters*, no. 68, Winter, pp. 43-49.

Qu, L. and Soriano, G. (2004), "Forming couple relationships: Adolescents' aspirations and young adults' actualities", *Relatewell*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 3-7.

#### *Presentations*

"Partnership formation and stability: A theoretical framework", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (R. Weston, L. Qu and D. de Vaus).

"The state of families in Australia", Paper presented to the members of the Council of Christian Education in Schools, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 30 November 2004 (L. Qu and R. Weston).

"The state of families in Australia: Continuities and change", Invited keynote paper presented at the Regional Family Policy Forum, Singapore, 25 November 2004 (R. Weston and L. Qu).

"World divorce trend and what Australia is doing to curb the trend", Invited paper for panel discussion, "Keeping Love Alive", Family Matters Seminar, Singapore, 26 November 2004 (R. Weston and L. Qu).

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

Member, ABS General Social Survey Reference Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics (R. Weston).

Member, National Council on Family Relations, USA (R. Weston).

Member, Australian Population Association (R. Weston).

Member, International Society for Quality of Life Studies (R. Weston).

## Families in the Asian Region

The Institute has continued to develop an improved understanding of family-related trends and issues shared by, or unique to, countries in different stages of modernisation in the Asian region, and to establish or strengthen existing connections with countries in the region regarding research on family relationships and wellbeing. This work has involved strengthening links with the International Branch of the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), and with key stakeholders in the Asian Region, participating in relevant conferences, and coordinating some of the visits to the Institute by delegations from the Region. Some of these commitments involve Institute-wide cooperation and sharing of responsibilities.

*Vietnam.* The year's work began with the development of a synthesis of discussions by participants attending the first East Asia Ministerial Forum on Families held in April 2004 and co-hosted by FaCS and the Vietnam Commission for Population, Family and Children.

In collaboration with the International Branch of FaCS, a delegation of members of the Vietnam Commission on Population, Family and Children, spent a day at the Institute in September 2004, during which details of the Institute's research program and communication and information program were discussed. The Family and Marriage Program joined forces with the Institute's Demographic Trends Analysis unit to present an overview of family trends and transitions in Australia.

*Malaysia.* At the request of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia, two Institute researchers participated in the Asia Pacific Family Dialogue, held in Kuala Lumpur on 11-13 October 2004. This work included facilitating a roundtable discussion on marriage and chairing paper presentations.

*Singapore.* On invitation from the Singapore Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, a keynote paper on the state of the family and a paper on international divorce trends and Australia's strategies for minimising relationship breakdown were respectively presented at the Regional Family Policy Forum, Singapore, on 25 November 2004, and the Family Matters Seminar held on the following day. The trip to Singapore also included a visit to the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, where family research and policies were discussed, and a visit to a Family Service Centre where individual and family counselling services were provided.

The strengthening of links with Singapore was also reflected in a visit to the Institute in December 2004 by the Vice Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Studies, National University of Singapore, and the participation of the Director of the Family Policy Unit, Singapore Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, in a panel discussion on family policy in the Asia Pacific region, held at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference in February 2005.

*Taiwan.* In May 2005, the Institute hosted a delegation from Taiwan comprising three Judges and the General Director of the Juvenile and Family Department, Judicial Yuan. The day's discussions largely centred on policy directions in the family law, child protection and sexual assault areas, and ways of protecting children's interests after parental separation and assisting parents to reach their own constructive parenting arrangements.

*Philippines.* Also during May, the Director of the Program Management Bureau at the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the Philippines visited the Institute to share information about joint interests and the means by which the latest material in the Institute's library can be obtained online. The Philippines Program Management Bureau is responsible for the development and monitoring of government programs for families, children, women, older people, and people with disabilities.

*New Zealand.* The establishment of the New Zealand Families Commission has added a new dimension to the Institute's involvement with New Zealand. A delegation from the Commission visited the Institute in February 2005 and participated in the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, presenting a workshop on the Commission, and participating in the panel discussion on family policy in the Asia Pacific region. This conference was also well attended by New Zealand academics, some of whom used the opportunity to spend time at the Institute.

#### *Publications*

Weston, R. (2004), "A timely forum on families in the East Asia region", *Family Matters* no. 68, Winter, pp. 60-67.

Weston, R. and Hayes, A. (2004), "Celebrating families in Singapore", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 83-87.

Weston, R. and Soriano, G. (2004), "Asia Pacific Family Dialogue", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Winter, pp. 80-82.

### Presentations

Invited papers for the Regional Family Policy Forum and the Family Matters Seminar, Singapore, are listed under the section *Family trends and transitions*.

### Representation at conferences, workshops and external committees

Invited participant in the Regional Family Policy Forum and the Family Matters Seminar, Singapore, 25-26 November 2004 (R. Weston).

Invited participant, chair of paper presentations, and facilitator of the Roundtable discussion on marriage, Asia-Pacific Family Dialogue: Towards the Doha International Conference for the Family, organised by the National Population and Family Development Board, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 13-14 October 2004 (R. Weston).

Conference attendee and participant in the roundtable discussion on work and family, Asia-Pacific Family Dialogue: Towards the Doha International Conference for the Family, organised by the National Population and Family Development Board, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 13-14 October 2004 (G. Soriano).

## Fertility Decision Making Project

As in other developed countries, Australia's fertility rate has fallen substantially over the last few decades, in the context of increasing life expectancy. This has led to an ageing of the population in both relative and absolute terms. There is a great deal of speculation about the importance of factors contributing to the fall in fertility since access to effective contraception became readily available. These discussions include life course trends in society, financial and non-financial costs of having children, and beliefs, attitudes and values that may discourage childbearing.

The *Fertility Decision Making Project* was conducted in collaboration with the Australian Government Office for Women (formerly the Office of the Status of Women), Department of Family and Community Services. The project sought to explain how a range of factors contributing to decisions about having children interact to help shape fertility trajectories.

A national, random sample of 3,201 men and women aged 20-39 years was interviewed by telephone. Questions covered a wide range of aspects of the respondents' lives, including their relationship and childbearing history, their employment, income and education, aspirations and expectations about having children in the future, and the importance respondents attach to various factors that might be considered in the decision to have or not have a first or additional child. The partners of 313 respondents completed a self-report mailed questionnaire. The outcomes of the project were reported to the Office for Women in November 2004. This work was also published by the Institute as AIFS Research Report no. 11.

Analysis of the data from this project will be ongoing, as researchers continue to explore fertility decision-making issues of relevance to policy and practice.

### Publications

Parker, R. and Alexander, M. (2005), "Factors influencing men's and women's decisions about having children", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 24-31.

Qu, L. and Weston, R. (2004), "Family size: Men's and women's aspirations over the years", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 18-23.

Weston R. (2004), "Having children. Or not.", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 4-9.

Weston, R. and Qu, L. (2004), "Dashed hopes? Fertility aspirations and expectations", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 10-17.

Weston, R., Qu, L., Parker, R. and Alexander, M. (2004), *It's not for lack of wanting kids: A report on the Fertility Decision Making Project*, AIFS Research Report no. 11, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

#### **Presentations**

"Having children: The actual versus the ideal and expected", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (R. Weston and L. Qu).

## **POSITIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

The Family and Marriage Program examines how couples develop strategies for living together and for adjusting to change. The 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. In addition to specific projects, work in this area involves publications and paper presentations on relationship stability versus instability. These are listed under family trends and transitions.

### **Marriage and Relationship Education and Support**

During 2004–2005 this ongoing project continued to monitor research and developments in service provision in the field of marriage and relationship education, and to participate in consultations on related policy and practice issues.

#### **Presentation**

"Pursuing excellence in family services", Opening address at Family-centred practice now and into the future: The links between research and practice, Family Services Australia Conference, Sydney, 20-22 October 2004 (A. Hayes).

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

Participant, "Future directions: Heritage and innovation" workshop on the future directions of the Family Relationship Education and Family Relationships Skills Training Programs, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, 21 June 2005 (R. Parker).

Participant, Family Services Australia roundtable on "Towards a National Quality Framework", Melbourne, 9 August 2004 (R. Parker).

Member, International Association for Relationship Research (R. Parker).

Member, Marriage Educators Association of Australia (R. Parker).

AIFS Representative, Victorian Association of Family Therapists (Research Advisory Committee) (R. Parker).

AIFS Representative, Victorian Marriage and Relationship Education Network (R. Parker).

Member, *Threshold* Editorial Board (R. Weston).

### **The Case for Marriage in Australia**

The catalyst for this project was the publication in 2003 of the book *The Case For Marriage* by American researcher Linda Waite and journalist Maggie Gallagher, in which results from a vast body of research were reported that support 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. In the first stage of the project, relevant Australian research was critically examined to determine whether, in fact, marriage does confer a range of advantages on individuals and couples and if so, the nature and extent of those advantages. This review was published in the Autumn 2005 issue of *Family Matters*.

The second stage of the project is currently underway. The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey is being analysed to establish whether marital status is significantly related to the health, happiness and economic wellbeing of Australians. The outcome of this analysis will be published in the form of a Research Report in coming financial year.

#### Publication

Penman, Robyn (2005), "Current approaches to marriage and relationship research in the United States and Australia", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp. 26-35.

## Family Relationships and Work Circumstances

Undertaken in collaboration with the Family and Society Program, the *Family Relationships and Work Circumstances* project aimed to assess the nature and strength of links between marital and family wellbeing and parents' work circumstances. Based on data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, analysis examined not only links between fathers' long work hours and their personal wellbeing and views about how work affects family life, but also the views of mothers (as well as fathers) regarding spousal relationships and father-child relationships. This project has now been completed.

#### Publications

Weston, R., Gray, M., Qu, L. and Stanton, D. (2004), *Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families*, Research Paper no. 35, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Gray, M., Qu, L., Stanton, D. and Weston, R. (2004), "Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families", *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 255-273.

#### Presentations

"Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families", Invited paper presented at the Work/Life Association workshop, Victoria University, Melbourne, 15 September 2004 (R. Weston, M. Gray, L. Qu and D. Stanton).

"Long hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families", Invited paper presented at the School of Social and Behavioural Science Psychology, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, 11 August 2004 (R. Weston, M. Gray, L. Qu and D. Stanton).

"Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families", Seminar presented by L. Qu at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 15 July 2004 (R. Weston, M. Gray, L. Qu and D. Stanton).

"Fathers' long work hours and their personal and family wellbeing", Paper presented at the Work-Life Balance Across the Life-course International Conference, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR), University of Edinburgh, UK, 30 June-2 July 2004 (R. Weston, M. Gray, L. Qu and D. Stanton).

## FAMILY LAW

### Family Law Monitoring and Evaluation

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, and thus spans the entire Family and Marriage program.

During the reporting period, the main focus of the Institute's family law research has been on helping to inform the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, and providing input for the latest round of proposed reforms to the family law system. The *Caring for Children after Parental Separation Project* continues to be the main source of Institute data for informing family law reform and discussion.

Three projects formed the hub of family law research at the Institute over the past year: *Caring for Children after Parental Separation*; *Understanding Contact Disputes*; and *Attitudes to Child Support*.

#### Publications

Caruana, C. (2005), "Family law update: Changes to federal family law and state domestic violence legislation", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp. 66-67.

Caruana, C. (2004), "Shared parenting and family law reform: The next installment", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 62-63.

Fehlberg, B. and Smyth, B. (2005), "Binding prenuptial agreements in Australia: The first year", in L. Mulcahy and S. Wheeler (eds), *Feminist perspectives on contract law*, GlassHouse Press, London.

Moloney, L. and Smyth, B. (2005), "Family Relationship Centres in Australia: Reflections based on research and practice", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Autumn, pp. 61-66.

Parkinson, P. and Smyth, B. (2004), "Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with father-child contact arrangements in Australia", *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, vol.16, no. 3, pp. 289-304.

#### Submissions

Caruana, C. (2005), Submission to the Attorney-General's Department in relation to the discussion paper: *A new approach to the family law system: Implementation of reforms*.

#### Contribution to other reports

Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, *In the Best Interests of Children: Reforming the Child Support Scheme*, Final report to the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra (B. Smyth).

#### Presentations

"Mapping family law data in Australia: A research proposal", Presentation to members of the Separation Support Network, Canberra, 21 April 2005 (B. Smyth).

"Adults' emotional experiences around separation", Paper presented at the Australian Sociological Association Conference, Beechworth, 9-10 December 2004 (B. Rodgers, E. Bond and B. Smyth).

"Post-separation patterns of parenting in Australia: An empirical update", Presentation to members of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, Canberra, 25 November 2004 (B. Smyth and L. Qu).

"When parents part: Insights into parent-child contact after separation", Paper presented at the Women's Legal Service Conference, Women Celebrating 20 Years of Challenging and Changing the Legal System: A conference on Women, Feminism and the Law, Brisbane, 26-29 October 2004 (C. Caruana, B. Smyth and A. Ferro).

“Child support: The Australian context”, Presentation to the UK Work and Pensions Committee, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 16 September 2004 (B. Smyth).

“Children in family law: Voices beyond rhetoric”, Panel presentation at the Justice Richard Chisholm Workshop – Family Mediation Winter School, Melbourne, 13 August 2004 (B. Smyth).

“Fathers’ contact with their children following divorce: New evidence from Australia”, Paper presented at the International Conference on Divorce: Causes and Consequences, Beijing, 18-22 July 2004 (P. Parkinson and B. Smyth).

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

AIFS observer, Family Law Council of Australia (B. Smyth).

Consultant, *Children in Focus* child-inclusive divorce mediation research (B. Smyth).

Member, ARC Families, Law and Social Policy Research Network (B. Smyth).

Member, Editorial Board, *Journal of Family Studies* (B. Smyth).

Member, Editorial Reference Group, Mensline Australia (B. Smyth).

Member, Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, Canberra (B. Smyth).

Member, Research and Ethics Committee, Family Court of Australia (B. Smyth).

Member, Separation Support Network, Canberra (B. Smyth).

Team member, La Trobe University Family Law PDR practitioner standards project (C. Caruana).

## **Caring for Children after Parental Separation**

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 “daytime only” contact versus “sleepovers”, and “holiday” versus “term-time” arrangements. Failure to make these distinctions can inaccurately convey both the amount and quality of contact that is occurring. The *Caring for Children after Parental Separation* project is currently addressing 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; (b) to improve understanding of why a significant proportion of non-resident parents have little or no contact with their children, and (c) to examine the inter-relation, if any, between contact and child support.

While the focus of the project is on mapping the detail of post-separation parenting patterns, the data will nonetheless serve as a benchmark on which to begin modelling the economic implications of contact for parents (both non-resident and resident). They will also act as an important source of information for a more comprehensive investigation into the impact of divorce on children and parents.

Data have been collected from two sources: (a) a series of focus groups, comprising 54 separated/divorced parents with at least one child under 18 years; and (b) telephone interviews with 971 separated parents from around Australia who have a biological or adopted child under 18 in 2003. Data from the HILDA Survey are also being used to augment the project. The project is due to be completed by December 2005.

### Publications

Smyth, B. (2005), "Parent-child contact in Australia: Exploring five different patterns of post-separation parenting", *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 1-22.

Smyth, B. (2005), "Food and family transitions: Cooking in the aftermath of divorce", *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, vol. 11, pp. 2-8.

Smyth, B. (2004), "Parent-child contact schedules after divorce", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 32-43.

Smyth, B. (2004), "Post-separation parenting: A qualitative approach", *Australian Family Law – Family Law News*, Issue 459, pp. 4-5.

### Presentations

"Parent-child contact schedules after divorce", Guest lecture, University of Melbourne, 27 April 2005 (B. Smyth).

"Time with mum, time with dad": Parent-child contact schedules after divorce", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (B. Smyth).

"Parent-child contact schedules after divorce", Paper presented at the Australian Sociological Association Conference, Beechworth, 9-10 December 2004 (B. Smyth, A. Ferro and C. Caruana).

"Post-separation parenting arrangements: Using Australian research to inform family law practice", Paper presented to the Victoria Legal Aid Conference, Melbourne, 3 December 2004 (B. Smyth).

"When parents part: Developments in family law and patterns of post separation parenting", Presentation to the Victorian College of Teacher's Association, Melbourne, 29 November - 1 December 2004 (C. Caruana, A. Ferro and B. Smyth).

"When parents part: Insights into parent-child contact after separation", Paper presented at the Women's Legal Service Conference, Women Celebrating 20 Years of Challenging and Changing the Legal System: A conference on Women, Feminism and the Law, Brisbane, 26-29 October 2004 (C. Caruana, B. Smyth and A. Ferro).

"Post-separation parenting: Using research to inform service delivery", Paper presented at the Family Services Australia Conference, Sydney, 22 October 2004 (B. Smyth).

"Applied social research: Post-separation parenting", Guest lecture, Swinburne University of Technology, 28 July 2004 (B. Smyth).

"Parent-child contact in Australia: A recent empirical snapshot", Victorian Legal Aid Family Law Conference, Melbourne, 16 July 2004 (B. Smyth, C. Caruana and A. Ferro).

## Understanding Contact Disputes

The aim of *Understanding Contact Disputes* project is to gain insight into the prevalence of disputes about contact and the dynamics and trigger events that lead to disputes on contact escalating into legal conflict. The research design involves: (a) a series of focus groups with family law professionals who work with parents in dispute about contact; (b) 70 face-to-face interviews with separated parents who have been in dispute about their parenting arrangements; and (c) telephone interviews with a national random sample of separated parents.

The project is a collaborative one between the Institute and the University of Sydney Faculty of Law. It is funded by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The Institute's part of the project is due to be completed by July 2006.

## Attitudes to Child Support

The *Attitudes to Child Support* study was designed to inform the work of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support. It was jointly funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Data were obtained from two national random samples: a general population sample comprising 1,000 people aged between 18 and 64 years; and a sample of 620 separated parents with a child under the age of 18 years.

### Publication

Smyth, B. and Weston, R. (2005), *A snapshot of contemporary attitudes to child support*, AIFS Research Report no. 9, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

### Presentations

"Attitudes to child support in Australia: Preliminary findings", Presentation to members of the Reference Group – Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, Canberra, 25 February 2005 (B. Smyth and R. Weston).

"Attitudes to child support", Presentation to members of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, Canberra, 18 January 2005 (B. Smyth and R. Weston).

## HILDA SURVEY

The *Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) survey 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 (ACER).

## Family Dynamics Module

During the reporting period, Institute staff continued to contribute to the ongoing design of the HILDA survey. Staff in the Institute's Family and Marriage program, in consultation with the Director and other Institute researchers, continued to develop 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 5 is scheduled to be in the field in late 2005. Since the data became available in 2002, Institute researchers have used HILDA data to address a range of research questions, the findings of which have been the subject of a number of papers and presentations.

### Publications

Publications based on the HILDA dataset are listed in other sections of this Annual Report.

### Presentations

Presentations based on the HILDA dataset are listed in other sections of this Annual Report.

### Representation at workshops, conferences and external committees

Member, Project Management Group, Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services' Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey (R. Weston).

Member, External Reference Group, Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services' Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey (R. Weston).

## PROGRAM C FAMILY AND SOCIETY

The Family and Society Program focuses on the relation 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, it is necessary 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

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 project 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.

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. The Institute's work on Social Capital has been extensively cited in important government reports. For example, the Productivity Commission's report *Social Capital: Reviewing the Concept and its Policy Implications*, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics report *Measuring Social Capital: An Australian Framework and Indicators Information Paper*, both extensively cite Institute work in this area.

As this project has been in operation since 2001, there has been no new work produced by the program in this financial year. However, the findings from earlier research continue to inform many of the other projects being undertaken within the Institute. Staff at the Institute have also played an important role in advising on social capital measures that could be included in external national surveys, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *General Social Survey 2006* and the Institute-based *Growing up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*.

#### *Presentations*

"Social capital, family and community life", Paper presented at the Home Economics Institute of Australia Conference, Sustainable Futures and Home Economics, Hobart, 12-15 January 2005 (J. Hughes).

*Representation at workshops, conferences and external committees*

Member, ABS Social Capital Advisory Group (J. Hughes).

**Family and Work Decisions Project**

The *Family and Work Decisions* project is a study of the work decisions of families with dependent children. This project is being conducted in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services.

The project adopts several approaches to understanding this issue. The first strand of the project has involved the analysis of existing secondary data and several papers have been published (see 2002–2003 Annual Report as well). The second strand involved 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 has been undertaken and in-depth qualitative interviews with 60 mothers have been completed.

A number of conference and research papers analysing the survey data and qualitative interviews have resulted and more are planned for the forthcoming financial year. These include papers on how mothers view and understand the income support system, how important are financial considerations in a mother's decision to work or not, what are the key determinants of a mother's decision to seek employment and the extent to which long-term health problems impact on a mother's employment decision.

*Publications*

Morehead, A. (2005), "Governments, workplaces and households: To what extent do they shape how mothers allocate time to work and family, and what role do preferences play?", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp. 4-9.

Hand, K. (2005), "Mothers' views on using formal child care", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp.10-17.

Hand, K. and Hughes, J. (2005), "Mothers' reflections about work and family life", *Family Matters*, no. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 44-49.

Renda, J. and Hughes, J. (2004), "The value mothers place on paid work and their feelings of life control", *Family Matters*, no. 68, Winter, pp. 76-83.

*Presentations*

"Work and family: The family's perspective", Guest lecture at the School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 20 April 2005 and 8 September 2004 (K. Hand).

"The determinants of employment for Australian mothers: A further analysis of lone and couple mothers", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (M. Alexander).

"Work role reversal among couples: Selected characteristics and the division of domestic labour", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (D. de Vaus and L. Qu).

"Mothers' use of and beliefs about child care", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (K. Hand).

"Mothers' attitudes to parenting and paid work: A typology?", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (K. Hand and J. Hughes).

"Does money matter? Mothers' views about money and how it influences employment decisions", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (J. Hughes and K. Hand).

"How long-term health problems impact on mothers' employment decisions", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (J. Renda).

"How employed mothers allocate time for work and family: A new framework", Paper presented at the AIFS Seminar Series, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 16 September 2004 (A. Morehead).

"Does money matter? How financial considerations feature in the employment decisions of partnered mothers receiving government assistance", Paper presented at the Work-Life Balance Across the Lifecourse Conference, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 30 June - July 2004 (J. Hughes, K. Hand and J. Renda).

"Paid work and retirement in the context of family obligations and community work, for mature and retirement age Australians?", Paper presented at the Work-Life Balance Across the Lifecourse Conference, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 30 June - 2 July 2004 (C. Millward).

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

United Kingdom Social Policy Association conference, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, 11-15 July 2004 (J. Hughes).

## **Work and Family Interactions/Family-Friendly Work Practices**

This project seeks to improve understanding of work and family interactions and the role played family-friendly work practices.

This financial year has seen the preparation of two articles for *Family Matters* based on analysis of the *Managing Caring Responsibilities and Paid Employment Survey*, NSW, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2000. The first (published in May 2005) considers the differential use of family-friendly work arrangements as it relates to the care of adults compared to care of children. The second (due for publication in August 2005) considers how couple and lone mothers use family-friendly work practices in caring for their children.

In October 2004, the Head of the Family and Society research program was an invited participant at an international workshop on parental leave arrangements in Brussels. This workshop considered the employment arrangements, in a wide range of industrialised countries, that employees have access to upon the birth of a child, and is expected to form the basis for an ongoing international network of researchers in this area. A Working Paper from this meeting has been published.

There has also been some preparatory work in this project on the employment arrangements of women whose partner is not participating in the labour market and how these arrangements differ from the experiences of other women.

#### *Publications*

Alexander, M. (2005), "Country note: Australia", in Deven, F. and Moss, P. (eds), *Leave Policies and Research: Reviews and Country Notes*, CBGS (Population and Family Study Centre), Working Paper Series No. 2005/3, Brussels.

Gray, M. and Hughes, J. (2005), "Caring for children and adults: Differential access to family-friendly work arrangements", *Family Matters*, no. 70, Autumn, pp. 18-25.

#### **Presentations**

"Returning to work following childbearing in Australia", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (J. Baxter).

#### **Representation at conferences, workshops or external committees**

Invited participant, ABS Meeting regarding data access, Melbourne, 20 April 2005 (J. Baxter).

Participants, "Transitions and Risks: New Directions in Social Policy" Conference, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 23-24 February 2005 (M. Alexander and J. Baxter).

Invited participant, "International Seminar on Leave Policies and Research: Issues of Diversity", Centre for Population and Family Studies, Brussels, Belgium, 12-13 October 2004 (M. Alexander).

Australian Centre for Research on Employment and Work (ACREW) Inaugural Conference, Melbourne, 24-25 June 2005 (J. Hughes).

Member, Family Relationships Service Program (FRSP) Outcomes Research Working Group (J. Baxter).

External reviewer, Special issue of the *Journal of Sociology* (J. Baxter).

External reviewer, for a Paper in the FACS Policy Research Paper series (J. Baxter).

### **Dynamics of Low Income, Welfare Reliance, and Changes in Family Structure of Parents with Dependent Children**

This is a three-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project that is being undertaken in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and the Australian National University.

This project will build a new seven-year longitudinal database, from FaCS administrative records and supplementary surveys, for low-income parents with dependent children. One of the supplementary surveys that will be attached to the longitudinal database is the *Family and Work Decisions* survey that was undertaken by the Institute in late 2002. The linking of this and other supplementary surveys to longitudinal FaCS administrative records 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.

### **Australians Working Together (AWT) Parenting Payment Activity Requirement Evaluation**

The Institute originally entered into a contract with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) in March 2004, to undertake the *Australians Working Together* (AWT) study. This was an evaluation of the impact of compulsory Centrelink interviews and activity requirements introduced by the Government in September 2003. Respondents were Parenting Payment customers who had a youngest child aged 13-15 years and had signed a formal Participation Agreement with Centrelink in February-March 2004. This evaluation

sought their views, and those of their youngest child, on how the required (compulsory) activities – such as paid work, voluntary work, training or study – were affecting themselves or their family.

This study included a literature review and the conduct of a two-wave longitudinal study to evaluate the impact of the new activity requirements for Parenting Payment customers on themselves and their children aged 13-15 years. Fieldwork was via taped telephone interviews with 60 parents and 60 children (paired interviews). Wave 1 and Wave 2 telephone interviews were conducted by a contracted fieldwork agency, approximately nine to ten months apart, in mid-2004 and early 2005 respectively.

Since the study was commissioned, responsibility for income support payments to people of working age had been transferred to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). A commissioned report and formal presentation of findings to DEWR was provided in June 2005. DEWR is due to provide a report to the Parliament on this and other aspects of the Government's *Australians Working Together* (AWT) program at the end of June 2006.

#### *Commissioned reports*

Alexander, M., Baxter, J., Hughes, J. and Renda, J. (2005), *Evaluation of the Impact of Activity Requirements for Parenting Payment Customers on their Children aged 13-15 years*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, June.

#### *Presentations*

"Evaluation of the Impact of Activity Requirements for Parenting Payment Customers on their Children aged 13-15 years", Presentation of wave 1 data to the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, 30 November 2004 (M. Alexander and J. Renda).

"Evaluation of the Impact of Activity Requirements for Parenting Payment Customers on their Children aged 13-15 years", Presentation of final report to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra, 8 June 2005 (M. Alexander, J. Baxter and J. Hughes).

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS ANALYSIS

Demographic Trends Analysis involves 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 the past year *Demographic Trends Analysis* continued to provide support to the Research Programs and responded to a number of queries on family trends from the media, both government and non-government organizations and university students. The Unit has also updated and expanded the Institute's online database *Family Facts and Figures*, which provides up-to-date information on family trends. Finally, research on a range of issues in relation to families has been undertaken, often in collaboration with members of the three Research Programs areas.

*Demographic Trends Analysis* has made regular contributions to the "Family Trends" column in the Institute's journal *Family Matters*. The issues examined in the past year included assessment of the prevalence of couple families with stepparent-child relationships, multiple child care arrangements, and difficulties faced by young adults in forming relationships. As noted earlier, in 2004, the Institute published a substantial book by David de Vaus entitled *Diversity and Change in Australian Families: Statistical Profiles*. The release of this publication, which provides a comprehensive overview of family diversity and change in Australia over the last 25 years, was launched by the Minister of Department of Family and Community Services in December.

The number of pages of the Institute's online database, *Family Facts and Figures*, downloaded from the Institute's website has increased by 20 per cent since the previous financial year. A new series "Parent-child contact after separation" has been added to the database.

During the year, *Demographic Trends Analysis* contributed to the *Fertility Decision-Making Project* carried out by Institute's Family and Marriage Program. This work involved planning, analysis and dissemination of findings through a Research Report, two articles published in *Family Matters*, and a conference presentation. The collaboration with the Institute's Children and Parenting Program on multiple arrangements of child care resulted in family trends article published in *Family Matters* and a conference presentation.

*Demographic Trends Analysis* also contributed to two presentations on family trends to a delegation from the Vietnam Population Commission and the members of the Council of Christian Education in Schools. Assistance was also provided to the Institute's involvement in the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support.

### Publications

All publications prepared by the Institute's Demographic Trends Analysis Unit can be found under relevant preceding research program areas.

### Presentations

Presentations prepared by the Unit are listed under various program areas.

### Representation at workshops, conferences and external committees

Member, Family Statistics User Advisory Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics (L. Qu).

## GROWING UP IN AUSTRALIA THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN

*Growing up in Australia* is the name by which the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) is widely known, particularly by the families participating in the study. LSAC was initiated and funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and is managed by the Institute. The first main wave of the study commenced in 2004. More than 10,000 families were recruited to the study, with about half having an infant as the study child (5,107), and the other half with a child aged 4-5 years selected as the study child (4,983).

In May 2005, the first wave of data was launched by Senator the Hon. Kay Patterson, Minister for Family and Community Services. The launch of data included the publication of the first Annual Report for *Growing Up in Australia*, which featured initial analysis of the data, and the release of the wave 1 dataset, which was accompanied by a comprehensive set of user documentation, including an online data dictionary.

The topics covered by the survey are comprehensive and are grouped into six broad domains: health, education, child care, family functioning, child functioning and socio-demographics. The data is ambitious in its scope, but also rich in its sources, with information provided by the children's parents, carers, teachers, and for the 4-5 year old cohort, from the children themselves.

Already research using wave 1 data has found that more than one in five mothers are working by the time the child is six months old; that most parents are happy with their neighbourhoods; and that grandparents provide most non-parental care for infants.

Because the study is longitudinal, with the same group of children being followed over time, it will be possible to observe the children's development unfold as they navigate childhood. It will also be possible to investigate why change occurs and the factors that contribute to particular outcomes. Through identifying risk and protective factors, developmental pathways and transition points, the findings from the study will inform policies and practice aimed at ensuring that every child in Australia has the best possible start in life.

Response to the study by those participating was overwhelmingly positive. The recruitment rate was 54 per cent of those families who were sent a letter of invitation to the study by the Health Insurance Commission, which had selected families at random from its Medicare database. About 12 per cent of these families could not be contacted because they had moved and a new contact address was not found.

Interviewers spent on average two hours with each family, collecting information from the child's parents and from the child (physical measurements and, for the 4-5 year old children, direct assessment of school readiness and language).

An innovative feature of the data collection included the use of a time-use diary, where parents recorded details of what their child did in two 24-hour periods. Information was also sought from the child's non-parental carer or teacher, where applicable.

Data from the National Childcare Accreditation Council relating to the quality of the child care provider has been added to the dataset, as has postcode-level data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census of Population and Housing. Child level records in the dataset have been assigned weights to allow population estimates to be produced and to take into account the sample design (which gave children varying chances of selection) and the differential response across types of families (for example, parents who had not completed Year 12 were less likely to agree to participate).

Application forms for the dataset were made available on the Institute's website, and by the end of June 2005 about 20 requests had been received.

An important part of the study is maintaining contact with the participants. As well as sending birthday and season's greetings cards to children in the study, and leaving memory joggers (such as a fridge magnet) with parents about how to supply updated contact information, further contact was made via a newsletter and short follow-up questionnaire which were sent to all study families about one year after the initial interview. If families had moved, then strategies were put in place to try to locate them in time for the second wave of data collection. This process was undertaken in late 2004 with the 500 families who were interviewed in late 2003, with 97 per cent of families located. The process was started with the 10,000 families in the main study in May 2005.

Development of the content and methodology for the second wave of data collection occurred throughout 2004–2005, with a range of consultative meetings held during 2004, followed by the development of draft instruments that were pilot tested in April-May 2005. The full methodology and data collection process will be trialled in the next financial year with the 500 families who were recruited to the study in 2003. The Australian Bureau of Statistics will be undertaking the data collection for this study for waves 2-4.

#### **Publications**

Australian Institute of Family Studies (2005), *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: 2004 Annual Report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, May.

#### **Commissioned reports**

Project Operations Team (2005), *Pilot Test Report and Wave 2 Content Recommendations*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, June.

Soloff, C., Lawrence, D. and Johnstone, R. (2005), *Sample Design*, LSAC Technical paper no.1, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, May.

Soloff, C., Johnstone, R., Misson, S. and Lawrence, L. (2005), *Data Users Guide Release 1.0*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, May.

Project Operations Team (2005), *Data Management and Validation*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, May.

Project Operations Team in conjunction with Colmar Brunton Social Research and I-view (2005), *Wave 1 Fieldwork: Final Report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, January.

Project Operations Team (2005), *2005 Workplan*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, January.

Project Operations Team (2004), *Between waves questionnaire: Outcome report – Dress rehearsal process*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, December.

Project Operations Team (2004), *Wave 2 development progress report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, November.

Sanson, A., Misson, S., Project Operations Team and Outcome Index Working Group (2004), *Specifications for the LSAC Outcome Index*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, September.

Project Operations Team in conjunction with Colmar Brunton Social Research and I-view (2004), *Wave 1 Fieldwork – September Progress Report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, September.

Project Operations Team (2004), *Preliminary Derived Item Specifications*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, September.

Project Operations Team (2004), *Wave 2-4 design and tender process: update*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, July.

#### **Presentations**

“Parental leave and return to work: The design and implementation of a national survey”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (G. Whitehouse and C. Soloff).

“Summarising children’s wellbeing: The LSAC outcome index”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (A. Sanson and S. Misson).

“*Growing Up in Australia*, The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children - Early data”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (J. Dickenson and R. Johnstone).

“Long-term research program for LSAC”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (P. Chevalier, K. Wilson, A. Sanson and A. Morehead).

“*Growing Up in Australia: Wave 1 Data*”, Paper presented at the Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference, Sydney, 29 September - 3 October 2004 (R. Johnstone).

“*Growing Up in Australia: A unique data resource for researchers*”, Paper presented at the Australian Population Association Biennial Conference, Canberra, 15-19 September 2004 (R. Johnstone).

“Sampling and information needs determining the approach for *Growing Up in Australia*”, Paper presented at the Australian Market and Social Research Association 2004 Adaptation Conference, Melbourne, 18 October 2004 (J. Rush and C. Soloff).

#### **Publications by Consortium Advisory Group members**

“Overview of measurement in *Growing Up in Australia*”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (S. Zubrick, M. Wake, J. Ungerer, L. Harrison, D. Berthelsen and J. Nicholson).

## AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) functions as the sole national repository for current information and research on sexual assault in order to assist service providers, policymakers and others working in the field to improve responses to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of, sexual assault in the community. ACSSA is funded by the Australian Government's Office for Women (formerly the Office of the Status of Women, which now forms part of the Department of Family and Community Services) under its new Women's Safety Agenda.

While national in its focus, the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) continues to be successfully hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies in Melbourne. Its emphasis is on all forms of sexual assault, particularly the sexual assault of women and girls over 15 years of age (the most commonly reported victim/survivors); and adult survivors of child sexual assault.

The main functions of ACSSA are: to facilitate access, particularly electronic access, to national policy-relevant data to inform strategies to more effectively prevent and respond to sexual assault; to establish a comprehensive evidence base, and provide information and advice 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.

### Functions and activities

Key indicators of ACSSA's performance over the reporting period included: the production of ten publications on issues relevant to the sexual assault field; further development of information, resources and the capacity of the ACSSA website; substantial increases in memberships to ACSSA's electronic news "alert" and Good Practice database, as well as increased subscriptions to the ACSSA mailing list; and responding to a significant growth in individual research enquiries.

### Publications

ACSSA has three types of publications that aim to report on developments in the sexual assault field. *ACSSA Aware* is a quarterly newsletter that includes feature articles on current topics in sexual assault, stakeholder profiles, alerts for upcoming workshops and conferences, and a literature review of the latest sexual assault research from Australian and international sources that have been obtained for the collection. *ACSSA Briefing Papers* provide a brief commentary on contemporary issues of importance in the area of sexual assault. *ACSSA Issues Papers* present a more in-depth investigation of some of the critical gaps that remain in our understanding of, and responses to, sexual violence.

During 2004–2005, ACSSA published five issues of the newsletter, including a special edition on "Good Practice", two Briefing Papers and three Issues Papers.

(Details of the publications are listed at the end of this section.) Publications are distributed to almost 7,000 individuals and organisations across Australia who have subscribed to the ACSSA mailing list.

### ***Research enquiry service***

The ACSSA research and enquiry service provides stakeholders with information, specialist advice, and research expertise on current issues that impact on working in the field of sexual assault. The research and enquiry service incorporates a wide range of important functions including: literature searches and literature “scoping”; statistical analysis and interpretation of current trends and issues that impact on our understanding of sexual assault; advice on best practice approaches and/or interventions; and reviews and/or critically evaluates reforms to policy and legislation relevant to sexual assault.

Over the year, ACSSA received more than 250 enquiries with an average of 36 minutes spent responding to each query. Between July 2003 and 30 June 2005 more than one-third (36 per cent) of the queries received related to research questions and requests for resources on a wide range of topics. Government departments (both state and federal), sexual assault services, police, tertiary institutions, libraries and the media are among the regular users of the research enquiry service.

### ***“Good Practice” Programs and Responses Database***

Since 2003, ACSSA has been developing a national collection of Good Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault. The collection aims to provide a valuable resource to service providers and policy makers by highlighting examples of good practice in service provision from each state and territory, in the spirit of sharing information and experiences across the sector. Currently there are 28 examples of “good practice” programs available for browsing in the collection. The most recent additions, that do not form part of the items contained in the special edition, include the Victorian “Drink Spiking Community Education Campaign”; Queensland’s Guidelines for “Responding to sexual assault and promoting sexual safety within the Queensland Health inpatient mental health services”; the NSW “About Date Rape” website developed by the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit; and the Northern Territory’s protocol outlining “A coordinated approach to better respond to drug and alcohol facilitated sexual assault in Darwin Urban”.

### ***Website***

The ACSSA website ([www.aifs.gov.au/acssa](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa)) aims to improve access to current information and resources through identifying new developments in the field, monitoring and recording the research, policy and practice literature, providing links to online documents, and by publishing ACSSA’s publications online. Pages on forthcoming conferences and events, and links to Australian and international organisations working to address sexual assault are regularly updated. There is also online access to the ACSSA collection located within the Australian Institute of Family Studies library.

In its second year of operation, visits to the ACSSA website more than doubled with over 150,000 pages/documents accessed. Briefing Papers and Issues Papers and articles from the newsletter were in demand with more than 42,000 downloads, followed by visits to the online resource collection of bibliographies and

online documents with more than 37,000 accesses. Other features of the website that have shown increased use are the “Good Practice Programs and Responses to Sexual Assault Database” and current statistical information on the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault.

Subscribers to ACSSA’s electronic news service, *ACSSA-Alert*, now number more than 300.

### *Library collection*

The ACSSA library collection grew at a steady rate over the past year. As of June 2005 there were 1,078 relevant items in the collection consisting of journals, monographs and reports, audio-visual material (videos and kits), training material/modules, as well as ephemera (for example posters, postcards, booklets). Materials held in the collection are available for browsing at the Institute’s library, which is open to the public by appointment during business hours. Otherwise, items may be borrowed through the inter-library loan system. Bibliographic information or items in the collection can also be viewed by accessing the Institute’s library catalogue via the ACSSA website.

### *Networking, conferences and outreach*

In the last 12 months, ACSSA has presented at 14 different events, conferences, forums and seminars focusing on issues such as law reform, criminal justice responses, approaches to prevention, sexual assault and disabilities, and intimate partner rape. Particular highlights were the presentations given at the Melbourne conference “Home Truths: Stop Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, A National Challenge”; Queensland’s “Challenge, Change & Cha, Cha, Cha: A Conference on Women Feminism and the Law” in October; the forum on “Preventing Sexual Assault: Lessons Learnt and Strategies for the Future”, held to launch Sexual Health Awareness Week in South Australia; and more recently, in Melbourne, ACSSA spoke at the forum “Improving the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault”, hosted by the Victorian Department of Justice. ACSSA also participated on a discussion panel on best practice pathways for responding to sexual assault that included the Chief Judge of the County Court, the Chief Magistrate and current members of the judiciary.

ACSSA team members also regularly promote the services provided by ACSSA through presentations, and information sessions aimed at increasing the sector’s understanding and use of the services available through the Centre.

### *Feedback*

In March 2005, ACSSA forwarded a survey to over 6,800 subscribers to the mailing list seeking feedback on the services provided by the Centre. Almost 200 survey forms were completed and returned. The survey sought feedback in relation to the broad range of services provided by ACSSA including how valuable or helpful the publications had been to the work of stakeholders. The feedback provided was overwhelmingly positive in terms of the quality and high standard of information provided through ACSSA’s publications. The vast majority of respondents who had also made use of ACSSA’s website, enquiry service, and who received the fortnightly “ACSSA-Alerts”, indicated that they had found the information “extremely helpful”.

## Primary research and analysis

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault has also been conducting primary research that analyses the characteristics and outcomes of police investigations into sexual assault.

### Primary research program

In October 2004, ACSSA succeeded in tendering for a project funded by the Victorian Office of Women's Policy, on behalf of the state-wide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault. ACSSA commenced work on the project, subsequently titled "An Analysis of Police Investigations into Sexual Assault", in November 2004.

The principal aim of this project is to examine what kinds of factors appear to be influencing the outcomes of rape investigations, especially where police or adult victim survivors decide to terminate the investigation. Specifically, the project will examine relevant Victorian police information in order to: identify the characteristics of cases that are finalised as "complaints withdrawn", "no offence disclosed", and "offender processed" – including characteristics related to the offence, the victim, the offender, the relationship between the victim and the offender and the time between the offence and the report to police; and distinguish, to the extent that this evidence is available, the kinds of factors that influence the finalisation of sexual assault reports as "complaints withdrawn", "no offence detected/disclosed" and "offender processed" where the complainant is from a diverse group (Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse, rural and women with disabilities).

The findings of the project will be used to contribute to an evidence base that can inform improved police investigations into sexual offences and specifically, police training and the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Sexual Assault. This will help ensure that all reports of sexual assault are thoroughly investigated and will ultimately improve access to the criminal justice system.

The data collection began in April 2005 and will be completed by the end of August 2005. It is estimated that the final report on the research findings will be submitted to the Victorian Office for Women in December 2005.

### Publications

Fergus, L. (2005), "Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation", *Briefing Paper 5*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Heath, M. (2005), "The law and sexual offences against adults in Australia", *Issues Paper 4*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Heenan, M. (2005), "Sexual Offences Law and Procedure", *Aware: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Newsletter no. 5*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Heenan, M. (2005), "Foreword", *Surviving the legal system: A handbook for adult & child sexual assault survivors & their supporters*, Coulomb Communications, Melbourne.

Keel, M. (2005), "Sexual assault and mental health in Australia: Collaborative responses for complex needs", *Aware: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Newsletter no. 6*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Keel, M., Fergus, L. and Heenan, M. (2005), "Home Truths: A conference in review", *Issues Paper 3*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Olle, L. (2005), "Mapping health sector and interagency protocols on sexual assault", *Issues Paper 2*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Fergus, L. (2004), "Making rights a reality: The human rights approach to stopping violence against women", *Aware: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Newsletter no. 4*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Keel, M. (2004), "Family violence and sexual assault in Indigenous communities: Walking the talk", *Briefing Paper 4*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

### Submissions

Heenan, M. (2005), Submission in response to the inquiry into *Improving Responses to Allegations Involving Sexual Assault*, Special Projects Unit of the Office of Ombudsman Victoria/Office of Police Integrity, Victoria.

### Presentations

Plenary speaker, Forum on *Improving the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault*, hosted by the Victorian Department of Justice, Melbourne, 29-30 June 2005 (M. Heenan).

Seminar facilitator, seminar on *Adolescents who sexually abuse their siblings: A study of family and individual factors, and the nature of abuse*, by Jo Hatch (Children's Protection Society), Australian Institute of Family Studies Seminar Series, Melbourne, 16 June 2005 (M. Heenan).

Speaker, Criminal Justice Donor's Forum, Reichstein Foundation's Annual Event, Melbourne, 2 June 2005 (M. Heenan).

Master of Ceremonies, Launch of *Anyone's Story: Understanding and Responding to Adult Sexual Assault*, a video training tool produced by the NSW Education Centre Against Violence in partnership with NSW Police, Parramatta, 23 May 2005 (M. Heenan).

Launch of Dr Caroline Taylor's book, *Court licensed abuse; patriarchal lore and the legal response to intrafamilial sexual abuse of children*, Southbank, Melbourne, 13 May 2005 (M. Heenan).

Showcasing Seminars, hosted by the Australian Government's Office for Women (Department of Family and Community Services) and the Queensland Office for Women, Brisbane, 21-22 March 2005 (M. Heenan).

Forum on *Preventing Sexual Assault: Lessons Learnt and Strategies for the Future*, held to launch Sexual Health Awareness Week, Shine SA, Adelaide, 14 February 2005 (M. Heenan).

"Just 'keeping the peace' – A reluctance to respond to male partner sexual violence", Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (M. Heenan).

"Women, violence and the criminal justice system: Surviving the legal system", Paper presented at a forum organised by the *Response to Sexual Assault Project* under the auspice of the Mental Health Co-ordinating Council (MHCC), Rozelle, NSW, 7 December 2004 (M. Heenan).

"Overview of ACSSA functions and research priorities" including a discussion of the findings published in the Vichealth report, *Measuring the Health Costs of Intimate Partner Violence*, Presentation at a Seminar requested by the Council for Christian Education in Schools (CCES), 30 November 2004 (M. Heenan).

"Overview of ACSSA functions and research priorities", Presentation to the State-wide Sector Meeting for Queensland Sexual Assault Services Meeting, Brisbane Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, 4 November 2004 (M. Heenan).

“Keeping an advocacy focus on law reform”, Plenary presentation delivered at the Challenge, Change & Cha, Cha, Cha: A Conference on Women Feminism and the Law, Brisbane, 27 October 2004 (M. Heenan).

“Feminism Roundtable: Reclaiming a gendered agenda, resisting mainstreaming”, Workshops co-convened and co-chaired with Jane Mulroney at the Home Truths: Stop Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, A National Challenge Conference, Melbourne, 17 September 2004 (M. Heenan).

“Exploring alternatives to abandoning criminal justice”, Paper presented at the Home Truths: Stop Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, A National Challenge Conference, Melbourne, 17 September 2004 (M. Heenan).

*Representation at conferences, workshops and external committees*

Fifth Australian Women’s Health Conference, Carlton Crest Hotel, Melbourne, 20-22 April 2005 (M. Heenan).

Amnesty International, Launch of the Campaign for a National Plan of Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women, Melbourne, 6 March 2005 (M. Heenan).

Launch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists’ “Medical responses to adults who have experienced sexual assault: an interactive educational module for doctors”, Melbourne, 31 March 2005 (M. Heenan).

Women’s Safety Forum 2004, *Working for a Safer Community*, organised by the Office of Women’s Policy on behalf of the Victorian Minister for Women’s Affairs, the Hon. Mary Delahunty, Melbourne, 10 December 2004 (M. Heenan).

Breakfast seminar and fundraiser to mark the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Melbourne, 25 November 2004 (M. Heenan).

Project Forum for *Building partnerships between mental health, family violence and sexual assault services*, Department of Human Services, Melbourne, 19 November 2004 (M. Heenan).

Home Truths, Stop Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence: A National Challenge Conference, Sheraton Hotel, Melbourne, 15-17 September 2004 (M. Heenan).

Launch of Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Domestic Violence, Melbourne Town Hall, 31 August 2004 (M. Heenan).

Launch of the Victorian Law Reform Commission’s Final Report into Sexual Offence Laws and Procedures, Parliament House, Canberra, 25 August 2004 (M. Heenan).

Director, Victorian Women’s Trust Ltd., Melbourne (M. Heenan).

Member, State-wide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault (M. Heenan).

Member, Advisory Committee for the Personal Safety Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics (M. Heenan).

Member, Advisory Committee, Violence Against Women Community Attitudes Project, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (M. Heenan).

Member, Conference Planning Committee, “Home Truths”: National Conference on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, CASA Forum and Domestic Violence Victoria (M. Heenan).

External reviewer, CASA House, *Women Against Violence: An Australian Feminist Journal* (M. Heenan).

## NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION CLEARINGHOUSE

*The National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPCL) 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. The goal of the Clearinghouse is to inform policy, practice and research into child abuse prevention.*

The Clearinghouse has operated from the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 1995, where it collects, produces and distributes information and resources, conducts research, and offers specialist advice on the latest developments in child abuse prevention, child protection and associated violence.

### Research

The Clearinghouse undertakes primary and secondary research projects related to child protection and the prevention of child abuse. A number of Clearinghouse research reports are available for downloading from the website ([www.aifs.gov.au/nch](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch)). As part of its contract with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), in 2004–2005 the Clearinghouse has been involved in projects aiming to inform future policy development concerning foster care and other forms of out-of-home care for children unable to live with their parents because of protective concerns. Particular attention has been paid to the needs of Indigenous young people in care, and how to put in place models of best practice. The Clearinghouse has also looked at an extensive review of the literature on risk factors for child abuse in organisations and risk-management strategies to create child-safe organisation.

In September 2004, the Clearinghouse completed a briefing paper for FaCS that provides an overview of the current state of knowledge on the effectiveness of programs that aim to prevent the child abuse and neglect of children. Based on questions frequently received by the Clearinghouse about child abuse prevention, a series of ten Resource Sheets giving up-to-date data and information about key issues in child protection were produced (and published online).

The Clearinghouse has two other key external contracts for research projects currently underway: a national audit of child protection research (1995–2004) commissioned by the Australian Centre for Child Protection (University of South Australia), and an Indigenous Community Development Evaluation project funded by the Telstra Foundation.

### Knowledge base

The Clearinghouse currently holds 12,229 records in its catalogue database related to child abuse and neglect. The catalogue is widely accessible via the Institute's website, while access to the Institute's bibliographic database, *Australian Family & Society Abstracts*, is via subscription to the RMIT's *Informat* service.

## Communications

The knowledge base is used to generate a number of communications activities. The Clearinghouse produces web-based and hard 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 over 8,000 clients registered on the Clearinghouse's free mailing list. In 2004–2005, two *Newsletters* and three *Issues Papers* were published.

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.

### Website

The Clearinghouse website continued to be well used during the year with 598,690 pages downloaded (including over 343,381 pages of Clearinghouse publications). In high demand were publications produced by the Clearinghouse. Its *Issues Papers* received more than 200,000 requests and articles in its *Newsletters* received more than 100,000 requests. Other pages receiving frequent use are the regularly updated bibliographies covering 27 topics, a directory of national and international links to organisations working to prevent child abuse and neglect, a listing of counselling services for parents and children, forthcoming conferences and events (at the national and international level), police clearances and checks, Internet safety, government departments responsible for issues dealing with child protection, and contact numbers for each state and territory to report incidences of child abuse.

### Advisory services and networking

A key role for the Clearinghouse is the provision of advice on child abuse policy and practice issues to the Australian Government, state and territory governments, agencies and practitioners working in the field. This free advisory service uses information from the library collection and databases. Clearinghouse research staff are available to help with requests requiring a more specialised response. This may include the detailed analysis and interpretation of current issues in child protection and child abuse prevention, informing program development and professional practice, to providing advice on research methodology and program evaluations.

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.

Clearinghouse staff continued to draw on the knowledge base to provide advisory services; the Clearinghouse's research staff continued to respond to more specialised questions. The use of the advisory service remains high, with a total of 212 verbal requests in 2004–2005, and more than 409 postings on our *childprotect* e-discussion list, which provides service providers, government agencies, policymakers and researchers with a venue to discuss research, policy and practice issues and facilitates discussion and dissemination of good practice knowledge. Currently, *childprotect* has 547 subscribers.

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. They also sit on a number of state-based and national advisory groups and committees committed to child abuse prevention or the improvement of the child protection system.

#### Publications

Bromfield, L. M. and Higgins, D. J. (2005), "National comparison of child protection systems", *Child Abuse Prevention Issues*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, vol. 22, pp. 1-31.

Bromfield, L. M. and Higgins, D. J. (2005), "The course and characteristics of chronic and isolated child maltreatment", *Family Matters*, vol. 70, Autumn, pp. 38-45.

Higgins, D. J. (2005), "Differentiating between child maltreatment experiences", *Family Matters*, vol. 69, Spring/Summer, pp. 50-55.

Bromfield, L. (2004), "The nature, causes and context of child maltreatment [Book Review]", *Journal of Family Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 282-283.

Bromfield, L. (2004), "Proposed reforms to Victorian child protection legislation, policy and programs", *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, pp. 12-17.

Bromfield, L., Richardson, N. and Higgins, D. (2004), "Victorian Aboriginal Community Child Abuse Conference", *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, vol. 13, no. 1, Summer, pp. 17-22.

Lawrence, R., and Irvine, P. (2004), "Redefining fatal neglect", *Child Abuse Prevention Issues no. 21*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Libesman, T. (2004), "Child welfare approaches for Indigenous communities: International perspectives", *Child Abuse Prevention Issues no. 20*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Richardson, N. (2004), "An inquiry into Australians' experiences of institutional and out-of-home care", *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, pp. 3-6.

Richardson, N., Higgins, D. and Feeney, T. (2004), "Working together for a child safe world", *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, pp. 7-10.

#### Electronic publications - Resource sheets

Richardson, N. (2005), "Child abuse and neglect in Indigenous Australian communities", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 10*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, March. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Richardson, N. (2005), "Social costs: the effects of child maltreatment", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 9*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, March. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Richardson, N. (2005), "Foster care?" *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 8*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, February. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Richardson, N. and Bromfield, L. (2005), "Who abuses children?", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 7*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, February. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Richardson, N. (2004), "What is child abuse?", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 6*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, December. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Tomison, A. and Richardson, N. (2004), "Evaluating child abuse prevention programs", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 5*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, December. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Kovacs, K. and Richardson, N. (2004), "Fatal child abuse", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 4*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, June. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Kovacs, K. and Richardson, N. (2004), "Mandatory reporting of child abuse", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 3*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, June. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Kovacs, K. and Richardson, N. (2004), "The economic costs of abuse", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 2*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, June. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

Kovacs, K. and Richardson, N. (2004), "Child abuse statistics", *National Child Protection Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 1*, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, June. In [www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/sheets/menu.html)

#### Commissioned reports

Bromfield, L., Higgins, D., Osborn, A., Panozzo, S. and Richardson, N. (2005), *Out-of-home care in Australia: Messages from research*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council, commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, Melbourne, June.

Higgins, D., Richardson, N. and Bromfield, L. (2005), *Stakeholders' perceptions of 'best practice' in out-of-home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people: An empirical evaluation [Preliminary Report June 2005]*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Australian Council of Children and Parenting, commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, Melbourne, June.

Richardson, N., Bromfield, L. and Higgins, D. (2005), *The recruitment, retention, and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foster Carers: A Literature Review*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Australian Council of Children and Parenting, commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, Melbourne, June.

Richardson, N., Bromfield, L. and Higgins, D. (2004), *The effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, Melbourne, September.

#### Submissions

Richardson, N. and Bromfield, L. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Care and Protection of Children and Young People Act 2005*, Northern Territory Government Department of Health and Community Services.

Richardson, N. and Higgins, D. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Legislation for the Regulation of Premium Mobile Phone Services*, Australian Communications Authority.

Richardson, N., Higgins, D. and Bromfield, L. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Legislation for the Screening of Individuals who Work with Children in Tasmania*, Commission for Children Tasmania.

Richardson, N., Higgins, D. and Bromfield, L. (2005), Submission on the *Draft Working with Children Bill 2005 Discussion Paper*, Victorian Government Department of Justice.

Bromfield, L. and Higgins, D. (2004), Submission to the *Victorian Child Protection Legislative Review*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services.

Higgins, D. and Richardson, N. (2004), Submission on the *Draft revised code of practice*, Internet Industry Association.

### *Presentations*

“Facilitating child abuse prevention research and models of best practice: The role of a national clearinghouse for child protection research”, Paper presented at the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children 13th Annual Colloquium, New Orleans, USA, 15-18 June 2005 (D. Higgins, N. Richardson and L. Bromfield).

“Understanding what child protection data mean: A national comparison”, Paper presented at the Safety, crime and justice: From data to policy – Australian Institute of Criminology/Australian Bureau of Statistics Conference, Canberra, 2-3 June 2005 (D. Higgins and L. Bromfield).

“Making the ‘right’ choices about child protection programs and services”, Paper presented at the Healthy Solutions for Children: Making the Right Choice 10th National Conference of the Association for the Welfare of Child Health, Sydney, 28-29 April 2005 (N. Richardson, D. Higgins and L. Bromfield).

“The National Child Protection Clearinghouse”, Guest Speaker at the Victorian Department of Human Services – Gippsland Region, Sale, 19 April 2005 (E. Fish).

“The course and characteristics of chronic and isolated child maltreatment”, Guest Speaker at the Victorian Department of Human Services – Gippsland Region, Sale, 19 April 2005 (L. Bromfield and D. Higgins).

“The course and characteristics of chronic and isolated child maltreatment”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (L. Bromfield and D. Higgins).

“Understanding the underlying constructs of child maltreatment”, Paper presented at the 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, 9-11 February 2005 (D. Higgins).

“National Standards in Child Protection and the Role of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse”, Guest Speaker at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group, 3-4 February 2005 (L. Bromfield).

“The role of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse in assisting statutory child protection workers”, Guest Speaker at the Victorian Department of Human Services - Barwon-South West Region, Geelong, 3 December 2004 (D. Higgins).

“Social marketing: Strategies for increasing community awareness of child abuse and neglect”, Guest Speaker at the Victorian Department of Human Services – Gippsland Region, Sale, 23 November 2004 (D. Higgins).

“The role of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse in assisting statutory child protection workers”, Guest Speaker at the Victorian Department of Human Services – Gippsland Region, Morewell, 23 November 2004 (D. Higgins).

“Current gaps in child protection research: Evaluating child abuse prevention programs”, Guest Speaker at the NSW Health Research Forum, Sydney, 2 November 2004 (D. Higgins).

“Snapshot of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse”, Paper presented at National Foster Care Conference, Canberra, 29-31 October 2004 (D. Higgins).

“Child abuse: Addressing the problem at home”, Guest Speaker at Annual General Meeting of the Safety House Association of Victoria Inc., Geelong, 23 October 2004 (D. Higgins).

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

ISPCAN 15th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect “Working together for a child safe world”, Brisbane, 19-22 September 2004 (D. Higgins and N. Richardson).

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association Conference, “Families are forever: Build them strong”, Melbourne, 6-8 October 2004 (D. Higgins, L. Bromfield and N. Richardson).

Member, QLD Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group (D. Higgins).

Member, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (NAPCAN) Victoria – Advisory Group (D. Higgins).

Member, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) Reference Group (D. Higgins).

Member, Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group (L. Bromfield).

External reviewer, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) *Child Abuse & Neglect* (D. Higgins).

Editorial Board Member, American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) *Child Maltreatment* (D. Higgins).

Editorial Board Member, *Journal of Religion & Abuse: Advocacy, Pastoral Care & Prevention*, (Haworth Pastoral Press) (D. Higgins).

External reviewer, *Australian Journal of Social Issues* (D. Higgins).

## STRONGER FAMILIES LEARNING EXCHANGE

The Stronger Families Learning Exchange provides information, resource sharing, and 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 extended to the wider community concerned with family wellbeing.

The Stronger Families Learning Exchange (SFLEX) was funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), as part of the Australian Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. During the first phase of the Strategy in 2000-2004, the two key components of the SFLEX were the Training and Support Team and the Library and Information Services. SFLEX provided support to Stronger Families Fund projects throughout Australia to contribute to the evidence base about the effectiveness of early interventions for families.

### Training and support activities

The major component of the SFLEX was the provision of action research and evaluation support to Stronger Families Fund projects, funded under the Strategy 2000-2004. These projects are located in disadvantaged communities throughout Australia and many involve working with Indigenous communities, a significant number of which are located in remote regions.

The initial contract between FaCS and the Institute ended in June 2004 and, with some projects reaching completion, the resources for SFLEX activities were reduced. In 2004-2005, SFLEX provided ongoing support to the remaining Stronger Families Fund projects. Team members visited each of the projects and maintained regular contact and support between visits. Support included developing and implementing evaluation frameworks, working with projects to design and implement action research projects and supporting projects to record and disseminate information about their work.

The team concentrated more effort on encouraging networking and mutual support between projects rather than the individual training and support provided to this point. The SFLEX team also changed its focus to publishing papers on the learning and experiences of the projects. This period also saw the trial of a regionally based worker in Sydney, which was successful in providing increased support and training for Stronger Families Fund projects located in New South Wales.

Through publications and conference presentations the projects' experiences are already contributing to the growing national and international body of knowledge about local participation, collaborative processes and early intervention strategies. The aim is to inform government policy, community development and capacity building, service delivery, and research practices.

### *Development of resources*

The Training and Support Team developed and trialed a range of resources to facilitate the work of projects, including tailored training materials for project

workers. The team worked collaboratively with projects on the design and development of a series of publications that record project outcomes and provide resources for the projects and others working with participatory, community based programs. Team members also worked with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services officers at regional, state, territory and national levels in relation to specific projects and in the documentation of broader themes and issues arising from the projects.

This formed the basis of a Learning Series, which consists of seven documents developed as part of this work.

Learning 1. *Doing action research* – a resource for community projects funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000–2004.

Learning 2. *Communities doing participatory evaluation* – a resource for community projects funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000–2004.

Learning 3. *Parent education and playgroups in community-based settings* – a record of learning from projects funded under Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000–2004.

Learning 4. *Early intervention and supporting families* – a record of learning from projects funded under SFCS 2000–2004.

Learning 5. *Is it deadly, gammon or what?* – a record of learning from implementing Indigenous protocols in projects funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000–2004.

Learning 6. *Working with Gubbas* – a resource guide for Indigenous communities working on government funded projects.

Learning 7. *Yarning up* – case studies showing alternative methods of documenting projects from projects funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000–2004.

The first two Learning documents are resources that have been developed from the learning accumulated when working with community projects using Action Research and Participatory Evaluation approaches. Learning documents 3 and 4 are records of work undertaken by community projects focusing on parent education and playgroups and early intervention. The final three documents have been developed from projects that are working with Indigenous communities.

### **Regional workshops**

SFLEX ran a series of regional workshops that facilitated the follow-up and extension of the action research and participatory evaluation processes of projects. Four workshops were run across the country including Coonabarabran, Mandurah, Cairns and the New South Wales Central Coast. All of the workshops were evaluated and received positive feedback from participants.

### **Library collection, services and databases**

The Library collection on topics related to early intervention in strengthening families currently stands at 4,500 items, with significant numbers of items on topics such as family strengths, Indigenous issues, rural or remote communities, social capital, community development, capacity building, action research and parent

education. With a primary focus on Australian materials, the collection contains both research/theoretical items and practical materials such as kits, audiovisual materials and “how to” resources. People are alerted to the latest acquisitions to the collection by clicking on the special SFLEX icon on the online catalogue screen on the project website, or by reading the “literature highlights” section of the *SFLEX Bulletin*.

Project personnel are entitled to borrow from the collection or use help desk services. Help desk staff assist with catalogue searches, provide reference information and undertake literature searches of bibliographic databases. Personnel from 55 projects have registered to use library services and have made nearly 200 requests for information or materials during the reporting period.

There are three Clearinghouse databases. Approximately 6,615 organisations and individuals are listed on the stakeholder *Mailing List database* to which the *SFLEX Bulletin* is distributed. The *Stronger Families Fund projects database* – with a diverse range of projects and activities across the projects, a webpage has been created for each project to showcase innovations and achievements rather than through a structured database. Details of more than 80 such projects have been added to the *Early Intervention database* which is publicly available on the SFLEX website: the criterion for inclusion is “good practice” or “what works” in early intervention, as demonstrated by evaluation, with managers of early intervention projects who are happy to depict “good practice” elements of their projects having been contacted for permission to include this information in the database.

### **Publications, website and extranet**

SFLEX *Bulletins* are published in hard copy and electronic format. These contain theoretical and methodological articles, information about the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, Stronger Families Fund project updates, and details about conferences and recent publications. Two editions of the *Bulletin* were produced in the reporting period.

During the life of the SFLEX website, a wide range of electronic resources was developed to support projects funded under the Strategy and other stakeholders interested in access to resources on community development, early intervention and prevention, and action research. The website offers: a Publications page for SFLEX *Bulletins* in HTML and PDF, papers and presentations by SFLEX staff, and links to other literature about the Strategy; details of funded Projects; a database of examples of good practice; bibliographies and links to other online resources; forthcoming conferences and events; and a page for “what’s new” on the web and in the sector. All areas were well used during the year with site statistics showing 434,445 hits and 183,610 pages downloaded. The Project pages and Publications were most popular with 54,795 and 53,130 downloads respectively, followed by the online resource pages with 33,801 downloads.

During 2004–2005, in addition to regular updating of the Conferences and Events and What’s New pages, the Projects pages were reviewed and updated with final information from the Stronger Families Fund Projects. Resources, such as reports, stories, newsletters, resources, photos and the like previously only available on a password-protected site for Stronger Families Fund projects were moved to the public site after permission was obtained from the Projects. As well as gaining an

insight into project activities and progress, these pages provide a wealth of ideas and tools on topics such as action research cycles, program evaluation, involving local communities, parenting groups and playgroups.

The A-Z listing of resources was reviewed and restructured and offers an extensive collection of online resources and references to resources in the *Stronger Families* collection. Topics include: action research; community capacity building; early intervention; evaluation; government policies and strategies; participation; reference groups; and, working with Indigenous communities. A new bibliography on child development specifically relating to parent education and early intervention was developed.

Finally, the email discussion list “reFLEXion (which took the place of the closed list *SFF-discuss* late in 2004) completed the year with 67 subscribers. To date, postings on the list have mostly been announcements about new resources or events from SFLEX staff with little actual discussion from stakeholders.

#### Publications

Burchill, M. (2004), “Enough talking, more walking: achieving deadly outcomes”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, no. 6, Spring/Summer, pp. 6-9.

Fish, E. (2004), “Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: Project profiles”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, no. 6, Spring/Summer, pp. 28-33.

Haviland, M. (2004), “What makes evidence, and who gets to say so? How participatory action research contributes to evidence on early childhood intervention and community development”, Paper presented at the VCOSS Congress 2004: Strategies for equality and inclusion, Victorian Council of Social Service, Melbourne.

Haviland, M., Johnson, K., Orr, L. and Lienert, T. (2005), Being an “insider” and/or “outsider”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, no. 7, (*in press*).

Heart, D. and Garrow, A. (2004), “Taking a whole of community approach and keeping good things going”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, no. 6, Spring/Summer, pp. 25-27.

Northey, M. (2004), “Early intervention in Wiluna”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, no. 6, Spring/Summer, pp. 18-19.

Orr, L. (2004), “Sustainability of community practice with early years projects”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, no. 6, Spring/Summer, pp. 14-15.

Turner, C. and Bredhauer, K. (2005), “Nice noise: Parent education and playgroups”, *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, no. 7, Stronger Families Learning Exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, (*in press*).

#### Commissioned reports

Northey, M., Garrow, A., Fish, E., Burchill, M., Shadbolt, A. and Orr, L. (2004), *Early Learnings, Research Report, Volume 1*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, for the Telstra Foundation, Melbourne, Victoria, December.

#### Presentations

“Using Participatory Evaluation to Strengthen Family Centred Indigenous Projects”, One World: Many Childhoods, XXIV World Congress of OMEP, Melbourne, July 2004 (M. Northey with R. Bhagwandas).

“Travelling with Communities: A Road Less Travelled, Community Narratives and Praxis, Sharing Stories of Social Action and Change”, 9th Biennial Australia – Aoteroa Community Psychology Conference, Tauranga, New Zealand, July 2004 (C. Turner).

*Representation at conferences, workshops and external committees*

“Action in the Top End: The power of story”, Action Research Action Learning Process Management Association, Darwin, July 2004 (C. Turner).

ARACY Clearinghouse Feasibility Workshop, Sydney, August 2004 (M. Northey).

Communities for Children Forum, Sydney, August 2004 (M. Northey).