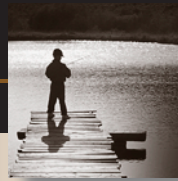


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COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

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

The Communication and Information Program is responsible for undertaking activities and achieving outcomes related to the broad communication objectives outlined in the Institute's Strategic Plan 2006–2008. As such, it is responsible for promoting the Institute's role, research, products and capabilities. This is done through publishing and disseminating Institute research; providing library and bibliographic services; maintaining and updating Internet and Intranet information; organising conferences and seminars; and facilitating positive media exposure for the Institute.

The program also develops and maintains networks and resources, and provides print and electronic publishing support for *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)*, the Australian Temperament Project (ATP), the National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC), the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA), the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA), and the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse (AFRC).

Publishing

Throughout 2006–2007, the Institute continued to publish relevant and timely information in the area of family research.

The publishing program includes the Institute's research journal *Family Matters*, and its series of Research Papers and Reports. In addition, research undertaken by Institute staff, or by external researchers using Institute data, is published in Australian and overseas journals and conference proceedings.

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

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

Publishing review processes

The Institute's research work was published in accordance with the Institute's established publishing review policy. This policy, formulated and monitored by the Institute's Information, Communications, Publications and Marketing Committee, requires that all material undergoes a formal, rigorous, internal and external review and assessment process, with reference to the Institute's *Criteria for Acceptance of Research Articles* or *Criteria for Acceptance of General Articles*.

Family Matters journal

The research journal *Family Matters* is the Institute's main dissemination vehicle. Its primary purpose is to keep local and international readers informed about Institute research and activities. Therefore the Institute places a high priority on its own research contribution to each edition.

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

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

The content of *Family Matters* provides a diverse range of perspectives and analyses of family research and policy options. In addition to research articles on a comprehensive range of family-related topics, regular columns include analysis of family trends, relationship trends, information and discussion of new developments in family law, details of Institute activities and seminars, notes on new books, and details on forthcoming conferences.

In accordance with the Institute's Strategic Plan, three editions of *Family Matters* were published in 2006–2007.

- *Family Matters*, No. 74, 2006 (72 pages) highlighted a diverse body of research on children in their context. It featured articles on: the health and wellbeing of women at five different ages who have had children; closing the gap between research policy and research practice; issues for parents of adults with an intellectual disability; parents' perceptions of their neighbourhood; paid work characteristics of mothers with infants; and investing in the early years from a community development approach. *The edition included six major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*
- *Family Matters*, No. 75, 2006 (96 pages) was a specially themed edition on Indigenous families. It contained articles on: the intergenerational effects of forced separation on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people; the economic value of harvesting wild resources to an Indigenous community; selected crime and justice issues for Indigenous families; views of carers and young people on 'out-of-home care' for Indigenous children; and Indigenous perspectives on community development. It also included an article on sustainability in prevention and early intervention; and one on mothers' accounts of work and family decision-making in couple families. *The edition included five major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*
- *Family Matters*, No. 76, 2007 (100 pages) was a specially themed edition that drew on Institute and other Australian research to focus on the theme of families caring. It included a mixture of research and viewpoint articles which explored the following three types of caring: care for people with a disability; care for children; and care in response to violence or neglect. *The edition included three major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*

The Institute charges subscribers to *Family Matters* but, in accordance with the Institute's aim of reaching a wide and diverse audience, *Family Matters* is also distributed at no cost to an extensive list of members of parliament, key policy makers, and the media.

Family Matters continues to draw considerable media attention with follow-up radio and press interviews and articles.

Family Matters online

Family Matters continued to be available as an online subscription from RMIT Publishing's Informit e-Library at search.informit.com.au.

Series publications

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

The Research Paper series is an important means by which Institute research findings and methodologies are made public. The series enables the dissemination of Institute research to policy makers, practitioners and researchers with the aim of encouraging dialogue with research and policy communities, and thus obtaining review and feedback about the nature, direction and quality of Institute research.

Three new Research Papers were published: No. 38, *The consequences of divorce for financial living standards in later life*; No. 39, *Differential parenting of children from diverse cultural backgrounds attending child care*; and No. 40, *Employment aspirations of non-working mothers with long-term health problems*.

The Research Report series comprises more substantial works that report on research findings at major milestones in a research project, or at the completion of a project. One research report was published in 2006–2007. Research Report No. 15 is entitled *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*.

Contract publications and reports

The Institute also publishes issues papers, discussion papers, bulletins and newsletters as well as commissioned and contracted reports. These are reported elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Media liaison

The Institute's participation in media liaison continues to be an important strategy towards achieving its key objective of informing the Australian community about its research findings. There were 972 items covered in print, radio and television mentioning Institute research in the reporting period. The greatest coverage for the Institute was on radio, where there were 628 mentions. The total audience reach of this coverage was 56,915,565. Media coverage was shared across states and in national media outlets. NSW, Victoria and Queensland and national print media outlets provided the greatest coverage. In radio and television, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland had the highest levels of coverage.

The Institute's media coverage is exclusively positive and, in addition to providing exposure of its own research findings, also frequently contributes a research dimension to wider public debate about family issues. The release of the Institute's flagship journal, *Family Matters*, three times during the reporting period promotes increased media interest in the Institute's work in general, as well as heightened interest in particular issues covered in the journal.

Library

The library provides a nationally and internationally accessible repository of Australian and overseas family research and information. It provides a high-quality and responsive information service supporting the work of the Institute and a specialist collection of electronic and hard-copy resources on family-related research.

Library staff also provides library and information services to support the Clearinghouses operated by the Institute (ACSSA, AFRC, CAFCA and NCPC), and the research projects (LSAC and ATP).

The library contributes to Australian information resource-sharing initiatives such as the Libraries Australia National Bibliographic Database, managed by the National Library of Australia.

A reference service is available to the wider community and the library is open to visitors by appointment. The library catalogue is available on the Institute's website.

Australian Family & Society Abstracts

The Australian Family & Society Abstracts (AF&SA) bibliographic database was established by the Institute in 1983 with the aim of providing Australia-wide and international access to research and information on Australian family issues.

AF&SA is a knowledge base of citations and abstracts that is central to the provision of information services, support of research and policy advice, and the specialised bibliographies and lists generated for clearinghouses. It covers Australian literature from 1980, and offers more than 60,000 citations and abstracts. Items indexed are drawn from a wide range of social science disciplines, including sociology, psychology, demography, health sciences, education, economics, law, history and social work. Unlike many citation databases that index only journal literature, AF&SA also includes books, conference papers, research reports, government reports and discussion papers, unpublished and working papers, and statistical documents.

The AF&SA database and an enhanced full-text version (Family and Society Plus) is available online via RMIT Publishing's Informat Online service, the major supplier of bibliographic and full-text databases for Australian scholarly literature. Subscribers to AF&SA include all Australian universities and state libraries, state and federal government departments and agencies, and non-government organisations.

During the reporting period 3,278 new documents were indexed for the AF&SA database, bringing the total number of documents to 66,785. Of the documents indexed this year, 46 per cent link directly to the full-text report or article on the Web, showing the continuing trend for information providers to publish online.

Library review

Libraries Alive! conducted a review of library services in 2006. One of the terms of reference for the review was to examine opportunities for improving the technological support required by the library to operate more efficiently.

There were a number of findings which reinforced the important role the library performs at the Institute. The library's performance was found to be consistent with its mission to support the research effort through a coordinated approach to gathering research information, as well as storing and disseminating research findings. It was acknowledged that the library also establishes the Institute's credentials with other information agencies and services, such as the National Library of Australia and national and international document delivery and inter-library loan services.

As a result of the recommendations of the review, the position of technical services librarian was created, and work is underway to progress the consolidation of database, collection management and web serving operations onto a single software platform.

Journal subscriptions

A considerable amount of time was spent analysing the usage statistics of the Institute's online journal subscriptions. The results of the 2005–2006 library survey showed most staff preferred to have access to online articles, rather than to photocopy printed articles. It was therefore decided that subscriptions will be taken to the 'online only' format wherever possible, or to purchase individual articles as required thus reducing purchase, binding and shelving costs.

The aim is always to provide researchers with prompt, cost-effective access to the relevant online journal literature.

Online databases

A review of online databases to which the library subscribes was also conducted. Databases were assessed for their journal coverage to ensure that that all journals of interest to staff are indexed, and that they offer appropriate subject coverage that is cost-effective and user-friendly. Consortial subscription opportunities have also been explored and entered into where possible, with the aim of providing the most cost-effective information service.

Websites and email lists

The Web team manages e-resources for the Institute's Intranet and website, and provides information services based on the library collection and the Australian Family & Society Abstracts database. The Web team is responsible for the design and development of the Institute's external websites, the staff Intranet, and a number of email alerting and discussion lists.

With the launch of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse (AFRC) website in September 2006, the Web team now manages seven websites and the Intranet. These are the Institute's main website, four websites for clearinghouses (NCPC, CAFCA, ACSSA and AFRC), and two for research projects (LSAC and ATP).

Within 10 days of its launch, the AFRC website had recorded 2,337 pages downloaded. Features of the site include: information on family support services and relationship services at the national and state level, online resources relevant to family relationship issues, bibliographies, links to online resources, forthcoming conferences and events, and full text access to AFRC publications.

The Institute's main website reports on Institute programs and activities, disseminates information from its databases, publications and resource collections, and promotes the development of networks with individuals and organisations concerned with family research and policy. Services that promote the regular dissemination of information such as the Forthcoming Conferences page, links to online publications and websites on family research and policy, and the weekly journal abstracts list selected from the AF&SA database, continue to be in demand.

Statistics of website use (number of hits and pages downloaded) for all websites and major web areas within each website are reported each month on the Intranet. This enables project managers to review how their publications and initiatives are being accessed online.

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	Increase from 2005–06 to 2006–07
Requests (hits)*	2,273,569	4,495,267	6,812,247	7,163,446	7,983,159	9,358,626	17%
Pages downloaded**	1,363,555	1,650,658	2,601,564	2,458,789	2,925,634	3,100,880	6%

* 'Hits' is a statistic used to record website use. It refers to the number of all successful requests for files, including pages, images and graphics.
 ** Pages downloaded refers to downloading whole web pages or documents, which incorporate all the files that are counted separately under 'hits'.

Pages downloaded*	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	Increase from 2005–06 to 2006–07
ACSSA	83,996	159,752	222,460	258,963	16%
AFRC	n/a	n/a	n/a	80,948	–
ATP	14,808	11,556	17,763	20,119	13%
CAFCA	n/a	n/a	27,769	52,402	89%
LSAC	51,910	57,227	85,966	107,890	26%
NCPC	512,531	598,690	706,870	767,735	9%

* Pages downloaded refers to downloading whole web pages or documents.

Alerting and discussion lists

AIFS-alert, the Institute's fortnightly email announcements list, keeps stakeholders up to date with the work and activities of the Institute. The *growingup-refgroup* list keeps stakeholders up to date with developments in the LSAC project. Other alerting and discussion lists are provided for clearinghouse projects: *ACSSA-alert* and *ACSSA-discuss* for the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; *childprotect* for the National Child Protection Clearinghouse; *CAFCA-chat* for Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia, and *AFRC-alert* and *e-relating* for the Australian Families Relationships Clearinghouse.

email list	January 2006	June 2007	% increase
<i>AIFS-alert</i>	1,181	1,411	+19%
<i>childprotect</i>	581	649	+12%
<i>ACSSA-alert</i>	386	628	+63%
<i>ACSSA-discuss</i>	96	154	+60%
<i>growingup-refgroup</i>	283	367	+30%
<i>CAFCA-chat</i>	119	197	+65%
<i>AFRC-alert</i>	342 (from Nov. 2006)	553	+62%
<i>e-relating</i>	35 (from Nov. 2006)	63	+80%
Total	3,032	4,022	+33%

Institute seminar program

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

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

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

Seminars hosted by the Institute

7 July 2006

Is child care a risk factor for diminished cognitive and social child outcomes?

Dr Sarah L. Friedman, Director of the Appalachian Regional Educational Laboratory, USA
Facilitator – *Professor Alan Hayes*

17 August 2006

Striking the balance: An examination of the relationship between the paid and unpaid work of men and women in Australia

Commissioner Pru Goward, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner
Facilitator – *Professor Alan Hayes*

6 September 2006

The multiple and complex needs of Australian children in out-of-home care and appropriate service responses

Dr Paul Delfabbro, School of Psychology, University of Adelaide
Facilitator – *Dr Leah Bromfield*

19 October 2006

Child centred family dispute resolution models: Comparative outcomes at one year post treatment

Dr Jennifer McIntosh, Clinical and Research Director of Family Transitions and Associate Professor, La Trobe University
Facilitator – *Associate Professor Laurie Moloney*

16 November 2006

The essentials of life and who is missing out on them: Dimensions of disadvantage among Australian families – Findings from the recent 'Community Understanding of Poverty and Social Exclusion' survey

Dr Peter Saunders, Director, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales
Facilitator – *Professor Alan Hayes*

1 March 2007

Responses to child abuse and adult sexual assault in the Anglican Church in Australia

Dr Zoë Morrison, Senior Research Fellow and Coordinator of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault
Facilitator – *Professor Alan Hayes*

22 March 2007

The effects of early environments on human development: Lessons from the integrated science of early child development

Professor Deborah Phillips, Public Policy Institute, Georgetown University, USA

Facilitator – Professor Alan Hayes

12 April 2007

It's About Time: Key findings from the women, men, work and family project
Hon. John von Doussa QC, President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Facilitator – Dr Matthew Gray

18 June 2007

Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study

Associate Professor Lawrie Moloney, Head of the Department of Counselling and Psychological Health, La Trobe University; **Ruth Weston**, General Manager, Research, Australian Institute of Family Studies; and **Associate Professor Bruce Smyth**, ACSPRI Centre for Social Research, Australian National University

Facilitator – Dr Rae Kaspiew