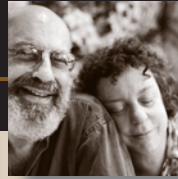
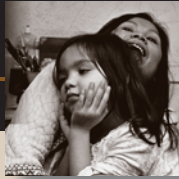


3

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

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

Over the year, the Institute's research activities have been guided by the Research Plan 2006–2008, *Families Through Life: Diversity, Change and Context*.

OVERVIEW

During 2006–2007 the Institute continued to provide research-based information on Australian families. This information has informed public debate and has been used by policy makers, practitioners and other researchers. Significant progress has been made in implementing the Research Plan 2006–2008, with projects having been developed that address the new directions identified in the plan.

Research about the causes and consequences of relationship breakdown expanded significantly during the year. The Institute has been commissioned by the Attorney-General's Department and FaCSIA to evaluate the family law reforms currently being implemented. Other work in this area includes Allegations of Violence in the Context of Family Law Proceedings, the Experiences of Parents and Children after Family Court Decisions about Relocation, and Evaluation of the Magellan Project. Research has also been conducted into the impact of divorce on financial living standards and wellbeing for older people.

The Institute continued its work monitoring family trends and transitions. Trends in couple and family formation, family stability, and family dissolution and re-formation, along with associated values, attitudes and beliefs, were monitored. Another area in which research was conducted related to issues of balancing family and work life. With the availability of data from Wave 1 of *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* a particular focus was on families with pre-school-aged children.

In recent years the Institute has become increasingly involved in managing longitudinal surveys and in analysing the resulting data. The Institute is responsible for LSAC, the Australian Temperament Project (ATP), and the Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) study. The Institute continues to be involved with the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey. As part of its evaluation of the family law reforms, the Institute commenced the planning for a longitudinal study of parents who have recently separated. This will be a unique study in the Australian context, with few parallels elsewhere.

A highlight of the year was the successful completion of the second wave of LSAC. A retention rate of about 90 per cent of the sample was achieved between Wave 1 and Wave 2. This is an excellent rate by international standards for studies of this nature. The number of registered users of the LSAC data has continued to expand and already several articles and research papers that use the data have been published. In addition, a second between-waves mail-out questionnaire (Wave 2.5) was developed. Funding for this wave is being provided by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and FaCSIA.

In September 2006, the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse (AFRC) became fully operational, in addition to the three established clearinghouses: the National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC), the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA), and the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA). The clearinghouses are an essential part of the Institute's activities, providing a source of accessible summaries of the research evidence to practitioners, policy makers and academic researchers. The clearinghouses are also a significant source of expertise to those working with families or developing policies that have an impact upon families.

Overall, it has been a successful year for the Institute's research program. The Institute is well placed for the coming year, and completion of its obligations under the current Research Plan.

Structure of the research program

Four themes focus the Institute's research program: family relationships; children, youth and patterns of care; families and work; and families and community life. The research program is also responsible for monitoring and analysing social and demographic trends.

The Institute's program of research is based upon three broad principles: rigour, relevance and responsiveness. These underpin the selection of research topics, design and conduct of the research and communication of the results. Some of the Institute's research is Institute-initiated, while other research is commissioned or contracted. Institute-initiated research is generally funded from the annual appropriation from parliament. The principles apply equally to all Institute research, regardless of the funding sources.

Project	Institute-initiated (I) or Commissioned (C)	Collaborators	Research themes			
			Family relationships	Children, youth and patterns of care	Families and work	Families and community life
Allegations of Violence in the Context of Family Law Proceedings	C (Attorney-General's Dept)		✓✓	✓✓		
ATP/TAC/RACV collaboration	C (TAC/RACV)			✓✓		
Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault	C (FaCSIA)		✓			✓✓
Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse	C (FaCSIA)		✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Australian Temperament Project	Joint funding ARC, AIFS, TAC, RACV	Profs Sanson, Toumbourou, Prior and Oberklaid	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Building Healthy Couple Relationships	I		✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Caring for Children after Parental Separation	I		✓✓	✓✓	✓	
Child Care Choices	C (ARC funding)	Macquarie University, Charles Sturt University, NSW DoCS	✓	✓✓	✓	

Project	Institute-initiated (I) or Commissioned (C)	Collaborators	Research themes			
			Family relationships	Children, youth and patterns of care	Families and work	Families and community life
Child Care in Australia: Wave 1 thematic paper	C (FaCSIA)	Curtin University of Technology, Telethon Institute of Childhood Research, Charles Sturt University, Macquarie University	✓	✓✓		
Child Care in Cultural Context	I		✓	✓✓		
Children and Family Life	I		✓	✓✓	✓	
Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia	C (FaCSIA)		✓	✓		✓✓
Comparability of Child Protection Data	C (CDSMAC, via NCPASS)	AIHW		✓		
Evaluation of Every Child is Important Program	C (Australian Childhood Foundation)		✓	✓		✓
Families Caring for a Person with a Disability	C (FaCSIA)		✓	✓✓	✓	
Families in the Asian Region	I		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Family and Work Decisions	I		✓	✓✓	✓✓	
Family Law Data Mapping Project	C (Attorney-General's Dept)	Australian Social Science Data Archives, ANU	✓			
Family Law Monitoring and Evaluation	I		✓✓	✓✓		
Family Law Reform Evaluation	C (Attorney-General's Dept and FaCSIA)		✓✓			
Family Trends and Transitions	I		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Follow-up of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination	C (Monash University)		✓✓	✓✓		

Project	Institute-initiated (I) or Commissioned (C)	Collaborators	Research themes			
			Family relationships	Children, youth and patterns of care	Families and work	Families and community life
<i>Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)</i>	C (FaCSIA)	8 research organisations	✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey	C (FaCSIA)	Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, Australian Council for Educational Research	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Indigenous Out-of-home Care	C (ACCAP, via FaCSIA)	SNAICC		✓✓		✓
Magellan Project Evaluation	C (Family Court of Australia)		✓	✓		
Mothers, Fathers, Children and Work	C (FaCSIA)	National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, ANU, University of New England		✓	✓✓	
National Approach for Child Protection	C (CDSMAC)			✓		
National Child Protection Clearinghouse	C (FaCSIA)		✓	✓✓		✓
National Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy	C (FaCSIA)	Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW	✓	✓		✓✓
Negotiating the Life Course	Joint funding ARC, ANU, AIFS	ANU, University of Queensland	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Parents on Low Income Study	Joint funding ARC, ANU, AIFS, FaCSIA	FaCSIA and ANU	✓	✓	✓✓	
Research Utilisation	C (Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia)	Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia		✓✓		
The Experiences of Parents and Children after Family Court Decisions About Relocation	ARC	College of Law, ANU	✓✓	✓✓		

Project	Institute-initiated (I) or Commissioned (C)	Collaborators	Research themes			
			Family relationships	Children, youth and patterns of care	Families and work	Families and community life
Understanding Contact Disputes	C (Attorney-General's Dept)	Sydney Law School, University of Sydney	✓✓	✓✓	✓	
Work and Family Interactions	I		✓	✓	✓✓	

Rigour

The Institute aims to undertake research that is of a high quality, credible and provides a solid evidence base. This requires that the research takes account of the latest theoretical developments, and adopts the most appropriate methodologies. The Institute employs a range of research methods.

Relevance

The Institute’s research program should involve research that is relevant to the development of national policy interests, both currently and on an emerging basis. It should also be relevant to academic researchers, and to the interests and needs of the general community. This includes research that addresses issues affecting families in a wide range of social and economic situations across Australia. It is important that much of the work is at the forefront of science and there is a role for research that does not inform current policy in an immediate and obvious way, but has the capacity to inform and set future policy agendas. The research should be useful, timely and provide value for money.

Responsiveness

The Institute’s research program should be responsive to the policy environment. To achieve these goals, the Institute will be consultative in the development of new research projects; form partnerships and other collaborative relationships; seek external review of new projects and publications; and communicate clearly to the target audience.

Quality management and ethics approvals

All research publications are subject to internal and expert external review, and stakeholder consultation improves the relevance of the research undertaken and ensures that the questions addressed are the key questions. All research articles in the Institute’s journal *Family Matters* are subject to full peer review prior to acceptance for publication. The journal has been classified by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) as a fully refereed journal.

Research projects conducted by the Institute need to meet the ethical standards outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*,

and elaborated in the Institute's ethics statement, *Ethical Issues in the Research Process* (1996). In 2006–2007, the Ethics Committee reviewed several projects via the expedited review process and during face-to-face meetings 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:

- LSAC Wave 3 Dress Rehearsal;
- Evaluation of the Australian Childhood Foundation's Every Child is Important program;
- Evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan Project;
- The Experiences of Parents and Children after Family Court Decisions about Relocation – Part B;
- Evaluation of Relationships Australia Victoria FUN for Kids program;
- The Impact on Families of Caring for a Person with a Disability;
- Australian Temperament Project Parent Questionnaire;
- Family Law Reform Evaluation;
- Service Provision Project – Qualitative Study. A project contributing to the evaluation of the family law reforms; and
- Best Practice Models in Indigenous Out of Home Care – Continuation.

Publishing and dissemination

A key role of the Institute as identified in its Strategic Plan 2006–2008 is to ensure that 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 papers and reports, newsletters, issues papers, *Family Matters* articles, articles in academic journals and book chapters. Outputs from Institute research have also 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 about employment decisions of mothers, the allegations of violence study, financial wellbeing of older people, couple family formation and dissolution, risky driving among young Australians, child abuse and neglect, health and wellbeing of new mothers and their child, antisocial behaviour and children's temperament and adjustment.

All of these, as well as conference presentations and other forms of written outputs, are listed in the Summary of Research Project Performance (Chapter 4).

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 prosperity and wellbeing, enhance the quality and impact of 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.

Broad involvement in policy processes

Parliamentary submissions

During the year the Institute's research staff prepared three submissions to parliamentary inquiries. These are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Parliamentary submissions 2006–2007

Child support

Smyth, B. (2006, September). *Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – New Formula and Other Measures) Bill 2006*. Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Drug use in families

Higgins, D., Bromfield, L., Morrison, Z., Robinson, E., & Weston, R. (2007, March). *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services: Inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families*. Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Health benefits of breastfeeding

Soloff, C. (2007, March). *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing: Inquiry into the health benefits of breastfeeding*. Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Consultations

The Institute maintains a consultative role with individual, 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 the reporting period, consultation covering many broad issues took place between all Institute research programs and representatives of various international and national organisations or bodies (see Table 3.3).

Visitors

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 the Institute's research. These visits provide the opportunity for the Institute to learn of the work of other researchers, share its own research findings, and help meet its objective of achieving and maintaining its place as a centre of excellence for research on family wellbeing (see Table 3.3).

External representation

In addition to conference and workshop papers presented by staff, Institute staff were invited to participate and share their expertise at workshops organised by government and non-government bodies, and universities. Similarly, staff attended and represented the Institute at various national and international conferences (see Table 3.3).

Representation on expert panels

A number of Institute researchers were invited to serve on editorial boards or to serve as external reviewers for academic journals, including: *Australian Journal of Family Law*; *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*; *Child Maltreatment*; *Communities, Children & Families Australia*; *Child Abuse and Neglect*; *Children and Youth Services Review*; *Developing Practice*; *Journal of Family Studies*; *Journal of Population Research*; *Journal of Religion and Abuse: Pastoral Care and Prevention*; *Journal Social Policy*; *Labour and Industry*; and *Threshold*.

Researchers were also invited to share their expertise on steering committees, advisory committees, expert panels, and government reference groups. The Institute was represented on various committees of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), such as the Family Statistics Framework Project Board, Family Statistics Advisory Group, General Social Survey Reference Group, and the Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group. Several staff also sit on advisory committees and reference groups, including the Advisory Committee for Policing Just Outcomes Project, Child Support Agency Reference Group, Family Court of Australia Chief Justice's Forum, Family Court of Australia Expert Reference Panel, Family Relationships Education and Skills Training Reference Group, Parentline Reference Group, Project Management Group (HILDA survey), Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group, and the Youth Information Advisory Group (AIHW) (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Consultations, visitors and representation	
	Total No.
Consultations*	134
Visitors to the Institute**	91
Institute representation at conferences (including paper presentations) and meetings	174
Institute representation on expert panels	73
*Does not include advice provided by clearinghouses via their information and advisory service, and does not include consultations conducted as part of research projects – please refer to Section 6 for details under each clearinghouse	
**Does not include attendees at seminars or participants in the Institute's reference groups	
<i>Note:</i> Detailed listings are available on the Institute's website www.aifs.gov.au .	

THEME 1 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Research about family relationships covers three broad areas: trends in family 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 recent amendments. Trends are examined at societal, family and individual levels.

Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse

The Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse (AFRC) aims to improve the wellbeing of families and children by supporting practitioners, service providers and policy makers in the development and delivery of family and relationship programs, ranging from prevention and early intervention through to post-separation services.

The AFRC is an information and advisory unit funded by FaCSIA, under the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP). The principal focus of the AFRC is to collect and deliver the latest relevant research and practice to family relationship service providers and other practitioners across Australia. Guided by an external reference group, the clearinghouse also contributes to the goals of the FRSP by offering a resource and point of contact for providers of family relationship and support services. Policy makers and members of the research and broader communities also benefit from having access to the clearinghouse.

Work on the AFRC commenced in April 2006, and the AFRC website was published in September 2006.

Functions and activities

The clearinghouse is to provide access to: practice- and policy-related research, resources and information; the latest developments in policy and practice; notice of emerging issues; opportunities for training, networking and information exchange; profiles of new and innovative programs; and a range of professional development and practice resources. Access to these is through the publication of briefing papers, in-depth issues papers, a quarterly newsletter (*Family Relationships Quarterly*), the AFRC website, an email alert service (*AFRC-alert*) and a moderated email discussion list (*e-relating*).

Key indicators of the AFRC's performance during the reporting period include the production of nine publications on issues of relevance to the family and relationships field, continued population of the AFRC website, consistent growth in subscribers to *AFRC-alert* and *e-relating*, increasing use of the AFRC website since its publication, and increase in awareness of and enquiries to the clearinghouse.

Substantial work was completed this year on the design and construction of the website, promotional materials and publications. Significant additions to the website included a practice profile collection to encourage practitioners and service providers to share information on programs and services, and an Indigenous Australian resources section. A Communication Strategy to increase awareness of the AFRC was rolled out, including a letter and brochures sent to 600 FRSP service providers in March 2007.

AFRC website

The AFRC website (www.aifs.gov.au/afrc) aims to improve access to current resources and information and operates as an information exchange for practitioners and service providers. The website acts as a central point of information, including highlights of recent research, and links to other websites, online documents and AFRC publications. A range of annotated bibliographies is provided, with 37 bibliographies being added to the site in its first year and regularly updated. Pages on forthcoming conferences, events and links to relevant Australian and international organisations are also regularly updated. The Resources section includes online resources for practitioners, managers and service providers, family members, and information on Indigenous Australian families. Over 110 resources were added in the first year of the operation of the AFRC.

The AFRC operates as an entirely electronic resource, and downloads for publications are a key indication of their interest and usefulness. Visits to the AFRC website have shown a steady increase, with more than 80,000 downloads for the first nine months of operation. Both the publications and bibliographies were in demand, with more than 23,000 downloads having occurred for each. The Resources section was also well visited, with over 20,000 downloads.

Subscribers to the *AFRC-alert* monthly electronic newsletter of coming events, new publications announcements and other items of interest to the field have continued to rise throughout the year, and numbered 553 at the end of the financial year.

Networking, conferences and outreach

AFRC staff members attended a range of conferences, forums and seminars. These activities not only allow staff members to promote the clearinghouse, but also represent an important means of ascertaining the latest information on family relationships of relevance to practitioners and service providers, many of whom are unable to attend the events. This information and knowledge forms the basis of articles in *Family Relationships Quarterly*, alerts staff members to potential authors for AFRC publications, and helps to identify good practice examples that may be relevant to the practice profile collection. AFRC team members also regularly promote the services provided by the clearinghouse through presentations and information sessions.

AFRC publications

During the reporting period, the AFRC has published four issues of the quarterly newsletter, five issues of *AFRC Briefing*, and has completed substantial work on two *AFRC Issues*.

Family Relationships Quarterly No. 1–4, 2006.

AFRC Briefing No. 1–2, 2006.

AFRC Briefing No. 3–5, 2007.

Publications

Parker, R. (2007). Recent progress in marriage and relationship education in Australia. *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 3*, Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Robinson, E. (2006). Internet affairs: Guidelines for practitioners. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 2, 3–5.

Robinson, E. (2006). Young people and their parents: Supporting families through changes that occur in adolescence. *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 1*, Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Robinson, E. (2007, 12 February). *Overview of AFRC functions*. Presentation to the Victorian Men and Family Relationships Network Meeting, Melbourne, Vic.

Robinson, E. (2007, 27 March). *Overview of AFRC functions*. Presentation to the Victorian Parent Education Network Meeting, Melbourne, Vic.

Robinson, E. (2007, 21 May). *Overview of AFRC functions and content*. Presentation to the Parenting Orders Forum, Melbourne, Vic.

Parker, R. (2007, 26 May). *Overview of AFRC functions and content*. Executive of the Catholic Society for Marriage Education, Melbourne, Vic.

External representation

Parker, R. (2006, 23–24 November). Attendance at the Queen Elizabeth Centre *4th Biennial Conference on Early Childhood: Evidence into Practice*, Melbourne, Vic.

Parker, R. (2006, 8 December). Attendance at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childhood Outcomes – Research and Evaluation Workshop, Melbourne, Vic.

Parker, R. (2006, 14 December). Attendance at the meeting of the Victorian Marriage and Relationship Education Network, Melbourne, Vic.

Parker, R. (2007, 7–10 March). Attendance at the 9th National Rural Health Conference, Albury, NSW.

Adams, R. (2007, 19 March). Attendance at the RE Ross Trust/Centre for Community Child Health Seminar *Moving towards an outcomes-based approach*, Shepparton, Vic.

Adams, R. (2007, 27–28 June). Attendance at the FADNET National Conference Drugs. Families. Solutions: Getting on with Family Work, Melbourne, Vic.

Member, Reference Group for the Relationships Australia Client Outcome Evaluation project (R. Parker).

Member, Child Support Agency Reference Group, Resource for children of separated parents (R. Parker).

Member, Expert Reference Panel relating to the work of Family Consultants in the Family Court of Australia (E. Robinson).

Family Trends and Transitions

The Family Trends and Transitions project analyses and disseminates information on 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 and for the timely development and design of research projects.

Family-related trends are disseminated through publications and paper presentations, the online database Family Facts and Figures, media interviews, and the handling of queries from internal and external sources. The updating of the widely used Family Facts and Figures database is an ongoing process.

The following issues have formed the basis of publications and presentations in 2006–2007: broad family-related trends, couple formation and dissolution, living arrangements, factors influencing pathways from cohabitation, the health and wellbeing of new mothers and their child, and the consequences of divorce for the financial wellbeing of older people. Team members accepted an invitation to give a session on ageing and fertility to students of Principles of Social Policy, a postgraduate unit offered by the Australian National University. They have also presented papers on family-related trends at various conferences.

Publications

de Vaus, D., Gray, M., Qu, L., & Stanton, D. (2007). *The consequences of divorce for financial living standards in later life*. (Australian Institute of Family Studies Research Paper No. 38). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Gray, M. (2006). Indigenous families and communities. *Family Matters*, 75, 4–9.

Gray, M., & Altman, J. (2006). The economic value of harvesting with resources to the Indigenous community of the Wallis Lake Catchment, NSW. *Family Matters*, 75, 24–33.

Gray, M., & Chapman, B. (2006). Labour Market Issues. In B. H. Hunter (Ed.) *Assessing the evidence on Indigenous socioeconomic outcomes: A focus on the 2002 NAT-SISS. Research Monograph No. 26*. Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Australian National University, Canberra, ACT.

Qu, L., & Parker, R. (2007). Getting married: Trends in choice of celebrant. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 3, 9–11.

Qu, L., & Parker, R. (2007). Getting married: Trends in choice of celebrant. *Threshold*, 89, 20.

Qu, L., Soriano, G., & Weston, R. (2006). Starting early, starting late: The health and wellbeing of mother and child. *Family Matters*, 74, 4–11.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2006). Trends in couple formation. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 1, 12–15.

Weston, R., & Gray, M. (2006). Family and community life. In B. H. Hunter (Ed.) *Assessing the evidence on Indigenous socioeconomic outcomes: A focus on the 2002 NAT-SISS. Research Monograph No. 26*. Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Australian National University, Canberra, ACT.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2006). Trends in couple dissolution. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 2, 9–12.

Conference presentations

Qu, L. (2006, 6–8 December). *Starting and ending one-person households*. Presentation at the Australian Population Association 13th Biennial Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2006, 27 November). *Family trends: Implications for children*. Invited presentation to the Victorian Home Economics and Textiles Teachers' Association Annual Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2006, 25 September). *Changing families, changing society: Implications for Catholic education*. Invited keynote presentation at the Biennial Catholic Education Business Administrators Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2006, 4 November). *Longitudinal studies: Rationale, types and two Australian examples*. Invited keynote presentation at a workshop on longitudinal studies organised by the Viet Nam Commission for Population, Family and Children, Hanoi.

Weston, R., Qu, L., & de Vaus, D. (2007, 27–29 June). *Cohabitation and beyond: The contribution of each partner's relationship satisfaction, perceived financial circumstances, and fertility aspirations to pathways of cohabiting couples*. Paper presented at Centre for Research on Families and Relationships 2nd International Conference – Extended and Extending Families, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Hayes, A. (2006, 7 September). *Families through life: Considerations for policy and practice*. Seminar presentation to the Benevolent Society, Sydney, NSW.

Hayes, A. (2006, 19 October). *Families through life: Considerations for policy and practice*. Presentation at the Windmere Annual General Meeting, Melbourne, Vic.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2007, 20 March). *Demographics of ageing and fertility*. Invited lecture for Principles of Social Policy course, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT.

Gray, M. (2007, April 17). *Indigenous Social Policy Issues*. Invited Lecture for Principles of Social Policy course, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT.

External representation

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 4–5 July). Participation in the *Building Ageing Research Capacity Colloquium – Policy and Practice on Ageing: Informed by evidence* Colloquium, auspiced by the Building Ageing Research Capacity (BARC) project. Canberra, ACT.

Bromfield, L., Hayes, A., Higgins, D., & Weston, R. (2007, 4–5 June). Participation in the Family Wellbeing Framework workshop run by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Canberra, ACT.

Higgins, D. (2007, 20 June). Participation in the Families Australia Family Wellbeing Forum. Canberra, ACT.

Ambassador, National Families Week 2007 (A. Hayes).

Member, ABS Family Statistics Framework Project Board (R. Weston).

Member, ABS Family Statistics Advisory Group (R. Weston).

Member, ABS General Social Survey Reference Group (R. Weston).

Member, Children and Youth Statistical Portal Reference Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Telethon Institute of Child Health Research (M. Gray).

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

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

Member, Australian Population Association (R. Weston, L. Qu).

Building Healthy Couple Relationships

An important aspect of the Institute's work involves the monitoring and evaluation of research and policies on positive family relationships. Another focus is on relationship education and support, and dissemination of findings from research on relationship formation and change. Issues of particular interest include ways in which couples develop strategies for living together and for adjusting to change. Relationships are examined from various perspectives: strengthening relationships in their early stages; identifying factors that contribute to trajectories of relationship quality and stability; and learning lessons from long-lasting marriages. The ongoing examination of whether the contention that getting and remaining married, compared to other couple and family types, is associated with better functioning and wellbeing for Australian individuals, couples and families (previously known as the Case for Marriage project) will continue as part of the Building Healthy Couple Relationships research area. Articles reporting on these various

aspects of couple and family relationships will appear in *Family Matters* and in publications of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Publication

Parker, R. (2006). Researching married and cohabiting couples: A step in the right direction. *Family Matters*, 74, 52–55.

External representation

AIFS Representative, Family Relationships Education and Skills Training Reference Group, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (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, Child Support Agency Reference Group, Resource for children of separated parents (R. Parker).

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

Member, Reference Group for the Relationships Australia Client Outcome Evaluation project (R. Parker).

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

Parker, R. (2006, 11–12 November). Attendance at the 6th Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Psychology of Relationships Interest Group, Melbourne, Vic.

Family law monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and contributing to the debate on family law issues are core functions of the Institute. 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 are married.

The activities relating to several areas of projects that form the hub of family law research are reported separately. In addition to these activities, a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – New Formula and Other Measures) Bill 2006 was prepared, the proceedings of the International Forum on Families Relationships in Transitions (held in December 2005) were published, a Family Law Update column appeared in each issue of *Family Matters* (with articles authored by Institute staff or external experts), and Institute staff presented relevant papers at various forums.

Publications

Caruana, C. (2006). Family law update: Shared parental responsibility and the reshaping of family law. *Family Matters*, 74, 56–59.

Gray, M. (2006). Child support. In B. Smyth, N. Richardson & G. Soriano (Eds.), *International Forum on Family Transitions: Conference proceedings*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Moloney, L. (2006). Our children come first: The heart and soul of the new family law system. *Relationships Quarterly* No. 1.

Moloney, L. (2006). The many challenges of parenting. *Journal of Family Studies*, 12(2), 161–164.

Smyth, B. (2006). Practical resources for separating families: Opening remarks. In B. Smyth, N. Richardson & G. Soriano (Eds.), *International Forum on Family Transitions: Conference proceedings*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smyth, B., Richardson, N., & Soriano, G. (Eds.) (2006). *International Forum on Family Transitions: Conference proceedings*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Weston, R. (2006). Perspectives from East Asia. In B. Smyth, N. Richardson & G. Soriano (Eds.), *International Forum on Family Transitions: Conference proceedings*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Commissioned report

Moloney, L., & McIntosh, J. (2006). *Child focused dialogues. Theoretical and clinical underpinnings of child focused practice*. Paper commissioned by Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, ACT.

Submissions

Smyth, B. (2006, September). Submission to the Inquiry into Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – New Formula and Other Measures) Bill 2006.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Hayes, A., Gray, M., & Smyth, B. (2006, 29 September). Evidence given to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry into Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – New Formula and Other Measures) Bill 2006.

Smyth, B. (2006, 20 November). Child support policy in Australia. Guest lecture presented at University of Melbourne, Faculty of Law, Melbourne, Vic.

Moloney, L. (2007, 7 June). Presentation on practice and research to CEOs of new Family Relationship Centres, Canberra, ACT.

Moloney, L. (2007, 20 June). Presentation on practice and research to telephone family dispute resolution practitioners, Brisbane, Qld.

Moloney, L. (2007, 21 June). Presentation on practice and research to new Family Relationship Centres staff, Canberra, ACT.

External representation

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

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

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

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

Observer, Family Law Council (B. Smyth, R. Weston).

Member, Child Support National Stakeholder Engagement Group, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (M. Gray).

Member, Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support – Research directions, Canberra (M. Gray).

Magellan Project Evaluation

The Magellan project is being conducted for the Family Court of Australia. The court has identified allegations about child abuse in the context of parental separation and divorce as part of its 'core business'. In order to better manage residence and contact disputes involving serious allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse of children, the Court established the Magellan case-management system.

Stage 1 of the evaluation involved conducting interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders from the Family Court of Australia and related organisations to examine how Magellan is being conducted, and the perceptions of these stakeholders about its effectiveness, the successful features, and any barriers to successful implementation.

Stage 2 involved conducting a file review and comparing cases that have gone through the Magellan process, with comparable cases that did not. These were from the Sydney Registry, where Magellan had not been rolled out until mid-2006.

Data collection is complete, and a final report to the court will be submitted early in the new financial year.

Commissioned report

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 30 April). *Progress Report: Magellan Evaluation Project*. A Report to the Family Court of Australia. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Other (non-conference) presentation

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 4 May). *Update on evaluation of Magellan Project*. Address to Magellan National Steering Committee, Family Court of Australia, Melbourne, Vic.

Allegations of Violence in the Context of Family Law Proceedings

This study was designed to determine how often allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings are made, how often allegations are denied, who makes the allegations, what form the allegations take, and links between court outcomes and the presence or absence of allegations.

The study is based on a content analysis of two random samples of court files from the Melbourne, Dandenong, and Adelaide registries of the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court: 240 files from the general population of parenting matters (the general litigants sample); and 60 files from judicially determined parenting matters (the judicial determination sample). In total, 300 files were analysed: 150 from the Family Court of Australia, and 150 from the Federal Magistrates Court.

This research was commissioned by the Attorney-General's Department to help inform the government's Family Law Violence Strategy.

The final report was submitted to the Attorney-General in early 2007. It was then published as an Institute Research Report, *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. The report attracted a great deal of media interest and associated interviews, and has resulted in several invitations to present the findings at various forums. In addition, the project developed a methodology to create a quantitative dataset based on information in court files. This methodology has been adopted for another Institute project.

Publication

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, May). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. (AIFS Research Report No. 15). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, 3 April). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited paper presented at special meeting of members of the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, ACT.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, 12 April). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited paper presented at special meeting of the Family Law Council, Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, ACT.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, 3 May). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited paper presented at special meeting of members of the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

Moloney, L., & Smyth, B. (2007, 20 June). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited paper presented to Family Law Pathways Group, Canberra, ACT.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, 18 June). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited paper presented at the Australian Institute of Family Studies public seminar, Melbourne, Vic.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, 19 June). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited paper presented at the Annual Family Law Forum: Behind Closed Doors: Family Dispute Resolution and Family Violence, The Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre, Melbourne, Vic.

Moloney, L. (2007, 25–27 June). Presentations on practice in research to International Social Services Forum on children in cross border conflicts, organised by International Social Service, Sydney, NSW.

Understanding Contact Disputes

The aim of this 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) 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.

This is a collaborative project between the Institute and the University of Sydney, Faculty of Law. It is jointly funded by the Attorney-General's Department and the Institute.

All sets of data have now been collected. Relevant questions were introduced into Wave 3 of the Caring for Children after Parental Separation telephone survey. The Institute's part of the project is due to be completed in the next financial year.

Family Law Data Mapping Project

In response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs *Every Picture Tells A Story* report, the government announced the most significant changes to family law in 30 years. The reforms aim to help

prevent separation and, where separation does occur, help parents agree on what is best for the children rather than going to court for a judicial determination.

To assess the impact of these reforms accurately, and to assist in improving outcomes for the individuals and families who come into contact with the family law system, reliable information is required. One of the most valuable sources of information on what is actually occurring in the family law system is the considerable amount of data collected by agencies within that system. However, as the content of these data is not summarised in one place, it is often difficult to identify, locate and access this information. To address these issues, the Attorney-General's Department has funded the Institute, in collaboration with the Australian Social Science Data Archive, to conduct the Family Law Data Mapping Project, which is a strategic review of family law data in Australia.

The project aims to chart and summarise the structure of the various databases held by key government and non-government agencies in the family law system. It should enhance the ability of agencies to evaluate programs, develop evidence-based policy, and fine-tune service delivery for maximum efficiency, particularly in areas where solutions are needed for cross-jurisdictional problems. Phase 1 of the project involves obtaining stakeholder agreement to participate; Phase 2 involves collecting and analysing the metadata. The project is due for completion in the next financial year.

The Experiences of Parents and Children after Family Court Decisions about Relocation

The Family Court often decides whether to allow a parent to relocate with children despite opposition from the other parent. Such decisions are considered to be among the most difficult in the family law arena as they potentially raise conflicts between the interests of individual family members. Reform to this area of law is under active consideration, yet little is known about the impact such decisions have on parents and children. This project, funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant and being conducted in collaboration with the Australian National University, explores the way that families are affected by court decision making in this area through interviews with parents and children who have experienced such disputes. Assistance from the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court to contact potential participants was secured in the second half of 2006. Data collection began in 2007, with some 30 interviews being concluded by 30 June. Arrangements for recruitment of further participants have been made with the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court. The research will help to inform future decision making on relocation after separation.

Caring for Children after Parental Separation

The main aims of the Caring for Children after Parental Separation 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 reasons for a significant proportion of non-resident parents having little or no contact with their children; and (c) to examine the interrelation, 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 serve as a benchmark against 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 or divorced parents with at least one child under 18 years; and (b) telephone interviews with 971 separated parents from around Australia who had a biological or adopted child under 18 in 2003. In 2006, the third and final wave of data was collected, some of which will be used for the Understanding Contact Disputes project and as baseline (pre-reform) data for the evaluation of the family law reforms. In the meantime, data from all waves are being analysed for general research on caring for children after parental separation.

Publications

Smyth, B. (2007). Non-resident parents. In G. Ritzer (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Vol. 7. Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 3223–3227.

Smyth, B., & Chisholm, R. (2006). Exploring options for parental care of children following separation: A primer for family law specialists. *Australian Journal of Family Law*, 20, 193–218.

Conference presentations

Smyth, B., & Richardson, N. (2006, 19 October). *Patterns of parenting after separation: Some pre-reform empirical insights and musings*. Plenary paper presented at the Family Court of Australia – Judges’ Annual Conference, Fremantle, WA.

Smyth, B., & Richardson, N. (2006, 24 October). *Patterns of parenting after separation: Some pre-reform empirical insights and musings*. Paper presented at the 12th National Family Law Conference, Perth, WA.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Smyth, B. (2007, 7 March). *Patterns of parenting after separation: Working with families in transition in the new family law system*. Plenary presented to the new family law parenting system: Putting the focus on the kids. Professional Development, Centacare, Melbourne, Vic.

Family Law Reform Evaluation

In response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs *Every Picture Tells a Story* report, the Australian Government announced the largest-ever investment in reforming the family law system. The new system, which came into effect on 1 July 2006, is intended to: (a) help prevent separation and build strong, healthy family relationships; (b) encourage greater involvement by both parents in their children’s lives after separation, and also protect children from violence and abuse; (c) in the case of separation, provide information, advice and dispute resolution services to help parents agree on what is best for their children rather than contesting parenting proposals in the courtroom; and (d) have a new entry point that provides a doorway to other services that families need and which facilitates access to those services.

The Attorney-General’s Department (AGD) and FaCSIA have joint responsibility for the implementation and evaluation of the family law reforms. These departments commissioned the Institute to develop an evaluation framework and a broad methodology for the evaluation, collect baseline data against which the

collection of future data can be compared, and undertake key components of the evaluation (to commence in the next financial year).

Pre-reform qualitative study and baseline data collection

Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted with some parents who identify as members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities and with some parents from selected culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (Chinese, Turkish, Filipino and Somali communities) in order to gain insight into the views of these participants about issues of relevance to the family law reforms (commissioned by FaCSIA). In addition, quantitative information was collected close to the time that the initial stage of the reforms was being implemented in order to enable the effects of the new family law system to be assessed. This work involved: (a) a telephone survey of the general population of parents of a child under 18 years (GPPS) (commissioned by AGD and FaCSIA); (b) a survey of family law specialists (commissioned by AGD); and (c) the inclusion of relevant questions in the third wave of the Institute's Caring for Children after Parental Separation telephone survey. In addition, FaCSIA commissioned the Institute to collect pre-existing information from large-scale nationally representative samples, analyse these data and those of the GPPS, and prepare a baseline report.

Evaluation of the reforms

In addition to the above work, a document outlining the framework for the evaluation and a related draft document outlining the broad methodology were prepared. Detailed development of the individual components is now under way and fieldwork for the first component is expected to commence early in the next financial year.

The proposed research program for evaluation of family law reforms comprises three separate components (each including a number of separate studies) that are designed to measure the impact of the changes in both broad and specific ways. The three components focus on: (a) families; (b) the service provision system; and (c) the implementation of the legislation and the changes to the court system. The components are closely linked in the sense that they will track the impact of the key themes in the package – the sharing of parenting responsibilities, child safety and child focus – on the practices and attitudes of parents, service system providers and legal system players. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods using multiple data sources will be applied across the evaluation.

Some aspects of the research program will build on the previously mentioned baseline research that has been conducted by the Institute to allow pre- and post-reform package comparisons to be drawn. Others will be conducted on a longitudinal basis, allowing the impact of the reforms to be assessed as they unfold over time. Current funding arrangements cover the period from June 2007 to June 2009.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Alexander, M., Weston, R., & Hand, K. (2007, 6 March). *Evaluation of the family law reforms*. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of Managers of Family Relationship Centres, Canberra, ACT.

Hand, K. (2007, 17 May). *Evaluation of the family law reforms*. Presentation to FRSP Service Provider Forum, Brisbane, Qld.

Hand, K. (2007, 19 June). *Evaluation of the family law reforms*. Presentation to meeting of CEOs of Family Relationship Centres and Family Pathways Branch, Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, ACT.

External representations

Caruana, C., Moloney, L., Vassallo, S., & Weston, R. (2007, 19 June). Attendance at Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Annual Family Law Forum: Behind Closed Doors: Family Dispute Resolution and Family Violence, Melbourne, Vic.

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. Key aspects of this work include participation in relevant conferences in the region and coordination of visits by delegations from the region. Some of these activities have involved collaboration with the International Branch of FaCSIA. During the year, the Institute hosted visits by individuals or delegations from Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, in which family-related research, policy and practice have been discussed.

Publication

Smart, D. (2006). The development of antisocial behaviour in adolescence: Child, family, peer and school influences. *Family Scholars Colloquium: Protecting and strengthening the family: Challenges and opportunities*. Conference proceedings. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: LPPKN Resource Centre.

Conference presentations

Smart, D. (2006, 8 August). *The development of antisocial behaviour in adolescence: Child, family, peer and school influences*. Invited paper presented at Family Scholars Colloquium, Protecting and strengthening the family: Challenges and opportunities, sponsored by the Malaysian Government's Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Gray, M., Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2006, 13–14 September). *Fertility and family policy in Australia: Trends and challenges*. Paper presented at the Policy Forum: Facing the Future Policy Challenges in the Ageing Era, Seoul, Korea.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2006, 4 November). *Longitudinal studies: Rationale, types and two Australian examples*. Keynote paper presented at a workshop on longitudinal studies organised by the Viet Nam Commission for Population, Family and Children, Hanoi.

Non-conference presentations

Hayes, A., & Gray M. (2007, March 27–30). *Australian families: Diversity, change and context*. Presentation to the New Zealand Families Commission, Wellington, New Zealand.

External representation

Weston, R. (2006, 6–7 November). Member of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs delegation at the second East Asian Ministerial Forum, held in Singapore, hosted by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore.

Weston, R. (2006, 8 November). Meeting with the Australian High Commission (Singapore) as member of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs delegation, Singapore.

Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey

The Institute continues to contribute to the ongoing design of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey. HILDA is being conducted by a consortium of three research bodies: the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne (the lead agency); the Institute; and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Institute researchers, in consultation with the Director, develop the family dynamics module of the survey and work 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 7 is scheduled to be in the field in late 2007. Since the first wave of data became available, Institute researchers have used the HILDA dataset to address a range of research questions, the findings of which have been the subject of a number of papers and presentations.

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

External representation

Member, Project Management Group, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey (R. Weston).

Observer, External Reference Group, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey (R. Weston).

THEME 2 CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PATTERNS OF CARE

Research on children, youth and patterns of care focuses on three main areas: family influences on children's development; non-parental care for children; and family influences on the extent to which children and young people engage with society. These three areas all stem from the recognition that the family environment influences children's development. While the family influences how children develop, children also spend time in places where others are responsible for their care and influence their lives, such as childcare centres and schools. Children are also influenced by the neighbourhoods and the communities in which they live. Understanding the influences of child and family characteristics, parenting practices, family structures and factors in the local community and social environment on children's development is crucial information for the development of policy and the provision of services to families.

Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

Growing Up in Australia: the longitudinal study of Australian children (LSAC) continues to be a major project for the Institute. This study was initiated and funded by FaCSIA and is managed by the Institute. The first main wave of the study commenced in 2004 and a second main wave of data collection has now been completed. More than 10,000 families were recruited to the study, with about half having an infant as the study child (B cohort) and the other half with a child aged 4–5 years selected as the study child (K cohort).

The main activities this year have been those associated with the conduct of the second wave of data collection (Wave 2), processing of the Wave 2 data in preparation for data release, development and testing for the third wave of data collection, release of data from the first 'between-waves' mail-out questionnaire (Wave 1.5) and development of a second 'between-waves' mail-out questionnaire (Wave 2.5).

Wave 2 data collection, undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), commenced in April 2006 and continued throughout the year, with most interviews being completed by November 2006. A small number of interviews were conducted in early 2007.

About 90 per cent of the Wave 1 respondents were interviewed for Wave 2. Interviews were obtained for 4,606 B cohort and 4,464 K cohort children. One per cent of families had opted out of the study prior to Wave 2, and a further three per cent refused an interview, although most of these families agreed to remain in the study. Five per cent of families were not able to be located, despite extensive efforts. The remaining families were away for the whole data collection period.

Wave 2 involved a 40-minute computer-assisted interview with the parent who best knew the child and self-completion forms for the child's resident and non-resident parents. Two 24-hour time-use diaries, about how the study children spend their day, were also completed. Interviewers undertook some direct assessments of the K cohort

and these children were asked about how they find school and their feelings more generally. Children in both cohorts were weighed and height and girth measurements were taken. Questionnaires were also sent to teachers and carers.

Just under 80 per cent of resident parent questionnaires were returned, as were over 75 per cent of the diaries. Questionnaires were received for 29 per cent of children with non-resident parents (only 70 per cent of resident parents provided contact details). Return rates of 71 per cent, 77 per cent and 84 per cent were achieved for centre-based carers, home-based carers and teachers, respectively.

There are now over 140 users of the data set, and anticipate that this will increase once Wave 2 data are available in September 2007.

Work began on the development of Wave 3 in early 2006 and continued throughout the first half of 2007. The main changes for Wave 3 are the extension of the child interview and the conduct of the Burt Word Recognition Test and the Applied Problems subset of the Woodcock-Johnson III for the K cohort, and the introduction of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the "Who am I?" assessments for the B cohort. We are also investigating using computer-assisted telephone interviewing for non-resident parents.

Data from the first 'between-waves' mail-out questionnaire (Wave 1.5) was released in November 2006 and provided the first opportunity to analyse LSAC data as a longitudinal dataset. The Wave 1.5 data included information covering aspects of the children's behaviour, development and general health issues, such as asthma, injuries and sleeping patterns. The areas of education, child care, stressful life events and parents' mental health were also covered, and parents were asked what they liked about their child. The B cohort dataset also included a nested study by Dr Gillian Whitehouse from the University of Queensland, with additional questions regarding service utilisation, parental employment history, maternity and other leave, and employment after birth.

In 2006, a decision was made to include an additional wave of data collection between Waves 2 and 3 using a mail-out questionnaire, as was done between Waves 1 and 2. The aims of the mail-out are to collect some additional data on children's use of media and technology, work and family issues, and child support payments via cohort-specific questionnaires, as well as to encourage families to inform us about changes to their contact details, and to locate as many participants as possible prior to the Wave 3 interviews.

During 2005, the Institute became involved with a Film Australia documentary series entitled *Life at 1*. This series recruited 11 families with children aged 0–1 years and is following them as they grow up. These families are not part of the main LSAC study, but undergo the same interview process as those in the main study. Results from the main study are used to inform the documentary commentary, which involves members of the Consortium Advisory Group. The first two parts to this series were screened on ABC TV in October 2006. During 2006–2007, the Institute has assisted with the development of a *Life at 2* website, and has undertaken the Wave 2 interviews for some of the documentary families.

LSAC now has an international presence. In September 2006, the first International Conference on Child Cohort Studies was organised by the UK Centre for Longitudinal Studies and held in Oxford, UK. A number of presentations using LSAC data were featured. LSAC data have also featured in other international forums through meetings and presentations undertaken by members of the Consortium Advisory Group.

Publications

Edwards, B. (2006). Views of the village: Parents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods. *Family Matters*, 74, 26–33.

Hayes, A. (2006). Maintaining the gains. *Family Matters*, 75, 66–69.

Hayes, A. (2006). Foreword. *Early childhood education: Pathways to quality and equity for all children* (A. Elliot). Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Hayes, A. (2007). Early childhood and care in Australia. In R. S. New & M. Cochran (Eds.), *Early childhood education: An International Encyclopedia: Vol. 4 The Countries* (pp. 867–871). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Hayes, A. (2007). Why early in life is not enough: Timing and sustainability in prevention and early intervention. In A. France & R. Homel (Eds.), *Pathways and crime prevention: Theory, policy and practice* (pp. 202–224). Devon, UK: Willan Publishing.

Commissioned reports

Project Operations Team (2006, July). *Project report on Wave 2 fieldwork*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2006, July). *Project report on preliminary Wave 3 development and testing*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2006, December). *Project report on 2007 workplan*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D. (2007, January). *Psychometric issues for LSAC wave 3 child self report at 8–9 years of age (typically grade 3)*. Report prepared for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2007, March). *Project report on proposal for Wave 3 dress rehearsal content*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2007, May). *Project report on Wave 2 data collection*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2007, May). *Project report on Wave 2.5 proposed content*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Misson, S. (2007, June). *LSAC discussion paper no. 5: Wave 2 data management issues*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Submission

Crettenden, I., Dean, J., Dunlop, B., Goodspeed, S., Allbon, P., Goss, J., Kim, C., Hayes, A., Smart, D., Goldfeld, S., Richardson, S., & Izmir, G. (2006, October). Confidential working party submission on 3 and 5 year old measures to the COAG Human Capital Working Group, Data Sub-Group.

Conference presentations

Sanson, A., & Gray, M. (2006, 1–2 July). *Planning longitudinal research for public access and secondary analysis: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Pre-conference Workshop, Melbourne, Vic.

Edwards, B. (2006, 2–6 July). *Residential mobility and neighbourhood effects: A possible mechanism for explaining the effects of single parents on children's social and emotional outcomes?* Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Gray, M., Misson, S., & Hayes, A. (2006, 2–6 July). *Parental separation and the role of grandparents in young children's lives*. Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Sanson, A., & Soloff, C. (2006, 12–14 September). *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Soloff, C. (2006, 12–14 September). *Sample recruitment and maintenance for 'Growing Up in Australia'*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Soloff, C., Sanson, A., Ungerer, J., Harrison, L., & Wake, M. (2006, 12–14 September). *Enhancing longitudinal studies by linkage to national databases: 'Growing Up in Australia', the longitudinal study of Australian children*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Wake, M., Bittman, M., Brown, J., Canterford, L., Carlin, J., Hardy, P., Sanson, A., Sawyer, M., & Soloff C. (2006, 12–14 September). *Preschool overweight/obesity in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Prevalence, socio-demographic correlates and future data possibilities*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Soloff, C. (2006, 5–8 December). *Growing up in Australia: A study of change in children and their families*. Paper presented at the Australian Population Association 13th Biennial Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Baxter, J. (2006, 10–13 December). *Children's time use in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Data quality and analytical issues in the 4-year cohort*. Paper presented at the ACSPRI Social Science Methodology Conference. University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW.

Sanson, A., Misson, S., and the LSAC Research Consortium (2006, 10–13 December). *Derivation and Validation of the LSAC Outcome Index*. Paper presented to the ACSPRI Conference, Sydney, NSW.

Soloff, C. (2006, 10–13 December). *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Study methodology*. Presentation to the ACSPRI Conference, Sydney, NSW.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Edwards, B. (2006, 6 June). *How much N is enough? Planning quantitative research projects using statistical power analysis*. Statistics Discussion Group, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Soloff, C. (2006, 4 August). *Growing up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Presentation to the New South Wales Department of Health and Ageing (Epidemiology Special Interest Group), Sydney, NSW.

Bencic, L. (2006, 22 August). *Growing up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Presentation to the Office for Children, Melbourne, Vic.

Hayes, A. (2006, 8 September). *Response to Minister Bishop's address on National investment for the early years*. Speech at Macquarie Bank/Good Beginnings/NIFTeY Early Years Forum, Sydney, NSW.

External representation

Edwards, B. (2006, 24 October). Invited participant, The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) ARC/NHMRC Network Program workshop on Understanding Community Level Factors (including the physical, social and service environments) that influence children's outcomes in disadvantaged areas across Australia and Canada, Melbourne, Vic.

Edwards, B. (2007, 27 February). Invited participant, National Roundtable on Children's Lived Experience of Poverty, ARACY ARC/NHMRC Research Network – Future Generation Program of Support for New Collaborations, Sydney, NSW.

Australian Temperament Project

The Australian Temperament Project (ATP) is an ongoing, longitudinal study following young people's psychosocial development from infancy into adulthood, investigating the contribution of personal, family, peer and broader environmental factors to adjustment and wellbeing. The Institute has managed and taken the lead in the study since 2000, in conjunction with researchers from the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, and the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

The study began in 1983 with the recruitment of 2,443 families and infants aged between 4 and 8 months from urban and rural areas of Victoria. Fourteen data collection waves have been completed across the first 24 years of life, annually for the first four years and bi-annually up to 2002, with a four-year interval thereafter to the latest data collection in 2006–2007. Using mail surveys, parents, maternal and child health nurses, primary school teachers, and from 11 years onwards the young people themselves, have completed questionnaires about the children's development and adjustment. The aspects assessed range from attributes and assets such as temperament style, social skills, family and peer relationships, and school adjustment; to problems and difficulties such as antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, anxiety and depression. The focus has widened in recent years to encompass employment and career development, relationship formation and dissolution, marriage and parenthood aspirations, and social and civic participation.

The 14th data collection at age 23–24 years has recently been completed. Information has been collected about young people's educational and occupational participation; psycho-social attributes and strengths; physical health; relationships with parents, peers and partners; attitudes towards marriage and parenthood; adjustment problems and risk-taking behaviours; and pro-social behaviour and civic engagement. Young people and their parents have reported on these aspects of life. As well, parents have provided information about their own family life, their conceptions of their parenting role now their ATP child is an adult, and retrospective reports of various aspects of their ATP child's experiences while growing up.

The next tasks are to complete data entry and data cleaning, to undertake cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis, and to prepare reports and papers for publication. It is anticipated that the first areas to be focused on will be: (a) the nature and levels of positive development in this cohort of young Australians, and the longitudinal and contemporaneous factors that promote positive development; and (b) young people's and parents' perspectives of their roles, relationships and aspirations in the early adulthood period.

As well as undertaking the 14th data collection, statistical analysis and the dissemination of findings from the longitudinal dataset continued during 2006 and 2007. For example, ATP data informed and underpinned *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 4, Tailoring parenting to fit the child*. There has been considerable media interest in the ATP, with the study being publicised in newspaper articles and radio interviews.

Publications

Chipman, P., Jorm, A. F., Prior, M., Sanson, A., Smart, D., Tan, X., & Easteal, S. (2007). No interaction between the serotonin transporter polymorphism (5-HTTLPR) and childhood adversity or recent stressful life events on symptoms of depression: Results from two community surveys. *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part B (Neuropsychiatric Genetics)*, 144, 561–565.

Smart, D., Hayes, A., Sanson A. V., & Toumbourou, J. W. (2007). Mental health and wellbeing of Australian adolescents: Pathways to vulnerability and resilience. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 19, 263–268.

Smart, D. (2007). Tailoring parenting to fit the child. *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 4*, Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D., & Sanson, A. (2006, November). A comparison of children's temperament and adjustment across 20 years. *LSAC 2005–2006 Annual Report*, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 35–37.

Smart, D. (2006). *Year 2006 ATP Newsletter for Young Adults*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D. (2006). *Year 2006 ATP Newsletter for Parents*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Vassallo, S. (2007). Article review: Is Sure Start an effective preventive intervention? *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 3, 6–8.

Conference presentations

Richardson, N., Smart, D., Sanson, A., & Dussuyer, I. (2006, 4–7 July). The role of environmental characteristics in changing the pathways to adolescent antisocial behaviour of high- and low-risk children. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Smart, D., Letcher, P., Toumbourou, J. W., Williams, I., & Sanson, A. (2006, 4–7 July). *The value of longitudinal studies for identifying and explaining developmental trajectories*. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Dussuyer, I., & Smart, D. (2006, 5 September). *Linking up research, policy and practice: Lessons from a collaborative crime prevention project*. Paper presented at the Australian Evaluation Society's International Conference, Darwin, NT.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Smart, D. (2006, 21 August). *The Australian Temperament Project*. Invited paper presented at the ARACY Workshop: Mature Australasian longitudinal studies of children and youth: Celebrating achievements, making connections, planning for the future, Melbourne, Vic.

External representation

Hayes, A., & Smart, D. (2006, 15 September). Attendance at the COAG Human Capital Working Group, Data Sub-Group Meeting, Adelaide, SA.

Smart, D. (2006, 26–27 October). Member of concluding discussion panel, ARACY Creating Child Friendly Cities Conference, Sydney, NSW. Member, Brotherhood of St Laurence Life Chances Project Advisory Committee (D. Smart).

Member, Longitudinal Study of Australia's Children Wave 3 Child Functioning design team (D. Smart).

Member, Youth Information Advisory Group, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (D. Smart).

Member, Local Organising Committee for the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development 2006 Conference (D. Smart).

Member, Parentline Reference Group (D. Smart).

ATP/TAC/RACV collaboration

The collaboration between the Institute and the Transport Accident Commission of Victoria (TAC) and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) has entered its second phase. The first phase of the project collected data in the 2002 ATP survey on young people's learner driving experiences, recent driving experiences, and road safety behaviours. It then made use of the ATP longitudinal dataset to investigate the personal, family and wider environmental factors associated with differing types of driving behaviours. The findings from this first phase were disseminated through an Institute research report, journal articles and conference presentations.

The second phase of the collaboration has involved the collection of data on the driver history and experiences of the 23- to 24-year-old ATP study members as part of the 2006 ATP survey. Data similar to that obtained in 2002 has been collected, along with new data pertinent to young people's current driving careers. The data will be analysed in 2007–2008 and a report prepared for an anticipated release in 2008.

Publication

Vassallo, S., Smart, D., Sanson, A., Harrison, W., Harris, A., Cockfield, S., & McIntyre, A. (2007). Risky driving among young Australian drivers: Trends, precursors and correlates. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, *39*, 448–458.

External representation

Vassallo, S., & Smart, D. (2007, 27 June). Attendance at the launch of the Monash University Accident Research Centre's 'Going Solo' resource kit. Monash University, Melbourne, Vic.

Child Care in Australia: Wave 1 thematic paper

In collaboration with project co-directors from the School of Teacher Education, Charles Sturt University and the Department of Psychology, Macquarie University, and project representatives from the Centre for Developmental Health, Curtin University, the Discipline of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Newcastle, and the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, the Institute analysed the LSAC Wave 1 dataset to examine relations between patterns of child care and early education, family demographics and development of infants and 4-year-old children. The final report, *Child Care in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Wave 1 thematic paper*, which includes a review of the literature concerning the effects of child care on development, was submitted to FaCSIA in April 2007.

Commissioned report

Harrison, Ungerer, J., Smith, G., Zubrick, S., & Wise, S., with Press, F., & Waniganayake, M. (2007, April). *Child Care in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Wave 1 thematic paper*. A report to the Office for Women, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Child Care in Cultural Context

The focus of this study is young children's experience of continuity between home and day care and caregiver-parent relationships, with an emphasis on children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who use mainstream child care services. A paper concerning the differential treatment of children from culturally diverse backgrounds across home and child care environments was released in February 2007, and a paper that describes cultural differences in parents' perceptions of child care quality was published in the *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* in September 2006. Findings that address the effect of discontinuity between home and child care on child adjustment are planned for release in 2007. Collectively, these papers will inform government, policy development and educators about how the child care experiences of children from culturally diverse cultural backgrounds can be optimised.

Publications

da Silva, L., & Wise, S. (2006). Parent perspectives on child care quality among a culturally diverse sample. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(3), 6–14.

Wise, S. (2007). Building relationships between parents and carers in early childhood. *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 5*, Melbourne: Australian Family Relationship Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Wise, S., & da Silva, L. (2007). *Differential parenting of children from diverse cultural backgrounds attending child care*. (Australian Institute of Family Studies, Research Paper No. 39). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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 Institute 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. In its first wave of data collection, undertaken in 2002–2003, 689 families with children aged 0 to 3 years were recruited to the study. Early in the current reporting period the third wave (2004–2005) of data collection was completed. Analysis of the data is continuing, and a number of conference presentations and written papers have arisen as a result. Although the New South Wales Department of Community Services provided additional 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), Institute involvement is limited to the analysis and presentation of findings from the first three waves of data collection.

Conference presentations

Bowes, J., Neilsen-Hewett, C., Fiora, M., Taylor, A., Simpson, T., & Wise, S. (2006, 2–6 July). *Young children's social skills with peers: Reports from primary carers at home and in childcare*. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Ungerer, J., Harrison, L., Taylor, A., Bowes, J., Wise, S., & Sanson, A. (2006, 2–6 July). *An evaluation of child care factors in young children's social-emotional development*. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD) Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Other (non-conference) presentation

Edwards, B. (2006, 1 August). Cross-sectional person centred analysis: Using latent class analysis to develop typologies. Statistics Discussion Group, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Children and Family Life

The Children and Family Life study examines the family environment, development and wellbeing of approximately 1,200 children aged between 5 and 12 years growing up in intact-couple, single-parent, step and blended families. It was designed to provide information about the family life and development of children reared in non-traditional family forms.

Analysis of the data has begun, and differences across family types on parenting dimensions were reported in a poster presentation to the Biennial Meeting of the Society for the Study of Behavioural Development in July 2006. A paper was also presented at this meeting that examined the differential effect of parenting dimensions on child behaviour problems in three family settings. Future analysis is planned to assess the relation between key aspects of the family environment and family structure to measures of child adjustment. This should provide information as to whether the physical composition of families affects development over and above family environment factors, and should emphasise where interventions and supports need to be targeted to enhance family and child wellbeing.

Conference presentations

Vassallo, S., & Wise, S. (2006, 2–6 July). *Parenting in three family structures*. Poster presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Wise, S. (2006, 2–6 July). *Differential consequences of parent nurturance, restrictiveness and involvement in three family settings*. Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Follow-up of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination

Preparation of a final report comparing the family life and development of children conceived through donor insemination technology (DI children) with children raised in different family settings (non-DI children) is in progress. The data were collected on behalf of Professor Gabor Kovacs from Monash Medical School, Box Hill Hospital (renowned for his contribution to the IVF research field from its early days), using instrumentation developed for the Children and Family Life study. Findings to emerge from this study are expected to have implications for families accessing donor insemination technology, and children born as a result.

Families Caring for a Person with a Disability

The Institute has been funded by FaCSIA to investigate the perceived impact on carers and their family of caring for a person with a disability. This collaborative project with staff from the Carers Branch will document the physical, emotional, social and financial impact on families of caring for a relative with a disability. Labour force participation and the effect of caring on family relationships within the family are also the focus of the study.

A total of 1,002 carers of a person with a disability were interviewed from around Australia via computer-assisted telephone interviews. The interview schedule has been developed through examination of the research literature and consultation with experts from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the disability support sector and the university sector.

The final report has been submitted prior to publication and a paper focusing on the social lives of carers has been published in *Family Matters*.

Publications

Edwards, B., Higgins, D., & Zmijewski, N. (2007). The Families Caring for a Person with a Disability Study and the social lives of carers. *Family Matters*, 76, 8–17.

Higgins, D. J. (2007). Families caring: Diverse care-work of families in Australia. *Family Matters*, 76, 4–7.

Commissioned report

Edwards, B., Higgins, D. J., & Zmijewski, N. (2007, June). *Final report: The families caring for a person with a disability study*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Higgins, D. (2006, 11 September). *The 'Families Caring for a Person with a Disability' joint study between AIFS and FaCSIA*. Presentation to the National Policy Working Group (Carers Australia), Melbourne, Vic.

Edwards, B. (2006, 12 December). *The Families Caring for a Person with a Disability Study: preliminary findings*. Presentation to the Disability and Carers Branch, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

Edwards, B., & Higgins, D. (2007, 16 February). *The Families Caring for a Person with a Disability Study: preliminary findings from the field*. Presentation to Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

External representation

Member, Australian Bureau of Statistics Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group (B. Edwards).

Reviewer, Children and Youth Services Review (B. Edwards).

National Child Protection Clearinghouse

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC) 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 FaCSIA, and has operated from the Institute since 1995. 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. The goal of the clearinghouse is to inform policy, practice and research into child abuse prevention and child protection.

Evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse

The Institute contracted Associate Professor Paul Delfabbro (Adelaide University) through Adelaide Research and Innovations to undertake an independent evaluation of the clearinghouse. The evaluation was completed and provided to FaCSIA under the clearinghouse project contract in June 2007. It is anticipated that the evaluation report will be made available to the public early in the 2007–2008 financial year.

The independent evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse concluded that:

There was clear evidence from feedback with stakeholders that the Clearinghouse has been actively involved in a number of endeavours that had influenced policy and decision-making... (Delfabbro, P. H., & Borgas, M. (2007). National Child Protection Clearinghouse Evaluation Report, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, pp. 73, 76.

Research

The clearinghouse undertakes primary and secondary research projects related to child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care. A number of clearinghouse research reports are available for downloading from the clearinghouse website (www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports).

Indigenous Out-of-home Care

As part of its contract with FaCSIA, the clearinghouse undertook a study following up the research undertaken for the Australian Council for Children and Parenting in 2005–2006, which investigated the recruitment, assessment, training and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers. The project aimed to profile and disseminate in a culturally appropriate way promising practices in out-of-home care for Aboriginal children, their families and carers. The research has been completed and it is anticipated that project resources will be disseminated early in the 2007–2008 financial year.

In addition, the Institute has undertaken several other projects relating to child protection that were managed and disseminated through the clearinghouse.

Research Utilisation

Commissioned by the Australian Centre for Child Protection and undertaken in collaboration with researchers from the Centre, the project comprised a two-stage survey to examine the barriers and facilitators of research utilisation by policy makers and practitioners in the fields of child abuse prevention and child protection. The research has been completed and it is anticipated that project resources will be disseminated early in the 2007–2008 financial year.

National Approach for Child Protection

Commissioned by the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC), this project aims to provide a very broad overview of directions and trends in child protection in Australia. Specifically, the project comprises a discussion of background and context, including international comparisons for measures of child protection and general community wellbeing. With the input and participation of all of the states and territories and the Commonwealth, the project team conducted national comparisons of strategic directions in government with regard to child protection services, provisions for 'breaking down the silos', legislative principles, and approaches to intervening early to prevent entry or re-entry into care and protection services. Commenced in 2006–2007, the project is scheduled to be completed in the 2007–2008 financial year.

Comparability of Child Protection Data

Commissioned by CDSMAC through the National Child Protection and Support Service (NCPASS), this project aims to analyse the differences in key child protection indicators between jurisdictions and, over time, within individual jurisdictions; and to identify and assess factors that may explain these differences. The

project is being conducted in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The project commenced in June 2007 and is expected to be completed in 2007–2008.

Knowledge base

The clearinghouse currently holds 13,722 records in its catalogue related to child abuse and neglect. The catalogue is widely accessible via the Institute's website. The resources of the Institute's bibliographic database Australian Family & Society Abstracts (AF&SA) are also available to the clearinghouse and are used to respond to stakeholder inquiries, and also to produce bibliographies for the clearinghouse website. The AF&SA database identifies and indexes the research, policy and practice literature about families, family life and social issues that impact on families, such as child abuse and child protection, in journal articles, conference papers, research reports and government documents.

Communication

The knowledge base is used to generate a number of communication activities including the clearinghouse website, an information and advisory service, and the production and dissemination of publications and presentations related to child abuse prevention and child protection.

The independent evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse concluded that:

The vast majority of stakeholders who were contacted during the course of the evaluation identified information dissemination as a great strength of the clearinghouse because of its ability to distribute information through multiple methods: electronic email lists, the website, downloadable publications, and face-to-face forums. Feedback from stakeholders showed clear links between the different media, e.g., people had learned about the website from clearinghouse publications. The independent evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse concluded that: Clearinghouse publications were considered well researched, professionally produced, and relevant to both policy and services because of a specific focus on the application and relevance of findings (Delfabbro & Borgas, 2007, p. 74).

Website

The clearinghouse website continued to be well used during the year with 1,532,373 hits and 767,735 downloads (including 287,265 downloads of NCPC publications). The electronic Resource Sheets continue to be very popular, as do the clearinghouse's *Child Abuse Prevention Issues* and *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*. Although most requests were received for resources that were full text publications, other areas of the website continue to be well utilised, including the bibliographies and information on getting help. This includes such topics as reporting child abuse, government departments responsible for dealing with child protection, Internet safety advice, help lines for children and parents, counselling services, guidelines for police checks for people working with children and adolescents, and links to other sites that provide information on child abuse prevention.

Information and advisory service

A key role for the clearinghouse is to provide information and advice on child abuse prevention and child protection policy and practice issues to the Australian Government, state and territory governments, agencies and practitioners working in the field.

A free information and advisory help desk is staffed to answer general queries by telephone, fax, mail, email, or in person. Experienced librarians respond to queries by drawing on the extensive resources of the research library and in-house databases, but they can also access external online and Internet services when necessary. Requests for more specialised information are referred to the clearinghouse research staff. This may include the detailed analysis and interpretation of current issues in child protection and child abuse prevention, informing program development and professional practice, and providing advice on research methodology and program evaluations.

Clearinghouse staff draw on the knowledge base to provide advisory services. The use of the information and advisory service remains high, with a total of 315 enquiries coming to the clearinghouse 'help desk'. In addition, there were 649 subscribers to the *childprotect* e-discussion list at 30 June 2007. The *childprotect* list provides service providers, government agencies, policy makers and researchers with a venue to discuss research, policy and practice issues, and facilitates discussion and dissemination of good practice knowledge. In 2006–2007, there were 309 messages posted on *childprotect*.

As a key aspect of its advisory function, clearinghouse research staff participate in 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.

Newsletters

National Child Protection Clearinghouse. (August, 2006). *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 14(2).

National Child Protection Clearinghouse. (February, 2007). *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 15(1).

Publications

Bromfield, L. M., & Ryan, R. (2007). National comparison of statutory child protection entry-level training. *Children, Communities and Families Australia*, 2(1), 59–72.

Burchill, M., Higgins, D. J., Ramsamy, L., & Taylor, S. (2006). 'Workin' together': Indigenous perspectives on community development. *Family Matters*, 75, 50–59.

Delfabbro, P. H., & Borgas, M. (2007). National Child Protection Clearinghouse Evaluation Report, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, Vic.

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., & Richardson, N. (2006). Protecting Indigenous children: Views of carers and young people on 'out-of-home care'. *Family Matters*, 75, 42–49.

Hayes, A. (2007). A great partnership begins. *Access* 23, 19–20.

Irenyi, M., Bromfield, L. M., Beyer, L. R., & Higgins, D. J. (2006). *Child maltreatment in organisations: Risk factors and strategies for prevention*. (Child Abuse Prevention Issues No. 25). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Electronic publications

Boyd, C., & Bromfield, L. M. (2006). Young people who sexually abuse: Key issues. *Practice Brief*, 1.

Submissions

Wise, S., Bromfield, L. M., & Higgins, D. J. (2006, October). Response to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Discussion Paper, *Improving permanency planning for children in care*.

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., Morrison, Z., Robinson, E., & Weston, R. (2007, March). House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Conference presentations

Bromfield, L. M., & Higgins, J. R. (2006, 14–18 August). *Carers of Indigenous children: Findings from a national study*. Paper presented at the Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies Conference, Sydney, NSW.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 30 September – 1 October). *Ten years of out-of-home care research: Evaluating the Australian evidence-base*. Paper presented at the Australian Foster Care Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Bromfield, L. M., & Williams, S. (2006, 30 September – 1 October). *Promising practice in Indigenous foster care: A collaborative project between AIFS & SNAICC*. Paper presented at the Australian Foster Care Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 14–15 November). *Finding and using research in child protection practice*. Workshop co-facilitated with Leanne Black, Senior Practitioner, Rockhampton North CSSC, Department of Child Safety and presented at Child Safety Research Conference: Child protection: Integrating research policy and practice, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 20–21 May). *Child protection in Australia: Current challenges and future directions*. Paper presented at the Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 4 August). *Child protection, sexual assault, families and communities, and caring*. Presentation to the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency, Major General Jeffrey and Her Excellency, Mrs Marlena Jeffrey. Melbourne, Vic.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 21 August). *The 2006–2008 Research Plan and the current work of the Institute*. Address to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Strategic Policy and Research Branch, Brisbane, Qld.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 21 August). *The National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the role of the Institute in translating and disseminating research*. Address to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Strategic Policy and Research Branch, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 28–29 August). *National comparison of entry-level training for statutory child protection workers*. Paper presented at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning Group Meeting, Perth, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 30 August). *Child protection and out-of-home care: An update from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Paper presented at the Department for Community Development, Community Skills Training Centre, Perth, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 11 September). *Child abuse prevention: Everyone's responsibility*. Paper presented at the Wendouree Rotary Club Meeting, Ballarat, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 11 September). *Child abuse prevention: Everyone's responsibility*. Paper presented at the Lara Lion's Club Meeting, Lara, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. (2006, 12 September). *Child protection in Australia*. Paper presented at the Australian Council of Children and Youth Organisations Accreditation Training Forum, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 29 September). *Child abuse prevention, Child protection and out-of-home care: A snapshot of recent research by the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Paper presented at Families SA, Adelaide, SA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 29–30 November). *Research design in Australia: What did we learn from the national audits?* Paper presented as part of a panel on reunification research design at the Australian Reunification Research National Workshop co-hosted by Families SA and the Australian Centre for Child Protection, Adelaide, SA.

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. (2006, 12 December). *Child abuse prevention programs: What works?* Paper presented at the Australian Centre for Child Protection seminar series, Adelaide, SA.

Holzer, P. H. (2007, 6 February). *An overview of research regarding refugee child and family welfare*. Presentation to the Refugee Minor Program Reference Group Meeting, Department of Human Services, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 12–13 March). *Child protection Australia: Key challenges and future direction*. Keynote presented at the West Australian Ministerial Community Roundtable on Child Protection, Perth, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 28 March). *National Child Protection Clearinghouse research one-day workshop* co-hosted by the Queensland Department of Child Safety and PeakCare Queensland, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M., & Fooks, S. (2007, 4 April). *Information Dissemination: Lessons learned from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Discussion paper presented to the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare staff meeting, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 3 May). *Child Protection in Australia: Current challenges and future directions*. Paper presented for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

Higgins, J. R. (2007, 18 May). *Research findings from Promising Practices in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers and Children Project*. Presentation at a kinship care consultation with Aboriginal groups, Department of Human Services, Placement Support Unit, Office for Children, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 25 June). Chair for the *Current government thinking panel* at the Parental Substance Use and Child Protection: Developing National Guidelines and Strategies national forum co-hosted by Odyssey House Victoria and the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Hayes, A. (2007, 25 June). Welcome address to the National Forum on Parental Substance Abuse and Children Protection, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

External representation: Conference/meeting attendance and consultations

Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA). (2006, 1 August). *National out-of-home care research forum: Report on forum proceedings*. Proceedings for the 'Out of home care research forum: From research into action' (Brisbane, 19 May 2006) compiled by a working group comprising: Judy Cashmore, Daryl Higgins, Brian Head, Cathy Humphreys, Coleen Clare, Dorothy Scott, Leah Bromfield, Jasmine Chee, Kristin Vink, Louise Debley, Michael Power and Tracie Young.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 22 August). Attendance at Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group Meeting and Research Forum, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 28–29 August). Attendance at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning Group Meeting, Perth, WA.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 14–15 November). Attendance at the Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Conference: Child protection – Integrating research policy and practice, Brisbane, Qld.

Higgins, J. R. (2006, 8 December). Attendance at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childhood Outcomes Seminar co-hosted by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 21 February). Attendance at the Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group meeting, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 26–27 March). Attendance at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning Group Meeting, Brisbane, Qld.

Holzer, P. (2007, 3 May). Attendance at the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth launch of Commitment to Young Australians, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 18 May). Attendance at the Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group meeting, Brisbane, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M., Holzer, P., & Irenyi, M. (2007, 20–21 May). Attendance at the Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., & Irenyi, M. (2007, 25 June). Attendance at the Parental Substance Use & Child Protection: Developing National Guidelines and Strategies national forum co-hosted by Odyssey House Victoria and the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Irenyi, M. (2007, 29 June). Attendance at the Rainbow Families Council Interdisciplinary Symposium, Melbourne, Vic.

Higgins, D. J. (various dates). Lectures and seminars presented at Deakin University, School of Psychology, Vic.

External representation: Board and Committee Membership

Member, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Victoria – Management Committee (L. M. Bromfield).

Editorial board member. *Communities, Children & Families Australia*. Journal of the Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners (L. M. Bromfield).

Editorial committee member. *Developing Practice*. Journal of the New South Wales Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies (L. M. Bromfield).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Member, National Child Protection Clearinghouse Reference Group (D. Higgins)

Member, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Victoria – Advisory Group (until December 2006) (D. Higgins).

THEME 3 FAMILIES AND WORK

Research in this theme is concerned with two broad areas: how families combine caring responsibilities and paid employment and what assists families in successfully combining both sets of responsibilities; and the relationship between labour market transitions and family factors. Research has focused on the ways in which family members combine their family responsibilities and paid employment, and the impacts of these arrangements on family relationships and the wellbeing of family members. There has also been research on the return-to-work decisions of mothers following childbearing, and the ways in which families manage this transition; the effects of differences in access to a range of family-friendly employment arrangements on parental wellbeing; and the implications of mothers' wage expectations on their labour supply decisions.

Family and Work Decisions

The Family and Work Decisions project is a study of the work decisions of families with dependent children, conducted in partnership with FaCSIA. The project comprised a quantitative component (a survey of 2,405 partnered and lone mothers in December 2002) and a qualitative component (in-depth qualitative interviews with 61 mothers from late 2003 to early 2004). The study primarily focuses on people's knowledge and understanding of the income support system, the way it interacts with paid employment, and decisions about labour force participation, living arrangements and family formation. Work on this project now comprises the production of research material. Several publications were planned for 2006–2007, and the first of these has been completed. Others will be completed in 2007–2008. Future work on this project will be reported under the Work and Family Interactions project.

Publications

Hand, K. (2007). Mothers' accounts of work and family decision-making in couple families: An analysis of the Family and Work Decisions Study. *Family Matters*, 75, 70–76.

Renda, J. (2007). *Employment aspirations of non-working mothers with long-term health problems*. (Australian Institute of Family Studies, Research Paper No. 40). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Parents on Low Income Study

This three-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project was undertaken in collaboration with FaCSIA and the Australian National University. The project was formally completed in March 2006. This project involved building a new 10-year longitudinal database from FaCSIA administrative records and supplementary surveys, for low-income parents with dependent children. One of the supplementary surveys attached to the longitudinal database was the Family and Work Decisions survey (see above). The linking of these data to longitudinal FaCSIA administrative records allows for the ongoing analysis of the dynamics of,

and interrelationships among, changes in family structure, income, and welfare reliance. The Institute's contribution to the project has been completed.

Work and Family Interactions

This project area contains much of the Institute's research into families and their relationship with the labour market. There have been three main areas of focus in 2006–2007: mothers' transitions back to employment after childbearing; employment characteristics and family wellbeing; and time-use aspects of how work and family intersect.

Analysis of mothers' transitions back to employment, using the LSAC 1.5 Wave data, resulted in two conference papers. One was in collaboration with academics from the United Kingdom (UK) as well as other Australian researchers. This was presented at an international conference in the UK. The second was presented at the Australian Population Conference.

The LSAC Wave 1 data have also been used in one *Family Matters* article, on the employment characteristics of mothers of infants, and to continue research on how aspects of employment are associated with family wellbeing. The family wellbeing research has been presented in a variety of forums, and more research is underway. Some aspects were also published in the LSAC 2006 Annual Report, as a summary of the report, *Mothers and fathers with young children: Paid employment, caring and wellbeing* (for information on this report, see Mothers, Fathers, Children and Work).

An area of research that has expanded over this year has been in the analysis of children's time use and of parental time with children. This makes use of the LSAC time-use diaries. In particular, this research focuses on how children's time and parents' time with children varies according to different family characteristics, in particular different employment arrangements. From 2007–2008, this time-use aspect will be reported separately, and future work on this topic will include analysis of the ABS adult time-use diaries.

Publications

Alexander, M. (2006). Country note: Australia. In P. Moss & M. O'Brien (Eds.), *International review of leave policies and related research*. (Employment Relations Research Series No. 57). London, UK: Department of Trade and Industry.

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2006). Paid work characteristics of mothers with infants. *Family Matters*, 74, 34–41.

Baxter, J., & Hayes, A. (2007). How four year olds spend their day: Insights into the caring contexts of young children. *Family Matters*, 76, 34–43.

Baxter, J., Gray, M., & Hayes, A. (2007). *A snapshot of how Australian families spend their time*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Baxter, J., Gray, M., Alexander, M., Strazdins, L., & Bittman, M. (2006). Mothers, fathers, work and wellbeing. In *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Annual Report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 26–28.

Conference presentations

Baxter, J., Joshi, H., Sanson, A., & Ward, K. (2006, 12–14 September). *Mothers' employment and mental health in the first year of a child's life: A contrast between two maternity leave regimes*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, St Catherine's College, Oxford, UK.

Baxter, J. (2006, 5–8 December). *A day in the life of a 4-year old: The effect of parental employment*. Paper presented at the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Baxter, J. (2006, 5–8 December). *Maternal employment in the first twelve months after the birth: The effect of pre-birth job characteristics*. Paper presented at the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Baxter, J. (2007, 1 May). *Exploring time use data: The LSAC example*. Presentation to the Australian Institute of Family Studies Statistics Discussion Group, Melbourne, Vic.

Baxter, J. (2007, 2 May). *Work and Family: A selection of recent AIFS research*. Invited guest lecture for the course 'Love, Family and Sexuality: A Comparative Perspective'. Melbourne University, Melbourne, Vic.

Baxter, J., Gray, M., Hayes, A., Qu, L., Richardson, N., Smyth, B., & Weston, R. (2007, 15 May). *Making space for time*. Presentation to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for National Families Week 2007, Canberra, ACT.

Hayes, A., Gray, M., & Baxter, J. (2007, 20–21 June). *The wellbeing of families: Conceptual issues and unique insights from Growing Up in Australia*. Presentation to the National Family Wellbeing Symposium, Canberra, ACT.

Gray, M. (2007, June 25). *The impact of long working hours on the wellbeing of families*. Paper presented at the Building Commission Work and Life Balance Industry Roundtable, Melbourne, Vic.

Baxter, J. (2007, 27 June). *Parents and jobs: Implications for time with children. Findings from Growing up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Presentation to the Work-life Association Roundtable, Canberra, ACT.

External representation

Baxter, J. (2007, 7 March). Attendance at final paper launch of *It's about time: Women, men, work and family*, Sydney, NSW.

Alexander, M., & Hand, K. (2007, 25 May). Attendance at *Grey matters: Engaging mature age workers*. Diversity Council Australia, Melbourne, Vic.

Baxter, J. (2007, 28 June). Attendance at the Melbourne Institute Economics Forum, Melbourne, Vic.

Judge, 2007 BCA/ACCI Work and Family Awards (M. Alexander).

Council Member, Australian Population Association Australia (J. Baxter).

Member, Advisory Group, HREOC *Striking the Balance* report (M. Alexander).

Member, International network on parental leave policy and research (coordinated from University of London, UK) (M. Alexander).

Mothers, Fathers, Children and Work

The objective of this project was to provide new information about, and improve our understanding of, issues relating to work and family balance for parents of infants and children aged 4 to 5 years using Wave 1 of LSAC. The work was commissioned by FaCSIA in December 2005, and a final report was provided to the Department in June 2006. Additional editorial work was undertaken in late 2006 and publication proofs finalised, with the final publication due for release in July 2007. A selection of findings was presented in the LSAC Annual Report (see Work and Family Interactions project).

Negotiating the Life Course

Negotiating the Life Course (NLC) is a longitudinal survey undertaken by the Centre for Social Research, and the Demography and Sociology Program of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, and the School of Social Science, University of Queensland. The Institute's contribution to the project is through the involvement of a senior research staff member as partner investigator to the project. Over 2006–2007, the fourth wave of the survey was planned and implemented, with fieldwork completed in early 2007. Work on this project will continue in 2007–2008. With the availability of data from the fourth wave, work will commence on analysis of the four waves of data and planning for a 2008 conference.

Publication

Baxter, J. (2006, July). *Men's and women's patterns of employment over a lifetime*. Contribution to the newsletter for NLC participants.

External representation

Partner investigator, ARC Discovery project: Negotiating the Life Course: Education, Work, Family and Lifestyle Behaviour in Australia (J. Baxter).

THEME 4 FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Research in this area focused on the interconnections between the health and wellbeing of families and the characteristics of their residential communities. This link is fundamental, for families are the building blocks of communities and rely on community resources for meeting the family's needs.

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) is the sole national centre for current information and research on sexual assault. The aim of the centre is to assist service providers, policy makers and others working in the field to improve responses to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of, sexual assault. ACSSA is funded by the Office for Women in FaCSIA under the Women's Safety Agenda.

ACSSA has been operating at the Institute since 2003. The focus of the centre is on all forms of sexual assault, but 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 abuse. The main functions of the centre 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 policy makers, 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.

ACSSA website

The ACSSA website (www.aifs.gov.au/acssa) is a key part of its functions and activities. Through the website, ACSSA identifies new developments in the field, monitors and records new literature in the field on research, policy and practice, provides links to online documents, and publishes its publications online. It also provides up-to-the minute information on forthcoming events and conferences, and links to Australian and international organisations. There is also online access to the ACSSA library collection, located in the Institute's library.

Visits to the ACSSA website continued to increase this year, with more than 258,900 pages/documents accessed (up from 218,900 in 2005–2006). *ACSSA Issues*, *ACSSA Wrap* and articles from the newsletter *ACSSA Aware* were in demand, with more than 93,770 downloads, followed by visits to the online resource collection of bibliographies and online documents, with more than 29,400 accesses. Other features of the website that continued to be frequently accessed were the Good Practice Programs Database and current statistical information on sexual assault.

ACSSA electronic newsletter

ACSSA also publishes a fortnightly electronic newsletter of upcoming events, new publication announcements, notices about research participation, and other items of interest to the field.

Subscribers to the *ACSSA-alert* fortnightly newsletter continued to increase and now number 628 at 30 June 2007 (up from 475 last year).

Bibliographies

The ACSSA website also includes online bibliographies containing selected references, online documents published predominantly within the last five years, journal articles, reports and conference presentations from Australia and selected international sources, on key topics within the sexual assault research field. The bibliographies on the website to date are: adult survivors of child sexual assault; drug and alcohol facilitated sexual assault; Indigenous communities and diverse cultures; law reform and policy; offenders – characteristics; offenders – criminal justice responses and treatment; prevention programs and strategies; sexual assault in intimate relationships; trafficking and sex workers – sexual assault and exploitation; victim/survivors – criminal justice responses; victim/survivors – service responses; victimisation studies – incidence and prevalence; and young offenders. Bibliographies on male survivors of sexual assault and young offenders were added this year.

Library collection

During the year 155 items of relevance to ACSSA were added to the library collection, and now total 1,774. Items include journals, books and research reports, government documents, conference proceedings, audiovisual material (videos and kits), training material/modules, as well as ephemera (e.g. postcards and booklets). An emphasis is given to obtaining material in an online format wherever possible and items include both Australian and overseas material. Items are obtained from a wide range of sources, including commercial publishers, government departments, non-government organisations, and service providers.

Materials held in the collection can be located in the Institute's online library catalogue via a link on the ACSSA website. They are also available for browsing in the Institute's library, which is open to the public by appointment. Items may also be borrowed through the interlibrary loan system.

Publications

ACSSA produces three types of publications.

ACSSA Aware is a quarterly newsletter that includes feature articles written on current and emerging topics in the field, with contributions by ACSSA staff and external authors. *ACSSA Aware* provides one of the few forums for publication in this field. It includes a News in Brief section; reviews of recently released books, research reports and films; profiles of services and other stakeholders; notices of upcoming workshops, training and conferences; and a listing of the latest sexual assault research from Australian and international resources that has been obtained for the collection.

ACSSA Wraps are short papers that aim to provide a briefing, particularly to a practitioner audience, on a key topic in the field, where a gap exists in the resources.

ACSSA Issues are longer, allowing an in-depth exploration of a topic, and are used to fill a critical gap in our understanding of and responses to sexual assault.

During the reporting period, ACSSA has published three *ACSSA Aware* newsletters, two issues of *ACSSA Wrap* (*ACSSA Wrap 2*: 'Male survivors of sexual assault and rape', and *ACSSA Wrap 3*: 'Young people who sexually abuse: key issues') and two

issues papers (*ACSSA Issues 6: 'Services for victim/survivors of sexual assault: Identifying needs, interventions and provision of services in Australia'*, and *ACSSA Issues 7: 'Ripple effects of sexual assault'*).

Publications are distributed to a mailing list of 6,915 subscribers and are also published on the website.

Research and enquiry service

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

Research enquiries are logged, allowing the centre to monitor the types of enquiries received, details of the organisation making the enquiry, the response provided and the time it took, and the enquirer's member status on the mailing list. In this way, the log allows monitoring of stakeholder needs and interests.

In the reporting period, ACSSA received more than 200 enquiries with an average of 45 minutes spent responding to each enquiry. The amount of time on each enquiry reflects the comprehensive effort involved in responding to research queries.

The main users of the research enquiry service include: government departments (both state and federal); sexual assault services, medical and health services, sex offender services; legal practitioners; police; tertiary institutions; libraries; non-government and community organisations; and the media. The service is accessed by individuals and agencies from all states and territories.

The topics of enquiries are varied, and include statistics on the prevalence of sexual assault, statistics on the justice system and sexual assault (for example, statistics on reporting and conviction in different states), drink spiking, trafficking, offender treatment programs, the issue of consent, sexual assault in Indigenous communities, best practice sexual assault service provision, information on sexual assault for the purpose of training workers and professionals, young people and sexual assault, sexual assault as part of domestic violence, disability and sexual assault, information about current policy and laws, sexual assault law reform, and requests for multiple copies of ACSSA resources.

Good Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault

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 experience across the sector. There are currently 40 examples of good practice programs available for browsing in the collection.

The information provided on the database includes a description of the program/initiative and the aspects of good practice it demonstrates, particular groups targeted by the program, information about the philosophical framework, as well as research behind the program and details of publications produced.

During this year, the ACSSA team has considered and proposed revisions to the Good Practice Database and a replacement Promising Practice Database will be launched in the next financial year.

Networking, conferences and outreach

In the last 12 months, ACSSA has presented at many different events, conferences, forums and seminars focusing on issues such as law reform, sexual assault in the church, young offenders, vicarious traumatisation, and ripple effects of sexual assault. It has also held many consultations with key stakeholders in the field, providing expert advice or information, and listening to issues raised by key stakeholders.

ACSSA team members also regularly promote the services provided by ACSSA through presentations and information sessions aimed at increasing the understanding and use of the services available through the centre.

Publications

Astbury, J. (2006). *Services for victim/survivors of sexual assault: Identifying needs, interventions and provision of services in Australia* (ACSSA Issues No. 6). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Boyd, C. (2006). Treatment of young men who sexually abuse: The involvement of family. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 2, 6–8.

Boyd, C., & Bromfield, L. (2006). *Young people who sexually abuse: Key issues*. (ACSSA Wrap No. 3). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Clark, H. (2007). Judging rape: Public attitudes and sentencing. *Aware: ACSSA Newsletter No. 14*. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Crome, S. (2006). *Male survivors of sexual assault and rape*. (ACSSA Wrap No. 2). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Morrison, Z. (2006). Family violence and sexual assault: Aspects of a new report in Victoria on law reform. *Aware: ACSSA Newsletter No. 13*. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Morrison, Z. (2006). Results of the Personal Safety Survey 2005. *Aware: ACSSA Newsletter No. 13*. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Morrison, Z. (2006, 1 November). *Women still on trial in rape cases*. Politics Section, Crikey.

Morrison, Z. (2006, 27 October). *Abuse: It's now entertainment*. Opinion Section, *The Age*, Melbourne, Vic.

Morrison, Z. (2007). Caring about sexual assault: The effects of sexual assault on families, and the effects on victim/survivors of family responses to sexual assault. *Family Matters*, 76, 55–63.

Morrison, Z., Quadara, A., & Boyd, C. (2007). *'Ripple effects' of sexual assault*. (ACSSA Issues No. 7). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Quadara, A. (2006). 'Elder abuse' and the sexual assault of older women: A new Australian policy response. *Aware: ACSSA Newsletter No. 13*. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Conference presentations

Morrison, Z. (2006, 20 November). *Ripple Effects of Sexual Assault*. Keynote speaker at the 20th Anniversary Annual General Meeting of the South West Centre Against Sexual Assault, Warrnambool, Vic.

Morrison, Z. (2006, 30 November). *ACSSA: Update and Future Directions*. Presentation at the Conference of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, Canberra, ACT.

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 19 April). *Family violence and sexual assault in Indigenous communities*. Invited address to the 18th World Congress of WAS/1st World Congress of Sexual Health, Sydney, NSW.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Morrison, Z. (2007, 1 March). *Responses to child abuse and adult sexual assault in the Anglican Church*. Presentation at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Seminar Series, Melbourne, Vic.

Boyd, C. (2007, 2 May). *Young people who sexually abuse*. Presentation to the Australian Council for Children and Youth Organisations Inc., Melbourne, Vic.

Morrison, Z. (2007, 29 May). *All about ACSSA*. Presentation to Indigenous sexual assault workers, Healing Workshop, Kalgoorlie, WA.

Morrison, Z. (2007, 18 June). *Drawing together the themes*. Presentation to the Sexual Assault and the Law Forum, Victorian Women Lawyers Justice Committee, Melbourne, Vic.

External representation

Clark, H. (2006, 5 September). Attendance at seminar: The legal system's response to sexual assault: Do specialist courts offer the best way forward? Institute of Criminology, University of Sydney, NSW.

Morrison, Z., Quadara, A., & Clarke, H. (2006, 28 August). Attendance at book launch of *Real Rape, Real Pain*, Queen Victoria Women's Centre, Melbourne, Vic.

Quadara, A., & Boyd, C. (2006, 2 October). Attendance at forum: Measuring community health outcomes. Melbourne: Key Centre for Women's Health in Society.

Boyd, C. (2006, 1 December). Attendance at forum: Police response to same-sex domestic violence, Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, Melbourne, Vic.

Boyd, C. (2007, 30 January). Attendance at forum: Discussion paper: Post-sentence supervision and detention of high-risk offenders, Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council, Melbourne, Vic.

Boyd, C., & Clarke, H. (2007, 27 March). Attendance at forum: Corporate pedophilia, CASA House, Melbourne, Vic.

Clarke, H. (2007, 18 June) Attendance at forum: The sexual assault forum: Perspectives on the law and sexual assault, Victorian Women Lawyers Justice Committee, Melbourne, Vic.

Boyd, C., & Clarke, H. (2007, 19 June). Attendance at the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Annual Family Law Forum: Family dispute resolution and family violence, Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne, Vic.

Member, Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault (Z. Morrison).

Member, National Child Protection Clearinghouse Reference Group (Z. Morrison).

Member, National Conference on Sexual Assault Organisation Committee (Z. Morrison).

Member, Advisory Committee for Policing Just Outcomes Project (Z. Morrison).

Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia

The Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA) aims to improve access to information and resources to inform policy, practice and research in the fields of early intervention and child development. The primary function of CAFCA is to provide information and advice to projects funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS), as well as policy makers, researchers and practitioners. The clearinghouse has an emphasis on initiatives that develop and promote improved services and practices for young families, the early learning and care of children, support for families and parents, and child-friendly communities. In addition to this core role, CAFCA supports the National Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2008. The clearinghouse is funded by FaCSIA through the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2009, and has been in operation since July 2005.

Research collection and library

The clearinghouse is supported by the services and collection of the Institute's library. Through the library, the clearinghouse brings together a comprehensive collection of national and international literature, including research on topics such as early intervention, child development, and strengthening families and communities, as well as research methodology and policy developments. The practice initiatives collection covers the research and policy literature on community development and capacity building, early childhood, families, and programs that support families. Key journal titles, research reports, government reports and audiovisual materials are also included in the collection. The library catalogue is available free of charge from the Institute's website. A catalogue and help desk service is provided for clients who wish to access information from the library collection and databases. Types of assistance sought included the provision of information on evaluation programs, ethics guidelines for non-government organisations, and assistance with searching the web for resources.

CAFCA website

The website provides information on the SFCS National Evaluation, links to Australian and overseas websites, electronic versions of publications, questionnaires relating to the National Evaluation, and news of forthcoming conferences and events. It also includes resources and supports for 'local evaluators' – the researchers contracted by SFCS-funded projects to evaluate the success of their project.

The CAFCA website recorded 78,570 hits and 52,402 pages were accessed or downloaded. The Evaluation section of the site was well used with more than 10,677 downloads of pages including the *Evaluators' National Newsletter*, questionnaires for services users and agencies, and questions and answers about the evaluation process. Interest was also shown in the resources pages on the site (6,789 downloads), the Stronger Families Strategy projects page (1,809 downloads), and the Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) respondent website (4,215 downloads). A password-protected area was created for SFCS local evaluators, usage of which has increased over the last year.

Electronic discussion lists

CAFCA provides an interactive, moderated medium for open use by individuals funded under the SFCS, the early childhood and community development

sectors and policy makers. There are two distinct moderated discussion lists: *CAFCA-chat* and *e-evaluate*.

CAFCA-chat provides a forum for the discussion of research, policy and practice issues relevant to the SFCS and the broad early childhood and community development sectors. Designed to facilitate discussion and disseminate knowledge, *CAFCA-chat* highlights innovative and effective practices, and informs on relevant literature, training opportunities and forthcoming events. The web information page for *CAFCA-chat* (the email discussion and announcements list) has received 2,208 visits resulting in 197 subscribers as at 30 June 2007.

The *e-evaluate* list is a moderated list that focuses on the SFCS National Evaluation. More specifically, it is a forum for Local Evaluators to offer each other peer support during the evaluation process. The list gives evaluators opportunities to share information, resources and case studies as well as providing a forum for problem solving and for building and maintaining a peer network. Additionally, *e-evaluate* allows for the timely dissemination of knowledge and resources specific to Local Evaluators, such as advice on evaluation instruments, relevant literature, training opportunities and forthcoming events. The list had 130 registered members as at 30 June 2007.

Electronic publications

A six-monthly newsletter, the *Evaluators' National Newsletter*, is published and electronically distributed to those working under the SFCS and the National Evaluation. The newsletter contains information regarding the Strategy, progress updates on the National Evaluation, links to the latest publications, resources, developments in relevant policy or legislation, and information about training, conferences and workshops. During the reporting period, two editions were published:

Evaluators' National Newsletter, edition 3 (December 2006), and edition 4 (June 2007).

Networking and outreach

CAFCA staff gave presentations at various conferences and workshops on the services provided by CAFCA, as well as reporting on the activities of the National Evaluation.

Evaluation of Relationships Australia Victoria FUN for Kids program

The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the FUN for Kids program on participating fathers and their families. The project will have a primary focus on the father's perspective. However, it will also include the views from immediate family members and service providers. The study will seek to understand the impacts of the program on the participating fathers, their family relationships and access to community networks. The study will also consider the evaluations of other father's programs in Australia.

Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation

A National Evaluation Consortium has been formed to evaluate the second phase of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2008. The Institute is working with the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and a team of expert advisers.

The National Evaluation seeks to capture the extent to which the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2008 contributes to better outcomes for children and families, and improved capacities of communities to achieve this. The strategy is an initiative of FaCSIA. The SFCS aims to: help families and communities build better futures for children; build family and community capacity; support relationships between families and the communities they live in; and improve communities' ability to help themselves. SFCS contains four strands: Communities for Children, Invest to Grow, Local Answers, and Choice and Flexibility in Child Care. The evaluation addresses the first three and seeks to establish a strong evidence base for the development of effective programs and services in the early childhood sector in Australia.

Studies have shown that support for families during infancy and early childhood can help foster children's lifetime development and educational attainment. However, the processes involved in such interventions, their cost effectiveness and the impact they make can vary widely. This evaluation seeks to capture the extent to which the strategy helps build the capacities of children, families and communities. The project design is informed by recent theoretical and practical developments relating to the evaluation of complex social programs. Our plan will evaluate the strategy in ways that capture:

- how it assists individuals and families to fully participate in society;
- how it creates and underpins social networks amongst community members;
- how it enhances children's and families' sense of belonging and community membership; and
- how it strengthens the capacity of the service system to provide for vulnerable children and families.

The outcomes framework used in the National Evaluation aligns with the National Agenda for Early Childhood. The SFCS National Evaluation Framework was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, and published in December 2005.

The Institute has contributed to the overall design and management of the project and is taking the lead on a number of key components.

Stronger Families in Australia

The Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) study is an integral component of the National Evaluation. It is the primary mechanism for collecting data on child, family and community outcomes in Communities for Children sites. The study extends over a three-year period covering 10 Communities for Children and five contrast sites. The first wave was completed in 2006 with a total of 2,202 families taking part. Data collection for the second wave was completed in May 2007 with excellent response rates. A participant website has been established and regular newsletters are sent to participating families.

Promising Practice Profiles

One of the key objectives of the National Evaluation is to identify 'what works' in early childhood and early intervention, and to identify, validate and disseminate promising practices arising from the Strategy. Promising Practice Profiles (PPPs) will be published on the web and are expected to provide a valuable resource for practitioners, policy makers and researchers working in the early childhood

sector. They will provide information about effective practices, service models and examples about what works in different settings. The profiles will assist in the planning of appropriate programs, provide a vehicle for peer learning and information sharing, and enhance the quality of services provided to families and communities.

The Call for Submissions for PPP Round 1 (there will be up to three calls for submission over the next three years) went out in August 2006 and closed in November 2006. Workshops were conducted in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane to assist project managers and local evaluators in the preparation of their submissions. The submissions required applicants to respond to at least two of the six criteria to be used to assess a practice as promising. These criteria were prepared in consultation with facilitating partners and local and national evaluators as well as service providers.

A PPP Reference Group comprising local evaluators from across the country, and a representative from both FaCSIA and the Social Policy Research Centre (University of New South Wales) was formed to assist the National Evaluation team at the Institute with the design and development of the validation process. The 11 submissions received in Round 1 underwent a validation process to ensure that the profiles that appear on the database are of high quality. The external review process was undertaken by an independent peer review panel, which was appointed to review and assess the submissions. The panel used a validation template that was developed at the Institute, based on the UK Quality Framework which has been found to be relevant for a range of types of qualitative evaluations, including practice evaluation and policy development and appraisal, as well as evaluation of particular interventions, schemes or programs.

The Round 1 validation process highlighted the need for the provision of ongoing expert support in the preparation and/or improvement of submissions. In this light, a Practice Evaluation Consultant has been appointed to assist in improving the submissions prior to publication.

Round 2 Call for Submissions went out in June 2007 and will close in October 2007. The level of support to be provided to the projects will be enhanced in Round 2 to include teleconferences to encourage projects in rural/remote areas to make a submission, and the conduct of workshops that cater to the specific needs of the Local Answers, Invest to Grow, and Communities for Children streams of the strategy.

Themed Studies

The purpose of the Themed Studies is to explore particular topics in depth. These studies will enhance understanding of 'what works' by exploring in more depth 'why' and 'how' things work. These studies will include the three SFCS program areas covered in the evaluation: Communities for Children, Invest to Grow and Local Answers. Some of the studies will be undertaken in partnership with Local Evaluators.

Commissioned reports

Adams, R., & Cheney, H. (2007). *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, National Evaluation, Communication Strategy: Implementation 2007–2008*.

Adams, R., Hand, K., & Soriano, G. (2007, February). *Stronger Families in Australia Wave 2 Instrument Test Report*. A report prepared for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Cheney, H., & Soriano, G. (2007). *Stronger Families in Australia, Wave 1 Fieldwork Report*. A report prepared for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Soriano, G., & Cheney, H. (2007, June). *Promising Practice Profiles, Round 1 Report*. A report prepared for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Conference presentations

Cheney, H., Willetts, J., & Soriano, G. (2006, 11–13 December). *Collaborative validation of qualitative evaluation*. Paper presented at the ACSPRI Social Science Methodology Conference, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Cheney, H. (2006, 8 December). *Using Our Knowledge(s) to Grow Up Strong Kids*, organised by Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Adams, R. (2006, 20–21 September). *Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia*. Presentation to the Communities for Children NGO Forum organised by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Melbourne, Vic.

Cheney, H. (2006, 20–21 September). *Stronger Families in Australia*. Presentation to the Communities for Children NGO Forum organised by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Melbourne, Vic.

Soriano, G. (2006, 20–21 September). *Promising Practice Profiles*. Presentation to the Communities for Children NGO Forum organised by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Melbourne, Vic.

Cheney, H., Oke, N., & Soriano, G. (2006, September–October). *Promising Practice Profiles*. Workshops presented to SFCS Local Evaluators and Project Managers in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane.

External representation:

Adams, R., Oke, N., & Soriano, G. (2006, 7 July). Attendance at the Early Years: From Research to Policy Practice Seminar, YMCA, Melbourne, Vic.

Adams, R., Oke, N., & Soriano, G. (2006, 7–8 December). Organisation and attendance at *Using Our Knowledge(s) to Grow Up Strong Kids*, organised by Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Adams, R. (2007, 1 March) Attendance at the Early Years: From Research to Policy Practice Seminar, Shepparton, Vic.

Clark, H., & Soriano, G. (2007, 4–5 June). Attendance at the Communities in Control Conference: From Advocacy to Policy – Communities Driving Change, Melbourne, Vic.

Evaluation of the Every Child is Important program

The Institute was commissioned by the Australian Childhood Foundation to undertake an independent evaluation of the Australian Childhood Foundation Every Child is Important program. The evaluation commenced in the 2006–2007 financial year and is due to be completed in 2007–2008. The Every Child is Important project is a national universal primary prevention program, aimed at preventing and reducing child abuse and neglect through increased social appreciation of children and parenting, and through improved understanding of children's developmental needs. The evaluation seeks primarily to ascertain the impact of the project materials on parents who have used them.