

# 3

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE



## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

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 reporting period, the Institute's research activities have been guided by the Research Plan 2006–08, *Families Through Life: Diversity, Change and Context*.

The research-based information provided by the Institute in 2007–08 has informed public debate in a range of areas and has been used by policy makers, practitioners and other researchers. Significant progress has been made in implementing the Research Plan 2006–08, with projects having been developed that address the directions identified in the plan.

This chapter includes a summary report of performance, followed by detailed reports relating to each key performance indicator (KPI).

### Summary performance information for Outcome 1

Table 3.1 details the Institute's performance for the reporting period against the KPIs set out in its Strategic Plan 2006–08.

**Table 3.1 Summary performance information for Outcome 1**

| Strategy   | Outcome  | KPIs  | Performance against KPIs   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>1. Conduct high-quality research on a broad range of policy-relevant issues regarding families in Australia</b> |  |   |  |
| Research Plan implementation   | Research outputs produced on time and in line with any contractual requirements and deliverables                 | 95% of projects meet scheduled outputs and budget                                     | Over 95% of scheduled outputs delivered within budget and on time (see also Research Activities, pp. 24–81)  |
| <b>2. Inform and influence policy development in areas relevant to family wellbeing</b>                            |  |   |  |
| Establish and maintain effective communications with Ministers, FaHCSIA and PM&C                                   | FaHCSIA and the Minister's Office, and PM&C and the PMO are kept fully informed about the Institute's activities | PMO satisfaction with quality and timeliness of communication processes and protocols | Successful negotiation of Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent (see Corporate Governance, pp. 96–8)<br>All Ministerial briefings returned without negative comment                |
|  |  | PM&C satisfaction with implementation of protocols and procedures                     | Successful negotiation and implementation of communication protocol and completion of MoU to support contractual arrangements between PM&C and the Institute (see Corporate Governance, p. 96) |

| Strategy  | Outcome  | KPIs   | Performance against KPIs  |
|---|--|--|---|
| Develop effective mechanisms to ensure that research is communicated to policy makers                               | Demonstrated influence of the Institute's research in contributing to government policy and programs | 15% increase over 2006–08 in the frequency of positive mentions of Institute research findings by the Minister, or in Parliament | The Institute received slightly fewer positive mentions in Parliament and by related committees during this reporting period (26, compared to 37 in 2006–07), probably due to the reduced number of sitting days during the election and caretaker period |
| Engage directly in high-level policy development forums   | The Institute is invited to participate in relevant forums   | Representation on government taskforces, committees and working groups   | Institute staff continue to be represented on several different government taskforces, committees or working groups (see also pp. 81–3)   |
| <b>3. Promote and lead public understanding and debate about factors affecting family functioning and wellbeing</b> |  |  |   |
| Maximise opportunities for coverage of the Institute's research in print and electronic media                       | The Institute's research findings disseminated to general public, via the media                      | Minister/Secretary satisfaction with the Institute's management of media inquiries   | Media releases and accompanying briefings successfully provided to the Minister and Secretary on key Institute research publications and promotional activities   |
|   |  | Mentions in press and geographical spread of reportage maintained at current high levels   | Media coverage of Institute research was positive and had a national spread, with over 1,935 mentions (compared to over 970 in 2006–07) and an estimated audience reach of over 52.4 million (see also Media Liaison, pp. 86–7)                           |
| Strengthen the Institute's profile among community and family service organisations                                 | The Institute's research findings inform family service practice                                     | 10% increase per year in community organisations' membership of mailing and discussion lists                                     | 17% increase in the number of subscribers to Institute mailing and discussion lists   |
| Strengthen the Institute's profile in the research community  | The Institute remains a leader in family research in Australia                                       | 15% increase over 2006–08 in the number of Institute-authored journal and book articles  | 55% increase in articles published by staff in external peer-reviewed journals and books, compared to 2006–07 (see also Research Activities, pp. 24–81)   |
|   |  | 20% of all articles of <i>Family Matters</i> from external authors (subject to journal standards)                                | 54% of <i>Family Matters</i> articles were externally authored (see also <i>Family Matters</i> Journal, pp. 89–90)  |

| Strategy   | Outcome  | KPIs  | Performance against KPIs   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>4. Identify and communicate current and emerging issues in family research, policy and practice</b>   |  |   |  |
| Effective communication of the Institute's research to key stakeholders through the development and implementation of communication plans for the Institute's projects | The Institute's reputation as an impartial and reliable authority on issues related to family wellbeing is enhanced and research is communicated in a timely manner in appropriate formats | <i>Family Matters</i> published three times a year  | 3 editions of <i>Family Matters</i> were published in 2007–08  |
|  |  | Contracted publications produced on time and on budget  | All agreed contractual publications have been produced on time and on budget   |
|  |  | 15% increase over 3 years in access rates to web-based publications and online mailing services | 56% increase in access to web-based publications during the year   |
| Maintain and strengthen partnerships and networks  | The Institute is involved in strategic partnerships with government, service provider and research communities   | Increase in active partnership arrangements   | Existing partnership arrangements strengthened and extended and several new strategic partnerships entered into, particularly with government and the research community   |
| <b>5. Maintain and strengthen our role as the national centre for research on families</b>   |  |   |  |
| Promote the Institute as an "employer of choice" through the implementation of best-practice people management strategies, in line with APS values and code of conduct | The Institute is able to recruit and retain high-quality staff who are trained, motivated and resourced to perform at their highest level  | Staff surveys indicate high levels of staff satisfaction  | A structured staff interview process was conducted by an external consultant that indicated high levels of staff satisfaction across the organisation  |
| Implement planning framework   | Plans and processes in place across the Institute to ensure effective systems and processes are documented and implemented   | Documented progress against planning framework  | The business of the Institute is conducted in line with the Strategic Plan 2006–08 and the Research Plan 2006–08<br><br>Regular reports to management, including internal audit reports, document progress against this planning framework (see also Internal Audit, p. 102) |

Notes: Slight changes to the wording, although not the meaning, of some of the outcomes and KPIs published in the 2007–08 *Portfolio Budget Statements* have been made to take account of machinery of government changes during the reporting period. See Glossary (pp. 158–9) for an explanation of the abbreviations used in this table.

## KPI 1. Conduct high-quality research regarding families in Australia

### 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.

A list of the Institute's research projects is provided in Table 3.2.

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.

### Rigour

The Institute aims to undertake research that is of a high quality, is 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 to achieve this.

The Institute's research work is published in accordance with its established publishing review policy. This requires that all material undergoes a formal, rigorous, internal and external review and assessment process, with reference to the Institute's policy documents, "Criteria for Acceptance of Research Articles" or "Criteria for Acceptance of General or 'Viewpoint' Articles".

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 listed on the *Register of Refereed Journals* and assessed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as satisfying the refereeing requirements for the Higher Education Data Collection.

### Relevance

The Institute's research program should involve research that is relevant to the development of national policy, 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 the social sciences and that there is a role for research that may not inform current policy in an immediate and obvious way, but has the capacity to inform future policy directions. The research should

be useful, timely and provide value for money. Stakeholder consultation improves the relevance of the research undertaken.

### *Responsiveness*

The Institute's research program should be responsive to the policy environment. To achieve this goal, 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.

**Table 3.2** Categories of Institute research projects

| Project  | Institute-initiated (I) or commissioned (C) | Collaborators                                 | Research themes      |                                      |                   |                             | Page no. |
|--|---|---|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|  |   |   | Family relationships | Children, youth and patterns of care | Families and work | Families and community life |          |
| Allegations of Family Violence in the Context of Family Law Children's Proceedings | C (AGD)                                     |   | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 24       |
| Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault                                  | C (FaHCSIA)                                 |   | ✓                    |                                      |                   | ✓✓                          | 68       |
| Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse                                      | C (FaHCSIA)                                 |   | ✓✓                   | ✓                                    | ✓                 | ✓                           | 25       |
| Australian Temperament Project   | Joint funding ARC, AIFS, TAC, RACV          | Profs Sanson, Toumbourou, Prior and Oberklaid | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   | ✓                 | ✓                           | 41       |
| ATP/TAC/RACV Collaboration   | C (TAC/RACV)                                |   |                      | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 43       |
| Building Healthy Couple Relationships  | I   |   | ✓✓                   | ✓                                    | ✓                 | ✓                           | 29       |
| Caring and Women's Labour Market Participation                                     | I   |   | ✓                    |                                      | ✓✓                |                             | 64       |

| Project   | Institute-initiated (I) or commissioned (C) | Collaborators          | Research themes      |                                      |                   |                             | Page no. |
|---|---|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|   |   |                        | Family relationships | Children, youth and patterns of care | Families and work | Families and community life |          |
| Child Support and Labour Market Participation                                     | I   |                        | ✓                    |                                      | ✓✓                |                             | 64       |
| Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia                                  | C (FaHCSIA)                                 |                        | ✓                    | ✓                                    |                   | ✓✓                          | 73       |
| Comparability of Child Protection Data  | C (CDSMAC, via NCPASS)                      | AIHW                   |                      | ✓                                    |                   |                             | 44       |
| Development of the Child and Family Services Outcomes Survey                      | C (DEECD)                                   | University of Adelaide | ✓                    | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 45       |
| Evaluation of the Every Child is Important Program                                | C (ACF)                                     |                        | ✓                    | ✓                                    |                   | ✓                           | 76       |
| Evaluation of the Relationships Australia Victoria FUN for Kids Program           | C (RAV)                                     |                        | ✓                    | ✓                                    |                   | ✓✓                          | 76       |
| Experiences of Parents and Children After Family Court Decisions About Relocation | ARC   | College of Law, ANU    | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 30       |
| Families Caring for a Person With a Disability                                    | C (FaHCSIA)                                 |                        | ✓                    | ✓✓                                   | ✓                 |                             | 45       |
| Families in the Asia-Pacific Region   | I   |                        | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   | ✓✓                | ✓                           | 31       |
| Family Law Data Mapping Project   | C (AGD)                                     | ASSDA                  | ✓                    |                                      |                   |                             | 31       |

| Project   | Institute-initiated (I) or commissioned (C) | Collaborators             | Research themes      |                                      |                   |                             | Page no. |
|---|---|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|   |   |                           | Family relationships | Children, youth and patterns of care | Families and work | Families and community life |          |
| Family Law Monitoring   | I   |                           | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 32       |
| Family Law Reform Evaluation  | C (AGD and FaHCSIA)                         |                           | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 33       |
| Family Trends and Transitions   | I   |                           | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   | ✓✓                | ✓                           | 35       |
| Follow-Up of Children Conceived Through Donor Insemination                    | C (Monash University)                       |                           | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 46       |
| <i>Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children</i> | C (FaHCSIA)                                 | 8 research organisations  | ✓                    | ✓✓                                   | ✓                 | ✓                           | 47       |
| Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey             | C (FaHCSIA)                                 | Melbourne Institute; ACER | ✓                    | ✓                                    | ✓✓                | ✓                           | 38       |
| Indigenous Out-of-Home Care   | C (ACCAP, via FaHCSIA)                      | SNAICC                    |                      | ✓✓                                   |                   | ✓                           | 52       |
| Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families              | I   |                           | ✓                    |                                      | ✓✓                |                             | 65       |
| Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children                     | I   |                           | ✓                    |                                      | ✓✓                |                             | 65       |
| Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project                                  | C (DHS)                                     |                           |                      | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 54       |

| Project  | Institute-initiated (I) or commissioned (C) | Collaborators                           | Research themes      |                                      |                   |                             | Page no. |
|--|---|---|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|  |   |   | Family relationships | Children, youth and patterns of care | Families and work | Families and community life |          |
| Magellan Project Evaluation  | C (FCoA)                                    |   | ✓                    | ✓                                    |                   |                             | 39       |
| National Approach for Child Protection   | C (CDSMAC)                                  |   |                      | ✓                                    |                   |                             | 54       |
| National Child Protection Clearinghouse  | C (FaHCSIA)                                 |   | ✓                    | ✓✓                                   |                   | ✓                           | 55       |
| Negotiating the Life Course  | Joint funding ANU, ARC, AIFS, UQ            |   | ✓✓                   | ✓                                    | ✓✓                | ✓                           | 67       |
| Research Utilisation   | C (ACCP)                                    | ACCP                                    |                      | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 61       |
| Review of Government Initiatives for Reconciling Work and Family Life          | I   |   | ✓                    | ✓                                    | ✓✓                |                             | 67       |
| Rural and Regional Families: The Impact of Drought, Economic and Social Change | I   | ANU, La Trobe                           | ✓                    |                                      | ✓                 | ✓✓                          | 76       |
| Specialist Practice Guides   | C (DHS)                                     |   | ✓                    | ✓✓                                   |                   |                             | 62       |
| Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation                 | C (FaHCSIA)                                 | SPRC                                    | ✓                    | ✓                                    |                   | ✓✓                          | 77       |
| Time Use in Families   | I   | ANU                                     | ✓                    | ✓✓                                   |                   | ✓✓                          | 63       |
| Understanding Contact Disputes   | C (AGD)                                     | Sydney Law School, University of Sydney | ✓✓                   | ✓✓                                   | ✓                 |                             | 40       |

Note: See the Glossary (pp. 158–9) for an explanation of the abbreviations used in this table.

## Research activities

### 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 its recent amendments. Trends are examined at societal, family and individual levels.

#### **Allegations of Family Violence in the Context of Family Law Children’s 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 was based on a content analysis of two random samples of 300 court files from the Melbourne, Dandenong and Adelaide registries of the Family Court of Australia (FCoA) and the Federal Magistrates Court (FMC).

Commissioned by the Attorney-General’s Department (AGD), the research was undertaken 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. The study was also featured in a special edition of *Family Matters* (No. 77), which included a number of responding opinion pieces from the FCoA, the FMC, Relationships Australia (Victoria) and the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre (DVIRC). A number of articles appeared in other publications. In addition, the project developed a methodology to create a quantitative dataset based on content analysis of information in court files. This methodology has been adopted for another Institute project.

| Planned outputs                  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Presentations of report findings | 1 feature article in <i>Family Matters</i> , with 4 responding opinion pieces<br>3 other journal articles<br>2 invited conference presentations and 3 other invited presentations | The project has played an important role in informing the Australian Government’s Family Violence Strategy<br>Methodology developed is being used for another Institute project and further research |

#### **Publications**

Moloney, L. (2007). A response to Braaf & Sneddon’s and Bagshaw’s comments on “Allegations of family violence and child abuse in child-related disputes in family

law proceedings”: AIFS Research Report No 15. *Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse Newsletter*, 30, 11.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., & Weston, R. (2007). Allegations of family violence and child abuse in child-related disputes in family law proceedings: A brief summary of the AIFS “Research Report No. 15”. *Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse Newsletter*, 29, 14–15.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007). Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children’s proceedings. *Family Matters*, 77, 8–15.

Smyth, B., Moloney, L., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007). Allegations of family violence and child abuse in children’s proceedings A pre-reform empirical snapshot. *Australian Journal of Family Law*, 21(3), 252–287.

### Conference presentations

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., & Weston, R. (2007, 3 August). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in the context of family law children’s proceedings*. Plenary paper, Legal Aid Commission of NSW Family Law Conference, Sydney.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., & Weston, R. (2007, 10 August). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in the context of family law children’s proceedings*. Plenary paper, Family Court of Australia Judges’ Annual Conference, Melbourne.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., & Weston, R. (2007, 17 July). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in the context of family law children’s proceedings*. Invited presentation at the Relationship Support Network Family Transitions Research Update, ANU, Canberra.

Moloney, L. (2007, 18 July) *Allegations of violence in family law disputes over children: A public health issue?* Presentation to the School of Public Health, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Moloney, L., Smyth, B., Weston, R., Richardson, N., Qu, L., & Gray, M. (2007, 22 August). *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children’s proceedings: A pre-reform exploratory study*. Invited presentation at the School of Public Health, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

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## Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse

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The 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 relationship programs, ranging from prevention and early intervention through to post-separation services.

Guided by an external reference group, the clearinghouse is an information and advisory unit that contributes to the goals of the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP) by collecting and disseminating the latest relevant research and practice via publications and a website. The clearinghouse also functions as 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.

The AFRC commenced operations in April 2006 with funding from FaHCSIA under the FRSP, and the AFRC website was launched in September 2006. The AFRC received further funding from FaHCSIA and the AGD in June 2008 to continue operations through to June 2010.

### *Functions and activities*

The clearinghouse provides access to the latest developments in practice- and policy-related research in the family relationships field via a range of quality in-house publications and a publicly accessible website. Four types of publications are produced:

- AFRC Issues are in-depth papers that focus on policy and research topics relevant to family relationships.
- AFRC Resource Sheets provide concise summaries of the information contained in each AFRC Issues paper.
- AFRC Briefings are short papers that synthesise or translate key messages from family relationships research or practice.
- *Family Relationships Quarterly* is a quarterly newsletter that aims to provide a forum for the dissemination of good practice, debate on contemporary issues and comment on family relationships. The newsletter includes articles, literature highlights, research updates and news in brief. Articles include program and agency spotlights, summaries of research and practitioner updates. These range from short reviews of books and articles and reports on conferences, workshops and projects to more substantial articles on significant issues relevant to family relationships.

Other information and resources can also be found on the AFRC website, as described below. An email alert service (*AFRC-alert*) notifies subscribers of AFRC news and publications, as well as the latest news, reports, seminars and professional development opportunities.

Key indicators of the quality of the AFRC's performance during the reporting period included the production of 13 publications on issues of relevance to the family relationships field, ongoing improvements and additions to the AFRC website, consistent growth in subscribers to *AFRC-alert* and increasing awareness and utilisation of clearinghouse services. Substantial work was completed this year on consolidating the operations of the clearinghouse and addressing the considerable need for a "one-stop shop" for quality information on supporting families and relationships.

### *AFRC website*

The AFRC website ([www.aifs.gov.au/afrc](http://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, with links to AFRC publications, annotated bibliographies, a collection of family relationship practice profiles, useful resources and organisations, and information on upcoming conferences and training opportunities.

Forty-one bibliographies are currently provided, with new bibliographies added on a regular basis and existing bibliographies updated. Bibliographies on the website focus on a range of relevant topics, including: cohabitation, marriage, parenting, adolescents, Indigenous families, step-families, early intervention programs for parents, and effects on families of the death of a family member. Pages on forthcoming conferences and events and links to relevant Australian and international organisations are also regularly updated. The Resources section

includes online resources for practitioners, managers, service providers and family members, and information on Indigenous families. Approximately 200 entries are currently on the site.

The AFRC operates as an entirely electronic resource, and page downloads (number of whole web pages or documents downloaded) are a key indication of the level of interest in them and their usefulness. Visits to the AFRC website have shown a continual increase, with almost 230,000 page downloads for the year. Both the publications (93,000 page downloads—70,000 more than the previous year) and bibliographies (66,000 page downloads—43,000 more than the previous year) were in considerable demand. Subscribers to the *AFRC-alert* service have continued to rise steadily, and numbered 804 at the end of the financial year (up from 553 last year).

### *Networking, conferences and outreach*

AFRC staff members attended a range of conferences, forums and seminars over the year. These activities not only allow staff members to promote the clearinghouse's services, but also represent an important means of obtaining 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.

### *Review of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse*

The Institute contracted Urbis to undertake an independent review of the clearinghouse. The review was completed and provided to FaHCSIA under the clearinghouse project contract in December 2007. The overall findings of the review concluded that the AFRC has become well established in the family relationships sector, the publications are generally considered to be of high quality, credible and relevant, and the sector clearly values the role that the AFRC plays in collecting, disseminating and synthesising relevant information.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|--|--|---|
| Publish a range of publications on the AFRC website  | 4 issues of <i>Family Relationships Quarterly</i> published  | Practitioners, researchers and the general community are informed about the latest developments in the family relationships field |
|  | 7 Briefing papers published  |   |
|  | 2 Issues papers published  |   |
| Maintain and improve a website that provides access to AFRC publications and other resources | Over 420,000 hits and almost 230,000 page downloads, with more than 176,000 hits for AFRC publications | Substantial increase in the use of the website, publications and email newsletter<br>AFRC services reach a wider audience         |
|  | 41 annotated bibliographies on topics relevant to families, relationships and service provision        |   |
|  | 804 subscribers to <i>AFRC-alert</i> as at 30 June 2008  |   |
|  |  |   |

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|--|---|--|
| Promotion of the clearinghouse and its work at suitable venues | 3 presentations at conferences and meetings<br>Attendance at meetings, conferences and events<br>New promotional brochure, flyer and sample publications printed and distributed at a range of events<br>Development of new communications strategy | Networks established and the work of the AFRC promoted through relevant channels |

Note: "Hits" refers to the number of all successful requests for files, including pages, images and documents. One web page may contain several such files, each of which, when downloaded, are counted as separate hits. "Page downloads" refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

## Publications

### Newsletters

*Family Relationships Quarterly*, No. 5, July 2007.

*Family Relationships Quarterly*, No. 6, September 2007.

*Family Relationships Quarterly*, No. 7, February 2008.

*Family Relationships Quarterly*, No. 8, April 2008.

### Other publications

Fletcher, R. (2008). *Father-inclusive practice and associated professional competencies* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 9). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Flynn, L., & Robinson, E. (2008). *Family issues in suicide postvention* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 8). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Howden, M. (2007). *Stepfamilies: Understanding and responding effectively* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 6). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Lodge, J. (2008). *Working with families concerned with school-based bullying* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 11). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Robinson, E., & Adams, R. (2008). *Housing stress and the mental health and wellbeing of families* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 12). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Robinson, E., & Parker, R. (2008). *Prevention and early intervention in strengthening families and relationships: Challenges and implications* (AFRC Issues Paper No. 2). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Robinson, E., & Parker, R. (2008). *Prevention and early intervention in strengthening families and relationships: Challenges and implications* (AFRC Resource Sheet No. 2). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Roufeil, L., & Battye, K. (2008). *Effective regional, rural and remote family and relationships service delivery* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 10). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Sawriker, P., & Katz, I. (2008). *Enhancing family and relationship service accessibility and delivery to culturally and linguistically diverse families in Australia* (AFRC Issues Paper No. 3). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Sawriker, P., & Katz, I. (2008). *Enhancing family and relationship service accessibility and delivery to culturally and linguistically diverse families in Australia* (AFRC Resource Sheet No. 3). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

Walker, R., & Shepherd, C. (2008). *Strengthening Aboriginal family functioning: What works and why?* (AFRC Briefing Paper No. 7). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

### Conference presentations

Parker, R. (2007, 20–22 September). *Overview of AFRC functions*. Marriage and Relationship Education National Conference, Perth.

Parker, R. (2007, 7 October). *Trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation*. TEAMS Conference, Melbourne.

### Other (non-conference) presentation

Parker, R. (2008, 5 February). *Overview of AFRC functions*. Marriage and Relationships Education Association of Australia Executive, Melbourne.

### External representation

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

Member, Organising committee of the 2009 National Marriage and Relationship Education conference (R. Parker).

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

## 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 the 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) continued as part of the Building Healthy Couple Relationships research area. Articles reporting on these various aspects of couple and family relationships appear in publications of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|--|---|---|
| Prepare articles<br>Present papers                       | Articles and paper presentations are listed in AFRC Briefing and Issues papers, and <i>Family Relationships Quarterly</i> | Requests for interviews and information from relationship professionals and the media |
| Disseminate research findings through the media          | Handle media queries  |   |
| Represent the Institute on relationship education bodies | Representation on 6 relationship education bodies   | Consultations with marriage and relationship education providers                      |

### External representation

AIFS Representative, Family Relationships Education and Skills Training Reference Group, FaHCSIA (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, Marriage and Relationship 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).

### **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 is funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant and is being conducted with Dr Juliet Behrens and Dr Bruce Smyth of the Australian National University (ANU) (as Chief Investigators).

The project has three aspects. The first (qualitative) component explores, through interviews with parents who have experienced such disputes, the ways in which families are affected by court decision-making in this area. Data collection began in 2007, with some 35 interviews being concluded by 30 June 2008. The second (quantitative) component examines patterns of mobility using large-scale population surveys and the 2006 Census data. It also involves Dr Jeromey Temple (ANU) and Mr Nick Richardson (AIFS). The third component will be a quantitative factual analysis of relocation judgements decided between 2002 and 2005. The research will help to inform future decision-making on relocation after separation.

| Planned outputs | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Data collection | Data collection about 80% complete   | Will improve understanding of relocation disputes |
| Symposium held  | Symposium held at ANU in April 2008<br>3 papers delivered at the symposium |   |

#### **Conference presentations**

Behrens, J., Smyth, B., & Kaspiew, R. (2008, 18 April). *Preliminary results from the experiences of parents after family court decisions about relocation*. "Relocation Disputes in Australia: What Do We Know and What are the Implications for Policy?" Symposium, ANU, Canberra.

Smyth, B., Temple, J., Behrens, J., Kaspiew, R., & Richardson, N. (2008, 18 April). *Post-separation geographic mobility in Australia: Some preliminary data on behaviour, disputes and attitudes*. "Relocation Disputes in Australia: What Do We Know, and What are the Implications for Family Law and Policy?" symposium, ANU, Canberra.

Temple, J., Smyth, B., & Kaspiew, R. (2008, 18 April). *Legal context and the demography of relocation*. "Relocation disputes in Australia: What Do We Know and What are the Implications for Policy?" symposium, ANU, Canberra.

## **Families in the Asia–Pacific 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 Asia–Pacific region, and to establish or strengthen existing connections with countries in the region regarding research on family relationships and wellbeing. Over the years, key aspects of this work have included 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 FaHCSIA. During the year, the Institute hosted visits by individuals or delegations from Singapore and New Zealand (three separate visits from representatives of the NZ Families Commission, including a visit by the Chief Commissioner, Dr Rajen Prasad), while a member of staff visited the Families Commission in New Zealand.

Dr Matthew Gray also participated in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Expert Group Meeting on “Enhancing Social Services Policies to Strengthen Family Well-being in Asia and the Pacific”. This meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand, and involved participants from Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Thailand.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|--|---|--|
| Develop and strengthen links with representatives of countries in the Asia–Pacific region who are involved in research on families | 4 visits from overseas individuals or delegations<br>A visit by an Institute representative to the NZ Families Commission | Exchange of information with academics and policy makers in the region |
| Conduct consultations with overseas colleagues on family-related research  | 1 international conference participation  |  |

### **External representation**

Gray, M. (2008). Participation in United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Expert Group Meeting on “Enhancing Social Services Policies to Strengthen Family Well-being in Asia and the Pacific”, Bangkok, Thailand.

## **Family Law Data Mapping Project**

In July 2006, the Australian Government implemented significant changes to the family law system that 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 (see the section on the Family Law Reform Evaluation for more details).

Reliable information is required to assess the impact of these reforms accurately and assist in improving outcomes for the individuals and families who come into contact with the family law system. The AGD has funded the Institute, in collaboration with the Australian Social Science Data Archive (ASSDA), 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, which has been completed, involved obtaining stakeholder agreement to participate. Phase 2 is underway and involves collecting and analysing the metadata.

| Planned outputs         | Actual outputs                    | Outcomes  |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Preparation of metadata | Preparation of metadata completed | Will help identify gaps in the current data collections and provide a summary of key baseline metadata available for the evaluation of the family law reforms |

### **Family Law Monitoring**

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 for 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 this chapter. In addition to these activities, a Family Law Update column appeared in an issue of *Family Matters*, and Institute staff presented relevant papers at various forums.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| Publish updates on family law   | 5 journal articles published  | Informed policy, research and practice regarding family law matters |
| Respond to calls for submissions to government reviews and to invitations to present papers | 8 presentations at conferences<br>4 presentations at other meetings |   |

### **Publications**

Caruana, C. (2007). Family law update: Unwrapping the family law reform package. *Family Matters*, 77, 43–47.

Caruana, C. (2007). Snapshots from the Family Relationship Centres album. *Family Matters*, 77, 33–38.

Moloney, L. (2008). Eight year old Samantha considers. *Journal of Family Studies*, 14(1), 4–9.

Smyth, B., & Moloney, L. (2008). Changes in patterns of post-separation parenting over time: A brief review. *Journal of Family Studies*, 14(1), 10–23.

Smyth, B., Weston, R., Moloney, L., Richardson, N., & Temple, J. (2008). Changes in patterns of post-separation parenting over time: Recent Australian data. *Journal of Family Studies*, 14(1), 23–36.

### **Conference presentations**

Smyth, B., Richardson, N., Moloney, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 11–13 July). *Changes in patterns of post-separation parenting over time*. Australian Social Policy Conference, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Smyth, B., Moloney, L. Weston, R., & Richardson, N. (2007, 19–20 July). *Changes in patterns of post-separation parenting over time*. HILDA Survey Research Conference 2007, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Kaspiew, R. (2007, 14 September). *Parental attitudes and children's interests*. Queensland Law Society's Annual Conference, Brisbane.

Moloney, L. (2007, 4 October). *Parents in separation and divorce-related conflict: The long road (in Australia) towards acknowledging "the best interests of the child"*. International Social Services Conference, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland.

Weston, R., & Hayes, A. (2007, 19 November). *Update of the Institute's Family Law Program*. Presentation to Chief Justice's Family Law Forum, Melbourne.

Kaspiew, R. (2008, 31 March). *Overview of the Legislation and Courts Project*. Presentation to Chief Justice's Family Law Forum, Melbourne.

Moloney, L. (2008, 13 June). *Family law and parental conflict: Children at the mercy of stories twice told*. Keynote address, Newcastle "It's for the Kids" Pathways Conference, Newcastle.

Weston R., & Gray, M. (2008, 7 September). *Overview of the Institute's research relating to family law issues, including the evaluation of the family law evaluation project*. Presentation to Chief Justice's Family Law Forum, Melbourne.

#### Other (non-conference) publications

Smyth, B., Moloney, L. Richardson, N., & Weston, R. (2007, 17 July). *Continuity and change in post-separation patterns of parenting*. Invited presentation at the Separation Support Network workshop Family Transitions Research Update, ANU, Canberra.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 17 September). *Snapshots of family relationships prior to the family law reforms: Baseline report*. Presentation to FaHCSIA, Canberra.

Moloney, L. (2007, 1 October). *Child sensitive practice in Australian family mediation*. University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium.

Moloney, L. (2007, October). *Keeping children at the centre*. International Social Services seminar, Geneva, Switzerland.

#### External representation

Observer, Family Law Council (R. Weston).

### 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 facilitates access to those services.

The AGD and FaHCSIA 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.

### *Pre-reform qualitative study and baseline data collection*

Surveys were conducted 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 2006; commissioned by the AGD and FaHCSIA); (b) a survey of family law specialists (commissioned by the 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, focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted to gain insight into views relating to the family law reforms held by parents who are members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities or selected culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities: Chinese, Turkish, Filipino and Somali communities (commissioned by FaHCSIA). FaHCSIA also commissioned the Institute to prepare a report on this qualitative study as well as a report based on data from the GPPS 2006 and pre-existing large-scale datasets (including data from the Census and from surveys of nationally representative samples).

### *Evaluation of the reforms*

In addition to the above work, a document outlining the framework for the evaluation and a draft outline of the broad methodology were prepared. The development and implementation of the individual components are now well underway, with fieldwork progressively commencing from August 2007 through to early 2009.

The research program for evaluation of the family law reforms comprises three separate projects (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 projects focus on: (a) the implementation of the legislation and the changes to the court system; (b) the service provision system; and (c) families. The projects are closely linked in the sense that they will track the impact of 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 is being applied across the evaluation. Information about the evaluation can be found at [www.aifs.gov.au/familylawevaluation](http://www.aifs.gov.au/familylawevaluation)

Some aspects of the research program are building on the baseline research that has been conducted by the Institute in order to allow pre- and post-reform package comparisons to be drawn. Others are being conducted on a longitudinal basis, allowing the impact of the reforms to be assessed as they unfold. Current funding arrangements cover the period from June 2007 to December 2009.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|--|---|--|
| Analyse various sets of pre-reform data and prepare reports and papers based on these data | Analysis of datasets<br>1 article published<br>1 report completed<br>1 conference presentation<br>8 presentations at other meetings | Key tools developed for assessment of the success of the reforms               |
| Commence implementation of post-reform evaluation methodology                              | Data collections commenced with service system providers, legal system players and separated parents                                | Collection and analysis of data that ensure the reforms are properly evaluated |

### Publications

Kaspiew, R. (2007). Evaluation of the family law reform package. *Family Matters*, 77, 39–42.

Lodge, J. (2007). A multidimensional evaluation of the new family law system. *InPsych*, 29, 12–13.

### Commissioned report

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2007, September). *Snapshots of family relationships prior to the family law reforms: Baseline report*. Report to FaHCSIA. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Conference presentations

Hand, K. (2007, 2 August). *Overview of the Service Provision Project*. 2nd Biennial FRSP Conference, Melbourne.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Weston, R. (2007, 17 July). *Evaluation of the family law reforms*. Presentation to Relationship Support Network Family Transitions Research Update Workshop, ANU, Canberra.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 17 September). *Snapshots of family relationships prior to the family law reforms: Baseline report*. Presentation to FaHCSIA, Canberra.

Weston, R., Kaspiew, R., Hand, K., & Lodge, J. (2007, 11 December). *Evaluation of the family law reforms*. Presentation to the AGD and FaHCSIA, Canberra.

Lodge, J. (2008, 14 February). *Overview of the Families Project*. Presentation to Family Law Council, Melbourne.

Kaspiew, R. (2008, 14 March). *Overview of the Legislation and Courts Project*. Presentation to National Legal Aid meeting, Adelaide.

Hand, K. (2008, 18 March). *Evaluation of the family law reforms*. Presentation to Victoria Marriage Educators Network, Melbourne.

Moloney, L., & Hand, K. (2008, 29 April). *First impressions: Service providers' accounts of the first phase of the family law reforms*. Presentation to Attorney General's Department and FAHCSIA, Canberra.

Kaspiew, R. (2008, 1 May). *Update of the Legislation and Courts Project*. Presentation to Family Law Council, Melbourne.

## 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 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 formed the basis of publications and presentations in 2007–08: broad family-related trends, couple formation and dissolution, living arrangements, factors influencing pathways from cohabitation, the health and wellbeing of new mothers and their children, 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 ANU. They have also presented papers on family-related trends at various conferences.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs   | Outcomes   |
|---|--|--|
| Publish articles, present papers at conferences and seminars, and participate in media interviews on family trends issues | 14 publications<br>16 presentations at conferences and meetings<br>42 media interviews (including 3 TV interviews & 2 NZ media interviews)<br>4 articles/reports featured in <i>Australian Policy Online</i> website | Ongoing analysis and dissemination of findings continue to inform government, policy makers and other stakeholders of the nature of and factors linked with family trends<br>Continuing requests for media interviews and invitations to present at both national and overseas conferences |
| Provide online database, Family Facts and Figures, on Institute website   | About 7,000 page downloads per month   | Findings have stimulated debates in media  |

## Publications

de Vaus, D., Gray, M., Qu, L., & Stanton, D. (2008). The financial consequences of divorce for later life. In P. A. Kempo, K. Van den Bosch., & L. Smith (Eds.), *International series on social security: Vol. 13. Social protection in an ageing world* (pp. 257–278). Oxford, UK: Intersentia.

Geggie, J., Weston, R., Hayes, A., & Silberberg, S. (2007). The shaping of strengths and challenges of Australian families: Implications for policy and practice. *Marriage & Family Review, 41*, 217–239.

Gray, M., Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007). *Fertility and family policy in Australia* (Research Paper No. 41). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Hayes, A. (2008). Are family changes, social trends and unanticipated policy consequences making children's lives more challenging? *Family Matters, 78*, 60–63.

Hayes, A., & Gray, M. (2008). Social inclusion: A policy platform for those who live particularly challenged lives. *Family Matters, 78*, 4–7.

Hayes, A. (2008) Putting early childhood into a lifespan, social-inclusion perspective. *Every Child, 14*(1), 4–5.

Lodge, J., & Feldman, S. S. (2007). Avoidant coping as a mediator between appearance-related teasing and self-esteem in young Australian adolescents. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 25*, 633–642.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2008). Attitudes towards cohabitation and marriage. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 8, 5–10.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2008). *Snapshots of family relationships*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Weston, R. (2007). Later life divorces. *Threshold*, November, 12–13.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2007). Families in Australia: Continuities and change. In E. Shaw & J. Crawley (Eds.) *Couple therapy in Australia: Issues emerging from practice* (pp. 23–47). Melbourne: Psychoz Publications.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2007). An update on partnership formation trends: What does the 2006 Census suggest? *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 6, 16–19.

Weston, R., Qu, L., & de Vaus, D. Cohabitation: Level of stability and post-cohabitation pathways. *Threshold*, 92, 18–20.

Weston, R., Stanton, D., Qu, L., & Soriano, G. (2007). Leaving home trends. *Threshold*, November, 24–25.

### Conference presentations

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 6 July). *Families: Changing patterns and health behaviours*. Invited paper, Child Public Health Elective 2007 Program, Centre for Community Child Health, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Qu, L., Weston, R., & Parker, R. (2007, 11–13 July). *Financial circumstances of divorced mothers relative to married mothers: Is the gap narrowing?* Australian Social Policy Conference, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2007, 17 July). *Trends in couple formation and dissolution*. Invited paper, Separation Support Network workshop, ANU, Canberra.

Weston R., & Qu, L. (2007, 20 August). *Family transitions and relationships in Australia*. Invited paper, Bouverie Centre, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Weston R., & Qu, L. (2007, 7 September). *Families in Australia: Continuities and change*. Invited paper, Local Government Professionals (LGRPro) Family, Youth and Children's Services Conference, Melbourne.

Lodge, J. (2007, 25–29 September). *Cyber-bullying in schools: How do our adolescents cope?* 42nd Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference, Brisbane.

Lodge, J. (2007, 25–29 September). *School engagement in the Middle Years*. 42nd Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference, Brisbane.

Baxter, J., Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 3 December). *Family structure, quality of the co-parental relationship, post-separation parenting and children's social-emotional wellbeing*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Hayes, A. (2008, 11 April). *Not such splendid isolation: Developmental implications of limited opportunities for intimacy*. 13th National Family Law Conference, Adelaide.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 17 August). *Trends in family transitions*. Delegation from Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore.

Hayes, A. (2007, 20 August). *Safe children, supportive families and child-friendly communities: Demographic change and policy*. Lecture at Mildura Campus, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Weston R., & Qu, L. (2007, 17 September). *Snapshots of family relationships prior to the family law reforms: Baseline report*. FaCSIA and the AGD, Canberra.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2008, 15 February). *Trends in family transitions*. Delegation from the Labour Market and Social Security Organisations in the Netherlands.

Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2008, 31 March). *Trends in family transitions*. Delegation from Doha International Institute of Family Studies.

Qu, L. & Weston R. (2008, 18 March). *Demographics of ageing and fertility*. Invited lecture, Principles of Social Policy course, ANU.

Hayes, A., & Gray, M. (2008, 26 March). *Families and social inclusion*. Presentation to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra.

### External representation

Weston, R. (2007, 10 August). Attendance at meeting of *Threshold* Editorial Advisory Board, Melbourne.

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

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

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

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

Member, Children and Youth Statistical Portal Reference Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics (M. Gray).

Member, Telethon Institute of Child Health Research (M. Gray).

Member, Project Management Group, HILDA survey (R. Weston).

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

## Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey

The Institute continues to contribute to the ongoing design of the HILDA survey. HILDA is currently 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 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 8 is scheduled to be in the field in late 2008. 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 chapter.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|---|---|--|
| Develop family dynamics section of forthcoming survey wave                | Development of the family dynamics section of survey is ongoing                       | HILDA dataset is now being used extensively by researchers in universities and the Institute and by government departments |
| Participate in discussions of design and development of forthcoming waves | Participation in discussion of design and development of forthcoming waves is ongoing |  |

### External representation

Observer, External Reference Group, HILDA survey (R. Weston).

Member, Project Management Group, HILDA survey (R. Weston).

## Magellan Project Evaluation

In order to better manage post-separation parenting disputes involving allegations of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse of children, the FCoA established the interagency Magellan case-management system. In 2006, the court commissioned the Institute to evaluate the project.

The evaluation involved conducting interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders from the FCoA 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 its successful implementation. These qualitative data were supplemented by a file review comparing cases that had and had not gone through the Magellan process.

Data collection was completed in 2006–07, with analysis and production of a final report to the court submitted in August 2007. The court published the results of the evaluation in October 2007, and a number of seminars, conference presentations and other feedback sessions to relevant stakeholders have been held since then.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| Final report  | FCoA printed and released the final report  | Results have been used by the Family Court and related agencies (including child protection departments) to better understand and address case-management issues and improve practice |
| Conference presentations and dissemination of outcomes and analysis | 2 presentations at national conferences<br>1 international conference presentation<br>1 invited seminar address<br>A range of formal and informal discussions and briefings on the implications of the findings for stakeholders<br>1 brief journal article published in <i>Family Matters</i> describing the methodology | Press coverage of the release of the final report by the Family Court confirmed the importance of the issues for the community  |

### Publications

Higgins, D. J. (2007). Magellan Project evaluation 2006–2007: A brief overview of methodology. *Family Matters*, 77, 40.

### Commissioned report

Higgins, D. J. (2007). *Cooperation and coordination: An evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan case-management model*. Canberra: Family Court of Australia. Retrieved 30 June 2008, from <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/magellan/index.html>

### Conference presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 31 October). *Responding to allegations of child abuse in Family Court proceedings: Evaluation of the Magellan Project 2007*. 11th Australian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Gold Coast, Qld.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 13–15 April). *Responding to allegations of child abuse in Family Court proceedings: The Magellan Project*. Invited address, "Shared Responsibility in Australian Family Law and the Impact on Children" seminar, Hawke Centre, University of South Australia, Adelaide.

Higgins, D. J., Burr, R. K., & Fowler, S. (2008, 29 May). *Innovative case management approaches to child abuse allegations*. 45th Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 5 December). *Responding to allegations of child abuse in Family Court proceedings: Evaluation of the Magellan Project 2007*. Invited address and facilitated discussion between Qld Department of Child Safety and staff from the Brisbane Registry of the Family Court of Australia, Brisbane.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 27 February). *Responding to allegations of child abuse in Family Court proceedings: Evaluation of the Magellan Project 2007*. Invited address and facilitated discussion for the Family Court of Australia's National Magellan Stakeholder Meeting, Brisbane.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 2 April). *Responding to allegations of child abuse in Family Court proceedings: Evaluation of the Magellan Project 2007*. Invited address and facilitated discussion for the Magellan Judges and Registrars of the Family Court of Australia, Adelaide.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 17 April). *Cooperation and coordination: An evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan case-management model*. Seminar presentation, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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## Understanding Contact Disputes

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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 Faculty of Law, University of Sydney. It is jointly funded by the AGD 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 datasets are currently being analysed.

| Planned outputs                 | Actual outputs      | Outcomes   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Analysis of a range of datasets | Analysis is ongoing | Will inform a range of interventions and services in the new family law system |

## 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 child care centres and schools. Children are also influenced by the neighbourhoods and 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.

### Australian Temperament Project

The ATP is an ongoing, longitudinal study following young people's psychosocial development from infancy into adulthood and 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 2006–07. 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.

Data entry and data cleaning of the 14th wave of data were recently completed, and scale construction is currently underway.

Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses utilising the data from the 14th wave have also commenced, with initial analyses focusing on the quality of relationships between young adults and their parents, parents' perceptions of their parenting roles, and patterns of risk-taking and adjustment difficulties from adolescence to early adulthood. It is anticipated that future analyses will focus on issues relating to the adjustment and wellbeing of study members in their mid-twenties, and young adults' attitudes towards marriage and parenthood.

In early 2008, work began on a collaborative project with external ATP researchers Professor Ann Sanson and Professor John W. Toumbourou that aims to: (a) identify childhood and adolescent factors that place young people at risk of alcohol abuse and dependence in early adulthood; (b) investigate the progression of adolescent drinking patterns into adulthood; and (c) examine the consequences of harmful alcohol use for adjustment and wellbeing in the mid-twenties. It is anticipated that project findings will be released in 2009.

The dissemination of results continued to be a major focus of the project during 2007 and 2008, and ATP findings were reported in a variety of forums. For instance, ATP findings were used to inform a submission to a NSW government inquiry into children and young people aged 9–14 years. Furthermore, with the release of the second wave of data from the LSAC study, the ATP was once again able to provide valuable benchmark data with which to compare the wellbeing and adjustment of children growing up in Australia today.

The ATP continued to attract considerable media attention during the year, with the study being publicised in newspaper articles, radio interviews and on television current affairs programs. For example, the comparison between the ATP and LSAC cohorts generated considerable attention from the media and researchers alike.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| Data entry and data cleaning  | Data entry and data cleaning completed  | Wave 14 data available for cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis  |
| Statistical analysis of Wave 14 and longitudinal data                                     | Statistical analyses commenced  | Will provide valuable Australian data on the wellbeing of young adults, as well as providing insights for policies and programs aimed at assisting young people to negotiate the transition to adulthood  |
| Preparation of journal articles, book chapters, submissions, and conference presentations | 2 journal articles<br>1 practitioner newsletter article published<br>1 submission prepared<br>1 conference presentation<br>1 non-conference presentation<br>2 newsletters for participants published and mailed to participants | Findings cited in national and international publications<br>Media interest<br>Requests for copies of reports, papers and study measurement instruments<br>Requests for advice from other national and international researchers<br>Invitations to present at workshops, seminars and conferences |
| Provide and update the ATP website  | Updated publications, investigators and current activities pages  | Increased accessing of the ATP website (over 80,000 hits)   |

## Publications

Smart, D. (2007). *Year 2007 Newsletter for ATP members*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D. (2007). *Year 2007 Newsletter for ATP parents*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D., & Sanson, A. (2008). Do Australian children have more problems today than twenty years ago? *Family Matters*, 79, 50–57.

Smart, D. F., Sanson, A. V., & Toumbourou J. W. (2008). How do parents and teenagers get along together? Views of young people and their parents. *Family Matters*, 78, 18–27.

Vassallo, S., Smart, D., Sanson, A., & Toumbourou, J. (2008). Understanding the pathways to harmful alcohol use among young adults: Insights from the Australian Temperament Project. *DrugInfo*, 6(2), 3–5.

### Submission

Hayes, A., Vassallo, S., & Smart, D. (2008, May). Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Children and Young People's Inquiry into Children and Young People 9–14 Years in NSW.

### Conference presentation

Smart D., & Sanson A (2007, 4 December). *Do today's Australian children have more problems than they did 20 years ago?* Paper presented at the 1st LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

### Other (non-conference) presentation

Smart, D. (2007, 22 October). *Children's development in the context of their families*. Parenting and Maternal and Child Health Lines National Meeting, Melbourne.

### External representation

Reviewer, *Journal of Family Studies* (D. Smart, September 2007).

Reviewer, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* (D. Smart, September 2007).

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## **ATP/TAC/RACV Collaboration**

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This collaboration between the Institute, the Transport Accident Commission of Victoria (TAC) and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) aims to: (a) examine the road safety behaviours of young drivers; and (b) identify factors associated with and pathways to risky driving behaviour in early adulthood, using data from the ATP.

The project began in 2002 with the collection of 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. A journal article reporting findings from this first stage of the collaboration was published in January 2008.

The second phase of the collaboration commenced in 2006, and involved the collection of data on the driver history and experiences of the 23–24 year old ATP study members as part of the Wave 14 ATP data collection. Similar data to those obtained in 2002 were collected, along with new data pertinent to young people's current driving careers.

Collection of this second wave of road safety data was completed in 2007. Data entry and data cleaning were recently completed, and preliminary descriptive analyses of the data have been undertaken.

During the reporting period, an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Institute, the TAC and RACV was negotiated regarding the

analysis of the 2006 road safety data and the preparation and release of a report based on this data. The amendment to the MoU was signed in June 2008.

The second wave of road safety data, along with data collected in the first phase of the collaboration will be analysed in 2008–09. It is anticipated that these analyses will focus on: (a) driving behaviour trends at 23–24 years of age; (b) connections between differing types of road safety behaviours and between driving behaviours and other lifestyle aspects at 23–24 years of age; (c) across-time trends in risky driving from 19–20 to 23–24 years and the identification of influential factors; (d) links between substance use and driving; and (e) family influences on driving behaviour. A report outlining the findings of this research is planned for 2009.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs                    | Outcomes  |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Publication of journal article                             | 1 journal article published       | This research will provide valuable new information for road safety policy, intervention and prevention efforts |
| Preliminary analysis of age 23–24 road safety data         | Preliminary analysis completed    |   |
| Negotiation of an amendment to the MoU between the parties | MoU amendment prepared and signed |   |

### Publication

Vassallo, S., Smart, D., Sanson, A., Cockfield, S., Harris, A., McIntyre, A., & Harrison, W. (2008). Risky driving among young Australian drivers II: Co-occurrence with other problem behaviours. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, *40*, 376–386.

## Comparability of Child Protection Data

Commissioned by the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC) through the National Child Protection and Support Services (NCPASS) Data Group, this project aimed to analyse differences in headline child protection indicators across Australian jurisdictions at a point in time (the 2005–06 reporting period) and differences within jurisdictions over time. In so doing, the project was designed to identify and assess factors that may explain observed differences. The project was conducted by Institute staff who are part of the NCPC team, and involved collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Findings have been disseminated through the NCPC. The project commenced in June 2007 and was completed in the 2007–08 financial year.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs                                    | Outcomes  |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1 project report | 1 project report                                  | This project identified and clarified reasons for variation in reported rates of child protection activity in Australia |
| 1 presentation   | 1 presentation delivered to the NCPASS Data Group |   |

### Commissioned report

Holzer, P. J. & Bromfield, L. M. (2008). *NCPASS comparability of child protection data: Project report*. Report submitted to the NCPASS Data Group. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

### Other (non-conference) presentation

Holzer, P. (2008, April). *Key findings*. Presentation to NCPASS Data Group, Perth.

## **Development of the Child and Family Services Outcomes Survey**

In collaboration with the University of Adelaide, the Institute has been contracted by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to develop the Child and Family Services Outcome Survey (CFSOS) and to provide recommendations concerning its administration. The survey is part of an overarching project that is intended to result in the routine collection of information on vulnerable children aged 0–18 years who are using family support, child protection and out-of-home care (OOHC) services.

The CFSOS will supplement data that already exists on systems files and will provide a comprehensive picture of the “safety”, “stability” and “development” of children receiving child welfare services. The project commenced in January 2008 with a review of the theoretical framework underpinning the survey and a comprehensive review of measures relating to the indicators included in the framework. A draft survey and technical report was delivered to DEECD in June 2008.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs                              | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| Project plan and methodology  | Project plan and methodology completed      | The CFSOS will be used to collect outcomes data for service monitoring and improvement purposes |
| Finalisation of the Child Protection and Family Services Outcomes Framework | Outcomes framework established              |   |
| Draft survey and technical report   | Draft survey and technical report completed |   |

## **Families Caring for a Person With a Disability**

The Institute was funded by FaHCSIA 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 of FaHCSIA documented the physical, emotional, social and financial impact on families of caring for a person with a disability. Labour force participation and the effect of caring on family relationships within the family were also a 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 was developed through examination of the research literature and consultation with experts from the AIHW, the disability support sector and the university sector.

The final report (AIFS Research Report No. 16) was published and launched on 17 June 2008 by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, The Hon. Jenny Macklin, MP.

One paper was published in *Family Matters*, focusing on the labour participation of female carers.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs                            | Outcomes   |
|---|---|--|
| Final report completed  | Final report completed and published      | This project is being drawn on by policy makers responsible for shaping and improving the way supports and services are provided to families caring for a person with a disability |
| Articles drafted and submitted for publication in academic journals | 1 <i>Family Matters</i> article published |  |
| Papers presented at conferences                                     | 4 conference papers presented             |  |

### Publications

Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2008). Caring and women's labour market participation. *Family Matters*, 77, 28–35.

### Commissioned report

Edwards, B., Higgins, D. J., Gray, M., Zmijewski, N., & Kingston, M. (2008). *The nature and impact of caring for family members with a disability in Australia* (Research Report No. 16). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Conference presentations

Edwards, B. (2007, 11–13 July). *The social lives of carers*. Australian Social Policy Conference, Sydney.

Edwards, B., Higgins, D., & Zmijewski, N. (2007). *Carers' mental health: National data on families caring for a person with a disability*. Social Policy Research Services Conference, Canberra.

Edwards, B., Higgins, D., & Zmijewski, N. (2007, 25–29 September). *Families caring for a person with a disability: The experience and timing of depressive episodes of carers, people with a disability and other family members*. 42nd Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference, Brisbane.

Higgins, D., Edwards, B., & Zmijewski, N. (2007, 25–29 September). *Carers' mental health: National data on families caring for a person with a disability*. 42nd Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference, Brisbane.

### External representation

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

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

## Follow-Up of Children Conceived Through Donor Insemination

Progress on 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) continued throughout the current reporting period. The data were collected on behalf of Professor Gabor Kovacs from Monash Medical School, Box Hill Hospital, using the survey tool developed for the Children and Family Life study. Findings are expected to inform information and support services to couples accessing donor insemination technology.

| Planned outputs | Actual outputs                          | Outcomes   |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Final report    | Preparation of final report in progress | Will provide important information for policy about a previously unresearched population to enhance information and support services |

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## ***Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children***

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LSAC continues to be a major project for the Institute. The study, initiated and funded by FaHCSIA and managed by the Institute, addresses a range of questions about children's development and wellbeing. Information is collected on children's physical health and social, cognitive and emotional development, as well as their experiences in significant environments, such as the family, child care, pre- and primary school and their broader communities.

The study involves two representative cohorts of children—approximately 5,000 infants aged 0–1 years (B or infant cohort) and 5,000 children aged 4–5 years (K or child cohort) at Wave 1, which was completed in 2004. Wave 2 was completed in 2006, and the Wave 3 is currently in progress. In addition, two between-waves mail surveys were undertaken in 2005 (Wave 1.5) and 2007 (Wave 2.5).

### ***Release of Wave 2 data and data training***

With the release of the second wave of LSAC data in September 2007, the first set of longitudinal data became available for analysis. At the end of June 2008, there were 124 registered users of Wave 2 data, and the total number of LSAC data users had reached 236.

The release of the Wave 2 data has been supported by two data user training workshops; one held in December 2007 in Melbourne and the other in Canberra in February 2008. There were about 30 attendees at each workshop, with very positive feedback received.

### ***Inaugural LSAC conference***

The Institute hosted the inaugural LSAC conference, featuring findings from the first two waves of the study, in Melbourne on 4–5 December 2007. There were over 150 attendees, with 35 papers presented, and feedback on the event was very positive. The issues covered included: parenting quality and its influence on children's development, progress of Australian children compared to children born 20 years ago, the financial wellbeing of Australian families with young children, and relationships between child care experiences and children's social-emotional development. The conference concluded with a panel discussion on priorities and considerations for future waves of LSAC.

### ***Wave 2.5***

In August 2007, a between-waves mail survey to all study families was undertaken. Families were sent a questionnaire covering topics such as children's engagement with media and technology, parental working arrangements, and the child support arrangements of separated parents. Overall, 6,555 survey forms were returned, comprising approximately 68% of those mailed.

### ***Wave 3 data collection***

Content for the Wave 3 data collection was finalised during the first half of 2007. The first phase of interviews was undertaken in August–October 2007, with over 400 interviews conducted. Following this, some refinement was made to the measures and

fieldwork processes. Approximately 160 ABS interviewers were trained by ABS and Institute staff in March–April 2008 in preparation for the next fieldwork phase.

Interviewing of the main Wave 3 sample commenced in early April 2008 and is expected to conclude in late 2008. As in previous waves, the data collection comprises a face-to-face interview with the designated primary parent, plus additional self-complete forms for resident parents and the children’s carers or teachers. Direct assessments are conducted with both cohorts of children, as well as interviews with K cohort children. A computer-assisted telephone interview is being used with parents living apart from the study child.

### *Development of Wave 4 and beyond*

During 2007, discussions were held on the broad future directions of the study, such as the domains of life that will become relevant as children move into adolescence, and methodological data collection options for future waves. Discussions on content and methodology specifically for Wave 4 commenced in late 2007, with this being the major focus of the Consortium Advisory Group meeting held in December 2007. This was followed by extensive stakeholder consultation in the first part of 2008. A series of proposals regarding Wave 4 content domains and methodological options was presented at the Consortium Advisory Group meeting in May 2008.

### *Life at 3 documentary*

The Institute has contributed to the *Life at 3* television documentary series, produced by Film Australia in conjunction with Heiress Films, which draws upon the methodology and findings of LSAC. Eleven children and their families are being followed over time, with coverage of children’s behaviour and milestones and the impact of factors such as parents’ relationships, finances, work and health. Institute researchers have undertaken interviews with participating parents and statistical analyses of the LSAC dataset, and provided material for posting on the *Life at 3* series website.

| <b>Planned outputs</b>  | <b>Actual outputs</b>  | <b>Outcomes</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| Release of Wave 2 data  | Data released in August 2007   | Data now being used in conference presentations and journal articles by Institute and external researchers |
| Complete Wave 2.5 mail survey of families                             | Data collection undertaken August–November 2007  | Data now available for use by researchers and policy makers  |
| Distribute accompanying Wave 2.5 newsletter to participating families |  | Sample engagement enhanced   |
| Release of Wave 2.5 data  | Data released in May 2008  |  |
| Finalise Wave 3 content   | Content development completed in November 2007   | On track for the production and release of third wave of data  |
| Prepare full suite of Wave 3 instruments and documentation            | Full suite of main wave instruments and documentation completed in time for training in March 2008<br>160 interviewers trained in March–April 2008 |  |
| Commence Wave 3 main data collection                                  | Data collection commenced April 2008   |  |

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|---|--|---|
| Commence development of Wave 4  | Development commenced in December 2007<br>Consultative Advisory Group meeting held in May 2008 to discuss methodology and content proposals<br>Testing strategy developed  | On track for development of fourth wave of data   |
| Publicise the study through conference presentations, papers and reports<br>Provide and maintain LSAC website | LSAC 2006–07 Annual Report released<br>Inaugural LSAC conference held 3–4 December 2007<br>Special issue of <i>Family Matters</i> on LSAC study published<br>Journal articles published, and print, radio and television media interviews undertaken<br>Online newsletters regularly posted on the LSAC website<br>Activities, Personnel, and Publications pages updated | Public profile of the study enhanced<br>Interest in the findings from policy makers<br>Strong media interest<br>Increasing number of website visitors and downloads |
| Facilitate use of LSAC data through training workshops and user group services                                | Two data training workshops held (December 2007 and February 2008)<br>Regular web updates on status of data files, telephone and email support provided  | Increased understanding of dataset among potential and novice users<br>Increased number of requests for data access<br>Data queries dealt with promptly             |
| Encourage use of LSAC data  | 47% increase in registered users to 236  | More widespread use of LSAC data  |
| Maintain sample engagement through distribution of birthday cards and other materials                         | Birthday cards sent to children<br>2008 calendar sent to all families  | Sample engagement enhanced<br>Sample tracking facilitated prior to the commencement of Wave 3 fieldwork   |

## Publications

Baxter, J. (2008). When dad works long hours: How work hours are associated with fathering 4–5-year-old children. *Family Matters*, 77, 60–69.

Gray, M., Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2008). Parent-only care: A child care choice for working couple families? *Family Matters*, 79, 42–49.

Gray, M., & Smart, D. (2008). *Growing Up in Australia*: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children is now walking and talking. *Family Matters*, 79, 5–13.

Smart, D., & Sanson, A. (2008). Do Australian children have more problems today than twenty years ago? *Family Matters*, 79, 50–57.

Soloff, C., Sanson, A., Wake, M., & Harrison L. (2007). Enhancing longitudinal studies by linkage to national databases: *Growing Up in Australia*, the longitudinal study of Australian children. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 10(5), 349–363.

## Technical papers

Baxter, J. (2007). *Children's time use in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Data quality and analytical issues in the 4-year cohort* (Technical Paper No. 4). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Misson, S., & Siphthorpe, M. (2007). *Wave 2 weighting and non-response* (Technical Paper No. 5). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### *Commissioned report*

Baxter, J., Gray, M., Alexander, M., Strazdins, L., & Bittman, M. (2007). *Mothers and fathers with young children: Paid employment, caring and wellbeing* (Social Policy Research Paper No. 30). Canberra: Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Wake, M., Canterford, L., Nicholson, J., Sanson, A., Bencic, L., Bittman, M. et al. (2008). *Options for physical and biomarker augmentation in LSAC: Discussion paper. Report to Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### *Other publications*

*Growing Up in Australia* 2008 calendar.

*Growing Up in Australia* study update (for respondents), August 2007.

Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. (2008). *2006–07 Annual Report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### *Newsletters*

*Growing Up in Australia* online newsletter, No. 17, Winter 2007.

*Growing Up in Australia* online newsletter, No. 18, Spring 2007.

*Growing Up in Australia* online newsletter, No. 19, March 2008.

*Growing Up in Australia* respondent newsletter, December 2007.

### *Project Operations Team commissioned reports*

Project Operations Team. (2007, May–June). *Wave 3 weekly fieldwork reports: Report series to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, July). *Wave 3 training strategy, including draft training manual for data collection teams: A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, August). *Wave 2.5 pilot test report: A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, August). *Revised survey instruments and procedures for Wave 3: A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, November). *Wave 2 Data collection: Report 2, Part I: Fieldwork. A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, November). *Wave 2 data collection: Report 2, Part II: Respondent management. A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, December). *2008 workplan. A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, December). *Wave 2 user guide: Report series to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2007, December). *Wave 3 dress rehearsal report (report on outcome of Wave 3 pilots phase): A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2008, February). *Wave 2.5 fieldwork report: A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2008, May). *Wave 2.5 user guide: Report series to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2008, June). *Wave 2.5 final fieldwork report: A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2008, June). *Wave 2.5 descriptive analysis report: A report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Conference presentations

Baxter, J., & Hayes, A. (2007, 5–8 July). *Days of their lives: Developmental implications and correlates of how four year olds spend their time*. Australasian Human Development Association conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Soloff, C. (2007, 5–8 July). *An update on Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Australasian Human Development Association Conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2007, 11–13 July). *Mothers' work–family strain in single and couple parent families: the role of job characteristics and supports*. 10th Australian Social Policy Conference, Sydney.

Edwards, B., & Bromfield, L. (2007, 11–13 July). *Neighbourhood influences on young children's emotional and behavioural problems and prosocial behavior: Evidence from an Australian national sample*. 10th Australian Social Policy Conference, Sydney.

Soloff, C. (2007, 11–13 July). *The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Latest information*. 10th Australian Social Policy Conference, Sydney.

Soloff, C. (2007, 26–27 October). *Breastfeeding and children's outcomes*. Child, Adolescent and Family Health Conference, Noosa, Qld.

Baxter, J., Gray, M., & Alexander, M. (2007, 3–4 December). *Working families' use of child care*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Baxter, J., Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2007, 3–4 December). *Family structure, quality of the co-parental relationship, post-separation parenting and children's socio-emotional wellbeing*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Edwards, B., Sawyer, M., & Pfeiffer, S. (2007, 3–4 December). *Pathways of neighbourhood influences through the family: How do neighbourhood social processes influence young children's emotional and behavioural problems?* LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Gray, M., & Baxter, J. (2007, 3–4 December). *The financial consequences of relationship breakdown and repartnering among families with young children*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Gray, M., & Smart, D. (2007, 3–4 December). *Overview of LSAC*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Hawkins, M., Sanson, A., & LSAC Outcome Index Working Group. (2007, 3–4 December). *The structure and validation of an index of child development*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Smart, D., & Sanson, A. (2007, 3–4 December). *Do today's Australian children have more problems than they did twenty years ago?* LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Smith, J., & Baxter, J. (2007, 3–4 December). *Comparison of time use data in the LSAC and Time Use Survey of New Mothers (TUSNM) to identify breastfeeding patterns and the influence of various background variables*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2008, 19–21 June). *Parents who don't use child care: Who provides the care in working couple families with infants?* 17th Annual Conference of the International Association for Feminist Economics, Torino, Italy.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Soloff, C. (2007, 17 July). *The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Study methodology*. Statistical Society of Australia (Victorian branch) meeting, Melbourne.

Smart, D. (2007, 22 October). *Children's development in the context of their families*. Parenting and Maternal and Child Health Lines National Meeting, Melbourne.

### External representation

Member, Reference group for the ABS Child Care & Early Years Learning Survey (L. Bencic).

Member, Brotherhood of St Laurence Life Chances Project Advisory Committee (D. Smart).

Member, Parentline Reference Group (D. Smart).

## Indigenous Out-of-Home Care

As part of its contract with FaHCSIA, the NCPC undertook a study following up the research undertaken for the Australian Council for Children and Parenting (ACCAP) in 2005–06, which investigated the recruitment, assessment, training and support of Indigenous carers. The project aimed to profile and disseminate in a culturally appropriate way promising practices in OOH for Aboriginal children, their families and carers. The research was completed in the 2006–07 financial year. Project resources were developed and disseminated early in the 2007–08 financial year in collaboration with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC).

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|---|---|--|
| 7 summary papers  | 7 summary papers  | Outcomes for Indigenous children in OOH enhanced |
| 12 promising practice profiles (PPPs) compiled in one booklet     | 4 booklets profiling 11 promising practices   |  |
| 6 workshops co-facilitated by staff from the Institute and SNAICC | 3 workshops delivered by the Institute and SNAICC<br>3 conference papers and 2 invited addresses delivered by the Institute |  |

### Publications

Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., Higgins, D. J., & Richardson, N. (2007). *Paper 1: Why is there a shortage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers?* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., Higgins, D. J., & Richardson, N. (2007). *Paper 2: Barriers, incentives and strategies to enhance recruitment of Indigenous carers* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., Richardson, N., & Higgins, D. J. (2007). *Paper 3: Why standard assessment processes are culturally inappropriate* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., & Richardson, N. (2007). *Paper 5: Supporting carers* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, J. R., & Butler, N. (2007). *Booklet 1: Characteristics of promising Indigenous out-of-home care programs and services* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Profiling Promising Practice). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, J. R., & Butler, N. (2007). *Booklet 2: Assessing, training and recruiting Indigenous carers* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Profiling Promising Practice). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, J. R., & Butler, N. (2007). *Booklet 3: Comprehensive support for Indigenous carers and young people* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Profiling Promising Practice). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, J. R., & Butler, N. (2007). *Booklet 4: Indigenous responses to child protection issues* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Profiling Promising Practice). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, J. R., Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., & Richardson, N. (2007). *Paper 6: Children with complex needs* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, J. R., Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., & Richardson, N. (2007). *Paper 7: Voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Richardson, N., Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., & Higgins, D. J. (2007). *Paper 4: Training carers* (Promising Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Carers: Strengths and Barriers). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Conference presentations

Higgins, J. R., (2007, 25 July). *Recruiting, assessing, training and supporting carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children*. Paper presented at the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Foster Care Recruitment Best Practice Engagement Project Forum.

Higgins, J. R. (2007, 3–5 August). *Promising practices in the assessment, training and support of Indigenous carers and Indigenous young people in care: Findings from a national study*. CROCCS (Centre for Research on Community and Children's Services) International Conference, "Overcoming Violence & Poverty", Mackay.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 4 March). *Promising practice in out-of-home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their carers*. ACWA Conference, Sydney, 4 March 2008.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 12 September). *Promising practices in out-of-home care for Indigenous children*. Invited address to Queensland Department of Child Safety's Research Forum. Townsville, 12 September 2007.

Higgins, D. J. (2007, November). *Promising practices in the out-of-home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care and their carers*. Invited address/workshop for the Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Forum, Brisbane, November 2007.

Higgins, J. R. & Butler, N. (2007, 23 November). *Promising practices in the out-of-home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care and their carers*. Workshop convened by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 23 November 2007.

Higgins, J. R. & Butler, N. (2007, 12 December). *Promising practices in the out-of-home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care and their carers*. Workshop convened by the Australian Institute of Family Studies and hosted by St Lukes, Bendigo, 12 December 2007.

### **Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project**

In November 2007 AIFS was contracted by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop an electronic database of information recorded on 614 Looking After Children Assessment and Action Records (A&ARs) and to conduct analyses on a select item set in order to establish a baseline for monitoring children's progress over time, and to determine the feasibility of using A&AR data for this purpose in an ongoing way. The database could be used to evaluate the impact of recent legislative reform; to inform the current government review of OOHC; and by practitioners, community service organisations, regions and states to improve outcomes.

The final project report was delivered to the DHS in May 2008. The Child Safety Commissioner, Bernie Geary, launched the report in June 2008. Dissemination of the report findings is ongoing.

| Planned outputs            | Actual outputs                | Outcomes   |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Submission of final report | Final report completed        | Will inform government policies and be of use to community service organisations |
| Dissemination of findings  | 1 non-conference presentation |  |

#### **Commissioned report**

Wise, S., & Egger, S. (2008, June). *The Looking After Children Data Outcomes Project, Final Report. Prepared for Department of Human Services*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

#### **Non-conference presentation**

Wise, S. (2008, June 24). *The Looking After Children Data Outcomes Project: Integrating Practice and Service Monitoring Project*. Presentation at the Launch of the Looking After Children Data Outcomes Project, June 2008, Melbourne.

### **National Approach for Child Protection**

Commissioned by CDSMAC, this project aimed to provide a broad overview of directions and trends in child protection in Australia. The project comprised: (a) a background discussion of international approaches to child protection and measures of child protection activity and general community wellbeing; (b) an overview of principles underpinning child protection practice in each Australian jurisdiction; (c) an analysis of Australian approaches to the provision of early intervention services; and (d) a discussion of shared challenges and common strategic directions across Australian child protection systems.

The project commenced in the 2006–07 financial year and was conducted by Institute staff who are part of the NCPC team. The project was supported by drawing on the expertise of representatives from all Australian states and territories and the Commonwealth Government. A variety of project resources were developed and completed in the 2007–08 financial year.

| Planned outputs | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 2 reports       | 1 project report<br>1 subsidiary fact sheet<br>1 presentation at an international conference<br>6 other presentations | Will facilitate the adoption (or recognition) by Australian states and territories of a national approach to child protection policy and practice |

### Publications

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *National Approach for Child Protection: Project report*. Report submitted to the NAFCPP Working Group. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *Protecting Australian children: Analysis of challenges and strategic directions*. CDSMC National Approach for Child Protection Project. Fact sheet submitted to the NAFCPP Working Group. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

### Conference presentation

Bromfield, L. M. & Holzer, P. J. (2007, 30 October – 2 November). *International approaches to child protection: How is Australia positioned?* 11th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, “Voices Calling for Action”, Gold Coast, Queensland.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 30 July). *Breaking down the silos*. Presentation based on the National Approach for Child Protection Project Report to the National Approach for Child Protection Working Group, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 30 July). *Key challenges & strategic directions*. Presentation based on the National Approach for Child Protection Project Report to the National Approach for Child Protection Working Group, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 30 July). *Modern approaches to child protection and their historical drivers*. Presentation based on the National Approach for Child Protection Project Report to the National Approach for Child Protection Working Group, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L.M. (2007, 30 July). *The nexus between risk and need*. Presentation based on the National Approach for Child Protection Project Report to the National Approach for Child Protection Working Group, Melbourne.

Holzer, P. J. (2007, 30 July). *Approaches to early intervention*. Presentation based on the National Approach for Child Protection Project Report to the National Approach for Child Protection Working Group, Melbourne.

Holzer, P. J. (2007, 30 July). *Child protection systems in Australia: Principles & practice*. Presentation based on the National Approach for Child Protection Project Report to the National Approach for Child Protection Working Group, Melbourne.

## National Child Protection Clearinghouse

The NCPC serves as an interchange point for information, advice and research in the fields of child abuse prevention, child protection and OOHC. The clearinghouse

is funded by FaHCSIA, 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 family violence. The goal of the clearinghouse is to inform policy and practice by enhancing research and information dissemination.

### *Knowledge base*

The clearinghouse currently holds 7,517 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.

### *Website*

The clearinghouse website continued to be well used during the year, with 1,165,932 hits and 574,341 page downloads (including 314,383 page downloads of NCPC publications). The electronic Resource Sheets continue to be very popular, as are the Clearinghouse's Issues papers 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 page. 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, and agencies and practitioners working in the field.

A free help desk information and advisory service is provided by library and research staff. 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 Clearinghouse research staff. Such requests may include 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.

The use of the information and advisory service remains high, with a total of 265 enquiries coming to the Clearinghouse help desk this financial year. In addition, there were 660 subscribers to the *childprotect* e-discussion list at 30 June 2008. 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 2007–08, there were 181 messages posted on *childprotect*.

The recent independent evaluation of the NCPC 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, [for example], people had learned about the website from Clearinghouse publications” (Delfabbro, P. H., & Borgas, M., 2007, *Evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*, p. 74. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies).

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.

### Research

The clearinghouse undertakes primary and secondary research projects related to child abuse prevention, child protection and OOHC. Clearinghouse research reports are available to download from the clearinghouse website ([www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports)). As described elsewhere in this report, staff from the NCPC were involved with the following research projects:

- Indigenous Out-of-Home Care (p. 52);
- National Approach for Child Protection (p. 54);
- Magellan Project Evaluation (p. 39);
- Research Utilisation (p. 61); and
- Specialist Practice Guides (p. 62).

| Planned outputs                           | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| Publish 2 Issues papers and 2 Newsletters | 2 Issues papers<br>2 Newsletters<br>3 journal articles<br>11 practice/research briefs & Resource Sheets<br>9 conference presentations   | The clearinghouse provided key Australian research information and advice in the area of child abuse prevention, child protection and OOHC to researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field |
| Research enquiry service                  | Responded to 265 enquiries  |   |
| <i>childprotect</i> e-discussion list     | 181 messages posted on the <i>childprotect</i> e-discussion list, and 660 subscribers to <i>childprotect</i> at end of financial year   |   |
| Networking/outreach                       | 1 submission<br>25 invited addresses<br>32 attendances at meetings, conferences, consultations and events<br>Representative/member on 5 external committees<br>Membership of 5 editorial boards | Networking and outreach expanded  |

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|--|--|---|
| Compilation of latest research and practice literature and resources relevant to child abuse prevention and child protection | 7,517 records in clearinghouse library repository  | Latest research and practice made available to researchers, policy makers and practitioners |
| Develop and maintain a website that provides electronic access to NCPCC's publications and other resources                   | 1,165,932 hits on website<br>574,341 page downloads on website<br>314,383 page downloads of NCPCC publications |   |

## Publications

### *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletters*

*Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 15(2), February 2008.

*Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 16(1), June 2008.

### *Issues papers*

Harris, N. (2008). *Family group conferencing in Australia 15 years on* (Child Abuse Prevention Issues No. 27). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Bromfield, L. M., & Arney, F. (2008). *Developing a road map for research: Identifying the priorities for a national child protection research agenda* (Child Abuse Prevention Issues No. 28). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

### *Electronic publications*

Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Kinship care* (Research Brief No. 10). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Holzer, P. J. (2007). *Defining the public health model for the child welfare services context* (Resource Sheet No. 11). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Holzer, P. J., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Australian legal definitions: When is a child in need of protection?* (Resource Sheet No. 12). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Irenyi, M. (2007). *Responding to disclosures* (Practice Brief No. 2). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Osborn, A., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Outcomes for children and young people in care* (Research Brief No. 3). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Osborn, A., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Participation of children and young people in care in decisions affecting their lives* (Research Brief No. 6). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Osborn, A., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Residential and specialised models of care* (Research Brief No. 9). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Osborn, A., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Young people leaving care* (Research Brief No. 7). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Osborn, A., Panozzo, S., Richardson, N., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Foster families* (Research Brief No. 4). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Panozzo, S., Osborn, A., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *Issues relating to reunification* (Research Brief No. 5). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Richardson, N., Bromfield, L. M., & Osborn, A. (2007). *Cultural considerations in out-of-home care* (Research Brief No. 8). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

### Updated publications

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., & Richardson, N. (2007). *Mandatory reporting of child abuse* (Resource Sheet No. 3). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Kovaks, K., Richardson, N., & Irenyi, M. (2008, March). *Fatal child abuse* (Resource Sheet No. 4). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Kovaks, K., Richardson, N., Irenyi, M., & Kelleher, J. (2008, March). *Foster care* (Resource Sheet No. 8). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

Kovaks, K., Richardson, N., & Kelleher, J. (2008, March). *Child abuse statistics* (Resource Sheet No. 1). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

All clearinghouse bibliographies were updated this financial year, and a new bibliography was added to the collection: "Rural issues and child abuse".

### Other publications

Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2007). *The Institute's response to the Evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Bromfield, L. M., Gillingham, P., & Higgins, D. J. (2007). Cumulative harm and chronic child maltreatment. *Developing Practice, 19*, 34–42.

Bromfield, L. M., & Osborn, A. (2008). Australian research investigating residential and specialised models of care: A systematic review. *Developing Practice, 20*, 23–32.

Gillingham, P., & Bromfield, L. M. (2008) Child protection, risk assessment and blame ideology. *Children Australia, 33*(1), 18–24.

### Submission

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *Australian Institute of Family Studies submission to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW*. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

### Conference presentations

Irenyi, M. I. (2007, 5–7 October). *Child maltreatment in organisations*. Australian Foster Care Association Conference, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M., & Arney, F. (2008, 17–19 March). *Dissemination strategies: Solutions not problems*. "Beyond the Rhetoric: Evidence-Informed Practice" workshop, Dartington Research in Practice, Dartington, UK.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 23–25 May). *Ethical responses for vulnerable children and families*. Third National Conference for the Australian College for Child and Family Protection Practitioners, Adelaide.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 5 September). *The National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Institute's child protection related research program*. Presentation to a delegation from the New Zealand Families Commission visiting the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M., Holzer, P. J., & Penhaligon, D. (2007, 6 September). *International approaches to child protection: How is Australia positioned?* A National Child Protection Week forum hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Children, Youth and Families Unit, Canberra.

Bromfield, L. M., & Miller, R. (2007, 10 September). *Practice challenges and tools to support the Victorian reforms*. A paper presented at the Australian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group meeting, Melbourne.

Higgins, D. J. (2007, 12 September). *Interagency collaboration in child protection: The challenges and the way forward*. Invited address/workshop for the Queensland Department of Child Safety's Research Forum. Townsville.

Higgins, D. J. (2007, November). *Interagency collaboration in child protection: The challenges and the way forward*. Invited address/workshop for the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Brisbane.

Hayes, A. (2007, 19 November). *Creating child friendly communities: Challenges and contradictions*. Presentation to NAPCAN Annual General Meeting, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 23 January). *Trends in child protection services: A national snapshot*. ACWA–ACOSS joint forum on the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW, Sydney.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 28 April). *Cumulative harm: The effects of chronic child maltreatment*. A presentation made to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Forum, Brisbane.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 8 May). *Cumulative harm: The effects of chronic child maltreatment*. A presentation made to the Tasmanian Department of Children and Family Services, Hobart.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 8 May). *Systemic issues in Australian Child Protection Services*. A presentation made to the Tasmanian Department of Children and Family Services, Hobart.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 9 May). *Cumulative harm: The effects of chronic child maltreatment*. A presentation made to the Tasmanian Department of Children and Family Services, Launceston.

Bromfield, L.M. (2008, 9 May). *Systemic issues in Australian Child Protection Services*. A presentation made to the Tasmanian Department of Children and Family Services, Launceston.

## External representation

### *Conference/meeting attendance and consultations*

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2007, 30 July). Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council National Approach for Child Protection Working Group meeting, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 10–11 September). Co-chair for the Australian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group Meeting, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 19 November). National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) Annual General Meeting, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2008, 26–28 March). EUSARF International Conference: "Assessing the Evidence-Base for Interventions for Vulnerable Children and Families", Padova, Italy.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 17 June). Queensland Department of Child Safety's Innovators Group, Brisbane.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 18–19 June). Expert Committee Workshop, Canberra relating to the development of a stronger prevention focus and greater service integration and collaboration; part of consultation process for Australian Government National Child Protection Framework.

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

### *Board and committee membership*

Editorial board member, *Child Maltreatment: Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children* (D. Higgins).

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

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

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

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

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

Member, ACSSA Reference Group (D. Higgins).

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

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

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

### Research Utilisation

This project was commissioned by the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) and undertaken by Institute staff who are part of the NCPC team, in collaboration with researchers from the ACCP. It originally comprised a two-stage survey that examined the barriers and facilitators of research utilisation by policy makers and practitioners in the fields of child abuse prevention and child protection. The data collection phase of the project was completed in 2006–07, and several project resources were completed in 2007–08.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1 project report | 1 project report<br>1 summary article<br>2 presentations (including a symposium at an international conference)<br>1 successful ARC Discovery Grant application | Informs Institute clearinghouses and the broader research community about effective means of dissemination to enhance research utilisation by policy makers and practitioners |

After successfully obtaining an ARC Discovery Grant to further progress this research project, the Institute, in collaboration with researchers from the ACCP, scoped a research project to examine the extent to which research evidence informs policy developments in the Australian child protection sector. This project will draw on the South Australian and Victorian experiences as case studies. In the latter part of the 2007–08 financial year, a documentary analysis of relevant policy publications was conducted and a sample for the Victorian component of the study was sourced. The project is to be continued in the 2008–09 financial year.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|---|---|--|
| 1 documentary analysis summary paper<br>Recruitment of a Victorian interview sample | Documentary analysis summary paper in preparation<br>A sample of approximately 20 people recruited to partake in Victorian interviews | Informs Institute clearinghouses and the broader research community about the extent and manner in which research informed significant policy developments in two Australian jurisdictions |

## Publications

Holzer, P. J., Lewig, K., Arney, F., & Bromfield, L. M. (2007). *The research utilisation project: Facilitating research informed policy and practice*. Sydney: ARACY Network, Knowledge Brokering Workshop, Benevolent Society.

Holzer, P. J., Lewig, K., Bromfield, L. M. & Arney, F. M. (2008). *Research use in the Australian child and family welfare sector*. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

## Conference presentations

Bromfield, L. M. & Holzer, P. J. (2007, 30 October – 2 November). *Bridging the research–practice divide: A symposium*. 11th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, “Voices Calling for Action”, Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, Gold Coast, Queensland.

Holzer, P. J. (2008, 23–25 May). “Getting research into practice”: *Lessons learned from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Third National Conference for the Australian College for Child and Family Protection Practitioners, Adelaide.

## Specialist Practice Guides

In 2007–08, the Victorian DHS commissioned the Institute to complete a series of Specialist Practice Guides, the aim of which is to assist child protection practitioners and child/family welfare workers in Victoria in conducting assessments and working with children and families under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.). The guides are being prepared by staff from the NCPC. Specialist Practice Guides will support the Best Interests Case Practice Model by providing specialist guidance and advice on specific issues or client groups. One of the key features of the guides is that they incorporate contemporary knowledge and research understanding of the subject matter and adopt an evidence-informed approach to practice.

| Planned outputs                                | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|--|---|---|
| 10 guides over 18 months (3 guides in 2007–08) | 1 guide published<br>2 guides submitted to DHS for feedback<br>1 presentation | Will enhance the capacity of the service delivery sector (family support, child protection and OOHC) by enhancing practice knowledge<br><br>Extensive knowledge developed through the reviews of the literature leading to the development of the practice guides will be used to inform other AIFS projects, in particular, the work of the NCPC |

## Publication

Bromfield, L. M., & Miller, R. (2007). *Cumulative harm: Specialist practice guide*. Melbourne: Department of Human Services.

## Other (non-conference) presentation

Bromfield, L. M., & Miller, R. (2007, 4 September). *Cumulative harm: Specialist practice guide*. Launch of the Cumulative Harm Specialist Practice Guide at the Victorian Government Department of Human Services Celebrating Good Practice Forum, Melbourne.

## Time Use in Families

An area of research that began in 2006–07 was the analysis of children’s time use and parental time spent with children, making use of the LSAC time-use diaries.

In 2007–08 work has continued, with the presentation of one paper on children’s time use and another on infants’ time use. A methodological paper on data quality and analyses of the time use data were also completed.

Several other analyses are underway and are expected to be published in 2007–08.

| Planned outputs                                | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|--|--|---|
| Analyses of data and dissemination of findings | 1 publication<br>2 conference papers<br>Several media interviews | Informs policies regarding the provision of supportive home environments. |

### Publications

Baxter, J. (2007). *Children's time use in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Data quality and analytical issues in the 4-year cohort* (LSAC Technical Paper No. 4). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Conference presentations

Baxter, J., & Hayes, A. (2007, 5–8 July). *Days of their lives: Developmental implications and correlates of how four year olds spend their time*. Paper presented at the Australasian Human Development Association conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Smith, J., & Baxter, J. (2007, 3–4 December). *Comparison of time use data in the LSAC and Time Use Survey of New Mothers (TUSNM) to identify breastfeeding patterns and the influence of various background variables*. Paper presented at the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children research conference, Melbourne.

### External representation

Baxter, J. (2008, March). Attendance at the ABS Time Use User Workshop.

### Theme 3: Families and work

Research in this theme is concerned with how families combine caring responsibilities and paid employment, including what assists families in successfully combining both sets of responsibilities. Research has focused on the ways in which family members combine their family responsibilities and paid employment, looking generally at employment patterns across the life cycle, at employment in particular types of jobs, child care use, types of leave for childbearing or childrearing, and return-to-work timing for mothers of infants. Research also has considered the impacts of these arrangements on family relationships and the wellbeing of family members.

#### Caring and Women's Labour Market Participation

As part of the project Families Caring for a Person With a Disability (p. 45), work was undertaken into the impact of caring on the labour market participation of women receiving Carer Payment or Carer Allowance. This research finds that there is a high rate of marginal attachment to the labour market among carers and that there is a potential role for policies that maintain carers' human capital and attachment to the labour market.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs | Outcomes  |
|--|----------------|---|
| Analyses of data from the Families Caring for a Person With a Disability study | 1 publication  | Conducted high-quality research on caring and women's labour market participation |

#### Publications

Gray, M., Edwards, B., & Zmijewski, N. (2008). Caring and women's labour market participation. *Family Matters*, 77, 28–35.

#### Child Support and Labour Market Participation

This project involves studying the impact of child support payments on resident mothers' decisions about participating in the labour market (labour supply decisions). Despite the growth in the number of separated families over the last three decades, there is surprisingly little Australian evidence in relation to the impact of child support payments on the labour supply decisions of resident mothers or how these interact with the financial incentives generated by the income support and taxation systems. This project is designed to begin to fill this gap in our knowledge base, using up-to-date data from Waves 1, 2 and 2.5 of LSAC. The project will be completed in the financial year 2008–09.

| Planned outputs            | Actual outputs         | Outcomes  |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Analyses of data from LSAC | Data analyses underway | Conducted high-quality research on families and labour supply decisions |

## **Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families**

This research attempts to understand the labour and financial consequences of divorce and re-partnering for families. Work has been undertaken regarding the consequences of divorce for families with young children using the first two waves of data from LSAC. Understanding the labour market and financial consequences of relationship breakdown for families with young children is particularly important given the importance of the early years for children. The research highlights the importance of understanding the interactions between relationship dynamics and labour market participation.

Research is also being undertaken on the lifetime consequences of relationship breakdown for Australian mothers and their children. This research is based upon data from the HILDA survey. The research illustrates the role that child support payments play in offsetting the financial consequences of relationship breakdown for resident mothers.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs                             | Outcomes   |
|--|--|--|
| Analyses of data from LSAC and HILDA and dissemination of findings | 1 publication<br>1 conference presentation | Conducted high-quality research on the consequences of divorce and repartnering for families |

### **Publications**

Gray, M., & Chapman, B. (2007). Relationship breakdown and the economic welfare of Australian mothers and their children. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*.

### **Conference presentations**

Gray, M., & Baxter, J. (2007, 3–4 December). *The financial consequences of relationship breakdown and repartnering among families with young children*. LSAC Conference, Melbourne.

## **Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children**

This project explores a number of labour market policy issues for families with young children. The project has a number of strands. One strand of work has focused on the labour market participation of mothers in the period immediately following childbearing. This program of research is using data from LSAC to analyse patterns of return to work following childbearing and the impact that having access to paid and unpaid maternity leave has. During the year, there was an active debate about whether Australia should introduce universal paid maternity and parental leave and, if so, how such a system should operate; the Institute's work in this area has helped provide an evidence base to inform the debate. The Institute made a submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave. The paper, *Timing of Mothers' Return to Work After Childbearing: Variations by Job Characteristics and Leave Use*, by Dr Jennifer Baxter, was prepared for publication in July 2008. Work was also undertaken on the work–family policies that mothers with young children would have found to be of most assistance in the months following the birth of a child.

A second strand of research has focused on the impacts of different types of jobs and working conditions (including working hours and flexible work arrangements) on family wellbeing. A third strand of research has examined issues of labour market participation of parents with young children and how children are cared for. A particular focus has been on the use of child care and how the use of child care varies according to parental employment and between children in single-parent and couple families. A fourth strand of work examines the employment aspirations of non-working mothers with long-term health problems.

For Families Week, AIFS produced the facts sheet, *Work and Family Responsibilities Through Life*, which was also subsequently published in *Family Matters* No. 79.

| Planned outputs                                | Actual outputs            | Outcomes   |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| Analyses of data and dissemination of findings | 8 publications            | Conducted high-quality research on policy-relevant issues regarding families |
|  | 1 submission              |  |
|  | 4 conference presentation |  |
|  | Several media interviews  | Opportunities maximised for media coverage of research                       |

### Publications

Baxter, J. (2008). Breastfeeding. *LSAC Annual Report, 2006–07*, 15–18.

Baxter, J. (2008). When dad works long hours: How work hours are associated with fathering 4–5-year-old children. *Family Matters*, 77, 60–69.

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2008). *Work and family responsibilities through life* (Facts sheet). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies (reprinted in *Family Matters*, 79).

Baxter, J., Gray, M., Alexander, M., Strazdins, L., & Bittman, M. (2007). *Mothers and fathers with young children: Paid employment, caring and wellbeing* (Social Policy Research Paper No. 30). Canberra: Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Gray, M., & Baxter, J. (2008). Financial wellbeing of families. *LSAC Annual Report, 2006–07*, 22–25.

Gray, M., & Baxter, J. (2008). Mothers' labour market participation. *LSAC Annual Report, 2006–07*, 19–21.

Gray, M., Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2008). Parent-only care: A child care choice for working couple families? *Family Matters*, 79, 42–49.

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

### Submission

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2008). *Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Conference presentations

Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2007, 11–13 July). *Mother's work–family strain in single and couple parent families: The role of job characteristics and supports*. Australian Social Policy Conference 2007, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Baxter, J., Gray, M., & Alexander, M. (2007, 3–4 December). *Working families' use of child care*. LSAC conference, Melbourne.

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2008, 19–21 June). *Parents who don't use child care: Who provides the care in working couple families with infants?* 17th Annual Conference of the International Association for Feminist Economics, Torino, Italy.

Gray, M., & Hayes, A. (2008, 24 June). *Child care, outcome for children and socio-economic disadvantage*. Melbourne Institute Public Economics Forum, "Too Little Too Late? Caring for and Preparing Young Children for Life", Canberra.

### **Negotiating the Life Course**

Negotiating the Life Course (NLC) is a longitudinal survey undertaken by the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute (ADSRI), and the School of Social Science, University of Queensland (UQ). The Institute's contribution to the project is through the involvement of a senior research staff member as partner investigator to the project. In 2007–08 much of the work was undertaken within ADSRI, which prepared Wave 4 data for dissemination. Planning for the next round of funding for the project was completed. Work has now commenced on the organisation of and Institute's contribution to the "Decade of the Life Course" conference, to be held later in 2008.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs                             | Outcomes   |
|--|--|--|
| Dissemination of data from the fourth wave of the survey | Data were disseminated to the project team | Conducted high-quality research on policy-relevant issues regarding families |
| Research using the NLC data                              | Analyses underway but not yet published    | Maintained and strengthened research networks                                |

#### **External representation**

Baxter, J. (2008, 23–25 June). Attendance at UK Social Policy Association Conference "Challenging Boundaries", Edinburgh.

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

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

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

External reviewer, *Journal of Family Studies*, *Journal of Home Economics*, *Population Research and Policy Review*, *Journal of Population Research*.

Member, International Network on Parental Leave Policy and Research (coordinated from University of London, UK) (M. Alexander).

### **Review of Government Initiatives for Reconciling Work and Family Life**

It is now generally accepted that governments have an important role to play in assisting families to successfully manage their work and family responsibilities. Governments around the world have approached this issue in a number of different ways. To fully understand a country's approach to work–family issues, it is necessary to consider how these policies work together to form a "package" of work–family policies, while also being mindful of the social, cultural and institutional context in each country in which they operate.

The aim of this project is to provide an up-to-date review of policies that governments across OECD countries have used to help families balance their work and family responsibilities. This will provide a useful source document for those interested in developing policies around work and family. The project is being undertaken on behalf of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## Theme 4: Families and community life

Research in this area focuses on the broader issues in society that influence families, and the relationship between families, and their communities. Major areas of focus include: the interconnections between the health and wellbeing of families, the characteristics of their neighbourhoods, the services that are available for children and families, and the supports available for parents, as well as factors that enhance community wellbeing and support families, risk factors, and ways of reducing harm to individuals and communities through violence and sexual assault. The Institute also facilitates access to resources and information to assist policy makers, practitioners and researchers to understand better and respond to the problem of sexual assault.

### **Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault**

ACSSA is the sole national centre for the collection and dissemination of current information and research on sexual assault. The aim of the clearinghouse 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 FaHCSIA under the Women's Safety Agenda.

ACSSA has been operating at the Institute since 2003. The focus of the clearinghouse 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 clearinghouse 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](http://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 on research, policy and practice; provides links to online documents; and publishes its work online. It also provides 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 311,400 page downloads (up from 258,900 in 2006–07). ACSSA Issues, ACSSA Wrap (specialist resource papers focused on the needs of practitioners and other stakeholders) and articles from the newsletter, *Aware*, were in demand (with more than 150,390 page downloads), followed by visits to the online resource collection of bibliographies and online documents, with more than 37,365 page downloads. Other features of

the website that continued to be frequently accessed were the Promising Practice Programs Database and current statistical information on sexual assault.

### *ACSSA electronic newsletter*

ACSSA 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 numbered 809 at 30 June 2008 (up from 628 last year).

### *Bibliographies*

The ACSSA website includes online bibliographies on key topics within the sexual assault research field that contain selected references, online documents published predominantly within the last five years, journal articles, reports and conference presentations, from Australia and selected international sources.

The bibliographies on the website to date are on a wide range of topics, including: adult survivors of child sexual assault, Indigenous communities and diverse cultures, law reform and policy, offenders, prevention programs and strategies, sexual assault in intimate relationships, trafficking and sex workers, victim/survivors, and young offenders.

Bibliographies on sexual assault and disability issues and on homelessness, family violence and sexual assault were added this year.

### *Library collection*

During the year, 130 items of relevance to ACSSA were added to the library collection, taking the total number of relevant items to 698. 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.

### *Publications*

ACSSA produces three series of publications:

- *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. *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.
- The ACSSA Wrap series 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 papers, 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 delivered two Issues papers, two Wrap briefings and four *Aware* newsletters to the Office for Women.

Publications are distributed in hard copy to a mailing list of 6,951 subscribers and electronically to 809 subscribers of the *ACSSA-Alert* email list, 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 functions including: literature searches and Internet scoping, statistical analysis and interpretation of current trends and issues that impact on our understanding of sexual assault, advice on best practice approaches and/or interventions, and critical evaluations of policy and legislative reforms relevant to sexual assault. Query topics covered during the reporting period were wide-ranging and included requests for resources.

ACSSA systematically records enquiries through a log database system. This information helps in monitoring the nature of enquiries received by stakeholders. In the reporting period, the clearinghouse received 168 separate enquiries, with an average of 40 minutes spent responding to each enquiry.

The largest proportion of the research enquiry service users come from specialist sexual assault services, with NGOs and community centres (such as migrant services, charities and women's centres), medical and health practitioners, government departments, police, lawyers, students, libraries, education providers and media personnel also frequenting the service. The service was accessed by every state and territory and also responded to a number of international enquiries.

### *Promising Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault Database*

In 2007, ACSSA launched the Promising Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault Database. The database is a revision of the Good Practice Database, which was established in 2003. The national collection of Promising Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault is continuing to be developed. 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. There are currently 40 examples of promising practices programs available for browsing.

The information provided in 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.

### *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 the clearinghouse through presentations and information sessions aimed at increasing the understanding and use of the services available.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs   | Outcomes   |
|--|--|--|
| Publish on key topics in the field, reaching a wide audience and influencing debate                                      | 3 newsletters<br>1 ACSSA Issues papers<br>1 ACSSA Wrap briefings<br>3–4 media requests per month   | Publications widely requested post-release, including for use in training and education<br>Information from publications used in policy documents, consultation papers and media articles<br>Publications the most popular pages downloaded on the website<br>Work published in other forums for the first time, including Opinion pages and <i>Family Matters</i> |
| Run a highly informative website and email alert service providing up-to-date and in-depth information on sexual assault | Continued increase of visits to the website<br>More than 258,900 pages downloads (up from 218,900 last year)<br>More than 93,770 page downloads of ACSSA publications (up from 79,596 last year) | The work of ACSSA and information about sexual assault readily accessible to a national audience   |
| Provide national enquiry services on sexual assault  | Responded to more than 200 research and media enquiries  |  |
| Networking and outreach  | 628 subscribers to fortnightly newsletter (up from 475 last year)<br>4 committee memberships<br>Numerous conference and seminar presentations<br>Representation at more than 20 external events  | Increase in subscribers<br>Increase in invitations to speak at a broader spectrum of events  |
| Establish an evidence base of best practice response to and prevention of sexual assault                                 | 40 projects profiled<br>Database reviewed  |  |

## Publications

Bournsnel, M., Lee, T., & Chung, D. (2008). Tell us what you know: Surveying university students' attitudes about sexual assault. *Aware*, 16, 4–12.

Boyd, C. (2008). Research review: Where is the care in the country? *Aware*, 16, 18–20.

Clark, H. (2008) Forum review: Victorian Women Lawyers sexual assault forum. *Aware*, 17, 22–25.

Cox, D. (2008). *Working with Indigenous survivors of sexual assault* (ACSSA Wrap No. 5). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

Imbessi, R. (2008). Engaging young people in leadership roles in the prevention of sexual assault: The CASA House peer educator project. *Aware*, 16, 13–17.

Morrison, Z. (2008). What is the outcome of reporting rape to the police? Summary research report. *Aware*, 17, 4–11.

Morrison, Z. (2007). *“Feeling heavy”*: Vicarious trauma and other issues facing those who work in the sexual assault field (ACSSA Wrap No. 4). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

Parkinson, D. (2008). Partner rape and rurality. *Aware*, 16, 21–22.

Quadara, A. (2008). *Sex workers and sexual assault in Australia: Prevalence, risk and safety* (Issues No. 8). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

### Conference presentations

Morrison, Z. (2007, 9 September). *Understanding sexual assault and abuse in the church: An Australian case study*. Plenary presentation, conference of the Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Clinicians Australia, Melbourne.

Quadara, A. (2007, 26 September). *Occupational health and safety and violence prevention in sex work*. Annual Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference, Adelaide.

Morrison, Z. (2007, 27 September). Member of a panel to discuss restorative justice and sexual offences at the Victimology Conference, “Alternative Approaches to Justice: Are victims better off?”, Australian Society of Victimology and the South Australian Government’s Attorney-General’s Department, Adelaide.

Boyd, C. (2008, 26 February). Presentation to the Child Safety Research Forum, Queensland Child Safety Department, Brisbane.

Quadara, A. (2008, 6 May). *Sex workers and sexual assault*. Key speaker, ACSSA Forum, Brisbane.

Morrison, Z. (2008, 26 June). *Gender and social exclusion*. Social Inclusion Downunder Symposium, Melbourne.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Morrison, Z. (2007, 21 September). *Getting the most out of ACSSA for service providers*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Assault, Sydney.

Morrison, Z. (2007, 28 September). *Vicarious trauma and other ripple effects of sexual assault*. Friday Forum, Women’s Health Statewide, Adelaide.

Morrison, Z. (2007, 20 November). *Ripple effects of sexual assault*. Paper presented at the FACSIA Social Policy Research Workshop, Canberra.

Morrison, Z. (2007, 29 November). *The hidden contributors: Family violence and sexual assault. Some thoughts on addressing social inclusion through whole of government approaches to violence response and prevention*. Academy of Social Sciences in Australia Workshop, “Combating social exclusion through joined up policy: Addressing social inclusion through whole-of-government approaches”, Adelaide.

Boyd, C. (2008, 26 February). Presentation at the Face-Up treatment program for adolescents, Brisbane.

Morrison, Z. (2008, 5 March). Presentation at Joint AIFS/ABS International Women’s Day Event about personal career trajectory, Melbourne.

- Morrison, Z. (2008, 11 March). Presentation at Burnie Sexual Assault Service promoting the role and services of ACSSA, and on the topic of vicarious trauma, Burnie, Tasmania.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 12 March). Presentation at Galileo House promoting the role and services of ACSSA, and on the topic of vicarious trauma, Hobart.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 13 March). Presentation at Laurel House promoting the role and services of ACSSA, and on the topic of vicarious trauma, Launceston, Tasmania.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 11 April). *Social exclusion, homelessness, sexual assault and family violence: The "hidden" contributors*. Seminar series paper, UnitingCare Wesley, Adelaide.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 11 April). *The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault: Recent activities and latest research*. Seminar series paper, UnitingCare Wesley, Adelaide.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 17 April) *The parameters of social inclusion in Australia: Putting family violence and sexual assault on the agenda*. Brotherhood of St Laurence Seminar Series.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 13 June). *Place, social inclusion and "cultural justice": Reflections on the British experience. A place-based social exclusion policy case study*. Social Inclusion and Place-Based Disadvantage Workshop, Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development, Melbourne.

### External representation

- Morrison, Z. (2007, 2 August). Attended meeting of Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault, Victoria, Department of Victorian Communities, Melbourne.
- Morrison, Z. (2007, 17 September). Attended meeting of National Sexual Assault Conference Working Group, NSW Attorney General's Department, Sydney.
- Morrison, Z. (2007, 25 October). Attended meeting of Victoria Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault.
- Morrison, Z. (2007, 11 December). Attended Expert Advisory Group meeting of the Women's Health West/VicHealth Project, "Building the Capacity of Organisations in the Western Region to Prevent Violence Against Women: A Guide to Health Promotion Action".
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 6 February). Attended meeting of Sexual Assault Workforce Development Reference Group, QV Women's Centre, Melbourne.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 7 February). Attended meeting of Expert Advisory Group, VicHealth Prevention Project, Melbourne.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 19–20 April). Attended 2020 Summit, Canberra.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 4 June). Attended inaugural meeting of National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, Canberra.
- Quadara A. (2008, 4 June). Attended Statewide Advisory Committee to Prevent Sexual Assault Planning Day.
- Morrison, Z. (2008, 30 June – 2nd July). Attended second meeting of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, Melbourne.
- Member, Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault (Z. Morrison).
- Member, National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (Z. Morrison).
- Member, Advisory Committee for Policing Just Outcomes Project (Z. Morrison).
- Member, Advisory Board for CASA Professional Development (Z. Morrison).

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## Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia

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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 clearinghouse 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 supported the SFCS National Evaluation (see p. 77). The clearinghouse is funded by FaHCSIA through the SFCS 2004–09, 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 have 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, and news of forthcoming conferences and events. It also includes resources and supports for Local Evaluators—the researchers contracted by SFSC-funded projects to evaluate the success of their project.

The CAFCA website recorded 128,097 hits and 77,603 pages downloaded in 2007–08. The Evaluation section of the site was well used, with 15,689 page downloads of pages, including the *Evaluators' National Newsletter*, questionnaires for service users and agencies, and questions and answers about the evaluation process. Interest was also shown in the Resources pages on the site (13,630 page downloads), the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy projects page (1,688 page downloads), the Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) respondent website (7,529 page downloads), and the PPPs page (12,374 page downloads). A password-protected area was created for SFCS Local Evaluators.

### *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 email discussion lists: *CAFCA-chat* and *e-evaluate*.

*CAFCA-chat* is a discussion and announcements list that 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 users about relevant literature, training opportunities and forthcoming events. The web information page for *CAFCA-chat* received 3,031 page downloads in 2007–08, resulting in 226 subscribers at 30 June 2008.

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 134 registered members at 30 June 2008.

### 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, and 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: edition 5 (December 2007) and edition 6 (June 2008).

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs  | Outcomes   |
|--|---|--|
| Host and moderate email discussion lists   | <i>CAFCA-chat</i> email discussion list hosted, with 226 members at 30 June 2008  | Email discussion lists used by SFCS network and early childhood and community development sectors  |
|  | <i>E-evaluate</i> email discussion list hosted, with 134 members at 30 June 2008  | Email discussion lists used by Local Evaluators for sharing information  |
| Make available information resources for clients                                 | Provided a catalogue and help desk service for clients who wished to access information from the library collection and databases   | Provides relevant information about early intervention and child development to service providers, SFCS Network, researchers and policy makers |
| Provide a website that supports the SFCS   | Total of 77,603 page downloads<br>Resources pages: 13,630 page downloads<br>SFCS projects page: 1,688 page downloads<br>SFIA respondent website: 7,529 page downloads<br>PPPs page: 12,374 page downloads<br>Site map developed |  |
| Establish <i>Evaluators' National Newsletter</i> and disseminate to SFCS network | 2 issues of <i>Evaluators' National Newsletter</i> published  | Newsletters generated enquiries and discussion on email discussion lists   |

| Planned outputs                        | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|--|---|---|
| Provide resources for Local Evaluators | Local Evaluators extranet<br>List of Indigenous early childhood research and services<br>Links to databases | Sharing of information and resources among Local Evaluators |

## Publications

*Evaluators' National Newsletter*, edition 5, December 2007.

*Evaluators' National Newsletter*, edition 6, June 2008.

### **Evaluation of the Every Child is Important Program**

In 2007–08, the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) engaged the Institute to conduct an independent evaluation of the Every Child is Important Program, which is a universal public education and awareness-raising campaign designed to affirm the value and significance of children. Institute staff from the NCPC team completed the evaluation (including data collection and analysis) and the project report was completed in the 2007–08 financial year.

| Planned outputs  | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|------------------|------------------|---|
| 1 project report | 1 project report | Will inform the development of similar programs by highlighting specific aspects of the program that were effective in promoting awareness and attitudinal change |

### **Evaluation of the 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 fathers' perspectives. However, it will also include the views from other immediate family members and service providers. The study will seek to understand the impacts of the program on participating fathers, their family relationships and access to community networks. The study will also consider evaluations of other fathers' programs in Australia.

| Planned outputs | Actual outputs                               | Outcomes  |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Research report | Fieldwork completed<br>Draft report prepared | Will contribute to the evidence base on fathers' programs<br>Will contribute to ongoing improvement of the RAV FUN for Kids Program |

### **Rural and Regional Families: The Impact of Drought, Economic and Social Change**

The Institute is conducting a major new study into the impact of drought, economic and social change on the wellbeing of families and communities in regional and

rural Australia. This is the first large-scale research into the impact of the drought on Australian families.

The research is being conducted by Dr Ben Edwards and Dr Matthew Gray from the Institute, Dr Boyd Hunter of the ANU, and Professor David de Vaus of La Trobe University.

The study is aimed at addressing the following questions:

- What is the impact of drought on the financial situation and living standards of families?
- Does drought have an impact upon the quality of family relationships and family wellbeing?
- Does drought result in people moving away from an area?
- What is the impact of drought on the availability of services?
- What is the impact of drought on social capital?

The research commenced in August 2007, the first major report will be completed in late 2008 and analysis will continue into 2009.

The database for the study is extensive, with over 8,000 telephone interviews conducted from September to December 2007 with people living in rural and regional areas. This included interviews with more than 1,300 farmers and 1,000 other people employed in the agricultural industries, over 3,000 who were employed but not in agriculture, and over 2,500 who were not employed.

The Institute will make a report available to the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to inform its expert panel on the social impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities, the Productivity Commission, and other stakeholders working on the National Review of Drought Policy.

| Planned outputs    | Actual outputs            | Outcomes   |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Collection of data | Data collected            | Will have input into drought policy as well as more general policies that address Australian families living in rural and regional areas |
| Data cleaning      | Data cleaned for analysis |  |

### **Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation**

A National Evaluation Consortium was formed to evaluate the second phase of the SFCS 2004–09. The Institute is working on this project with the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), the lead agency. The National Evaluation seeks to capture the extent to which the SFCS contributes to better outcomes for children and families, and improved capacities of communities to achieve this. The strategy is an initiative of FaHCSIA. 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 (CfC), Invest to Grow (ItG), Local Answers (LA), and Choice and Flexibility in Child Care. The National 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.

The evaluation 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 the SFCS assists individuals and families to fully participate in society;
- how it creates and underpins social networks among 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 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 National Evaluation activities. In 2007–08 these included the conduct of the SFIA study, identification and dissemination of PPPs, and the implementation of the Father Engagement Themed Study.

### *Stronger Families in Australia*

The SFIA study is a longitudinal study of child, family and community outcomes covering 10 CfC sites and 5 contrast sites. It is an integral component of the National Evaluation and the primary mechanism for assessing the impact of the CfC service stream of the SFCS. The third and final wave of data collection was completed in April 2008, with excellent response rates. Final data analyses are complete, and the final report is due for completion early in the next reporting period.

| Planned outputs                             | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|---|--|---|
| Wave 2 fieldwork report                     | Wave 2 fieldwork report completed  | Information is publicly available via the CAFCA website   |
| Wave 3 ethics approval                      | Ethics approval obtained from AIFS and SPRC Ethics Committees                  |   |
| Wave 3 instrument development and testing   | Instruments and data collection processes refined in preparation for fieldwork | Will provide important information for policy about the success of the CfC initiative funded under the SFCS |
| Training of interviewers                    | Interviewer manual developed and training completed                            |   |
| Track down and interview study participants | Interviews completed   |   |
| Final data analysis                         | Final data analysis completed  |   |

### **Commissioned report**

Wise, S. (2007). *Stronger Families in Australia, Wave 2 fieldwork report. A report prepared for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Wise, S., & Edwards, B. (2007, 9 October). *Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) briefing presentation*. Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation 2004–08 Steering Committee Meeting, Canberra.

Wise, S. (2007, 7–8 November). *Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) briefing presentation*. “Working Together to Create a Child-Friendly Community: Contact, Connect, Collaborate”, Communities for Children NGO Forum, Sydney.

### 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.

The PPPs are designed to identify practice elements linked to positive client and service outcomes. It involved a call for proposals and a validation process undertaken by an independent peer review panel. In the current reporting period, the final two calls for proposals were conducted using revised submission forms, which focused on “effectiveness” as the key validation criteria. In all, 81 proposals, of which 57 were accepted as promising practices, were received over the three rounds. As participation in the PPP was entirely voluntary, workshops and teleconferences were conducted to support projects to respond to the call for proposals.

Promising practices are profiled on the CAFCA website and are a valuable resource for various stakeholders. This 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.

| Planned outputs   | Actual outputs  | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| Complete Round 2 and Round 3 calls for proposals                            | Proposal form and supporting documentation revised<br>Round 2 and Round 3 calls for proposals completed   | Will provide stakeholders in the early childhood sector with the opportunity to access valuable information about effective practices and ideas for adaptation in their local communities |
| Provide SFCS projects with assistance in the preparation of their proposals | Workshops and teleconferences conducted<br>Staff responded to PPP queries during calls for proposals<br>Resources page maintained on CAFCA website<br>Research assistance provided to project managers and Local Evaluators |   |
| Complete Round 2 and Round 3 validation process                             | PPP Reference Group maintained<br>New peer review panel members appointed<br>Validation template revised<br>Validation processes completed  |   |
| Publish Round 1 PPPs on CAFCA website                                       | Round 1 PPPs published on the CAFCA website   |   |
| Complete Round 2 report   | Round 2 report completed  |   |
| Complete final project report   | Final project report completed  |   |
| Publish Round 2 and Round 3 PPPs on CAFCA website                           | Ongoing   |   |

### Commissioned reports

Soriano, G. (2008). *Promising Practice Profiles: Round 2 report. A report prepared for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Soriano, G., Clark, H., & Wise, S. (2008). *Promising Practice Profiles: Final report. Report prepared for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Other (non-conference) presentations

Clark, H., Cheney, H., Soriano, G., & Wilson, E. (2007, September–October). *Promising Practice Profiles*. Workshops presented to SFCS Local Evaluators and Project Managers in Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth.

Clark, H., Soriano, G., & Wilson, E. (2007, September–October). *Promising Practice Profiles*. Teleconference workshops presented to SFCS Local Evaluators and Project Managers.

Soriano, G. (2007, 7–8 November). *Promising Practice Profiles*. Paper presented at “Working Together to Create a Child-Friendly Community: Contact, Connect, Collaborate”, Communities for Children NGO Forum, Sydney.

Clark, H., Soriano, G., & Wilson, E. (2008, February). *Promising Practice Profiles*. Teleconference workshops presented to SFCS Local Evaluators and Project Managers.

### External representation

Member, Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) National Evaluation Advisory Group (G. Soriano).

### Father Engagement Themed Study

The purpose of the Themed Studies is to explore particular topics in depth to enhance understanding of “what works” and how and why. These studies include the three SFCS program areas covered in the evaluation: CfC, ItG and LA. The Father Engagement Themed Study describes father participation in selected SFCS programs and services and identifies successful strategies for engaging with fathers. The research employed a mixed methodology: a survey of SFCS program managers on father engagement and in-depth fieldwork with a sample of selected services and programs. Service managers and facilitators participated in one-on-one interviews, and focus groups were held with father participants. The final project report was delivered to FaHCSIA in June 2008.

| Planned outputs                                  | Actual outputs   | Outcomes  |
|--|--|---|
| Development of study design and methodology      | Study design and methodology established                                       | Will provide specific findings on the engagement and participation of fathers in child and family services for policy makers, community workers and service providers |
| Instruments and data collection processes tested | Instruments and data collection processes refined in preparation for fieldwork |   |
| Ethics approval                                  | Ethics approval obtained from AIFS and SPRC Ethics Committees                  |   |
| Data collection completed                        | All data collection processes completed  |   |
| Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data    | Data analysis completed  |   |
| Final project report                             | Final project report completed   |   |

## Commissioned report

Berlyn, C., Wise, S., & Soriano, G. (2008) *Engaging fathers in child and family services: Participation, perceptions and good practice. A report prepared for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs as part of the National Evaluation Consortium (Social Policy and Research Centre, UNSW, and the Australian Institute of Family Studies)*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## KPI 2. Inform and influence policy development

### Parliamentary submissions

During the year the Institute's research staff prepared three submissions to parliamentary inquiries:

#### Child protection services

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *Australian Institute of Family Studies submission to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW*. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

#### Parental leave

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2008, June). *Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

#### Children and young people

Hayes, A., Vassallo, S., & Smart, D. (2008, May). *Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Children and Young People's Inquiry into Children and Young People 9–14 Years in NSW*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### 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, consultations covering a broad range of issues took place between all Institute research programs and representatives of various international and national organisations or bodies. Issues included work and family, labour markets, social capital, child protection and social inclusion.

### 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.

### Key visitors

July 2007—Professor Jeanne Brookes-Gunn, Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Child Development, Teachers College and College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University.

July 2007—Professor Shirley Feldman, Stanford University.

August 2007—A delegation from the Singapore Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS).

August & December 2007—Dr Jeff Harmer, Secretary, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

September 2007—The Hon. Diana Bryant, Chief Justice, Family Court of Australia.

October 2007—Professor Stephen Sedgwick, Director, Melbourne Institute.

November 2007—Ms Gillian Calvert, NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People.

November 2007—Dr Lance Emerson, CEO, and Ms Lynne McGuigan, National Coordinator and Company Secretary, ARACY.

December 2007—Ms Sue Linacre, Deputy Statistician, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

January 2008—Ms Lynelle Briggs, Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission.

January 2008—Mr John Pascoe AO, Chief Federal Magistrate, Federal Magistrates Court of Australia.

February 2008—Ms Kasy Chambers, Executive Director, Anglicare Australia.

February 2008—Delegation from the Netherlands, comprising 20 senior level representatives from Labour Market and Social Security organisations.

February 2008—Dr Helen Buckley, Trinity College Dublin.

February 2008—Ms Sawon Hong, Regional Child Protection Advisor, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand), and Professor Cathy Humphreys, Melbourne University.

March 2008—Professor Ariel Kalil, Associate Professor, Harris School of Public Policy Studies, and Director, Center for Human Potential and Public Policy, University of Chicago.

March 2008—Ms Lyn Campbell, Commissioner, New Zealand Families Commission.

March 2008—Professor Dr Richard Wilkins, Managing Director; Dr Marya Reed, Deputy Managing Director; and Ms Fatimah Saad, Director, Implementation and Social Outreach Division, Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development.

May 2008—The Hon. Justice John Faulks, Deputy Chief Justice, Family Court of Australia.

May 2008—Mr Terry Moran AO, Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

### 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. Staff also attended and represented the Institute at various national and international conferences.

During the reporting period, the Director represented the Institute on the following bodies: the Longitudinal Studies Advisory Group (with Dr Gray and Ms Smart), convened by FaHCSIA; the Evaluation Governance Committee for the National Evaluation of the New Family Law System, convened by the AGD; and the Advisory

Committee, of the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales. In addition, Professor Hayes was a member of the Australian Children and Families Council; chaired the Advisory Board of the Children and Families Research Centre, Macquarie University; was a member of the Professorial Promotions Committee at the Australian Catholic University; and was an Ambassador for National Families Week, 11–17 May 2008. Staff of the Institute accompanied the Director at ministerial briefings and consultations. In February, the Director presented the occasional address at a graduation ceremony for students of the Mildura Campus of La Trobe University. The Director also represented the Institute at a range of Global Foundation meetings with federal ministers and with the Russian Ambassador.

In April 2008, Dr Zoë Morrison was afforded the honour of being selected to participate in the Australia 2020 Summit, held in Parliament House.

### Representation on expert panels

A number of Institute researchers were invited to serve on editorial boards or to serve as external reviewers for a range of academic journals, including: *Child Maltreatment; Child Abuse and Neglect; Children and Youth Services Review; Communities, Children & Families Australia; Developing Practice; Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology; Journal of Family Studies; Journal of Home Economics; Journal of Population Research; Journal of Religion and Abuse; Population Research and Policy Review; 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 ABS, such as the Family Statistics Framework Project Board, Family Statistics Advisory Group, General Social Survey Reference Group, Child Care and Early Years Learning Survey, and the Children and Youth Statistical Portal Reference Group. Several staff also sit on advisory committees and reference groups, including the Brotherhood of St Laurence Life Chances Project Advisory Committee, Child Support Agency National Stakeholder Engagement Group, FCoA Chief Justice's Forum, FCoA Expert Reference Panel on the Work of Family Consultants, Family Relationships Education and Skills Training Reference Group (FaHCSIA), HILDA survey External Reference Group, HILDA survey Project Management Group, HIPPIY National Evaluation Advisory Group, NAPCAN Victoria Management Committee, National Child Information Advisory Group (AIHW), Parentline Reference Group, Queensland Department of Child Safety Innovators Advisory Group, Relationships Australia Client Outcome Evaluation Project Reference Group, Victorian Association of Family Therapies Research Advisory Committee, and the Victorian Marriage and Relationship Education Network.

## KPI 3. Promote and lead public understanding about families

### AIFS Seminar Series

The Institute hosts a regular seminar series by invited researchers throughout the year. The AIFS Seminar Series presents contemporary issues in national and international family research and offers a forum for discussion and debate of these

issues. Seminars are free and open to the public. While predominantly focused on Australian research, the Institute welcomes presentations from overseas visiting researchers, who are able to provide international perspectives to the local experience.

Where possible and with the permission of presenters, the Institute makes the abstracts and papers from the seminars available for free download via the Institute website. In 2008, again with permission from presenters, the Institute also has begun to provide audio files for listening online or free download. Seminars are promoted widely and interested website visitors are encouraged to download the accompanying papers and audio files.

### **Seminars hosted by the Institute**

#### **6 July 2007**

Prof. Peter Saunders, Centre for Independent Studies

*Tax-welfare churning: The government giveth, and the government taketh away*

Facilitator: Dr Matthew Gray

#### **26 July 2007**

Dr S. Caroline Taylor, Senior Research Fellow, University of Ballarat

*(Il)legally wounded: Intrafamilial sexual abuse and the legal response*

Facilitator: Professor Alan Hayes

#### **16 August 2007**

Prof. Mark Wooden, Professorial Research Fellow and Deputy Director, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne

*Long work weeks in Australia*

Facilitator: Professor Alan Hayes

#### **27 September 2007**

Dr Lyn Craig, Research Fellow, SPRC

*Contemporary motherhood: The impact of children on adult time*

Facilitator: Dr Jennifer Baxter

#### **25 October 2007**

Dr Ben Edwards, Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Family Studies

*Does it take a village? Neighbourhood influences on young children's development*

Facilitator: Dr Matthew Gray

#### **15 November 2007**

Gillian Calvert, Commissioner, and Trish Malins, Research Manager, NSW Commission for Children and Young People

*Children's voices in research: Some reflections on the ethics and outcomes of participatory research with children*

Facilitator: Professor Alan Hayes

#### **14 February 2008**

Dr Helen Buckley, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

*Engagement, analysis and reflectiveness: Developing a Framework for the Assessment of Vulnerable Children and Their Families*

Facilitator: Dr Leah Bromfield

**13 March 2008**

Professor Robert A. Cummins, Professor of Psychology, Deakin University, and Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Happiness Studies*

*Subjective wellbeing and families: Issues of measurement and data interpretation*

Facilitator: Dr Daryl Higgins

**17 April 2008**

Dr Daryl Higgins, General Manager (Research), Australian Institute of Family Studies

*Cooperation and coordination: An evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan case-management model*

Facilitator: Professor Alan Hayes

**11 June 2008**

Professor David Peetz, Professor, Department of Employment Relations, Griffith University

*Work and conflict at home: Some aspects of how work affects employees' personal relationships and partners*

Facilitator: Michael Alexander

**Library and information services**

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

Library staff provide library and information services to support the four clearinghouses operated by the Institute (ACSSA, AFRC, CAFCA and NCPC) and also contributes to Australian information resource-sharing and discovery initiatives, such as the Libraries Australia National Bibliographic Database, managed by the National Library of Australia.

A reference service is available to the wider community and the library is open to visitors by appointment. The library catalogue is available on the Institute's website and material held in the collection can be borrowed through the inter-library loans scheme operated by libraries throughout Australia.

***Australian Family & Society Abstracts***

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

AF&SA is a knowledge base of citations and abstracts that is central to the provision of information services, support for research and policy advice, and the specialised bibliographies and lists generated for clearinghouses. It covers Australian literature from 1980, and offers more than 70,000 citations and abstracts. Items indexed are drawn from a wide range of social science disciplines, including sociology, psychology, demography, health sciences, education, economics, law, history and social work. Unlike many citation databases that index only journal literature, AF&SA also includes books, conference papers, research reports, government reports and discussion papers, unpublished and working papers, and statistical documents.

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

During the reporting period, 3,415 new documents were indexed for the AF&SA database, bringing the total number of documents to 70,200. The trend for information providers to publish online continued, with almost half of the documents indexed this year directly linked to the full-text report or article on the web.

Restructuring of the AF&SA database to comply with the structure required of all databases hosted by Informit is nearing completion. This will result in a more standardised structure and improve searching across all databases hosted by Informit. The planning of the migration of the restructured data into the existing software used to manage library operations is complete, with implementation scheduled to take place between July and September 2008. This will see the achievement of one of the key recommendations of the 2006 review of library services conducted by Libraries Alive! to consolidate database, collection management and web-serving operations onto a single software platform.

### *Journal subscriptions*

The move towards subscribing wherever possible to an "online-only" format for journals continued in 2007–08. The practice of purchasing individual articles as required also increased. This reflects a gradual shift from a "just-in-case" to a "just-in-time" service consistent with our aim of reducing purchase, binding and shelving costs, while providing researchers with prompt, cost-effective access to the relevant online journal literature.

### *Online databases*

A number of databases were assessed for their continued relevance to research needs at the Institute. Following consultation with research staff in the Family Law Evaluation area, two databases were replaced by alternative products, which staff felt provided better access to family law material. In total, subscriptions to five new databases were taken out in order to ensure thorough and user-friendly coverage of journal literature of interest to staff. As in previous years, consortium subscription opportunities offered by our membership of groups such as the Australian Government Libraries Information Network (AGLIN) have been explored and entered into where possible in order to provide the most cost-effective information service.

### **Media liaison**

There has been considerable reporting of the Institute's research in radio, television and print media, particularly on issues about work and family, mothers return to work following childbearing, maternity leave, the disability and carers study, fertility and family policy, child abuse and neglect, family formation and dissolution, and changes in children's wellbeing over the last 20 years.

The Institute's participation in media liaison continues to be an important strategy towards achieving its key objective of informing the Australian community about its research findings. The Institute's media coverage is exclusively positive and, in addition to providing exposure of its own research findings, also frequently contributes a research dimension to wider public debate about family issues. The release of the Institute's publications (including its flagship journal, *Family Matters*) promotes increased media interest in the Institute's work in general, as well as heightened interest in the particular issues covered.

### *Press, radio and television*

There were 1,935 items in the press, radio and television that mentioned Institute research in the reporting period. The total estimated audience reach of this coverage was more than 52.4 million, shared across all states and territories and in national media outlets. Although the greatest coverage for the Institute was on radio, where there were 1,096 mentions, press had the highest circulation, with a total estimated audience of more than 32.3 million. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and national print media outlets provided the greatest coverage, while in radio and television, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland had the highest levels of coverage.

### *Internet*

In addition to the mentions in press, radio and television, there were 926 items on the Internet mentioning Institute research in the reporting period.

### **Websites and email lists**

The Web Team manages the electronic resources for the Institute's intranet and website, and provides information services based on the library's collection and the AF&SA database. The Web Team is responsible for the design and development of the Institute's external websites, the staff intranet, and a number of email alerting and discussion lists.

In 2007–08 the Web Team managed the content and development of seven websites and the intranet. These are: the Institute's main website, websites for each of the four clearinghouses (NCPC, CAFCA, ACSSA and AFRC), and two for the longitudinal research projects (LSAC and ATP). A new web presence was also established for Family Pathways: The Longitudinal Study of Separated Parents.

The Institute's main website reports on Institute programs and activities, disseminates information from its databases, publications and resource collections, and promotes the development of networks with individuals and organisations concerned with family research and policy.

The retrieval of information from our websites has been enhanced by the implementation of new search engine software and an improved display of search options. This allows users to target their search to a particular clearinghouse or project website or broaden it to search across all Institute sites.

In general, activity measured across the entire website increased during the reporting period. In particular, the usage statistics revealed very strong growth for

the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse website (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4 for a detailed breakdown).

**Table 3.3** Statistics of use of all Institute websites

|                    | 2004–05   | 2005–06   | 2006–07   | 2007–08   | Change from 2006–07 to 2007–08 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Requests (hits)*   | 7,163,446 | 7,983,159 | 9,358,626 | 9,892,190 | +5.7%                          |
| Pages downloaded** | 2,458,789 | 2,925,634 | 3,100,880 | 3,444,859 | +11.1%                         |

Notes: \* "Hits" refers to the number of all successful requests for files, including pages, images and documents. One web page may contain several such files, each of which, when downloaded is counted as a separate hit. \*\* "Pages downloaded" refers to downloading whole web pages or documents, which incorporate all the files that are counted separately under "hits".

**Table 3.4** Page download statistics for clearinghouse and project websites

| Pages downloaded* | 2004–05 | 2005–06 | 2006–07  | 2007–08    | Change from 2006–07 to 2007–08 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------|------------|--------------------------------|
| ACSSA             | 159,752 | 222,460 | 258,963  | 311,428    | +20.3%                         |
| AFRC              | na      | na      | 80,948** | 228,026    | +181.7%                        |
| ATP               | 11,556  | 17,763  | 20,119   | 24,903     | +23.8%                         |
| CAFCA             | na      | 27,769  | 52,402   | 77,603     | +48.1%                         |
| LSAC              | 57,227  | 85,966  | 107,890  | 155,144    | +43.8%                         |
| NCPC              | 598,690 | 706,870 | 767,735  | 574,341*** | -25.2%                         |

Notes: \* "Pages downloaded" refers to downloading whole web pages or documents. \*\* AFRC was only in operation for 9 months of 2006–07. \*\*\* Due to the caretaker period, election and machinery of government changes, some NCPC publications of a sensitive nature were held over for publication in the latter half of the reporting period. na = Not applicable.

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

### *Alerting and discussion lists*

*AIFS-alert*, the Institute's fortnightly email announcements list, keeps stakeholders up-to-date with the work and activities of the Institute. The *growingup-refgroup* list keeps stakeholders up-to-date with developments in the LSAC project. Other alerting and discussion lists provided for clearinghouse projects included: *ACSSA-alert* and *ACSSA-discuss* for ACSSA; *childprotect* for the NCPC; *CAFCA-chat* for CAFCA, and *AFRC-alert* for the AFRC (see Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5** Subscribers to email lists

| Email list                | June 2007    | June 2008    | Change from 2007 to 2008 |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| <i>AIFS-alert</i>         | 1,411        | 1,722        | +22.0%                   |
| <i>ACSSA-alert</i>        | 628          | 809          | +28.8%                   |
| <i>ACSSA-discuss</i>      | 154          | 177          | +14.9%                   |
| <i>AFRC-alert</i>         | 553          | 804          | +45.4%                   |
| <i>CAFCA-chat</i>         | 197          | 226          | +14.7%                   |
| <i>childprotect</i>       | 649          | 659          | +1.5%                    |
| <i>e-relating*</i>        | 63           | na           | na                       |
| <i>growingup-refgroup</i> | 367          | 412          | +12.3%                   |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>4,022</b> | <b>4,809</b> | <b>+19.6%</b>            |

Notes: \* Discontinued in early 2008. na = Not applicable.

#### KPI 4. Communicate key issues in family research

A key role of the Institute, as identified in its Strategic Plan 2006–08, is to ensure that research is disseminated widely and effectively in various formats to a range of stakeholders.

In 2007–08, the Institute continued to publish relevant and timely information in the area of family research 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.

All of these, as well as conference presentations and other forms of written outputs, are listed in detail under Research Activities (pp. 24–81).

To ensure the widest possible readership, Institute publications are written in a clear and accessible manner, edited to a high standard, and designed and published in an attractive manner. The intended audience includes government policy makers, practitioners in family-related professions, researchers, media and the interested general public.

Most material is published in both print and electronic form. This occurs simultaneously in the case of free publications, or subsequent to initial print publication in the case of the subscription-based *Family Matters*.

#### *Family Matters* journal

*Family Matters* is the Institute's main research dissemination vehicle. Its primary purpose is to keep local and international readers informed about Institute research and activities and therefore a high priority is placed on its own research contribution to each issue. In addition, *Family Matters* aims to keep its readers informed of

relevant family-related research by publishing articles from other Australian and overseas authors.

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

In accordance with the Institute's Strategic Plan 2006–08, three editions of *Family Matters* were published in 2007–08.

- *Family Matters*, No. 77, 2007 (84 pages)—“Family Relationships”—featured articles on the family law reforms and family relationships. It included: a series of articles describing and responding to the Institute's Research Report, *Allegations of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Family Law Children's Proceedings*; a report on the evaluation of the family law reform package; a description of the new “less adversarial” approach to the hearing children's cases under the *Family Law Act*; an update on the family law reforms; snapshots of three family relationships centres; a review of research on interventions for step-families; the effectiveness of marriage and relationship education programs; and an analysis of LSAC data about how work hours affect fathering 4–5 year old children. *The issue included seven major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*
- *Family Matters*, No. 78, 2008 (72 pages)—“Challenged Lives”—focused on social inclusion and wellbeing. It featured articles on: a policy platform for social inclusion; measuring wellbeing using non-monetary indicators; how parents and teenagers get along together; caring and women's labour market participation; children talking about homelessness; a new post-separation and divorce parenting program; and an early history of child protection in Australia; as well as an opinion piece on whether family and social changes are making children's lives more challenging. *The issue included four major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*
- *Family Matters*, No. 79, 2008 (72 pages)—“Parenting With Care”—reviewed some of the research currently being undertaken using the most recent waves of LSAC data. Articles were on: whether child care quality matters; shared parental responsibility; parents' involvement in their children's education; parent-only care; whether children have more problems today than they did 20 years ago; and work and family responsibilities through life. *The issue included four major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.*

*Family Matters* is available by subscription, both in hard copy and as an online subscription from RMIT Publishing's Informit e-Library. However, in accordance with the Institute's aim of reaching a wide and diverse audience, it is also distributed at no cost to an extensive list of members of parliament, key policy makers, and the media.

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

## Research series publications

In addition to *Family Matters* and the *Annual Report*, the Institute produces two main monographs in series—Research Papers and Research Reports.

### Research Papers

The Research Paper series is an important means by which Institute research findings and methodologies are made public. The series enables the dissemination of Institute research to policy makers, practitioners and researchers, with the aim of encouraging dialogue with research and policy communities, and thus obtaining review and feedback about the nature, direction and quality of Institute research. In 2007–08, three Research Papers were published:

- No. 40—*Employment aspirations of non-working mothers with long-term health problems*, by Jenny Renda.
- No. 41—*Fertility and Family Policy in Australia*, by Matthew Gray, Lixia Qu and Ruth Weston; and
- No. 42—*Timing of Mothers' Return to Work After Childbearing: Variations by Job Characteristics and Leave Use*, by Jennifer Baxter.

### Research Reports

The Research Report series comprises more substantial works that report on research findings at major milestones in a research project, or at the completion of a project. One Research Report (No. 16) was published in 2007–08: *The Nature and Impact of Caring for Family Members With a Disability in Australia*, by Ben Edwards, Daryl J. Higgins, Matthew Gray, Norbert Zmijewski and Marcia Kingston. Details of this project and report are described earlier in this chapter (pp. 45–6).

## Clearinghouse publications

The Institute's clearinghouses publish an extensive range of newsletters, issues and briefing papers. These are listed in detail under the reports from the clearinghouses in this chapter.

## Other publications

For Families Week, 11–17 May 2008, the Institute produced two publications:

- *Work and Family Responsibilities Through Life*, by Jennifer Baxter and Matthew Gray—a Facts Sheet providing a snapshot of issues associated with work and family balance, including paid employment rates, hours worked, maternal employment, fathers' working hours and self-employment; and
- *Snapshots of Family Relationships*, by Lixia Qu and Ruth Weston—a report commissioned by FaHCSIA that provided a brief outline of trends in couple formation, dissolution and family size; relationships between teenagers and adults; parents' opinions about issues such as raising children; professional support for separating partners or parents having difficulties with their children's behaviours; and post-separation patterns of parenting.

## KPI 5. Maintain and strengthen our role as a national centre

### Operating results

The Institute finished the financial year 2007–08 with a surplus of \$108,371 (2006–07 operating surplus of \$362,805). This surplus is \$100,371 more than the estimate for 2007–08 in the *Portfolio Budget Statements 2008–09*. This difference is primarily due to timing differences in the recognition of revenue and expenditure. Revenue from other sources was less than budgeted due to contracted negotiations for a major project, resulting in some delay in commencement. The corresponding decrease in expenditure was higher than the decrease in revenue, resulting in the larger than expected surplus.

#### *Operating revenue*

The total operating revenue was \$12,795,615 and consisted of the following:

- government appropriations of \$4,256,000;
- sale of goods and rendering of services of \$8,468,376; and
- other revenue of \$71,239.

Revenue from government appropriations increased by only \$24,000 from 2006–07, reflecting the reduction of \$20,000 as a result of the additional 2% efficiency dividend required of all Commonwealth agencies.

#### *Operating expenses*

Total operating expenses were \$12,687,244 and consisted of:

- employee costs of \$5,467,906;
- supplier expenses of \$6,908,855;
- depreciation of \$297,202; and
- loss from asset sales of \$13,281.

### Balance sheet

#### *Net asset position*

The net asset position at 30 June 2008 was \$1,859,760 (2006–07: \$1,751,389).

#### *Total assets*

Total assets at 30 June 2008 were \$8,204,371 (2006–07: \$6,421,130). The difference was due to an increase in financial assets of \$1,779,872. This arose due to the lower than expected drawdown from government appropriations, mainly as a result of the receipt of prepaid revenue. Trade debtors and GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office were also higher at the end of the year.

#### *Total liabilities*

Total liabilities at 30 June 2008 were \$6,344,611 (2006–07: \$4,669,741). The difference was largely due to an increase in the payables of \$1,559,348 due to a higher level of unearned revenue. There was also an increase in employee provisions of \$115,522.

**Table 3.6 Resources for Outcome 1: Inform government, policy makers and other stakeholders on factors influencing how families function**

|   | Budget*<br>2007–08<br>(\$'000) | Actual<br>expenses<br>2007–08<br>(\$'000) | Variation<br>(column<br>2 minus<br>column 1)<br>(\$'000) | Budget**<br>2008–09<br>(\$'000) |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Administered appropriations</b>                          |                                |   |  |                                 |
| Total administered appropriations                           | –                              | –   | –  | –                               |
| <b>Departmental appropriations</b>                          |                                |   |  |                                 |
| Output Group 1  | 4,256                          | 4,256                                     | –  | 4,037                           |
| Total revenue from government<br>(appropriations)           | 4,256                          | 4,256                                     | –  | 4,037                           |
| Contributing to price of departmental<br>outputs            |                                |   |  |                                 |
| <b>Revenue from other sources</b>                           |                                |   |  |                                 |
| Output Group 1  | 10,310                         | 8,540                                     | (1,770)  | 7,525                           |
| Total revenue from other sources                            | 10,310                         | 8,540                                     | (1,770)  | 7,525                           |
| <b>Total price from departmental outputs</b>                |                                |   |  |                                 |
| (Total revenue from government and<br>from other sources)   | 14,566                         | 12,796                                    | (1,770)  | 11,562                          |
| <b>Total resourcing for Outcome 1</b>                       |                                |   |  |                                 |
| (Total price of outputs and administered<br>appropriations) | 14,566                         | 12,796                                    | (1,770)  | 11,562                          |

Notes: \* Full-year budget, including additional estimates. \*\* Budget prior to additional estimates.

|                                 | Actual 2007–08 | Budget 2008–09 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Average staffing level (number) | 58             | 61             |

### Social justice and equity impacts

The Institute's core function is to conduct high-quality, timely, reliable and relevant research that informs the Australian Government and the community of issues that affect the wellbeing of Australian families and influences policy, services and support for them. In so doing, the Institute indirectly contributes to social justice and equity in the Australian community.

Examples of relevant issues being researched include: social inclusion/exclusion; care of Indigenous children; work–family balance; the effect of drought on families and communities; caring for people with a disability; child care; and sexual assault, among many others.