



Agency overview

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Overview description of agency

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)* is a Melbourne-based statutory agency of the Australian Government established in February 1980 under the Australian *Family Law Act 1975*. The Institute operates within the portfolio of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) and has close links with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), Attorney General's Department (AGD) and other Australian Government portfolios, their departments and agencies. Staff of the Institute are employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. At 30 June 2009, staff numbered 75 people, excluding the Director.

Role and functions

The Institute aims to increase understanding of factors affecting how Australian families function by conducting research and communicating findings to policy-makers, service providers and the broader community.

The Institute's strategic and research plans set the framework for its research activities and guide the research undertaken, including commissioned projects. The Institute facilitates and communicates research findings through its research publications, websites, clearinghouses, information services, presentations and the media.

The Strategic Plan 2006–08, approved by the then Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in May 2006, outlines the roles and functions of the Institute for this annual reporting period. The key strategic objectives were to:

- conduct high-quality research on a broad range of policy-relevant issues regarding families in Australia;
- inform and influence policy development in areas relevant to family wellbeing;
- promote and lead public understanding and debate about factors affecting family functioning and wellbeing;
- identify and communicate current and emerging issues in family research, policy and practice; and
- maintain and strengthen our role as the national centre for research on families.

During 2008–09, new strategic and research plans for the financial years 2009–10 to 2011–12 were developed for approval by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Organisational structure

The Director is responsible for providing the overall leadership of the Institute and shaping its future. He is supported by two Deputy Directors—Deputy Director (Research) and Deputy Director (Corporate & Strategy)—who work together to lead a team of General Managers (GMs) responsible for the management of the day-to-day work of the Institute in meeting its strategic objectives (see Figure 2.1).

* For an explanation of acronyms and abbreviations used in this report, see Appendix C: Acronyms & abbreviations (p. 140).

General Managers (Research) oversee teams of research staff who work on a range of contracted and internally initiated projects, including three longitudinal studies and four clearinghouses. Research staff members are supported by the Corporate and Strategy area, which provides library, website, publishing, finance, information technology, external relations, human resources and other administrative services.

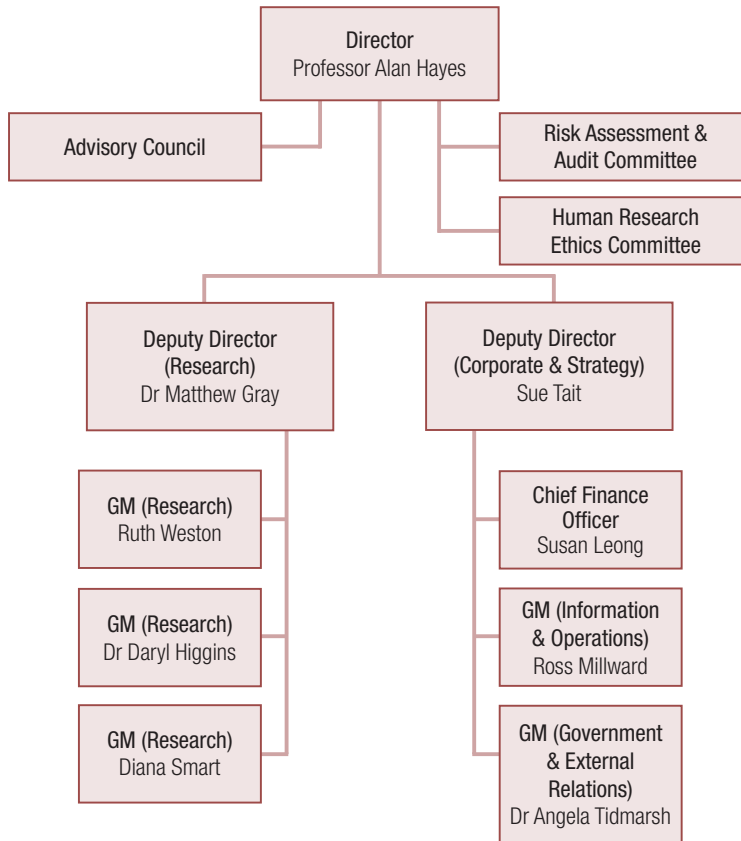


Figure 2.1 AIFS organisational structure

Outcome and output structure

In this reporting period, the Institute operated within the Australian Government’s outcome and output framework published in the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2008–09 (Table 2.1, p. 10). The Institute has one outcome and one output:

- Outcome 1—Inform government, policy-makers and other stakeholders on factors affecting how families function.
- Output 1.1—Information and advice on factors affecting how families function.

All Institute activities are directed to achieving the outcome. Performance indicators, detailed in Chapter 3 (Table 3.1, p. 12), measure output deliverables.

The Institute’s research and communications performance is detailed and discussed in Chapter 3, its management accountability performance in Chapter 4, and its financial performance in Chapter 5.

In February 2009, as part of the Operation Sunlight Outcome Statement Review, the Minister for Finance and Deregulation approved the Institute’s revised outcome statement as follows:

Increased understanding of factors affecting how families function by conducting research and communicating findings to policy-makers, service providers, and the broader community.

This outcome statement has been incorporated into the Institute’s 2009–10 Portfolio Budget Statements and associated research and corporate planning documents.

Table 2.1: Total resources for Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Inform government, policy-makers and other stakeholders on factors affecting how families function	Actual 2008–09 \$’000	Budget 2008–09 \$’000
Output group 1.1:		
Departmental outputs		
Annual departmental appropriation	4,037	4,037
Revenues from other sources (s 31)	9,849	9,326
Subtotal for Output group 1.1	13,886	13,363
Total resources for Outcome 1	13,886	13,363