

**Report on performance**



# REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

## Summary performance information for Outcome 1, Output group 1.1

To contribute to its outcome and deliver its output during 2008–09, the Institute strove to achieve the five strategic objectives set out in the Strategic Plan 2006–08. Achievements in relation to the performance targets that are relevant to the Institute’s activities in 2008–09 are set out in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Summary performance information for Output group 1.1: Information and advice on factors affecting how families function**

2008–09 target	Performance against targets
<b>Conduct high-quality research on a broad range of policy-relevant issues regarding families in Australia</b>	
Analysis of achievements of Research Plan 2006–08	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Research activities”.
Research Plan 2009–11 completed for approval by the Prime Minister	Achieved. Research Plan 2009–12 approved and in effect from 1 July 2009.
Research outputs produced on time and in line with any contractual requirements and deliverables	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Research activities”.
Enhanced research program with at least three new research collaborations or significant new contracts entered into	Achieved. 9 new contracts and MoUs entered into, including 3 contracts of 12 months or more duration.
<b>Inform and influence policy development in areas relevant to family wellbeing</b>	
Successful transition to PM&C portfolio, with all expectations of the Prime Minister for AIFS successfully met	Achieved. Statement of Intent for the reporting period fulfilled.
Demonstrated influence of the Institute’s research in contributing to government policy and programs	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Communications activities”.
Representation on government task forces, committees and working groups	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Communications activities”.
<b>Promote and lead public understanding and debate about factors affecting family functioning and wellbeing</b>	
The Institute’s research findings disseminated to the general public via media, with mentions in the press and geographical spread of reportage maintained at current high levels	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Communications activities”.
Successfully stage the Institute’s national conference	Achieved. AIFS Conference held 9–11 July 2008.
A significant number of Institute-authored journal articles published	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Research activities”.

2008–09 target	Performance against targets
20% of all articles in <i>Family Matters</i> are from external authors	Achieved. 61% of all major articles in <i>Family Matters</i> were from external authors.
<b>Identify and communicate current and emerging issues in family research, policy and practice</b>	
<i>Family Matters</i> published three times per year, as well as a range of other research publications	Achieved. 3 issues of <i>Family Matters</i> and numerous reports, papers and submissions were published during 2008–09. See “Report on performance—Research activities”.
Contracted publications produced on time and on budget	Achieved. See “Report on performance—Research activities”.
Increase in access rates to web-based publications and online mailing services	9.1% increase in publications downloaded in 2008–09. 4.4% decrease in email subscribers at 30 June 2009, attributed to data cleansing of subscriber lists.
Strengthen active partnership arrangements in which the Institute is a participant	Achieved. Existing partnership arrangements strengthened and extended, with 16 commissioning agencies in 2008–09. MoU signed with Norwegian Institute of Public Health in November 2008.
<b>Maintain and strengthen our role as the national centre for research on families</b>	
Strategic Plan 2009–12 completed for approval by the Prime Minister	Achieved. Strategic Plan 2009–12 approved and in effect from 1 July 2009.
Continued focus on Financial Management and Accountability Act governance and business model to ensure best practice	Achieved. See “Corporate governance”.
New collective agreement completed on time and within government policy parameters	Achieved. Amended Certified Agreement in force from 3 March 2009.

## Report on performance—Research activities

The *Family Law Act 1975* requires the Australian Institute of Family Studies to conduct and coordinate research to develop understanding of the factors affecting marital and family stability in Australia. Over the year, the Institute’s research activities have been guided by the Research Plan 2006–08, *Families Through Life: Diversity, Change and Context*. During this reporting period, the 2006–08 Research Plan was completed and a new plan developed to guide the areas in which the Institute intends to undertake research over the three-year period from July 2009 to June 2012.

The Institute’s program of research was highly productive in 2008–09, with major projects being completed and a number of new projects being developed. The Institute continued to provide timely, relevant and rigorous research that helped provide the evidence base for the development of family-related policies, inform understanding of issues affecting Australian families, and provide information that is used by other researchers.

## Structure of the research program

The Institute's research program is structured around four themes:

- family relationships;
- children, youth and patterns of care;
- families and work; and
- families and community life.

The majority of the Institute's research projects relate to more than one research theme. A summary of the Institute's research projects and how they related to these themes is provided in Table 3.2.

The Institute conducts its research to deliver information that is:

- rigorous, high-quality and credible;
- relevant to current and emerging policy, professional, research and community interests relating to family functioning and wellbeing;
- responsive, timely and targeted in its delivery; and
- effectively and efficiently communicated to all stakeholders.

Research activities are either initiated by the Institute or commissioned by an external body. Institute-initiated research is generally funded from the budget appropriation.

Research projects conducted by the Institute vary significantly in both scale and type, and include:

- **Research projects**—Research projects provide evidence relating to current and emerging social policy issues such as the social effects of drought and the relationship between families, and labour markets. Research projects vary from short- to long-term duration, with the outputs including substantial research papers, articles, commissioned reports, presentations and online content.
- **Major evaluations and reviews**—Major evaluations of government policies and programs include the Family Law Reform Evaluation and the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation.
- **Longitudinal studies**—Large-scale longitudinal studies, such as *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* and the Australian Temperament Project, provide valuable data on child social and emotional development that are being widely used.
- **Advisory projects**—Specialist advisory services, ranging from a few days' to a few weeks' duration, are performed under contract for government agencies. AIFS advisory services are typically of strategic policy value, with Institute advice integrated by the commissioning agency with expertise received from other internal and external sources.
- **Clearinghouses**—The Institute currently manages four clearinghouses funded by the Australian Government to identify, collect, evaluate and synthesise research resources about a specialist area and to disseminate that information to policy and practice professionals.

This chapter includes a summary report of performance, followed by detailed description of the each of the Institute's research projects (beginning on p. 17).

## Social justice and equity impacts

Much of the research conducted by the Institute provides an evidence base that may be used to advance social justice and equity in Australia. For example, in this reporting period the Institute researched 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. The Institute’s research outputs on these and other topics are used to inform the development of social policy and the delivery of social services for the Australian community.

**Table 3.2 Summary of Institute research projects, 2008–09**

Project	Research themes				Page no.
	Family relationships	Children, youth and patterns of care	Families and work	Families and community life	
<b>Research projects</b>					
Australian Temperament Project	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	17
Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project		✓			19
Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation		✓✓			19
Child Support and Labour Market Participation	✓		✓✓		20
Driving Behaviour Study		✓✓			21
Families Caring for a Person With a Disability	✓	✓✓	✓		22
Family Law: Experiences of Parents and Children After Family Court Decisions About Relocation	✓✓	✓✓			23
Family Law Reform Evaluation	✓✓	✓✓			24
Family Law: Understanding Contact Disputes	✓✓	✓✓	✓		25
Family Trends and Transitions	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	26
FUN for Kids Program Evaluation	✓	✓		✓✓	27
<i>Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children</i>	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	28
Home-to-School Transitions of Financially Disadvantaged Children		✓✓			32
Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families	✓		✓✓		33
Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children	✓		✓✓		34
Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project		✓✓			36
National Approach for Child Protection		✓			37

✓✓ – most relevant    ✓ – some relevance

Project	Research themes				Page no.
	Family relationships	Children, youth and patterns of care	Families and work	Families and community life	
Negotiating the Life Course	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	37
Neighbourhood Effects on Children's Wellbeing		✓✓		✓✓	38
Northern Territory: Child Safety and Wellbeing		✓✓		✓✓	39
Reconciling Work and Family Life: Review of Government Initiatives	✓	✓	✓✓		40
Rural and Regional Families: The Impact of Drought and Economic and Social Change	✓		✓	✓✓	41
Rural and Remote Carers in Australia	✓		✓	✓✓	42
Social Inclusion: Origins, Concepts and Key Themes	✓	✓	✓	✓	43
Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation	✓	✓		✓✓	44
Time Use in Families	✓	✓✓		✓✓	46
Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides	✓	✓✓			47
<b>Clearinghouses</b>					
Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault	✓			✓✓	48
Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	52
Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia	✓	✓		✓✓	56
National Child Protection Clearinghouse	✓	✓✓		✓	58

✓✓ – most relevant    ✓ – some relevance

## DETAILS OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

### Australian Temperament Project

Project duration	1983–	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation; Australian Research Council Discovery Grant	
Partner organisation(s)	University of Melbourne; Deakin University; Royal Children’s Hospital	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	✓
Related project(s)	Driving Behaviour Study	

The Australian Temperament Project (ATP) is an ongoing, longitudinal study following young people’s psychosocial development from infancy into adulthood. It investigates 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 waves of data collection have been completed across the first 24 years of life. The most recent was undertaken 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.

In 2008, a 3-year Australian Research Council Discovery Grant was awarded to investigate the factors and processes that promote positive development in early adulthood and to partially fund the 15th data collection wave at age 27–28 years in 2010.

During the reporting period, a range of research was undertaken using the ATP survey data. Issues investigated included the quality of relationships between young adults and their parents, parents’ perceptions of their parenting roles, positive development in early adulthood, and patterns of risk-taking and adjustment difficulties from adolescence to adulthood.

The dissemination of study findings continued to be a major focus during 2008 and 2009, and the ATP continued to attract considerable media attention during the year, with the study being publicised in newspaper articles, radio interviews and on television news. The number of pages downloaded from the ATP website increased by 15.5% from the previous financial year.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Statistical analysis of Wave 14 and longitudinal data	Statistical analyses completed and ongoing	Provides valuable Australian data on the wellbeing of young adults, as well as insights for policies and programs aimed at assisting young people to successfully navigate early adulthood
Preparation and dissemination of journal articles, book chapters and conference presentations	7 journal articles 1 book chapter 5 presentations 2 newsletters	Findings cited in national and international publications. Media interest; requests for advice from other national and international researchers; invitations to present at workshops, seminars and conferences
Provide and maintain the ATP website	Pages updated	Increased accessing of the ATP website and downloading of publications

## Publications

- Hawkins, M. T., Letcher, P., Sanson, A. V., Smart, D., & Toumbourou, J. W. (2009). Positive development in emerging adulthood, *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 61(2), 89–99.
- Letcher, P., Smart, D., Sanson, A. V. & Toumbourou, J. W. (2009). Psychosocial precursors and correlates of differing internalizing trajectories from 3 to 15 years. *Social Development*, 18(3), 618–646.
- Parker, R., & Vassallo, S. (2009). Young adults' attitudes towards marriage. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 12, 18–21.
- Sanson A. V., Letcher, P., & Smart, D. (2008). Temperament in early adolescence. In N. Allen & L. Sheeber (Eds.), *Adolescent emotional development and the emergence of depressive disorders* (pp. 215–237). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sanson, A. V., Letcher, P., Smart, D., Prior, M., Toumbourou, J. W., & Oberklaid, F. (2009). Associations between early childhood temperament clusters and later psychosocial adjustment. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 55(1), 26–54.
- Smart, D. (2008). The views of young people about relationships. *Threshold*, 93, 24–25.
- Smart, D., & Vassallo, S. (2008). Pathways to social and emotional wellbeing: Lessons from a 24-year longitudinal study. In *Research conference 2008: Touching the future. Building skills for life and work: Conference proceedings* (pp. 54–59). Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Vassallo, S. (2008). *Year 2008 newsletter: To all ATP members*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Vassallo, S. (2008). *Year 2008 Newsletter: To all ATP parents*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Vassallo, S., Smart, D., & Price-Robertson, R. (2009). The roles that parents play in the lives of their young adult children. *Family Matters*, 82, 8–14.

## Presentations

- Smart, D., & Sanson, A. (2008, 10 July). *Patterns of risk taking and adjustment problems from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties: Trends from the Australian Temperament Project*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Vassallo, S. (2008, 10 July). *How well do parents and young adults get along together? Views of young adults and their parents*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Smart, D. (2008, 11 July). *Do Australian children today have more problems than 20 years ago?* 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Smart, D., & Vassallo, S. (2008, 12 August). *Pathways to social and emotional wellbeing: Lessons from a 24-year longitudinal study*. ACER Research Conference 2008, Brisbane.
- Vassallo, S., & Smart, D. (2008, 18 December). *Risk-taking and adjustment difficulties among young Australians: Insights from the Australian Temperament Project*. Victorian Department of Human Services, Melbourne.

## Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project

Project duration	June–December 2008	
Funding source(s)	National Child Protection and Support Services Data Group through the South Australian Government	
Partner organisation(s)	AIHW	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation; Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project; National Approach for Child Protection; Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides; National Child Protection Clearinghouse	

In 2007, the Institute was commissioned by the South Australian Government (on behalf of the National Child Protection and Support Services Data Group) to analyse the differences in child protection rates *across* jurisdictions and in rates over time *within* jurisdictions; and to identify and assess factors that may explain these differences. The project was conducted in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Findings have been disseminated through NCPC.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Project report	Project report Conference presentation	The project clarifies an area of confusion regarding child protection data in Australia: reasons for variations over time and between jurisdictions in child protection activity data

### Publication

Holzer, P. J., & Bromfield, L. M. (2008). *NCPASS Comparability of Child Protection Data: Project report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Presentation

Holzer, P. J. (2008, 18–20 August). *The comparability of Australian statutory child protection activity data: Making sense of differences across Australian states and territories*. Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Conference: Strong, Safe and Sustainable: Responding to Children, Young People and Families in a Civil Society, Sydney.

## Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation

Project duration	2007–10	
Funding source(s)	Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia	
Partner organisation(s)	University of South Australia; University of Melbourne	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–

Related project(s)	Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project; Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project; National Approach for Child Protection; Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides; National Child Protection Clearinghouse
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The Institute, in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia, and the University of Melbourne, is investigating child protection policy reform. Using Victoria and South Australia as case studies, this project examines the extent to which research plays a part in child protection reform processes, as well as other drivers that lead to and shape the direction of policy reform.

South Australia and Victoria were chosen as case studies because both jurisdictions have implemented innovative child protection reforms (i.e., the Victorian Every Child, Every Chance initiative and associated early intervention strategies, and the South Australian whole-of-government Keeping Them Safe initiative). The project has encompassed a content analysis of publicly available primary sources relating to the South Australian and Victorian child protection policy developments, as well as interviews and focus groups with key government and non-government players in both jurisdictions.

Dr Leah Bromfield and Dr Daryl Higgins from the Institute are Partner Investigators in this project.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Qualitative data collection	Interviews completed and data analysed	The project aims to provide information regarding policy development to better enable researchers to facilitate evidence-informed policy and reform
Project report/journal article	1 journal article 1 manuscript accepted for publication by <i>Australian Social Work</i> Final report is currently in development	

### Publication

Arney, E., Bromfield, L. M., Lewig, K., & Holzer, P. J. (2009). Integrating strategies for delivering evidence-informed practice. *Evidence & Policy*, 5(2), 179–191.

## Child Support and Labour Market Participation

Project duration	2007–09	
Funding source(s)	FaHCSIA	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	–
	Families and work	✓✓
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families; Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children; Negotiating the Life Course; Reconciling Work and Family Life: Review of Government Initiatives	

This project studied the impact of child support payments on resident mothers' decisions about participating in the labour market. Despite the growth in the number of separated families over the last three decades, little Australian evidence exists 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 uses data from *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* collected in 2004 and 2006 and therefore the estimates are for the Child Support Scheme that was in place prior to the reforms that arose from the recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support and which were fully implemented in July 2008.

The project has been completed and the resulting research will be published by the Institute in the next financial year.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Final report	Delivered	The first Australian study into the effect of child support payments on labour supply

### Publication

Taylor, M., & Gray, M. (2009). *The impact of child support payments on the labour supply decisions of resident mothers: Report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Driving Behaviour Study

Project duration	2002–09	
Funding source(s)	Transport Accident Commission; Royal Automobile Club of Victoria; appropriation	
Partner organisation(s)	Transport Accident Commission; Royal Automobile Club of Victoria	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓
Related project(s)	Australian Temperament Project	

The Driving Behaviour Study used data from the Australian Temperament Project to examine the road safety behaviours of young people and the personal, family and wider environmental factors associated with differing profiles of driving behaviour.

The project began in 2002 with the collection of data on young adults' (19–20 years) learner driving experiences, current driving patterns and risky driving behaviours, using the ATP longitudinal dataset to investigate the personal, family and wider environmental factors associated with differing types of driving behaviours. In 2006, similar data was collected on the driver history and experiences of the 23–24 year old ATP study members as part of Wave 14. The report from the 2nd phase covers five main issues: (a) driving behaviour trends at 23–24 years of age; (b) connections between differing types of driving behaviours at 23–24 years, such as speeding, drink driving, crash involvement and risky driving; (c) cross-time stability and change in risky

driving from 19–20 to 23–24 years; (d) links between substance use and driving; and (e) family, personal and lifestyle influences on young people’s driving behaviour. It is anticipated that the final report will be released in late 2009.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Statistical analyses of Wave 13 and 14 data	Analyses completed	Due to the scant information available on driving behaviours among young Australians in their mid-twenties, the study will be a valuable source of new information
Preparation of draft report	Draft report completed and submitted to commissioning agencies	Findings will provide new Australian evidence to inform policy development

### Families Caring for a Person With a Disability

Project duration	2006–09	
Funding source(s)	FaHCSIA; appropriation	
Partner organisation(s)	Carers Branch, FaHCSIA	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	–

The project documents 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.

Using computer-assisted telephone interviews, 1,002 carers of a person with a disability were interviewed from around Australia. The interview schedule was developed through examination of the research literature and consultation with experts from the AIHW and the disability support and university sectors. The final commissioned report was published in June 2008. The research was continued by the Institute into 2008–09 and additional publications and presentations extended the outcomes of the research.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Articles drafted and submitted for publication in academic journals	4 articles published	To inform policy-makers responsible for shaping and improving the way support and services are provided to families caring for a person with a disability
Papers presented at conferences	2 presentations	

#### Publications

Edwards, B., & Higgins, D. (2009). Is caring a health hazard? The mental health and vitality of carers of a person with a disability in Australia. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 190(7), S61–S65.

Edwards, B. (2009). Caring for families caring for a person with a disability. *Australian Family Relationships Quarterly*, 11, 3–9.

Gilmore, L., Cuskelly, M., Jobling, A., & Hayes, A. (2009). Maternal support for autonomy: Relationships with persistence for children with Down syndrome and typically developing children. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 30, 1023–1033.

Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2009). Determinants of the labour force status of female carers. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 12, 5–21.

### Submission

Edwards, B., Higgins, D., & Gray, M. (2008). *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth Inquiry into Better Support for Carers: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Presentation

Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2008, 9–11 July). *Caring and women's labour market participation*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Edwards, B., & Higgins, D. (2008, 30 September). *Family carers of a person with a disability*. Centre for Public Policy Forum Series: Disability National Insurance: Is There a Problem and is This the Solution?, University of Melbourne.

## Family Law: Experiences of Parents and Children After Family Court Decisions About Relocation

Project duration	2006–09	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation	
Partner organisation(s)	Australian National University (ANU)	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Family Law Reform Evaluation; Family Law: Understanding Contact Disputes	

The aim of this project is to explore the impact of court decisions involving relocation disputes on families. In addition to a literature review, it has three main elements:

- a series of one-to-one interviews with 39 mothers and fathers who have litigated disputes over relocation in the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court between 2002 and June 2005;
- an analysis of all Family Court relocation judgements handed down between 2002 and June 2005—access to the judgements has been negotiated through the court and analysis of the judgements provides benchmark data that will assist in developing understanding of relocation decision-making generally and the impact of the *Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006* (Cth) in this area; and
- a demographic analysis of relocation in Australia.

The Chief Investigators for this project are Professor Juliet Behrens and Associate Professor Bruce Smyth of the ANU. Dr Rae Kaspiew, AIFS, is a Partner Investigator.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Final report	Final report close to completion	Inform understanding about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ experiences of parents after court decisions about relocation;</li> <li>■ court decision-making in relocation disputes prior to the 2006 reforms to the <i>Family Law Act 1975</i> (Cth); and</li> <li>■ the demographic context of relocation.</li> </ul>
Articles published in refereed journals	Two articles prepared	
Presentations	Abstracts submitted for presentation at 1 international and 2 Australian conferences	

## Family Law Reform Evaluation

Project duration	2007–09	
Funding source(s)	AGD; FaHCSIA	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Family Law: Experiences of Parents and Children After Family Court Decisions About Relocation; Family Law: Understanding Contact Disputes	

In response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs *Every Picture Tells a Story* report (2003), the Australian Government undertook a major reform of the family law system. The new system, which came into effect on 1 July 2006, was 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 to provide baseline data against which the effects of the new family law system could be assessed. This work involved: (a) conducting (by telephone) the General Population of Parents of a Child Under 18 Years Survey (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 communities or selected culturally and linguistically diverse 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

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 nearing completion, with fieldwork due to be completed by the end of 2009.

The research program for the 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.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Implement post-reform methodology, collect data and write reports	Presentations and interim reports provided to stakeholders	Collection and analysis of data that ensure that ensure the reforms are properly evaluated

## Family Law: Understanding Contact Disputes

Project duration	2004–09	
Funding source(s)	AGD; appropriation	
Partner organisation(s)	Sydney Law School, University of Sydney	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Family Law: Experiences of Parents and Children After Family Court Decisions About Relocation; Family Law Reform Evaluation	

The aim of this project is to gain insight into the prevalence of parental disputes about contact and the dynamics and trigger events that lead to disputes on contact that escalate 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.

All sets of data have 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

### Family Trends and Transitions

Project duration	Since 1980 (ongoing)	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	✓✓
	Families and community life	✓

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. During the reporting period, the Family Facts and Figures section of the website was re-structured to provide better access to the data.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Publish articles, present papers at conferences and seminars, and participate in media interviews	5 articles published 1 Facts Sheet published 9 presentations 1 submission to Parliamentary inquiry	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
Provide and maintain online database, Family Facts and Figures, on Institute website	Updated 5 series Added 1 series	Continuing requests for media interviews and invitations to present at both national and overseas conferences Findings stimulate debates in media

## Publications

- Baxter, J., Gray, M., & Hayes, A. (2009). *Diverse families making a difference* (Facts Sheet). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Qu, L. (2008). Work and family balance: Issues in research and policy. *Family Matters*, 80, 6–8.
- Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2009). Opinions of parents on the acquisition of parenting and relationship skills. *Family Matters*, 81, 55–57.
- Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2009). Attitudes towards divorce. *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 11, 18–24.
- Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2009). Relationships between grandparents and grandchildren. *Family Matters*, 81, 58–60.
- Weston, R., Qu, L., & de Vaus, D. (2008). Cohabitation: Level of stability and post-cohabitation pathways. *Threshold*, 92, 18–20.

## Submissions

- Weston, R., Qu, L., & Kaspiew, R. (2008). *Inquiry into the Family Law Amendment (De Facto Financial Matters and Other Measures) Bill 2008 [Provisions]: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Presentations

- de Vaus, D., Gray, M., Qu, L., & Stanton, D. (2008, 9–11 July). *Divorce and personal well-being of older Australians*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2008, 9–11 July). *Parental cohabitation and children's wellbeing*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Weston, R. (2008, 9–11 July). *Families through life: Complications, risks and opportunities*. Keynote address, 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 1–2 November). *From form to function: Framing family policy to address contemporary choices, changes and challenges*. International Relationships Symposium, Melbourne.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 20 November). *Child development and family functioning in Australia: Some new insights from Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Presentation to Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, Norway.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 3 December). *Trends in Australian family form and functioning*. Presentation to Department of Planning and Community Development, Victoria.
- Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2008, 15 December). *Selected family trends in Australia: Implications for CSA?* Child Support Agency National Leadership Forum, Adelaide.
- Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2009, 9 April). *Demographics of ageing and fertility*. Presentation to Principles of Social Policy course, ANU, Canberra.
- Weston, R., & Qu, L. (2009, 30 April). *Parental separation, family relationships and wellbeing*. Presentation to Service Delivery Executive, Child Support Agency.

## FUN for Kids Program Evaluation

Project duration	2006–08	
Funding source(s)	Relationships Australia (Victoria)	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓✓

The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the Relationships Australia (Victoria) Fathers Utilising Networks for Kids (FUN for Kids) program on participating fathers and their families.

The FUN for Kids program is a parenting education program for fathers that has been operating in Victoria since 2001. The program is coordinated by Relationship Australia (Victoria) in conjunction with maternal and child health centres, preschools, kindergartens and primary schools. The program focuses on increasing fathering skills and knowledge within a whole-of-family approach.

The project had a primary focus on the father’s perspective. However, it also included the views from immediate family members and service providers. In the study, the Institute assessed the impacts of the program on the participating fathers, their family relationships and access to community networks. The final report also briefly reviewed evaluations of other fathers programs in Australia.

The evaluation found that the value of the program varied according to the child’s developmental stage, but, on the whole, participating fathers felt more confident, learnt about certain parenting skills, or were able to further develop relationships with their children as a result of the program.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Final report	Draft report completed Final report completed	Relationships Australia (Victoria) are using the evaluation to inform their service planning and ongoing quality assurance processes.

### Publications

Wise, S. (2008). *The FUN for Kids Program: External evaluation draft report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Wise, S. (Ed.), with Adams, R., Berlyn, C., Cheney, H., & Oke, N. (2008). *The Fathers Utilising Networks for Kids (FUN for Kids) program: External evaluation*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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

Project duration	2002–19	
Funding source(s)	FaHCSIA	
Partner organisation(s)	FaHCSIA; ABS; Consortium Advisory Group	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	✓

*Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)*, is a major study that is following the development of 10,000 children and families from urban and rural areas of all states and territories of Australia and addresses a range of questions about children’s development and wellbeing. The study is conducted in a partnership between FaHCSIA, the Institute and the ABS, with advice provided by a consortium of leading researchers. 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, preschool and primary school and their broader communities. A major aim of the study is to identify policy opportunities for improving supports for children and families and for early intervention and prevention strategies.

The study commenced in 2002 with the recruitment in 2004 of two cohorts of approximately 5,000 infants aged 0–1 years, and 5,000 children aged 4–5 years, and their parents. Families have been interviewed every two years, with information being collected from resident and non-resident parents, teachers, child care providers, and the children themselves. In addition, three between-waves mail surveys were undertaken in 2005, 2007 and 2009.

## Commitment to Waves 5 to 8

A major advance for the study was reached during the reporting period when the Australian Government extended the study for a further four waves, taking the study to 2019. This will yield a total of eight waves of data on children's development from infancy through to the threshold of adulthood. During 2008–09, discussions were held about the operation of the study in this next phase.

## Wave 3 data collection

During 2008–09, the Wave 3 data collection was completed, with 8,718 interviews conducted. This represents approximately 86% of the original sample and 94% of the families who participated in Wave 2. A major innovation for this wave was the introduction of telephone interviews with non-resident parents. Around eighty per cent of non-resident parents for whom contact information was provided participated in the telephone interviews—an excellent result. Wave 3 data will be released in August 2009.

## Wave 3.5 data collection

The third between-waves mail survey (Wave 3.5) was developed during 2008–09 and mailed out to parents in June 2009. This short survey focuses on the children's development and covers their use of media and technology, health, transition to school for the younger cohort, and parental involvement in learning for the older cohort.

## Development of Wave 4

Development of the Wave 4 data collection was a major activity for 2008–09. Measures and materials were finalised, and pre-testing of new content and methodologies was undertaken. Several significant methodology changes are proposed for Wave 4, which will be conducted in 2010. While the primary data collection method of a face-to-face interview with the child's main parent will continue, other data collection methods are being introduced to improve data quality and response rates, and ensure that time spent with families is used efficiently and effectively. These include:

- the collection of information during the interviewer's initial phone call;
- a computer-assisted self-interview with the child's main parent (formerly a self-complete questionnaire) at the same time as the interviewer works with the child;

- parents not being asked to complete time use diaries about the child's activities; instead, the older cohort will work with the interviewer to record details of their activities on the previous day, using a newly developed computer-assisted time use diary; and
- an increased number of questions for the older cohort of children (who will be aged 10–11 years), which will be administered as an audio computer-assisted self-interview (formerly a face-to-face, interviewer-administered interview).

## Data linkage

The study received written permission from most parents of children in the older cohort to access their child's results from the new National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy tests, to supplement the information already collected in the study. These tests provide information on students' academic ability in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. Letters were sent to state and territory education authorities in 2009 to arrange access to the data of children for whom parental permission had been obtained. Arrangements have been made with most authorities and it is anticipated that data linkage will occur later this year.

## Data Expert Reference Group

A Data Expert Reference Group has been established and met twice in 2008–09, in February and June 2009. The group's role is to recommend or review data management processes and provide advice on issues such as data manipulation, variable derivation, weighting and treatment of missing data. The group is chaired by Professor Stephen Zubrick, who also chairs the study's Consortium Advisory Group.

## *Life at 3* documentary

In September and October 2008, ABC TV screened *Life at 3*, the second in the *Life at* documentary series, which has been very well received. The Institute has contributed to this 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 the 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 as well as statistical analyses of the LSAC dataset for use in the series.

## Dissemination and promotion of LSAC

The dissemination and promotion of LSAC continued, with several papers and reports being published, two symposia showcasing the study being presented at the AIFS Conference 2008, and papers being presented at other national and international forums. The study received considerable media attention through newspaper articles, radio interviews and television coverage. A variety of promotional materials were produced for study participants and the study website.

Many of the Institute's projects use LSAC data, and these are listed elsewhere in this report under the relevant projects.

During the reporting period, preparations began for the 2nd LSAC conference, to be held in December 2009.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Completion of Wave 3 main data collection	Data collection completed. Very good response rates achieved: 86% of Wave 1 families (generally mother and child) interviewed. For families interviewed at Wave 3, data also obtained for 70% of fathers, 80% of non-resident parents where contact information available; and 80% of teachers Preparation of Wave 3 data for release in 2009–10	Comprehensive, high-quality and relevant information collected about the wellbeing and progress of Australian children and families that can inform policy development Preparation of data on track
Wave 3.5, between-waves mail-out survey	Questionnaires developed, tested and finalised, with appropriate stakeholder consultation, by start April 2009 Mail-out occurred on schedule on 9 June 2009	Information obtained on policy-relevant issues regarding children and families
Development of Wave 4	Content and methodologies developed, tested and finalised, and other study materials produced, with appropriate stakeholder consultation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consortium Advisory Group face-to face meeting in November 2008 and series of teleconferences to finalise content;</li> <li>■ several rounds of pre-testing undertaken for new content and methodology;</li> <li>■ content and methodologies finalised for Dress Rehearsal, including development of new time use diary for children, and computerised self-interviews for parents and children;</li> <li>■ detailed specifications prepared for multiple survey instruments (both computerised and pen and paper), by start April 2009; and</li> <li>■ all other field materials (letters, brochures, etc.) developed by end June 2009</li> </ul>	On track for conduct of Dress Rehearsal in July–September 2009
Provide and maintain LSAC website	Online newsletters regularly posted on the LSAC website Activities, personnel and publications pages updated	Increasing number of website visitors and downloads
Publicise the study through conference presentations, papers and reports	LSAC 2007–08 <i>Annual Report</i> released Commissioned reports published Presentations made at conferences Print, radio and television media interviews undertaken LSAC data used in several other AIFS projects	Public profile of the study enhanced Interest in the findings from policy-makers Strong media interest
Facilitate use of LSAC data through training workshops and user group services	Regular web updates on status of data files, telephone and email support provided User training for main data set provided in July 2008 User training for time use diary data provided in December 2008	Increased understanding of dataset among potential and novice users Increased number of requests for data access Data queries dealt with promptly

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Encourage use of LSAC data	Increase in registered users to around 300	More widespread use of LSAC data enhances the value of the study to policy-makers and researchers
Maintain sample engagement through distribution of birthday cards and other materials	Birthday cards sent to children 2009 calendar, and respondent and children's newsletters sent to all families Study updates prepared and distributed	Sample engagement maintained Sample retention and representativeness facilitated

## Publications

Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2008). *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children 2007-08 annual report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Misson, S. (2009, May). *Wave 3 data management issues: Report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs* (LSAC Discussion Paper No. 6). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team. (2009, March). *Wave 3.5 report on testing: Report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Other publications

*Growing Up in Australia* 2009 calendar.

*Growing Up in Australia* study update (for respondents), June 2009.

*Growing Up in Australia* birthday card, 2009.

### Newsletters

*Growing Up in Australia* online newsletter, No. 21, September 2008.

*Growing Up in Australia* online newsletter, No. 22, Summer 2009.

*Growing Up in Australia* online newsletter, No. 23, Autumn 2009.

*Growing Up in Australia* (newsletter for study parents), December 2008.

*Hello from Growing Up in Australia* (newsletter for study children), December 2008.

## Presentations

Misson, S. (2008, 9-11 July). *Determining the effects of housing costs on the well-being of Australian families*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Soloff, C. (2008, 3-6 October). *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Study methodology and background*. Early Childhood Australia Biennial National Conference, Canberra.

Gray, M. (2008, 30 October - 2 November). *Early years longitudinal study: What the data is saying*. Australian General Practice Network Forum, Darwin.

## Home-to-School Transitions of Financially Disadvantaged Children

Project duration	2008-09
Funding source(s)	The Smith Family

Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓

In 2008, the Smith Family commissioned the Institute to undertake a project on the home-to-school transitions of children from financially disadvantaged families. The project aimed to provide evidence concerning the key influences on, and practices of, Australian children and their families, particularly those in disadvantaged circumstances, in preparing for school and during the first years of school. A further aim of the project was to provide evidence that could inform decisions about where and how investment in program development might best be placed for greatest impact.

The project involved a literature review, analysis of the LSAC data set, and the preparation of a report. The project was completed in November 2008 with the publication and release of the report. The findings have received considerable attention from policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and the media, and dissemination of the findings will continue in 2009–10.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Literature review	Literature review completed	Informs policies and interventions to assist children and families
Statistical analyses of LSAC data	Analyses completed	
Preparation of commissioned report	Report completed, published and released	

### Publication

Smart, D., Sanson, A., Baxter, J., Edwards, B., & Hayes, A. (2008). *Home-to-school transitions for financially disadvantaged children*. Sydney: The Smith Family.

### Presentations

Smart, D., Sanson, A., Baxter, J., Edwards, B., & Hayes, A. (2008, 20 November). *Home-to-school transitions for financially disadvantaged children*. Launch of report at the Smith Family Annual General Meeting, Sydney.

Smart, D., Sanson, A., Baxter, J., Edwards, B. & Hayes, A. (2009, 22–24 June). *School readiness and vulnerable children*. Resilient Families Need Resilient Workers Symposium, Melbourne.

## Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families

Project duration	Ongoing	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	–
	Families and work	✓✓
	Families and community life	–

Related project(s)	Child Support and Labour Market Participation; Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children; Negotiating the Life Course; Reconciling Work and Family Life: Review of Government Initiatives
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This research explores 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.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Publications and conference papers	1 book chapter 1 conference paper	Contributes to policy development as it relates to the wellbeing of relationships and families

### Publication

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

### Presentations

Gray, M., & Baxter, J. (2008, 9–11 July). *The labour market and financial consequences of relationship breakdown and re-partnering of mothers with young children*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

de Vaus, D., Gray, M., Qu, L., & Stanton, D. (2009, 18 June). *The effect of relationship breakdown on income and social exclusion*. Foundation for International Studies on Social Security 16th International Research Seminar, Sigtuna, Sweden.

## Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children

Project duration	Ongoing
Funding source(s)	Appropriation
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships ✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care –
	Families and work ✓✓
	Families and community life –
Related project(s)	Child Support and Labour Market Participation; Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families; Negotiating the Life Course; Reconciling Work and Family Life: Review of Government Initiatives

This is an ongoing project that encompasses analyses of several work–family policy areas. 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, including analyses of the timing of mothers’ return to work, their use of leave, and the perceived value of a range of work–family policies. A second strand has involved research into the impacts of different types

of jobs and working conditions (including working hours and flexible work arrangements) on family wellbeing. This work has also analysed the links between mothers returning to work following childbearing and breastfeeding and whether there are particular work conditions or patterns of work that are associated with mothers continuing breastfeeding. The third strand has examined issues of labour market participation of parents with young children and how children are cared for.

The Institute has also conducted work on the impact of recessions on families, particularly those with dependent children. This work has been conducted in response to the global recession, which has had a significant impact on the Australian economy, and will be published in the next reporting period.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Publications and conference papers	1 <i>Family Matters</i> article 6 other journal articles 1 submission 5 presentations	Contribution to policy development in relation to supportive workplace and family environments

### Publications

- Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2008). Mothers' work-family strain in single and couple parent families: The role of job characteristics and supports. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 43(2), 195-214.
- Baxter, J. (2008). Breastfeeding, employment and leave: An analysis of mothers in *Growing Up in Australia*. *Family Matters*, 80, 17-26.
- Baxter, J. (2008). Is money the main reason mothers return to work after childbearing? *Journal of Population Research*, 25(2), 141-160.
- Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2008). Work and family responsibilities through life. *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, 15(3), 9-12.
- Baxter, J., Cooklin, C., & Smith, J. (2009). Which mothers wean their babies prematurely from full breastfeeding? An Australian cohort study. *Acta Paediatrica*, 98(8), 1274-1277.
- Gray, M., & Hunter, B. (2009). Families through life: Selected issues for labour economists. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 12(1), 1-4.
- Renda, J., Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2009). Exploring the work-family policies mothers say would help after the birth of a child. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 12(1) 65-87.

### 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.

### Presentations

- Baxter, J. (2008, 30 June - 3 July). *Is money the main reason mothers return to work after childbearing? A quantitative analysis of reasons for return to work*. 14th biennial conference of the Australian Population Association, Alice Springs.
- Baxter, J., Renda, J., Alexander, M., Whitehouse, G., & Baird, M. (2008, 9-11 July). *What mothers want: Exploring the policies mothers say would help after the birth of a child*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.
- Gray, M. (2009, 10 June). *The economic crisis and the wellbeing of families*. Melbourne Institute Public Economics Forum: Work, Family and the Economic Crisis, Canberra.
- Renda, J., Baxter, J., & Alexander, M. (2008, 24 November). *Mothers' views on which parental leave policies would be helpful*. Parental Leave: Assessing Impacts and Refining Policy Directions Research Forum, Brisbane.

Baxter, J., & Gray, M. (2009, 16 June). *Parents who don't use child care: Who provides the care in working couple families with infants?* New Zealand Families Commission Research Seminar, Wellington, New Zealand.

## Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project

Project duration	2007–08	
Funding source(s)	Victorian Department of Human Services	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project; Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation; National Approach for Child Protection; Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides; National Child Protection Clearinghouse	

The aim of the project was to build an empirical database from information recorded on the assessment section of the Looking After Children Assessment and Action Records, completed since 1 July 2006 (for children under 5 years of age) and 1 January 2006 (for children 5 years and over) for children in out-of-home care in Victoria.

The project involved designing a coding framework for each item across six age-related Assessment and Action Records, entering data from 614 records, and conducting an analysis on 30 select items relating to children’s health, education, identity, social presentation, self-care and family and social relationships.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Dissemination	2 conference presentations Final report 1 newsletter article	Strong interest from policy-makers and practitioners who are using the data to better understand the needs of young people in care and improve services that are offered

### Publications

Wise, S., & Egger, S. (2008). *The Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project: Final report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Wise, S. (2009). The Looking After Children Data Outcomes Project. *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 17(1), 10–15.

### Presentations

Champion, R., & Wise, S. (2008, 7–9 July). *Using Looking After Children records in Victoria, Australia*. Care Matters: Transforming Lives/Improving Outcomes Conference Incorporating the 8th International Looking After Children Conference, Keble College, Oxford, UK.

Wise, S., & Champion, R. (2008, 9–11 July). *Using the Looking After Children records for knowledge building and service improvement*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

## National Approach for Child Protection

Project duration	2006–08	
Funding source(s)	Community and Disability Services Ministers Advisory Council	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project; Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation; Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project; Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides; National Child Protection Clearinghouse	

The objective of the National Approach for Child Protection project was to identify commonalities and differences at a high level across Australian jurisdictions in child protection policy and practice. The project found that, while there were differences between jurisdictions in child protection responses, there were common challenges and shared strategic directions in child protection across Australia.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Project report	2 project reports completed Fact sheet published	Of strategic importance to the eight state and territory child protection departments Provides resource to inform development of the National Child Protection Framework

### Publications

- Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *A National Approach for Child Protection: Project report. A report to the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC)*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *National Approach for Child Protection: Project report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. J. (2008). *Protecting Australian children: Analysis of key challenges and strategic directions from the CDSMC National Approach for Child Protection Project (Fact Sheet)*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Negotiating the Life Course

Project duration	2006–11
Funding source(s)	Appropriation
Partner organisation(s)	Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute; School of Social Science, University of Queensland

Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	✓✓
	Families and community life	✓
Related project(s)	Child Support and Labour Market Participation; Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families; Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children; Reconciling Work and Family Life: Review of Government Initiatives	

Negotiating the Life Course is a longitudinal survey undertaken by the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute and the School of Social Science, University of Queensland. AIFS also contributes through the involvement of a senior research staff member as Partner Investigator to the project.

The study tracks the changing life courses and decision-making processes of Australian men and women as families and society move from male breadwinner orientation towards higher levels of gender equity.

In addition to helping with the ongoing development of the survey, AIFS resources have been directed to analysis of the survey data. The focus of this analysis has been examining women's labour market participation in terms of life cycle stage across different birth cohorts. This work was presented at the first Negotiating the Life Course conference, The Decade of the Life Course, held 29–30 September 2008. The Institute contributed \$10,000 to the cost of running this conference. A book based on the conference papers is now being developed by the project team.

The next wave of the survey will be conducted in 2009.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Conference paper	Conference paper	Contribute to improved understanding of changing life courses and decision-making processes of Australian men and women by contributing analyses of women's labour market participation
Book chapter	Book chapter drafted	

## Presentation

Baxter, J. (2008, 29–30 September). *Negotiating work and family across the life course: A comparison of birth cohorts*. The Decade of the Life Course conference, Canberra.

## Neighbourhood Effects on Children's Wellbeing

Project duration	2006–11	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓✓

The aims of the Neighbourhood Effects on Children’s Wellbeing project are to:

- provide evidence about the impact of neighbourhoods on children and their parents;
- explore the impact of neighbourhood disadvantage on children; and
- research risk and protective factors.

The project provides information about locational disadvantage, which is a key focus of the Australian Government’s Social Inclusion Agenda. Using data from LSAC, the project analyses the impact of neighbourhoods on children and their parents.

To date, the project has found that:

- neighbourhood disadvantage is associated with worse social/emotional and learning outcomes for 4-year-old children; and
- neighbourhood belonging and, to a lesser extent, perceptions of neighbourhood safety seem to be important mechanisms in the transmission of the effects of neighbourhood socioeconomic status on children’s conduct problems.

Further research will explore how parental factors such as mental health and parenting mediate the effects of neighbourhood on children’s social and emotional outcomes.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Articles drafted and submitted for publication in academic journals	1 article published	Inform social inclusion and early childhood policies

### Publication

Edwards, B., & Bromfield, L. M. (2009). Neighborhood influences on young children’s conduct problems and pro-social behavior: Evidence from an Australian national sample. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 317-324.

## Northern Territory: Child Safety and Wellbeing

Project duration	2008–09	
Funding source(s)	FaHCSIA	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	–
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓✓

The Institute was contracted by FaHCSIA in August 2008 to conduct a brief review of the literature relating to Indigenous child safety and wellbeing to assist the work of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) Review Board.

The purpose was *not* to provide an assessment of the success or otherwise of the NTER interventions, but rather to provide research findings and frameworks that could be used by the Review Board in their task of reviewing the interventions.

The report covered the following issues:

- background factors affecting Indigenous communities, including the ongoing impact of the Stolen Generations, developmental trauma, and other historical and contextual factors;
- Indigenous definitions and approaches to child safety and child wellbeing (Australian and overseas);
- an understanding of risk factors for child maltreatment, with an emphasis on understanding reasons for the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in child protection statistics; and
- identification of potentially effective alternative measures, pointing the Review Board to examples of promising practices here in Australia and overseas.

A discussion of how the various NTER measures fit against the understanding of child safety and risk factors identified above was included in a separate response by Teresa Libesman (University of Technology Sydney), along with legal perspectives from a human rights framework.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Review of literature	Report completed	Research findings inform the review of the NTER Review Board

### Publication

Higgins, D. (2009). *Child safety and wellbeing in the NT: A report to the NTER Review Board*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Reconciling Work and Family Life: Review of Government Initiatives

Project duration	2007–08	
Funding source(s)	Office of Work and Family, PM&C	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	✓✓
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Child Support and Labour Market Participation; Labour Market and Financial Consequences of Divorce for Families; Labour Market Issues for Families With Dependent Children; Negotiating the Life Course	

The purpose of the project was to obtain an up-to-date picture of initiatives and proposals that governments can implement to help families achieve work and family balance, while at the same time maintaining or improving labour force productivity. It examined both the value of existing practice and the potential of emerging ideas for Australia.

The project was completed in October 2008 with the submission of a final report to the Office of Work and Family in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The results of this research will be published as an AIFS Research Paper in 2009–10.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
1 report	Final report completed	Contribute to work–family policy development

## Publication

Baxter, J., Renda, J. & Gray, M. (2008). *Review of government initiatives for reconciling work and family life*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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

Project duration	2007–09	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation	
Partner researcher(s)	Dr Boyd Hunter, ANU; Professor David de Vaus, La Trobe University	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	–
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	✓✓

In August 2007, the Institute commenced a major study into the impact of drought and economic and social change on the wellbeing of families and communities in regional and rural Australia, an issue on which there has been very little large-scale work. Understanding the impact of drought on families and communities is likely to become increasingly important if the climate change predictions are correct that much of Australia will experience more frequent and severe droughts in the future.

The goal of the project is to provide the Australian Government and general community with current information and expert analysis about the economic and social impacts of drought on families in regional and rural Australia. It addresses the effect of drought on families' financial situation, standard of living, relationships, wellbeing, migration patterns, service availability, social capital and community cohesion.

The study involved interviews with about 8,000 people living in rural and regional areas, including more than 1,300 farmers, 1,000 others employed in agricultural industries, 3,000 employed in non-agricultural industries, and over 2,500 people who were not employed. It is exploring the extent to which drought has impacts beyond farmers and those directly employed in agriculture or related industries.

The research resulting from this project was used extensively by the Productivity Commission in their report on Drought Support Policy and the report of the Expert Panel on the Social Impacts of Drought. The data from this project will continue to be analysed in 2009–10.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Articles drafted and submitted for publication in academic journals	2 publications	Findings inform drought policy and policies involving Australian families living in rural and regional areas
Papers presented at conferences	3 presentations	
Submissions made	2 submissions made to government panels and inquiries	

## Publications

Edwards, B., Gray, M., & Hunter, B. (2009). A sunburnt country: The economic and financial impact of drought on rural and regional families in Australia in an era of climate change. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 12, 109–131.

Hunter, B., & Biddle, N. (2009). *Migration, labour demand, housing markets and the drought in regional Australia: Report to the Australian Institute of Family Studies*.

## Submissions

Edwards, B., Gray, M., & Hunter, B. (2008). *Social and economic impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities: Submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Government Drought Support*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Edwards, B., Gray, M., & Hunter, B. (2008). *Social and economic impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities: Submission to the Drought Policy Review Expert Social Panel*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Presentations

Edwards, B. (2008). *Her beauty and her terror; the wide brown land for me! The individual and family wellbeing of Australian and rural and regional families in drought*. Presentation to Victorian Government Department of Primary Industries.

Edwards, B., Gray, M., Hunter, B., & De Vaus, D. (2008, 9–11 July). *Her beauty and her terror; the wide brown land for me! The individual and family wellbeing of Australian and rural and regional families in drought*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Edwards, B., & Gray, M. (2008, 23 October). *Her beauty and her terror; the wide brown land for me! The individual and family wellbeing of Australian and rural and regional families in drought*. AIFS Seminar Series, Melbourne.

## Rural and Remote Carers in Australia

Project duration	2009–10	
Funding source(s)	Carers Australia	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	✓✓

The Institute has been contracted by Carers Australia to undertake research on carers living in rural and remote areas of Australia. Not much is known about carers in rural and remote areas of Australia. The proposed research will help to address this gap in our understanding and provide

evidence for decisions about policies and practice to better meet the needs of carers in rural Australia. The report will focus on three issues:

- the geography of caring—information about the number and demographic characteristics of carers in rural and remote areas of Australia;
- the impact of living in rural and remote areas—focusing on accessing support and information, health and wellbeing, finances, employment and how care is provided; and
- the impact of drought on carers—whether drought widens social inequalities and particularly affects carers, who may have fewer financial resources than other groups.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Final report	Final report being prepared	Research findings will inform policy-makers and practitioners responsible for shaping and improving the way in which support and services are provided to families caring for a person with a disability in rural and remote areas

### Social Inclusion: Origins, Concepts and Key Themes

Project duration	2008–09	
Funding source(s)	PM&C	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	✓

The Institute was commissioned by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to prepare a report on the origins of the concept of social inclusion and how it has been applied internationally to help inform the work of the Australian Social Inclusion Board. This project involved:

- an overview of the origins of the concept of social inclusion, and key themes and emerging debates in the literature on social inclusion in Australia and selected overseas countries;
- an annotated bibliography of relevant literature on social inclusion in Australia and selected overseas countries and key readings; and
- an indication of the dimensions of social exclusion as this relates to children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage, jobless families and areas of locational disadvantage.

The project report, *Social Inclusion: Origins, Concepts and Key Themes*, was published by the Social Inclusion Unit.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
1 report	1 report 1 journal article 11 presentations	Policy-makers informed about the concept and dimensions of social inclusion

## Publications

- Hayes, A. (2009). Invited commentary on *Child Well-Being in Comparative Perspective* by Professor Jonathan Bradshaw. *Children Australia*, 34(1), 13–14.
- Hayes, A., Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2008). *Social inclusion: Origins, concepts and key themes*. Canberra: Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## Presentations

- Hayes, A. (2008, 18 August). *Invited commentary on Child Well-Being in Comparative Perspective by Professor Jonathan Bradshaw*. ACWA08 Strong, Safe & Sustainable: Responding to Children, Young People and Families in a Civil Society, Association of Children Welfare Agencies (ACWA) Conference 2008, Sydney.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 3 September). *Social inclusion: From a view of the past to a glimpse of Australia's future*. Opportunities not Vulnerabilities: An Australian Agenda for Social Inclusion, Anglicare National Conference 2008, Sydney.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 24 September). *Social mobility as the engine of inclusion*. AIFS Seminar Series, Melbourne.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 3 October). *Why early childhood is important for social inclusion and mobility*. 3 Dimensions of Social Inclusion Seminar, ACOSS, Sydney.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 17 October). *Divided nation? Why educational opportunity is an engine of social inclusion*. Sir Harold Wyndham Memorial Lecture, NSW Institute for Educational Research Inc., Sydney.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 23 October). *Is Australia culturally attuned to social inclusion and mobility?* Brotherhood of St Laurence Seminar Series, Melbourne.
- Hayes, A. (2008, 12 December). *Early childhood, social and educational mobility: Life course policy, public health and social inclusion*. Brotherhood of St Laurence Social Inclusion and Early Years Workshop, Melbourne.
- Hayes, A. (2009, 27 February). *The social and economic determinants of child wellbeing: An Australian perspective on an international issue*. Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Current Research and Action on the Wellbeing of Families and Children in Australia Roundtable, Melbourne.
- Hayes, A. (2009, 2 April). *Social inclusion: Possible impacts and probable residues of the "Great Recession"*. ACOSS National Conference 2009, Sydney.
- Hayes, A., Gray, M., Edwards, B., & Baxter, J. (2009, 15 May). *The potential impacts of the global financial crisis on Australian families*. Presentation to Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for Families Week 2009, Canberra.
- Hayes, A. (2009, 19 May). *Invited commentary on Social Inclusion for People with Mental Illness, Their Families and Friends by Dr David Morris*. 11th Annual Bruce Woodcock Memorial Lecture, Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, Melbourne.

## Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation

Project duration	2005–09	
Funding source(s)	FaHCSIA	
Partner organisation(s)	Social Policy Research Centre	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓✓
Related project(s)	Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia	

During 2008–09, the national evaluation of the Australian Government's 2004–09 Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) was completed. This evaluation was undertaken by

the Institute in partnership with the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. The SFCS was an area-based intervention aimed at improving outcomes for young children and their families living in disadvantaged communities in Australia. The SFCS contained four strands: Communities for Children, Invest to Grow, Local Answers, and Choice and Flexibility in Child Care. The National Evaluation addressed the first three and sought to establish a strong evidence base for the development of effective programs and services in the early childhood sector in Australia.

The evaluation found that the SFCS, particularly the Communities for Children strand, produced positive outcomes. It identified particular features of the model that contributed to the achievement of these outcomes and was one of the most sophisticated evaluations of a community development or early childhood program undertaken in Australia. The findings have important implications for policies aimed at addressing area-based disadvantage and the delivery of early childhood programs and services in disadvantaged communities.

AIFS was responsible for three elements of the evaluation: the Stronger Families in Australia (SFIA) study, the Promising Practice Profiles (PPP) and the Father Engagement Themed Study.

The Promising Practice Profiles element was a key component of the cross-strategy evaluation that aimed to identify “what works” and associated processes in community development, early childhood development and early intervention service provision. The PPPs are part of a growing trend to identify, document and disseminate descriptions of best practice or “what works” in order to improve outcomes for children and their families. Almost 60 PPPs have been published and will continue to be developed and published on the CAFCA website.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Report on SFIA	Final report on SFIA and FaHCSIA Occasional Paper published	Findings from the evaluation inform policy-makers and practitioners seeking to improve their service provision approaches
PPP final report	Final report submitted More than 50 profiles progressively published on CAFCA website 3 conference presentations	
Father Engagement Themed Study report	Final report submitted and published as FaHCSIA Occasional Paper 1 conference presentation 1 article in <i>Family Matters</i>	

### Publications

Berlyn, C., Wise, S., & Soriano, G. (2008). Engaging fathers in child and family services: Participation, perceptions and good practice. *Family Matters*, 80, 37–42.

Berlyn, C., Wise, S., & Soriano, G. (2008). *Engaging fathers in child and family services: Participation, perceptions and good practice*. (Occasional Paper No. 22). Canberra: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Edwards, B., Wise, S., Gray, M., Hayes, A., Katz, I., Misson, S., Patulny, R., & Muir, K., (2009). *Stronger Families in Australia study: The impact of Communities for Children* (Occasional Paper No. 25). Canberra: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Hayes, A. (2008). Contexts and consequences: Impacts on children, families and communities. In J. M. Bowes & R. Grace (Eds.), *Children, families and communities: Contexts and consequences* (3rd edn.). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Hayes, A. (2008). Looking forward: Impacts on children, families and communities. In J. M. Bowes & R. Grace (Eds.), *Children, families and communities: Contexts and consequences* (3rd edn.). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Hayes, A., & Bowes, J. (2008). Children, families and communities: Looking forward. In J. M. Bowes & R. Grace (Eds.), *Children, families and communities: Contexts and consequences* (3rd edn., pp. 193–203). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Muir, K., Katz, I., Purcal, C., Patulny, R., Flaxman, S., Abello, D., Cortis, N., Thomson, C., Oprea, I., Wise, S., Edwards, B., Gray, M., & Hayes, A. (2009). *National evaluation (2004–2008) of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004–2009* (Occasional Paper No. 24). Canberra: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Soriano, G., Clark, H., & Wise, S. (2008). *Promising Practice Profiles: Final report*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Presentations

Berlyn, C., Wise, S., & Soriano, G. (2008, 9–11 July). *Engaging fathers in child and family services: Participation, perceptions and good practice*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Soriano, G., Clark, H., & Wise, S. (2008, 9–11 July). *Promising Practice Profiles: An experiment in building the evidence-base base for early childhood, early intervention and community development services*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 10 December). *Promising Practice Profiles and the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia*. Communities for Children Forum, convened by South Australian CfCs and FaHCSIA, Glenelg, SA.

Higgins, D. J., Yuksel, C., Yilmaz, F., & Wise, S. (2009, 16 February). *Community hubs get it together for Australia's children*. National Investment for the Early Years/Centre for Community Child Health Conference, Melbourne.

## Time Use in Families

Project duration	2007–10	
Funding source(s)	Appropriation	
Partner organisation(s)	ANU	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓✓

The AIFS project, Time Use in Families, was initiated in 2007 to explore adults' and children's time use to better understand those factors that contribute to family members' wellbeing through the way they spend their time. It includes analyses of interactions between work and family.

Several ongoing research streams are aligned to this project, including analysis of parental time with children and infants' time use (particularly breastfeeding), and also adults' time use and experience of time pressure. The project leverages existing data sources, including data from LSAC and ABS time use data.

This project is expected to completed during 2010.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Conference papers and publications	1 AIFS Research Paper 2 conference papers	Contribute to policy development in relation to supportive workplace and family environments

## Publication

Baxter, J., & Smith, J. (2009). *Breastfeeding and infants' time use* (Research Paper No. 43). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Presentations

Baxter, J. (2008, 9–11 July). *Parental time with children and children's activities: An analysis of Australian time use diaries of 4–5 year olds*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Baxter, J. (2008, 1–3 December). *Parental time with children: Do job characteristics make a difference?* 30th annual conference of the International Association of Time Use Research, Sydney.

## Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides

Project duration	2007–10	
Funding source(s)	Victorian Department of Human Services	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	–
Related project(s)	Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project; Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation; Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project; National Approach for Child Protection; National Child Protection Clearinghouse	

The Victorian Government Department of Human Services commissioned the Institute to produce a series of evidence-informed Specialist Practice Guides for practitioners working in family services, child protection and out-of-home care in Victoria. Specialist Practice Guides provide specialist guidance and advice on specific issues or client groups (e.g., cumulative harm, neglect, permanency planning, young people with sexually abusive behaviours, infants at high risk of harm).

One Specialist Practice Guide, on cumulative harm, has been developed and to date has been used to inform policy development and resource practitioners not only in Victoria, but also in Queensland and Tasmania; and has also informed the NSW Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW. Six more guides are currently being developed.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
9 Specialist Practice Guides (across the 18-month project)	1 Specialist Practice Guide has been finalised and drafts of most of the other guides are nearing completion	Provide resources that directly support the Victorian family services, child protection and out-of-home care services Provide resources that support the child protection sector in general across Australia

## Presentation

Bromfield, L. M. (2009, 23 June). *Specialist Practice Guides: Getting research into practice in family services, child protection and out-of-home care*. Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Resilient Families Need Resilient Workers Conference, Melbourne.

## Advisory projects

The Institute provides specialist advisory services performed under contract for government agencies. The outputs of such projects are typically of strategic policy value, with Institute advice integrated by the commissioning agency alongside expertise received from other internal and external sources. Current advisory projects are listed in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 Advisory projects, 2008–09**

Project	Funding body
Family Impact Statements	PM&C
Family Law Data Mapping Project	AGD
Research and Data Relating to Children and Families in Australia	FaHCSIA

## Report on performance—Clearinghouse activities

Institute clearinghouses identify, gather, synthesise and publish research and resources within a specialist area. By linking research findings into policy and practice, the clearinghouses provide evidence to support the decisions and practice of policy-makers and service providers. The Institute’s clearinghouses deploy a wide range of communication tools for target stakeholders—policy-makers and service providers—and the media, researchers, students, peak bodies and the community.

In 2008–09, the Institute continued its management of four national clearinghouses, the:

- Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault;
- Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse;
- Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia; and
- National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

In 2008–09, the Institute was successful, in partnership with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in an open tender process to manage a national clearinghouse to assist with evidence about closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse will commence operation in, and be reported from, 2009–10.

### Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

Project duration	Operating at AIFS since 2003; funded to 31 December 2010	
Funding sources	FaHCSIA	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	–
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓✓

The 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.

The clearinghouse provides evidence about all forms of sexual assault, with a focus on the sexual assault of women and girls over 15 years of age and adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

The main functions of the clearinghouse are to: facilitate access to national policy-relevant data; establish a comprehensive evidence base and provide information and advice on research and best practice approaches for interventions in response to sexual assault; 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 raise awareness of sexual assault and its impact on the Australian community.

## Electronic resources

### ACSSA website

The ACSSA website <[www.aifs.gov.au/acssa](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa)> provides information about new developments in the field; monitors and records new literature on research, policy and practice; provides links to online documents; and publishes ACSSA's work online. Online resources include information on forthcoming events and conferences, links to Australian and international organisations, and access to the ACSSA library collection.

During the reporting period, the website was designed and restructured to improve functionality and accessibility.

**Table 3.4 ACSSA website usage, 2006–07 to 2008–09**

Downloads	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	Change from previous year
Web pages*	258,900	311,400	356,550	+15%
ACSSA Wrap and <i>Aware</i> publications	93,770	150,390	146,890	-2%
Bibliography and document resources	29,400	37,365	43,120	+15%

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

### 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 numbered 767 at 30 June 2009.

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

The Promising Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault Database has been operating at ACSSA since 2007 (revising the Good Practice Database established in 2003). The collection highlights examples of good practice in service provision from each state and territory. For each selected program or initiative, the database identifies 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.

Five more programs were added in 2008–09, bringing the number of examples of Promising Practices Programs available for browsing to 45.

### Online bibliographies

The ACSSA website includes online bibliographies on key topics within the sexual assault research field. Bibliographic topics include: 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 in 2008–09.

### Library services

During the year, 66 items of relevance to ACSSA were added to the library collection, taking the total number of relevant items to 724. 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 and includes news, reviews, profiles, notices, training and research listings.
- ACSSA Wrap is a series of short papers directed to a practitioner audience. Each Wrap is a brief resource on a key topic in the field where a gap exists in current information resources.
- Issues papers are longer pieces, each providing an in-depth exploration of a topic. They are used to fill a critical gap in our understanding of and responses to sexual assault.

During the reporting period, ACSSA published one Issues paper, one Wrap resource paper and four *Aware* newsletters.

Publications are distributed in hard copy to a mailing list of 6,951 subscribers and electronically to 767 subscribers of the *ACSSA-alert* email list. They are also published on the ACSSA website.

### Research and enquiry service

The ACSSA research and enquiry service provides stakeholders, service providers and other users with specialist advice, information and research expertise on current issues in the field of sexual assault. In the reporting period, the clearinghouse received 233 separate enquiries (up from 168 in the previous reporting period) with an average of 30 minutes spent responding to each enquiry.

The largest proportion of the research enquiry service users came from specialist sexual assault services, with non-government organisations 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 users from every state and territory and also responded to a number of international enquiries.

## Outreach, networking and specialist advice

In the last 12 months, ACSSA staff have made presentations at many different events, conferences, forums and seminars, focusing on issues such as prevention, sexual assault against sex workers, research gaps in the sector, and men’s involvement in violence prevention. 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.

### *Sexual Assault Workforce Development Project*

The Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) Forum, along with RMIT University and ACSSA, have partnered to implement the Statewide Workforce Development Project, funded by Department of Human Services Victoria. The project is a three-year initiative to support the training of sexual assault workers in their counselling and education work. CASA Forum is the lead agency and RMIT evaluates the training. ACSSA provides research support and expertise to inform the training and education programs developed. Research is being provided in the form of briefings; three briefings have been provided so far. ACSSA is also a member of the reference group and provides other support to achieve project goals.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Establish an evidence base of best practice response to and prevention of sexual assault	45 projects profiled Database reviewed	Examples provided of good practice in service provision
Provide national enquiry services on sexual assault	Over 230 research and media enquiry responses	Users provided specialist advice, information and research expertise
Run a highly informative website and email alert service providing up-to-date and in-depth information on sexual assault	356,550 web page downloads* 146,890 downloads of ACSSA publications Website redesign and restructure implemented	The work of ACSSA and information about sexual assault readily accessible to a national audience
Publish on key topics in the field, reaching a wide audience and influencing debate	4 newsletters 1 Issues paper 1 ACSSA Wrap	Publications widely requested post-release, including for use in training and education Information used in policy documents, consultation papers and media articles Publications are the most popular pages downloaded from the website Work published in other forums for the first time, including opinion pages and <i>Family Matters</i>

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Networking and outreach	767 newsletter subscribers Numerous conference and seminar presentations Representation at more than 20 external events	Increase in subscribers Increase in invitations to speak at a broader spectrum of events

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

## Publications

### Aware newsletter

Aware newsletter No. 18 (September 2008).

Aware newsletter No. 19 (November 2008).

Aware newsletter No. 20 (January 2009).

Aware newsletter No. 21 (June 2009).

### ACSSA Wrap

Quadara, A. (2008). *Responding to young people disclosing sexual assault: A resource for schools* (ACSSA Wrap No. 6). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

### Issues paper

Murray, S. & Powell, A. (2008). *Sexual assault and adults with a disability: Enabling recognition, disclosure and a just response* (Issues No. 9). Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

## Presentations

Morrison, Z. (2008, 9 July). *Social inclusion, sexual assault and family violence*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Morrison, Z. (2008, 15 July). *Partner rape: Key issues and social context*. Keynote address at launch of Women's Health Goulburn North East *Partner Rape Research Report*, Benalla, Vic.

Quadara, A. (2008, 31 July). Panellist at Australian Institute of Criminology Research Forum on Sexual Assault, Melbourne.

Quadara, A. (2008, 10 November). *Reconceptualising risk and safety: Sex workers and sexual assault prevention*. University of Sydney seminar, NSW.

Quadara, A. (2008, 20 November). *Men's role in violence prevention*. Opening address at inaugural ACSSA/ADFVCH Forum, Melbourne.

Quadara, A., & Bromfield, L. (2009, 1 May). *Telling stories: Child abuse, neglect and adult sexual assault*. AIFS Seminar Series, Melbourne.

Higgins, D. J. (2009, 2 June). *Managing the risk of sexual assault and other child maltreatment in organisations*. Dealing with Sexual Assault Cases in Schools and Youth Organisations seminar, Sydney.

## Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse

Project duration	Operating at AIFS since 2006; funded to 31 July 2010	
Funding sources	FaHCSIA; AGD	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓
	Families and work	✓
	Families and community life	✓

The Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse (AFRC) aims to improve the wellbeing of families and children by supporting practitioners, service providers and policy-makers in the development and delivery of family 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; incorporated within the new Family Support Program from February 2009) 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 focus for this year’s operation was an expanding focus on post-separation issues for families, due to the introduction of funding from the Attorney-General’s Department.

The clearinghouse provides access to the latest developments in practice- and policy-related research in the family relationships field through its website and a range of quality inhouse publications.

### AFRC website

The AFRC operates as an entirely electronic resource. The AFRC website <[www.aifs.gov.au/afrc](http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc)> aims to improve access to current resources and information, with links to AFRC publications, annotated bibliographies, family relationship practice profiles, resources and organisations, and information on upcoming conferences and training.

Forty-four bibliographies are currently provided under six themes: families and relationships; family members; having children and parenting; family breakdown and post-separation; professional issues and service delivery; issues that impact on relationships and families.

Over 290 resource entries, as well as information on Indigenous families, are currently available for reference by practitioners, managers, service providers and family members. Substantial development continued on the website this year, with browse-by-topic functionality added to improve usability and access.

**Table 3.5 AFRC website usage, 2006–07 to 2008–09**

Downloads	2006–07 (9 months)	2007–08	2008–09	Change from previous year
Web pages*	80,000	230,000	318,800	+38%
Publications	23,000	93,000	110,800	+19%
Bibliographies	23,000	66,000	93,400	+41%

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

### Electronic newsletter

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. During the reporting period, AFRC delivered monthly *AFRC-alerts* to over 900 subscribers.

## Publications

Four types of publications are produced:

- AFRC Issues—in-depth papers that focus on policy and research topics relevant to family relationships;
- AFRC Resource Sheets—providing concise summaries of the information contained in each AFRC Issues paper;
- AFRC Briefings—short papers that synthesise or translate key messages from family relationships research or practice; and
- *Family Relationships Quarterly*—a 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.

During the reporting period, AFRC produced 6 publications on issues of relevance to the family relationships field.

## Outreach, networking and specialist advice

AFRC staff members attended a range of conferences, forums and seminars over the year. These activities help promote the clearinghouse’s services and provide an important means of obtaining the latest information on family relationships. Knowledge gathered at such forums form the basis of articles in *Family Relationships Quarterly*, identify potential authors for AFRC publications, and 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

A short questionnaire was sent to *AFRC-alert* subscribers in December 2008 to gauge interest in and the relevance of the AFRC to stakeholders, with over 100 replies received. Feedback was positive, with over 85% of respondents finding the AFRC to be very or somewhat interesting, and very or somewhat useful. More than 80% of respondents found the publications produced by the AFRC very or somewhat interesting, and very or somewhat useful.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Maintain and develop a website that provides access to AFRC publications and other resources	Over 318,800 web page downloads* 44 new annotated bibliographies Over 93,400 bibliography downloads 33 AFRC publication available on the AFRC website, with over 110,800 downloads 901 subscribers to <i>AFRC-alert</i> as at 30 June 2009 Website redesign and restructure implemented	Substantial increase in the use of the website, publications and bibliographies AFRC services reach a wider audience

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Publish a range of publications on the AFRC website	4 issues of <i>Family Relationships Quarterly</i> published 1 Briefing paper published 1 Issues paper and Resource Sheet published	Practitioners, service providers, policy-makers, researchers and general community informed about latest developments in family relationships field Information used in policy documents, conference papers and media articles
Promotion of the clearinghouse and its work at suitable venues	10 presentations at conferences and network meetings 36 general and three media inquiries Attendance at other relevant meetings, conferences and events New promotional brochure, flyer and sample publications printed and distributed at a range of events	Networks established and the work of the AFRC promoted through relevant channels

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

## Publications

### Family Relationships Quarterly

*Family Relationships Quarterly* No. 9 (July 2008).

*Family Relationships Quarterly* No. 10 (October 2008).

*Family Relationships Quarterly* No. 11 (March 2009).

*Family Relationships Quarterly* No. 12 (May 2009).

### AFRC Briefing

Parker, R., & Pattenden, R. (2009). *Strengthening and repairing relationships: Addressing forgiveness and sacrifice in couples education and counselling* (AFRC Briefing No. 13). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

### AFRC Issues

Robinson, E., Rodgers, B., & Butterworth, P. (2008). *Family relationships and mental illness: Impacts and service responses* (AFRC Issues No. 4). Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse.

## Presentations

Robinson, E. (2008, 9–11 July). *Young people and their families: Building strong bonds*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Robinson, E. (2008, July). *AFRC overview*. Meeting with New Zealand Families Commission commissioners, Melbourne.

Bencic, L., & Parker, R. (2008, 1–3 July). *How important is marriage to Australians' health, wealth and happiness?* 14th biennial conference of the Australian Population Association, Alice Springs.

Bencic, L., & Parker, R. (2008, 9–11 July). *The health, financial and relationship wellbeing of Australian couples: Does marriage matter?* 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Parker, R. (2008, 18–19 October). *Young adults' views on marriage*. Australian Family Association Conference, Fremantle, WA.

Parker, R. (2008, October). *AFRC overview*. Meeting of Victorian Family Relationship Centre managers, Shepparton, Vic.

Robinson, E. (2008, 5–7 November). *Strengthening family relationships: Making a difference*. Family Relationship Services Australia Inaugural National Conference, Cairns, Qld.

Robinson, E. (2008, 5–7 November). *Sourcing useful data and statistics: AFRC and other resources*. Family Relationship Services Australia Inaugural National Conference, Cairns, Qld.

Parker, R. (2008, November). *AFRC overview*. Meeting of Family Relationship Centre managers, Sydney.  
 Robinson, E. (2009, April). *AFRC overview*. Meeting of the Separated Families Network, Canberra.  
 Parker, R. (2009, May). *AFRC overview*. Meeting of the Executive of Relationships Australia Sydney, Sydney.

## Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia

Project duration	Operating at AIFS since July 2005; funded to 18 September 2009		
Funding source	FaHCSIA through the SFCS		
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships		✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care		✓
	Families and work		
	Families and community life		✓✓
Related project(s)	Stronger Families and Communities Strategy National Evaluation		

The Communities and Families Clearinghouse (CAFCA) aims to improve access to information and resources to inform policy, practice and research in the fields of early intervention and child development. The primary function of CAFCA in 2008–09 was to provide research, information and resources to support the Communities for Children, Invest to Grow and other projects funded under the Commonwealth Government’s Parenting Appropriation program.

One of the main objectives for CAFCA in 2008–09 was to disseminate findings from the evaluation of the former Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. This occurred through the development and publication of Promising Practice Profiles, *CAFCA-chat* (a moderated e-discussion list) and resources and information on the CAFCA website.

### CAFCA website

CAFCA operates entirely as an electronic resource. The website <[www.aifs.gov.au/cafca](http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca)> provides information on the SFCS National Evaluation, links to Australian and overseas websites, electronic versions of publications, and news of forthcoming conferences and events and Promising Practice Profiles.

In 2008–09, the website was significantly redeveloped to reflect the focus of the clearinghouse’s new funding agreement. The content was restructured by themes in order to facilitate navigation and incorporate materials from the SFCS National Evaluation.

**Table 3.6 CAFCA website usage, 2006–07 to 2008–09**

Downloads	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	Change from previous year
Web pages*	52,402	77,603	111,397	+43%
Evaluation pages	10,677	15,689	17,931	+14%
Stronger Families in Australia respondents website	4,215	7,529	13,328	+77%
Promising Practice Profiles	–	12,374	20,242	+63%

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

## Email discussion list

*CAFCA-chat* is a discussion and announcements list that provides a forum for the discussion of research, policy and practice issues relevant to 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. There were 185 subscribers to *CAFCA-chat* at 30 June 2009.

The *e-evaluate* list and the Local Evaluators' Extranet, which operated as forum for Local Evaluators to offer each other peer support during the SFCS evaluation process, were closed in February 2009 following the completion of the SFCS National Evaluation.

## Library services

The clearinghouse is supported by the services and collection of the Institute's Library. The practice initiatives collection covers the research and policy literature on community development and capacity building, early childhood, families, and programs that support families. Library users have sought information on evaluation programs and ethics guidelines for non-government organisations.

## Publications

The *Evaluators' National Newsletter* was replaced with *National Evaluation in Brief* to disseminate findings related to the SFCS National Evaluation. The newsletter contained progress updates on the National Evaluation, links to the latest publications, resources, developments in relevant policy or legislation, and information about training, conferences and workshops. During the reporting period, two editions of the *Brief* were published, in December 2008 and June 2009.

The Promising Practice Profiles collection highlights innovative programs and practices in the fields of early childhood and community development. Fifty-seven profiles were published online in 2008-09.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Improve usage and design of CAFCA website	111,397 web page downloads* 17,931 Evaluation pages download 13,328 downloads from SFIA website Website redesign and restructure implemented	Increased traffic to the CAFCA website Increased usability and access to relevant information for service providers, researchers and policy-makers
Publication of Promising Practice Profiles	57 profiles published 20,242 PPP pages downloaded	Increased access to information on promising practices within the early intervention and child development sector

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Selection of final “plank” of CAFCA and update of work plan	Additional round of PPPs proposed in February 2009 Five submissions received Further round of Expressions of Interest called in April 2009, with six expressions received	Policy-makers and service providers have access to information on promising practices in service provision
Networking and promotion	2 conference presentations 2 issues of <i>National Evaluation in Brief</i> published Monthly <i>CAFCA-chat</i> emails distributed to subscriber database	Increased awareness within the sector of CAFCA publications and resources, and other relevant information

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

## Publications

### *National Evaluation in Brief*

*National Evaluation in Brief* No. 1 (December 2008).

*National Evaluation in Brief* No. 2 (June 2009).

## Presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 10 December). *Promising Practice Profiles and the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia*. Invited address to the Communities for Children Forum, Glenelg, SA.

Higgins, D. J., Yuksel, C., Yilmaz, E., & Wise, S. (2009, 16 February). *Community hubs get it together for Australia's children*. National Investment for the Early Years/Centre for Community Child Health Conference, Melbourne.

## National Child Protection Clearinghouse

Project duration	Operating at AIFS since 1995; funded to 31 July 2010	
Funding source	FaHCSIA	
Research Plan 2006–08 theme(s)	Family relationships	✓
	Children, youth & patterns of care	✓✓
	Families and work	–
	Families and community life	✓
Related project(s)	Child Protection: Comparability of Data Project; Child Protection Policy: Research Utilisation; Looking After Children Outcomes Data Project; National Approach for Child Protection; Working With Vulnerable Children and Their Families: Specialist Practice Guides	

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC) is a research and information advisory unit focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The clearinghouse aims to resource and support the child protection sector to make evidence-informed policy and practice decisions. 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 clearinghouse is funded by FaHCSIA, as part of the Australian Government’s response to the problem of child abuse and neglect.

## Electronic resources

### NCPC website

The NCPC website continues to be the primary mechanism for disseminating clearinghouse information and resources, recording very high usage in 2008–09. The clearinghouse’s Child Abuse Prevention Issues and *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter* publications continue to be very popular, as are its electronic Resource Sheets.

**Table 3.7 NCPC website usage, 2006–07 to 2008–09**

Downloads	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	Change from previous year
Web pages*	767,735	574,341	737,767	+28%
Publications	287,265	314,383	421,623	+34%

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

### Email discussion list and electronic newsletter

*childprotect* is a moderated email discussion list that enables members to share information and discuss research, practice and policy issues relating to child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care. On 30 June 2009, there were 677 *childprotect* subscribers.

*What’s New in Child Protection* is the clearinghouse’s brief monthly e-news alert distributed through the *childprotect* discussion list.

In 2008–09, there were 171 messages posted on *childprotect*, which includes 6 editions of *What’s New in Child Protection*.

## Library services

### Library collection

The clearinghouse—through the Institute’s Library—collates the latest research, literature and other information resources relevant to child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care. Electronic resources are available directly via their web addresses. Print resources are available via the interlibrary loan system. Anyone can search the online library catalogue. The total number of items of relevance to NCPC stakeholders on 30 June 2009 was 4,938.

### NCPC Library Membership Scheme

In an attempt to help small, not-for-profit, non-government organisations and carers obtain access to research and information, the clearinghouse offers a Library Membership Scheme. Library membership is free and entitles members to borrow books, reports and audiovisual materials from the Institute’s Library collection, and have up to 25 articles photocopied per year from journals held by the Institute’s Library. On 30 June 2009, there were 203 NCPC Library members.

## Publications

The clearinghouse produces a range of regular publications to support evidence-informed practice:

- *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*—a means of disseminating widely information on a number of topics focusing on child abuse prevention and protection;
- Child Abuse Prevention Issues papers—in-depth articles on policy and research; and
- Resource Sheets—brief, frequently updated articles that provide up-to-date facts and statistics on a specific issue.

NCPC researchers also author reports and papers for external publications. These publications increase awareness of the clearinghouse among other audiences and add to the credibility of clearinghouse research.

## Outreach, networking and specialist advice

Clearinghouse researchers raise awareness about the National Child Protection Clearinghouse by providing a visible presence at workshops, conferences and related activities. Clearinghouse researchers frequently present papers and seminars and 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 and enquiry service

A Research Helpdesk is staffed to respond to telephone queries from policy-makers, practitioners, carers, researchers and other professionals in the child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care sector. Experienced reference librarians respond to queries by drawing on the extensive resources of the Institute's Library, websites and resources. Requests for more specialised advice are referred to research staff. Use of the Research Helpdesk remains high, with a total of 231 enquiries during the reporting period.

## Research

The Institute's child protection research specialists also undertake independently funded primary and secondary research projects complementary to the focus of the project. Outputs from these projects are made freely available via the clearinghouse website <[www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports)>. Reporting on the activities of the Institute's child protection research group are described elsewhere in this report.

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Develop and maintain a website that provides electronic access to the clearinghouse's publications and other resources	737,767 page downloads* 421,623 page downloads of NCPC publications Website redesign and restructure implemented	The clearinghouse is a major resource for child protection information in Australia

Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Outcomes
Library services Compilation of latest research and practice literature and resources relevant to child abuse prevention and child protection	4,938 records in clearinghouse library repository 203 NCPC Library members	Latest research and practice made available to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners
Publish on a range of topics to support evidence-informed practice	1 Issues paper published 2 newsletters 1 new Resource Sheet and 4 updates 3 journal articles 1 Fact Sheet 6 e-news alerts	Provides resources to the child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care sectors to support evidence-informed practice
Outreach, networking and specialist advice	21 presentations 2 clearinghouse events 11 board, committee, reference & advisory group memberships 231 Research Helpdesk enquiries 677 <i>childprotect</i> subscribers 171 <i>childprotect</i> message posts	Networking and outreach expanded

Note: \* Refers to the number of whole web pages or documents downloaded.

## Publications

### Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter

*Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter* 17(1) (April 2009).

*Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter* 16(2) (December 2008).

### Child Abuse Prevention Issues papers

Dawe, S., Harnett, P., & Frye, S. (2008). *Improving outcomes for children living in families with parental substance misuse: What do we know and what should we do* (Child Abuse Prevention Issues No. 29). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Resource Sheets

Berlyn, C., & Bromfield, L. M. (2009, February update). *Child protection and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children* (Resource Sheet No. 10). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Berlyn, C., Holzer, P. J., & Higgins, D. J. (2009). *Pre-employment screening: Working with children checks and police checks*. (Resource Sheet No. 13). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Bromfield, L. M., & Irenyi, M. (2009, March update). *Child abuse and neglect statistics* (Resource Sheet No. 1). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., Richardson, N., Holzer, P. J., & Berlyn, C. (2009, February update). *Mandatory reporting of child abuse* (Resource Sheet No. 3). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Richardson, N., Irenyi, M., Kelleher, J., & Horsfall, B. (2009, April update). *Children in care* (Resource Sheet No. 8). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

### Other publications

Hayes, A. (2009). The first decade of Newpin in Australia: From theory to lived experience. *Children Australia*, 34(2). 33.

Hayes, A. (2009). The first decade of Newpin in Australia: From theory to lived experience. *Family Matters*, 82, 62.

Holzer, P. J. (2008). *Child protection in Australia* (Fact Sheet). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Edwards, B., & Bromfield, L. M. (2009). Neighborhood influences on young children's conduct problems and pro-social behaviour: Evidence from an Australian national sample. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 317–324.

### Electronic newsletter

6 editions of *What's New in Child Protection* were released in 2008–09.

### Presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 9–11 July). *Evaluation of Magellan: A case-management response to allegations of child abuse in family court proceedings*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 9–11 July). *Panel discussion: Enhancing the translation of research into practice with vulnerable families*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Holzer, P. J. (2008, 9–11 July). *Issues in child protection*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Holzer, P. J., Arney, F. M., & Lewig, K. (2008). *Getting research into practice: A symposium*. 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne.

Holzer, P. J. (2008, 18–20 August). *The comparability of Australian statutory child protection activity data: Making sense of differences across Australian states and territories*. Association of Children's Welfare Agencies conference, Sydney.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 10 September). *Briefing on the Institute's clearinghouses*. Provided to the Hon. Anthony Byrne MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and other invited guests during National Child Protection Week.

Holzer, P. (2008, 12 September). *Research use in child protection: What does the evidence tell us and to what extent are we drawing upon it?* Presentation to Department of Human Services (Ballarat), National Child Protection Week.

Berlyn, C. (2008, 1 November). *Stability in long-term out-of-home care arrangements*. National Foster Care Conference, Sydney.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 12 November). *The future in child protection*. Plenary address to the 2008 Child Safety Research Conference, Brisbane.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 25 November). *Interagency collaboration in child protection*. NSW Central Coast Connexions Conference, Wyong, NSW.

Higgins, D. J. (2008, 25 November). *Preventing and responding to child abuse and family violence: Listening to young people's views on family, community and culture*. Keynote address at the NSW Central Coast Connexions Conference, Wyong, NSW.

Higgins, D. J., & Kaspiew, R. (2009, 25–28 February). *"Mind the gap ...": Protecting children in family law cases*. Australian Psychological Society Forensic Psychology Conference, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2009, 6 March). *Being child-focused in child protection practice*. Workshop for the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, Hobart.

Kaspiew, R., & Higgins, D. J. (2009, 12 March). *"Mind the gap ...": Protecting children in family law cases*. Juris Doctorate class at the Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne.

Higgins, D. J., & Kaspiew, R. (2009, 18 March). *"Mind the gap ...": Protecting children in family law children's cases*. National Forum on Women's Safety and the Law, Melbourne.

Bromfield, L. M. (2009, 19 March). *Ethical responses for vulnerable children and families*. Practice forum for the South Australian Department for Families and Communities, Adelaide.

Bromfield, L. M. (2009, 27–29 March). *Child protection in Australia: Challenges, reforms and the National Child Protection Framework*. You Raise Me Up: Australian Foster Care Conference, Fremantle, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. & Quadara, Q. (2009, 1 May). *Telling stories: Child abuse, neglect and adult sexual assault*. AIFS Seminar Series, Melbourne.

Lamont, A. H. (2009, 22–24 May). *Parental intellectual disability and child protection: Key issues*. Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners 2009 National Conference, Brisbane.

- Bromfield, L. M. (2009, 22 June). *Cumulative harm: Recognising the effects of chronic child maltreatment*. Queensland Child Safety Services, Senior Practitioner Forum, Brisbane.
- Bromfield, L. M. (2009, 23 June). *Research into practice panel*. Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Conference, Melbourne.

### Clearinghouse events

- Cashmore, J. (2008, 11 December). *Corporal punishment of children: Reforming the law. The whys and the wherefores?* Hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Melbourne.
- Scott, D. (2008, 11 September). *Think child, think family, think community: Building the capacity of adult services to respond to the needs of vulnerable children*. National Child Protection Clearinghouse annual National Child Protection Week address through the AIFS Seminar Series, Melbourne.

## Report on performance—Communications activities

### AIFS Conference 2008

The 10th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Families Through Life, was held 9–11 July at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. A capacity audience of nearly 500 delegates attended the event, which was sponsored by the ANZ Bank and supported by the Australian Government departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Attorney-General; Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The five conference themes reflected those of the Institute's 2005–08 Research Plan: Family relationships; Children, youth and patterns of care; Families and work; Families and community life; and Violence and protection issues. These themes framed the three-day conference program, which comprised three keynote addresses, two panel sessions, 14 symposia, more than 160 papers and 12 posters.

Following the welcome to country by Auntie Doreen Garvey-Wandin, Senior Elder of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nations, the conference was officially opened by the Member for Jagajaga and Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Jenny Macklin.

Chaired by the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, the Hon. Diana Bryant, the first keynote presentation was delivered by Professor Andrew Cherlin, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy in the Department of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University, Maryland, USA. Professor Cherlin explored the causes of multiple partnerships and the consequences for families, comparing and contrasting these relationship trends in the US and Australia.

The second keynote address, chaired by the Director of the Institute, Professor Alan Hayes, was presented by Ruth Weston PSM, General Manager (Research) at the Institute, and explored demographic and social trends affecting Australian families.

The Reverend the Hon. Professor Brian Howe, AO, Centre for Public Policy, Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne, chaired the third keynote address by Professor Peter Whiteford, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales (previously with the OECD). The address explored social policy approaches across the OECD. The three keynote addresses were well received and stimulated considerable discussion among delegates.

The first of two conference panel sessions—the Social Inclusion Panel—was chaired by Richard Aedy, host of the ABC Radio National program *Life Matters*. A panel of experts from various areas

of government and service provision contributed to a robust discussion of social inclusion issues in Australia. The Institute's Deputy Director (Research), Dr Matthew Gray, chaired the second panel on Work and Family. The panelists included Australian and international representatives, who brought a range of unique perspectives to the discussion.

## Parliamentary submissions

During the reporting period, the Institute's research staff prepared the following submissions to parliamentary inquiries:

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.

Edwards, B., Higgins, D., & Gray, M. (2008). *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing & Youth Inquiry into Better Support for Carers: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Edwards, B., Gray, M., & Hunter, B. (2008). *Social and economic impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities: Submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Government Drought Support*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Edwards, B., Gray, M., & Hunter, B. (2008). *Social and economic impacts of drought on farm families and rural communities: Submission to the Drought Policy Review Expert Social Panel*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Higgins, D. (2009). *Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Weston, R., Qu, L., & Kaspiew, R. (2008). *Inquiry into the Family Law Amendment (De Facto Financial Matters and Other Measures) Bill 2008 [Provisions]: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## Publications

In addition to the wide range of publications produced in the course of its research activities, the Institute also publishes its research journal, *Family Matters*, the Research Paper and Research Report series and other publications.

### Family Matters journal

*Family Matters* is the Institute's main research dissemination vehicle, with the primary purpose of keeping local and international readers informed about Institute research and activities. In addition, the journal keeps its readers informed of a broad range of family-related research by publishing articles from other Australian and overseas authors. *Family Matters* is a fully refereed academic journal recognised by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research for the purposes of Higher Education Research Data Collection.

*Family Matters* provides a diverse range of perspectives and analyses of family research and policy options. In addition to research articles on 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 2008–09.

- *Family Matters*, No. 80, 2008—“Family dimensions”—featured articles on the work and family balance, many of which were based on papers presented at the 10th AIFS conference. Issues addressed by the articles included: Australian and US policies directed at assisting families to achieve a good work–family balance; breastfeeding, employment and leave; combining caring and employment; multiple partnerships and children’s wellbeing; engaging fathers in child and family services; enhancing child protection service systems; and a history of social security in Australia. The issue included four major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.
- *Family Matters*, No. 81, 2009—“Making ends meet”—also focused on work and family balance, again with some based on papers presented at the 10th AIFS conference. It featured articles on: young women’s aspirations for work and family; the working poor in Australia; flexible work arrangements in New Zealand; using adult specialist services to support children at risk of abuse and neglect; the CDEP scheme; the acquisition of parenting and relationship skills; and relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren. The issue included two major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.
- *Family Matters*, No. 82, 2009—“Family portraits”—examined issues in family relationships research, including: the roles that parents play in the lives of their young adult children; children’s participation in family law disputes; characteristics of cohabiters; relationships between step-parents and young adults of divorce; effective caring in the carer support sector; sole-parent families; and Indigenous social exclusion. The issue included three major research articles authored and co-authored by Institute researchers.

*Family Matters* is available by subscription, in hard copy and online from RMIT Publishing’s Informit e-Library. To meet 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 papers and reports*

The Research Paper series is an important means by which Institute research findings and methodologies are made public. The series disseminates Institute research to policy-makers, practitioners and researchers, with the aim of encouraging dialogue with research and policy communities. Readers are encouraged to provide feedback about the nature, direction and quality of Institute research.

In 2008–09, one Research Paper was published: Baxter, J., & Smith, J. (2009). *Breastfeeding and infants’ time use* (Research Paper No. 43). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The Research Report series comprises more substantial works that report on research findings of a major project. No Research Report was published during the reporting period.

### *Other publications*

For Families Week, 10–16 May 2009, the Institute produced the brochure: *Diverse Families Making a Difference*, prepared by Jennifer Baxter, Matthew Gray and Alan Hayes. This Facts Sheet examined the diverse range of family structures in which Australians live and the ways in which family members provide support for one another.

## Library and information services

### *Library*

The library offers a highly responsive information service supporting the work of the Institute and a specialist collection of online and hard copy resources on family-related research that is disseminated as widely and cost-effectively as possible.

Library staff provide:

- an information helpdesk to support the four clearinghouses operated by the Institute (ACSSA, AFRC, CAFCA and NCPC);
- a reference service available to the wider community and support for visitors by appointment;
- a library catalogue that is available on the Institute's website;
- the contribution of bibliographic records to the Libraries Australia National Bibliographic Database, managed by the National Library of Australia; and
- interlibrary loans to other libraries throughout Australia and overseas.

During the reporting period, two of the key recommendations of the 2006 external review of library services have been achieved. The migration of the restructured data into the existing software used to manage library operations is now complete and has seen the consolidation of the Australian Family & Society Abstracts (AF&SA) database, collection management and web-serving operations onto a single software platform. In August 2008, the process of bringing together library, indexing and abstracting services and web operations under the one manager was completed with the appointment of an ongoing Library & Web Manager.

### *Knowledge base*

Since 1980, AIFS has created a knowledge base of over 100,000 bibliographic records. The records:

- cover research, policy and practice literature about Australian families and the social issues that affect them;
- draw upon a wide range of social science disciplines, including sociology, psychology, demography, health sciences, education, economics, law, history, and social work;
- describe source documents, such as journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, government reports, research reports, discussion and working papers, unpublished papers, statistical documents and theses; and
- include many items held in the AIFS research library, which can be borrowed via interlibrary loan.

The AIFS knowledge base supports a range of services, including the provision of information services, research and policy advice, and the compilation of specialised bibliographies for clearinghouses. It is also the source of data for the Australian Family & Society Abstracts.

### *Australian Family & Society Abstracts*

Drawn from this knowledge base, AIFS has identified over 70,000 citations and abstracts describing Australian material to form the AF&SA database. These citations and abstracts are available online via RMIT Publishing's Informit Online service, the major supplier of bibliographic and full-text databases for Australian scholarly literature. An enhanced full-text version, Family &

Society Plus, is also available via Informit Online. AF&SA subscription details are available at <[www.aifs.gov.au/institute/info/infodev.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/info/infodev.html)>.

During the reporting period, restructuring of the AF&SA database to comply with Informit requirements has resulted in improved search functionality of AIFS-related resources across all Informit databases.

### Website and email lists

AIFS designs and hosts an external website <[www.aifs.gov.au](http://www.aifs.gov.au)> and a number of subsites in order to communicate the work of:

- the Institute’s four clearinghouses (ACSSA, AFRC, CAFCA and NCPC);
- the Family Law Reform Evaluation project; and
- the longitudinal research projects (LSAC, ATP and Family Pathways: The Longitudinal Study of Separated Parents).

In 2008–09, the Web Team undertook a major redevelopment of the Institute’s website, encompassing a content audit, refresh of the site’s appearance, improved navigation and major changes to the information architecture of the site to increase usability. This included implementation of a new themed approach to content displayed on the clearinghouse subsites, with all clearinghouse resources now grouped under appropriate topics.

Activity measured across all sections of the website increased during the reporting period, with 3,627,043 page downloads resulting in an overall 5.3% increase above the 2007–08 reporting period. In particular, the usage statistics revealed very strong growth for the AFRC and CAFCA subsites (see the clearinghouse section for a more detailed breakdown). There was also a substantial increase in access to online publications, with 1,582,985 downloads representing a 9.1% increase from 2007–08.

### Alerting and discussion lists

AIFS disseminates a number of email alerts or newsletters and discussion groups to keep stakeholders up-to-date with the work and activities of the Institute, its clearinghouses and longitudinal studies (see Table 3.8).

**Table 3.8** Subscribers to email lists

Email list	Related project	June 2008	June 2009	Change from previous year
<i>AIFS-alert</i> <sup>a</sup>	All Institute activities	1,722	1,632	-5.2%
<i>ACSSA-alert</i> <sup>a</sup>	ACSSA clearinghouse	809	767	-5.2%
<i>ACSSA-discuss</i> <sup>b</sup>	ACSSA clearinghouse	177	na	na
<i>AFRC-alert</i>	AFRC clearinghouse	804	901	+12.0%
<i>CAFCA-chat</i> <sup>a</sup>	CAFCA clearinghouse	226	185	-18.1%
<i>childprotect</i>	NCPC clearinghouse	659	676	+2.6%
<i>growingup-refgroup</i>	LSAC longitudinal study	412	436	+5.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,809</b>	<b>4,597</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Cleanup of email addresses that are no longer valid resulted in a slight decrease in overall subscriber numbers for 2008.

<sup>b</sup> Discontinued in early 2009.

na = not applicable.

## AIFS Seminar Series

The AIFS Seminar Series is a public forum at which invited researchers and policy-makers speak on contemporary family-related research and social issues. While predominantly focused on Australian research, the Institute occasionally hosts visiting international researchers who provide international perspectives. AIFS Seminars are free and open to the public.

Where possible, the Institute provides presentation material, including papers, audio and transcripts, for free download via the Institute website.

### *Seminars hosted by the Institute*

14 August 2008

**Peter Davidson**, Senior Policy Officer, Australian Council of Social Service  
*Family payments: Australia's quiet achiever*

11 September 2008

**Professor Dorothy Scott**, Director, Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia  
*Think child, think family, think community: Building the capacity of adult services to respond to the needs of vulnerable children*

24 September 2008

**Professor Alan Hayes**, Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies  
*Social mobility as the engine of inclusion*

23 October 2008

**Dr Ben Edwards**, Research Fellow, and **Dr Matthew Gray**, Deputy Director (Research), Australian Institute of Family Studies  
*"Her beauty and her terror; the wide brown land for me!" The individual and family wellbeing of Australian rural and regional families in drought*

11 December 2008

**Associate Professor Judy Cashmore**, Faculty of Law, University of Sydney  
*Corporal punishment of children: Reforming the law. The whys and the wherefores?*

1 May 2009

**Dr Leah Bromfield**, Senior Research Fellow, and **Dr Antonia Quadara**, Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Family Studies  
*Telling stories: Child abuse, neglect and adult sexual assault*

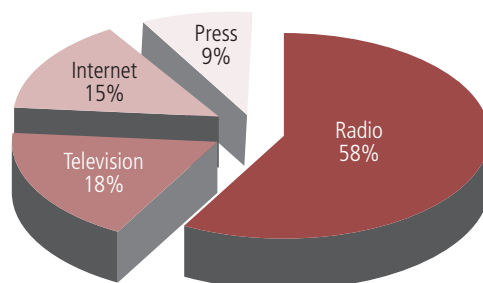
## Media coverage

The engagement of media is an important means of communicating the Institute's research findings about factors that affect family wellbeing.

There was an increase in the level of media coverage and audience reach of the Institute's research in 2008–09. Media related to the AIFS Conference in July 2008 contributed to the strong level of press coverage, while a significant level of radio coverage stemmed from reporting on the Institute's study into the impact of drought on rural and regional families.

- The total volume of coverage was 2,192 media reports/articles, with a total audience/circulation of 68,443,796. This was an increase from 1,980 media items and circulation of 52,420,815 in 2007–08.

- Radio was the leading medium, with 58% of the total coverage, followed by television (18%), Internet (15%) and press (9%).
- New South Wales led radio and television coverage by volume (31% of total broadcast coverage), while Victoria led press coverage, with a total of 71 articles (37% of total).



**Figure 3.1** Volume of media coverage by media type

**Table 3.9** Number of mentions by media channel

Number of mentions	2007–08	2008–09
Radio	1,096	1,272
Television	697	405
Press	142	193
Internet	400	322
Totals	1,980	2,192

**Table 3.10** Audience reached by media channel

Audience circulation*	2007–08	2008–09
Radio	9,457,200	11,892,400
Television	10,619,977	5,738,293
Press	32,343,638	50,813,103
Totals	52,420,815	68,443,796

Note: \* Audience figures are unavailable for Internet media and for some broadcast media outlets.

## External relations

### Consultations

Individuals, government bodies and community sector organisations consult with AIFS, and Institute staff are members of a number of advisory groups. Such consultation is an indication of the Institute’s involvement in the policy process.

In the reporting period, consultations were undertaken covering a broad range of issues, including work and family, labour markets, social capital, child protection and social inclusion.

## Visitors

A number of academics and representatives of government and community sector organisations from within and outside Australia met with Institute researchers to exchange ideas on issues of relevance to the Institute's research. These visits provide the opportunity for the Institute to learn of the work of other researchers and share its own research findings.

### Key visitors

- The Hon. Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- The Hon Anthony Byrne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.
- Dr Rajen Prasad, Chief Commissioner, and Commissioner David Smyth, New Zealand Families Commission.
- Dr Johannes Wiik and Dr Kristin Mathieson, Norwegian Institute of Public Health.
- Delegation from the Committee on Social Insurance, Swedish Parliament.
- Michelle Scott, Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People.
- Charles Waldegrave, Social Policy Research Unit, The Family Centre, New Zealand, and Elizabeth Rowe, New Zealand Families Commission.
- Senator the Hon. Ursula Stephens, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector.
- Reverend Professor the Hon. Brian Howe, Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne.
- Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Director, Growing Up in Scotland.

### External representation

AIFS staff also serve on editorial boards, act as external reviewers for academic journals, and are members of steering committees, advisory committees and expert panels.

AIFS staff were on the editorial boards for the following journals in 2008–09:

- *Australian Journal of Family Law*
- *Child Maltreatment: Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children*
- *Communities, Children and Families Australia*
- *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*
- *Family Science*
- *Journal of Family Studies*
- *Journal of Religion & Abuse*
- *Journal of Sexual and Relationship Therapy*
- *Threshold: A Magazine About Marriage Education*

AIFS staff acted as referees for the following publications in 2008–09:

- *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*
- *Australian Journal of Family Law*
- *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*

- *Australian Psychologist*
- *Australia's Welfare 2009*, "Children, youth and families" chapter
- *Child Abuse & Neglect*
- *Child Maltreatment: Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children*
- *Children and Youth Services Review*
- *Children Australia*
- *Communities, Children and Families Australia*
- *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*
- *Family Science*
- *Health Sociology Review*
- *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*
- *Journal of Religion & Abuse*
- *Journal of Sexual and Relationship Therapy*
- *Population Research and Policy Review*
- *Threshold: A Magazine About Marriage Education*

Institute researchers provide professional advice through their membership of external groups and forums:

- *A Picture of Australia's Children* Advisory Group
- Advisory Board for CASA Professional Development
- Analysis of the Likely Impacts of the Global Economic Crisis on the Distribution of Advantage and Disadvantage in Victoria, Project Reference Group, Department of Planning and Community Development, Victorian Government
- ARACY: Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
- ARACY Research Network, New Investigators Network (NIN) Advisory Group
- Australasian Human Development Association Trust
- Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group
- Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse reference group
- Australian Families and Children Council (AFCC)
- Centre for Community Child Health, Platforms Advisory Group, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne
- Chief Justice's Family Law Forum
- Child Safety Innovators Group, Department of Communities (Child Safety, Youth and Families), Queensland Government
- Child Support National Stakeholder Engagement Group, FaHCSIA and Child Support Agency
- Children and Families Research Centre Advisory Board, Macquarie University
- Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Expert Reference Panel Relating to the Work of Family Consultants in the Family Court of Australia

- Family Law Council, Attorney-General's Department
- Family Relationship Services Australia Conference 2009 Organising Committee
- Family Statistics Advisory Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- General Social Survey Reference Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) External Reference Group
- International Network on Leave Policies and Research
- KnowledgeXchange Research Forum
- Longitudinal Studies Advisory Group, FaHCSIA
- National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) Community Attitudes Survey Development Research Reference Group
- NAPCAN Victoria Advisory Council
- National Council on Family Relations (USA)
- National Evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), Advisory Committee
- National Knowledge Broker Forum: Child Welfare Sector, University of Melbourne and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
- National Marriage and Relationship Education Conference 2009, Organising Committee
- Pathways of Care: Longitudinal Study of Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care in NSW, Academic Advisory Group
- Raising Children Network: Parenting Information Website Advisory Group
- Measurement Group, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Social Policy Research Centre, Advisory Committee, University of New South Wales
- Statewide Advisory Committee to Prevent Sexual Assault
- The Song Room, Reference Group, University of Melbourne
- Victorian Association of Family Therapists Research Committee
- Victorian Cooperative Oncology Group Psycho-Oncology Committee, Cancer Council

## Report on performance—Financial activities

### Operating results

The Institute finished the financial year 2008–09 with an operating loss of \$179,494 (2007–08 operating surplus of \$45,431, restated, see Note 17 in the Financial Statements). This operating loss is less than the expected loss of \$278,000 in the estimate for 2008–09 in the *Portfolio Budget Statements* 2009–10. The expected loss of \$278,000 would have been the direct result of a fall in government bond rates, which in turn would require increased provisions for employee long service leave entitlements. The drop in government bond rates was not as severe as expected and the expected operating loss was revised to \$143,000. The additional loss of \$36,464 was the direct result of an adjustment to the recording of lease expenses being recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease period to comply with accounting standards, AASB 117. Prior period adjustments were also made, resulting in changes to the 2007–08 comparatives. No additional funding is required for this loss, nor does the Institute expect an operating loss of the same nature in the future. Prior period adjustments were also made in respect of long service leave entitlements.

## *Operating revenue*

The total operating revenue was \$13,885,799 and consisted of the following:

- government appropriations of \$4,037,000;
- sale of goods and rendering of services of \$9,680,897; and
- other revenue of \$167,902.

Revenue from government appropriations decreased by \$219,000 from 2007-08. This was due to the cessation of supplementation after 30 June 2008 for increased lease expenses associated with the move to new premises, and the application of efficiency dividends required of all Commonwealth agencies, mitigated to some extent by indexation.

## *Operating expenses*

Total operating expenses were \$14,065,293 and consisted of:

- employee costs of \$6,516,241;
- supplier expenses of \$7,236,595;
- depreciation of \$311,070; and
- loss from asset sales of \$1,387.

## *Balance sheet*

### *Net asset position*

The net asset position at 30 June 2009 was \$1,792,561 (2007-08: \$1,972,055, restated, see Note 17 in the Financial Statements).

### *Total assets*

Total assets at 30 June 2009 were \$6,613,313 (2007-08: \$8,204,371, restated for GST presentation as \$8,111,375). The difference was mainly due to a decrease in financial assets of \$1,171,964. This was mainly because of a decrease in the amount of pre-paid revenue received, necessitating a higher draw down from government appropriations to meet the Institute's financial obligations. This resulted in a lower cash balance held and a lower balance of government appropriations. In addition, the value of non-financial assets decreased by \$326,098, mainly due to depreciation of \$153,400 and a decrease of \$172,698 of prepaid expenses. Prepaid expenses were higher in 2007-08 due to payments made before 30 June 2008 in relation to the Institute's conference, held in July 2008.

### *Total liabilities*

Total liabilities at 30 June 2009 were \$4,820,752 (2007-08: \$6,139,320, restated, see Note 17 in the Financial Statements). The difference was largely due to a decrease in the other payables of \$1,250,139, represented mainly by a lower level of unearned revenue (\$1,228,317). A decrease in supplier payables of \$298,928 was offset by an increase in employee provisions of \$230,499.

With net assets of \$1,792,561 (2007-08: \$1,972,055), the Institute remains in a strong financial position.

**Table 3.11 Resources for Outcome 1: Inform government, policy-makers and other stakeholders on factors affecting how families function**

	Budget* 2008–09 (\$'000)	Actual 2008–09 (\$'000)	Variation (column 2 – column 1) (\$'000)	Budget** 2009–10 (\$'000)
<b>Administered appropriations</b>				
Total administered appropriations	–	–	–	–
<b>Departmental appropriations</b>				
Output group 1	4,037	4,037	–	3,906
Total revenue from government (appropriations)	4,037	4,037	–	3,906
Contributing to price of departmental outputs				
<b>Revenue from other sources</b>				
Output group 1	9,326	9,849	523	8,262
Total revenue from other sources	9,326	9,849	523	8,262
Total price from departmental outputs (Total revenue from government and from other sources)	13,363	13,886	523	12,168
Total resourcing for Outcome 1 (Total price of outputs and administered appropriations)	13,363	13,886	523	12,168

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

**Table 3.12 Average staff level**

	Actual 2008–09	Budget 2009–10
Average staffing level (number)	64	64

## Transition to new performance reporting indicators

### Key performance indicators from 2009–10

From 2009–10, the Institute's research, communications and organisational performance will be measured against seven performance indicators, four of which have been extrapolated as trend indicators (noted with asterisks, below).

#### Research

- Number of citations in public submissions to government inquiries that cite Institute-authored research.\*
- Number of funding agreements and the number of commissioning agencies.\*
- Number of Institute-authored articles published in peer-reviewed journals and publications.

## Communication

- Number and audience reach of media mentions—online, print, television, radio.\*
- Number of Institute publications distributed and downloaded.\*

## Organisational capability

- Qualifications and professional experience of Institute staff.
- Results of Institute employee surveys.

To facilitate transition from the performance data reported in this *Annual Report* to future year reports, and to bridge the Institute's 2006–08 and 2009–12 Strategic Plans, current year performance against future year trend indicators is provided below.

## Performance trend indicators

The impact of the Institute on improving understanding of family function can be partially tracked by measuring the following indicators.

### *Citations in submissions to public inquiries (research indicator)*

The number of public submissions to government inquiries that cite Institute-authored research indicate the credibility and relevance of Institute research to policy-makers.

**Table 3.13 Citations in submissions trend indicators**

	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Number of submissions	14	28	15	15	15	15

Note: Citation numbers derived from a search of ParInfo on <www.aph.gov.au>. Citations of Institute-authored research in inquiry submissions depend to a significant degree on the number of government inquiries undertaken in areas relevant to the Institute's expertise. The number of public inquiries and the number of submissions made to those inquiries by third parties may vary considerably from year to year.

### *Funding agreements and commissioning bodies (research indicator)*

The number of funding agreements and number of different commissioning agencies indicate the responsiveness and rigour of the Institute's research to the policy community.

**Table 3.14 Funding trend indicators**

	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Number of funding agreements	32	38	34	34	34	34
Number of commissioning agencies	17	16	20	20	21	21

### *Media coverage (communications indicator)*

The number of media mentions and the audience reach of media coverage of Institute activities and data are an indication of the relevance and timeliness of Institute activities and effectiveness of our communications.

**Table 3.15 Media coverage trend indicators**

	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Number of mentions	1,980	2,192 <sup>a c</sup>	2,200	2,600 <sup>c</sup>	2,500	3,500 <sup>c</sup>
Audience/ circulation	52,420,815	68,443,796 <sup>b</sup>	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Application of a more robust method of data collation, and correction of the 2008–09 Q1 data supplied to AIFS, has led to an adjustment of the number of media mentions for 2008–09, down from 5,300 projected in the PBS 2009–10. Corresponding adjustments have been made to future year forecasts of the number of media mentions. Extrapolation of trends from 2007–08 through 2008–09 to future years may not be predictable.

<sup>b</sup> Audience figures are unavailable for Internet media and for some broadcast media outlets. Given the escalating migration of audiences from print to Internet media sources, future year forecasts of audience circulation have been adjusted downwards while still representing an increase in audience in real terms.

<sup>c</sup> Forecasts are higher in years of the Institute’s biennial conference.

### *Distribution of Institute publications (communications indicator)*

The number of Institute publications that are distributed in print and downloaded electronically indicate the relevance and quality of the Institute’s research and the effectiveness of our communications across all target groups.

**Table 3.16 Distribution of Institute publications trend indicators**

	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Number of print publications distributed <sup>a</sup>	59,798	61,865	60,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Number of electronic publication downloads <sup>b</sup>	1,451,373	1,582,985	1,600,000	1,650,000	1,700,000	1,750,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>854,336</b>	<b>933,000</b>	<b>1,020,000</b>	<b>1,106,000</b>	<b>1,210,000</b>	<b>1,320,000</b>

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Includes mail distribution of *Family Matters*, *NCPC Newsletters* and *Issues papers* and *ACSSA Aware*, *Issues papers* and *Wraps*. Reduction of print production over the forward years is reflective of cost-saving strategies.

<sup>b</sup> The 2007–08 electronic download figure published in the PBS 2009–10 (794,538) did not include electronic downloads of clearinghouse publications. The adjusted figure for 2007–08 (above) and subsequent figures includes downloads of all Institute publications. See <[www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/pubsmenu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/pubsmenu.html)>.