

With the re-election of the Howard government on 3 October 1998, the Institute has been relocated to the newly created Department of Family and Community Services portfolio. In effecting this transfer, the Institute will now report to the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator The Hon Jocelyn Newman. We look forward to the exciting challenges and research opportunities the new portfolio brings.

New Research Manager for Institute

I am pleased to report that following an extensive recruitment and selection process, a new executive appointment has been made. Professor Peter Saunders will be joining the Institute in January 1999 as Research Manager.

Prior to his appointment, Peter Saunders was Professor of Sociology, School of Sociology at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. Professor Saunders is the sole author of some eight books and joint author of three, all related to family issues. He has served on the editorial board of the British Institute of Economic Affairs, Health and Welfare, whose primary focus is on family policy and welfare provision. Professor Saunders has been a regular contributor to international conferences in the field of sociology. In 1981 he was a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and in 1982 and again in 1996 he was Visiting Research Fellow at the Australian National University and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology respectively.



Professor Peter Saunders

At Sussex he has taught a wide range of subjects including Sociology Research Methods and Sociology Themes and Perspectives.

With the arrival of the new Research Manager, we farewell the Acting Research Manager, Dr Trevor Batrouney. Trevor commenced work with the Institute in January 1998 and has successfully led the research team during this time, using his considerable research expertise and experience in shaping our research

ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JOHN SHELTON

program for the next triennium. On behalf of all the staff and the Board of Management I would like to thank Trevor for his excellent work.

Institute Conference

The Institute's Sixth Australian Family Research Conference, *Changing Families, Challenging Futures*, held in Melbourne on 25–27 November 1998, was opened by the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator The Hon Jocelyn Newman. Over three days of concurrent sessions, keynote addresses and poster workshops, more than 400 participants from across Australia and from overseas, delivered, listened to, discussed and analysed a host of reports on family policy research and related endeavours currently being undertaken by governments, community agencies, the corporate sector, research institutes and universities, both in Australia and overseas.

Once again I would like to express the Institute's gratitude to the National Australia Bank for its generous contribution to the running costs of the conference. In his keynote address, Mr Ron Burke, General Manager Group Corporate Relations, National Australia Bank, expressed his hope that the relationship established with the Institute would continue.

We are pleased to publish in this issue of *Family Matters* the Keynote address delivered at the opening session of the conference by Dr Richard Eckersley, 'Redefining Progress: Shaping the Future to Human Needs', and several papers presented during the course of the conference. We hope to publish the other Keynote address, by Dr David Thompson, and a comprehensive selection of conference papers in the next (Autumn 1999) edition of *Family Matters*.

Institute's Research Program

Conferences provide a venue for disseminating Institute research. Since the Winter edition of *Family Matters* several staff have presented papers at the International Sociological Association Conference in Montreal. The Institute has also been

represented at the Australian Population Association Conference in Brisbane, and the ACOSS Conference in Adelaide. In strengthening the Institute's ongoing research in Family Law, staff also attended the Family Law Conference in Hobart.

In November the Institute released the Working Paper *Family Relationships and Intergenerational Exchange in Later Life* by Institute Research Fellow Christine Millward which attracted considerable media attention. The Institute's conference provided the venue for the launch of *Social Change, Suburban Lives: An Australian Newtown 1960s to 1990s* by Lois Bryson and Institute Researcher Ian Winter. This major book compares an Australian suburb today with how it was 30 years ago by looking at the patterns of interaction between family, friends, neighbours and community. (For more detailed reports of both these works see elsewhere in this issue.)

The last few months have seen the completion of a number of major contracts for both the Commonwealth and Victorian governments. At Commonwealth level these include *The Impact of Violence on Post-Separation Negotiations and Financial Outcomes*, for the Office of the Status of Women, and two reports for the former Department of Social Security – *Family Intergenerational Accommodation Support and Mobility and the Social Benefits of Public Rental*.

The Institute is undertaking a number of child abuse prevention projects for the Victorian Department of Human Services. The first of the evaluations to be completed is the *Western Metropolitan Region Pilot Family Outreach Service*.

The Institute's close links with the Family Law Council have been maintained with Institute working papers such as *Spousal Support* and *Superannuation and Property Division*, among others, proving to be of direct relevance to the work of the Council.

The Institute is continuing to develop its research plans for the next triennium and is looking forward to the input of the new Research Manager.

National Australia Bank, Australia's leading bank and one of its most successful and robust companies, is again pleased to be the sole sponsor of the Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, *Changing Families, Challenging Futures*.

The sponsorship is part of the National CommunityLink program – an integrated series of activities and projects with a common purpose: to address issues of concern to communities, families and volunteers throughout Australia.

At the National we understand our leadership role in business brings with it responsibilities, not only to our customers, employees and shareholders, but also to the communities in which we conduct our business.

As a result we have developed the National CommunityLink program as a genuine response to the question: 'How can a modern corporation meet both its commercial and social responsibilities?'



Sponsor of Institute's Family Research Conference

A focus of National CommunityLink is partnerships developed with organisations which work in support of communities, families and volunteers. In many cases we work with these community service organisations with the aim of bringing about an improvement in their operational quality. This in turn will lead to improved service delivery and quality of life for their clients.

As well as these partnerships, the National CommunityLink program comprises:

- the annual National CommunityLink Awards, in which 42 local and regional volunteer groups share prize money of \$174,000 across a range of areas of activity;
- the quarterly *CommunityLink Magazine*, which aims to share great ideas among communities and provide information and analysis regarding issues and trends of relevance to volunteers;
- an employee 'outreach' program, which links our future leaders with community service groups, enabling them to access expertise and knowledge free of charge which they would otherwise have to fund.

While direct funding of mutually agreed projects is provided, the emphasis is on building meaningful, enduring partnerships which bring about substantive, long-term, beneficial change.