

Director's report

DAVID STANTON



This issue of *Family Matters* contains a diverse array of articles about the family in Australia. David de Vaus writes on marriage and mental health; Boyd Hunter and Matthew Gray on the labour supply of Indigenous Australians; Michael Gilding on the challenges for families in the new Millennium; Bob Birrell and colleagues on regional variation in concentration of sole parents; and Bruce Smyth reviews methodological issues involved in researching post-separation parent-child contact.

Issues to do with work and family, fertility, the labour force participation of women, and issues of maternity benefits and maternity leave, continue to be in the news on a daily basis. Our last issue of *Family Matters* (no. 61, Autumn 2002) was timely with its concentration on "Work and family life: Our workplaces, families and futures". We continue this emphasis with a review by Susan Fooks of recent materials available on the Institute's *Australian Family & Society Abstracts* database on the subject of "Fertility and public policy".

This issue also contains the Institute's *Research Plan 2002-2005*. This plan will guide our activities over the next triennium and I recommend it to you. It is intended to be a "living document" and responsive to emerging research and policy issues. We have sought to ensure that the Institute's research continues to be at the forefront of thinking on the family in Australia, and with this plan the Institute is seeking to make a positive contribution to policy development and informed debate on issues of

critical and far-reaching concern for all families. At the same time, the Institute is always interested to receive further comment on its planned activities, and to receive suggestions for areas of possible research on emerging issues of concern.

Readers will also see in this edition our announcement for the 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, to be held from 12-14 February 2003 at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Southbank. We welcome submissions for papers on any aspect of family research and policy. The conference will provide a valuable opportunity for those interested or involved in family research, family policy, or providing services to families in Australia.

I am pleased to announce that Associate Professor David de Vaus has joined our team at the Institute, as Senior Research Advisor. We are sharing his time with La Trobe University where he is with the Sociology Department. David has a long-standing interest in family research and research techniques generally, and we are delighted that he has been able to join the Institute.

As a final note, we are all very sad at the passing of Ann Henderson, the Presiding Member of the Institute's Board (see below). Ann was a tremendous support to me in the management of the Institute and she will be greatly missed by all of us.

Sarah Stanton

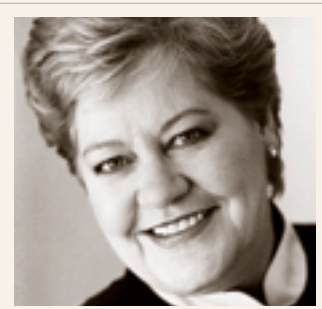
OBITUARY

The Honourable Ann Henderson
31 December 1941 – 4 June 2002

The Director, Board Members, and Staff of the Australian Institute of Family Studies were deeply saddened by the news of the death of Ann Henderson, Presiding Member of the Institute's Board of Management, on 4 June 2002, after a courageous battle with cancer.

The Institute was indeed fortunate when Ann was appointed to its Board in July 2000. She made a valuable contribution, bringing to the task a wealth of experience, practical ideas, and positive and forward-looking leadership. Ann always maintained a keen interest and close involvement in the activities of the Institute. She very much liked catching up with staff, and particularly enjoyed chatting with individual members during informal lunches on days when Board meetings were held. In turn, Ann was well liked and highly regarded by staff, and greatly respected by everyone involved with the Institute.

Ann had an active and fulfilling life. Professionally, she is most well known for her role in Victorian politics. She won the seat of



Geelong in 1992, and was the Minister for Housing and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Victorian government between 1996 and 1999. Among her many other activities over the years was her role as Executive Officer of the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation, and Executive Officer of the Geelong branch of the National Trust of Australia. She also served the community as Mayor of the City of Newtown.

The State Funeral held for Ann at St Mary of the Angels Church in Geelong on 12 June 2002 was attended by David Stanton, Director of the Institute. The very moving ceremony was both a fitting tribute to Ann's public contribution as well as a loving farewell from her family and friends. The singing by the Sacred Heart College Choir was especially beautiful.

Central to Ann's life was her family, and she was a proud and loving mother and devoted grandmother. We send to her family our sincere condolences.

She will be missed.