

Director's report

ALAN HAYES



The Institute is beginning the process of developing its next three-year Research Plan at an exciting time for family policy in Australia. As I signalled in my last report, we are seeking to ensure that Institute research continues to connect to the needs of families and communities, and to the work of those who frame policy and deliver the many services that support and strengthen families.

To this end, the Institute will hold *research consultations* in all capital cities, and a selection of regional venues, to receive input from key stakeholders as part of the process of developing our Research Plan. In holding these meetings, we return to a practice established by our founding Director, Dr Don Edgar, who on the establishment of the Institute in 1980 consulted extensively to gain insights into the needs and priorities of families across the nation.

Since coming to the Institute, I have been daily impressed by the extent to which Institute work is used and seen to be of value and relevance. Collectively we are committed to ensuring that continues and grows. It is thus imperative that the Institute gains a sense of the varied priorities and needs, across the nation, in order to address in an effective, timely fashion those that fall within our capacity. While it will not be possible to include every topic, I think that this is a good way to ensure that the work of the Institute is relevant. As far as possible, we aim to be positioned to anticipate the future needs of policy makers and practitioners, while reflecting accurately the current concerns of Australian families and communities.

The consultation process starts in mid August 2005 and will be completed later in the year.

Honour for former AIFS Board member

I was delighted to see the recognition of the many contributions, by *Dame Margaret Guilfoyle* in the Award of a Companion (AC) in the General Division of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday list. As many readers would be aware, Dame Margaret served as a member, and presiding member, of the Institute's Board of Management, from 1992 to 2000, and her support of the work of the Australian Institute of Family Studies was and remains

greatly appreciated. In addition to her work as a Senator and Minister, Dame Margaret has maintained an active involvement in a wide range of organisations and a continued commitment to Australian families. We convey our heartiest congratulations to Dame Margaret on yet further recognition of her outstanding contributions to the nation.

New Zealand visitors

In July 2005, we welcomed to the Institute *Judge Boshier* and his associates, Denise Udy and Melanie Gudsell, from the New Zealand Ministry of Justice. This visit provided an opportunity to share insights into the trends and developments in family law, and the support of families facing and negotiating relationship transitions.

Also in July 2005, we were pleased to host the visit of *Dr Charles Waldegrave*, Director of the Social Policy Unit within the Family Centre, in New Zealand – a visit that provided a valuable opportunity to exchange views on the policy priorities related to families in our two nations and to explore opportunities for collaborative research. There are a number of common areas of interest that should provide a fertile field for future collaboration.

AIFS links in the East Asia region

In collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, the Institute continues to strengthen its cooperative links with countries in the East Asia region. A key feature of current work involves assisting the Vietnam Commission for Population, Family and Children (VCPFC) in the design of its first National Survey on Families. This survey is also the first of its kind to be funded by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), New York. UNICEF is therefore very interested in monitoring the entire process, including the Institute's current and future involvement.

In July 2005, AIFS Principal Research Fellow *Ruth Weston* spent a week in Hanoi, working with members of the VCPFC and representatives of other Vietnamese organisations who are involved in the planning and implementation of the survey, along with the Program Officer, UNICEF Vietnam Country Office. The team made excellent progress in setting up the framework and overall design of the survey. Indeed, the week was seen as a resounding success by all participants. This endeavour represents a precursor to a national workshop held in Hanoi in August 2005, the aim of which was to flesh out the details of questionnaire measurement and survey implementation.

Child Support Taskforce

Professor Patrick Parkinson and the members of the Child Support Taskforce are to be congratulated on their excellent and incisive report *In the best interests of children: Reforming the Child Support Scheme*, released in June 2005.

Institute researcher *Bruce Smyth* was a contributor to the Taskforce, as were our past Director, *David Stanton* (as Deputy Chair of the Taskforce), and our Deputy Director, Research, *Matthew Gray*. The research undertaken for the Taskforce by Bruce Smyth and Institute colleague *Ruth Weston* has been recently published as AIFS Research Report No.13, *A snapshot of contemporary attitudes to child support*. (See the article summarising key findings of the Institute

New AIFS Deputy Director, Research



I am pleased to announce the appointment of *Dr Matthew Gray* as Deputy Director, Research, of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Matthew took up the position on 11 July 2005.

Matthew is no stranger to the Institute, having been an AIFS Principal Research Fellow heading the Family and Society Program from November 2000 to May 2004, before leaving to join the staff of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University as a Research Fellow.

Matthew brings a wealth of expertise and experience in economics and social policy, and his knowledge of the Institute has enabled him to "hit the ground running". I greatly value his talent, energy and commitment, and I very much look forward to working with him.

Together with *Denise Swift*, Matthew forms part of a very strong Executive Leadership Team at the Institute.

I would like to express my appreciation of the outstanding job that *Ruth Weston* did throughout her term as Acting Deputy Director, Research. It was no easy task for Ruth to move into this role while simultaneously continuing her very extensive research as an AIFS Principal Research Fellow heading the Institute's Family and Marriage research program. On behalf of all at the Institute I thank Ruth for a job well done.

report on pp. 4-10 in this edition of *Family Matters*.) I would also like to acknowledge the support of staff of the Department of Family and Community Services, who facilitated this work and co-funded the research and its publication.

Release of LSAC data

I have been particularly pleased with the extent of publicity following the release of the first wave of data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), and the recognition in many quarters of the study's value, timeliness and relevance. The data are available to researchers, and I anticipate widespread use of this unique set of information. (See a report of the launch of the LSAC data by Minister Patterson on p. 62 of this edition.)

At present, in close association with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the finalisation of the instrumentation and procedures for LSAC Wave 2 is under way, and we anticipate being in the field, on time, in 2006.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of the Institute's LSAC team led by Carol Soloff, and Robert Johnstone in her absence, the management contributions of Ann Sanson, Alison Morehead, and now Matthew Gray, the support and assistance of the Consortium Advisory Group chaired by Professor Stephen Zubrick, and the Steering Committee for the project, along with the officers of the Department of Family and Community Services who have provided invaluable assistance and facilitation to the project and its successes.

Clearly LSAC represents a unique dataset that will benefit Australian children, families and communities in this and

subsequent generations. The next edition of *Family Matters* will include a set of the first articles based on LSAC Wave 1 data – a timely and fitting contribution in the Institute's 25th Anniversary Year.

National Child Protection Clearinghouse

In recent weeks, *Dr Daryl Higgins and colleagues* in the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Institute have completed major projects reviewing the literature on Indigenous out of home care, reporting on data in this area, as well as finalising two pieces of work for the Community Services Ministerial Advisory Council in the areas of foster care and child safe organisations. The team has worked with great efficiency, effectiveness and commitment to complete these projects, and I congratulate them on their high standard of work.

The Institute is well positioned to continue the contributions to Australian society that have been the hallmark of its first quarter century. Families are the foundation of any country, and understanding their characteristics, capacities and challenges is vital to the nation and its future prospects. The Australian Institute of Family Studies has a rare privilege and a great responsibility to provide the best possible information to guide policy and practice to the benefit of all Australian families. As we enter our next quarter century we renew our commitment to discharge these obligations to the best of our ability.

The Director, members of staff and the Board of Management of the Australian Institute of Family Studies are saddened by the death of Professor Henry Finlay, one of the founding fathers of family law scholarship in Australia. His presence will be missed in the corridors of academe at Oxford and elsewhere, in the auditoriums of international socio-legal conferences, and in the hearts of the many lawyers who studied under him.



Henry Finlay

20 June 1923 – 3 June 2005

Henry was born Gunter Freund in Berlin in 1923. In 1939, he left Germany on one of the *Kindertransports* bound for England, followed a month later by his sister, Ina. After the war, Henry and Ina worked their passage to the other side of the world to rejoin their parents who had been interned in England and sent to Australia.

Henry had various jobs around Sydney on the fringes of the bohemian world; he did film reviews and dabbled in journalism and teaching. In 1948, Henry became naturalised and changed his name, insisting that he felt much more English than German. He was appointed as a teacher of English as a second language to adults, mainly "displaced persons", in the Immigration Centres, rising to be Chief Instructor at the centre in Bathurst. Here he met and married his wife, Lea Sim.

Henry left to study Law at the University of Tasmania, at the same time working as an articled clerk, then as Associate to Justices Marcus Gibson, Sir John Morris and Sir Stanley Burbury. He graduated in 1957. After some years working in private practice, then in the Solicitor-General's Office and in the Attorney-General's Department in Canberra, he turned to what had always been his first interest – academia. He became Senior Lecturer in Family Law at the recently-opened Monash University – the first in the faculty to hold that position. Henry and his family moved to Melbourne.

For the next 20 years Henry worked at the occupation he loved – teaching Family Law, and Constitutional Law. In 1972, he became an Associate Professor. He published articles; he was a Visiting Fellow for a year at Wolfson College at Oxford;

he had three stints of three months in Germany – one researching at Munich, one doing a series of lectures at 18 German universities, one as Visiting Fellow at Freiberg. His textbook on Family Law is still widely used throughout Australia, and his published monograph on the legal aspects of sex change is still in demand.

On his retirement in 1988, Henry moved to Hobart, where his legal career had begun. Here, he served as *Mootmaster* and part-time lecturer at the University of Tasmania Law School. He did some mediation, and followed his interests in theatre, music, bushwalking, travel and red wine.

Above all came his retirement work on a major research project, a book on people's changing opinions on marriage and divorce in the 19th century. *To Have but Not to Hold*, published barely a month before his death and launched at the Institute on 14 April 2005, was a fitting conclusion to a very full life. This work is Henry's Magnum Opus, and bears all the hallmarks of his erudition and passion for history and socio-politics. The book is dedicated to his wife and four children, but in the first instance to his father, Dr Heinrich Alexander Freund, "whose brilliant legal career was cut short by Nazi oppression". It would seem that in his profession Henry walked in the legacy of his father's footsteps.

The Institute's Family Information Centre has always held Henry's many books, chapters, and articles with great pride. Henry kindly bequeathed his entire personal library of some 600 books to the Institute. The Institute is honoured to receive this gift and trust that those who knew and cared for Henry will take solace in knowing that his books will continue to be used by others for many years.

Henry was both a gentleman and a scholar. We offer our sincere condolences to Henry's wife, Lea, and their daughter and three sons. Henry will be greatly missed by his family and friends, and by the family law fraternity around the world.

Bruce Smyth, Australian Institute of Family Studies