



Families Australia, the national independent peak organisation representing the interests of families, publishes *National Family News* on the first week of each month (except January). *NFN* contains information about latest major developments in national family policy, services and research from across government and the non-government sectors. Back issues can be viewed at: www.familiesaustralia.org.au

This edition includes latest information about:

- Grandparenting
- Child protection
- Work and family
- Parental leave
- Volunteering
- Domestic violence
- Adoptions
- Funding
- Families Australia

Blueprint for Action in Indigenous Affairs – Speech by the Hon. Mal Brough

5 December 2006: The Australian Government Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Family Services, the Hon. Mal Brough MP, addressed the National Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra on governance in Indigenous communities. More at: <http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/Minister3.nsf/content/051206.htm>

Volunteer Survey

5 December 2006: The *National Survey of Volunteering Issues* conducted annually by Volunteering Australia provides information about issues that are emerging in the sector and factors that help and hinder effective volunteering. The information collected is used to formulate policy positions to put to government and to identify where further research and consultation efforts should be directed. Results of the survey will be released during National Volunteer Week 2007 (14-20 May). More at: <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

Balancing Work and Family

7 December 2006: The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services tabled its report on *Balancing Work and Family*. More at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/workandfamily/report/reportfinal.pdf>

Adoptions Australia 2005 -2006

12 December 2006: *Adoptions Australia 2005-06* by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare contains the latest data on adoptions of Australian children and children from overseas, and highlights important trends in the number of adoptions over the last three decades. Data on all finalised adoptions recorded by State and Territory community services departments for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 are presented, including information on adopted children, adoptive families and birth mothers. More at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10382>

In Home Care – The Way Forward

13 December 2006: *In Home Care – The Way Forward* outlines the findings of an evaluation of the In Home Care (IHC) Program conducted for the Australian Government Department of

Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). IHC is a targeted form of childcare funded under FaCSIA's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy where an approved carer provides care in the child's home. The IHC program has operated since 2001. More at:

[http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/vIA/childcare/\\$file/evaluation_report-in_home_care_2005.pdf](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/vIA/childcare/$file/evaluation_report-in_home_care_2005.pdf)

Measuring Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault – A review of the literature and statistics

13 December 2006: This Australian Parliamentary Library Services brief draws together major resources, research and studies on violence against women and sexual assault in Australia and a selection of the major international surveys. It complements a previous brief, *Domestic Violence in Australia*, issued by the Parliamentary Library in August 2003 (and updated in September 2006), which includes links to interest groups and an overview of Australian Government violence against women initiatives and perpetrator programs. More at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/ViolenceAgainstWomen.htm>

Demand for SAAP assistance by homeless people

14 December 2006: According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in 2004-2005 1,294 non-government, community and local government organisations were funded nationally under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). This report provides information on the range of support services provided by these agencies to people experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The report also presents information about the level of unmet demand for SAAP services. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10342>

Australian Mothers and Babies 2004

19 December 2006: *Australia's Mothers and Babies 2004* provides information on births in Australia from perinatal data collections in each State and Territory. The report presents demographic, pregnancy and childbirth factors of women who gave birth in 2004 and the characteristics and outcomes of their babies. It includes a chapter on first-time mothers and their babies. The report is produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's National Perinatal Statistics Unit based at the University of New South Wales. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10374>

The Parental Leave in Australia Survey

December 2006: *The Parental Leave in Australia Survey* was conducted in 2005 as part of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. Based on over 3,500 responses from families with young children, the survey provides comprehensive information on parents' experiences in the lead up to, and following, the birth of a child. This is the first Australian survey to collect this kind of information from a specialised sample of parents of young children within the context of a longitudinal study. More at:

<http://www.polsis.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=54055&pid=55767>

The Changing Role of Grandparents

December 2006: This Australian Family Research Centre Briefing No. 2, 2006, by Dr Gay Ochiltree explores the changing roles of grandparents particularly in the areas of providing child care, bringing up grandchildren, relationships with grandchildren after parents' separation/divorce, and sources of support and information for grandparents. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/briefing2.html>

National Public Health Expenditure Report 2004-2005

19 January 2007: This publication reports on expenditures on public health activities by governments in Australia. It provides detailed estimates of recurrent expenditure for the financial year 2004-2005 along with selected time series data back to 1999-2000. The report

summarises estimates of funding and recurrent expenditure from key health departments and agencies of the Australian Government and each State and Territory Government by nine public health activity categories. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10271>

Grandparenting: Present and Future

24 January 2007: According to a Families Australia study, *Grandparenting: Present and Future*, many grandparents, especially those with primary caring responsibilities for grandchildren, would benefit from additional financial, social and emotional support, and from better targeted information about how to get help. Families Australia makes 29 recommendations to better support grandparents.

More at: <http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/policy/grandparentingandpresentations.htm>

Housing assistance data development series

24 January 2007: Housing assistance is provided under the 2003 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) in six program areas: public rental housing; state owned and managed Indigenous housing; community housing; crisis accommodation; private rent assistance; and, home purchase assistance. This Australian Institute of Health and Welfare publication reports on CHSA community housing assistance, providing the data items and performance indicators collected to meet the requirements of the CSHA national performance reporting framework. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10396>

Child Protection Australia 2005-2006

25 January 2007: According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's report, *Child Protection Australia 2005-06*, over the past five years, the number of Australian children in out-of-home care has increased by 40%. In 2001, there were 18,241 children in out-of-home care, increasing to 25,454 children in care in 2006. The number of children on care and protection orders has increased significantly, rising by 37% from 19,917 in 2001 to 27,188 in 2006. Detailed information on the characteristics of children in the child protection system is presented, specifically data on their age, sex and Indigenous status. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10383>

Child Support Scheme Reforms

January 2007: Stage 2 of the Australian Government Child Support Scheme Reforms commenced on 1 January 2007 and includes independent review of child support decisions by the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, simplification of the relationship between the courts and the new Child Support Scheme, providing separating parents more time (up to 13 weeks) to work out parenting arrangements for the family before their Family Tax Benefit Part A is affected, and improved arrangements for parents who dispute a child's paternity.

More at: http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/childsupport_reforms.htm

Aspects of Retirement for Older Women (2006)

January 2007: The Australian Government's Office for Women report, *Aspects of Retirement for Older Women*, compares key characteristics of retirement for men and women including reasons for retiring, transitions to retirement, life satisfaction, the effect of the presence of a spouse or partner, and financial security. The report presents new findings about differences in life following retirement for single and partnered women. The study is based on the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, which is funded by the Australian Government. More at:

http://www.ofw.facsia.gov.au/downloads/pdfs/Aspect_of_Retirement%20report_final.pdf

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Scanlon Foundation

January 2007: The Scanlon Foundation was established in June 2001 "to support the creation of a larger cohesive Australian society". Grants are available for general charitable purposes in Australia with their principle areas of interest in cultural diversity and social cohesion. Expressions of interest are due by 28 February 2007. More at:

<http://www.scanlonfoundation.org.au/grantapplications.htm>

FAMILIES AUSTRALIA - LATEST NEWS

National Families Week May 2007 – Families Investing in Time Together

National Families Week 2007 will be held from Sunday 13 May to Saturday 19 May 2007 (coinciding with Mother's Day on 13 May and the UN International Day of the Family on 15 May). This year's slogan is: FITT Families- "Families Investing in Time Together". Further information about National Families Week 2007 can be found on <http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/index.htm>

Families Australia comments on welfare payment proposal

Based on consultations with its Members, Families Australia provided a response on the Australian Government's welfare payment proposal announced on 23 November 2006 by the Australian Government Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Mal Brough MP. Families Australia views the proposal against the background of its belief that all Australian children, without exception, need to be protected from harm and provided with the best possible conditions in order to grow, thrive and reach their potential. This is best achieved by adequately resourced, integrated national, community, neighbourhood and family strengthening approaches and services to assist particularly vulnerable families and individuals. Read the full response at:

<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/publications/pubs/ResponsetowelfarepaymentproposalNov2006.pdf>

Families Australia representation on Australian Government consultative forums

Families Australia participates on a range of standing Australian Government consultative forums, including the Medicare Community Consultative Group, the Centrelink Community Participation Reference Group, the Australian Taxation Office Personal Tax Advisory Group, and the Australian Council for Children and Parenting. Families Australia Member organisations are encouraged to contact Families Australia with any issues they would like raised on their behalf in these forums. For more information email admin@familiesaustralia.org.au

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