



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](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au)

This edition includes latest information about:

- Child poverty
- Child health
- Muslim Australians
- Marriage and relationship education
- Funding opportunities
- Families Australia
  - ▶ Grandparenting
  - ▶ Illicit drugs
  - ▶ National Families Week

#### ***Child poverty in perspective: an overview of child wellbeing in rich countries***

14 February: This publication is the seventh in a series of the UNICEF Innocenti Report Cards, designed to monitor and compare the performance of the OECD countries in securing the rights of their children. Report Card Seven focuses on the wellbeing of children and young people in the world's advanced economies and provides the first comprehensive assessment. The six dimensions taken to measure the wellbeing of children are: material wellbeing; health and safety; education; peer and family relationships; behaviours and risks; and young people's own subjective sense of wellbeing. More at: [http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/rc7\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/rc7_eng.pdf)

#### ***Health of Children in Australia: a snapshot, 2004 – 2005***

15 February: This Australian Bureau of Statistics article summarises the factors surrounding the health of Australian children and youth principally using data drawn from the National Health Survey (NHS). Topics covered include: health conditions; mental health; disability; risk factors; and mortality. The article also describes how some factors affecting children's health are changing over time. More at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4829.0.55.001?OpenDocument>

#### ***The mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in home-based foster care***

February: This 'Medical Journal of Australia' article identifies the prevalence of mental health problems, rates of suicidal ideation and behaviour, and the use of professional mental health services among children and adolescents residing in home-based foster care. It finds that children in home-based foster care experience high rates of mental health problems but only a minority receive professional help. More at: [http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/186\\_04\\_190207/saw10752\\_fm.html](http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/186_04_190207/saw10752_fm.html)

#### ***The consequences of divorce for financial living standards in later life***

February: The number of older Australians who have experienced divorce at some point in their lives will increase in coming decades, yet there is little empirical evidence in

Australia about the financial consequences of divorce for older people. This Research Paper No.38 from the Australian Institute of Family Studies begins to fill this gap by providing some of the first estimates of the financial consequences of divorce for Australians aged 55 to 74 years, using data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/rp38/rp38.html#1>

### ***Recent progress in marriage and relationship education in Australia***

February: Rising rates of marriage breakdown in Australia have led to increasing interest in and support for strategies that can help build stronger relationships. One of these strategies involves the provision of marriage and relationship education services. Briefing Paper No. 3 from the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse summarises recent developments aimed at addressing challenges and setting directions in the field of marriage and relationship education. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/briefing3.html>

### ***International Women's Day (IWD)***

February: International Women's Day is celebrated around the world on 8 March. IWD offers women all over the world an opportunity to join together in celebrating their achievements, reaffirming their goals and working at a local and international level to improve the status of all women. Since its beginnings in the early 1900's, IWD has maintained a focus on the issues of pay, conditions, and political rights for women. The UNIFEM theme for this year is "ending impunity for violence against women". More at:

<http://www.unifem.org.au/index.cgi?tid=103>

### ***Early intervention services***

31 January: The Australian Government announced 27 new Early Intervention Services (EIS) to help families maintain healthy family relationships. The new services will open in July 2007 and are funded under the Family Relationship Services Program. They build on the achievements of the first 33 of these services, which commenced operating from July 2006. More at:

[http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/minister3.nsf/content/early\\_intervention\\_service\\_31jan07.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/minister3.nsf/content/early_intervention_service_31jan07.htm)

### ***ANAO: Project management in Centrelink***

22 February: The Australian National Audit Office released a performance audit report on Project Management in Centrelink. More at:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/2006-07\\_Audit\\_Report\\_28.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/2006-07_Audit_Report_28.pdf)

### ***The impact of illicit drug use on families***

February: The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services is conducting an inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families. Submissions are due on 23 March. More at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/illicitdrugs/index.htm>

### ***Australian Community Sector Survey – Report 2007***

February: This Australian Council for Social Services (ACOSS) report presents the results of the Australian Community Sector Survey 2007 (ACSS). The Report provides information on service use, income, expenditure and workforce issues for the community services and welfare sector. More at:

[http://www.acoss.org.au/upload/publications/papers/2101\\_Full%20Community%20Sector%20Survey%202007.pdf](http://www.acoss.org.au/upload/publications/papers/2101_Full%20Community%20Sector%20Survey%202007.pdf)

### **Muslim Australians**

8 February: This electronic brief by the Parliament of Australia Library Service is a guide to some of the recent research, statistics and information on Australia's Muslim communities. More at:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/Muslim\\_Australians.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/Muslim_Australians.htm)

### **Voices of Australia education module**

9 February: The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) launched an educational tool to help combat racism and promote a culture of respect and equality among high school students around Australia. More at:

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/media\\_releases/2007/9\\_07.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/media_releases/2007/9_07.html)

### **A guide to data development**

27 February: Developed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, this guide covers the basics of data development and the steps to follow when developing data. It outlines sound data development practices that incorporate the necessary steps to produce high-quality data that meet the needs of all users of the data and attract the necessary level of agreement on content and authority behind the data specifications. The document promotes the role of metadata in describing data and the use of data standards to improve consistency in data recording where data consistency and comparability is required. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10422>

### **School engagement and life chances: 15 year olds in transition**

February: Young people in Australia face many challenges in their transitions from school to further education and to employment. The Brotherhood of St Laurence's Life Chances Study is a longitudinal study of children born in 1990 in inner Melbourne. The study commenced with 167 children and has followed them and their families over the years as many moved away from the inner suburbs. The families are very diverse, including high and low income families and a range of ethnic groups. Stage seven of the study explores school engagement and transitions as particular issues for young people growing up in Australia today. More at:

[http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Taylor\\_Nelms\\_school\\_engagement\\_&\\_life\\_chances.pdf](http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Taylor_Nelms_school_engagement_&_life_chances.pdf)

### **Ageing and cultural diversity**

February: With increasing numbers of older people originating from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, this scoping project conducted by the University of Queensland's Australasian Centre on Ageing, is designed to pool the evidence on the needs of, and issues of concern to, older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Queensland and in Australia overall. More at:

<http://www.uq.edu.au/aca/docs/Reports/AgeingAndCulturalDiversityInQueenslandFull.pdf>

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Telstra Foundation**

February: The Telstra Foundation announced \$1.8 million in new grants to be provided over three years to community-based organisations to help isolated children and young

people across Australia attain a better quality of life. The focus of project funding will be on building social connections and support networks for Australian kids, as well as improving access to services such as education and healthcare. Three new program areas have been developed with the objective of connecting children and young people to their communities: Social Innovation Grants; Indigenous Community Development; and a Spotlight Issue, child abuse and neglect. Applications close on 30 April 2007. More at: <http://www.telstrafoundation.com>.

### ***Visions of Australia funding***

February: Visions of Australia aims to make exhibitions of cultural material accessible to more Australians. Funding is available through the Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts to cultural and community organisations to develop and tour exhibitions of historical and scientific material, visual arts and craft, multimedia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture throughout Australia. Through the program, more Australians have the opportunity to enjoy our diverse culture, and organisations can tour exhibitions interstate to major centres as well as regional and remote areas. Applications close on 2 April 2007. More at: [http://www.dcita.gov.au/arts\\_culture/arts/visions\\_of\\_australia](http://www.dcita.gov.au/arts_culture/arts/visions_of_australia)

## **FAMILIES AUSTRALIA LATEST NEWS**

### ***Forum on the impact of illicit drug use on families***

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services is conducting an inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families, with submissions due by 23 March 2007. Families Australia is making a submission to the Inquiry and will hold two focus groups and an Expert Forum in Canberra in mid-March 2007. We would welcome views about the issues. Families Australia Members can provide views at: <http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/index.htm>

### ***Grandparenting***

Families Australia's report 'Grandparenting: present and future' was released on 25 January 2007. The report contains 29 policy and practice suggestions, and received significant national media coverage. More at: <http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/policy/grandparentingandpresentations.htm>

### ***National Families Week 13-19 May 2007***

National Families Week is fast approaching! Just a reminder that you can find out more about National Families Week and register your event through the Families Australia website: <http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/index.htm>

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