



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:

- National Families Week
- Youth homelessness
- Mental health services
- Indigenous health
- Drug statistics
- Families Australia news
 - ▶ National Family Wellbeing Symposium
 - ▶ Impact of illicit drugs on families

National Families Week

National Families Week 2007 will be held from Sunday 13 May to Saturday 19 May 2007 (coinciding with UN International Day of the Family on 15 May and Mothers' Day on 13 May). The central aim of National Families Week 2007 is to encourage all Australians to take time to do things together that will improve the all-round physical and emotional wellbeing of their family unit. The slogan is: "FITT Families - Families Investing in Time Together". More at:

<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/nfw07.htm>

An exploratory study of impacts on parenting capacity and child wellbeing

April: This final report to the Family Court of Australia by Family Transitions, a Melbourne-based family psychology and research centre, provides an exploratory study of impacts on parenting capacity and child wellbeing. The subject of the report, the Children's Cases Project, focuses on the interests of the child and the parents' or caretakers' proposals for the future of the child rather than the past history of the parties' relationships. More at:

http://www.familycourt.gov.au/presence/resources/file/eb000508dcbb97c/McIntosh_CC_P_pilot_final.pdf

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

30 March: Australia was amongst the first countries to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 30 March 2007 in New York. The Convention adds to existing human rights laws by confirming that people with disability are entitled to the full range of human rights. It also provides clearer goals for governments throughout the world to work towards ensuring human rights in practice for people with disability. More at:

http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/minister3.nsf/content/un_conventions_30mar07.htm

Personal Helpers and Mentors Program

5 April: The Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, announced more than \$32 million in grants for the first round of the Australian Government's Personal Helpers and

Mentors Program. The grants are for service providers in 28 demonstration sites selected for their experience in mental health service delivery and connections with local clinical health and community-based organisations. It is expected that 140 personal helpers and mentors will commence work at these demonstration sites by the end of May 2007. More at:

http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2007/Media_Release24239.cfm

Mental health services in Australia 2004-05

27 April: *Mental health services in Australia 2004-05* is the eighth in the series of Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's annual reports on the characteristics and activity of Australia's mental health services. Details from a wide range of data sources for 2004-05 are presented, as are changes over time. Information is provided on mental health-related prescriptions and mental health resources such as facilities, workforce and expenditure. Where possible, comprehensive data are provided for each State and Territory, and comparisons are made between population groups (including Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and overseas-born and Australian-born people). More at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10381>

Crime and Violence Prevention Awards

April: The annual Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards are sponsored by the heads of Australian Governments and the Australasian Police Ministers' Council as a joint Australian Government, State and Territory initiative. They include monetary awards totalling up to \$130,000. Nominations close on Friday 18 May. More at:

http://www.aic.gov.au/acvpa/2007_information.html

Youth homelessness

April: The National Youth Commission into Youth Homelessness (NYC) is an independent community inquiry, the first since the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry in 1989 which was headed by Brian Burdekin. The NYC inquiry will provide a process for all stakeholders to provide evidence about the issue and ideas for action. More at: <http://www.nyc.net.au>

Funding to combat illicit drugs

22 April: The Australian Government announced additional funding of \$150 million to combat amphetamine-type stimulants. The funding package provides specific measures to address amphetamine-type stimulants, especially the toxic and highly addictive drug crystal methamphetamine or Ice. The new funding will provide: new drug rehabilitation services and further support for the non-government organisation drug and alcohol sector; more drug prevention education for young Australians and support to their parents; and an increase in the Government's law enforcement efforts. More at:

http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2007/Media_Release24270.cfm

Drug Statistics Series No. 18

12 April: This report provides a comprehensive summary of major drug use statistical collections, with references to sources of more detailed information. It also serves as the companion document to the *National Drug Strategy 2004-2009*. Data are presented on patterns of drug use, international comparisons, drugs and health, special population groups and crime and law enforcement. More at:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10393>

Kidscount

April: A new website about childhood is part of the *Every Child is Important* Program that supports and resources parents nationally. This initiative has been funded for the past four years by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The website has parenting information in 16 languages in both audio and print formats. The information is also available on a free talking book CD ROM and can be ordered by contacting the Australian Childhood Foundation at info@childhood.org.au. More at: www.kidscount.com.au

KidsMatter

April: KidsMatter is a primary school mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative developed in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Beyondblue: the national depression initiative, the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council and supported by the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund. More at:

http://www.beecoswebengine.org/cache13/APAPDC_Home07.html

Participation in sport and recreation by culturally and linguistically diverse women

April: The Office for Women in the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs engaged the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales to research how culturally and linguistically diverse women participate in sport and recreation and identify the factors that may limit their full involvement. More at:

http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/reports/Stakeholder_Consultation_report.pdf

A Fairer Australia: Recommendations for the Federal Budget

18 April: The Australian Council of Social Service released its recommendations for the Federal Budget. More at:

http://www.acoss.org.au/upload/publications/papers/2368_Paper%20147%20BPS%20recommendations%2007-08.pdf

Close the Gap: Solutions to the Indigenous Health Crisis facing Australia

April: This Oxfam briefing paper suggests practical ways of solving the health crisis facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It draws on published data and the expertise of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. More at:

<http://www.oxfam.org.au/media/files/CTG.pdf?PHPSESSID=03914e8191594301a867bef5f932558a>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Drawing Together – An Art Competition

April: *Drawing Together* is an art competition exploring reconciliation and promoting the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Public Service. All Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are invited to enter what organisers hope will be one of the most prestigious art events of the year. It offers \$82,000 in prizes across seven categories including an Indigenous Award and a Youth Award. Entries close 8 June 2007. More at: www.apsc.gov.au/drawingtogether.

National Family Wellbeing Symposium

The National Family Wellbeing Symposium will be held in Canberra on 20-21 June 2007. The Symposium is an initiative of Families Australia in conjunction with the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at The Australian National University College of Medicine and Health Sciences. The Symposium will explore what is meant by family wellbeing and will aim to build understandings and agreement on the main elements of a family wellbeing framework. The Symposium will involve around 120-140 people from a wide range of community, political, government, academic, media, union and business backgrounds. For further information about the Symposium email admin@familiesaustralia.org.au or phone 02 6273 4885.

Families Australia position on the impact of illicit drug use on families

Families Australia's submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families is available at:

<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/publications/pubs/submission-illicitdrugs.pdf>

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