



Families Australia, the national independent peak organisation promoting 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:

- Carer Payment Review
- Strengthening Families and Relationships
- Public Health Expenditure
- Adoptions
- International Women's Day

Review of Carer Payment (child)

February: A Review of Carer Payment (child) was conducted from March to November 2007 by an independent Taskforce. The review examined the eligibility criteria for Carer Payment (child) and its effectiveness in providing a safety net for carers of children with a severe disability or medical condition. The Taskforce's report, *Carer Payment (child): A New Approach*, is now available. More at:

http://www.facs.gov.au/carers/carer_payment_review_report/

Improved Support for Parents with New Born Children

18 February: The Productivity Commission will be conducting an inquiry into improved support for parents with new born children. The inquiry is scheduled to report in February 2009. More at: <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/parentalleave>

Building better partnerships between schools, parents and the community

18 February: The Minister for Education, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, announced funding of \$800,000 for a unique Family-School and Community Partnership Bureau to help develop partnerships between parents, schools and the community. More at:

<http://www.alp.org.au/media/0208/msed180.php>

How Australians Use Their Time

21 February: The survey was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics across all States and Territories and collected information from people aged 15 years and over. Comparisons are provided with results from the 1992 and 1997 *Time Use Surveys* to show the changes in time use over the fifteen year period. More at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4153.0?OpenDocument>

National public health expenditure report 2005–06

13 February: This Australian Institute of Health and Welfare publication reports on expenditure on public health activities by governments in Australia. 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/10528>

Prevention and early intervention in strengthening families and relationships: Challenges and implications

February: This paper from the Australian Institute of Family Studies examines challenges and strategies associated with encouraging individuals to engage in prevention and early-intervention activities focusing on healthy relationships. More at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/issues/issues2.html>

Leaving home: What economics has to say about the living arrangements of young Australians

January: This paper reviews the developing economics literature surrounding young people's decisions to continue living in their parents' homes in order to begin to assess the causes and consequences of this decision. More at: <http://cepr.anu.edu.au/pdf/DP568.pdf>

Supporting the families of young people with problematic drug use

25 February: This report commissioned by the Australian National Council on Drugs reveals that the biggest problem Australian families are facing when it comes to substance misuse is young people binge drinking. The report argues that family members should be able to get support and assistance in their own right and highlights that many family members helping people with drug or alcohol issues frequently are not getting the right information or support – and end up feeling isolated and confused. More at: http://www.ncd.org.au/publications/pdf/rp15_supporting_families.pdf

Compulsory treatment in Australia: a discussion paper on the compulsory treatment of individuals dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs

February: This discussion paper presents a national perspective of the current operation of compulsory alcohol and/or other drug treatment, within the context of existing research evidence, ethical considerations and international practice. It is intended to inform ongoing debate on the place of compulsory treatment in Australia.

More at: http://www.ncd.org.au/publications/pdf/rp14_compulsory_treatment.pdf

Adoptions Australia 2006-07

21 February: This report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare presents the latest data on adoptions of Australian children and children from overseas and highlights trends in adoptions over the last three decades. Data are presented on all finalised adoptions recorded by the State and Territory departments responsible for adoption, including information on adopted children, adoptive families and birth mothers. More at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10547>

Application of Penalties Under Welfare to Work

February: This report prepared by the Ombudsman's Office discusses Centrelink's processing practices in the context of their consistency with the social security law and policy guidelines, as well as their impact on customers. More at:

[http://www.comb.gov.au/commonwealth/publish.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/reports_2007_16/\\$FILE/penalties_welfare_to_work.pdf](http://www.comb.gov.au/commonwealth/publish.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/reports_2007_16/$FILE/penalties_welfare_to_work.pdf)

ACCC inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries

February: The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is holding a public inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries. Submissions are due on 11 March. More at: <http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/809228>

Stuff happens: Unused things cluttering up our homes

January: This study by The Australia Institute is about the extent to which Australian homes are cluttered with things that are rarely or never used. A nationally representative online survey of 1,002 respondents was carried out in December 2007 and was followed up with a series of telephone interviews with people who identified themselves as having problems with clutter. More at:

<http://www.tai.org.au/documents/downloads/WP111.pdf>

Human Rights Explained

22 February: The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has released a series of fact sheets to assist university students, senior high school students and their teachers to understand human rights. More at:

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/hr_explained/index.html

Family Issues in Suicide Postvention

February: This briefing paper from the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse explores post-suicide outcomes for those closest to the one who died, particularly family and friends, and outlines strategies to support and counsel the suicide-bereaved. Recent national initiatives that guide postvention activities are also discussed and relevant resources provided. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/briefing8.html>

Family Relationships Quarterly

February: This edition of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse newsletter includes an article on parental substance abuse and its effects on families, an agency spotlight on Anglicare WA, an article on the late discovery of adoptive status, news in brief, website reviews, conference reviews and upcoming conferences. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/newsletter/newsletter7.html#identifying>

Family Matters

February: This edition of the Australian Institute of Family Studies magazine *Family Matters* focuses on family relationships and includes articles on allegations of family violence, law reform, pre-marriage education for stepfamilies and father involvement. A guest editorial introduces the articles and discusses how law reform is responding to changing families and changing relationships. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2007/fm77.html>

New strategy to get people with disability or mental illness into work

15 February: The Minister for Employment Participation, The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services, Bill Shorten MP, will jointly oversee a National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy aimed at assisting people with a disability or mental illness into work. The National Disability Strategy will be developed in close consultation with people with disability, employers, disability employment services and training providers. More at:

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/OConnor/Releases/Newstrategytogetpeoplewithdisabilityormentalillnessintowork.htm>

International Women's Day

8 March: International Women's Day was first celebrated in 1908 and is observed on 8 March each year. UNIFEM Australia organises the largest celebrations of this day in Australia, attracting thousands of women and men to events around Australia.

International Women's Day offers a specific day to focus on the needs and achievements of women and work for an end to the injustice and suffering that women and children still endure. It is also a day to celebrate the progress that has already been achieved. More at: <http://www.unifem.org.au/iwd/default.html>

FAMILIES AUSTRALIA LATEST NEWS

Booklet on the Forgotten Australians

March: Families Australia has produced, on behalf of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians, a free booklet: *Forgotten Australians: supporting survivors of childhood institutional care in Australia*. The booklet aims to give health and other professionals the background information they need to recognise, relate to and assist people who are experiencing long-term trauma because of a childhood spent in orphanages or homes. The people who identify as Forgotten Australians are survivors of the approximately 500,000 children who found themselves in orphanages or homes in Australia between 1930 and 1970. A 2004 Senate Inquiry report revealed a history of neglect and cruelty, abandonment and exploitation that has left large numbers of Australians and child migrants physically and psychologically scarred as adults. To obtain copies, call Families Australia on 02 6273 4885. For further information on the Forgotten Australians, go to www.forgottenaustralians.org.au

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