



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 the 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

IN THIS ISSUE...

Views & news from Families Australia: child protection and Families Week

Top stories: carers, homelessness, disability, volunteering

VIEWS & NEWS FROM FAMILIES AUSTRALIA...

Welcome moves on child protection

25 May: In line with the ALP's 2007 Federal Election commitment to devise a National Child Protection Framework, on 25 May 2008, the Hon. Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, publicly released a discussion paper, *Australia's children: safe and well – A national framework for protecting Australia's children*. Public submissions are invited by 30 June. Other targeted consultations will be conducted by the Minister's Department and the Australian Families and Children Council. Families Australia has been playing a leading role in the development of the Framework. In the May 2008 Federal Budget, the Australian Government announced that it will provide \$2.6 million over three years to develop a national child protection framework. This will enable consultation with key child protection stakeholders, including State and Territory governments, to support the development of the framework. Government will also work with the States and Territories to collect nationally consistent child protection data.

More at:

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/parenting-child_protection_discussion_page.htm

For Families Australia's public comment in May 2008 on child protection and wellbeing issues, see:

<http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/at-last-an-acknowledgment-of-childabuse-crisis/777239.aspx>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/federal-input-urged-to-tackle-rise-in-abuse/2008/05/25/1211653847219.html>

Federal Budget overhaul of Carer Payment (child)

13 May: Amongst the May 2008 Federal Budget measures, Government accepted the recommendations of the independent Review Taskforce which will, from 2009-10, see an additional 19,000 carers of children with severe or profound disabilities or illness being able to access Carer Payment (child). Families Australia served on the Taskforce.

More at: <http://www.budget.gov.au/2008-09/content/bp2/html/expense-11.htm>

National Families Week breaks record

May: National Families Week was held between 11 and 17 May 2008 and saw a record number of over 120,000 people across Australia participating in community events. Amongst the National Families Week Ambassadors was former champion Australian cricketer Michael Bevan. More at:

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

Speeches on families, disability, work and family and the community sector

May: recent speeches by Families Australia's CEO on families, work and family, disability and the role of community organisations are available at:

<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/policy/statements.htm>

Families Australia new look website

May: Families Australia's website has been revamped to give greater emphasis to campaigns and advocacy on a wide range of policy fronts. More at:

<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/>

National E-security Awareness Week

May: To help home users and small businesses stay smart online, Families Australia is proud to partner with the Australian Government for National E-security Awareness Week on 6–13 June. More at: <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/>

TOP STORIES...

Parliamentary Inquiry into better support for carers

14 May: The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth is conducting an inquiry to review better support for carers, specifically: the role and contribution of carers in society and how this should be recognised; the barriers to social and economic participation for carers, with a particular focus on helping carers to find and/or retain employment; the practical measures required to support carers more effectively, including key priorities for action; and strategies to assist carers to access the same range of opportunities and choices as the wider community, including strategies to increase the capacity for carers to make choices within their caring roles, transition into and out of caring and effectively plan for the future. Submissions are due by Friday 4 July. More at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/carers/index.htm>

'Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness'

22 May: The Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP announced the release of the Government's Green Paper, *Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness*. The Green Paper aims to promote public discussion on homelessness, highlight the challenges faced by people who are homeless and suggest ways forward. Community participation in the public discussion on homelessness will inform the development of the White Paper, to be released in September 2008. The White Paper will set out the Government's plan of action for the next 10 years. More at:

http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/housing/new_approach_stage1.htm

Working with families concerned with school-based bullying

9 May: This briefing paper from the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse discusses the research literature on the effects of bullying on the health and wellbeing

of young people, together with effective prevention and intervention strategies, and offers suggestions for engaging young people in conversations about bullying. More at: www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/briefing11.html

All Love is Equal: Isn't It?

May: This report by the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby is Australia's largest consultation with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people about the recognition of same sex relationships under Federal law. More at: http://www.glrll.org.au/pdf/major_reports/AllLoveisEqual_Isn_tlt.pdf

2008–09 Budget Papers

May: The Australian Government Budget papers, including portfolio statements and economic outlook reports are available at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/budget/>

Every Child Matters

15 May: In her address to the National Disability Services-Families Australia 'Every Child Matters' conference, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Jenny Macklin MP, highlighted the initiatives announced in the Federal Budget that will help eligible carers looking after children with a severe disability. The Minister's speech can be read at:

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/every_child_matters_15may08.htm.

Extra Support for Children with Disability Program

May: This Australian Government Program aims to address a number of areas of unmet need in service provision for children with disability and their families. A particular focus of this program will be to increase access to outside school hours and vacation care for children and teenagers (aged between 12–18 years) with disability. The program will seek to combine support from community groups, parent organisations and local governments together with funding from the Australian Government to establish delivery models which aim to build community capacity. More at:

[http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/via/extra_support_child_disab/\\$file/ES_CDP%20Program%20Guidelines.pdf](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/via/extra_support_child_disab/$file/ES_CDP%20Program%20Guidelines.pdf)

Arts and disability action plan 2008–2010

May: The Australia Council for the Arts has developed the 'Arts and disability action plan 2008-2010' to guide the organisation in its operations, programs and strategies in relation to access and equity for people with disabilities. The plan also provides the Australia Council with a framework in which to articulate more clearly, both internally and externally, future organisational goals in this area. More at:

http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0016/20608/arts_and_disability_action_plan.doc

Business Service Excellence Awards

16 May: The Business Services Excellence Awards recognise, encourage and promote the significant contribution that business services make in improving the lives of people with disability. These awards also provide an opportunity to recognise the dual focus of business services: being a viable business, while providing high quality employment to people with disability. Nominations close 20 June. More at:

http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/disabilities/services_bis_services_excellence_awards.htm

Drug Action Week

May: Drug Action Week is a week of activities held nationally to raise awareness about alcohol and other drugs issues in Australia and is an initiative of the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia. It will be held from 22-28 June 2008, with the theme 'Alcohol is a Drug - TOO!'. More at: www.drugactionweek.org.au

A Place to Call Home

May: The Refugee Council of Australia works with other agencies around Australia to coordinate Refugee Week, a national celebration held each year since 1986. Refugee Week will be held from 15-21 June. This will coincide with World Refugee Day - Friday, June 20, 2008. The national theme for Refugee Week 2008 is 'A Place to Call Home'. More at: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/newsevents/refugeeweek.html>

Australia's Strengths and Challenges in Responding to Homelessness: An International Comparison

24 May: This discussion paper summarises homelessness issues and data in the United States, Canada and Europe. The paper also argues that, whilst homelessness in Australia is substantial and needs attention, we are well placed, compared to other Western countries, to develop a comprehensive national plan to prevent and reduce homelessness. More at: http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/items/2008/05/00202-upload-00001.pdf

National Conference on Volunteering

May: Volunteering Australia is hosting the 12th National Conference on Volunteering to discuss, debate and exchange ideas and information on the issues that impact the 5.4 million Australians who volunteer. The theme for this year's conference, 'Catch the New Waves', aims to explore current and emerging trends in volunteering, including the shift in the way people are volunteering, flexibility in volunteer management and the changing demographic of the volunteer. The conference will be held at the Gold Coast on 3-5 September 2008. More at:

http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s02_article/default.asp?nav_cat_id=210&nav_top_id=55

Tax help for low income earners

May: Trained Tax Help Volunteers can provide low income earners with free help to fill out their tax returns. Eligibility details and community locations for the Tax Help program will be available after 1 July. More at: www.ato.gov.au

Snapshots of family relationships

May: To support National Families Week 2008, this report, prepared by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, looks at: trends in couple partnering and childbearing; relationships between partners; relationships between parents and children; and other family issues. More at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/snapshots/ssreport08/ssreport08.html>

If you no longer wish to receive *National Family News*, please send an email to admin@familiesaustralia.org.au to unsubscribe.