



# families

australia

**Bulletin No.5**  
Winter 2004

## CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT SUMMIT - 18 JUNE 2004

*Families Australia* is organising a national Child Abuse and Neglect Summit to be held on Friday 18 June 2004 in Canberra.

The Summit will bring together key stakeholders from government, the business sector, unions, churches, the health sector and the community sector to discuss how they can work together to stop the rising incidence of child abuse and neglect in Australia. Families Australia has invited both the Government and the Opposition Party to outline their policy position on this critical issue in the lead up to the election.

This Summit is the culmination of the *Families Australia* Child Abuse and Neglect Campaign - *Our Children: Our Concern, Our Responsibility*. The Campaign was launched on 3 September 2003 and aims to gain greater Commonwealth Government leadership and investment in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

With a 42% increase in the number of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect over the last decade, it is clear the current State/Territory systems are not coping with the rising incidence of child abuse and neglect - many people consider the current situation as a crisis. There is no State or Territory Government which can be said to be addressing the issue of child abuse and neglect well. This is not from lack of will as most States have conducted reviews of the child protection

legislation and increased investment in the system.

Families Australia sees the rising incidence of child abuse and neglect as an issue of national concern and the campaign is intended to seek solutions through the adoption of a national approach to the issue. We believe that State, Territories and Commonwealth Governments need to work together to find solutions to bring about real change.

If you require further information about the Summit please contact Anne Meuronen on 02 6273 4885 or email [policy@familiesaustralia.org.au](mailto:policy@familiesaustralia.org.au).

Information on the *Families Australia* Child Abuse and Neglect Campaign - *Our Children: Our Concern, Our Responsibility* is available on our website at [www.familiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au) and in the *Families Australia* Bulletin No. 4 Spring 2003.



### Globalisation, Families & Work CONFERENCE

Meeting the policy challenges of the next two decades

SEE THE CONFERENCE  
REPORTS INSIDE  
BULLETIN

# families

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From the Chair  
page 2

Families Week Celebrations  
page 3

Conference Session:  
Consumer Culture and Work-  
Family Balance  
page 4

Conference Session:  
The Economics of Caring  
page 6

Father Friendly Workplaces  
page 7

Conference Session:  
Grandparents raising Children  
page 8

Member Profile - SIDS & Kids  
page 10

Conference Session:  
Work and Family: HILDA Survey  
page 11

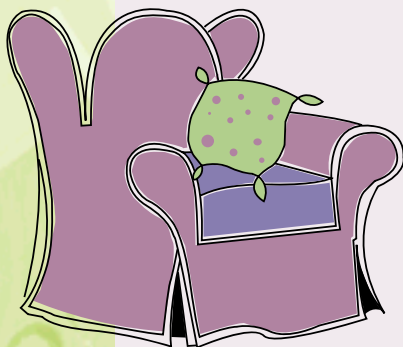
Every Child is Important  
page 11

A Head Start for "Growing Up"  
Australians  
page 12

Celebrating Family Strengths  
page 13

Conference Session:  
Aotearoa New Zealand: A great  
place to live, work and bring up  
children  
page 14

What's Coming Up?  
page 16



## from THE CHAIR

This issue of the Bulletin has a focus on work and family matters, reflecting our very successful conference on *Globalisation, Families and Work*. We wanted the conference to focus attention on long-term social and economic trends, to look at the 'big picture' rather than single issues.

Family households still comprise the majority of Australian households, but the composition of families is changing. Couples are marrying later and having fewer children. Women are more likely to remain in the workforce after having children. More families are reliant on two incomes. Many are caring not only for young children but also for elderly or disabled relatives. Divorce and remarriage are more common, making for more sole parents and more 'blended' families.

Workplace arrangements and working patterns have also become more diverse. The pressures and opportunities associated with globalisation require a more skilled and flexible workforce.

More businesses have to operate round the clock to remain competitive. The length of the school day and the length of the working day rarely co-incide. While some people are working very long hours, others do not have enough work. Meanwhile, our population is ageing and there is pressure to increase workforce participation. Many families are therefore facing new or different pressures when negotiating work and family issues.

We did not come up with solutions to all the problems identified in our two day conference. But the outstanding calibre of all our speakers, and the perspectives contributed by all participants, guarantee that it will make a lasting contribution to public policy debates. It was made abundantly clear that the health of the nation is intertwined with the quest to balance work and family roles. The wellbeing of children and families is a vital measure of social and economic progress and responsibility for ensuring this rests with us all.



Sandie de Wolf  
Chair  
*Families Australia*

## Families Australia Membership

### Join us!

*Families Australia* is a non-profit, non-government organisation recognised by the Commonwealth Government as the national peak body representing the interests of families in Australia.

Both individuals and organisations can contribute to the work of *Families Australia*.

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

membership

JOIN US!!!

#### General Members

Incorporated national bodies that demonstrate support for the aims of *Families Australia* may apply to become General Members.

Membership fee: General \$250 + GST (\$275) or less! (Please contact *Families Australia* for details)

#### Associate Members

Individuals, groups, alliances, or organisations that demonstrate support for the aims of *FAMILIES AUSTRALIA* may apply to become Associate Members.

Membership fee:

Full \$50 + GST (\$55) Concession \$25 + GST \$27.50 (Full-time students and pensioners)

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Organisation

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national  
*families*  
*Week* 2004



## BIG celebrations in National Families Week

This year's National Families Week (9-15 May) featured hundreds of events celebrating the Australian family.

Fathers in the small New South Wales town of Condobolin played their sons in a game of footy as part of the Week's celebrations, while the town's mothers and daughters organised a "make-over" evening. Two Western Australian prisons will extend visiting hours to allow inmates and their families to participate in the Week.

There was a conference on parenting in Sydney, a families expo at a Toowoomba shopping centre, and the Art Gallery of Western Australia expected more than 5000 people to visit a combined year 12 art exhibition to be staged as part of the Week.

National Families Week also featured hundreds of traditional playgroup and preschool morning teas for parents and carers.

The theme for National Families Week was to "*Celebrate YOUR family*". It provided an opportunity for us to think

about families, whatever shape they take, and to celebrate the role families play in our lives and in our community.

As 2004 is the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, National Families Week also provided an opportunity to reflect upon the importance the international community attaches to families.

The CEO of *Families Australia*, Ms Anne-Marie Mioche, says Families Week allows local people to celebrate their family in a fun and informal way.

"National Families Week gives us all an opportunity to think about families, whatever shape they take, and to celebrate the role families play in our own lives and in the life of our community," Ms Mioche says.

Families Week is organised by *Families Australia*, with sponsorship from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and support from Centrelink.

### FAMILIES WEEK EVENTS

National Families Week was celebrated throughout Australia by over 89,000 people with events arranged by 350 organisations.

Over 125 Centrelink offices celebrated National Families Week with BBQ's, joint expos with local community organisations and open days in the workplace. More than 43,000 people were involved with National Families Week through these events.

- A Family Conference was held in Sydney by the Liverpool Christian Life Centre which highlighted the parenting and relationship issues that our communities are facing today.
- Children in Warnbro created and listened to stories about families and then made their own family tree to take home. Each of the children added their own apple and name on the display tree for the library.
- Families in San Remo held a "Picnic in the Park" to encourage local communities to get together to celebrate National Families Week.
- An Early Learning Centre in Sydney invited grandparents to spend the morning with their grandchildren at the centre and share morning tea and activities.
- An indigenous community in Alice Springs held a short film night and BBQ which presented films made by the young people in the community.
- In Queensland, children at a State school were encouraged to participate in an art and poetry competition "Celebrating their Family".
- Coober Pedy Child Care Centres joined in National Families Week by inviting families to visit the centres to view what services are offered to the children and to celebrate their families.





# Consumer Culture and Work-family Balance

*Richard Denniss is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australia Institute, an independent policy research institute based in Canberra.*

## INTRODUCTION

Australians are working longer and longer hours. Technologies such as mobile phones and the internet are helping to push work into our evenings and our weekends. Mothers and fathers are increasingly aware of the impact of their prolonged absences on their children's development.

Why are Australians working longer and longer hours? What is it that we are striving for? Some Australians do face very real financial obstacles. The minimum wage in Australia today is \$448.40 per week, or just over \$23,000 per year. Similarly, there are many Australians living on around \$10,000 per year, unemployed people, sick people, and university students. I don't know exactly where the poverty line should go, but most of those people are certainly below it.

But average full-time earnings are almost twice the minimum wage, and average household earnings are over three times as much. While there is a large number of poor people in Australia who are struggling to make ends meet it, it is the middle and upper income earners doing most of the whingeing and receiving most of the media and political attention.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Australian economy grew by more than \$20 billion in the last year. That is, as a society we spent \$20 billion more on goods and services during 2003 than we did in 2002. That's a lot of money.

But how much of that money was spent addressing the problems that have dogged us for years? Poll after poll shows that we want to see more money spent on education and health, but we largely ignored that problem. We say we are worried about ageing with dignity yet many aged pensioners suffer for months while waiting for basic dental services. Did we allocate any of our economic growth to helping pensioners with abscesses? Not likely.

## OVERCONSUMPTION

For Clive Hamilton's paper *Overconsumption in Australia, the rise of the middle class battler*, the Australia Institute commissioned Newspoll to survey

people's attitudes towards consumption expenditure.

In 2003, as many as 62 per cent of Australians agreed with the statement that 'you can't afford to buy everything you really need'. The percentage of respondents who endorsed the statement is highest among low income households (79 per cent of people in households earning less than \$20,000), but nearly 47 per cent of respondents in households earning over \$70,000 per year agreed they couldn't afford to buy everything they needed.

Maybe, you are thinking, people are interpreting 'need' as 'want'. Well in the same survey we also asked people to agree or disagree with the following statement 'I spend nearly all my money on the basic necessities'. Across the population, 56 per cent of Australians agreed with that statement, including more than 26 per cent of people in households earning over \$70,000 per year.

## IS INCOME GROWTH THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEMS FACING AUSTRALIA?

I am going to duck the question of whether money buys happiness today, which Clive Hamilton discusses in his book *growth fetish*. But I do not duck away from the simple statement that higher incomes do not make shortages go away. A quarter of the population earning \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year believe that they have money left over after purchasing the 'basic necessities'. Yet a quarter of the population earning over \$70,000 believe they are skint.

Most economists and policy makers take as given the notion that increasing economic growth is the best way to improve society. But I doubt the public at large understands, or accepts, the premises on which that belief is held. The problem with relying solely on economic growth to improve wellbeing is that growth is directionless. Economic growth refers to the expansion in the size of the economy, it does not signify that we are moving closer to achieving our objectives.

The point is not that money cannot make people happier, of course it can. There are few people who would say no to an offer of an extra \$10,000 per year. But the important question is 'what would you be willing to give up for an extra \$10,000?'

What would you give up for an extra \$10,000 per year?

Would you give up having dinner with your family each night for a pay

rise? Would you give up having an uninterrupted weekend? Would you give up on the idea of taking your annual leave each year?

As I said before, Australians are working longer hours, taking more work home with them and giving up their annual leave and their weekends because of changing workplace expectations and cultures. While there are undoubtedly some Australians who face the very real threat of job loss if they do not conform to these expectations, to suggest that the majority of the workforce is being dragged kicking and screaming in a direction they adamantly oppose is ridiculous.

Like it or not, many Australians are selling their personal time, their family time and their community time for a few pieces of silver. They may believe that they have to 'keep up with the Joneses', they may believe they need to 'provide a secure future for their kids', they may believe that they need to fund their own retirement. But the fact is, Australians seem increasingly willing to trade off their quality of life for money.

## EARNING LOTS OF MONEY CAN BE EXPENSIVE

One of the problems with the pursuit of higher and higher incomes is that it can be an expensive operation. Even leaving aside the competitive consumption on clothes and cars, long hours usually mean a lot more expenditure on take away food, domestic cleaning services, car washing, dry cleaning and of course a few 'little rewards' and expensive weekend 'getaways' to make it all seem worthwhile.

## THE MONEY-TIME TRADEOFF

In a recent report we published, Barbara Pocock spoke to children about their parents work/money decisions. The children came from a mix of low, middle and high income families, from city and country areas and from NSW and South Australia. The take out message was that money is not a substitute for time with parents, and that time with one parent is not a substitute for time with another parent.

Children, even young children, demonstrated a high level of understanding about the need for their parents to work. They knew that the family needed money, and they knew that work provided that, but few of them thought more money was more important than more time.



## CONCLUSION

Higher incomes can help low income earners meet their needs and participate in contemporary society. However, the simple pursuit of higher incomes at the expense of time spent with families and friends, in community activity or simply spent resting can cause major problems for individuals, families and communities.

Governments have an important role to play in ensuring that individuals can manage work – life balance. It is not sufficient for governments to say that employees and employers can negotiate such outcomes by themselves. Many individuals struggle to see their concerns reflected in their employment conditions.

Contemporary Australian culture suggests that earning higher and higher incomes is not just rewarding, but essential for the provision of a 'safe' environment for families. But a three-fold increase in real incomes since the 1950s has not resulted in a similar increase in measured wellbeing. Individuals must, therefore, ask themselves and their families what it is they are trying to achieve. While higher income may assist in the pursuit of some family goals, it is unlikely to lead to more time, better communication or stronger family relationships for middle and high earners.

Having determined what family priorities are, individuals may then decide to 'downshift', they may opt for increased holiday leave rather than an annual pay increase, or they may simply participate in events such as National Go Home On Time Day (April 19), which are designed to make individuals and their organisations reflect on long hours of work cultures.

## REFERENCES

*Can't buy me love? Young Australians' views on parental work, time, guilt, and their own consumption*, B.Pocock & J.Clarke, Australia Institute Discussion Paper No 61, Feb 2004.

Australia Institute website  
[www.tai.org.au](http://www.tai.org.au)



families australia



# Globalisation, Families & Work CONFERENCE REPORT

The *Families Australia* conference on *Globalisation, Families and Work: Meeting the policy challenges of the next two decades*, held in Brisbane on 1-2 April, was hailed as a great success. It provided a timely opportunity to hear leading international and Australian experts address the important issues confronting families, employers and policy makers in the twenty-first century. Attended by people from all levels of government, the community sector, women's groups, industry and business organisations, trade unions and the research community, the conference drew together many strands of the work and family debate.

The assembled delegates were graciously welcomed to the land by Indigenous representative Auntie Ella Gordon of the Brisbane Council of Elders, who urged everyone to work together to find solutions that supported all families. The Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon Kay Patterson, then officially opened the conference. She talked about the importance of research and debate to the policy making process and launched a new report on men's uptake of family friendly workplace provisions (see page 7).

One of Australia's most respected futurists, Mr Phil Ruthven provided an illuminating overview of economic and demographic trends affecting families and workplaces. He pointed out for example that for the first time in history we have five generations coexisting and that presents us with many challenges.

The feedback from conference delegates was overwhelmingly positive, with the quality of the speakers and the richness and diversity of the information presented being rated as excellent. Many people commented that the linking of different issues – such as family wellbeing, social welfare supports, and employment arrangements – was a highlight of the Conference. Discussions over the two days of the conference were high-level, informative and stimulating.

Some of the material presented is included in this issue of the Bulletin. For full conference papers and presentations please go to the Families Australia website [www.familiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au) or contact the office on 02 6273 4885 or email [conference@familiesaustralia.org.au](mailto:conference@familiesaustralia.org.au).

Ella Gordon



Kay Patterson



Exhibition Area





CONFERENCE SESSION:

# The Economics of Caring

Caring for others is a central aspect of family life. It is also essential to a functioning economy. The need for families to devote time and energy to looking after each other, or organise for others to do so, is the key nexus between work and family life. But the cost of caring is not included in economic calculations unless it is 'outsourced' and paid for. This means its value is often overlooked, and those who provide the care in the home and community go unrecognised. This issue is close to many people's hearts and the Conference session on The Economics of Caring was one of the most popular.

*Professor Susan Himmelweit gave the keynote address in this session. An internationally renowned economist based at the Open University in England, she has written widely on the economic analysis of households, paid and unpaid work, caring and gender relations in the economy. This is an extract from her talk.*

'The economy depends on caring activities – for example care plays a crucial role in the socialisation of individuals and the production and maintenance of human capabilities. How people are cared for determines what they can do in their lives and for society. At the same time, caring responsibilities impact on what else people can do in their lives and for society. The value of caring activities is significant – in the UK for example, unpaid caring activities

are worth approximately £231 billion. Care has remained as an unpaid domestic activity longer than other economic activities, although it is increasingly being carried out in the public and private sectors of the paid economy too.

Care differs from other economic activities in being the development of a personal relationship. Norms and values matter in who is seen to need care and in how that care should be delivered and by whom. This is true of all types of caring – whether for children, old people or people with disabilities. These factors limit the potential for productivity increases. Because of this, care has moved more slowly than other goods and services from the unpaid to the paid economy. In the most developed economies, caring is now the core activity carried out in the home.

The difficulties of raising productivity in caring mean that an increasing proportion of an economy's resources will have to be devoted to caring, even if needs do not increase. The private provision of care by individuals and households is unlikely to meet these costs, because the need for care and the ability to pay for it are unevenly and indeed often inversely related. At the same time, the opportunity cost of staying at home to care for others will rise. Increasing numbers of women will seek to combine caring with employment. This means that if care needs are to be met, governments will have to spend increasing proportions of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on providing care. In theory this should be quite acceptable, because the overall rise in productivity means that there is still an increasing absolute amount left over to devote to other (private or public) spending. However, spending more on care goes against the current emphasis by governments and international

agencies on individual (household) responsibility for care, and on reducing government spending as a proportion of GDP.

But unless the political will is found to increase government expenditure on caring more than proportionately to GDP, the quality of individual socialization and the production and maintenance of human capabilities in the economy will suffer. This will be a high price to pay.'

Professor Himmelweit has also recently completed a study of the ways mothers of pre-school children decide about work and employment in the UK. She found that while these mothers recognised they had more choice than earlier generations of women, they still felt the pressure of external constraints including financial, childcare and working time problems. In reporting on the policy implications of her findings, she suggests that the government should take parents' and children's needs as seriously as it does those of employers. "This requires a change in government attitude, towards recognising that both childcare and sufficient time for parents to be with children, are good for both parents and children and as such are a potential benefit rather than a cost to the economy."

*Associate Professor Michael Bittman is Acting Director of the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. He is an international expert on time use research and has published widely on family and social policy issues.*

There has been a lot of discussion about how employment could be reconfigured in a 'family friendly way'. Dual career couples are now the norm. Although fathers are becoming more involved in



## Father-friendly Workplaces

the home, on average the time that men devote to unpaid family responsibilities is half that spent by women. Almost regardless of their position in the life course, men's weekly hours of unpaid work tend to be a fixed quantity<sup>1</sup>. The time women spend in unpaid work varies throughout the life course, expanding and contracting in accordance with their responsibility for others (spouse, children or a frail relative). The largest shifts in women's time use are associated with the care of young children. Raising children costs both time and money. My research has led me to believe the time costs are much higher than the money costs. Consequently, parenthood places working families under the greatest time pressures. Mothers pay a heavy penalty in lifetime earnings if they withdraw from the labour market for anything more than a year. My research also reveals that parents (mainly mothers) use childcare to reschedule the time they spend with children rather than to substitute for their own contact with children. The issue of work-family has two facets – what happens at work and home. Most of the public discussion of this addresses only the most trivial aspects of what happens at work and neglects what happens at home. I believe more emphasis should be given to smoothing the time pressure associated with preschool age children while maintaining a strong attachment to the labour market. The best instrument for this is paid parental leave. This strengthens the position of the primary carer both at work and at home.

**Scott Barklamb** is Manager, Workplace Relations, with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), one of the peak organisations representing employers. Its members comprise small, medium and large business which between them employ over four million Australians. Mr Barklamb presented a business perspective on the issues and spoke about ACCI's response to the Work and Family Testcase brought by the Australian Council of Trade Unions and currently being considered by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (<http://www.e-airc.gov.au/familyprovisions>).

He said that over many years informal arrangements have existed between businesses and employees to address specific work and family circumstances as they have arisen. It is the primary function of business to manage commercial enterprises for profit and it is not always viable or cost-effective to accommodate the work and family needs of employees. These needs are increasing and becoming more diverse with the ageing of the population, men's greater involvement in parenting, and changing expectations. There is scope for providing businesses with more tools to assist in their cost-benefit analysis of different arrangements and proposals. However, perhaps the best possible contribution to families that business can make is the provision of jobs and incomes. Policies that create jobs are therefore important, as are policies to create more workplace flexibilities. The emphasis should be on education, information and promotional activities rather than on workplace regulation.

Further details of ACCI's work and family policies and initiatives can be found on their website [www.acci.asn.au](http://www.acci.asn.au) Examples of family friendly provisions in certified agreements can be found at [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

<sup>1</sup>The exceptions are sons living at home (whose weekly hours of unpaid work are a fraction of those of other adults) and the small category of men who outlive their spouse (whose weekly hours of unpaid work are similar to those of comparable women).



In opening the Conference the Minister for Family and Community Services launched a new report commissioned by her Department, *Men's uptake of family-friendly employment provisions*, by Michael Bittman, Sonia Hoffman and Denise Thompson of the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales. The report is in two parts. Part One is a literature review that brings together findings of previous Australian and international research on the availability of family friendly work provisions, men's patterns of use and the barriers to take-up. Part Two comprises case studies of 'best practice' companies that have a reputation for accommodating their employees' family responsibilities. Male employees and their partners and managers were interviewed. The researchers found that even in these companies men often find it hard to fit family around the demands of work. They identify a discrepancy between what men say they want (greater involvement in parenting) and what they do or fail to do (take up family friendly provisions at work such as career breaks, parental leave, part-time work). The authors conclude that public policy has a key role to play in changing workplace cultures to encourage and enable fathers to achieve a better balance between their paid work and parenting roles. For copies of the report contact the Publications Unit of the Department of Family and Community Services, phone 02 6244 5458 or go to [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au) or [www.sprc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au)





## CONFERENCE SESSION:

# Grandparents RAISING Grandchildren

*James (Jim) Giles AM is Chair of the National Policy Council of the Council on the Ageing (COTA) National Seniors Partnership.*

Grandchildren come to live with their grandparents because there has been a breakdown in parental care. Last year, the COTA National Partnership was commissioned by Larry Anthony, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, to talk to these grandparents about:

- their existing support mechanisms
- what additional support they may require
- the financial and legal issues they may be facing and
- any concerns they have about the wellbeing of their grandchildren.

Our project officer, Margot Fitzpatrick, organised 22 workshops in five states: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Grandparents in other states and territories were encouraged to contribute via the internet or by post or telephone. In all there were 110 individual responses.

In four months a total of 499 grandparents raising 548 grandchildren took part in the project, making up 308 grandparent-headed families. Of these, 63% were couples, with 68% of all grandparents being 55 years of age or over. The eldest was 82 and she was raising three teenagers (13, 15 and 17) on her own. Of the grandchildren, 53% were under 10 years of age, the youngest being just 12 weeks old. Just over half of the grandparents are raising two or more grandchildren, with some having up to six in their care.

Irrespective of the geographic location or socio-economic circumstances of the participating grandparents, there was a

striking similarity among the concerns identified. This gave us the confidence to make a number of recommendations to government, knowing that they represent real and immediate needs.

The issues grandparents identified fell into these categories: financial issues, legal issues, problems of parenting, the health and wellbeing of the grandparents, the health and welfare of the grandchildren, and finding suitable child care for pre-school grandchildren.

## FINANCIAL - BENEFITS

If you are caring for your grandchildren as the consequence of a Family Court order, then you are entitled only to Family Tax Benefits and any other means tested pensions or benefits you may be eligible for through Centrelink, and Child Support Payments if these apply.

If at the state and territory level, on the application of the child protection authorities you are nominated as the carers of grandchildren, then you are entitled to non-taxable, non-means tested payments from the state government towards the cost of raising the grandchildren as well as support

services deemed necessary by the child protection authority.

If, on the other hand, the arrangements are informal you don't get a brass razoo. Your argument goes like this: you, the child protection authority, are happy for us to take care of these children, but if we were not available the kids would end up in foster care as the responsibility of the child protection authorities and at taxpayer expense. In fact, when grandparents seek help from those authorities they are often told, "We know the children are safe with you. We have closed the file."

## FINANCIAL - CENTRELINK

The Centrelink system is confusing to grandparents with an array of payments and eligibility requirements, including the family tax benefit parts A and B, the childcare benefit, the double orphan pension, the disability allowance, the age pension and the youth allowance. Grandparents say that Centrelink does not inform them of possible benefits available to them. There is no category for grandparents and no recognition of grandparents' status or circumstances, so they are made to look for work or put on inappropriate benefits. Centrelink requires grandparents to prove continually that they have the grandchildren, even when that information is already on file.

## FINANCIAL - PERSONAL FINANCES

The impact on grandparents' personal finances, health and wellbeing can be considerable, as illustrated by these quotations from the workshops:

A 72-year-old grandmother: *"I am, frankly, finding all this a big financial strain, and the money I saved for my retirement is slowly but surely being spent on the children. I have also had to contend with some serious ill health. On the positive side, the children bring me a lot of happiness. But it would all be much easier if I had legal custody and access to the family allowance. I could include them on my pensioner concession cards."*





A 61-year-old grandmother: "There is the initial cost of providing on an age pension for a two-week old baby, ie. cot, stroller, car seat etc. and now having to buy a larger car as my grandchild is coming up to one year old and the situation is likely to be long term."

A 63-year-old grandmother: "My husband feels cheated of his retirement plans. He can't get past the anger at the mother."

A 65 year old grandmother: "I had retired shortly before the children came to me, and now I have virtually no life of my own. I cannot go out at nights or at weekends, and see my friends only rarely. Also, I do not have enough money to follow my own interests anyway."

## PARENTING

Parenting of children can be a real problem for grandparents. The children's culture is different and there are frequently clashes over discipline, clothing, TV, swearing, or tidiness. Sometimes the children are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, with accompanying nightmares, bed-wetting, mood swings and episodes of violent behaviour. Grandparents also speak of being too old to do the things the children want to do. They often feel tired and worry about their capacity to keep going.

Listen to the words of a 12-year-old grandson: "It's not very cool living with Nan. Nan drives really slow, and she isn't confident driving any more so we never go very far. My friends don't live close by so I don't get to see them that much. I don't get to see my friends that much because Nan doesn't like having any more kids here. Nan worries about me, she worries that I will be like my Mum and Dad but I won't. I just want to do the stuff other kids do. The good thing is that I get to play footy, so I see my mates then."

## LEGAL ISSUES - LEGAL AID

Grandparents are rarely eligible for legal aid as owning even a modest home disqualifies them, so they must pay for their own legal representation.

A grandparent couple, aged 55 and 57, wrote: "The legal expenses were horrific, about \$50,000 over a two and a half year legal battle. The mother got legal aid and still does. The care, control and residence was granted to us, but the mother was still given legal aid to take us back to court because the eldest child didn't want anything to do with her.

This cost us \$8,000. New orders were made which mean nothing to this woman and the child got no protection from the Children's Court or the police. The only way would be back to court. We simply couldn't afford that, no legal aid for us or this child. This mother abides by no orders from the court. To care and keep these children safe and give them their rights has cost us our retirement home and the struggle of our lives, and our government failed to help these children and us."

## COMPLEXITIES OF THE SYSTEMS

The complexities and confusions of the legal systems, with varying commonwealth and state laws and responsibilities, are a maze for grandparents to find their way through. And grandparents find the Family Court and its rulings on custody issues particularly difficult. In one case the grandchildren's father is in prison for 18 years, their mother is dead and they live with their grandparents. But the father still has legal custody and still has the final say on decisions affecting the children.

## WHERE NEXT?

All up, these grandparents do not have an easy existence. However, not all the stories are negative. Members of the extended family help and the grandchildren benefit from close contact with their aunts, uncles and cousins. Some spoke warmly about the assistance given by non-government agencies such as the Salvation Army and Anglicare.

We made a number of recommendations to Minister Larry Anthony, including:

- That the Commonwealth and State Governments together recognise that grandparents raising their grandchildren are a special group requiring assistance
- That Commonwealth and State Governments work together to ensure that they receive the same payments and support services as foster carers
- That legal aid be available to grandchildren and grandparents involved in Family Court matters
- all children involved in the legal system have an independent advocate or children's legal representative paid for by Legal Aid

- the income and assets test for Legal Aid have the same eligibility criteria as the aged pension

## CONCLUSION

Margot Fitzpatrick, co-author with Patricia Reeve of the report, is firmly of the view that grandparents caring for grandchildren need public recognition. In a recent e-mail to me she said:

*"Grandparents are naturally sometimes ambivalent about caring for their grandchildren, whether on a full time basis or as regular child care providers while parents work. They can feel exhausted, resentful, put-upon, anxious about their health, worried about coping etc, but at the same time delighted to be involved in raising their grandchildren, pleased to be useful, full of love and extremely protective."*

Grandparents around Australia would prefer that their grandchildren could live with caring parents and that they could be "normal" grandparents again. In the meantime they are determined to give their grandchildren every opportunity to have healthy, happy and well-rounded lives. They ask their Government to help them in this.

The report "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" is on the COTA National Seniors web site at [www.cota.org.au](http://www.cota.org.au)

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS

In response to COTA National Senior's report the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Larry Anthony, announced on 2 May funding of \$310,000 for 10 new projects to help grandparents who have primary care of their grandchildren.

*"There are more than 27,700 children under the age of 15 living with their grandparents only. This is more than twice the number of children living in foster care. They do an amazing job in what are often difficult circumstances,"* said the Minister.

For information about the projects go to [http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/minister2.nsf/content/helping\\_grandparents.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/minister2.nsf/content/helping_grandparents.htm)

we want your  
feedback!



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# sids<sup>and</sup>kids

SIDS and Kids is dedicated to the elimination of sudden and unexpected infant deaths, and the provision of quality services that reduce the impact of that death. They aim to reach all families with newborn babies to provide them with up-to-date information on how to reduce the risks of SIDS and create safe sleeping environments. There are 250,000 births per year in Australia, and over the past 12 years SIDS and Kids has been instrumental in reducing the incidence of SIDS by about 80%.

Jan Carey, CEO Chair of the federated organisation, is proud to report that "through our commitment to research and health promotion programs and in co-operation with health professionals, we have saved the lives of over 4,000 Australian babies."

In 1999 SIDS organisations formally expanded their wide range of services to include support for families whose children die suddenly and unexpectedly from 20 weeks gestation to two years, regardless of cause. In some States, the services provided are even broader and include miscarriage and children up to six years. In March 2002, to reflect these expanded objectives and services, the organisation embraced a new name – **SIDS and Kids**. It is largely self-funded and relies heavily on Red Nose Day for fundraising and donations. This year's Red Nose Day is on 25 June 2004.

Throughout Australia SIDS and Kids organisations employ around 60 full time equivalent staff and provide support services free of charge. Counselling to bereaved families is provided using a unique partnership between professional counsellors and trained volunteer 'peer supporters'.

A wide range of information and educational materials is available for parents, health professionals and the community. You can make contact with SIDS and Kids via the award-winning website [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org) or by phoning 1300 308 307.



Please get behind  
red nose day



sids<sup>and</sup>kids  
red nose day

Friday 25th June  
[www.rednoseday.com.au](http://www.rednoseday.com.au)







## CONFERENCE SESSION:

# BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY: EVIDENCE FROM HILDA

*Professor Mark Wooden of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, is director of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey project.*

The HILDA survey involves interviews with a large, nationally representative sample of households. It is a panel survey, which aims to track all members of an initial sample of households over an indefinite period. The first wave interviews were conducted in late 2001. Information is gathered on economic and subjective well-being, labour market dynamics and family dynamics. At the conference Professor Wooden presented data from HILDA that examine the diversity of working arrangements across Australian families and how Australian workers with parenting responsibilities are coping with their dual roles. The data show that many Australian workers are dissatisfied with their working hours. For those parents who are working quite long hours (more than 48 per week), the gap between usual hours worked and preferred hours of work – often referred to as the time-squeeze – is quite large. Around 55 per cent of parents of children aged 14 years or under who are working these hours would prefer to work fewer hours. They are much less likely to be happy with their hours than parents working 35-40 hours or parents working part-time.

The more hours worked, the less flexibility people have to balance work and non-work commitments. The hours spent by fathers interacting with their children and doing housework tend to be lower for those working more hours. However, while greater flexibility to take time off and reschedule working hours can assist a better work-family balance it does not guarantee it. Moreover, measures of satisfaction with partners and children show little direct association with hours of work.

*The full paper is on the Families Australia website. Further information about HILDA can be found at [www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda](http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda) or [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)*

# EVERY child is IMPORTANT



The Australian Childhood Foundation launched its *Every Child is Important* Campaign in Sydney on the 15 March 2004. It is an innovative parenting education initiative which works to elicit a social commitment to children. It uses multimodal strategies to strengthen positive relationships between parents and children through the provision of parenting information, resources and support at a national level. It also encourages help seeking behaviour by parents through promoting the view that all parents need information and support at some point in their child's development.

The campaign has been funded through the Australian Government's National Agenda for Early Childhood to be implemented nationally until the end of 2005.

The launch included the release of a research report entitled *The Concerns of Australian Parents* based on interviews with a sample of 500 parents nationally. The research highlighted that 3 in 4 parents struggled to balance work and family, more than half lacked confidence in their parenting and more than 80% wanted more information and support on parenting issues.

The campaign features creative TV, radio and print advertising using the evocative Van Morrison song "Have I told you lately that I love you". It includes the following key elements:

- an interactive website for parents and children's services providers;
- forty parenting seminars around Australia with Michael Grose;
- the distribution of half a million free parenting booklets;
- free CDROM with parenting information in eight languages;
- free Every Child is Important Parenting Newsletter;
- updates about research on child development and parenting; and,
- opportunities for services to promote local parenting activities and support programs.

Information about the campaign can be found at [www.kidscount.com.au](http://www.kidscount.com.au). Requests for campaign resources can also be made by phoning the *Every Child is Important* national campaign helpline on 1800 176 453.

# A Head Start for 'Growing Up' Australians

A new report challenges child-focused professionals to work with others to help give children – and Australia – a great 'head start'.

*A Head Start for Australia: An Early Years Framework* encourages people whose work involves young children and their families to "think outside their area of expertise and take a broader approach to growing up kids", said the NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Gillian Calvert.

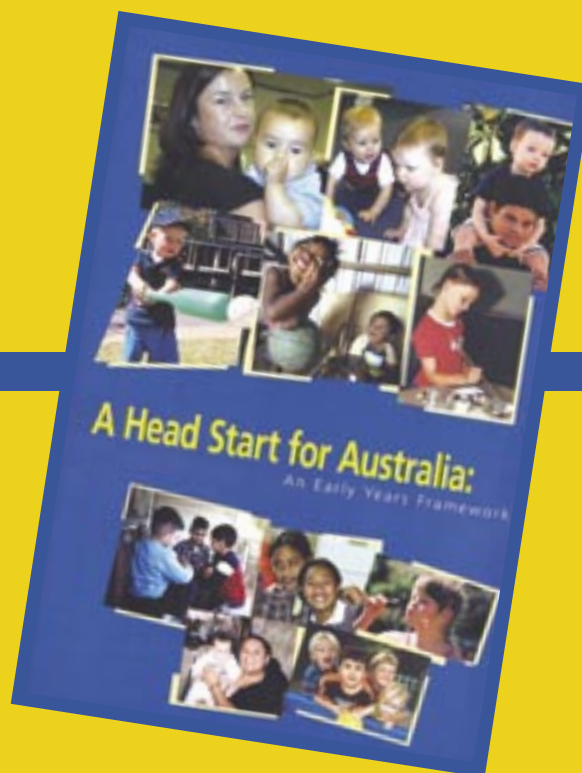
The report sets out a national agenda for all Australians – professionals, business and industry, all levels of government, community groups and families – to work together so our children are happy, healthy, educated and able to participate in and contribute to the community. It was produced by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and the Commission for Children and Young People (Qld) and the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY).

The framework identifies nine key areas where action can be taken that will have immediate and long-term benefits for children. For example, in the outcome area of helping children achieve success in learning and social development, suggested actions include making child care more affordable through tax incentives and using child care and early childhood education to engage families and link them to a range of other groups and services.

Supporting families to care for kids, optimising children's health and well-being, promoting better connections across generations, families, cultures and communities, and increasing children's opportunity to participate in decision-making are all highlighted in the report.

Importantly, the report recognises that significant headway will only be made in any of the key areas if action is taken that addresses all areas of a child's life.

*A Head Start for Australia: An Early Years Framework* can be downloaded in PDF format from [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au) or contact the NSW Commission for Children and Young People on 02 9286 7276 for a printed copy.



## NINE KEY OUTCOME AREAS:

1. Supporting the wellbeing of women of child-bearing age.
2. Promoting child wellbeing.
3. Supporting the choices of families in their parental and working roles.
4. Enriching, safe and supportive environments for children.
5. Improving economic security for families and reducing child poverty.
6. Achieving success in learning and social development.
7. Protecting the safety of children.
8. Promoting connections across generations, families, cultures and communities.
9. Increasing children's participation: policy action, awareness raising and advocacy.

## USEFUL INTERNET SITES FOR WORK AND FAMILY INFORMATION

Department of Family and  
Community Services  
[www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)

Department of Employment and  
Workplace Relations  
[www.workplace.gov.au/  
WorkFamily](http://www.workplace.gov.au/WorkFamily)

Equal Opportunity for Women in  
the Workplace Agency  
[www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)

Human Rights and Equal  
Opportunity Commission  
[www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

WORK+LIFE STRATEGIES  
[www.workpluslifestrategies.  
com](http://www.workpluslifestrategies.com)

MANAGING WORK/LIFE BALANCE  
[www.worklifebalance.com.au](http://www.worklifebalance.com.au)

Australian Council of Trade Unions  
Work and Family Campaign  
[http://actu.asn.au/public/  
campaigns/workandfamily.html](http://actu.asn.au/public/campaigns/workandfamily.html)

Queensland Government Work and  
Family Unit  
[http://www.ir.qld.gov.au/  
work&family](http://www.ir.qld.gov.au/work&family)





# Celebrating Family Strengths

The idea for *Our Scrapbook of Strengths* emerged in 1999 when the Family Action Centre at the University of Newcastle initiated the first wide-scale investigation into how families identify their strengths. The research identified eight key strengths: communication, togetherness, sharing activities, affection, support, acceptance, commitment and resilience.

The Family Action Centre approached St Luke's Innovative Resources with their findings and initiated another round of research to create a strengths-building tool. The result is *Our Scrapbook of Strengths*, an original and highly versatile conversational prompt for exploring the strengths that can be found, not only in families, but in groups, organisations and communities.

The cards in *Our Scrapbook of Strengths* replicate a family scrapbook or photo album with more than 130 watercolour illustrations by renowned Bendigo artist Carolyn Marrone. It requires no prior training and is adaptable to every area of family work including: building resilience, strengths-based storytelling, working with couples, step families, caregivers, and family workers themselves.

*Our Scrapbook of Strengths* is a resource that will build optimism for future change, identify strengths to strive for, and suggest strategies for how a vision of new possibilities might be realised. You can order a copy (\$49.50) by phoning 03 5442 0500, email [stlukeir@stlukes.org.au](mailto:stlukeir@stlukes.org.au) or see [www.stlukes.org.au](http://www.stlukes.org.au)

JOHN HOLTON

Writer-in-Residence, St Luke's Innovative Resources

## Have YOUR SAY on schooling

Parents across Australia can go to [www.dest.gov.au/nef/](http://www.dest.gov.au/nef/) schools to have their say about some very important schooling issues - including the benefits of national consistency, dealing with bullying, use of school facilities outside school hours, helping young people make good career choices, keeping kids active and educating boys.

The *Taking Schools to the next level* - the national education framework for schools consultation kit includes a short paper parents can read and discuss with friends. There are questions that can be answered on-line, by mail or by fax. There is also space to present other good ideas or to make further comments.

Responses are welcome from individuals, families or groups of interested parents or community members. What is important is that the Australian Government hears

directly from as many parents as possible with their views and insights on how schools can best meet the needs of families in the 21st century.

If going on-line is difficult, a free copy of the kit or a CD-ROM is available by calling 1300 559 655 at the cost of a local call (the cost may be higher from a mobile) or emailing [schoolsframework@dest.gov.au](mailto:schoolsframework@dest.gov.au).



By participating in this nationwide consultation, parents and the community will help make Australian schooling even better by contributing to the development of the Australian Government's policies for schools."

### HEALTH ISSUES FOR WORKING MOTHERS

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Working\\_mothers\\_common\\_problems](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Working_mothers_common_problems)

Australian Breastfeeding Association  
<http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/canwork>.

### MEN AT WORK

<http://www.interrelate.org.au/work>

### NEW ZEALAND DEVELOPMENTS

[www.worklife.govt.nz](http://www.worklife.govt.nz)

### UK DEVELOPMENTS

[www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance](http://www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance)

[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

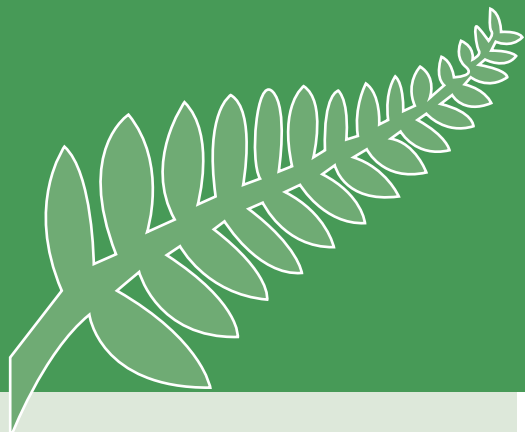
<http://www.women-returners.co.uk>

### USA DEVELOPMENTS

Families and Work Institute

[www.familiesandwork.org](http://www.familiesandwork.org)





## CONFERENCE SESSION:

# Aotearoa New Zealand A Great Place to live, work and bring up children?

*Trudie McNaughton is a member of the NZ Ministerial Advisory Group on Work and Life Balance and was chief executive of the NZ Equal Employment Opportunities Trust for 11 years.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are now significant international moves to advance from rhetoric to action in the integration of family and paid work. This has implications for policy in government, local authorities, education and workplaces. The challenge for us all, in our different countries, is to answer what next after all the platitudes? What do we DO?

What is happening in New Zealand? Like Australia's, our population is ageing and becoming more diverse. Changing workforce participation and the demands of the modern workplace impact heavily on family life and the community. Skills shortages are a recurring nightmare in the employment arena. As in Australia, the greatest potential growth in the labour market is from women in their childbearing years.

The current NZ Government's position on work-life balance was set out in the Governor General's speech in August 2002 where she stated the government's belief:

- That work is but one dimension of living
- It should not crowd out and distort family life, recreation and personal development.
- Work-life balance should seek to raise the profile of activities other than work
- It should contribute to the government goals of a growing economy and an innovative and inclusive society.

The Government has made a bold commitment:

- That New Zealand will be a great place to live, work and bring up children

- To be a leader itself in work and life balance – as a policy maker, as an employer and in the way that it operates (eg the alignment of Parliamentary recess with school holidays)
- For New Zealand to be a leader internationally in work and life balance.

## WORK-LIFE SCORECARD

We already have the Social Report produced by the Ministry of Social Development. The Government has now agreed to develop a Scorecard as a means of both inspiring and measuring progress towards the vision of New Zealand being a great place to live and work. We need to be able to compare, over time and against other countries, indicators such as paid parental leave, childcare provision and conditions of work.

The Government's intention is not to prescribe what the right balance is for people, but to encourage consultation and debate with key stakeholders – individuals, their families and communities, workplaces – employees and employers, and government.

The contributions from people and institutions will vary. On the issue of leave, individuals can contribute by making sure that they take their leave, that they don't overwork when possible, and if they are in management or supervisory positions that they help their staff do the same. Workplaces can ensure best practice terms and conditions. Managers can be held accountable for leave being taken, as part of their performance appraisal. Government can ensure legislation that provides good levels of annual, sick, bereavement and parental leave.

In 2003, the then Labour Minister Margaret Wilson announced an integrated government programme to develop family-friendly and other policies promoting work-life balance.

An inter-agency steering group was set up, chaired by the Department of Labour.

"The right balance is different for each person. Obviously work-life issues for a sole-parent worker will be quite different than for say a worker nearing retirement. What is important is the extent to which people have real choices and control over their circumstances. What is also clear is that achieving work-life balance is complicated, and will therefore require different government, employer, individual and community responses," the Minister said.

The government's work programme has three phases

- analysis of policies and practices
- consultation and stakeholder engagement, currently underway
- and policy development. (See [www.worklife.govt.nz](http://www.worklife.govt.nz))

## CONSULTATION

Focus groups have been conducted to identify current understanding of and attitudes towards the issue of work-life balance. One of the most significant findings for me was that the researchers reported less cynicism from employers about this issue than about many others that they research. This occurs in a context of a continuing tight labour market. They also report that in other unrelated research they are seeing a resurgence in the importance attached to families. This is a key issue for men and women, job seekers, employees, unions, employers, government and the public.

The researchers reported a personal relationship to this issue from both employers and employees. Most believe work and life is out of balance. This is not an issue just for the government nor is it one that workplaces can be expected to sort out. And educating individuals about their employment entitlements will not be enough on its own either. We need an integrated approach.





Those involved in the focus groups reported the main motivation for change was a crisis or some other sort of event. This matches exactly what I have learned over the years we have been involved in work and life issues at the EEO Trust. Occasionally the catalysing event is a celebration eg birth of a long awaited child, but regrettably it is often a crisis. This might be death, relationship break up or problems with children. Teenage troubles often get quoted to me by senior men as a catalyst for noticing how out of kilter their lives are.

There is a difference in the perception of employers and employees about how easy it is to get a balance. Employers and employees rated their work and life balance similarly but employers perceived that employees had a better balance than the employees themselves reported.

The research showed a difference between those who feel really trapped in their work, can't leave because they need the money for example for children's education, and those who have access to better pay and conditions and can leave.

Suggestions range from what the individual can do, to matters directly related to work content and design, to facilities e.g. child care and policies such as parental leave. So the solutions include contributions at a family, workplace and government level.

The Consultation phase aims to:

- raise public awareness, debate and understanding of work-life issues;
- clarify what work-life balance means to different groups of people;
- generate practical solutions; and
- enable the Government to work in partnership with others to achieve change.

## PAID PARENTAL LEAVE REVIEW

Prime Minister Helen Clark and Women's Affairs Minister Ruth Dyson announced on 8 March 2004 that, following an evaluation of the paid parental leave scheme which shows it has been a resounding success, the eligibility and duration of leave is to be extended. Employees and business reported high levels of satisfaction with the scheme.

The leave period will be extended from 12 to 14 weeks, phased in over two years. Also, paid parental leave will be available to those who have been in the same job for at least six months, rather than a year as at present. This will bring New Zealand into line with International Labour Organisation standards. There have also been reforms to improve the adequacy of annual, sick and bereavement leave (the Holidays Act 2003 came into force 1 April 2004).

## FAMILIES COMMISSION

In July a new Families Commission is being established to act as an advocate for the interests of families generally. The Act under which it has been established expressly recognises the "kinds, structures, and diversity of families and family groups." It defines family groups very broadly, through biological and legal relationships, psychological attachments or through whanau or culturally recognised family groups. It must also have regard to the needs, values and beliefs of Maori Pacific Islands peoples and other ethnic and cultural groups within New Zealand.

We have an opportunity to use the support from business leaders such as Nick Lambert, CEO of IBM New Zealand who says "By encouraging work life balance, business will attract and retain the very best people. This is the business imperative." And government leaders including the Prime Minister, Attorney General and Minister of Women's Affairs, who explicitly support work life balance. And policy experts who are intrigued by the challenge of developing a scorecard that can inspire and measure progress towards a dream.

Our challenge is to increase the goodwill, and translate it into more action. I am optimistic about our chances of success.



# INCREASED FUNDING FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

On 7 April 2004, the Prime Minister announced the Australian Government's commitment of an additional \$365 million over four years for the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

This new funding will be used to strengthen the Strategy's focus on the early childhood years. It will fund a range of local initiatives that intervene early to help families, children and communities at risk.

The new Strategy builds on the principles of the original Strategy. It works from a recognition that Government social policy approaches should be responsive to community needs and provide access to those most in need. Key initiatives are:

- **Communities for Children** (\$110 million over four years) – will target up to 35 disadvantaged communities, providing funding for local early childhood initiatives;
- **Early Childhood – Invest to Grow** (\$70.5 million over four years) – will provide funding for national early childhood programs and resources. It will ensure that Australia continues to be one of the world leaders in best practice in the early childhood development arena;
- **Local Answers** (\$60 million over four years) – gives communities the power to develop their own solutions and help them help themselves;
- **Choice and Flexibility in Child Care** (\$125.3 million over four years) – continues the groundbreaking work of the first Strategy in providing Australian parents with flexible and innovative child care solutions. It will fund the continuation of the in-home care program and provide additional places for families without other formal child care options. There will be incentives for child care providers to set up in areas of high need, and funding will continue to the quality assurance system for family day care and outside school hours care.

Further information can be found at [www.facs.gov.au/sfcs](http://www.facs.gov.au/sfcs).



# WHAT'S COMING UP?

## Calendar of Events for 2004-2005

2 Jun	Cross-government project to reduce social isolation of older people, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Conference, Brisbane QLD <a href="http://www.apo.org.au/event_archive.shtml">www.apo.org.au/event_archive.shtml</a>	4 Aug	Aged Care in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Lessons from the Past, Seminar with Christine Sindely, Brisbane QLD <a href="http://www.apo.org.au/event_archive.shtml">www.apo.org.au/event_archive.shtml</a>
2-4 Jun	10th National Conference on Volunteering, Hilton on the Park, East Melbourne VIC <a href="http://www.nvsc.org.au/">www.nvsc.org.au/</a>	5-6 Aug	Strategies for Equality and Inclusion VCOSS Annual Congress, Melbourne VIC <a href="http://www.vcooss.org.au/events.htm">www.vcooss.org.au/events.htm</a>
4 Jun	UN International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression <a href="http://www.unesco.org">www.unesco.org</a>	16-19 Aug	31st International Conference on Social Welfare, Kuala Lumpur <a href="http://www.icsw.org/global-conferences/global-conf-intro.htm">www.icsw.org/global-conferences/global-conf-intro.htm</a>
5 Jun	World Environment Day	26-28 Aug	National SARRAH Conference, Walking together side by side Alice Springs Convention Centre, NT <a href="http://www.sarrah.org.au">www.sarrah.org.au</a>
17-18 Jun	Parent Child 2004- International Conference on the Family, London UK <a href="http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/ja120">www.neilstewartassociates.com/ja120</a>	1-3 Sep	The Mental Health Services 14th Annual Conference, Gold Coast QLD <a href="http://www.themhs.org/">www.themhs.org/</a>
17-18 Jun	Bring on the Change-New Directions in community WACOSS Conference, Perth WA <a href="http://www.wacoss.org.au/conference">www.wacoss.org.au/conference</a>	1-3 Sep	5th National Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference, Gold Coast QLD <a href="http://www.aicafmha.net.au/conferences/goldcoast2004/index.html">www.aicafmha.net.au/conferences/goldcoast2004/index.html</a>
18 Jun	<b>Families Australia Child Abuse and Neglect Summit</b> Parliament House, Canberra ACT <a href="http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au">www.familiesaustralia.org.au</a>	5 Sep	National Child Protection Week (NAPCAN)
18-20 Jun	Navigating the Maze: Connecting policy and practice NSW Country Children's Services Association Conference Mudgee NSW <a href="http://www.ccsa-nsw.asn.au/">www.ccsa-nsw.asn.au/</a>	6-8 Sep	Parenting Imperatives; a National Parenting Conference, Adelaide SA <a href="http://www.cyh.com/helpline/parentingconference/index.htm">http://www.cyh.com/helpline/parentingconference/index.htm</a>
22-23 Jun	Australia's Health: Vital Statistics, Vital Signs Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Conference, Parliament House, Canberra ACT <a href="http://www.aihw.gov.au/conferences/ah04/">www.aihw.gov.au/conferences/ah04/</a>	19-22 Sep	ISPCAN15th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect, Brisbane QLD <a href="http://www.congress2004.com/">www.congress2004.com/</a>
23-24 Jun	Multicultural Families: Investing in the Nation's Future Conference at University of the Sunshine Coast Email: <a href="mailto:mkhakbaz@usc.edu.au">mkhakbaz@usc.edu.au</a> or <a href="mailto:mspencer@usc.edu.au">mspencer@usc.edu.au</a>	26-30 Sep	11th Biennial National Family Law Conference, Gold Coast QLD <a href="http://www.familylawsection.org.au/11th%20Conf/conf04_intro.htm">http://www.familylawsection.org.au/11th%20Conf/conf04_intro.htm</a>
25 Jun	Red Nose Day <a href="http://www.rednoseday.com.au">www.rednoseday.com.au</a>	28-30 Sep	Getting it together: Family Therapy Practice for the Future, Brisbane QLD <a href="http://www.orgaus.com.au/aft2004">http://www.orgaus.com.au/aft2004</a>
4 Jul	National Aboriginal Islander Observance Week <a href="http://www.atsic.gov.au/events/NAIDOC">www.atsic.gov.au/events/NAIDOC</a>	17 Oct	Anti-poverty week <a href="http://www.antipoverty.org.au">www.antipoverty.org.au</a>
7 Jul	Building Community; Valuing the role of older people Seminar with Dr Jeni Warburton, Brisbane QLD <a href="http://www.apo.org.au/event_archive.shtml">www.apo.org.au/event_archive.shtml</a>	20-22 Oct	Family Services Australia 10th Annual National Conference, Sydney NSW <a href="http://www.fsa.org.au">www.fsa.org.au</a>
9-11 Jul	5th International Mental Health Conference, Gold Coast QLD <a href="http://www.gcimh.com.au/conference/">www.gcimh.com.au/conference/</a>	23 Oct	Children's Week Australia <a href="http://www.edna.edu.au">www.edna.edu.au</a>
16-19 Jul	Identities and innovations; shaping better worlds through early childhood education, Melbourne VIC <a href="http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/LED/CEIEC/news/pecera.shtml">www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/LED/CEIEC/news/pecera.shtml</a>	29-31 Oct	National Foster Care Conference, Canberra ACT <a href="http://www.fostercare.org.au/national.html">http://www.fostercare.org.au/national.html</a>
21-24 Jul	One World: Many Childhoods- Strengthening Early Childhood International Links, Melbourne VIC <a href="http://www.omepaustralia.com.au/">www.omepaustralia.com.au/</a>	17-19 Nov	Creating Connections- Siblings Australia, Adelaide SA <a href="http://www.siblingsaustralia.org.au/">http://www.siblingsaustralia.org.au/</a>
25-27 Jul	Broadening the vision: Building cohesive communities for children and families, 6th Biennial National ECIA Conference, Melbourne VIC <a href="http://www.cdesign.com.au/ecia2004">www.cdesign.com.au/ecia2004</a>	25 Nov	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
28 Jul	Children and Work Conference Institute of Education and Open University, London UK <a href="http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk">http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk</a>	10 Dec	International Human Rights Day
2-4 Aug	Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Conference Sydney NSW <a href="http://www.acwa.asn.au/conf2004/">www.acwa.asn.au/conf2004/</a>	2005	
3-6 Aug	Challenges in Early Intervention- Critical Incident Stress Management, Melbourne VIC <a href="http://www.cismfa.org.au/">www.cismfa.org.au/</a>	10-13 Mar	8TH National Rural Health Conference Alice Springs, NT <a href="http://www.ruralhealth.org.au">www.ruralhealth.org.au</a>
		16-18 Mar	Community, Work and Family: Change and Transformation, Manchester, UK <a href="http://www.mmu.ac.uk/cwfconference">www.mmu.ac.uk/cwfconference</a>

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The International YEAR OF THE FAMILY!

