

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Corporate Support provides a range of services to assist the Institute to meet its goals through developing and applying improved executive, administrative, personnel and information technology policies and practices.

Human resources management

The Institute has been effective in managing and developing its human resources to achieve organisational objectives. The employment of quality staff is vital in ensuring that contract deliverables are met, and the Institute has continued to manage an intensive and extended recruitment process for staff employed to work on a broad range of contracts. These included the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children projects.

A revised *Workplace Diversity Plan* was approved during the year, and a draft Disability Action Plan will be finalised early in 2004-2005. During the reporting period, guidelines and policy on addressing workplace harassment were also developed. There has been further training conducted on workplace diversity and Australian Public Service (APS) values and conduct. Guidelines and instruction material on recruitment have been developed for managers. The Institute's Occupational Health and Safety policy has also been reviewed and will be operational for the next two years.

The Institute has selected a new human resources system, with the "Greentree" human resources and payroll modules to provide a broad range of reports on staffing, training, recruitment and workforce planning, which will assist management decision making. Work has commenced on planning for the new system.

Staffing profile

At 30 June 2004, there was a total number of 67 staff (see Table 6.1). Of these, 26 were part-time staff. This includes fixed-term staff hired for specific research projects or functional tasks as they are needed.

Staff development

Staff take part in approved training activities in their respective disciplines as well as general skills development. During 2003-2004, the Institute invested \$109,420 in direct training and development activities.

Certified Agreement

The Institute's 2003-2005 Certified Agreement was certified in September 2003.

The Agreement, which runs to December 2005, provides for pay increases totalling 13 per cent by January 2005. Staff received their first 4.5 per cent pay increase on Certification. A further 4.5 per cent was paid in January 2004. All pay increases in the proposed Agreement are contingent upon the Institute meeting its organisational targets, and individual performance assessments.

A number of internal policies and guidelines are to be re-drafted during the life of the Agreement. New Study Assistance Guidelines and Work Level Standards were approved in December 2003.

A number of family-friendly arrangements were negotiated. These included:

- Sick leave and other types of special leave are replaced with Personal Leave which may be used for: non-work related personal illness or injury; to care for family members who are ill or injured and for whom the employee has caring responsibility; for personal requirements associated with birth, adoption or fostering a child (including where the employee is the non-primary care giver).
- The current purchased leave scheme will be extended from 48/52 to 44/52 to enable parents to better balance school holidays.
- A number of changes relating to leave to care for newborn or newly adopted children, including: increasing from 12 to 14 weeks the number of paid weeks leave for those on maternity leave or adoptive leave; enabling the use of up to six weeks of accrued personal leave as paid parental leave for a non-primary care giver; enabling the leave to be taken at half pay; and encouraging the development of individual leave and return to work plans.

Table 6.1 Staffing overview: actual ongoing and non-ongoing full-time and part-time staff by gender at 30 June 2004

	Ongoing full-time	Ongoing part-time	Non-ongoing full-time	Non-ongoing part-time	Total
Men	5	0	3	3	11
Women	22	11	11	12	56
Total	27	11	14	15	67

Table 6.2 Staffing overview: actual ongoing and non-ongoing staff by classification level and gender at 30 June 2004

Classification	AIFS classification	Ongoing staff		Non-ongoing staff		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
SES Band 3		0	0	0	0	0
SES Band 1		0	0	0	1	1
Exec Level 2	AIFS Band 5	2	3	0	2	7
Exec Level 1	AIFS Band 4	2	6	1	3	12
APS 5-6	AIFS Band 3	1	13	3	9	26
APS 3-4	AIFS Band 2	0	10	1	5	16
APS 1-2	AIFS Band 1	0	2	1	2	5
TOTAL						67

Table 6.3 Staffing overview: salary ranges by classification

	\$ Pay point - lower	\$ Pay point - higher
SES Band 1	96,507	100,850
AIFS Band 5 2.5	88,845	88,845
AIFS Band 5 2.1-2.3	74,561	87,358
AIFS Band 4	64,646	71,391
AIFS Band 3	46,997	57,926
AIFS Band 2	37,559	45,451
AIFS Band 1	29,138	36,567

Table 6.4 AIFS Certified Agreement and Australian Workplace Agreements

APS employees covered by AIFS Certified Agreement	61
APS employees covered by Australian Workplace Agreements	6

Workplace diversity/Industrial democracy

The Institute fosters a work environment that values and uses the contribution of people of different backgrounds and cultures. The Institute provides flexible working arrangements to staff to support their different needs. The Institute's revised Workplace Diversity Plan was approved during the year and will run for the course of the current agency agreement to the end of 2005.

Occupational health and safety

The Institute has revised its *Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Plan* for 2004 and provided further training to employees during the year on the following issues:

An overview of the OH&S legislation; fitness practices and alleviating stress; potentially unsafe work postures; and ergonomic set up.

A detailed workplace inspection was performed during the year, which considered a broad range of OH&S issues raised by staff. Most of these issues have been addressed and generally related to conditions associated with the workplace such as office design, equipment and air-conditioning.

The Institute has an OH&S Committee that meets on a quarterly basis and considers specific workplace issues and provides recommendations to senior management. The Institute's revised OH&S Plan is to run for two years from 2004-2005. There were no reports in 2003-2004 of a dangerous occurrence under Section 68 of the OH&S Act.

Table 6.5 Non-salary benefits by employment category and classification level

AIFS Certified Agreement	
■	Access to employee assistance program
■	Study assistance
■	Flexible remuneration packaging
■	Purchased leave
■	Special leave
■	Home based work
■	Flexi time
Australian Workplace Agreements: SES staff	
■	Motor vehicle, fuel and parking
■	Mobile phone for official and incidental personal use
■	Airline lounge membership
■	Home office equipment, comprising standard PC monitor, printer and remote access to the network
■	Financial and other support for professional and personal development
■	Flexible remuneration packaging
Australian Workplace Agreements: non-SES staff	
■	Airline lounge membership
■	Mobile phone for official and incidental personal use
■	Flexible remuneration packaging

Table 6.6 Performance pay

Level	Number	Aggregated amount	Average	Minimum	Maximum
SES 3	0	0	0	0	0
SES 1	1	7,721	0	0	7,721
Executive Level 2	7	46,310	6,616	4,442	8,884

Information technology

Information Technology staff contribute directly to the productivity of the Institute by developing and maintaining a secure, reliable, effective, efficient and easy to use computing and communications environment. This includes management of the Institute's Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility, Web server, email, telephone and security systems.

In addition to managing the computing infrastructure, Information Technology staff also managed some operational aspects of several of the Institute's research projects.

Software

The operating system was upgraded on the Unix servers, ensuring a more secure and robust system. Firewall and mail server software was also upgraded to ensure maximum security, with filtering installed on the mail server to reduce the effect of virus and SPAM email.

New "Greentree" financial management information software was installed to increase the ease with which accounting staff could process and disseminate information. Ariel software was installed to assist the administration of inter-library loans. NVivo qualitative analysis, MlwiN (stats), Mplus (stats) and Supertable (ABS) software were installed to provide more sophisticated analysis tools for research staff.

During the year the following software was upgraded to ensure that staff had access to the most functional and reliable versions: MacOS X, CDATA 2001 (ABS Census), ComSuper (superannuation), EtherShare (file server), Norton AntiVirus, Netscape (e-mail and Internet), MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Now Up-to-Date (calendar), FileMaker (database), ProCite (bibliography), Acrobat, BBedit, HTML tidy, MultiTes, PhotoShop, DreamWeaver (Web), Unicorn (library), SPSS, SAS and Stata (statistics).

Hardware

During the reporting period, old data cabling was replaced to enhance and standardise the speed and reliability of networking for all Institute staff. Six new Macs were purchased to continue the rolling program of replacement of equipment that is more than four years old. A new Windows server was purchased to enable the efficient running of Windows software such as the new financial management information system.

The computing hardware at the Institute now consists of four Unix servers, one Windows server, 74 desktop Macs, six Mac portables, and three Windows desktop PCs. All computers are linked by a local area network, which is connected through a firewall to the Internet, thus ensuring security of Institute data.

Survey Operations and Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing

Christine McCarthy (the Survey Operations Manager) died tragically in October 2003 after a short illness and is greatly missed by everyone who knew her.

The only Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) project undertaken during the year was the programming of questionnaires and interviewing of more than 450 parents of children in child care for the second wave of the Institute's Child Care Choices study. Consultation was begun for the development of the CATI script for the third wave of this study.

Other work completed by Survey Operations staff included recruiting women and transcribing interviews for the Mothers' Perspectives on Family and Work survey, and data entry and administrative support for the Children and Family Life study.

Business and financial management

During the year the Institute developed a *Corporate Services Plan* which will run for the duration of the current agency agreement. The Plan identifies a number of initiatives and tasks that will improve the Institute's business and resourcing practices, and position the corporate services function to better respond to the operational needs of the agency.

The Institute has implemented a new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) using the "Greentree" Finance and Accounting package. The updated package will deliver more timely and tailored financial and management reports, and will also integrate effectively into the human resources system.

The Institute's internal auditors, Walter Turnbull, were appointed as external auditors during the year, and subsequently relinquished their internal audit role. The internal audit program continued during 2003-2004 with a review of the Institute's FMIS which led to a decision on the new system, and a review of the Institute's public sector governance arrangements. No major issues of concern were identified in the public sector governance review with recommendations to further enhance the process, particularly at Board level.

The 2003-2004 external audit report also did not identify any major issues of concern; it flagged the need in 2003-2004 for an external valuation of the Institute's fixed assets in accordance with the fair value method, and discussed the difficulty of measuring the work in progress revenue associated with the Stronger Families Learning Exchange contract. This difficulty will not be an issue in the 2003-2004 financial accounts. In March 2004, Herron Todd White conducted an external valuation of the Institute's fixed assets at fair value.

Purchasing

The Institute has continued to conduct the procurement of goods and services within government and internal purchasing guidelines, which emphasise value for money considerations, as well as the promotion of open and fair competition. The Institute suppliers for both goods and services are predominantly Australian based, and their performance is reviewed by program managers on a regular basis.

Consultants and competitive tendering

The Institute's major consulting costs have been concerned with sub-contracting for the data collection phase of three Institute studies – the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), the Fertility Decision Making project, and the Caring for Children project. These studies required data collection which were best delivered using the expertise of external consultants who had the resources and technology to conduct the data collection at a major scale. All consultants and sub-contractors were selected in accordance with the Institute's procurement guidelines.

Table 6.7 lists those consultancy services with a cost of \$10,000 or more for the year.

Records management

A Records Management consultant completed a review of the Institute's records management, including an assessment of both electronic and paper systems. The Records Management Committee has evaluated the report, determined priorities and commenced implementation. A temporary staff resource has been allocated to key

implementation tasks. Most of the work centres on upgrading processes for storage and retrieval of electronic records and educating staff as to their record keeping requirements.

Security

The next phase of upgrading the Institute's security centres on the car park, and proposals are being considered for increased lighting, improved perimeter fencing and automation of the front gates. Also currently under consideration is increasing electronic surveillance within the building.

Property issues and assets management

The Institute has completed office renovations to house additional staff associated with the Stronger Families Learning Exchange, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. In March 2004 there was a car park rent review in which the Institute negotiated a figure based on its own independent market assessment. The internal repainting of the building was completed during the year.

Advertising and market research

Table 6.8 provides the particulars of advertising and market research expenditure of \$1,500 or greater.

Disability strategy

The Institute has developed a *Disability Action Plan* that ensures employment and workplace practices are in accordance with the Australian Government's Disability Strategy.

Provider	Service	\$
Access Co	Library and information database technical support	53,496
ANI Intellect	Computer support	10,683
Health Insurance Commission	LSAC contract services	101,240
Colmar Brunton	LSAC sub-contract data collection	2,995,164
Fenton Communication	Information and Communications review	60,546
University of Queensland	LSAC Consortium Advisory Group	11,700
Wallis Consulting Group	Caring for Children - data collection	77,797
Wallis Consulting Group	Fertility Decision Making Project - data collection	203,290
The total cost of consulting services for 2003-2004 were		\$3,657,198

Provider	Service	\$
HMA Blaze P/L	Staff advertising	39,245
Australian Public Service Commission	Staff advertising	1,664
Mailcare System P/L	Distribution of <i>Family Matters</i>	13,402
Mailcare System P/L	Newsletter and Bulletin mail-outs for projects	69,725
The total advertising and market research costs for 2003-2004 were		\$125,036

Ecologically sustainable management

The Institute continued to implement the Energy Policy developed in the previous year, and monitored energy use on a quarterly basis. The results over the last 12 months indicate a reduction in the per capita use of electricity, which is the major energy source of the Institute. A review of the strategies/targets in the policy will be conducted next year.

Risk management

The Institute conducted a major review of its *Risk Management Plan* with significant input from the Board and management, including the running of two workshops to facilitate the process. The revised plan emphasises the importance of effective risk management processes strategically to the Institute, and the need for treatment plans and actions that are part of internal processes and management decision-making. The major risks faced by the Institute are strategic and contractual, given the nature of the agency and its project based work.

Freedom of Information

No requests were made this year of the Australian Institute of Family Studies for information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. The following information about arrangements for access to Institute documents is included under Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Outside participation

The Institute has established and maintains formal and informal contacts with a wide range of individuals and organisations for the purpose of obtaining and giving advice, collaborating on studies, exchanging information, seeking access to data, and exploring options for the development of the Institute's work.

Specific avenues for outside participation include input by experts in design seminars and steering groups of Institute studies, external review of Institute manuscripts prior to publication, Visiting Fellows, and a biennial national Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference.

The Institute's Library is open to the public, and the staff handle enquiries by phone, facsimile, email, letter, or in person.

Categories of documents and procedures

The Institute maintains the following categories of documents. The first is research data collected by survey interviews (this information is obtained from respondents on the understanding that their anonymity will be preserved and the information provided is confidential to the Institute; datasets may be made available to external researchers when all identifying details are removed). The second is general correspondence. The third category is published and unpublished research reports.

The procedures the Institute has in place for Freedom of Information requests is that the Institute's Manager, Strategy and Communications, will assist applicants to identify the particular documents they seek. If a request is to be refused on grounds appearing in section 15(2) or section 24(1) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (insufficient information or unreasonable diversion of resources), applicants will be notified and given an opportunity for consultation. The officer authorised to deny access to documents is the Manager, Strategy and Communications. As noted, no Freedom of Information requests were made during the reporting period.