

STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Vision statement

The Australian Institute of Family Studies will achieve eminence as a centre of excellence for research and information on family wellbeing.

Enabling legislation

The Institute was established in February 1980 under Part XIVA of the *Family Law Act 1975*. As described in s.114B(2) of Part XIVA of the Act, the functions of the Institute are:

- (a) to promote, by the conduct, encouragement and coordination of research and other appropriate means, the identification of, and development of understanding of, the factors affecting family and marital stability in Australia, with the object of promoting the protection of the family as the natural and fundamental group unit in society; and
- (b) to advise and assist the Minister in relation to the making of grants, and with the approval of the Minister to make grants, out of moneys available under appropriations made by the Parliament, for purposes related to the functions of the Institute and the supervising of the employment of grants so made.

Operation of the Institute

From its establishment in 1980 until June 1989, the Institute operated within the Attorney-General's portfolio. In June 1989, the Institute was transferred to the portfolio of the Minister for Social Security. Following the Federal election of March 1993, the Institute was moved to the Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services portfolio, with transfer arrangements formally effected from 1 July 1993. In March 1994, the portfolio was restructured and the Institute relocated to the portfolio of Human Services and Health. Further restructuring in March 1996 saw the portfolio renamed Health and Family Services. In October 1998 the Institute was relocated to the newly created portfolio of Family and Community Services. The responsible Minister is the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator the Hon. Kay Patterson.

Part XIVA of the *Family Law Act 1975*, as amended by the *Family Law Reform Act 1995*, provides for the structure of the Institute to consist of a Director and a Board of Management appointed by the Governor-General, staff members employed by the Director on behalf of the Australian Government, and other persons engaged in the same manner to assist as consultants or otherwise. The Director and other Board members hold office for a period not exceeding seven years, as is specified in the instrument of appointment, and are eligible for reappointment. Staff of the Institute are employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*. Staff numbers at 30 June 2004 are 67 people.

Board of Management

The general direction of the Institute is entrusted to the Board of Management which comprises the Director and four or more other members. Subject to the Board's general direction, the Director is responsible for the management of the affairs of the Institute.

The Board is responsible for setting broad guidelines for the operation of the Institute. Its role is to ensure that the Director has established appropriate plans, policies and procedures for the efficient and effective management of the Institute.

The Board of Management meets at least three times a year and is provided with comprehensive management reports on the business of the Institute, and in turn, provides feedback to the Institute through the Director.

The Minister may request the Board to arrange for the Institute to engage in a particular activity and, after consultation with the Board, specify the priority to be given to the activity. Any requests made by the Minister are to be specified in the Institute's Annual Report along with the priority accorded them and progress made in giving effect to them. No such requests were made in 2003-2004.

An Audit, Finance and Administration Sub-Committee meeting is held in association with Board of Management meetings. Its role is to oversee corporate governance, monitor the progress of the Institute's budget and contribute to the management, administration and financial workings of the Institute.

Table 2.1 Board of Management 2003–2004

Ms Dianne Gibson

MA (Psych)
Principal Mediator
Family Court of Australia
Canberra
(Appointed July 2000
reappointed July 2003)
Non-executive Director
*Attendance: 4 Board meetings, 4 Audit, Finance
and Administration Sub-Committee meetings*

Professor Donald Chalmers

LLB(Hons)(Lon), LLM(PNG)
Faculty of Law
University of Tasmania
(Appointed July 2003)
Non-executive Director
Attendance: 3 Board meetings

Professor Alan Hayes

BA(Hons)(UNSW), PhD(Macquarie), FAPS, FAm.PsyS
Dean and Head of Division
Australian Centre for Educational Studies
Macquarie University
(Appointed July 2000
reappointed July 2003)
Non-executive Director
*Attendance: 4 Board meetings, 4 Audit, Finance
and Administration Sub-Committee meetings*

Mr David Kalisch

B.Econ(Hons)(Adelaide)
Executive Director, Family and Children
Department of Family and Community Services
Canberra
(Appointed December 2002)
Non-executive Director
Attendance: 3 Board meetings

Professor Frank Oberklaid OAM

MBBS MD(Melb), FRACP, DCH
Centre for Community Child Health
University of Melbourne
(Appointed July 2000
reappointed July 2003)
Non-executive Director
*Attendance: 4 Board meetings, 4 Audit, Finance
and Administration Sub-Committee meetings*

Dr Ann Sanson

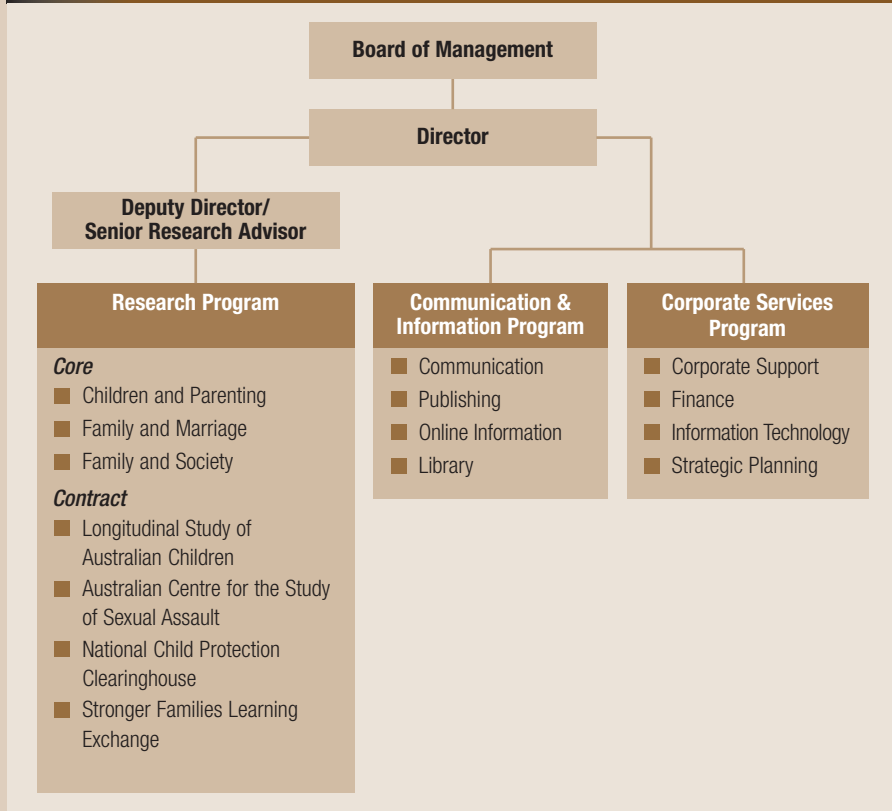
BA(UWA), PHD(LA TROBE), FAPS
Acting Director
Australian Institute of Family Studies
(Appointed January 2003)
Executive Director
*Attendance: 4 Board meetings, 4 Audit, Finance
and Administration Sub-Committee meetings*

Key objectives

The Institute has outlined its key objectives in the *Strategic Plan 2002-2005*:

1. Inform and influence policy development, public understanding and debate about factors affecting family functioning and wellbeing.
2. Conduct high quality research on a broad range of policy-relevant issues regarding Australian families.
3. Identify emerging family research and policy issues, and anticipate and respond to its stakeholders' priorities.
4. Form collaborative partnerships with all levels of government, non-government organisations, and universities and other research institutions in the planning, conduct and dissemination of family research in Australia.
5. Communicate the outcomes and implications of its research through a comprehensive information and communications strategy.
6. Encourage and support Australian family research, policy and programs by maintaining and enhancing an authoritative national collection of family research.
7. Provide a safe and healthy working environment where the individual differences, skills, talents and views of all staff are valued, and where people are encouraged to learn and develop and share their knowledge.

Table 2.2 Structure of the Australian Institute of Family Studies at 30 June 2004



Outputs and outcomes framework

The Institute operates within the Australian Government’s Outputs and Outcomes framework. The Institute has one Output and one Outcome and a number of specific performance indicators. The Institute’s research performance is discussed in the Research Activities Section in Chapter 3 and detailed in the Summary of Research Performance (Chapter 4). The Institute’s communication and information performance is outlined in Chapter 5, the corporate support performance in Chapter 6, and the financial performance in Chapters 7-8.

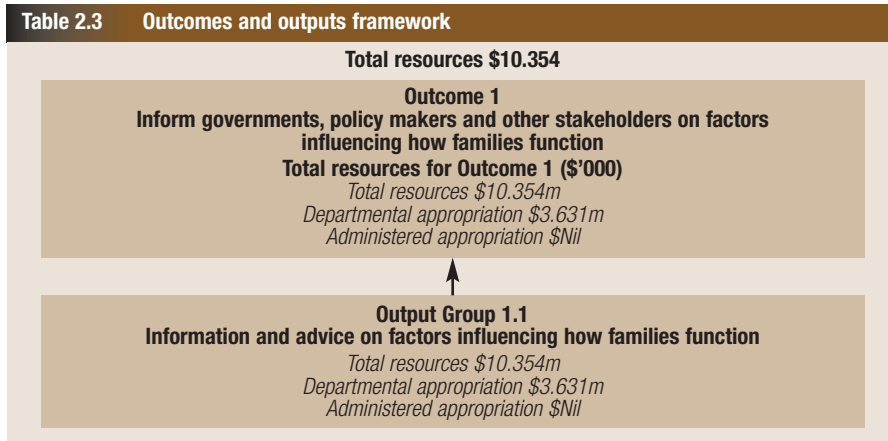


Table 2.4 Reporting by outcomes 2003-2004: \$'000s

Outcomes	Departmental (price of outputs) Revenue from government (appropriations)			Revenue from other sources	Price of outputs	Total administered appropriations	Total appropriations	
	Bill No 1	Special approps	Total					
Outcome 1 Inform governments, policy makers, and other stakeholders on factors influencing how families function								
	Actual	3,631	-	3,631	6,723	10,354	-	3,631
	Budget	3,631	-	3,631	6,737	10,368	-	3,631

Table 2.5 Total resources for outcome 1: \$'000s

	Actual 2003-2004	Budget 2003-2004
Administered appropriations	-	-
Total administered expenses	-	-
Departmental appropriations Output group 1.1	3,631	3,631
Total revenue from government	3,631	3,631
Contributing to the price of departmental outputs	3,631	3,631
Revenue from other sources		
Sales of goods and services	6,409	6,637
Interest and dividends	116	45
Other	188	55
Total revenue from other sources	6,723	6,737
Total price of departmental outputs	10,354	10,368
Total resourcing for outcome 1	10,354	10,368
Average staffing level number	60	61

Corporate governance and accountability

The Corporate Support unit at the Institute is responsible for finance and budget, information technology, personnel, building and property and administrative services. These services are delivered within a legislative and compliance framework that requires the unit to report on adherence to corporate governance, risk management and audit processes, as well as a broad range of other government policy directions.

The Audit, Finance and Administration Sub-Committee of the Board is responsible for overseeing corporate governance including the development and implementation of a three-year internal audit program. Walter Turnbull has been appointed as the Institute's external auditor for 2003-2004 and as a result the Institute will soon be appointing a new internal auditor to finish the current three-year program. The Institute has a risk management plan in place, which was comprehensively reviewed in 2003-2004.

Table 2.6 Ethics Committee 2003–2004

Dr Trevor Batrouney

BA BEd(Melb), MEd PhD(Monash)
Adjunct Professor
RMIT University
(to January 2006)

Ms Judith Foster

BA(Swinburne)
(to January 2006)

Sr Carol Hogan

BA (Melb), BTheol, Phd student(Melb Coll of Divinity)
(to January 2006)

Reverend Dr Philip Hughes (Chair)

MA MEd (Melb), D.Theol(SEAGST)
Christian Research Association
(to January 2006)

Dr Richard Ingleby

BA MA PhD(Oxford), LI.M.(Cambridge)
Latham Chambers
(to January 2006)

Dr Duncan Ironmonger

BCom MCom(Melb), PhD(Cambridge)
Department of Economics
University of Melbourne
(to November 2004)

Dr Frank Morgan

BA MBBS MD GradDipMgmt(Melb)
Advocacy Branch
Department of Veterans' Affairs
(to January 2006)

Dr Kerreen Reiger

BA Hons(Melb), PhD(La Trobe)
Department of Sociology
La Trobe University
(to November 2004)

The Institute also has an Executive Management Group, which meets every two months to discuss strategic and management issues.

Research support grants

Section 114B (2) of the *Family Law Act 1975* authorises the Institute to advise the Minister in relation to the making of grants, and with the Minister's approval to make grants out of Parliamentary appropriations for purposes related to the Institute's functions. The Institute made no support grants under the Act during 2003-2004.

Ethics Committee

The role of the Institute's Human Research Ethics Committee is to ensure that the ethical standards outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, and elaborated in the Institute's ethics statement, *Ethical Issues in the Research Process (1996)*, are met in all research projects undertaken by the Institute.

In particular, the Committee must ensure that projects meet the three key principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice as set down in the National Statement. The Committee is registered with Australian

Health Ethics Committee, a sub-committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The Ethics Committee meets at least twice a year to consider new project proposals, to receive brief oral and written reports on ongoing projects, to consider any complaints or problems which may have arisen regarding ethical issues in Institute research and to review the complaints procedures as required. The Committee also has an expedited review process in place for projects that need ethics approval between meetings of the Committee.

In 2003-2004 several members of the Ethics Committee attended the Research Ethics Training Program organised by the National Health and Medical Research Council in Melbourne.

Members of the Ethics Committee are appointed for three-year terms by the Minister for Family and Community Services.