

WEB UPDATE



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Australia is one of the top ten countries for Internet use, making the World Wide Web an effective medium to disseminate research and policy information on Australian family issues.

This column reports new features on the Australian Institute of Family Studies Web site, and identifies various worldwide family research and family policy resources on the Internet.

NEW ON THE AIFS WEB www.aifs.org.au/

There are a number of new features on the Australian Institute of Family Studies Web site – all part of this year's planned improvements and new developments.

AIFS Conference Papers and Presentations www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/papers/papersmenu.html

A new page to record presentations and conference papers by Institute staff gives a more informal view of the Institute's research activity before published reports are available.

Costs of Children www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/costs.html

During the 1980s the Institute conducted and commissioned research on the 'costs of children' in families. *Family Matters* published regular updates of these figures. Other agencies have recently developed different approaches to calculating these costs, and articles describing them were presented in *Family Matters*. These have now been reproduced in a special publication, *A guide to calculating the costs of children*, which is on this Web page.

Family and Social Policy Links www.aifs.org.au/institute/info/policy.html

This page highlights Australian policy documents and initiatives by the federal, state and territory governments, as well as the contributions to policy debates by non-government agencies.

Site Map www.aifs.org.au/institute/info/sitemap.html

As the Institute's Web site continues to grow – it now offers in excess of 600 pages – the addition of a site map or index provides a quick overview.

RESOURCES ON FAMILY LAW AND DIVORCE

This section reflects the theme of this edition of *Family Matters* – divorce and family law. The Web is an excellent starting place for information and downloadable documents on the position and operation of family law in Australia. The following is a selection of links to government agencies involved in the creation, administration, and reform of family law; to sites that provide information about and reports on family law; to actual legislation and case law; and to a selection of key documents in full text for viewing online or downloading.

Government sites

Family Court of Australia
www.familycourt.gov.au/
The Family Court site has an extensive collection of information for clients, lawyers and students of family law. Examples include fact sheets explaining the divorce process, court forms, do-it-yourself kits, daily court lists, Commonwealth legislation administered by the Family Court, links to other jurisdictions, conference papers

and reports from judges and other Court personnel.

Family Law and Legal Assistance (Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Family Law Unit) <http://law.gov.au/lafs/>

The Department's Family Law Unit administers the Family Law Act 1975 and the Marriage Act 1961. The Unit is responsible for developing policy about issues related to family law and marriage, and also for considering possible reforms to the Acts, including those suggested by the Family Law Council, parliamentary committees, and the Australian Law Reform Commission.

Family Law Council <http://law.anu.edu.au/fic/>

The Family Law Council is a statutory authority established by the Family Law Act 1975 to advise and make recommendations to the Attorney General concerning the working of the Family Law Act 1975 and other legislation relating to family law, to the working of legal aid in relation to family law, and to other family law matters. The Council's Web site provides access to its publications and submissions including, discussion and consultation papers, letters of advice and reports to the Attorney-General, and its quarterly newsletter *Family Law Council News*.

Child Support Agency www.csa.gov.au/

Now located in the Department of Family and Community Services and with the logo 'Helping parents manage their

BECOME PART OF THE CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION NETWORK!



The National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies serves as an interchange point for information, research and initiatives in the child abuse prevention field. It collects and distributes information, and aims for a two-way involvement with the community concerned with child protection.

To participate in the work of the Clearinghouse –

- send us your materials relevant to child abuse prevention;
- complete and return a questionnaire on program activities relevant to child protection with which you are involved;
- join the National Clearinghouse mailing list – you will receive two newsletters and two issues papers free of charge each year.

Please fill in details ➤

responsibilities; the Child Support Agency's site provides information about the operation of the Agency; advice for parents; information for employers; and forms and publications including downloadable fact sheets and handbooks.

Research resources

Australasian Legal Information Institute

www.austlii.edu.au/
A project of the Faculties of Law of the University of Technology, Sydney, and the University of New South Wales, this site offers Commonwealth and state legislation and cases, including the Family Law Act and amendments, and Family Court of Australia Decisions from 1988.

Australia Now – a statistical profile

www.abs.gov.au/
An invaluable statistical resource is provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its 'Australia Now' collection. Current statistics on a wide range of topics are available plus special overview or analytical articles. One example in the Population collection is 'Divorces', which includes rates and numbers of divorces from 1947-1998. Another is a special article 'Marriage and divorce in Australia 1998'; this compares marriage and divorce rates, examines trends in the age people marry and divorce, comments on the marital status of the population, and provides statistics on the incidence of people cohabiting prior to marriage, people remarrying,

and the numbers of children involved in divorce.

Australian Law Reform Commission

www.alrc.gov.au/
This Web site reports on old and new references and offers an extensive list of publications, many of them relevant to family law and in full text. For example: 'Rethinking family law proceedings, 1997'; 'Speaking for ourselves: children and the legal process'; and 'For the sake of the kids: complex contact cases and the Family Court, 1995'.

Research centres

Griffith University Family Law Research Centre

www.gu.edu.au/centre/flru/
The primary purpose of this Unit is to engage in research, mainly of an empirical nature, into the practical operation of family law in Australia. One current research project is examining the impact of the Family Law Reform Act 1995. Working papers and newsletters are available from the Web site.

University of Queensland Family Centre

www.psy.uq.edu.au/family/
The Family Centre aims to provide community service through programs for the community to help couples and families deal with problems, and through training professionals in meeting family needs. A current research project is looking at 'Sibling relationships and adjustment to parental divorce'. The Web site provides access to a regular Newsletter and notices of forthcoming workshops.

Australian Institute of Family Studies Family and Marriage Research Program

www.aifs.org.au
A major Institute research program of two parts, the first aimed at informing family law issues (property settlements, child access, family mediation, social justice in divorce), and the second aimed at understanding the factors contributing to the success of marital and de facto partnerships.

Online reports and papers

Child inclusive practice in family and child counselling and family and child mediation

Strategic Partners Pty Ltd for the Family Services Branch, FACS, 1999
www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/who/cipcoreport.htm

Children's participation in Family Court litigation.

Chisholm, R.
Paper presented at Third Family Court of Australia National Conference, Melbourne, October 1998, 11p
www.familycourt.gov.au/papers/fca3/CHISHOLM.PDF

Determining the best interests of the child: a grief and loss perspective

Bagshaw, D. (1998)
Paper presented at Third Family Court of Australia National Conference, Melbourne, October 1998, 18p Online (111K)
www.familycourt.gov.au/papers/fca3/BAGSHAW.PDF

The division of property and superannuation under the Family Law Act 1975

Faulks, J. (1998)
Family Court of Australia online

papers collection
www.familycourt.gov.au/papers/html/faulks3.html

Property and family law: options for change: a discussion paper

Attorney-General's Department (1999)
<http://law.gov.au/aghome/commaff/lafs/Familylaw/mpl/fullversion.html>

A report on use of, and attitudes to, mediation services among divorcing and separating couples

Denis Muller and Associates (1998) for Relationships Australia
www.facs.gov.au/dss/dss.nsf/whomediation1.htm

Spousal support in Australia: a study of incidence and attitudes

Behrens, J. and Smyth, B. (1999)
Australian Institute of Family Studies Working Paper 16
www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/behrens.html

Superannuation and divorce in Australia

Dewar, J., Sheehan, G. and Hughes, J. (1999)
Australian Institute of Family Studies Working Paper 18
www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/dewar.html

Towards understanding the reasons for divorce

Wolcott, I. and Hughes, J. (1999)
Australian Institute of Family Studies Working Paper 20
www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/wolcott6.html

Deborah Whithear is the Web Manager at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

← For details see opposite

APPLICATION FORM

NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION CLEARINGHOUSE

Please send questionnaire concerning my program activities. Please add my name to your mailing list

Title Full name

Organisation

Address (Postcode)

Phone Fax



Send your application to:

National Child Protection Clearinghouse,
Australian Institute of Family Studies, 300 Queen Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000 Australia.
Phone: (03) 9214 7888. Fax: (03) 9214 7839. Internet: <http://www.aifs.org.au/external/nch/>