

issues involved, with some agencies developing their own protocols or ethics committees. For example, Uniting Care Burnside—a major non-government child and family welfare agency—has developed a code of ethics for researchers, designed to protect the clients of non-government child and family welfare organisations in collaboration with University of Wollongong. (Burnside’s Research Code of Ethics can be accessed at: <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/policy.htm>)

Did the project receive formal ethics approval?	Percentage	n
Yes	56%	75
Pending	0%	0
Did not seek approval	0%	0
Not applicable	4%	6
No response	40%	54

13. Multiple site projects

There were 57 projects identified in the current audit as having been conducted across multiple sites. Multi-site research was self-defined. Respondents were simply asked to respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question: “Was the project conducted across multiple sites?” Although these data are informative, it could include research that is conducted at different sites within the same agency, in different areas within one jurisdiction (e.g., rural/regional/metro), across different states/territories, or across different agencies. Details on the nature of the multiple sites would need to be examined individually in each of these studies.

Cashmore and Ainsworth (2004) emphasised the importance of multiple site research, as well as clearinghouses, research centres and collaborative networking arrangements between organisations and between states, to assist the development of a cohesive approach to research in out-of-home care. Such cross-jurisdictional or multi-site research is the most likely way of being able to engage in large-scale projects to assess the effectiveness of different child abuse and neglect prevention programs, or of different approaches to child protection practice.

Universities had the highest level of multi-site research with a total of 45 individual projects identified. Of these, 28 projects were conducted exclusively across multiple sites of the same university, whereas just two projects involved cross-university collaboration. University and government agencies accounted for nine multiple site collaborations; university and non-statutory agencies accounted for eight; four projects where the research was conducted across a university, non-statutory agency and an institute; and one was a collaboration between a university, government agency and a research institute.

Government agencies showed the second highest level of multiple site research with a total of 18 projects. Half (9) of these were in collaboration with universities; five (5) across multiple sites of the one department; four (4) across multiple government bodies, with two (2) of these involving inter-state collaboration; and four (4) in collaboration with non-statutory agencies. As with the universities, government bodies were involved in a total of five (5) projects where the collaboration was not just over multiple sites but also across more than two separate organisations.

D. Productivity/output

14. Frequency of different publication types

It is a difficult task to accurately summarise the research outputs (in terms of publications) from the projects submitted to the audit. One difficulty is that at the time of the audit, some projects were completed (and are therefore more likely to have a publication as a finished product), whereas other projects were still underway (and therefore were less likely to have published results). Accordingly, the number of each different type of publication output is described separately for ‘completed’ and ‘ongoing’ projects (see Table 15). Results can also be viewed in two ways: the number of projects that had a particular publication type (listed under ‘projects’), as well as the total number of outputs for that

particular publication type, given that projects could have resulted in multiple publication outputs (e.g., two or three journal articles based on the one research project).

In addition to the publication outputs, respondents were also asked to list the total number of conference presentations made concerning the research. In total, respondents indicated that 194 conference presentations were made. These were counted separately from 'conference proceedings', which refer to papers in refereed or edited conference proceedings; however, examination of the details of the outputs revealed that some respondents listed as a 'conference paper' what appears to be an oral presentation only.

Table 15: Publication types - frequencies for completed projects

Publication type	Completed projects (n = 101)		All projects (n = 135)	
	Projects*	Output**	Projects*	Output**
Peer-reviewed journal articles	32	53	37	62
Conference Proceedings	23	42	26	47
Books/book-chapters	16	23	18	27
Government Reports	15	17	16	18
Other (university theses and other projects not within other categories)	10	12	11	13
NGO/Agency Reports	11	11	12	12

Note: Number of completed projects = 101, Number of projects underway = 34
 * refers to number of projects where publication type occurred
 ** refers to total output publications from projects

All publications identified from projects included in the audit are listed in Appendix C. These have not been significantly edited or had any exclusion criteria applied. The quality of this listing highlights the problematic nature of a self-report audit, as a number of these 'publications' appear to be conference presentations (rather than papers published in conference proceedings), or lack crucial details. As well as identifying the publication, a project identification number is also listed to enable matching publications with specific projects, as listed in Appendix B. This will be useful if readers wish to contact the researchers about a particular publication.

15. Projects addressing Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander issues

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their sample included Indigenous participants, non-Indigenous participants, or both. Five projects (3.7 per cent) were listed as having an Indigenous sample. Thirty-eight projects (28.1 per cent) were listed as having an exclusively non-Indigenous sample. Ninety-two projects (68.1 per cent) selected "both" (respondents did not have a choice to leave this question blank, as using an electronic pull-down menu on the audit required this field to be completed). Unless researchers had specifically excluded Indigenous people as part of their recruitment strategy, this is the option they would most likely select, even if their samples were unlikely to have included Indigenous people. This was a consequence of the method of answering the question using the online pull-down menu, which did not allow the respondent to leave the answer blank, which most likely inflated the number of respondents selecting the category 'both', even if Indigenous participants were not explicitly identified or included in their research design.

E. Findings: What we now know

Findings from Research

Respondents were asked to briefly summarise the key aims and objectives, results and implications of their research. Based on a qualitative analysis of these responses, project findings were grouped under six key headings:

- Statutory child protection services
- Prevention