Annual Report: 2012

Institute of Child Protection Studies
Australian Catholic University

Vision: To promote and enhance the protection and well-being of children, young people and families in their communities by conducting and disseminating quality research and evaluation.
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Introduction

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS), Australian Catholic University, carries out high quality research, evaluation and professional development to enhance outcomes for children, young people and their families.

ICPS was established in 2005 as a partnership between the ACT Community Services Directorate, ACT Government; and the Australian Catholic University (ACU). ICPS is now a nationally recognised centre of research excellence in the area of child, youth and family welfare.

Through its activities, ICPS aims to influence policy and practice to achieve positive social change, enhancement of the Common Good and improved outcomes for children, young people and families. ICPS has an identified strength in rigorous academic research and its direct translation into policy and practice enabled through its partnerships with government, non-government and community organisations.

ICPS is located within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and in 2011 was recognised as a University Priority Research Centre within the ACU.

The overarching objectives of ICPS are:

- To conduct high quality research and evaluation which improves our understanding of the nature and extent of child abuse and neglect and reduces its impact on children, young people and families, with a particular focus on the needs, experiences and service responses to children, young people and families;
- To promote children’s needs, interests and views and influence the development of policy and the provision of services to children, young people and families through research dissemination and community engagement activities; and,
- To contribute to and increase the professional development opportunities of those working with children, young people and families (including government, non-government and other community-based organisations).
I am pleased to present the 2012 Annual Report of the Institute of Child Protection Studies. Founded in partnership between the Community Services Directorate and the ACU in 2005, ICPS has played a significant role in building the evidence base and bridging the gap between research, policy and practice, in child, youth and family welfare.

ICPS has continued to work closely with the ACT Community Services Directorate, and with community services, to support the implementation of the Child, Youth and Family Services Program, to provide critical advice and support in community sector workforce planning, and to provide key training opportunities to those supporting vulnerable children, young people and families in the ACT.

In 2012, ICPS completed work in a number of key areas affecting vulnerable children, young people and families, including the child protection workforce, youth homelessness, exploring what works for children experiencing family violence and/or homelessness, and identity and meaning for vulnerable young people. I look forward to receiving the findings of ongoing projects, including children’s experiences of parental incarceration, and an Evaluation Plan for the Child, Youth and Family Services Program.

I have been pleased to chair the ICPS Board in 2012, and look forward to continued collaboration with ICPS in the future.

Natalie Howson
Board Chair, Institute of Child Protection Studies
June 2013
Report from the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS), a University Priority Research Centre, has continued to contribute significantly to the goals of the ACU, particularly in the area of Research and Knowledge Transfer, Strategic Goal 2 of the University’s Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014. ICPS is committed to undertaking rigorous and important research in the area of child, youth and family welfare, and importantly; seeking to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.

I am pleased to see the expansion of ICPS in 2012 and in particular, I welcome the appointment of the Institute’s first Associate Director, Dr Stephanie Taplin.

In 2012, the ICPS completed important work at both an ACT and national level, including research projects at a systemic level, looking at child protection workforce trends, evaluating national programs and exploring how well national service systems work together to support the most vulnerable Australians.

I would like to congratulate Professor Morag McArthur and the ICPS staff on their achievements in 2012.

Professor Gail Crossley
Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
June 2013
Report from the Director of the Institute of Child Protection Studies

2012 has been a significant year in the child protection field in Australia. Nationally, the first three-year action plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children concluded, and we have now moved into the second three-year action plan, which concludes in 2015. ICPS welcomed the establishment of a National Children’s Commissioner to help promote the rights, wellbeing and development of children and young people in Australia; and in particular to ensure their voices are heard, and we congratulate Ms Megan Mitchell on her appointment to this role. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is an important step towards preventing the abuse of children by institutions. We provided our recommendations to the Terms of Reference for the Commission.

2012 has been a year of change and expansion for ICPS. In 2011 we were recognised as a University Priority Research Centre of the ACU, which provided us with an opportunity to further strengthen our organisation and progress our objectives.

A key part of this opportunity was the appointment of an Associate Director, and I was pleased to welcome Dr Stephanie Taplin into this role in August. Stephanie comes to ICPS from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre at the University of NSW, and brings a public health background to our research program.

In 2012, ICPS completed research projects at both an ACT and national level. Our National analysis of Australia’s statutory child protection workforce trends and approaches identified the national trends that impact upon recruitment and retention in the statutory child protection workforce, along with successful strategies that are employed by governments to address these issues. We were heavily involved in research around homelessness; undertaking an evaluation of Reconnect, a national program which supports young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; publishing our work on supporting fathers who are homeless; and undertaking a literature synthesis of what works with children experiencing family violence and homelessness. We were also supported by the ACU to undertake a qualitative research project to explore identity and meaning for vulnerable young people, the findings of which will be released in early 2013.

An on-going project includes Connecting the Dots: Service Delivery Pathways and Homelessness, which will make an important contribution to understanding clients’ experiences of specialist homelessness services and Australian Government service systems; as it examines the perceived
ICPS Annual Report 2012

impact of key government services on the lives of people who have experienced homelessness. I am also pleased that both Vicky Saunders and Debbie Noble-Carr, who have been researchers with ICPS for a number of years, will be commencing their PhDs in 2013. Vicky’s PhD by publication will continue her work on the innovative *Children’s Experiences of Parental Incarceration* research project; which will deepen our understanding of the needs of children who have an incarcerated parent. Debbie will be looking at how vulnerable children perceive and experience loss.

In addition to undertaking our research program, ICPS staff have published and presented widely in their areas of research interest. We were fortunate to attend the *International Child Abuse and Neglect Conference* in Istanbul in September 2012, where we presented on child protection and juvenile justice issues. I was also honoured to be invited to an international meeting, hosted by Save the Children, UNICEF, Plan and World Vision, in New Delhi where child protection systems were the focus. This was a significant opportunity to contribute to the debate about child protection systems across the world.

We are committed to providing training and professional development opportunities to those who work to support children, young people and their families; and delivered a number of training sessions and seminars focused on practice development and child-centred practice; and also on evaluation for child, youth and family support services.

In addition to the appointment of Stephanie Taplin as our new Associate Director, I would like to acknowledge the following staff members. Our Office Manager Amanda Macdonald left ICPS at the end of 2012, to pursue a great opportunity with another organisation. I wish her well in this new position and thank her for the pivotal role she played at ICPS for the last two years. In August of 2012 we welcomed Erin Barry to the new position of Communications Coordinator, to enhance our communications structures and ensure we effectively promote and disseminate our research and other work to stakeholders. Tim Moore, who has been with ICPS since 2005, submitted his PhD at the end of 2012. His study looked at how researchers construct children, and the impacts for their research practice. His thesis provides an exciting way forward for qualitative researchers undertaking research with children.

Thank-you also to the members of the ICPS Advisory Board, including the ongoing support of the ACT Community Services Directorate. Helen Pappas, Director of Care and Protection Services, will be departing the Board in 2013, and I am very appreciative of the contribution she has made. We look forward to welcoming Jillian Paull, Senior Director of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, in her place. We were also pleased to develop our Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014 with the
ICPS Annual Report 2012

assistance of the Board, which sets out the future priorities for action by ICPS, under our overarching objectives.

I am anticipating a positive and very productive year in 2013, with the full-time appointments of a number of formerly part-time staff members, as we continue to build upon our strengths and undertake research to enhance outcomes for children, young people and families.

Professor Morag McArthur
Director, Institute of Child Protection Studies
ICPS Annual Report 2012

Institute of Child Protection Studies Advisory Board

ICPS is a partnership between the Community Services Directorate, ACT Government; and the Australian Catholic University. It is overseen by an Advisory Board which provides advice to the Director.

Institute of Child Protection Studies Advisory Board, as at 31 December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Natalie Howson (Chair)</td>
<td>Director-General, ACT Community Services Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Morag McArthur (Executive)</td>
<td>Director, Institute of Child Protection Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assoc Prof Patrick McArdle (Executive)</td>
<td>Campus Dean, ACU Canberra Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Helen Pappas (Executive)</td>
<td>Director, Care and Protection Services, ACT Community Services Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Bev Orr</td>
<td>National President, Australian Foster Care Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Hilary Martin</td>
<td>Representative of Children, Youth and Families ACT (CYFACT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Emma Robertson</td>
<td>Director, Youth Coalition of the ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Karen Wilson</td>
<td>Branch Manager, Children’s Policy Branch, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Adam Tomison</td>
<td>Director, Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Tim Scrase</td>
<td>Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Australian Catholic University</td>
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Personnel in 2012

Below is an overview of the staff, adjunct and associate members, and students who were involved with ICPS in 2012. A biography of each staff member follows.

Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof Morag McArthur</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Stephanie Taplin</td>
<td>Associate Director (since August 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Justin Barker</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Lorraine Thomson</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Tim Moore</td>
<td>Research Scholar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Vicky Saunders</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Debbie Noble-Carr</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Bronwyn Thomson</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Amanda Macdonald</td>
<td>Office Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Erin Barry</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator (since August 2012)</td>
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Adjunct and Associate Members

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Gail Winkworth</td>
<td>Adjunct Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Adam Tomison</td>
<td>Adjunct Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Giovanna Richmond</td>
<td>Associate Research Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Peter Camilleri</td>
<td>Associate Member</td>
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Students

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tim Moore</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Elise Woodman</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Barbara Knight</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Hannah Henry</td>
<td>Masters of Social Work Student Placement</td>
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Professor Morag McArthur, Director

Dip. Welfare: BSocSci (Hons) UNSW; Postgrad Cert Higher Ed Teaching UNSW; PhD UNSW

Professor Morag McArthur is the foundation director of ICPS. As a social work academic with over 25 years of teaching and research experience, Morag has worked with Commonwealth, State and Territory Government departments, non-government and community organisations on a wide range of research and evaluation projects. She has taught both undergraduate and post-graduate students research methods, public policy and social theory. She had a key role in designing and implementing the first specialised postgraduate courses in child welfare in Australia.

As Director of ICPS, Morag has worked to successfully bridge the gap between research, policy and practice, by assisting a wide range of organisations to develop and utilise evidence more effectively, and to build organisational research capacity. She has worked on a range of research projects aimed specifically at improving policy and practice that affects children, young people and their families. One key area of expertise is the development of innovative and participatory methodologies which include children and young people.

In addition to overseeing all ICPS research projects and supervising four PhD students, in 2012 Morag was published in Australian Social Work and Child & Family Social Work, with a further five publications accepted and forthcoming in 2013; and authored four research reports relating to completed ICPS research projects. Morag delivered a number of presentations on child protection, juvenile justice, family violence and vulnerable families; including at two international conferences, the International Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in Istanbul in September; and a conference hosted by UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children and World Vision in New Delhi in November. Morag also participates on a number of committees and advisory groups, both within the ACU and externally.
Dr Stephanie Taplin, Associate Director

MA (Psychology); Dip Crim; PhD (Public Health) (Sydney)

Dr Stephanie Taplin started as the new Associate Director of ICPS in August 2012. Stephanie has been working for more than 20 years in illicit drug, criminology and child protection research within government research centres. She has a particular interest in the prevention of substance use and mental health problems, and her focus, over recent years, on child protection has developed from this interest.

In 2008, she obtained research funding through the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales (where she is still a Visiting Fellow), to undertake research examining parental substance use and child protection involvement. Stephanie obtained two research grants: 1) ‘Child protection and mothers in substance abuse treatment’ (funded by NSW Community Services, 2008-2011); and 2) a follow up study, ‘Twelve month follow-up of mothers on the NSW Opioid Treatment Program’ (funded by NSW Health, 2011/12). The first publications from these grants have been published as grey literature (on the NDARC website) and the journal article on the main study findings is in press in Child Abuse & Neglect. Stephanie is now actively building on the findings of these studies by seeking further grant funding and publications in the area.

Since she has been at ICPS, Stephanie has been largely focused on preparing grant applications. An ARC Linkage application to conduct a trial of an intervention in the out-of-home care sector was submitted in December, and an ARC Discovery grant is in preparation. A number of other funding applications are under development in the broad child protection field.
Dr Justin Barker, Research Fellow

BA (Hons) ANU & University of Adelaide; PhD (Anthropology), ANU

Dr Justin Barker is an urban anthropologist whose research has addressed youth homelessness, intergenerational drug use, alcohol related violence, normalisation of alcohol and other drug use amongst subcultures of young people, and tobacco management in the community sector. Prior to his career as a researcher Justin was a youth worker in Adelaide and Canberra working with homeless young people. This experience led onto his PhD that explored the lives of homeless young people in Canberra – providing ethnographic insights into the conditions of youth homelessness. He has developed and implemented a range of qualitative research methodologies aimed at doing research with young people.

In 2012, Justin was involved in a number of ICPS research projects, including being the primary researcher involved in the evaluation of Reconnect, and the literature synthesis on what works with children experiencing family violence / homelessness. He continues to be the Project Manager for the Identity and Meaning for Vulnerable Young People Project, and Connecting the Dots: Service Delivery Pathways and Homelessness. In 2012 Justin was published twice in the peer-reviewed Journal of Youth Studies, with articles focusing on homeless young people and social capital; and published a further four research reports. Justin delivered a number of presentations related to his work on homeless fathers, and homeless young people, including at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, the 7th National Homelessness Conference, and the AHURI Homelessness Research Conference.

Ms Lorraine Thomson, Research Fellow

BSW (Hons) UNSW; M.Litt (Peace Studies) UNE; MSW ACU

Lorraine Thomson is a social worker in the fields of practice of mental health, child and family and income support; has experience in program evaluations and has carried out a number of family support program evaluations, including the Integrated Family Support Project evaluation for the ACT Government. She has also undertaken research in a number of areas: including good practice in placement planning; what works in residential care; a major research report to the Attorney-General’s Department to support the development of the Family Relationships Centres and Advice Line; and the ACT Childrens Court (part of an ARC funded
national project). She led the project that developed the *Statement of specific child wellbeing and protection curriculum content for social work qualifying courses* for the Australian Association of Social Workers.

In 2012, Lorraine completed a national research project that analysed workforce trends and approaches that affect Australia’s statutory child protection workforce. She was also involved in the evaluation of Reconnect, and completed Phase 1 of the Cross-Border Practice Project which aimed to identify strategies and actions to enhance cross-border child protection arrangements in central Australia. Lorraine was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Child and Family Social Work*, alongside Morag McArthur and Gail Winkworth, in an article about the cost of compliance on sole parents, and was also an author of the reports from the Reconnect evaluation.

**Mr Tim Moore, Research Scholar**

**BA ANU; M.Child&AdolWelf CSU; M.Youth Studies ACU**

Tim Moore has over 18 years of experience working within the children, youth, family and community sectors. Since his commencement with ICPS in 2005, Tim has been engaged on projects targeting children, young people and families; and has also participated in projects focusing on health, mental illness and education. Tim has adopted a number of peer-based and pathfinder models that engage children and young people in research design and delivery which have provided them with opportunities to build their skills, knowledge and confidence.

In 2012, Tim completed his doctoral studies which provided a group of experienced researchers with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the practice of research with children in Australia: to consider how they understand children and childhood; and how their research is underpinned and influenced by the assumptions they hold. Tim had an article accepted for the peer-reviewed journal *Australian Social Work* on young people transitioning out of youth detention, and presented at a number of conferences, including the *International Child Abuse and Neglect Conference* in Instanbul. Tim delivered a number of training and professional development sessions for community services, and is a trainer for the Kids Central Toolkit Workshop, which was delivered three times in 2012. He participated in a number of national committees and advisory groups, and was the President of Carers Australia.
Ms Vicky Saunders, Research Associate

RN, BSW (Hons) ACU

Vicky Saunders is an experienced human services researcher and social worker. Her research interests include children and families, and issues such as out of home care; social inclusion and resilience in families. Vicky has been teaching social policy, social theory and welfare history at the ACU School of Social Work to undergraduate social workers. She has a broad range of research expertise which includes the design of research projects (both quantitative and qualitative approaches) and conducting interview/focus groups with a range of vulnerable groups including children and young people, refugees and Indigenous parents.

In 2012, Vicky commenced as Project Manager on the research project Children’s Experiences of Parental Incarceration, which she will continue in 2013 as her PhD topic by publication. She developed a peer-reviewed chapter on undertaking research with children and young people of a refugee background, and was also an author of the report published from the Supporting Homeless Fathers project.

Ms Debbie Noble-Carr, Research Associate

BSW, RMIT

Debbie Noble-Carr has completed projects on issues such as young carers, adoption, children experiencing homelessness, children affected by parental alcohol or other drug use, younger mothers and breastfeeding and identity and meaning in the lives of vulnerable young people. Debbie also has extensive experience in providing professional development in the areas of child centred practice and family aware youth work practice. Debbie is a recipient of an APA scholarship and will commence her PhD in 2013.

In 2012, Debbie was the primary researcher of the Identity and Meaning for Vulnerable Young People project, which explored the role and potency that identity and a search for meaning have in the lives of vulnerable young people. She presented at the Family Reconciliation Mediation Program Sixth Annual Conference on family aware youth work practice, and delivered a number of training and professional development sessions to community services. She is also a trainer for the Kids Central Toolkit, which was delivered three times in 2012.
Ms Bronwyn Thomson, Research Associate

*BSc (Hons), ANU*

Bronwyn Thomson has worked on several projects at ICPS, including Understanding Young Mothers, Refugee Child and Family Experiences of Resettlement in the ACT, and Supporting Fathers who are Homeless. She has a background in psychology, and a particular interest in quantitative data analysis. Bronwyn conducted the analysis of the Child Protection Practitioners Values Survey.

Ms Erin Barry, Communications Coordinator

*B Community Education, UC*

Erin Barry commenced with ICPS in August 2012. She has worked in peak bodies within the ACT youth and community sector since 2006, undertaking a range of policy, advocacy, representation and sector/workforce development activities. As Communications Coordinator she undertakes the publishing, promotion and dissemination activities of ICPS, and provides specific project support.

In 2012, Erin established a range of communications systems that seek to better communicate the academic research of ICPS with relevant stakeholders, particularly those who support children, young people and families. These include revising the ICPS website, establishing quarterly Research Updates, and coordinating research seminars.

Ms Amanda Macdonald, Office Manager

Amanda Macdonald played a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth running of ICPS, including looking after the finances, staffing administration, and helping to organise many meetings, events and activities.

In 2012, Amanda worked at both ICPS and within the broader Canberra Campus of the ACU, providing support to the Campus Dean, Professor Patrick McArdle. She was also involved in organising the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Signadou, to be held in 2013. Amanda left the Australian Catholic University at the end of 2012 to pursue other career opportunities.
Adjunct and Associate Members

Dr Gail Winkworth, Adjunct Professor

BSW (Hons) UNSW; DSW USyd

Dr Gail Winkworth has been a leader in child and family welfare policy and practice in NSW and the ACT for more than thirty years. She led Child Protection, Out of Home Care, Adoptions and Family Support programs and developed and coordinated strategies for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and disaster recovery in the ACT. In 2000 she was awarded The Public Service Medal for her work in designing and implementing programs for disadvantaged children and families and for the implementation of mandatory reporting. She was the founding editor of the journal Communities, Children and Families Australia.

Dr Adam Tomison, Adjunct Professor

BSc (Hons) Deakin; PhD, Monash

Dr Adam Tomison was appointed Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology in 2009. He is an expert in the field of child abuse, the prevention of child abuse and other family violence, and the development and operation of child protection and family support systems. In 2006-07 Adam was the expert advisor (and Director of Policy and Research) for the 'Little Children are Sacred' NT Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse. He also developed the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Dr Giovanna Richmond, Associate Research Fellow

BSocStud, Sydney Uni; BA (Hons) (ANU); PhD (ACU), PSM

Dr Giovanna Richmond’s research activity has covered cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning and practice, public inquiries, child health and development, child protection and workforce planning. Prior to joining the ACU School of Social Work, she held senior positions in the ACT Government in the fields of health, family support services, child welfare and disability services. Her PhD developed a model to enhance the sustainability of human service organisations, with a focus on policy and reform processes in areas that included local government, community and child welfare sectors.
Prof Peter Camilleri, Associate Member

BScsocStud (Hons) Sydney; M.Sc (SocRes) Surrey; PhD Flinders

Professor Peter Camilleri is the Professor of Social Work at ACU. He has taught on social work programs at University of South Australia and James Cook University, was involved in the Bushfire Recovery Research Project, and worked on the ARC funded project Assessment of the Childrens Courts. His areas of research include recovery from natural disasters, suicidal behaviour and case management.

Students

See also Tim Moore in Staff.

Ms Elise Woodman, PhD Candidate

Elise Woodman is a social worker and school counsellor who began her Social Work PhD with the ACU and ICPS in July 2011. Her research project is looking at young people's experiences of family connectedness. This research recognises the importance of family connectedness for young people's wellbeing and aims to inform schools, parents and social workers on how young people experience and understand family connectedness, to help them support the development and maintenance of family connectedness throughout adolescence.

Ms Barbara Knight, PhD Candidate

Barbara Knight joined ICPS in 2011 as the inaugural recipient of the FaHCSIA PhD Scholarship. Her area of research is located in the context of developing a methodology that engages with upper primary age children in a conversation about their experiences of family transitions and changing families. Barbara is a social worker with practice, policy, program management and research experience in community mental health, criminal justice environments, alcohol and drug programs, and the out of home care environment.

Ms Hannah Henry, Masters of Social Work Student Placement

Hannah Henry joined ICPS in 2012 for a Masters of Social Work Student Placement, under the supervision of Debbie Noble-Carr and Vicky Saunders. She provided support to the Children’s Experiences of Parental Incarceration Project.
Post-Doctoral Research Supervision

The ICPS provides support to a number of PhD candidates at the Australian Catholic University. Professor Morag McArthur supervises the following students, in partnership with Professor Joanne Zubrzycki.

**PhD Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Research Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tim Moore</td>
<td>Keeping them in mind: Understanding how researchers construct children and the impacts for research practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elise Woodman</td>
<td>Young people’s experience of family connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Knight</td>
<td>Children’s experience of changing families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Healy</td>
<td>How can government best support and enable communities to recover from disaster?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bindi Bennett</td>
<td>How is Aboriginal cultural identity developed, understood and experienced by young Aboriginal people with light skin colour, lack of kinship ties and community links?</td>
</tr>
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Research Program

Projects completed in 2012

National analysis of Australia’s statutory child protection workforce trends and approaches

*Investigators:* Prof Morag McArthur, Lorraine Thomson

*Funding source:* Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

*Aim:* This project was a national analysis of workforce trends and approaches that affect Australia's statutory child protection workforce; which aimed to identify:

- The national trends that impact upon recruitment and retention in the statutory child protection workforce;
- Successful strategies that are, or will be employed by state and territory governments to recruit, retain and support the statutory child protection workforce; and,
- Identify priorities at jurisdictional and national levels that could be considered to further develop capacity and expertise of the statutory child protection workforce.

*Methods:* ICPS reviewed state and territory child protection workforce initiatives, currently available knowledge and web-based national reports; and visited statutory child protection authorities in each state and territory, conducting consultations with key stakeholders involved in the recruitment, training and management of the statutory child protections sector. Preliminary findings were discussed in a workshop with FaHCSIA and state and territory representatives to assist with the prioritisation of work for consideration as part of the action plan of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children* for 2012 – 2020.

*Findings:* The project identified a number of national trends which impact upon recruitment and retention: broad structural trends and context-specific trends. Future directions for the development of capacity and expertise of the statutory child protection workforce from a national perspective were identified, and included: national data development to enable workforce planning; developing of national standards and education; para-professional workforce development; and pre-employment capacity building, particularly for Indigenous young people.

*Outputs:*

Reconnect Program Evaluation

Investigators: Dr Justin Barker, Peter Humphries, Prof Morag McArthur, Lorraine Thomson
Funding Source: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Aim: This evaluation of 'Reconnect' assessed the appropriateness and effectiveness of responses and intervention strategies for working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It examined the extent to which Reconnect services implemented early intervention strategies that directly helped them to achieve their intended objectives.

Methods: The project methods included a literature review of effective intervention strategies for working with homeless young people; a review of program data; qualitative interviews with FaHCSIA state and territory managers; an online survey of Reconnect services; and qualitative interviews with service providers.

Findings: The evidence outlined a range of principles and effective interventions, that together support effective practice with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The project found that many Reconnect services have adapted and responded to the emerging needs of their clients in creative and inventive ways, but that there are still significant gaps in evidence about specific groups who experience homelessness in Australia, particularly Indigenous people and newly arrived young people.

Outputs:

Literature Synthesis of what works with children experiencing family violence / homelessness

Investigators: Dr Justin Barker, Prof Morag McArthur

Funding Source: Hanover Welfare Services and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Aim: This project aimed to document, analyse and synthesise the national and international academic and community services literature on effective programs, service models and practices with children (12 years and under) experiencing homelessness and family violence.

It identified the key elements, mechanisms and practice tools/resources employed in effective service models and practices with these children and their care-givers; and identified the similarities and differences between services provided through the homelessness sector and those provided through family violence services for infants, preschool and primary school aged cohorts. It also referenced key approaches (e.g. family sensitive practice) and service models in the child protection and family support services programs.

Methods: This study employed a modified realist synthesis methodology, examining literature that focused on the intersection between three field: homelessness, domestic / family violence, and approaches that focus on supporting children. Online databases were searched for international and Australian peer-reviewed studies, with 74 articles identified as suitable for the study.

Findings: The study identified the need to have a range of family and child responsive interventions established across the homelessness and domestic / family violence sectors; and identified an integrated suite of responses, which if implemented would address a range of needs.

Outputs:
Barker, J., & Mallett, S. (Forthcoming). What approaches or interventions work with children who have experienced homelessness and / or family violence? Canberra: Hanover Welfare Services and the Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACU.
On-going Projects

Identity and Meaning in Vulnerable Young People

Investigators: Debbie Noble-Carr, Dr Justin Barker
Funding Source: ACU Institute for Catholic Identity and Mission

Aim: To explore the role and potency that concepts such as identity, and a search for meaning, have in the lives of vulnerable young people. A broad base of literature has found that having a positive view of self, the world and the future is important in the lives of vulnerable young people. However, much of this research is international (predominately the UK and USA), and little is actually known about how the current service system in Australia does, or should, support vulnerable young people in a search for positive identity and meaning.

Methods: More than 20 qualitative interviews were conducted with vulnerable young people aged between 15 and 25 years in the ACT in 2012.

Progress/Findings: Interviews with vulnerable young people will elicit an in-depth narrative of their life experiences, with particular reference to how they view themselves and make sense of the world and their place within it. The implications this may have for how the service sector provides support to vulnerable young people will also be explored.

Outputs: A report will be published in 2013.

Connecting the Dots: Service Delivery Pathways and Homelessness

 Investigators: Prof Morag McArthur, Dr Justin Barker
Funding Source: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Aim: To examine the perceived impact of key government services on the lives of people who have experienced homelessness. It aims to make an important contribution to informing a knowledge gap to understand clients' experiences of specialist homelessness services (SHS) and Australian Government service systems.

Methods: Situated within a broader research project, the ICPS component will use qualitative in-depth telephone interviews with 100 research participants who are homeless or have experienced homelessness. These interviews will investigate the impact of services on the lives of people who
have experienced homelessness, and explore how key services can improve the experiences of homeless people as they negotiate these service systems.

**Progress/Findings:** Qualitative interviews will be implemented in 2013.

**Outputs:** A report will be published in 2013.

**Children's Experiences of Parental Incarceration**

**Investigators:** Vicky Saunders  
**Funding Source:** ACT Health Directorate, SHINE for Kids

**Aim:** To deepen the understanding of children's needs by exploring their experiences of parental incarceration. Commissioned by SHINE for Kids, it will identify appropriate individual, family and community responses, informed by children, their caregivers, and other key groups; in the context of multiple system involvement (e.g. child protection, criminal justice, health, education, family support). This research will provide new insights into how service systems might work more effectively and responsively together to reduce future involvement in welfare, health and criminal justice systems, improve children's well-being and increase their participation in society.

**Methods:** This study will include a literature review and undertake qualitative interviews with service providers, parents and young people whose parents have been incarcerated.

**Progress / Findings:** The literature review was completed in 2012, with qualitative interviews being implemented in 2013.

**Outputs:** A final report will be published in 2013. Vicky Saunders will also be completing her PhD by publication on this project.

Past research projects are available at Appendix A.
Peer-Reviewed

Institute of Child Protection Studies’ staff members had the following peer-reviewed publications accepted in 2012:


**Other Publications**

The following reports were also published:


Barker, J., & Mallett, S. (Forthcoming). *What approaches or interventions work with children who have experienced homelessness and / or family violence?* Canberra: Hanover Welfare Services and the Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACU.

Presentations

Institute of Child Protection Studies’ staff members delivered the following presentations in 2012:


Barker, J. *Dignity in Marginalisation.* Presented at the 7th National Homelessness Conference.


Barker, J. *Reconnect: Working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.* Presented at the FaHCSIA Reconnect State and Territory Face-to-Face Meeting, April.


Barker, J. *Relationships, social capital and homelessness.* Presented at the Family and Reconciliation Mediation Program Sixth Annual Conference, May.

McArthur, M. *What can we learn from OECD systems of child protection?* Presented at ‘A better way to protect all children: The theory and practice of child protection systems’, hosted by UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children and World Vision, New Delhi, November.


McArthur, M. *Needs or Deeds? ACT Childrens Court*. Presented at Locked Up and Left Out, Youth Week Seminar, ACU, 18 April.


Moore, T. *Caring, Cared for and Carer*. Presented at the Bouverie Centre Conference, La Trobe University, October.

Moore, T. *Caring at the Crossroads*. Presented at the ARAFMI and Carers Conference, August.


Moore, T. *Considering what works in youth justice in the ACT*. Presented at Locked Up and Left Out, Youth Week Seminar, ACU, 18 April.

Noble-Carr, D. *Family Aware Youth Work Practice*. Presented at the Family Reconciliation Mediation Program Sixth Annual Conference, May.

Professional Development: Training and Professional Development

ICPS staff members provide training, seminars and professional development opportunities to workers and services that support vulnerable children, young people and their families.

*Training and professional development opportunities provided in 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr</td>
<td>Practice Development Session for YWCA of Canberra, 2 February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Moore</td>
<td>Facilitation of Young Men’s Program for Carers ACT, 17 – 19 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr</td>
<td>Practice Development Session for YWCA of Canberra, 8 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kate Butler and Lorraine Thomson</td>
<td>Evaluation Basics, for the Child, Youth and Family Services Program, 1 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr</td>
<td>Family Focused and Child-Centred Practice Principles Training, for Families ACT, 5 July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr and Tim Moore</td>
<td>Kids Central Toolkit Training, 24 – 25 September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr and Tim Moore</td>
<td>Kids Central Toolkit Training, 21 – 22 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Moore</td>
<td>Why youth work must change or die, for the ACT Youth Workers’ Practice Network, November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Moore</td>
<td>New ways of working with children and young people, for CatholicCare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Barker</td>
<td>Active Engagement Training, for Families ACT</td>
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Events

Locked Up and Left Out

As part of National Youth Week 2012, ICPS hosted this seminar on 18 April 2012, which explored key issues in youth justice.

Presenters included:

Dr Adam Tomison, Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology: Trends on Youth Criminality and Juvenile Justice

Prof Morag McArthur, Prof Peter Camilleri and Lorraine Thomson, Institute of Child Protection Studies: Needs or Deeds: ACT Childrens Court

Tim Moore, Institute of Child Protection Studies: Creating positive transitions for young people leaving detention

Dr Jenny Howell – NSW Mental Health Official Visitor: Working with young people in youth detention centres across Australia
ICPS Annual Report 2012

Representation and Memberships

Staff at ICPS participate on a range of internal and external committees, advisory groups, boards and as critical friends on specific projects.

Professor Morag McArthur

ACT Child Protection Advisory Group
ACT Community Services Directorate Workforce Planning Sub-Group
PhD Examination University of Queensland
Review of Social Work and Human Services at Griffith University
Critical Friend to YWCA Respect, Communicate, Choose Program Governance Group
Critical Friend to Lifestyle Triple P Program Evaluation

Tim Moore

President, Carers Australia
Everyone Everyday Program
National People with Disability and Carer Council
National Disability Insurance Scheme Eligibility and Assessment Expert Group
National People with Disability and Carer Alliance
Family Connections Project
Appendix A: Past Research Projects


2011

Challenges, Possibilities and Future Directions: A national assessment of Australia's Children's Courts
The effect on parents and young people of Family Tax Benefit Part A
Child protection practitioners' values survey
More than just me: Supporting fathers who are homeless
Refugee child and family experiences of resettlement in the ACT: A scoping project
Evaluation of Supporting Children after Separation Program (SCASP) and Post-Separation Cooperative Parenting (PSCP) service
What Australian Kids Say About their World

2010

Integrated Family Support Project Evaluation
Understanding the experiences and aspirations of younger mothers
Increasing collaboration in the ACT
Evaluation of the Supported Playgroups and Parent Groups Initiative
The experiences and needs of young carers aged 18-25 years living in the ACT
Supporting Young People in Education

2009

Getting what we need: Families experiences of services
Kids R Central: Toolkit for services working with homeless children
Building New Opportunities for Collaboration: The Family Relationship Services Program
Early Intervention in the Australian Capital Territory
Evaluation of Clearinghouses
Communities for Children Evaluation
Working Across the Grey - Communities for Children
Supporting Children and Young People in Families Affected by Alcohol or Other Drug Use for ACT Government
ICPS Annual Report 2012

Youth Services Program Future Directions
Understanding Children and Young People's Experiences of Separation and Divorce
- a Scoping Project

2008

Evaluation of Relationships Australia Canberra and Riverina (RACR) Counselling Program
Review of the Qualifications and Training Pathways Dept of Child Safety Queensland
Submission for the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW
Child Wellbeing and Protection Curriculum Content for Social Work Qualifying Courses
Supporting Transitions from Juvenile Detention Project
Transferability of Social Work Knowledge between Different Practice and Cultural Contexts
Evaluation framework for “Step up Step down” program: STEPS
Murray Darling Basin Evaluation Framework
Evaluation Plan of Clearinghouses

2007

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Project
Consultations for the Youth Services Program
Indigenous Family Support
Evaluation of ‘Families Together’ Program
Affirm Evaluation Framework
Emergency Readiness Training
Children's Experiences of Homelessness
Recovering from the 2003 Canberra Bushfires
Australian Government Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery
Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line Continuous Improvement Process
Young Carers in Western Australia
Experience of Former Foster Carers
ICPS Annual Report 2012

2006

Reading, Writing and Responsibility: Young Carers and Education
Principles for Child Centred Practice
Family Group Conferencing Scoping Paper
Youth Support Workers in Schools
Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line Practice
Framework for Screening and Assessment
Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line Research Report
The Multidisciplinary Approach to Student Services

2005

Good Practice for Placement Planning
Screening of People Working with Children and Young People: Issues Paper
Workforce Planning in the Care and Protection System in the ACT: Issues Paper
Consultation on Strengthening Families Partnership Approach in ACT
What Works in Residential Care
Schools as Communities Evaluation