Strategic Plan: 2012 - 2014

Institute of Child Protection Studies
Australian Catholic University
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Introduction

The Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014 provides a framework that identifies the ways in which the Institute of Child Protection Studies (the Institute), Australian Catholic University, will consolidate its strengths and continue to develop in a changing policy and practice landscape. The Strategic Plan provides a basis for future evaluation about the impacts, outcomes and achievements of the Institute.

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to:

- Articulate the vision of the Institute, which will continue to inform its strategic direction;
- Identify the principles that will guide Institute activities in pursuit of its vision;
- Articulate the aims and objectives of the Institute in pursuit of its vision;
- Identify the ways in which the Institute has achieved, and intends to achieve, these objectives; and,
- Set the future priorities for action by the Institute.

This Strategic Plan is a living document which will be regularly reviewed and developed by the Institute’s Board and staff. Staff at the Institute will meet quarterly to consider the plan and report to the Board against its objectives and priorities.

About the Institute of Child Protection Studies

The Institute of Child Protection Studies at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) was established in January 2005 to carry out high quality research, evaluation and professional development to enhance outcomes for children, young people and their families. It was established as a partnership between the ACT Community Services Directorate and the ACU. The Institute is now a nationally recognised centre of research excellence in the area of child, youth and family welfare.

The work of the Institute strongly reflects the ACU’s mission, which is ‘guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity and for the dignity of all human beings’\(^1\). It is essential to human dignity that children have opportunities to reach their full potential – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. As a particularly vulnerable group within societies, children and young people are at risk from abuse and neglect. This risk places an obligation on adults and society to act to protect children from abuse and neglect, the immediate effects of abuse and neglect, as well as its long term impacts on individuals and our society. Research that leads to a better understanding of

\(^1\) ACU Mission Statement, 2003, p. 4
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These issues, their causes and underlying structures is a critical undertaking. The ACU has identified research about children as central to its mission, and as such, has recognised the Institute as a University Priority Research Centre.

Through its activities, the Institute influences policy and practice to achieve positive social change, enhancement of the Common Good and improved outcomes for children, young people and families. The Institute 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.

Vision

The vision of the Institute of Child Protection Studies is 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.

Principles

All work undertaken by the Institute is underpinned by commitments to:

• Promoting children and young people’s voices and supporting outcomes that will positively affect their safety, wellbeing and position in the community;
• Collaborative approaches to planning and conducting research and evaluation;
• Seeking the views of those affected by a program or service (such as client groups and service providers); and,
• Ethical research practice.

Aims

The Institute aims to conduct research which leads to:

• Improved protection and wellbeing of children, young people and families; and,
• Ongoing recognition of the Institute as a leading research organisation in child protection in the local, national and international environments.
Objectives

The objectives of the Institute reflect the overall approaches that will be used to work toward its vision, from 2012 – 2014. These are:

a) 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 placed on the needs, experiences, and service responses to children, young people and families;

b) 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,

c) 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).
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Strategic Priorities 2012-2014

The objectives of Institute will be implemented through a range of strategic actions. The Strategic Actions for 2012 – 2014, and the Priority Actions for Year One (2012) are summarised, along with their measures, in the following tables.

Objective 1:

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 placed on the needs, experiences, and service responses to children, young people and families.

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<tr>
<th>Strategic Actions 2012 – 2014</th>
<th>Priority Actions 2012</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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| 1.1 Continue to seek government, corporate, community and Category 1 Research funding. | • Identify research priorities for 2012-2014  
• Scope potential funding sources and continue to apply for Category 1 funding grants  
• Sustain endorsement by government research panels | • New ideas for research grants developed  
• 2 Category 1 funding grants submitted  
• 4 successful research funding applications |
| 1.2 Attract and sustain a highly skilled research and evaluation staff team and build capacity in the field. | • Conduct staff skills and expertise audit  
• Identify and seek funding for PhD and post-graduate scholarships  
• Provide supervision and professional development opportunities to staff to enable quality improvement  
• Provide opportunities for post-graduate research  
• Conduct reflective practice meetings and activities  
• Recruit and support adjunct staff  
• Support the research careers and interests of Institute staff | • New ideas for research grants developed  
• 2 Category 1 funding grants submitted  
• 4 successful research funding applications |
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### 1.3 Develop innovative and responsive research methodologies.
- Establish children and young people’s advisory groups for all relevant programs
- Implement child-centred principles and guidelines
- Explore and trial new methodologies and methods (including new technologies for conducting and analysing research, quantitative studies)
- 100% of staff provided with supervision
- 1 staff development opportunity provided per staff member (including conferences, training, PD)
- 2 new PhD students
- 6 reflective practice meetings held

### 1.4 Conduct timely, accountable and well-managed projects.
- Implement Institute Business Plan 2012 - 2014
- Monitor the Institute project management system
- 2 meetings of project advisory groups per child-centred project facilitated
- 2 new technologies explored

### 1.5 Develop strategic partnerships with other like-minded research and human service organisations to maximise funding opportunities and promote discussion nationally.
- Map and identify potential partners and develop formalised agreements where appropriate
- Participate in networks, committees and on advisory boards related to child-centred research (e.g. ARACY, National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children)
- Sustain existing partnerships and explore possible shared funding opportunities
- Contribute to national debate about children, young people and families
- 100% projects delivered on time
- 6 staff meetings to monitor performance

### 1.6 Develop strategic alliances with other like-minded research and service
- Contribute to international debate about children, young people and families (by writing journal articles, attending conferences and participating in international discussions)
- 2 new partnerships developed
- Participation in 2 networks
- 1 grant application and/or paper written
| 1.7 Develop strategic alliances within the Australian Catholic University. | • Participate in Faculty and whole-of-University committees and projects  
• Co-facilitate lecture series with the School of Social Work and the broader ACU academic community |  
• 1 international conference attended  
• 4 international projects supported (through doctoral examination or journal review) |
|---|---|---|
| • Support the development of research related to children, young people and families (by assisting in marking overseas doctoral theses, reviewing international journal articles)  
• Participating in and hosting international forums where research and issues related to children, young people and families can be promoted | |  
• with new partners |
Objective 2:
To promote children’s needs, interests and views and influence the development of evidence-informed policy and the provision of services to children, young people and families through research dissemination and community engagement activities.

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| 2.1 Widely promote children’s needs, interests and views. | • Develop a series of publications that promote children and young people’s needs, interests and views  
• Promote methodologies that actively engage children and young people  
• Engage in public discussion and debate about children, young people and families, promoting their needs, interests and views | • 2 papers on child and youth-centred methods and methodologies published  
• Participation in 4 community forums about issues related to children, young people and families  
• 4 organisations working with children, young people and families provided expert advice to promote their needs, interests and views |
| 2.2 Disseminate research findings broadly through academic channels. | • Development of publication agenda for research dissemination  
• Growth of the ‘Write to Publish’ group | • 8 academic book chapters or refereed journals published  
• 12 conference presentations conducted  
• 4 meetings of the Write to Publish group held |
| 2.3 Disseminate research findings through non-academic channels. | • Development of communications strategy for research dissemination  
• Conduct annual research symposium on a topic of interest | • 1 community workshops per completed project facilitated (where appropriate)  
• 6 media engagement activities conducted |
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#### 2.4 Provide critical advice to government and community about issues related to children, young people and families.

- Reconfiguration of Institute website
- Develop Community Engagement Strategy (which identifies key priority areas and issues)
- Engage with ACT political parties annually
- Continue sitting on federal and Territory-wide advisory councils and committees
- Scope membership of relevant advisory bodies at the local and federal levels
- Participate in practice-improvement activities with government and non-government agencies

- 4 Practice Notes developed
- 4 advisory groups, boards and committees attended
- 2 critical friend arrangements developed and sustained
- 4 presentations provided to ACT CSD staff each year.
- 4 newsletters produced each year.

#### 2.5 Contribute to the academic field and emerging knowledge.

- Referee journal articles
- Mark post-graduate assessment (ie PhD theses)
- Participate in Editorial Boards
- Participate in peer review activities (within and external to the ACU)
- Contribute to organising committees of national conferences

- 4 journal articles or book chapters reviewed
- 1 thesis reviewed
- 2 Category 1 grants reviewed
- 1 editorial board supported
- Member of organising committee of 1 national conference
**Objective 3:**

To contribute to and increase the professional development of those working with children, young people and families (including government, non-government and other community-based organisations).

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<td>3.1 Provide educational and professional development opportunities to those working with children, young people and families.</td>
<td>• Supervise students (particularly from the BSW and MSW courses) • Provide input into the ACU Social Work courses • Provide Kids Central training in ACT and in other jurisdictions • Provide relevant professional development activities to services and other stakeholders</td>
<td>• 2 social work student placements supervised • Training and professional development activities (including Family Work, Kids Central) presented • 1 workshops and presentations on Institute research given • 4 Practice Notes developed • 2 external professional development workshops facilitated</td>
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