OUR AIM

To enhance the well-being of children, young people and families through quality research, training and community education.
Introduction

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (the Institute) at Australian Catholic University (the University) was established in January 2005 to carry out high quality practice 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 University. The Department also contracts the Institute to carry out various projects.

The work of the Institute strongly reflects the University’s mission which is “guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity and for the dignity of all human beings”. All children must have the opportunity to reach their potential – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Children have the right to be protected from both the immediate effects of abuse and neglect and the long term consequences on both individuals and our society. Research that leads to a better understanding of these issues is a critical undertaking. Australian Catholic University has identified research about vulnerable children as a key priority and as such has recognised the Institute as a University Priority Research Centre. The Institute’s work is fully aligned with the University’s strategic focus on Social Justice.

Through its activities the Institute aims to influence policy and practice to achieve positive social change. One of the benefits of the Institute is our strength in rigorous academic research and its direct translation into policy and practice. It does this by building partnerships with government, non-government and community organisations.
We frame our work with the assumption that best outcomes are achieved by:

• keeping children and young people at the forefront
• understanding children and young people in the contexts of family, community and society
• recognising everyone’s strengths, resources and possibilities, and
• a commitment to social justice as outlined in the University’s mission

The Institute believes that the care and protection of young people is inextricably linked with the overall well-being of children, families and communities. For the service system to respond best to children and young people, it must continually develop its understanding of their needs, experiences and understandings. Through research, the Institute aims to work with a range of partners to ensure that ongoing reflection and development are fundamental to the policy process.

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

• collaborative approaches to planning and conducting research
• seeking the views of those affected by a program or service (such as client groups and service providers)
• exploring ways of developing research partnerships with key stakeholders including people who use services and
• Ethical research practice.
It is with great pleasure that I present 2011 Annual Report of the Institute of Child Protection Studies.

The report offers an insight into the range of important projects undertaken by the Institute over the past year.

The Institute of Child Protection Studies and the Community Services Directorate are long term partners and share a commitment to promote the safety and well being of children and young people. Developing a sound evidence base in the field of child protection is a vital ingredient in the development of policy and the focus of practice.

In March this year the Directorate launched the new Children, Youth and Family Support Program. The Institute made a significant contribution to the development of strategy in this program through its recent research activity.

The Community Services Directorate was formed in recognition of the connections between different dimensions of disadvantage. The breadth of projects listed in this report mirror that fact with projects looking at homelessness and squalor, the impact of tax changes on the education of young people and the experiences and vulnerabilities of refugee children and families settling in the ACT.

This has been a year of achievement for the Institute and a year in which collaboration and partnerships have continued to grow which bodes well for the future of this important work.

I commend this Annual Report to you and look forward to the Institute’s future endeavours.

Martin Hehir
Chair, Board Institute of Child Protection Studies
29 March 2012
The Institute for Child Protection Studies exemplifies the goal set in the University’s Strategic Plan 2009-2011 that Australian Catholic University ‘has a specialised, growing and well-regarded research environment’. As demonstrated in this report, the Institute continues to make a significant contribution through its research focused on children, young people and their families.

Professor Morag McArthur has successfully led the Institute’s researchers to work collaboratively with representatives of a wide range of partner organisations on important projects concerning homelessness, education and refugee assimilation.

As a University Priority Research Centre, the Institute of Child Protection Studies has documented the importance and impact of its achievements through its publications and contributions to the wider community.

I am delighted to commend Professor Morag McArthur and her colleagues on their achievements in 2011.

Professor Gail Crossley
Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences
This is my 7th annual report and it is gratifying to be able to reflect on another productive and busy year. The Institute continues to consolidate its reputation for carrying out research about children and young people and their families. Through our work we aim to impact on policy or practice directly both at a local and national level. The establishment of the Institute in partnership with the ACT Government has been an important initiative both locally and nationally and strongly reflects the mission of the University.

We have had some changes in personnel over the past 12 months. Kate Butler left the ICPS in April 2011 to take up other opportunities. Kate, with her expertise in evaluation and health promotion will be missed. Dr Justin Barker joined the team and brings with him wide experience and skills in carrying out research with young people. He has recently completed his PhD on young people’s experience on homelessness.

Institute staff have been involved in a range of projects concerned with children, young people and families. This has included: a project that examined the experiences of fathers who are homeless and the impact this has on their own and their children’s wellbeing. We also evaluated two major Family Relationship programs which aim to assist children from separating families to deal with issues arising from the disruption in their parents’ relationship. This is an important program that works with children directly. During the evaluation we were able to ask children and young people what they thought about the program. This project demonstrates the increased awareness of the need to talk directly to children and young people by the commissioners of evaluations.
We have also carried out a range of other important activities, such as contributing to the work of committees, providing training and advising local agencies. We have presented our research at local, national and international forums. For example, Tim Moore and I presented papers at the Asia Pacific Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect conference in New Delhi. Going to India certainly puts protecting children in perspective. India has much work to do in establishing systems to increase the safety of children. In November Gail Winkworth and I attended the Family Relationship Services Australia annual conference. I was invited to report on the findings of an evaluation of the Supporting Children after Separation program and be on a panel about workforce issues. Justin Barker has presented at a number of national and local conferences and seminars on young people’s experience of homelessness and on a project that focused on fathers who are homeless.

A strategic goal for the ICPS is to attract post graduate research students. In 2011 two new students have begun their studies. Barbara Knight was the successful recipient of a scholarship funded by the Australian government through the Department of Families and Community Services, Housing and Indigenous Affairs. Barbara’s topic explores children’s experiences of changing families. Elise Woodman was granted an ACU scholarship. Elise’s topic aims to understand how young people experience and understand family connectedness.

In November 2011 results of the Review into the University’s six priority research centres was released. The aim of the review was to assess the needs and performance of centres with the aim of supporting Centres to develop a 5 year business plan. The review reported favourably on the ICPS’s performance. It identified how the ICPS performed strongly on a range of indicators: good governance, strong partnerships and clear strategic direction. The report highlighted ICPS success in attracting external research funds; it has the highest per researcher HERDC funds and total income of all University Priority Research Centres. The report also noted how the ICPS has significant potential to attract HDR students to ACU. The long term security of the Institute and its ability to fulfil its intended part in the University’s research plan requires a sustainable financial
and staffing establishment. Such security of finances and staffing would enable the Institute to reach a ‘critical mass;” allows for the better management and prospective planning; and, the delivery of the full potential benefits (in teaching and learning in the range of welfare fields and community engagement as well as research outputs) to the University’s research agenda and its broader mission.

We look forward to the implementation of the Review’s recommendations in 2012.

We are very grateful for the support of the ACT Community Services Directorate (previously Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services) and look forward to continuing a fruitful and effective relationship to improve the circumstances of children, young people and their families.

Professor Morag McArthur
Director, Institute of Child Protection Studies
As at 31 December 2011

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Martin Hehir</td>
<td>Director General, ACT Community Services Directorate, Chair of the Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Thomas Martin</td>
<td>Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) Australian Catholic University</td>
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<td>Professor Morag McArthur</td>
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<td>Assoc Professor Patrick McArdle</td>
<td>Campus Dean, ACU Canberra Campus, Chair of the Executive Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Bev Orr</td>
<td>National President, Australian Foster Care Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Hilary Martin</td>
<td>Representative of Children, Youth and Families ACT (CYFACT)</td>
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<td>Ms Emma Robertson</td>
<td>Director, Youth Coalition of the ACT</td>
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<td>Ms Karen Wilson</td>
<td>Branch Manager, Children’s Policy Branch Women’s and Childrens Group. Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>Dr Adam Tomison</td>
<td>Director Australian Institute of Criminology</td>
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<td>Ms Helen Pappas</td>
<td>Acting Director of Child Protection, Office of Children, Youth and Family Support, ACT Community Services Directorate</td>
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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee provides advice to the Institute in relation to its operations and provides advice to the Board Chair for the Board Agenda.

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Institute Staff

As at 31 December 2011

**Director**

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

Morag is the founding Director of the Institute and is an experienced human services researcher. Prior to this appointment she was an academic in the School of Social Work at Australian Catholic University where she taught research methods, public policy and electives in substance abuse. Her research interests include issues facing children and families such as homelessness, implementation of social policy and early intervention approaches. Her PhD examined the privatisation of welfare services. Morag is on the editorial Board of the journal of the Australian Child and Family Protection Practitioners, “Communities, Children and Families Australia”.
Research Fellows

JUSTIN BARKER
PhD (Anthropology), Australian National University, B.A. (Hons) Australian National University & University of Adelaide

Dr Justin Barker is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Child Protection Studies at the Australian Catholic University in Canberra. He 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.

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

A social worker in the fields of practice of mental health, child and family and income support, Lorraine 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 Placement Planning Residential Care a major research report to the Attorney-General’s Department to support the development of the Family Relationships Centres and Advice Line. 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. She has a number of research interests including the role of foster carers in the broader child protection system, and what works in family support.

KATE BUTLER

BA App SocSci (Hons); MA Women’s Studies; Postgrad Dip Health Promotion; MA Assessment & Evaluation.

Prior to joining the Institute, Kate worked as an independent consultant specialising in evaluation, planning and service development. Kate’s background is in health promotion. She has held positions at several State Government agencies and worked in the areas of population health policy development, program planning and implementation, and evaluation. Her particular interests include prevention and early intervention issues associated with youth health, child and family health and rural community health.

Research Associates

BRONWYN THOMSON

BSci (Hons) ANU

Bronwyn is a Research Assistant at the Institute with a background in psychology. Bronwyn has worked on several projects at the Institute including Understanding Youth Mothers, Refugee Child and Family Experiences of Resettlement in the ACT and Supporting Fathers who are Homeless. Bronwyn has a particular interest in quantitative data analysis and conducted the analysis of the Child Protection Practitioners Values Survey.
DEBBIE NOBLE-CARR
BSW RMIT

Since completing a Bachelor of Social Work degree in 1997, Debbie has worked in a wide range of direct service positions such as financial counselling and housing support work in a variety of settings including local government, community health and with various non-government organisations.

Over the last ten years Debbie has actively pursued her interests in social research and child centred practice. Her research projects have spanned issues such as young carers, child care, adoption, children experiencing homelessness, young people who care for a parent with an alcohol or other drug issue and younger mothers and breastfeeding. More recently Debbie’s work for the Institute has involved providing training and practice development sessions on child centred and family focused practice.

VICKY SAUNDERS
RN, BSW(Hons) ACU

Vicky is a Research Associate with the Institute. Over the last eight years, she has predominantly worked with foster carers and children and young people in out of home care. More recently Vicky has been involved in a number of research projects at the Institute including the Supporting Transitions from Juvenile Detention Project and the evaluation of the Relationships Australia Canberra and Riverina (RACR) Counselling Program. Her research interests include: community participation; engagement of children and young people in research activities and child protection policy and practice.
MS MERRILYN WOODWARD
BA UNSW; Grad.Dip.Ed UNSW; BSW ACU; Cert. IV in Community Mediation (Family Law)

Merrilyn is a project officer with the Institute. Merrilyn has had extensive public policy development experience in a range of health and community services areas and was the national manager for a number of Commonwealth Government programs and initiatives in women’s health, child and youth health, Indigenous health, homeless youth welfare, refugee mental health, disability, and innovative approaches to the supply of pharmaceutical medicines.

This work usually involved a particular focus on services becoming more responsive and accessible. She is also a qualified and experienced mediator in the area of family law. Merrilyn’s major involvement with the Institute to date has been as project officer for the review of the Schools as Communities Program. During her time with the Institute, Merrilyn had worked on a number of projects including the review of the Schools as Communities Program, the review of the Youth Support Workers in Schools Initiative, the Canberra Bushfire Recovery Research Project and developmental work for the new Family Relationships Centre and Advice Line.
Megan has spent more than 12 years working with refugees and migrants, with a focus on children, young people and their parents and has a particular interest in cross-cultural work. She worked at Companion House for 8 years in a number of roles including Children’s Counsellor/Advocate, Community Development Team Leader and Acting Director. Much of her work has focused on prevention and early intervention strategies and collaboration. She has also run training for support workers working with people with disabilities. She has coordinated youth services for young migrants and refugees in Canberra and south-east Sydney.

Research Scholars

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

Tim Moore holds the inaugural Southern Cross Club PhD Scholarship (2009-2012) and is carrying out a thesis entitled ‘Keeping them in mind: Understanding how researchers construct children and the impacts for research practice’.

Prior to taking up his doctoral studies Tim was a Research Fellow with the Institute. For ten years, he has worked with children, young people and their families, particularly those experiencing homelessness, affected by alcohol or drug programs or parental disability or mental illness. Over the past six years, Tim has conducted research with homeless children and young people, Aboriginal young people in care and young people exiting detention and the systems that support them.
ELISE WOODMAN

Elise Woodman is a social worker and school counsellor who began her Social Work PhD with the Australian Catholic University and the Institute of Child Protection Studies 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. This is a three year research project.

BARBARA KNIGHT

Barbara joined the Institute of Child Protection Studies 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. With a strong social justice perspective, and being mindful of the way in which systems and discourses often serve to disempower or silence the people she works with, her practice has focused on listening for, valuing and responding to the expressed experience of others; a perspective which continues to inform all aspects of her work.
Adjunct Staff

DR GAIL WINKWORTH
PSM, BSW (Hons) UNSW; DSW USyd

An Adjunct Professor at the Australian Catholic University, Gail has a long history of public service in Child Welfare, including in NSW and as the ACT Director of Family Services (including statutory Child Protection, Out of Home Care and Child Abuse Prevention). Gail led the ACT Child Abuse Prevention Strategy and in 2000 was awarded the Public Service Medal for Innovative Programs for Disadvantaged Children and for her work in the Implementation of Mandatory Reporting. After completing her doctoral research in government service delivery and partnerships Gail joined the Institute of Child Protection Studies in 2005. She has undertaken numerous research projects for the government and non-government sectors and has been a major contributor to practice and research in the areas of ‘child centred’ and ‘collaborative’ approaches to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families and communities. Other projects include: the development of the Screening and Assessment Practice Framework for Commonwealth Family Relationship Centres, and a project to improve cross-sectoral responses to vulnerable children and families Commonwealth and State service delivery agencies in three states. Professor Winkworth developed the coordination and collaboration practice principles for FaHCSIA’s new Family Support Program. She was the inaugural editor of Communities, Children and Families Australia.
Dr Adam Tomison Adjunct Professor at the Australian Catholic University, was appointed the Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology in July 2009. He is internationally recognised as 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. An experienced public service executive, he has worked over the past two decades with a range of government, non-government organisations and advocacy groups focused on child protection and child abuse prevention in Australia and overseas. From 2004 to 2008 he held various senior executive positions within the Northern Territory Department of Health and Families, including as Director of the Northern Territory’s Family and Children’s Services, and as the Department’s inaugural Principal Child Protection Adviser in 2004. 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 established his reputation developing the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. He is currently a Director on the Board of Management of the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, Director on the National Board of the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) and a Member of the Executive Council of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN).
GIOVANNA RICHMOND
B.Soc.Stud., (Sydney Uni.), B.A (Hons) (ANU). PhD (ACU),PSM

Giovanna is a consultant and Adjunct Research Fellow at the Institute of Child Protection Studies. Prior to joining the ACU School of Social Work, as a lecturer, she held senior management and senior professional positions in ACT Government in the fields of Health, Family Support Services, Child Welfare and Disability Services. Giovanna has undertaken a number of research projects for non-government and government sectors. She has made significant contributions to teaching and research especially in the area of human services policy and child and family welfare. Her research activity has covered cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning and practice, public inquiries, child health and development, child protection and workforce planning. Some recent projects include: the impact of mentoring on research capability and capacity of early career allied health professionals; the development of child protection resources for the Queensland Department of Child Safety.

Dr Richmond was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2002 for the ACT for her services to children and families. In particular, she was commended for her work in setting up the mobile immunization service, the community asthma support service and the integration of post-natal services.

Giovanna’s doctoral thesis 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.
PROFESSOR PETER CAMILLERI
B Soc Stud (Hons) Sydney; M.Sc (SocRes) Surrey; PhD Flinders

Peter is the Professor of Social Work at Australian Catholic University. He was Rector of the Canberra Campus of ACU from 1999 to 2008. He has also been the Head of the School of Social Work. He has taught on social work programs at University of South Australia and James Cook University. He was involved in the Bushfire Recovery Research Project and currently working on the ARC - funded project, Assessment of the Childrens Courts. His areas of research include recovery from natural disasters, suicidal behaviour and case management.

He is currently Chair of the ACT Higher Education Committee and a member of the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council. He was Chair of the ACT Children Services Council from 2002 – 2005.

The Institute also employs additional staff as required. These staff members are listed with the relevant project description.

Office Manager

AMANDA MACDONALD

Amanda is the Institute’s office manager. Amanda plays a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth running of the institute including looking after the finances, staffing administration, and helping to organise many meetings, events and activities for the Institute.
Social Work Students

LAURA BLAZKO ACU SOCIAL WORK STUDENT

Laura Blazko was an ACU Social Work student and in 2011 undertook her final year research placement at the Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS).

Laura’s project involved conducting a scoping study to assess the need for an ongoing young persons’ consultative/advisory committee for the ICPS, to provide advice and feedback about research.

Supervision was provided by Professor McArthur and Lorraine Thomson.

JENNIFER RILEY ACU SOCIAL WORK STUDENT

Jennifer Riley, Masters of Social Work student on final year placement with ICPS 2011. Jennifer worked on two joint projects, both concerning First Point, a centralised intake service for homelessness services in the ACT. The first project consisted of helping First Point to develop a program logic and draft evaluation proposal. The second was a literature review into centralised intake services with a specific focus on homelessness services.

Jennifer’s Supervisor was Lorraine Thomson.
## Post Doctoral Research Supervision

MORAG McARTHUR

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giovanna Richmond</td>
<td>The use of sustainability as conceptual and planning tool in influencing the connectivity between policy and practice. completed March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine King</td>
<td>The Aboriginal Kinship System: A Key To The Future submitted December 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Moore</td>
<td>Keeping them in mind: Understanding how researchers construct children and the impacts for research practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Healy</td>
<td>How can government best support and enable communities to recover from disaster?</td>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Elise Woodman</td>
<td>Young people’s experience of family connectedness</td>
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<td>Barbara Knight</td>
<td>Children’s experience of changing families.</td>
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Research Program

Projects completed in 2011

SUPPORTING FATHERS WHO ARE HOMELESS
For the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs,

The aim of this mixed method study was to explore the experiences of homeless fathers, with or without an active parenting role. This research project was commissioned by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. It identifies the social, emotional and material consequences of their homeless experience for them and their relationship with their children. The study also examines how their identity and role as fathers impacts on their lives in general and their experience of homelessness. Finally it examines how homelessness services currently support single fathers and identifies policy and service delivery changes that could result in improved outcomes for this largely invisible population. This research was done in partnership with Hanover Welfare Services and Melbourne City Mission, and addresses the National Homelessness Research Agenda 2009-2013 priority ‘to Inform and improve the service system and practice, including evaluation’ and filled a gap in our understanding by providing both qualitative and quantitative evidence about how best to support fathers who are homeless particularly around their parenting.

Justin Barker, Morag McArthur, Shelley Mallet, Deborah Keys Vicky Saunders, Bronwyn Thomson
SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION
For the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

This Project looked at the effects on young people and their parents of the Australian Government’s changes to Family Tax Benefit A (FTB A). These changes meant that in order for parents to continue to receive FTB A for young people aged 16-20, those young people need to be in education or training to achieve Year 12 or equivalent, or have completed Year 12 or equivalent. The study assisted in building an appreciation of how young people and their parents understood and responded to the condition of participation in education in order to receive FTB A and of the impact that it had on their lives. The research also aimed to: uncover any unintended consequences of the policy changes; consider whether any measures need to be put in to place to mitigate these effects; and identify what young people see as enablers and barriers to education and training.

Lorraine Thomson, Morag McArthur and Bronwyn Thomson

EVALUATION OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN AFTER SEPARATION PROGRAM (SCASP) AND POST-SEPARATION COOPERATIVE PARENTING SERVICE (PSCP)
For the department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Attorney General’s Department.

The evaluation of the Supporting Children after Separation Program (SCASP) and Post-Separation Cooperative Parenting service (PSCP) aimed to establish the appropriateness and effectiveness of service models and the extent to which they achieved their intended objectives. It also assessed the extent to which the programs gave priority to at-risk, vulnerable and disadvantaged families and how they increased family access to services through more collaborative service arrangements. The evaluation incorporated existing data and reviews but moved beyond the reliance on adult focused data (ie: service providers and parents) to hear directly from young people themselves. It also used evidence based models of collaboration to analyse how the programs are working within relevant broader service delivery systems.

Morag McArthur, Lorraine Thomson, Merrilyn Woodward, Justin Barker, Megan Layton, Gail Winkworth
HEALTHY HOME: HEALTHY ME
Northside Community Services

The ICPS evaluated a pilot program that supported clients to reduce the severe domestic squalor within which they lived and to reduce its effects. The program which engaged a specialised cleaning company, provided case management and living skills support, accommodation assistance and community engagement was the first of its kind and worked with clients to improve a broad range of outcomes. The evaluation found that there was a high level of satisfaction from service users although as a short term pilot the issue of sustainability of gains was questioned.

Megan Layton and Morag McArthur

CHALLENGES, POSSIBILITIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS: A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF AUSTRALIA’S CHILDREN’S COURTS

This project, funded by an ARC Discovery Grant and the ACT study was one of nine parallel studies – one covering each state and territory and the ninth, based on the eight others, focusing on Australia as a whole. The aim of the study was to address the following research questions: (1) What is the contemporary status of, and current challenges faced by, Australia’s Children’s Courts in relation to both their child welfare and criminal jurisdictions from the perspective of its judicial officers and other key stakeholders? (2) What issues and challenges do judicial officers and other key stakeholders believe the Children’s Court will face over the next decade? (3) What are the judicial officers’ and other key stakeholders’ assessments of, and degree of support for, child welfare and juvenile justice jurisdiction reforms that have recently been canvassed in Australia and overseas? The study was completed in 2011 and a book to be published by Springer will provide an overview of the national project and chapters on each of the Australian jurisdictions.

Morag McArthur Peter Camilleri and Lorraine Thomson
WHAT AUSTRALIAN KIDS SAY ABOUT THEIR WORLD:

In 2011 the Institute was contracted by the Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians to create a book of children’s quotes and artwork that reflected the issues that are important to Australian children in their daily lives. The artwork and quotes were selected from consultation and community engagement activities undertaken by the nine Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians.

Debbie Noble-Carr

A SCOPING PROJECT – REFUGEE CHILD AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES OF RESETTLEMENT IN THE ACT

One of the major challenges facing the world today is protecting refugees who have been forced to leave their homes for fear of death or persecution due to either armed conflict or human rights abuses. The aim of this research was to scope the boundaries and possible methodologies of future research into refugee children and their family’s experience of settling into Australian communities. It identified critical areas of vulnerability and resilience during this transition and the formal and informal processes that can transform risk trajectories into adaptive pathways. This was achieved by exploring refugee families’ and children’s lived experiences and by analysing how they were constructed and responded to as refugees. This project received support from the Australian Catholic University Faculty Linkage Grant and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Vicky Saunders, Morag McArthur, Joanna Zubrzycki and colleagues from Companion House
Ongoing Institute Projects
as at 31 December 2011

EVALUATION OF THE RECONNECT PROGRAM

The Reconnect evaluation will assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of responses and intervention strategies for working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It will examine the extent to which Reconnect services implement early intervention strategies that directly help them to achieve their intended objectives. The findings from the evaluation will inform the future direction of Reconnect.

The project will be guided by the proposed key evaluation questions outlined by FaHCSIA:

- Which early intervention strategies are most effective for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

- Which of these identified strategies are practically applied by Reconnect service providers?

- Which, if any, of these strategies are more or less effective for specific demographics targeted by the Reconnect Program?

Using a mixed-methods approach, the evaluation will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods. It will draw on existing data and reviews and collect new data for analysis. An international literature review will be produced that outlines available evidence addressing strategies for working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
Previously completed projects

2010

- Integrated Family Support Project Evaluation
  for the ACT Office Children Youth and Family Support (OCYFS)

- Understanding the experiences and aspirations of younger mothers
  for Department Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

- Increasing collaboration in the ACT
  This was a project that was funded by the Australian Government under the Protecting Australia’s Children Framework (COAG, 2009)

- Evaluation of the Supported Playgroups and Parent Groups Initiative
  for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria Evaluation Model for the ACT Early Childhood Schools
  for ACT Department of Education and Training

- The experiences and needs of young carers aged 18-25 years living in the ACT
  For Carers ACT

- Child Protection Practitioners Values Survey
  This project received funding through the Australian Research Council.

- Supporting Young People in Education
  For the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
2009

- Getting what we need: Families experiences of services
  for Department Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

- Kids R Central: Toolkit for services working with homeless children
  for Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)

- Building New Opportunities for Collaboration: The Family Relationship Services Program for FaHCSIA

- Early Intervention in the Australian Capital Territory
  for ACT Government

- Evaluation of Clearinghouses
  for FaHCSIA

- Communities for Children Evaluation
  for Northside Community Services

- Working Across the Grey - Communities
  for Children for Northside Community Services

- Supporting Children and Young People in Families Affected by Alcohol or Other Drug Use for ACT Government
  funded through Carer Recognition Grants Program

- Youth Services Program Future Directions for Youth Coalition of the ACT and ACT Department Disability, Housing and Community Services

- Understanding Children and Young People’s Experiences of Separation and Divorce - a Scoping Project
  for Department Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
2008

- Evaluation of Relationships Australia Canberra and Riverina (RACR) Counselling Program
  for Relationships Australia

- Review of the Qualifications and Training Pathways Dept of Child Safety Queensland
  for Australian Association of Social Workers

- Submission for the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW
  for Australian Association of Social Workers

- Child Wellbeing and Protection Curriculum Content
  for Social Work Qualifying Courses for Australian Association of Social Workers

- Supporting Transitions from Juvenile Detention Project
  for the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

- Transferability of Social Work Knowledge between Different Practice and Cultural Contexts

- Evaluation framework for “Step up Step down” program: STEPS
  for Centacare

- Murray Darling Basin Evaluation Framework
  for Centrelink

- Evaluation Plan of Clearinghouses
  for FaHCSIA
2007

- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Project
  for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Unit at the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

- Consultations for the Youth Services Program
  for the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

- Indigenous Family Support
  for Marymead Child and Family Centre

- Evaluation of ‘Families Together’ Program
  for Marymead Child and Family Centre

- Affirm Evaluation Framework
  for Disability ACT

- Emergency Readiness Training
  for Lifeline ACT

- Children’s Experiences of Homelessness
  for Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

- Recovering from the 2003 Canberra Bushfires
  for Emergency Management Australia

- Australian Government Evaluation Framework
  for Disaster Recovery for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

- Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line
  Continuous Improvement Process
  for Attorney General’s Department

- Young Carers in Western Australia
  for Carers WA

- Experience of Former Foster Carers
  for the Foster Care Association ACT
2006

- Reading, Writing and Responsibility: Young Carers and Education
  for Carers Australia

- Principles for Child Centred Practice
  for the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support

- Family Group Conferencing Scoping Paper
  for the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support

- Youth Support Workers in Schools
  for ACT Department of Education and Training

- Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line
  Practice Framework for Screening and Assessment
  for Attorney General’s Department

- Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line
  Research Report
  for Attorney General’s Department

- The Multidisciplinary Approach to Student Services
  for the ACT Department of Education and Training
2005

- **Good Practice for Placement Planning**  
  for the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support

- **Screening of People Working with Children and Young People: Issues Paper**  
  for ACT Children’s Services Council

- **Workforce Planning in the Care and Protection System in the ACT: Issues Paper**  
  for ACT Children’s Services Council

- **Consultation on Strengthening Families Partnership Approach in ACT**  
  for ACT Health (Alcohol and Other Drug Policy Unit)

- **What Works in Residential Care**  
  for Marist Youth Care

- **Schools as Communities Evaluation**  
  for The Office of Children, Youth and Family Support

*Most reports are available at www.acu.edu.au/icps*
Distinguished Visiting Fellowship

PROFESSOR PETER PECORA AND CAMPUS DEAN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT THE COMMUNITY SEMINAR AT THE CANBERRA CAMPUS, JULY 2011

The University has a Distinguished Visiting Research Scholarship and the ICPS and School of Social Work were successful in being granted funding for Professor Peter Pecora to visit from Seattle Washington.

Professor Pecora has a joint appointment as the Managing Director of Research Services for Casey Family Programs, and Professor, School of Social Work, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. He was a foster care line worker and later a human services program coordinator. He has worked with a number of state departments of social services to implement intensive home-based services, child welfare training, and risk assessment systems for child protective services.

While in Canberra he presented a community seminar titled “How do we work towards better outcomes for children supported by child and family agencies, including children in the out of home care system”? He also presented a workshop to ACT Community Services Directorate staff on evaluating family support as well as meeting with executive staff of the Directorate. Professor Pecora also met with ICPS staff to discuss shared research interests. While in Australia Professor Pecora presented and worked with staff on other ACU campuses as well as a range of non government organisations. Professor Pecora’s trip provided an excellent professional and research development opportunity for staff and students as well as community agencies.
CHILD PROTECTION IN AUSTRALIA: TAKING THE NEXT STEP

DR ADAM TOMISON
DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY
PUBLIC LECTURE IN SEPTEMBER 2011

In 1990 the death of Daniel Valerio was a signal event that led to the introduction of mandatory reporting in Victoria and facilitated its subsequent introduction in other jurisdictions. The death of Daniel, and the subsequent inquires into his care, was also a key milestone in what has become the dominance of the forensic child protection system in Australia. With the 20th anniversary of Daniel’s death it is timely to step back and consider – have we taken the right path? Is the child protection ‘system’ best placed to protect children and to ensure children’s safety and wellbeing? What might an alternative system look like, and what are the barriers to the implementation of a more effective system?

These issues are considered in light of the presenter’s involvement in the NT ‘Little Children are Sacred’ Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse and managing the Northern Territory (NT) child protection system during the subsequent Australian Government Intervention in the NT. Reflecting on system reform over the past two decades, consideration is given to key challenges and possible future directions in child protection and child abuse prevention.
Kids Central Toolkit and Training

*Kids Central* is a toolkit that was developed by staff at the Institute of Child Protection Studies in response to a research project which focused on experiences of homelessness for accompanying children.

One of the key messages that emerged was that children needed adults to respond to their needs and that services greatly benefited from adopting a child-centred approach. We discovered, however, that sometimes workers wanted some ideas and tools for how to do this in practice. As a result, Kids Central was born and we have now developed a two day training program which compliments the toolkit and assists workers to put the toolkit principles and tools into practice.
In 2011 the Institute was contracted to conduct three Kids Central training courses in Canberra, with a diverse range of workers including those working in housing support, family support, child protection, drug and alcohol services, disability and domestic violence services. The training has been found to be successful in increasing workers’ knowledge and confidence in child centred practice, with 95% of those participating saying they would recommend it to others within the sector. Some of the comments received from participants have included: “I have gained a better understanding of how to support families from the presenters and also the participants”, “The training helped me to confirm some of my strengths and bring some new strategies and ideas to approach clients” and “Really enjoyable two days...varied, stimulating and challenging. Some new ideas too. Thanks”.

### Professional Development: Training, Workshops, Seminars and Consultations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Carried out for</th>
<th>By Who and When</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids ‘R’ Central training</td>
<td>Families ACT</td>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr and Megan Layton 25th - 26th May 2011</td>
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<td>Kids ‘R’ Central training</td>
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<td>Debbie Noble-Carr 6th -7th December 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids ‘R’ Central training</td>
<td>Families ACT</td>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr and Megan Layton 22nd-23rd June 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being more child centered and Family Focused: An action learning approach.</td>
<td>YWCA Canberra</td>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr 22nd November 2011 and 15th December 2011</td>
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## Presentation

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>The hopes and dreams of younger mothers.</td>
<td>FaHCSIA Social Policy Workshop</td>
<td>Morag McArthur, March, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection and Participation: Meaningfully researching children and young people in the child welfare context “,”</td>
<td>9th Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, New Delhi</td>
<td>Tim Moore, October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What child protection workers values about their practice</td>
<td>9th Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, New Delhi</td>
<td>Morag McArthur, October, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Mothers and Breastfeeding”</td>
<td>‘Step Up Reach Out’ International Breastfeeding Conference</td>
<td>Debbie Noble-Carr, 20-21 October 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Findings from the evaluation of the Support for Children after separation</td>
<td>Family Relationships Services Australia, National Conference</td>
<td>Morag McArthur, November, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
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<td>More than just me: supporting homeless fathers</td>
<td>Blackfriars Community Seminar</td>
<td>Justin Barker December, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading the Change’</td>
<td>Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Conference</td>
<td>Justin Barker February 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Healthy Workplace Advisory Committee</td>
<td>AC Keynote Speaker</td>
<td>Justin Barker March 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Coalition Forum</td>
<td>Guest Speaker,</td>
<td>Justin Barker March 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th International Conference on Drugs and Young People</td>
<td>Drug Use and Homeless Young People: Reciprocity, Sociality and the Role of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs’</td>
<td>Justin Barker Oral presentation May 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Launch of 2011 Homeless Persons’ Week, Homelessness Australia</td>
<td>Keynote address,</td>
<td>Justin Barker July 2011</td>
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Published work 2011

Barker, J Dr Different to you and I? Insight Magazine, Issue 3 Summer 2011 page 3 (to read this paper visit) http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/news_events/insight_magazine/top_stories/different_to_you_and_i/


ICPS Award Winners 2011

DEBBIE NOBLE-CARR - 2011 YOGIE AWARD

Excellence in Research and Evaluation on behalf of the ACT/Southern NSW Branch of the Australian Breastfeeding Association for the “Younger Mothers and Breastfeeding Project”.
## Committee/Board Memberships

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<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Committee/Board</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kate Butler</td>
<td>Member Greater Southern Area Health Service Health Ethics Research Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morag McArthur</td>
<td>Member of the subcommittee to develop a research agenda: National Framework for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Protecting Australia’s Children</td>
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<td>Critical Friend for A Picture of ACT Children and Young People, 2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ACT Sharing Responsibility committee</td>
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<td>ACT workforce planning and development subcommittee</td>
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<td>Member of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth network</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Investing in the future: Children’s journeys through homelessness and child</td>
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<td>Editorial committee, Communities, <em>Children and Families Australia</em>, the journal</td>
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<td>of the Australian College for Child and Family Practitioners</td>
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<td>Tim Moore</td>
<td>President, Carers Australia</td>
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<td>Board Member, Carers ACT</td>
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<td>Public Officer, National People with Disability and Carers Council</td>
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<td>Thomas Wright Institute Member</td>
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<td>Who</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorraine Thomson</td>
<td>Member ACT Alternatives to Violence Project Working group, Member editorial Committee, Editor/editorial committee, Communities, Children and Families Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail Winkworth</td>
<td>Editorial committee, Communities, Children and Families Australia, the journal of the Australian College for Child and Family Practitioners Child Support National Stakeholder Engagement Group Expert advisor to ACATLGN Australian Child &amp; Adolescent Trauma, Loss &amp; Grief Network, Australian National University CAARS (Common Approach to Assessment Referral and Support) Technical Information Sharing and Working Group</td>
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