

Consultation opportunities

Children and young people under 18 – have your say! Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, April 2010

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian listens to and speaks up for children and young people. The Commission is currently seeking children's and young people's views on their worries, including what they worry about and what could be done to make them feel better. The views of children and young people will help the Commission to find out what young people in Queensland think about certain issues, and how it can help make Queensland a safer and better place for children and young people to live. The closing date for responses is **31 May 2010**.

www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

Consultation Paper for the Family Violence Inquiry Australian Law Reform Commission, April 2010

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) has released a consultation paper and summary document containing questions and proposals on which the ALRC and NSW Law Reform Commissions are seeking comments in relation to the intersection of state and territory domestic and family violence laws with the *Family Law Act 1975*, state and territory criminal laws and child protection laws.

Submissions are due **4 June 2010**.

<http://us1.campaign-archive.com/?u=0ac682945224f85fa1d89d148&id=65e318c579#month>

Reports, research papers, policy initiatives etc

Child Protection

The prevalence of child abuse and neglect, Price-Robertson, R., Bromfield, L. & Vassallo, S. Australian Institute of Family Studies, April 2010

This resource sheet reviews recent studies that estimate the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in Australia. It also explains the reasons why these estimates can vary so significantly, with the most likely reason being differences in how data are collected. Findings from the review show that:

- the majority of studies found the prevalence of child physical abuse to be between 5% and 10%, and
- studies that comprehensively measured the prevalence of child sexual abuse found that males had prevalence rates of 4-8% for penetrative abuse and 12-16% for non-penetrative abuse, while females had prevalence rates of 7-12% for penetrative abuse and 23-36% for non-penetrative abuse.

It also found that the best available evidence suggests:

- the prevalence rate for neglect is 12% (however, there are limitations to this research)
- the prevalence rate for emotional maltreatment is 11%, and
- the prevalence rate for the witnessing of family violence is between 12% and 23%.

The authors conclude that all five types of child maltreatment occur at significant levels in the Australian community.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs21/rs21.html>

Emerging issues in domestic/family violence research, *Research in Practice no. 10*, Bartels, L. Australian Institute of Criminology, April 2010

This paper presents an overview of some of the key emerging issues in Australian domestic and family violence (D/FV) research. In particular, the paper considers research in the context of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) communities; among the elderly; those with disabilities and people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; family violence and Indigenous communities; the relevance of homelessness; the impact of D/FV on children; and issues around perpetrator programs. Some of the issues identified in the paper regarding children and young people include:

- data indicates that for 2003–04, children were recorded as being present at 44% of D/FV incidents
- there is currently little research that “improves our understanding of the long-term impacts of continued exposure to trauma on the psychological, physical and brain development of children, or how this exposure impacts their personality, impulse control and, ultimately, their propensity to perpetrate violence in the future”

- the available evidence indicates that witnessing violence in the home poses a threat to children's physical, emotional, psychological, social, educational and behavioural wellbeing
- it is suggested that enduring stress in the early years may adversely impact on brain development and organisation
- more research is required to determine the effects of stress on the developing nervous system, how these effects are manifested through observable symptoms and what factors in the child's environment may either enhance or modify these effects
- future research should examine trauma symptoms in young children and develop more appropriate and standardised means of assessing trauma symptoms, and
- research should focus on the extent to which the primary carer's distress and possibly diminished coping abilities as a result of family violence may influence their perceptions of their children.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/10.aspx>

Learning lessons from serious case reviews: interim report 2009-10, Ofsted, 6 April 2010 (UK)

This report examines 85 serious case reviews completed between 1 April and 30 September 2009 in the United Kingdom. Serious case reviews are inquiries into the death or serious injury of a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor..

The report provides selective information about the characteristics of the children who were the subjects of the reviews (age, gender and ethnicity) and identifies some of the characteristics of their living environments (eg. presence of domestic violence, mental health problems and drug and alcohol misuse).

While the report acknowledges caution in generalising from reviews of the relatively small number of cases which result from the most serious incidents, it identifies a wide range of systemic failures based on its overview of the reviews. These include:

- inadequate interagency communication about the child's family situation
- a tendency on the part of involved agencies to respond reactively to individual situations rather than to see the whole context
- agencies making referrals to specialist services which assumed, falsely, that non-attendance by the family or child implied the service was not needed
- inadequate capacity at a frontline service delivery level within child social care agencies
- inadequate supervision and support of frontline staff working with families, and
- lack of consideration of race, language, culture, religion and disability in working with the families.

The report also evaluates the case review process itself and notes various shortfalls between policy and practice. One of these is the widespread tendency to avoid involving children and families in the review process, despite policy recommendations that such involvement be facilitated.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Other-statistics/Learning-lessons-from-serious-case-reviews-interim-report-2009-10>

Youth Justice

Youth Justice Issues Paper No. 4, Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia, April 2010

This paper highlights the need for developing and investing in evidence-based programs and services that are delivering proven, positive outcomes for young people and for the wider community. It acknowledges that issues related to youth offending are multi-faceted and states that the solution lies in providing a range of interventions in a holistic and integrated way, so the often complex causes of young people's offending behaviour are addressed and young people are supported in developing skills that will help them engage with the community in positive ways.

It reminds us that when discussing youth justice it is important to remember that the vast majority of Western Australia's children and young people are leading productive lives and contributing positively to their communities.

www.ccyp.wa.gov.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

Quarterly report on key indicators in Queensland discrete Indigenous communities (October-December 2009)

Queensland Department of Communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, April 2010.

These quarterly reports provide information about what is being done to improve the quality of life for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in 17 communities. According to the current quarterly report, eight out of the 17 communities showed increases in average school attendance rates when data were compared for Term 4 in 2008 and 2009.

Comparing Term 4 2008 to Term 4 2009, school attendance improved in Aurukun and Mornington Island. The communities of Cherbourg, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mossman Gorge, Napranum, Northern Peninsula Area, Pormpuraaw, Woorabinda and Wujal Wujal remained steady. However, Palm Island and Yarrabah showed a decrease of 14 percentage points for this period.

The quarterly report also sets out individual community profiles, information about services and initiatives and data in relation to community wellbeing. The six indicators are:

1. hospital admissions for assault-related conditions
2. reported offences against a person
3. breaches of alcohol restrictions
4. new substantiated notifications of harm
5. new finalised child protection orders, and
6. school attendance.

<http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/government/programs-initiatives/partnerships/quarterly-reports/report-oct-dec-2009.asp>

Indigenous Education 2010, Hughes, H. & Hughes, M. The Centre for Independent Studies, April 2010

This is the third annual report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. It demonstrates that there has been no improvement in Indigenous student achievement during the reporting period. For example, the 2009 NAPLAN results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students show high rates of failure to meet the national minimum standards. The report also demonstrates that current policies are not working for a significant minority of Indigenous students. For example, lower expectations of Indigenous students have resulted in inadequate school facilities, separate Indigenous curriculums, short school hours, and a lack of school discipline, while welfare dependent cultures lead to low expectations and result in low attendance.

The report:

- reviews the 2009 NAPLAN results, discussing the implications for Indigenous primary and secondary schools and for Indigenous students attending mainstream schools
- analyses the principal supply and demand factors responsible for poor performance by Indigenous schools and Indigenous students
- summarises MCEECDYA's policies and programs, and examines new models of Indigenous schools being developed in Queensland and the Northern Territory, and
- draws together the principal steps needed to make a substantial difference to Indigenous education by 2014, the target date set by MCEECDYA's draft Indigenous Education Action Plan.

http://www.cis.org.au/policy_monographs/pm110.pdf

Indigenous perpetrators of violence: Prevalence and risk factors for offending, Wundersitz, J. Australian Institute of Criminology, 8 April 2010

This report focuses on Indigenous perpetrators of violence and aims to quantify the prevalence and nature of violent behaviour as well as examine empirical evidence on the relationship between violence and its associated risk factors.

Some of the risk factors for violent behaviour identified and explored in detail in the report include:

- childhood experiences of violence and abuse which increases the likelihood that they will grow up to become perpetrators of violence
- the relatively high proportion of adults and children experiencing mental illness and psychological distress, and
- exposure to pornography, which increases the risk of sexualised violence among children and adolescents as well as adults.

The report acknowledges that despite the evidence attesting to the marked prevalence of violent offending among Indigenous Australians, the majority of Indigenous people are not violent, even though many confront the same risks as

offenders and live in the same communities where violence is endemic.

The author suggests that there may be other factors that serve to protect the individual against involvement in violence and recommends that more attention be paid to identifying protective factors for Indigenous violence.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/en/media/2010/april/20100408.aspx>

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008, Australian Bureau of Statistics, April 2010

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey was conducted between August 2008 and April 2009, collecting information from approximately 13,300 Indigenous Australians living in private dwellings in remote and non-remote areas, including discrete communities.

Information is provided on a range of demographic, social, environmental and economic indicators, including personal and household characteristics, language and cultural activities, social networks and support, education, personal safety and housing.

A series of data cubes break down the survey results by demographic group. The Queensland dataset reveals that:

- 6.2% of 4–14 year olds have an Indigenous language as their main language at home
- 54.5% identify with a clan, tribal or language group
- 78.9% were involved in cultural events, ceremonies or organisations in the past 12 months
- 9.1% have self-reported ear or hearing problems
- 22.7% have a household member who usually smokes inside the house, and
- 55.1% are being taught Indigenous culture at school.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4714.0Main%20Features32008?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4714.0&issue=2008&num=&view=>

The Early Years

Child Care Vacancies Quarterly Snapshot, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, April 2010

This publication provides information on child care vacancies for Child Care Benefit approved services that reported their vacancies for the week ending 19 March 2010.

Key findings show that, on average:

- there were 65,780 reported long day care vacancies each day, and approximately seven in 10 (72%) long day care places were being used across Australia
- there were 70,640 reported outside school hours care vacancies across Australia each day, and
- there were 5,970 reported family day care vacancies across Australia each day.

The publication provides explanations of data limitations and technical terms used in the report.

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Resources/Pages/ChildCareVacanciesQuarterly.aspx>

Report on the State of Child Care in Australia, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, April 2010

This publication provides information on the state of child care in Australia. The report sources information from administrative data and survey data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Productivity Commission and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Key findings from the report show that:

- there were more than 870,000 children using approved child care in the September quarter 2009, up 8% since the September quarter 2005
- there are now 5,758 long day care services across the country, an increase of more than 1,000 services since the September quarter 2005
- the proportion of child care hours being used was 75% in September 2009, compared to 77% in September 2005
- across all income levels, out-of-pocket child care costs to families decreased between 2004 and 2009, and
- early childhood education and care funding has more than doubled, up from \$1.7b in 2004-05 to \$3.7b in 2008-09.

Other findings include a nine per cent increase in the number of families using all types of child care since September 2005 including a 15 per cent increase in families using long day care. The proportion of privately owned child care centres increased to September 2009, but with the collapse of ABC learning and the purchase of 650 centres by the not-for-profit organisation, *GoodStart*, it is expected the proportion of community managed centres will increase from 22

per cent to 34 per cent.

With the recent Council of Australian Governments reforms, there will be increased staff-child ratios, a new transparent rating system and a more streamlined regulatory approach.

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Resources/Pages/home.aspx#report>

Education

Choosing science: understanding the declines in senior high school science enrolments, Lyons, T. & Quinn, F. University of New England, National Centre of Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR Australia), 2010

This study represents a large-scale national attempt to understand the influences on Year 10 students' decisions about taking science subjects in Year 11. The study was undertaken with 589 secondary school science teachers and 3759 Year 10 students who had recently chosen their subjects for Year 11.

The last two decades have seen significant declines in the proportions of high school students choosing senior physics, chemistry and biology courses in Australia. Concern has been expressed about the implications of these declines for the supply of future scientists, the quality of the scientific endeavour in Australia and the levels of scientific literacy of its citizens.

The study found that declines in the proportions of students taking physics, chemistry and biology are part of a broader phenomenon which has seen similar falls in many traditional subject areas, including economics, geography, history and advanced mathematics. The authors conclude that this is likely to be due to an interrelated set of factors centred on the changing context of subject choice for senior high school. The principal factor appears to be students' responses to the greater array of options available in Year 11, resulting in proportionally lower enrolments in many long-standing subjects.

The context of greater choice has also heightened the influence of three contributing factors more closely associated with science education:

- the difficulty many students have in picturing themselves as scientists
- the decrease in the utility value of key science subjects relative to their difficulty, and
- the failure of school science to engage a wider range of students.

The report makes a number of recommendations, including that:

- the new National Science Curriculum make school science learning experiences more interesting, practical and personally relevant
- science teachers encourage girls to have greater confidence in their science learning and ability to achieve
- teachers be made more aware of the strong influence they have on students' decisions about choosing science, and
- further research be undertaken to investigate why students in rural schools have less positive attitudes to school science than their city peers.

<http://www.une.edu.au/simerr/pages/projects/131choosingscience.pdf>

Law and Justice

Child Witnesses in the New Zealand Criminal Courts: A review of practice and implications for policy, Hanna, K., Davies, E., Henderson, E., Crothers, C. & Rotherham, C. Institute of Public Policy (NZ), 26 April 2010

This study focuses on children aged 17 years and under who have given evidence as witnesses for the prosecution in criminal proceedings, whether as complainants or witnesses, during 2008 and 2009 at various District and High Courts in New Zealand. The study aimed to determine if measures adopted to ameliorate conditions for children - while protecting accused adults - have been achieved.

The report found inconsistent implementation of existing law and policy in relation to children and some regional variation in practices. It found that child witnesses faced long delays while awaiting trial as well as exposure to inappropriate questioning in the courtroom. In addition, it found that children are frequently cross-examined in ways that are forensically unsafe and subjected to tactics in cross-examination that are likely to confuse them.

The report identifies alternative processes that work well in other jurisdictions for facilitating children's participation in criminal proceedings. The report notes that practices in Western Australia, Norway and England are particularly instructive. The authors believe that there is most merit in a system that adds pre-recorded cross and re-examination by a court-appointed specialist child examiner to current forensic interviewing processes.

Some of the recommendations outlined in the report include:

- legislative amendments to include pre-recording of a child witness' entire evidence, including re-examination and cross-examination
- developing a system to track child witnesses through court processes
- the need for ongoing training on children's communication and best practice in relation to eliciting children's testimony for judges, prosecutors and also defence lawyers
- developing a register of judges, prosecutors and Public Defence Service lawyers who wish to specialise in child witness cases, and
- developing mechanisms for monitoring compliance that addresses key issues of concern raised in the report.

<http://www.ipp.aut.ac.nz/news-and-events/all-news/child-witnesses-in-nz-criminal-courts>

Children's Rights

Special Children's Rights Edition of the Human Rights Law Resource Centre Bulletin, Human Rights Law Resource Centre, April 2010

This special edition of the Human Rights Law Resource Centre Bulletin serves to highlight and raise awareness of the legal and human rights issues facing children. The articles in this Bulletin consider current children's rights issues, including:

- Australia's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- why Australia needs a National Children's Commissioner
- the age of criminal responsibility
- youth justice conferencing
- turning 18 and leaving care
- *Parens Patriae* and the welfare jurisdiction of the Family Court in the medical treatment of children
- Australia's anti-terrorism legislation and its impact on children's rights, and
- case notes on key children's rights decisions from domestic and international courts and tribunals.

<http://www.hrlrc.org.au/files/HRLRC-Bulletin-Special-Edition-on-Childrens-Rights1.pdf>

Health and wellbeing

Health system expenditure on disease and injury in Australia, 2004-05, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, April 2010

This third report in the disease expenditure series provides a systematic analysis of Australian health expenditure in 2004-05 allocated by disease. In 2004-05, the disease groups which contributed to the greatest allocation of health expenditure in Australia were: cardiovascular disease (\$5.9 billion, 11% of total allocation); oral health (\$5.3 billion, 10%); mental disorders (\$4.1 billion, 8%); musculoskeletal diseases (\$4.0 billion, 8%); neoplasms (\$3.8 billion, 7%) and injuries (\$3.4 billion, 7%).

For children and young people (aged 0-14 years), an estimated \$4.5 billion was allocated. The allocation of health expenditure increased with increasing age, as diseases and illnesses become more prevalent. On a per person basis, allocated health expenditure was higher for males up to 14 years of age, mainly due to a higher incidence of congenital conditions and chronic illnesses such as asthma.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10632>

Prevention of mental illness: Why not start at the beginning? Bulletin on Early Childhood Development Volume 9, No 1, Tremblay, R.E., Krakow, E. & Palkhivala, A. Centre for Excellence for Children's Wellbeing (Canada), March 2010

This Bulletin highlights the increasing evidence that the origins of mental health problems diagnosed in later childhood, adolescence and adulthood can be found during pregnancy and very early childhood.

It overviews two areas of research that are changing the view of the causes of mental health problems. The first is developmental epidemiology of mental health problems with population samples followed from birth onwards. The second is epigenetics (environmental programming of genes) which has confirmed that risk of mental health problems could be transmitted from parents to children through genetics. It has also shown that negative environmental conditions are generally needed to trigger the onset of the disease. Epigenetics is now also suggesting that the environment, especially during pregnancy and very early childhood, activates and silences good and bad genes that are crucial for mental well-being and social adaptation. For example, early life environment can produce chemical changes in the genes that affect brain development, and these changes may help explain why abuse and neglect early

in life results in a high risk for suicidal behaviour years later.

The authors state that while mental health services for children and young people with mental health problems are key to treating the illness and preventing further negative impacts, the mounting evidence about the importance of the environment during the pre-natal period and the child's early years suggest that it is imperative to begin interventions as early as possible. For example, infant visiting programs and pre-natal interventions have been shown to have highly protective effects, particularly when they continue for three or four years.

The authors recommend a substantial increase in resources to support pregnant women, preschool children and their families to prevent mental illness and foster the mental health of young children.

<http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/BulletinVol9No1Mars10ANG.pdf>

Peri-natal Deaths, Australia, 2008, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 15 April 2010

This publication presents statistics on the number of fetal, neo-natal and total peri-natal deaths by state or territory of usual residence of Australia, sex and cause of death. Peri-natal deaths comprise stillbirths (fetal deaths) and deaths of infants within the first 28 days of life (neo-natal deaths). Key data provided in the report show that:

- in 2008, there were 2,501 peri-natal deaths registered in Australia, compared with 2,532 registered in 2007, a decrease of 1.2%
- disorders related to length of gestation and fetal growth accounted for 31% (773) of total 2008 peri-natal deaths, compared to 34% (867) in 2007
- congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities accounted for 16% (394) in 2008, compared to 17% (421) in 2007
- respiratory and cardiovascular disorders specific to the peri-natal period accounted for 6.5% (163) of peri-natal deaths in 2008, compared to 8.8% (222) in 2007; with 2008 data the lowest point in the ten year period for this cause
- a maternal condition was reported in 851 (34%) of the 2,501 peri-natal deaths registered in 2008, compared to 723 (29%) of the 2,532 peri-natal deaths registered in 2007
- in 2008, complications of placenta, cord and membranes was the most frequently reported maternal cause, accounting for 318 or 13% of peri-natal deaths, compared to 309 or 12% in 2007, and
- maternal complications of pregnancy accounted for 288 or 12% of peri-natal deaths in 2008, compared to 255 or 10% in 2007.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/FE50252E1E63674CCA257705001D6DF1?opendocument>

How can we reduce alcohol-related road crash deaths among young Australians? Hall, W.D., Wallace, A.L., Cobiac, L.J., Doran, C.M. & Vos, T. Medical Journal of Australia; 192 (8): 464-466, April 2010

This article is designed to generate debate on possible solutions to the issue of alcohol-related road crash deaths among young Australians. It outlines the benefits of research in the United States indicating that an increase in the minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) can reduce road crash deaths. However, the key proposal for debate is to require licensed drivers to maintain a blood alcohol concentration of zero until at least the age of 21 years.

The article's abstract highlights the following benefits in raising the MLDA and proposes an alternative approach to reducing the number of deaths caused by alcohol-related road crashes:

- in the United States, policy experiments over a 20-year period have demonstrated that road crash deaths among young adults can be substantially reduced by raising the MLDA to 21 years
- a recent evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of policies for reducing alcohol-related harm in Australia found that, if the United States experience were to be replicated in Australia, raising the MLDA would be more cost-effective than random breath testing and drink-driving campaigns
- given the major political obstacles to increasing the MLDA, the authors propose a policy that could achieve a similar reduction in road crash deaths, that is, requiring licensed drivers to maintain a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of zero until at least the age of 21 years (close to the current policy of zero BAC until age 22 years in Victoria), and preferably until 25 years. This would allow young Australians to drink or drive but not to combine these activities for at least the first several years of driving
- if all Australian jurisdictions had adopted this policy in 2003, 17 deaths could have been averted among young Australians as they aged from 18 to 21 years and many more serious injuries could have been prevented each year. If a zero BAC had been enforced until age 25, the number of deaths averted until age 25 years could have been as high as 50.

The article considers the various options available for reducing alcohol-related road crash deaths including the cost effectiveness of a ban on alcohol advertising and increased tax on alcohol but identifies the barriers in Australia to an increase in the MLDA.

http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/192_08_190410/hal10784_fm.html

Cultural Influences on Parenting, Zero to Three Parenting Infants and Toddlers Today Survey (USA), Spicer, P. March 2010

This study aims to focus attention on racial and ethnic differences on social and emotional development in order to explore what these might mean for a more culturally inclusive practice for infants, toddlers, and families. The findings are taken from the United States 2009 ZERO TO THREE *Parenting Young Infants and Toddlers Today Survey*

The study explores areas where African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian parents may differ in their perceptions of infant development. The article highlights some of the differences in these racial and ethnic groups, such as parents' understanding of early social and emotional development, expectations for school readiness, and the sources of support and information that have the most influence on parents.

http://main.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Spicer0310_2.pdf?docID=11341

Society and Culture

Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2008–09, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 30 April 2010

This report provides information on the support provided by government-funded specialist homelessness agencies. It is the fourteenth report in what was previously known as the SAAP National Data Collection report series. It provides an overview of assistance given to clients and their children by government-funded specialist homelessness services in 2008-09.

Data for 2008–09 show that:

- one in every 105 Australians, or 204,900 people, received support including 79,100 accompanying children
- young females aged 15–19 years were most likely to become a client (1 in every 50 females), and
- children had a high rate of use, with one in every 39 children aged 0–4 years accompanying a parent or guardian to an agency.

Supplementary tables for each state and territory have also been released.

For Queensland in 2008–09:

- there were 20,800 clients (a rate of 55 per 10,000) and 13,000 accompanying children (a rate of 124 per 10,000 aged 0–17 years)
- there were 700 clients aged under 15 years with another 3300 aged 15–19 years, and
- one third (31.6%) of accompanying children were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The Queensland report is available at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/11257>

The national report is available at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/11235>

Resources

Corporal punishment: Key issues Resource Sheet, Holzer, P. & Lamont, A. National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, April 2010

This resource sheet provides a brief overview of research literature on the use of corporal punishment towards children and the legal landscape regarding corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children in Australia. The distinction between corporal punishment and physical abuse, and corporal punishment and discipline is examined. Arguments for and against changes to the law in this area are also discussed.

Key issues highlighted in the resource sheet include:

- research suggests that the use of corporal punishment may lead to adverse outcomes for children. However, there is some debate about how well existing research distinguishes between severe physical abuse and physical discipline, such as smacking
- it is lawful in Australia to use corporal punishment to discipline children as long as the punishment is "reasonable" in the circumstances. Punishment that is "unreasonable" (eg. punishment that causes harm to a child that lasts for more than a short period) may be classified as physical abuse and could lead to intervention by police and/or child protection authorities
- corporal punishment is one disciplinary technique. There are many other disciplinary techniques which parents can employ that are effective
- research shows that children between the ages of 3 and 5, and children who exhibit challenging behaviours and difficult temperaments are more likely than other children to be the recipients of corporal punishment. There are also clear gender differences, with boys more likely to experience corporal punishment than girls. Within the family setting, contextual factors such as family structure (eg. number of children), economic disadvantage and family stress increase the likelihood that parents will resort to physical punishment. In addition, it has been argued that a wider social context that effectively sanctions the use of physical punishment contributes to its continuation
- there has been considerable uniformity across Australian states and territories in either explicitly banning the use of corporal punishment in schools or removing legislative provisions that provided a defence to the use of reasonable chastisement by people acting in the place of a parent (such as teachers). There remains some ambiguity in Queensland and Western Australian law where amendments have been made to legislation that previously allowed for the use of physical punishment, but not to criminal codes that still give authority to a parent, or a person in place of a parent, to use reasonable corrective force
- 23 countries have prohibited corporal punishment in all settings in legislation. Two other countries have prohibited corporal punishment by Supreme Court ruling, and
- research findings regarding the damaging effects for children of corporal punishment have been critiqued for methodological reasons. However, the research is clear that there is limited evidence to support any positive outcomes associated with corporal punishment and that there are other more preferable techniques for disciplining children.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs19/rs19.html>

Images of children and young people online - Resource Sheet, Horsfall, B. National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, April 2010

This resource sheet provides information about safety and good practice when images of children and young people are displayed online. The display of images of children and young people on the internet requires careful consideration. There may be legal implications for internet users who post images of children and young people on the internet, including under the following:

- Commonwealth privacy laws which regulating the unauthorised publication of personal information that conveys the identity of a person or allows their identity to be determined
- laws which protect the identity of children and young people involved in child protection, family court, or criminal proceedings, and
- Commonwealth, state and territory legislation which make it illegal to produce, distribute, possess or view child pornography in any form.

Secondly, good internet practices aim to enhance the safety of children and young people, irrespective of legal responsibilities. Such practices include:

- gaining consent of the child or young person and their parent (or guardian) prior to recording, producing, displaying or distributing images of children
- excluding identifying information accompanying photographs, such as the child's name, address or telephone number
- producing voluntary codes of conduct in relation to images of children and young people
- parental reminders that young people need to treat private information, like pictures, carefully, and
- keeping computers in public areas of the house facilitates supervision and encourages conversations about internet activities.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs18/rs18.html>

Submissions prepared by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG)

Response to the National Standards for Out of Home Care Consultation Paper, CCYPCG, March 2010

The CCYPCG has responded to the National Standards for Out of Home Care Consultation Paper, with recommendations including that the National Standards:

- give greater prominence to the process of transition from care
- develop ways to report on and measure the lived experience of all children and young people in Out of Home Care, and
- include independent monitoring of reporting against National Standards.

The CCYPCG also contributed to a joint Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians submission which recommended the National Standards:

- achieve nationally consistent benchmarks for all child protection decision-making, including coming into care, and nationally consistent access to appropriate support services
- recognise that a key driver for optimal health and well-being outcomes for many children and young people in Out of Home Care will be their access to high quality, specialist, holistic support services. It needs to be recognised that this will require significant funding and cooperation from Commonwealth and state and territory governments if children and young people in Out of Home Care are to receive the level of services they are entitled to
- achieve appropriate supports for the transition from care process
- include a requirement for systematic engagement with children and young people in Out of Home Care and for their views to be included in measuring and reporting on outcomes, and
- include state or territory based independent monitoring of child protection systems and reporting processes, where the monitoring body is independent from Out of Home Care service providers and funding authorities.

<http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/resources/submissions.html>

Events and Conferences

Inaugural international youth mental health conference, Melbourne 29–30 July 2010

This event will bring together health practitioners, researchers, youth sector professionals and young people and their families, and will 'showcase the best of youth mental health from around the globe'. Key streams will be youth health

and mental health; education and vocational issues; health promotion; drug and alcohol issues; and service reform.

<http://www.iymhconference.com.au>

The Inaugural National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference, (NIDAC 2010) *Listening, Learning & Leading*
16-18 June 2010 , Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia

Across Australia, there are a number of people, organisations and communities working together to address Indigenous alcohol and drug issues and associated harm. The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference (NIDAC 2010) aims to celebrate and showcase their effort and achievements. NIDAC 2010's theme is about listening, learning and leading the way on what can be accomplished within Australia

<http://www.nidaconference.com.au/>

Media Releases and Speeches

Helping young Australians take control of their lives, The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, 14 April 2010

The first *National Strategy for Young Australians* to help young Australians take charge of their lives has been launched. The strategy draws on evidence and experience to help young Australians to take on new responsibilities and fully participate in all aspects of Australian life.

The *National Strategy for Young Australians* highlights eight priority areas for Government action to help young Australians:

- improve their health and wellbeing
- shape their own futures through education
- support them within their families
- empower them to take part and be active in their communities
- equip them with the skills and personal networks they need to get work
- enable them to participate online confidently and safely
- help them get their lives back on track through early intervention, and
- establish clear-cut legal consequences for behaviours that endanger the safety of others.

The *National Strategy for Young Australians* will be used as a guide for future action to encourage and help young people take charge of their own lives. More information about the *National Strategy for Young Australians* can be found at <http://www.youth.gov.au>.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100414_124039.aspx

Convention to bring together youth-led organisations, The Hon Kate Ellis MP Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, 14 April, 2010

The Government has announced funding for a convention for Australia's youth-led organisations to share and build their expertise. The convention aims to help equip youth leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to grow their organisations and improve the lives of Australian young people.

The Government will partner with an organisation in the youth sector to deliver the event in Canberra in July. The convention will include workshops, presentations and networking opportunities with representatives from youth-led organisations and the Government. Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to workshops on youth issues and share their knowledge within the sector and with the Australian Government.

The Youth-led Convention is being announced during National Youth Week as part of the first ever *National Strategy for Young Australians*.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100414_123821.aspx

More Schools for the 2010 Youth Advisory Group on Cyber-Safety, Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

It has been announced that an additional 17 schools will participate in the Australian Government's Youth Advisory Group (YAG) on Cyber-safety in 2010, bringing the total number of schools participating to 30.

YAG members have provided the Government with advice on issues such as cyber-bullying, mobile phone safety, privacy, social networking sites and online computer games. YAG has now expanded its membership to include primary school students. School students aged 8 to 17 years will have the opportunity to advise the Government on cyber-safety issues currently faced by their peers. YAG will consider cyber-safety risks faced by Australian children

and young people and communicate to the Government how best to address these and how to communicate cyber-safety messages to other young Australians.

YAG is one part of the Government's cyber-safety plan which includes education, international co-operation, a Joint Parliamentary Committee, research, law enforcement and filtering measures. Five of the 30 schools participating in the 2010 Youth Advisory Group on Cyber-safety are from Queensland including Burpengary Primary School, John Paul College, St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace, Springwood State High School and Ipswich Girls Grammar.

http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2010/033

Ministers Decide On National Day Of Action Against Bullying, Minister for Education and Training, The Honourable Geoff Wilson, 14 April 2010

A National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence has been announced and will be held on the third Friday in March each year. Australia's Education Ministers agreed to support Queensland's proposal for an annual community awareness campaign on bullying at the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) meeting.

Bullying expert, Dr Ken Rigby suggested that Queensland bring together people who have first-hand experience of dealing with this issue to recommend innovative, effective and practical solutions for schools. As a result the Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence, made up of representatives of Catholic, independent and state schools; principals' associations; union organisations; parents' groups; and the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian was formed.

The Alliance has already agreed on and is in the process of implementing a number of initiatives to tackle bullying and has endorsed in-principle the recommendations from Dr Ken Rigby's report into bullying.

A national day of action would showcase the positive work governments, schools and students are doing to combat this type of inappropriate behaviour. It would help to improve responses to bullying, violence and behaviour management in schools.

<http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=69355>

\$390 000 for action to improve quality of family day care, The Hon Kate Ellis MP Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, 19 April, 2010

The Family Day Care Australia's five year plan *Working for a Stronger Future* has been released. The Government will deliver \$390 000 over the next three years to help support the implementation of *Working for a Stronger Future*, which aims to improve the quality of care for the 100 000 Australian children who attend family day care.

The plan has strategies to strengthen early learning practices in areas such as workforce development, learning environments, service viability and community partnerships.

The new National Quality Framework will include requirements for:

- lower staff-to-child ratios
- new qualifications requirements for all early childhood education workers
- a transparent quality ratings system, which will allow parents to easily compare the quality on offer at different child care services
- streamlined regulatory arrangements, which will mean less paperwork for services, so they have more time to spend providing high quality care, and
- a new jointly-governed national body between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories to oversee the new standards.

The changes will be phased in over several years starting from 1 July 2010 with quality assessments of child care providers.

The Government is providing \$61 million between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to the states and territories to support the framework. More than \$16 billion will be invested in early childhood education over the next four years.

Working for a Stronger Future is available at www.familydaycare.com.au. For more information visit www.mychild.gov.au.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/ellis/media/releases/pages/article_100419_114326.aspx

Enhancing Human Rights Education, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education. Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and The Hon Robert McClelland MP, Attorney-General, 21 April, 2010

A comprehensive suite of education initiatives to ensure all Australians have access to information about human rights has been outlined. These measures form the centrepiece of Australia's Human Rights Framework and reflect the key recommendation of the report by the National Human Rights Consultation Committee that education must be 'the highest priority for improving and promoting human rights in Australia.'

The Framework outlines a number of practical, positive initiatives, to enhance human rights education including:

- greater support for human rights education across the community, including primary and secondary schools
- investing \$6.6 million to expand the community education role of the Australian Human Rights Commission
- investing \$3.8 million to improve human rights awareness in the Commonwealth public sector, including through the development of a human rights toolkit and guidance materials for policy development and implementation of Government programs, and
- investing \$2 million for the development and delivery of community education and engagement programs to promote a greater understanding of human rights by non-government organisations (NGOs).

The education initiatives outlined in Australia's Human Rights Framework will help to ensure that information about human rights, including what they are, why they matter and how they are protected, is more readily available across the community.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100421_141010.aspx

New Study to Investigate the Needs of Australia's Child Care, Education and Training Sectors, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education. Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for Social Inclusion, Deputy Prime Minister and Senator The Hon Nick Sherry MP, Assistant Treasurer, 22 April 2010

The Productivity Commission will research factors impacting on the early childhood, schooling and vocational training workforces. The Productivity Commission will look at current and future demand and supply within these sectors and investigate ways to structure and develop these workforces.

The study will consider factors that impact on each sector's workforce, such as remuneration, working conditions, retention, training and support structures. It will also look at what level of skills and knowledge these workforces need to deliver quality education in these sectors. The Productivity Commission will report on each workforce sector separately over the next two years, beginning with vocational training in mid 2011.

Research on the early childhood sector will be available later in 2011 and the report into schooling is scheduled for release in 2012. The Productivity Commission will consult with relevant professionals and interested parties as part of its research.

The study will provide valuable input to the work of the Council of Australian Governments to strengthen Australia's education and training workforces.

Further information can be found at the Productivity Commission's website www.pc.gov.au.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/gillard/media/releases/pages/article_100422_123003.aspx

New Programs to Aid Youth Employment, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education. Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for Social Inclusion, Deputy Prime Minister, 28 April, 2010

Plans to deliver better career and tertiary education services to young Australians are now ready to be rolled out by the States and Territories. The Commonwealth Government is providing over \$200 million over the next four years so each jurisdiction can develop programs designed to encourage students to stay in school until year 12 and on to further education.

In addition the Commonwealth will utilise \$47 million for national career development initiatives. The funds were committed following a COAG decision last year to see 90% of young people attain Year 12 (or equivalent) by 2015. Each State has tailor-made their implementation plans to address local employment needs and improve the long-term employability of our youth.

Programs supported by these funds will provide a range of local services including:

- individual career development sessions for students,
- local mentoring programs,
- improved work experience opportunities,
- more targeted vocational pathways for years 9 and 10 students, and
- courses better aligned with local and regional labour markets.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/gillard/media/releases/pages/article_100428_154737.aspx