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## 1. Consultation Opportunities

### 1.1 **Disability Care and Support – Draft report**, Productivity Commission, released 28 February 2011.

Feedback is sought from interested parties and individuals on the Productivity Commission's draft proposals regarding the design of a new national model for providing supports and services for people with a disability ([see 2.4.1 below for more details](#)). The Productivity Commission's final report will be delivered to the Australian Government in July 2011.

Submissions are due by **30 April 2011**. The Productivity Commission is also holding public hearings in April.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support/draft>

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### 1.2 **Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 – Discussion paper**, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, released 15 February 2011.

Feedback is sought from all members of the community about how the Standards for Education have worked in practice and whether they continue to be the most efficient mechanism for achieving the objectives of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The Australian Government is required to review the Standards within five years of their taking effect.

Submissions are due by **31 March 2011**.

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/reviewdisabilitystandardsforeducation.aspx>

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### 1.3 **A National Quality Framework to support quality services for people experiencing homelessness – Options paper**, Housing Ministers' Homelessness Working Group, released 3 February 2011.

Feedback is sought on possible options for the homelessness National Quality Framework, the transition issues associated with those options and the sector support that may be required to implement them. The options outlined in the paper have been developed from feedback received during first stage national consultations undertaken in 2010.

Submissions are due by **13 May 2011**.

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessness/Pages/nqf\\_options\\_paper.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessness/Pages/nqf_options_paper.aspx)

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## 2. Reports, Research Papers, Policy Initiatives etc

### 2.1 **Child Protection and Youth Justice**

#### 2.1.1 **Working together to prevent child abuse and neglect – a common approach for identifying and responding to early indicators of need**. The final report from ARACY on behalf of the Common Approach to Assessment, Referral and Support Taskforce, released 23 February 2011.

This report is the outcome of a project to develop a Common Approach to Assessment, Referral and Support (the Common Approach), one of the twelve national priorities for the first three years of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020.

The Common Approach has been developed to enable universal service providers across different agencies, states and territories to take a more proactive role in promoting child well being than currently is the case.

By helping doctors, community health nurses, teachers, counsellors, child care workers and others to identify and respond to early signs of vulnerability, the Common Approach aims to provide vulnerable children and families with the assistance they need before problems escalate into crisis.

This final report includes a detailed description of the needs identification mechanism developed in consultation with stakeholders; a *Guidance Manual* to instruct universal service providers in the use of the Common Approach; recommendations for improved information sharing and referral, and strategies for trialling the Common Approach to test its usability, reliability and transferability in practice.

The Common Approach and its needs identification mechanism has been designed to be simple, flexible, easy to use, and adaptable to different contexts. It promotes the use of common language to aid more effective communication across different service sectors.

The needs identification mechanism comprises four components that can be used together or individually:

- the *'wheel'* — which provides a structure for universal service providers to think about different aspects of a child or young person's life, including those areas that are outside the practitioner's immediate area(s) of professional expertise
- a *professional judgement reference point* — which comprises high-level example indicators of need and questions for use by the practitioner before engaging with the child or family
- *conversation prompts* — a menu of sample questions to assist the practitioner in engaging in a conversation with children, young people and families about their strengths and needs, and
- a *self-assessment questionnaire* — for adolescents to use to identify their own strengths and needs as part of, or ahead of, a discussion with the practitioner or another universal service provider.

The Australian Government has agreed to fund a trial of the Common Approach ([see 5.1 below for more details](#)).

<http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsimages/file/CAARS%20Final-Report.pdf>

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### 2.1.2 **All Together Now – research examining the separation of siblings in out-of-home care**, Wise S., Anglicare Victoria, released 22 February 2011.

This report presents the findings of the Brothers and Sisters in Care (BASIC) survey, which included a representative sample of 95 foster carers responsible for the care of 144 children. The survey data were analysed to address four key research questions concerning the proportion of foster children who belong to a sibling group, the incidence of sibling separation in care, the role service capacity plays in sibling separation and contact between separated siblings.

Findings include that:

- just under three quarters (73.6%) of children included in the survey had a sibling, nine out of ten of whom (88.7%) had a sibling who was also in care
- 42.6% of children with siblings in care were separated from all siblings and 41.5% were separated from some but not all of their siblings in care
- 16% of children were accommodated with all of their siblings in care, and
- less than one third of children with siblings living elsewhere (either at home or in other care placements) had weekly or more frequent contact with those siblings and 45.5% never saw their siblings or saw them only on an infrequent and irregular basis.

Eleven recommendations are made to:

- improve administrative practices within the Victorian Department of Human Services to better support the identification and placement of siblings
- create and support placements that are capable of accommodating sibling groups
- improve contact between siblings not accommodated together, and
- conduct further research to understand the reasons for sibling separation.

[http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/index.php?action=filemanager&folder\\_id=806&pageID=6102&sectionID=5948](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/index.php?action=filemanager&folder_id=806&pageID=6102&sectionID=5948)

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### 2.1.3 **Health of Australian children in out-of-home care: Needs and carer recognition**, Kaltner, M. & Rissel, K., *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, Paediatrics and Child Health Division, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 2010.

In this article, the authors report on their attempt to quantify health needs in a sample of children in out-of-home care in Queensland.

Sixty-three children entering care in North Brisbane within the month prior to the study were referred for a baseline child health assessment. Children's health was assessed by paediatricians and clinical nurses. Also investigated were carer concerns, health referrals and immunisation status. Of the 63 children assessed, 70% were found to require multiple referrals to various health services. The most frequent referrals were paediatric follow-up (41%), counselling services (30%) and audiology (26%). Only 68% of children were found to be fully immunised.

The study findings support those of previous research highlighting high levels of health need and poor preventative health utilisation among children in out-of-home care. The findings underscore the need for a multi-disciplinary health screening for this population.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1440-1754.2010.01899.x/abstract>

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### 2.1.4 **Why is the juvenile re-offending rate higher than expected?** Smith, N., NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Crime and Justice Bulletin Number 146, February 2011.

This paper examines some reasons for the apparent increase in the rate of juvenile reconviction in NSW between 2004-05 and 2006-07. Observed and predicted reconviction rates were investigated for the 2004-05 and 2006-07 cohorts of juvenile offenders given non-custodial sanctions. Various factors (for example, number of prior police cautions) were included in the Group Risk Assessment Model to determine whether they eliminated the discrepancy between the observed and predicted reconviction rates. The profile of re-offences across cohorts was also compared.

The analysis found that two factors may explain the discrepancy between the observed and predicted reconviction rates in 2006-07:

1. a higher than expected rate of reconviction among juveniles dealt with via a Youth Justice Conference, and
2. the absence in the Group Risk Assessment Model of any control for the number of prior police cautions received by a juvenile offender.

The higher than expected rate of reconviction among juveniles dealt with via a Youth Justice Conference in 2006-07 appears partly attributable to changes in policing practices. Based on these results, the authors recommend that the use of the Group Risk Assessment Model be restricted to young offenders who are dealt with through the Children's Court.

[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll\\_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/CJB146.pdf/\\$file/CJB146.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/CJB146.pdf/$file/CJB146.pdf)

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### 2.1.5 **What makes juvenile offenders different from adult offenders?** Richards, K. Australian Institute of Criminology, Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice Number 409, February 2011.

This paper examines some of the biological, psychological and social factors that make adolescent offenders different from adult offenders and necessitate a unique response to juvenile crime. The paper reports that:

- while adolescents commit more offences than any other age group, the vast majority 'grow out of crime' when they reach adulthood
- while certain types of offences (such as graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting and fare evasion) are committed disproportionately by adolescents, very serious offences (such as homicide and sexual offences) are rarely perpetrated by adolescent offenders
- adolescent offending may be influenced by changes in brain development – particularly increases in arousal and motivation in the absence of a well developed ability to regulate these emotions
- adolescent offenders may be more strongly influenced by peers and the need to maintain peer networks than adult offenders
- adolescent offenders are more likely to have intellectual impairments than adult offenders, and
- adolescent offenders are not only disproportionately the perpetrators of crime, but are also disproportionately the victims of crime.

The paper argues that because young offenders are neither fully developed nor entrenched in the criminal justice system, interventions can have a meaningful impact and help them desist from criminal behaviours. The paper also identifies some of the key elements of youth justice systems in Australia that seek to respond to the specific needs of young offenders. These include:

- having a mixture of welfare models that seek to rehabilitate young offenders and justice models that seek to hold the young person to account for their behaviour
- diverting young people from the courts and protecting the privacy of young offenders in order to reduce stigmatisation and assist young people to 'grow out of crime', rather than becoming entrenched in the criminal justice system
- addressing the criminogenic needs that contribute to a young person's offending, including drug use, mental health problems, and/or education, employment and family problems, and

- reducing the influence of adult offenders on young offenders by processing young offenders through the youth justice system rather than the adult criminal justice system.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/4/2/2/%7B4227C0AD-AD0A-47E6-88AF-399535916190%7Dtandi409.pdf>

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## 2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

2.2.1 **2010 Social Justice Report**, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, released 11 February 2011.

This report considers the key human rights issues facing Indigenous Australians and makes recommendations about changes to government policies, programs and laws. It covers issues ranging from self-determination to criminal justice and includes an annual report card on the reconciliation process.

The Social Justice Commissioner, Mr Mick Gooda, outlines his key priorities as Commissioner and sets out the themes he will focus on over the next five years. These themes are about developing stronger and deeper relationships:

- between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community
- between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments, and
- within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The report includes a detailed case study of the way in which the Fitzroy Valley communities in Western Australia have taken local ownership and control of alcohol-fuelled social and health problems, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). The case study argues that community-led development projects ensure best outcomes for addressing concerns and describes:

- the local governance structures that have supported change and provided a platform for communication between the local communities, the three tiers of government and service providers
- a locally-developed strategy to address FASD in a collaborative arrangement with external partners, and
- how investment in community consultations and informed consent processes ensured that 95% of families in the Fitzroy Valley with children aged seven and eight years consented to participation in a FASD prevalence study.

[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social\\_justice/sj\\_report/sjreport10/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport10/)

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2.2.2 **Closing the Gap – Prime Minister's Report 2011**, tabled in Parliament 9 February 2011.

This report sets out the progress being made towards reaching the Government's six targets to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. Tabled in Parliament, the Prime Minister summarised progress saying the government:

- is confident of reaching two of the targets – namely, to halve the gap in infant mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018 and to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities by 2013
- could, if faster improvements are made, reach three other targets – namely, to halve the gap in literacy and numeracy achievement for Indigenous children by 2018; to halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020, and to halve the gap in employment outcomes by 2018, but
- is challenged to reach the target of closing the life expectancy gap by 2031.

Some of the details outlined in the report include:

- the current *life expectancy* gap is estimated at 11.5 years for males and 9.7 years for females and while there has been a decline in mortality rates for Indigenous peoples there has also been a decline in non-Indigenous death rates. With non-Indigenous life expectancy expected to rise, Indigenous male life expectancy will probably have to increase by almost 21 years and female life expectancy by 16 years to close the gap by 2031
- the gap in *infant mortality rates* has been closing in recent years, and in 2008, the baseline gap was 121 per 100 000. To achieve the target of halving the gap within a decade, the mortality rate for Indigenous children would need to fall from 221 to around 147 deaths per 100 000 by 2018.
- data on *access to early childhood education* suggests that 64% of Indigenous children were enrolled in preschool in the year before school in 2009 compared to around 70% of all children, and

- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy measures show some positive signs with a reduction in the gap for Years 3 and 5 reading, and Year 5 numeracy from 2008 to 2009.

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/closing\\_the\\_gap/2011\\_ctg\\_pm\\_report/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/closing_the_gap/2011_ctg_pm_report/Pages/default.aspx)

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### 2.2.3 Family Responsibilities Commission 9<sup>th</sup> quarterly report, tabled in Queensland Parliament 8 February 2011.

This report details the activities of the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) for the quarter from July to September 2010. The FRC, established in 2008, is a key plank of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial. The trial is operational in four Cape York communities (Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge) and aims to improve the wellbeing of Indigenous children and families by encouraging social development and responsibility among communities.

Under the trial, the FRC receives agency notifications from relevant Queensland departments where a parent or carer in those communities has not met pre-determined obligations (i.e. school attendance, Magistrate Court conviction, housing tenancy breach or child safety notification). Notifications to the FRC can lead to an individual attending a conference with possible outcomes including clients entering agreements or attending relevant community support services. Where a person does not comply, a client may be placed on a Conditional Income Management (CIM) order.

For the reported quarter (1 July – 30 September 2010) the FRC:

- received a total of 726 jurisdictionally-appropriate notifications –
  - 321 Magistrates Court notifications
  - 318 school attendance notifications
  - 86 child safety notifications
  - 1 housing tenancy notification
- conducted 336 conferences –
  - 192 in Aurukun
  - 18 in Coen
  - 98 in Hope Vale
  - 28 in Mossman Gorge
- and implemented –
  - 25 Family Responsibility Agreements
  - 49 directions to attend community support services
  - 49 Conditional Income Management orders.

Almost one-third (32%) of clients have recorded more than 5 notifications since 1 July 2008. The number of CIM orders in this 9<sup>th</sup> quarterly report (49) has declined from 68 in the 8<sup>th</sup> quarterly report.

The FRC will increase conference sittings focused on school attendance due to recent declines in attendance rates in Aurukun and Coen. Additional resources will be engaged, and the FRC will continue to emphasise the importance of school attendance and prompt arrival times. The Cape York Welfare Reform trial is expected to continue until 31 December 2011.

<http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au/government/families-responsibilities-commission/documents/frc-quarterly-report-9.pdf>

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### 2.2.4 Substance use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, published online 8 February 2011.

This report presents national data on the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit substances among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The report outlines consumption patterns and how these have changed over time including data on the links between substance use and health, and the use of alcohol and other drug treatment services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The report indicates that:

- the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who smoke is slowly declining
- more than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women smoke during pregnancy

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are twice as likely to binge drink compared to the rest of the community, and
- marijuana is the most common substance used, followed by amphetamines and speed.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/11503>

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### 2.3 Early Years and Education

#### 2.3.1 **Aboriginal Access to Preschool**, Mann, D., Knight, S., and Thomson, J., *sdn* Child and Family Services, February 2011.

This small qualitative and quantitative study of inner Sydney mainstream preschools investigates what attracts and retains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in preschools. The research was conducted with eight preschools in inner Sydney and involves the views of 34 non-Aboriginal staff, one Aboriginal trainee, seven preschool directors and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. Five of the preschools had Aboriginal children enrolled at the time of the study.

The paper suggests that some of the elements required to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families include:

- the need for staff, environment and atmosphere to be welcoming
- a curriculum that supports culture and equitable learning opportunities, and
- Aboriginal children having access to specific services, with qualified Aboriginal teachers and staff that develop a teaching program to meet cultural law and practices, and equip children to meet the dominant educational norms.

Some of the barriers to access identified by the parents included:

- inadequate transport
- lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- cost of fees, and
- perceived attitudes and behaviours that inhibit the development of trusting relationships.

[http://www.sdn.org.au/do/targeted\\_support/aboriginalunit/Aboriginal%20Access%20to%20Preschool%20study.pdf](http://www.sdn.org.au/do/targeted_support/aboriginalunit/Aboriginal%20Access%20to%20Preschool%20study.pdf)

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#### 2.3.2 **Linking schools and early years project evaluation: data collection round 2**, Eastman, C., Newton, B.J., Valentine, K., Rajkovic M., Social Policy Research Centre, published January 2011.

This is the second of two evaluation reports on the Linking Schools and Early Years Project (LSEY), which is being led by the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH), Murdoch Children's Research Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

The aim of LSEY is to ensure that all children enter the formal education system ready to engage and be successful in school. The project also aims to ensure that schools are prepared for children of all abilities and backgrounds when they first attend, and that families, services and communities are ready to support the development of children.

The methodology for the first evaluation was the use of questionnaires completed by parents, schools, early childhood education and care services, and child and family services. For this report, qualitative data was collected to enhance the process component of the evaluation. The third and final round of data collection will take place in 2012.

Visit the website below for a full report of Round Two (2010) findings, summary of Round One (2008) findings and a comparison of results between Round One (2008) and Round Two (2010) findings including for:

- how children and families make a smooth transition between early years services and schools
- how early years services and schools actively connect with families
- how schools are responsive to the individual learning needs of all children
- links between services, and
- child and family service use information.

[http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Report2\\_11\\_LSEY.pdf](http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Report2_11_LSEY.pdf)

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### 2.4 Health and Wellbeing, Society and Culture

#### 2.4.1 Disability Care and Support Draft report, Productivity Commission, released 28 February 2011.

This draft report details the findings and recommendations from the Productivity Commission's public inquiry into a long-term disability care and support scheme, undertaken at the request of the Australian Government. The Commission is due to deliver its final report in **July 2011**.

The report describes the current disability support system as being 'underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient, and gives people with a disability little choice and no certainty of access to appropriate supports'. The report concludes that the reform is necessary and a new disability service system is feasible.

To address the reported flaws, the Commission proposes two schemes with a rollout to commence in 2013-14:

- the *National Disability Insurance Scheme* (NDIS), a national scheme with national standards and entitlements that would cover people with disabilities (from non-accidents) with high needs, and
- a second, smaller scheme, the *National Injury Insurance Scheme* (NIIS), which would cover people's lifetime care and support needs if they acquired a catastrophic injury from any accident (e.g. motor vehicle accidents, medical, criminal injury, recreational and domestic accidents).

The funding sources and focus of the two schemes would be different. The report justifies two schemes because of the existence of some well functioning motor accident schemes that can be scaled up, as opposed to amalgamation which would be costly and not provide sufficient benefits in the near term.

The NDIS is estimated to cost \$6.3 billion above current spending (around \$280 per Australian) with total expenditure around \$12.5 billion per annum. It would be funded from consolidated revenue into a National Disability Insurance Fund using an agreed formula. Around 360,000 people would receive direct scheme funding from the NDIS which would cover existing and new cases of serious disability. Assessments under the NDIS would identify and facilitate referrals for those who do not qualify for entry.

A new body, the National Disability Insurance Agency would oversee the NDIS. The Australian and State and Territory Governments would appoint its board, but the agency would run the scheme independently, using clear criteria for entry to the scheme, tight controls to ensure spending is based on reasonable need, and a focus on cost-effectively achieving better outcomes for people.

The NIIS would cover only new incidences of catastrophic injury, estimated at 800 people each year. The net annual costs of the NIIS could be around \$685 million (around \$30 per Australian).

It would be funded from existing insurance premiums and small municipal rate increases.

The NIIS would be a federation of state schemes.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support/draft>

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#### 2.4.2 Social Inclusion Board Annual Report 2010, released 22 February, 2011.

This is the second annual report of the Australian Social Inclusion Board. It examines the way in which the delivery of government programs and services might change in future.

The report summarises the findings of three research projects undertaken by the Board in order to provide advice to Government on three important policy areas:

- breaking the cycle of disadvantage
- addressing barriers to participation faced by jobless families with children, and
- overcoming location based disadvantage.

While the research projects make separate explicit recommendations, common themes were found that the Board believes are central to redesigning relevant public policy along social inclusion lines. Those themes are:

- the way you treat people matters – it is not enough to focus on *what* support is provided but also *how* it is provided
- continuity of support is essential – episodic care based around discrete crises with a withdrawal of service in between is an inefficient and ineffective way to address entrenched disadvantage, and

- a focus on structural barriers must be maintained – reforms to service provision must be coupled with a focus on broader issues, including the housing market, labour force conditions, the availability of infrastructure and the cost and distribution of caring responsibilities.

The report also highlights the importance of measuring progress against headline and supplementary indicators in the *Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Framework* to ensure social inclusion policy is evidence based. In this regard, the report contains an update on the children in jobless families indicator and looks in more detail at differences by age of the youngest child in the family.

The respective links to the annual report in full and webpage containing the three research reports are:

<http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Resources/Documents/BoardAnnualReport.pdf>

<http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Resources/Pages/Resources.aspx>

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### 2.4.3 The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: 2009–10 Annual Report, released 14 February 2011.

This report provides an overview of the Wave 3.5 data collection and findings from when children in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) were aged 5–6 and 9–10 years old.

LSAC began in 2004 involving approximately 10,000 families around Australia. A major aim of LSAC is to identify policy opportunities for improving support for children and their families and for early intervention and prevention strategies. The study follows a representative sample of children from across Australia. Study informants include the child (from the age of 6 years), parents (both resident and non-resident), and carers and teachers. Information is collected using a range of methodologies.

This report includes information about children's schooling, health and media technology use. Some of the findings include:

- the majority of parents (96 per cent) whose child attended school (defined as Grade 1 and kindergarten/prep/reception) reported their child looking forward to school every day or most days and only 2 per cent reported their child was upset going to school most days or every day
- the majority of parents whose children attended school found their child's transition to school easy (96 per cent), while a small number found it difficult (4 per cent)
- over 90 per cent of parents thought their child's health was good, very good or excellent. On average children in the study do get the amount of sleep recommended by experts, and
- parents reported they had rules surrounding their child's use of media and technology in terms of both how much they use and what they watch.

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Pages/lisac\\_annual\\_rpt\\_200910.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Pages/lisac_annual_rpt_200910.aspx)

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### 2.4.4 The National Secondary Student's Diet and Activity (NaSSDA) survey 2009-10, jointly funded by state Cancer Councils, the Cancer Council Australia and the National Heart Foundation of Australia, released 10 February 2011.

This study monitors adolescents' body weight, and dietary and physical activity behaviour at both a state and national level. The participation of 12,000 students in years eight to 11 across 237 schools provides the first national survey sample of young Australians since 1985.

The study reveals excessive levels of overweight and obesity among students, inadequate rates of physical activity, insufficient fruit and vegetable intake and a high proportion of students making food choices based on advertising.

Visit the website below for the full research memos regarding physical activity, overweight and obesity, dietary habits, food marketing and small screen recreation.

<http://www.cancer.org.au/policy/Publications/NaSSDA.htm>

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### 2.4.5 **National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children**, an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments, released 17 February 2011.

The National Plan is a 12 year overarching plan for reform (2010 – 2022) that was endorsed by the Australian state and territory governments on 15 February 2011. The Plan provides a framework to assist governments in reducing the incidence of violence against women and children. It aims to improve co-operation between state and federal governments, increase support mechanisms for women and children and provide targeted initiatives to bring about change.

The National Plan oversees the staged release of four action plans which identify specific actions, responsibilities and timeframes for government action. It also contains the following six national outcomes which will be used to measure success:

1. communities are safe and free from violence
2. relationships are respectful
3. Indigenous communities are strengthened
4. services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence
5. justices responses are effective, and
6. perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/nationalplan/Pages/default.aspx>

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### 2.4.6 **Report on Government Services 2011**, Productivity Commission, released 28 January 2011.

This report provides information on the equity, efficiency and effectiveness of government services in Australia. The emphasis is on longitudinal reporting to help drive performance improvements.

The report contains performance information on 15 overarching areas including:

- children's services (chapter 3)
- school education (chapter 4) and vocational education and training (chapter 5)
- services for people with a disability (chapter 14)
- protection and support services – covering child protection, out-of-home care and juvenile justice (chapter 15), and
- homelessness (chapter 17).

Improvements to the reporting of protection and support services this year include five new juvenile justice indicators – group conferencing outcomes, assaults in custody, self harm and attempted suicide in custody, completion of orders and centre utilisation.

More general advances in this year's report include the alignment of health, community services, and housing and homelessness performance indicators with those in the related National Agreements, the development of data quality information and extended time series for many indicators, and the inclusion of brief case studies for selected service areas.

Reporting on services to Indigenous Australians is a continuing priority.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/roqs/2011>

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## 2.5 International

### 2.5.1 **Children's perspectives on parenting styles and discipline – A developmental approach**, Nixon, E., and Halpenny, AM, Department of Health and Children, Ireland, 2010.

This Irish study explores the perspectives of children in four age groups, ranging from early childhood to late adolescence in order to identify developmental patterns in children's views on parenting styles and discipline. Thirty focus groups were conducted with 132 children (67 boys and 65 girls), aged 6-17, from two class groups in primary schools and two class groups in secondary schools.

Some of the key findings include:

- younger children highlighted parental activities such as providing sustenance, protection and basic care to their children, and sharing activities with their children, whereas older children emphasised the importance of parental guidance, emotional support and authority
- parents represent important figures of authority and control for their children. Key aspects of this role were perceived as involving the monitoring and checking of children's activities and whereabouts, enforcing limits and boundaries, and disciplining children
- parental use of physical punishment had the result of making children feel bad in some way, including feeling sad, upset, unloved, sore, scared, angry and embarrassed. Children considered that parents tended to use physical punishment as a last resort, especially when their children were repeatedly defiant, or when parents were feeling out of control or frustrated
- the majority of children did not agree that physical punishment should be legally prohibited. Children made reference to the right of parents to use physical punishment with their children and the complexity of implementing a ban on physical punishment in the home. Some children, however, did favour the legal prohibition of physical punishment by parents, pointing out that such prohibition would protect children whose parents used physical punishment excessively or severely, and
- four principles underpinned effective discipline: loss of privilege (being deprived of something that was of value to the child); instructional value (affording the child an opportunity to learn about the consequences of their behaviour); consistency (delivering discipline in a consistent manner and following through with appropriate action); and fairness (adopting discipline strategies that reflect fair-mindedness and a sense of justice).

One conclusion the paper draws is that children's ability to articulate their views on parenting, as reported in this study, suggests that family policy development could benefit from a child-centred ethos, which takes account of the developmental needs and rights of individual children within their families.

[http://www.tcd.ie/childrensresearchcentre/assets/pdf/Publications/Children's\\_perspectives\\_on\\_parenting\\_styles.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/childrensresearchcentre/assets/pdf/Publications/Children's_perspectives_on_parenting_styles.pdf)

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### 2.5.2 **New inspection system to improve outcomes for children living in children's homes**, Ofsted, United Kingdom, 16 February 2011.

This paper details a new inspection framework for all children's homes in the England. Included in the scope of children's homes are children's refuges, short-break services and homes for disabled children as well as boarding schools and residential special schools. The framework does not cover inspections of 'looked-after children' services provided by local authorities as this is covered by a separate framework. The expression 'looked-after children' in England is equivalent to 'out of home care children' in Australia.

The new framework focuses inspection on the quality and impact of services and the outcomes achieved for children and young people. Notable features of the new framework include:

- the twice yearly inspections will be unannounced
- Inspectors will take account of the extent to which service providers have sought and acted on the views of children, young people and parents or carers in reviewing and improving services and outcomes
- Inspectors will consider the views of users they speak to on-site, and
- surveys of children will be carried out at points in time across the inspection year so Inspectors can access the recent experiences from children and young people looked after in the home or setting.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/News/News-Archive/2011/February/New-inspection-system-to-improve-outcomes-for-children-living-in-children-s-homes>

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### 2.5.3 **The children on family justice report – A report of children's views for the Family Justice Review Panel, 2010**, by the Children's Rights Director for England, published by Ofsted, 16 February 2011.

This report by the UK Children's Rights Director, Dr Roger Morgan, reveals concerns that children in care have about the court system and decisions that are made about their lives.

The report outlines the results of surveys or interviews involving 125 children and young people which found among other things, that only half the children and young people trust the courts to make the right decisions about their lives.

According to Dr Morgan, the three main worries for children going to court included whether the court's decisions about their future was right for them; people and strangers hearing about their private lives and problems, and not being able to give the right answers to important questions in front of a court. Many also reported not knowing, or feeling that they had a say in what was happening to them.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/News/News-Archive/2011/February/Children-on-family-justice>

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### 3. Resources

3.1 **Who abuses children?** Lamont, L., National Child Protection Clearing House, Australian Institute of Family Studies, updated 23 February 2011.

This seven page resource sheet provides an overview of the evidence available regarding abused children. Although data is limited, three key messages are drawn from the evidence available:

- a considerable amount of abuse and neglect goes undisclosed, making it difficult to develop an accurate picture of who may abuse or neglect children
- with the exception of child sexual abuse, children are most likely to be abused or neglected by parents and/or caregivers, and
- contrary to other types of abuse, a far greater number of child sexual abuse offences are perpetrated by adults who are not in the caregiver role, with males constituting the majority of perpetrators.

As research data regarding perpetrators of child abuse and neglect tend to isolate incidents into one form or other, the resource sheet discusses the evidence under the various forms e.g. physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, witnessing domestic violence, and adolescent offenders.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs7/rs7.html>

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3.2 **Pre-employment screening: working with children checks and police checks**, Berlyn, C., Holzer, P., Higgins, D., National Child Protection Clearing House, Australian Institute of Family Studies, updated 17 February 2011.

This updated resource sheet highlights the important differences which exist across Australian jurisdictions regarding the type of screening programs that are in place, what records are checked and who is required to undergo screening.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs13/rs13.html>

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3.3 **Child deaths from abuse and neglect in Australia**, Lamont, L., National Child Protection Clearing House, Australian Institute of Family Studies, updated December 2010.

This six page resource sheet provides a statistical overview of child deaths from child abuse and neglect in Australia and internationally. Due to different data collection policies and practices in different jurisdictions, it is difficult to obtain reliable national statistics.

The resource sheet outlines which states and territories conduct child death reviews, as well as detailing the specific functions in each jurisdiction. This includes a description of the Queensland Child Death Case Review Committee, and details some findings from the recent 2009–10 Annual Report.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs4/rs4.pdf>

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### 4. Events and Conferences

#### 4.1 **The mental health and wellbeing of young people: One-day seminar**, convened by Generation Next, to be held in Brisbane 1 April 2011 and the Gold Coast 3 June 2011.

Generation Next is holding a national seminar series for parents, educators, and professionals working with children and young people. Leading experts will provide information and advice on common issues impacting young people including cyber bullying and sexting, alcohol and drugs, anxiety and depression, building resilience and help after natural disasters.

<http://generationnext.com.au/pdf/MHWYP11-GoldCoast-Brisbane.pdf>

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### 5. Media Releases and Speeches

#### 5.1 **New approach to protection of vulnerable children**

On 23 February 2011, the Australian Government announced it will provide \$1.1 million to trial a new tool to assess the needs of vulnerable children and their families in four communities across Australia. The pilot project follows a recommendation of the Common Approach to Assessment Referral and Support Ministerial Taskforce.

[http://www.juliecollins.fahcsia.gov.au/mediareleases/2011/Pages/jmc\\_vulnchildren\\_23february2011.aspx](http://www.juliecollins.fahcsia.gov.au/mediareleases/2011/Pages/jmc_vulnchildren_23february2011.aspx)

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#### 5.2 **Regional students to get a better deal on income support**

On 21 February 2011, the Australian Government announced it will bring forward by 12 months, a comprehensive review of student income support, with a particular focus on the capacity of rural and regional students to access higher education. Minister for Tertiary Education, Senator Chris Evans said the review will consider appropriate savings that can be made to pay for any extensions in eligibility for Youth Allowance. The review will report by 1 July this year, and the Government will move to implement any new eligibility arrangements from 1 January 2012.

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Evans/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_110221\\_095315.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Evans/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_110221_095315.aspx)

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#### 5.3 **Strong response to Family Violence Bill consultation**

On 15 February 2011, Federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, issued a media release stating there has been a strong community response to the Federal Government's draft Family Law Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2010. Mr McClelland said more than 400 submissions were received during the public consultation process on the draft Family Violence Bill. The majority of submissions supported measures to protect children in the family law system as well as broader definitions of family violence and child abuse, the removal of the mandatory costs orders provision and changes to the 'friendly parent' provision.

[http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/www/ministers/mcclelland.nsf/Page/MediaReleases\\_2011\\_FirstQuarter\\_15February2011-StrongresponsetoFamilyViolenceBillConsultation](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/www/ministers/mcclelland.nsf/Page/MediaReleases_2011_FirstQuarter_15February2011-StrongresponsetoFamilyViolenceBillConsultation)

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#### 5.4 **Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry launched**

On 31 January 2011, Victorian Premier, Ted Baillieu, launched the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry. The Inquiry will investigate systemic problems in Victoria's child protection system and make recommendations to strengthen and improve the protection and support of vulnerable young Victorians. The inquiry panel consists of the Honourable Philip Cummins (Chair), Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott OAM and Bill Scales AO. The panel will provide a report to the Minister for Community Services by 4 November 2011 and the report will be tabled in Parliament.

<http://www.childprotectioninquiry.vic.gov.au/>

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