

### Reports, research papers, policy initiatives etc

#### *Child Protection*

##### **Own Motion Investigation into Child Protection: Out of Home Care**, Ombudsman Victoria, May 2010

This report presents the findings of an investigation by the Victorian Ombudsman into Victoria's out-of-home care (OOHC) system and the level of care and protection being provided to the children within it. It is subsequent to the Victorian Ombudsman's investigation and report into the Department of Human Services Child Protection Program in November 2009.

The report notes that despite ongoing reforms of the OOHC system, some children do not experience their OOHC placements to be safe and secure and are subject to abuse and neglect. A large number of short-comings in the OOHC system are identified as contributing to this situation, including:

- an acute shortage of all forms of OOHC placements resulting in
  - inadequate screening of carers (especially kinship carers)
  - inappropriate and unsafe placement of children
  - the growing use of unfunded "contingency placements" which can be costly, unstable and risky for the children who are placed in them, and
  - inadequately or inappropriately trained, qualified and supervised residential care staff
- a high turnover of residential care staff and a heavy reliance on temporary agency staff who are disproportionately implicated in allegations of abuse of children
- inadequate placement support and financial assistance to home-based carers
- inadequate case planning, needs assessment, data collection and information sharing resulting in the needs of children not being identified or adequately and appropriately addressed
- chronic lack of availability of mental health and therapeutic services preventing timely responses to children's needs, and
- inadequate planning and preparation of young people for leaving care.

The Ombudsman concludes that many of these issues "are largely as a consequence of the department not being adequately resourced to carry out its functions".

The report makes 21 recommendations. Chief among these are proposals to introduce mechanisms for independent systemic monitoring of the OOHC system, noting that "approaches adopted by other jurisdictions which include community visitor schemes, independent advocates and regular surveying of children in out of home care placements would provide a level of scrutiny not presently evident in the Victorian... system."

The need for independent advocacy mechanisms is also emphasised. It is argued that in a context where the OOHC system is struggling to meet demand, "advocacy on behalf of every child in the out of home care system is... crucial to ensure that their best interests are met and their right to a safe and secure placement is not compromised by systemic pressures".

[http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Own\\_motion\\_investigation\\_into\\_child\\_Protection\\_-\\_out\\_of\\_home\\_care\\_May\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Own_motion_investigation_into_child_Protection_-_out_of_home_care_May_2010.pdf)

**Care-system impacts on academic outcomes**, Sarah Wise, Sarah Pollock, Gaye Mitchell, Cathy Argus and Peta Farquhar, Anglicare June Report 2010

This joint project between Wesley Mission and Anglicare was based on surveys with 199 Victorian carers, 21 teachers and six detailed case studies of young people in out-of-home care.

The findings in this report show that children in care have lower academic outcomes because they suffer from poor mental and physical health. The report categorises children in care in terms of their education according to 'damaged', 'disengaging', and 'doing well'.

The report makes 11 key recommendations designed to:

- promote placements that are likely to make a positive future impact on educational outcomes
- extend the provision of placement and support until young people in out-of-home care complete Year 12 or an equivalent accredited qualification
- improve support for children who exhibit or are at risk of developing severe emotional and behavioural disturbance
- increase the capacity of mainstream schools to respond to trauma-related behaviour
- improve the scale and reach of evidence-based alternative education programs and settings
- introduce co-ordinated education assessment and planning across the out-of-home care and education systems, and
- introduce a co-ordinated system, owned by out-of-home care and education, to monitor the education progress of children and young people in out-of-home care.

[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)

**Doing nothing hurts children: Tracking community attitudes about child abuse and child protection in Australia**, Tucci, J., Mitchell, J. & Goddard, C. Australian Childhood Foundation, May 2010

This article presents the results from the third national community attitude study about child abuse and child protection in Australia. The first two national studies in this series were published in 2003 and 2006. The study aimed to assess the degree to which child abuse is considered a community concern; gauge the accuracy of public knowledge about the extent, nature and impact of child abuse; and track community attitudes about the challenges facing children in relation to child abuse and child protection.

The findings suggest that the community's views of child abuse and child protection have not changed since the first study in 2003. Among the 722 respondents in the 2009 study:

- 26% had identified a child or young person who had been abused or neglected in the past five years
- 32% believed that children make up stories about being abused. Indeed, 1 in 5 respondents may not actually believe a child who disclosed abuse to them
- 28% did not feel confident enough to recognise the signs of child abuse and neglect
- 20% did not feel confident enough to know what to do if they suspected that a child was being abused or neglected
- 17% believed that children were unlikely to know the person who abused them
- 10% believed that child abuse only happens in poor or disadvantaged families, and
- 12% believed that well educated parents do not abuse their children.

Child abuse was rated thirteenth on a list of community issues, being rated less concerning than high petrol prices and problems with public transport and roads.

The authors make a number of recommendations, including:

- the Commonwealth Government commit to developing a comprehensive national child abuse prevention strategy
- the Commonwealth Government commit \$50 million to resource sustained public education campaigns aimed at resourcing and engaging the community in the protection of children from abuse
- State and Commonwealth Governments co-operate to develop and implement uniform national child abuse and child protection legislation, and
- all sectors of the Australian community commit to listening to and believing children, especially in relation to child abuse and family violence.

<http://www.childhood.org.au/Assets/Files/6c7fbbbb-0c34-4c0f-8808-cccb2dbee8c2.pdf>

**Children in care**, Richardson, N., Irenyi, N. & Horsfall, B. National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, June 2010

This resource provides an overview of out-of-home care in Australia. It discusses a range of issues concerning out-of-home care, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and the reimbursement of foster carers. It also provides data on the number of children who are in out-of-home care and the number of children who have been placed according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

Some of the key challenges in foster care are discussed, including the number of children in out-of-home-care who experience multiple placement changes, and recruiting enough carers to cope with the increased demand for foster carers.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs8/rs8.html>

**Making Molehills into Mountains: Adult Responses to Child Sexuality and Behaviour** Flanagan, P. Dulwich Centre Foundation, New Zealand, May 2010

This paper aims to analyse the approaches and practices in understanding sexual behaviour among children. While it acknowledges that children's sexual or abusive behaviours should be not ignored, it suggests that children should not be readily categorised as criminals or paedophiles and emphasises that children with abusive actions should be listened to.

The author identifies four types of sexual behaviours:

1. natural, "normal", healthy, exploratory – where children explore their worlds and their bodies to discover and know about themselves, others and relationships
2. sexually reactive behaviours - where children have witnessed sexual activity or possibly been abused
3. mutually sexual behaviour – where children find comfort and support with each other, and sexual actions offer a sibling or a friend comfort and support, and
4. molesting behaviour – where children act in sexual ways that display violence and aggressions that appears intentional.

Children who engage in problem sexual behaviour have:

- not reached the age of criminal responsibility
- experienced a range of disruptive and/or abusive experiences themselves, and
- been influenced in the social, economic and familial conditions in which they live.

The author states that too often the experiences of children and families are generally classified. Their profiles are partially determined by evidence-based processes, which often do not take into account the particularities of their experience. While the lives of some families may have frequent and common factors, the systems of health, education and social development appear to readily adopt treatment approaches to fit a model, rather than a person or family.

<http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/explorations-2010-1-paul-flanagan.pdf>

**Child abuse and neglect statistics**, Bromfield, L. & Horsfall, B. National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, June 2010

This resource provides a snapshot of data describing child protection activity in Australia. Key data reported include:

- during 2008-09, there were 339,454 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect, which is a significant increase of 6.9% from the 317,526 reports made in 2007-08
- in 2008-09, the 339,454 notifications recorded concerned 207,462 children
- the number of children subject to a notification has increased by 28% in the last 5 years (161,960 to 207,462) in Australia
- notifications were most commonly made by members of the police force, followed by hospital/health centre staff and school personnel
- the total number of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2009 was 34,069. Thirty per cent of these children were aged 10-14 years, 30% were aged 5-9 years, 25% were aged less than 5 years and 15% were aged 15-17 years
- In New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory emotional abuse was the most commonly substantiated maltreatment type. In Western Australia, and the Northern Territory neglect was the most commonly substantiated maltreatment type, and
- at 30 June 2009, there were 10,512 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. The national rate of Indigenous children in out-of-home care was just over 9 times the rate for other children

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs1/rs1.html>

## **Youth Justice**

**Transition through detention and custody**, Ofsted (UK), 27 May 2010

This report details an evaluation of the education and training arrangements for young people in the youth justice system in the United Kingdom. The evaluation examined the education and training arrangements for three types of young people: those with a high likelihood of offending, those transferring into and between secure establishments, and those transitioning from secure establishments to the community. The report illustrates good practice and makes recommendations for improvement.

The report highlighted the following problems with current education and training arrangements:

- schools, employers and providers of work-based learning not understanding the roles and responsibilities of secure establishments and youth offending services, making it harder for young people to reintegrate into mainstream education
- inadequate arrangements for transferring information between secure establishments, making it difficult for young people to continue their current studies
- differences between secure establishments in their choice of subjects and examination arrangements, making it difficult for young people to obtain standardised qualifications (e.g. GCSEs)
- poor quality of information being made available to secure establishments about young people's educational needs on admission, and
- short sentences and high turnover in secure establishments, making it difficult to plan and deliver appropriate education services.

The report makes the following recommendations:

- improve the quality and availability of information on young people's education needs to support them as they move through the youth justice system and back into the community
- improve the involvement of youth offending teams in young people's review meetings, and
- improve communication with employers and education stakeholders about young people in the youth justice system.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Transition-through-detention-and-custody>

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

### **Drug and Alcohol Use by Indigenous People**, Reconciliation Australia, 16 June 2010

This Reconciliation Australia factsheet aims to counter media stereotypes about drug and alcohol use by Indigenous people. It responds to nine stereotypical areas concerning substance misuse, including:

- the negative portrayal by the media of Indigenous people and substance misuse
- why Indigenous people have a substance misuse problem
- why addressing substance misuse is problematic for Indigenous people
- is substance abuse a part of Indigenous cultures
- identifying successful programs to reduce substance abuse
- understanding what it is that makes these programs successful
- how community-based restrictions differ from government imposed restrictions
- the bigger picture solution to reducing excessive drinking, and
- stopping substance misuse and reconciliation.

<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/home/reconciliation-resources/facts--figures/qa-factsheets/drug-and-alcohol-use-by-indigenous-people>

### **Sexual violence and Indigenous victims: women, children and the criminal justice system**, Davis, M., Cripps, K. & Taylor, L. Indigenous Law Centre, University of NSW, June 2010

This paper outlines a research study examining the sexual experiences of Indigenous victims of sexual violence and how their cases are dealt with in the criminal justice system. The research aims to facilitate informed decision-making by government and policymakers. It also seeks to help in improving the experiences of Indigenous women and child victims of sexual assault in the criminal justice system, and their access to justice.

Nationally, there were 121 cases located, of which 12 cases were from Queensland, 67 from the Northern Territory, 27 from Western Australia, nine from South Australia, five from New South Wales and one from Victoria.

Preliminary analysis of the data collected indicate that:

- there was an unexpected proportion of sexual offences committed against children. The majority of the cases collected involved female victims between the ages 11-15
- the majority of assaults in the analysed cases were perpetrated by people known to the victim through family or community ties, and
- some of the victims faced community pressure, such as assault, ostracism, or a perceived fear for safety, and intimidation because of their decision to report the assault.

The paper provides the following conclusions and recommendations:

- given the special vulnerability of Indigenous females between 11 and 15 years of age, special attention must be paid to the kind of support that is provided to this category of victim. Both judicial and medical support services need to be tailored to specifically address their needs.
- as there is a high proportion of child victims, measures should be taken to ensure that families know how to identify behaviours associated with children experiencing sexual violence. Health workers, teachers, family and community members should receive special education on how to identify the signs of children who have been or are being abused.
- appropriate victim support is needed to deal with potential pressure placed on the victim to not proceed to trial. Care must be taken to ensure the victim's safety at all points of the process, from the initial reporting through to giving evidence and dealing with the aftermath of prosecutions.

The study will continue to locate new cases, focusing on jurisdictions where few cases have been found. In addition, case studies will be undertaken in relation to cases where victims appear to have been treated especially poorly. The study will also explore in further detail the experiences of 11–15 year-old Indigenous victims, recognising that little is publicly known of their experiences. It will also analyse the use of Victim Impact Statements in court and how these are referenced in proceedings. The study will examine how victims decide to report, how long it takes them to report, who it is victims decide to report to first and how this proceeds to a police investigation, and it will seek to identify where additional support for victims is needed.

<http://www.ilc.unsw.edu.au/research/Documents/Sexual%20Violence%20Research%20Brief%20No.1.pdf>

### **The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 28 May 2010

This report draws on results of the recent National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, which collected information about children for the first time in 2008.

There are a number of positive findings in relation to maternal health and factors affecting childhood development including high rates of breastfeeding and physical activity among Indigenous children. For example:

- in 2008, the majority of birth-mothers of Indigenous children aged 0–3 years (87%) had regular check-ups while pregnant (at least one every two months)
- 76% of Indigenous children aged 0–3 years had been breastfed
- 74% of Indigenous children aged 4–14 years were physically active for at least 60 minutes everyday
- 59% of Indigenous children aged 1–14 years ate fruit daily, with 53% eating vegetables daily
- the proportion of children aged 0–14 years who lived in a household where members usually smoked inside the house decreased from 29% in 2004–05, to 21% in 2008
- 71% of Indigenous children aged 0–14 years brushed their teeth at least once a day
- eye or sight problems and ear or hearing problems were experienced by 7% and 9% of Indigenous children aged 0–14 years respectively in 2008, and
- 79% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 14 years or under were reported as being in excellent or very good health

In addition to health improvements, educational attainment among Indigenous Australians continues to increase. For example:

- apparent school retention rates for Indigenous full-time students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 increased from 35% in 1999 to 45% in 2009
- nationally, the proportion of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over completing Year 12 increased from 18% in 2002 to 22% in 2008
- more Indigenous people are completing non-school qualifications, 40% of 25–64 year olds in 2008, up from 32% in 2002, and
- more Indigenous young people were fully engaged in work and/or study in 2008. Just over half (54%) of Indigenous young people aged 15–24 years were either working full-time, studying full-time, or both working and studying; up from 47% in 2002.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4704.0Main+Features12010?OpenDocument>

### **National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day**, 4 August 2010, SNAICC

'*Value my culture, Value me*' is the theme for the 2010 National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day, held annually in August. The Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) encourages all those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to celebrate the day and promote new pathways to understanding.

SNAICC is distributing Launch Kits to assist organisations celebrate the event. The Launch Kits are free to subscribers and members, others can order the packs from 25 June onwards. Activity ideas can be downloaded from the SNAICC website.

<http://www.snaicc.asn.au>

**Plugged In: Remote Australian Indigenous Youth and Digital Culture**, Kral, I. Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, June 2010

This paper draws on case study data from research with Indigenous youth who are participating in non-formal community-based media and music production and digital community archiving projects in remote regions.

The recent explosion in digital media practice among Indigenous youth can be attributed to two main factors: the common use of digital media in programs outside school hours and the increased ownership of affordable, small, mobile technologies. An increasing body of research suggests that community youth groups, as sites for non-formal learning, have the time, space, activity and authority to excite and engage young people through digital media and provide a means to develop skills and divert from substance abuse.

The research findings indicate that when young people have access to resources and activities that are tied to meaningful community projects they are engaging as the mediators and facilitators of digital literacy in collaborative, participatory, intergenerational activities. These activities positively affirm their contemporary Indigenous identity as well as their 'belongingness' to globalised youth culture. Most significantly however, these outcomes are demanding a reassessment of preconceptions about youth literacy in this domain as through these multimedia platforms young people are exploring and developing new multimodal forms and creative literacies.

[http://caepr.anu.edu.au/system/files/Publications/WP/WP69\\_0.pdf](http://caepr.anu.edu.au/system/files/Publications/WP/WP69_0.pdf)

### ***The Early Years***

**Linking schools and early years project evaluation: Evaluation framework 2010-2013**, valentine, k. & Katz, I. Social Policy and Research Centre, University of New South Wales, May 2010

This report outlines the evaluation framework for the Linking Schools and Early Years Project, which is designed to ensure that all children enter the formal education system ready to engage in learning.

Specifically, the project's goals are that:

1. children and families make a smooth transition between early years services and schools
2. early years services and schools actively connect with families, and
3. schools are responsive to the individual learning needs of all children

The evaluation aims to:

- determine the overall impact of the project towards achieving each of the project goals
- identify the effectiveness of strategies and activities implemented towards achieving the project goals across and within the project sites
- identify the barriers and enablers to achieving the project goals

The final report of the evaluation is expected in May 2013.

[http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Report4\\_10\\_LSEY.pdf](http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Report4_10_LSEY.pdf)

### ***Education***

**The overarching principles governing the reporting and use of NAPLAN**, Australian Primary Principals Association, 11 June 2010

This paper outlines principles and recommendations to be considered by governments to protect schools from the kinds of negative consequences reported in the United States and Great Britain from national testing programs.

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) supports the use of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) because the test results provide schools with standardised diagnostic information about the performance of students. However, problems can arise from using national tests when the stakes are high, that is, where serious consequences for system officials, principals and teachers hinge on the results. The paper gives examples of perverse effects from 2010 NAPLAN tests and highlights 10 issues that have been raised including:

- media reports that some schools have encouraged parents to keep their children at home on test day if the school judged that the student would not perform well in the tests
- some children became anxious on the test days (in particular Year 3s). Some became stressed, ended up in tears, gave up, went home, were upset that they did not complete the task, reported they felt ill, etc. There may be negative, longer term consequences for these young students, and
- some line managers exerted pressure on principals to improve their test results at all costs without taking into account what the school has been doing to improve the students' performance and the particular factors that have made progress so challenging. As a consequence, principals reported feeling unfairly "threatened" if they failed to treat raising the average test performance as their absolute goal. It was implied that their job would be on the line if the school's results did not improve.

<http://www.appa.asn.au/images/news2010/papernaplanreportinganduse20100611.pdf>

### **Under Pressure? The effect of peers on outcomes of young adults, *Black, S.E., Devereux, P.J. & Salvanes, K.G, Geary Institute, University College Dublin, Ireland, 2010***

This paper investigates the importance of three peer characteristics in lower secondary school on subsequent academic outcomes of students and presents the main findings around it. The three peer characteristics examined in terms of affecting a child's outcome in school are:

1. gender composition of classmates
2. socio-economic characteristics (as proxied by their mother's educational attainment), and
3. average age of classmates.

A key finding is that students are influenced by the proportion of females in the grade, with opposite effects observed for males and females. This study found that females benefit from having a higher proportion of female peers, while males are disadvantaged by a higher proportion of female peers. This is despite the existing evidence that suggests that a higher proportion of girls improves academic outcomes for both boys and girls. There was very little evidence that the other peer variables in the study (average age and average mother's education) have any impact on the outcomes of teenagers.

<http://www.ucd.ie/geary/static/publications/workingpapers/gearywp201024.pdf>

## ***Law and Justice***

### **The health of Australia's Prisoners 2009, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, June 2010**

*The health of Australia's prisoners 2009* is the first report relating to the National Prisoner Health Indicators, which were developed to assist in monitoring the health of prisoners and to inform and evaluate the planning, delivery and quality of prisoner health services.

The report provides the following information concerning prisoners who are pregnant or who have dependent children:

- Imprisonment may place pregnant women and their unborn child at increased health risk due to prison related stressors. Alternatively, it may enhance pregnancy outcomes for women from disadvantaged backgrounds as prison provides shelter, regular meals, protection from abusive partners, access to antenatal care and moderates the use of alcohol and drugs.
- Pregnant prisoners who give birth in custody may be allowed to keep their baby with them. Mother and baby units operate in some Australian prisons with children up to preschool age being able to stay with their mothers.
- Many male and female prisoners have dependent children. In NSW, 45% of prisoners have dependent children aged 16 years or under.

- Research has consistently shown that one of the main stressors for incarcerated women is the loss of involvement in their children's lives and concerns for their wellbeing.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/123/11012.pdf>

**Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia, 2009**, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3 June 2010

This publication presents national crime statistics relating to victims of a selected range of offences that have been recorded by police. These statistics provide indicators of the level and nature of recorded crime victimisation in Australia and a basis for measuring change over time. As not all crimes are reported to police (especially sexual offences), the counts in the report are likely to under-report the true incidence of crimes in Australia.

Young people aged 0–19 had victimisation rates for sexual offences higher than the total population rates. Specifically, sexual assaults with victims aged 10–14 years occurred at rates four-times the national average for both males and females (108 and 579 per 100,000 population respectively). In 2009, there were 4741 sexual assaults against 10–14 year olds and 3266 against children aged 0–9 years, with one-quarter (25.2%) of all sexual assaults involving 10–14 year old victims.

Other findings include:

- young people aged 15–19 years were 3-4 times more likely to be the victim of robbery than the general population, and
- young people aged 10–14 years were more likely to be victims of kidnap or abduction than the general population

<http://abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4510.02009?OpenDocument>

## **Children's Rights**

**Conducting Social Research and Children's privacy: the Childhood, Tradition and Change Project**, Darian-Smith, K. & Henningham, N, University of Melbourne, 11 June 2010

This paper explores the issues and tensions between supporting children's participation in social research and protecting children's privacy and the misappropriation of the material they provide within the context of social research in Australia.

The authors suggest that the conduct of social research into the daily lives and activities of children is important if we are to understand how children perceive themselves in relationship with the social institutions that matter most to them. They state that ethically managed social research that undertakes to explore these perceptions by allowing children to speak for themselves is vital to truly understand their world, from their point of view.

<http://www.apo.org.au/research/conducting-social-research-and-childrens-privacy-childhood-tradition-and-change-project>

**Australia's health 2010-in brief**, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 23 June 2010

*Australia's Health 2010* covers a range of health topics which affect Australians, with attention paid to identifying the specific health issues faced by special populations, including children and young people. To this end, the report revealed:

- life expectancy at birth is the third highest in the world (79.0 years for males and 83.7 years for females)
- infant mortality is in the worst third of 30 OECD countries
- between 2000 and 2007 there was a 30% increase in the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes in 0–14 year olds
- one-quarter (25%) of children aged 5–17 years were overweight or obese
- the Indigenous mortality rate was 1.9 times higher than the non-Indigenous mortality rate
- in 2007, 0.4% of 12–17 year old Australians drank alcohol daily, and

- 24% of 14–16 year olds met the daily recommendation of fruit serves when fruit juice was included (the prevalence dropped to 1% when fruit juice was not included).

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/aus/ah10inbrief/ah10inbrief.pdf>

**The Effect of Childhood Conduct Disorder on Human Capital**, Koning, P., Webbink, D., Vujić, S. & Martin, N.G., Institute for the Study of Labour (Germany)

This paper examines the longer-term effects of childhood conduct disorder on human capital accumulation and violent and criminal behaviour later in life using data of Australian twins.

The study found that early (pre-18 years of age) conduct disorder problems significantly affect both human capital accumulation and violent and criminal behaviour over the life course. In addition, the study found that conduct disorder is more deleterious if these behaviours occur earlier in life. These findings corroborate the findings of other research in this field.

<http://ftp.iza.org/dp4940.pdf>

**Media and communications**

**Trends in Media Use by Children and Young People**, Australian Communications and Media Authority, June 2010

This report provides a detailed look at current media use patterns among young Australians and young Americans, drawing on major studies in both countries. Key findings from these studies show that:

- in 2007, young Australians showed a total of four hours and 49 minutes in media content consumption, of which two hours and 20 minutes was spent watching television content
- both Australian and American teens spend considerably more time texting than talking on their mobile phones
- there has been a significant increase in the popularity of electronic gaming among Australian boys, largely due to online gaming against other players, and
- in 2007, young Australians spent most time on computers using instant messaging services, gaming online, doing homework, and then social networking.

[http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/\\_assets/main/lib310665/trends\\_in\\_media\\_use\\_by\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people.pdf](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/_assets/main/lib310665/trends_in_media_use_by_children_and_young_people.pdf)

**‘Growing Up Networked’ – An Analysis of Youthful Risk-Taking and Disclosure Within Online Social Networking Websites**, Jansz, C, Monash University, June 2010

This paper explores current practices of youth self-disclosure within online social networks, and the potential risks involved, weighing these against the many values of the practice, and the ways in which the expression and disclosure these websites afford has influenced young people’s current views on privacy and risk.

This paper argues that despite the very real risks inherent in the practice, the benefits and potential of the technology to revolutionise communication cannot be ignored.

Some of the findings show that:

- online social networks are one of the most popular communicative mediums being used by today’s young people
- young people start using the internet and various communicative tools, such as email, instant messaging, and mobile phone technology from increasingly early ages
- by displaying their data online, young people are exposing themselves to serious risks such as embarrassment, damage to reputations, privacy breaches, loss of jobs, university places and relationships, cyber-bullying and sexual solicitation
- the growth of social networks can provide young people access to resources pertaining to issues/topics that they are not comfortable discussing openly with family or offline friends, and

- social networks also provide a place where they can vent their emotions and foster their social skills without the need to be physically present among their peers.

The author makes the following recommendations:

- parents need to be aware of the technologies available to their children, and with whom they are conversing
- guidance and education from parents, teachers and other authority figures on negotiating the risks of online social networking websites is required prior to online exposure, and
- allow for flexibility and opportunities for controlled online exploration, which can help young people fully experience and understand the technology.

<http://www.apo.org.au/research/growing-networked>

## Submissions prepared by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

### The Australian Law Reform Commission and New South Wales Law Reform Commission's *Family Violence Inquiry Report*, June 2010

The Commission responded to the Australian Law Reform Commission and New South Wales Law Reform Commission's *Family Violence Inquiry Report*. The focus of the Inquiry is improved protection for women and their children, which examines how family violence interacts with other legal frameworks, including child protection, family law and criminal law.

The Commission's submission included the following recommendations:

- The definition of family violence in state and territory family violence legislation be extended
- 'Exposure of children to family violence' not be included as a category of violence in its own right
- 'Exposure to family violence' be clearly defined in family violence legislation to ensure that the variety of ways that children and young people are affected by family violence is captured
- The primary aims, when dealing with cases where children have been exposed to family violence, focus on dealing with the primary acts of violence against the victim, and expressly considering the making of conditions which protect children and young people from being exposed to further acts of violence
- The Queensland legislation establish core legislative purposes
- Rehabilitation and counselling programs not be considered as complete protective solutions to family violence matters and only be available as ancillary conditions in protection orders
- If a breach of a protection order involves the commission of a more serious criminal offence, the respondent be charged with the more serious offence, and charged with a breach of protection order as an alternative charge in the event the substantive charge cannot be made out
- The *Family Law Act 1975* be amended to direct state and territory courts varying parenting orders to prioritise the protection of family members from violence over a child's best interest in having contact with both parents
- Police have a discretion about notifying child protection when responding to incidents of family violence
- Specialist prosecutors be included in the list of specialist personnel comprising specialised family violence courts in proposal 20-4, and
- Research and evaluation be conducted in specialised family violence courts to determine the most effective ways to stop perpetrators from committing further acts of family violence.

<http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/pdf/submissions/Family-Violence-Inquiry-Consultation-Paper.pdf>

**A Flying Start for Queensland Children Education Green Paper for public consultation, Submission to the Queensland Department of Education, June 2010**

This submission focuses on improving educational outcomes for vulnerable students and the issues impacting on their educational achievement and personal development. The Commission's response includes the following recommendations:

1. Offer free access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care programs for 15 hours per week for any child in out-of-home-care or in a family at risk of entering the tertiary child protection system
2. Provisional support for moving Year 7 to secondary school, conditional on:
  - consultation with upper primary and lower secondary students, and
  - planned transitions that are adequately resourced and address the risks of moving students into a less structured and protected social environment
3. Support all schools to develop and maintain a caring and inclusive school environment
4. Explore new models of supporting students who have been excluded from school and are at risk of disengaging from all formal learning pathways
5. Offer professional development to enable school principals and curriculum leaders to analyse and respond to NAPLAN data in effective ways.

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

## Events and Conferences

**Young people, risk and resilience: The challenges of alcohol, drugs and violence conference**, The Australian Institute of Criminology and the Victorian Safe Communities Network, Melbourne 7-8 March 2011

This conference aims to discuss the nature and extent of young people's use of alcohol and other drugs and their involvement in violence, and to share the experiences of young people and practitioners in reducing risks and increasing resilience to these potentially harmful activities.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/events/aic%20upcoming%20events/2011/vscn.aspx>

## Media Releases and Speeches

**Outside School Care National Learning Framework**, The Hon Kate Ellis MP Minister, 27 May, 2010

The Australian Government has announced that it will develop the country's first Learning Framework for Outside School Hours Care programs.

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/ellis/media/releases/pages/article\\_100527\\_114428.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/ellis/media/releases/pages/article_100527_114428.aspx)

**ABC child care centres transferred to GoodStart**, The Hon Julia Gillard MP and The Hon Kate Ellis MP, 31 May, 2010.

From 31 May 2010, a total of 570 child care centres will be transferred from ABC Learning to the not-for-profit company GoodStart. GoodStart is a new consortium that has been established by four non-profit organisations; Social Ventures Australia, Mission Australia, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Benevolent Society.

New regulatory measures to ensure the financial viability of large child care providers have also been introduced. This includes financial checks for new child care centre operators to make sure they are viable from the outset and able to meet the national quality standards.

The Minister for Early Childhood Education and Child Care will also have new powers to commission an independent, confidential investigation or audit of particular provider where there are concerns about their financial viability.

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100531\\_140627.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100531_140627.aspx)

**First national census for the early childhood workforce**, The Hon Kate Ellis MP, 4 June, 2010

The first National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census will commence this week and will collect workforce information from preschool and kindergarten providers, child care services and individual staff.

The information will inform workforce planning for the early childhood sector, particularly the Early Years Development Workforce Strategy.

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/ellis/media/releases/pages/article\\_100604\\_144244.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/ellis/media/releases/pages/article_100604_144244.aspx)

**Young Australians advise the Government on cyber-safety**, The Hon Stephen Conroy MP, 8 June 2010

The 2010 Cyber-Safety and Youth Advisory Group (YAG) Summit, held on 8 June 2010, involves primary and secondary school members, along with their parents and teachers, who will provide their views on a range of Government cyber-safety programs and initiatives.

A new Cyber-safety Help Button, which provides internet users, particularly children and their parents, with easy access to relevant cyber-safety information and assistance has also been launched, as has the establishment of a Teachers and Parents Advisory Group on Cyber-safety.

[http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media\\_releases/2010/056](http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2010/056)

**Support for Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Just a Phone Call Away**, The Hon Nicola Roxon MP, 21 June 2010

A new, expanded national 24 hour Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline has been announced and will commence on 1 July 2010. Women, their partners and families will be able to call the Helpline on 1800 88 24 36 for advice and information about pregnancy, birth and the first 12 months of a baby's life.

The independent charitable organisation, Royal District Nursing Service Ltd, will provide this free service, offering information and counselling on a wide spectrum of topics relating to pregnancy, birthing and life with a new baby – including issues such as nutrition for mothers and babies, breastfeeding, relationship support and health care options.

An important new component of this enhanced service is the line will also become a resource for women who experience a loss at this crucial time.

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/4B494D868D222167CA257749000B59B9/\\$File/nr132.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/4B494D868D222167CA257749000B59B9/$File/nr132.pdf)

**Carers of children with disability to benefit from Government reforms**, The Hon Jenny Macklin, 24 June 2010

Legislation to implement a simpler and fairer assessment process for carers of children with severe disability or medical conditions was passed in Parliament on 24 June 2010. This means that there will be a single assessment process for Carer Payment (child) and Carer Allowance (child). Parents who qualify for Carer Payment (child) will automatically qualify for Carer Allowance (child), removing the requirements for more forms and medical examinations.

The legislation also introduces new rules from 1 July 2010 to provide carers with more time to transition from Carer Allowance (child) to Carer Allowance (adult) once the child turns 16.

<http://alp.org.au/news/carers-children-disability-benefit-government-reforms>

**National consultation on disabilities convention report**, The Hon Robert McClelland MP and The Hon Bill Shorten MP, 29 June 2010

A national public consultation process on Australia's first report under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been announced. Under the Convention, Australia is required to submit a comprehensive report every four years on measures taken to promote the rights and freedoms of those with a disability.

The draft report includes information about the development of the National Disability Strategy and explains the policies, programs and laws relating to the rights of persons with disabilities in Australia.

The Government is seeking comment on the draft report from non-government organisations, persons with disabilities and their advocates, and other interested individuals.

Copies of the draft report and supporting documents can be obtained at [www.ag.gov.au](http://www.ag.gov.au) Submissions close on 6 August 2010.

<http://www.alp.org.au/news/national-consultation-disabilities-convention-report>