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1. Reports, Research Papers, Policy Initiatives etc

1.1 Child Protection

1.1.1 **Protecting children is everyone's business**, Annual Report to the Council of Australian Governments 09-10, FaCHSIA, 10 March 2011

This first annual report details the progress that has been made on implementing the *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 – 2020 (the National Framework)*.

The report collates information on the actions taken to date to implement the National Framework. It also documents the areas of common endeavour that will bring practices in every Australian state and territory closer to best practice approaches. The report includes case studies provided by the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children (the Coalition) as well as the most current government data available on measures around child health, development, wellbeing and protection.

The report establishes an important baseline for future reporting and the 'indicators of change' are presented in some detail to fulfil this role. Chapter Four of the report provides information on the national priorities for the first three years of implementing the National Framework. Other chapters cover the six supporting outcomes in detail, they are:

- children live in safe and supportive families and communities
- children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early
- risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed
- children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing
- Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities, and
- child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Documents/pac_report_to_COAG/pac_annual_rpt.pdf

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1.2 Law and Youth Justice

1.2.1 **Young People on Remand in Victoria – Guilt not yet determined, balancing individual and community interests**, Tony Vinson, Matthew Ericson, Jesuit Social Services, 27 February 2011

This report analyses current Australian and international trends in evidence-based prison policy in Australia and overseas, including a review of remand and its place within the criminal justice system. The report includes a statistical analysis of more than eleven thousand Victorian remandees incarcerated while awaiting trial between 2008 and 2010, with particular attention to the socio-economic background of remandees by age, gender and Indigenous status.

The analysis highlights the accumulated disadvantage of young people involved in the criminal justice system, including high rates of unemployment and low levels of educational attainment. The report concludes with recommendations for remand reform that promote social inclusion and community safety, and the health and well-being of disadvantaged young people, families and communities.

<http://www.jss.org.au/policy-and-advocacy/news-and-media/119-new-research-calls-for-remand-reform>

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1.2.2 **Antisocial behaviours: an examination of individual, family and neighbourhood factors**, Tara Renae McGee, Australian Institute of Criminology, 25 February 2011

This research is reportedly the first of its kind in Australia to simultaneously examine individual, family and neighbourhood predictors of adolescent antisocial behaviour. The study draws on two key data sources – Australian Bureau of Statistics census data and the Mater University Study of Pregnancy (MUSP). The MUSP is a prospective longitudinal study of mothers and their children in Brisbane. The current project draws on data from birth through to adolescence (age 14 years).

The study found that less than one percent of variation in antisocial behaviour was attributable to the statistical local area (SLA). Subsequent models of both SLA-level variables (neighbourhood disadvantage, immigration concentration and residential mobility) and individual and family variables, indicate that the strongest predictors of adolescent antisocial behaviour are those which measure disruptions in parenting processes, poor school performance and early childhood aggression.

The findings suggest that programs that aim to enhance parenting practices, including improving communication, supervision and monitoring of children, are important in reducing adolescent antisocial behaviour.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/F/6/5/%7BF6506CB0-7D65-4EB9-B1A7-06FD80748B1C%7Dtandi410.pdf>

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1.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

1.3.1 **Speaking out about wellbeing: Aboriginal children and young people speak out about families**, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Western Australia, 31 March 2011

This report highlights the importance of family to the Aboriginal children and young people who participated in the research and demonstrates that Aboriginal children and young people value their family and enjoy spending time with family members. However, their families can also be a source of stress.

The key messages in the report are that the needs of Aboriginal children and young people are strongly influenced by the social, economic and historical factors that affect Aboriginal communities. However, like all children and young people, they need to be provided with a nurturing and loving environment, and parents and caregivers must be supported to provide this critical role.

<http://www.cryp.wa.gov.au/files/Aboriginal%20children%20and%20young%20people%20speak%20out%20about%20families.pdf>

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1.3.2 **Dental health of Indigenous children in the Northern Territory**, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 21 March 2011

This report presents findings from the dental follow-up data collection that was established as part of the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement (NPA) between the Australian and Northern Territory governments to monitor dental services in communities in prescribed areas of the Northern Territory. These findings can be used to support public accountability for the delivery of dental services provided through the NPA.

The report provides information on the following aspects of dental services delivered from August 2007 to June 2010, including the:

- amount and types of dental services provided
- extent of follow-up care provided to children with dental referrals, and
- oral health status of children who received dental services.

Whilst there are some listed data limitations that affect the findings of this report, the report shows that the high prevalence of oral health problems and the requirement of follow-up services indicate that there is a considerable need for dental services among these children that is expected to continue into the future.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737418547&tab=2>

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1.4 Early Years

1.4.1 **Early childhood development (ECD) workforce study**, first stage submission to Productivity Commission, Angelo Gavrielatos, Susan Hopgood, Australian Education Union (AEU), 16 March 2011

The AEU represents approximately 184,000 teachers and educators in the primary, secondary, early childhood and TAFE sectors throughout Australia.

This submission addresses issues relating to the ECD workforce set out under the terms of reference provided by the Productivity Commission. The document Early Childhood Development Workforce – Productivity Commission issues paper (November 2010) also provides a large number of discussion questions. Rather than answer every question individually, this submission addresses the discussion questions most relevant to the work of AEU members, namely public sector pre-school/early childhood education teachers and assistants/support staff under the most appropriate terms of reference. These include:

1. Factors affecting the current and future demand and supply for the ECD workforce, and the required mix of skills and knowledge, including:
 - a. delivery of fully integrated ECD services including maternal and child health, childcare, preschool, family support services and services for those with additional needs
 - b. market requirements for broader leadership, management and administrative skills in operating both mainstream universal service providers and integrated service hubs
 - c. the availability and quality of pre-service education programs, including through undergraduate and postgraduate education and VET, and consideration of training pathways
 - d. ECD workforce participation, including ease of access to the early childhood development workforce in different sectors and net returns to individuals and recognition of expertise, and
 - e. the quality and skills of the workforce, job design and workplace practices and arrangements and their contribution to achieving COAG outcomes and setting future direction
2. Workforce planning, development and structure in the short, medium and long term, covering:
 - a. career pathways, the structure of existing employment arrangements and practices and the extent to which they are dis/incentives to attracting and retaining employees, including pay and conditions across settings; strategies to address possible pay equity issues as necessary; options for funding pay increases as necessary; and the implications for purchasers of ECD services and all levels of government and funding responsibilities
 - b. potential labour market failures
 - c. the impact of government, community and private provision, and
 - d. the concept and workforce implications of integrated service delivery

<http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/2011/ECDWS2011.pdf>

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1.5 Education

1.5.1 ICT in the teaching of science and mathematics in year 8 in Australia, John Ainley, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Second International Technology in Education Study (SITES) Survey, 7 March 2011

The IEA SITES is an international comparative research program studying the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in education. Its central focus is on understanding how ICT affects the way teaching and learning takes place in schools. In many educational systems there is a desire to use ICT to support changes in teaching and learning and policies have been implemented to promote the use of ICT by equipping schools with computers and network connections, training teachers in the use of ICT and providing digital resources. Although there is a growing body of research on the educational effects of ICT, much of it is based on intensive studies of small samples. SITES, however, surveyed large representative samples of schools using questionnaires with established psychometric properties so that variations within, and among, countries in the links between ICT and pedagogy could be investigated. The SITES project was conducted internationally in 22 countries during 2006 and then implemented in Australia as a comparison study in 2007.

When SITES in Australia are compared with data from other countries they suggest that ICT has been relatively widely adopted (at least in science and mathematics in Year 8 at secondary schools), that there is a relatively strong provision of computers in schools and that teachers are more confident in their ICT capability than their peers in other countries.

http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=acer_monographs

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1.6 Health and Wellbeing

1.6.1 Speaking out about wellbeing: The views of Western Australian children and young people, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Western Australia, 23 March 2011

In 2009 research was commissioned by the WA Commissioner, and just released, to find out what children and young people considered was important to their wellbeing and what help them 'live life to the full'.

This research comprised three components – a literature review, qualitative research and a quantitative online survey and has resulted in the report *Speaking out about wellbeing – The views of Western Australian children and young people*.

Nearly 1000 children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years from across Western Australia participated in the research.

The major factors identified as essential to living a full life include:

- a loving, supportive family
- good friends
- fun and activity
- a safe environment
- a good education
- acknowledgement,
- trust

The WA Commissioner will be using this research to talk with government, not-for-profit agencies, the private sector and the wider community about what more can be done to support children, young people and their families.

<http://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/content.aspx?cld=326>

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1.6.2 **At risk youth: A transitory state?** Alison, Anlezark, The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 21 March 2011

By definition, youth transitions involve young people moving between school, post-school and employment. It is a time of flux, as young people try out different school, post-school work and study options. But are those who don't find work immediately likely to make a poor transition? Given that many may well have a spell out of the labour force, we need to understand when this becomes a risk factor.

This briefing paper draws on existing research on 'at risk' youth and some primary data analysis to consider whether being at risk is a permanent or transitory state. It suggests that rather than counting the numbers of young people who are detached from work, study or other meaningful activities, attention should be focused on young people who remain detached for extended periods. Extended detachment from work or study impacts negatively on the young person's ability to develop employability skills, which, together with their lack of work experience adversely affect their prospects of future employment.

Note: a free registration to LSAY is required to access this publication.

<http://www.lsay.edu.au/publications/2342.html>

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1.6.3 **Evaluation of the self directed support pilot for children and young adults with a physical disability: Baseline report**, Sandra Gendera, Karen Fisher, Sally Robinson, Natalie Clements and Christine Eastman, Social Policy Research Centre, 21 March 2011

The Self-Directed Support pilot aims to improve the control that people with a disability have over the funding allocated for their support and thereby improve their sense of personal empowerment and community inclusion.

Disability and Community Care Services (Department of Communities, Queensland) commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre to conduct an evaluation of the outcomes, process and costs of the pilot. This baseline report provides early findings from the evaluation. It also draws together questions arising for the pilot and implications for future development of the program. With regard to outcomes for participants, the baseline interviews with families of young people and service providers reveal that the program is already achieving its goals of improving wellbeing, independence, resilience and social participation.

http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/1_SPRC_Report_Series_611.pdf

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1.6.4 **The 2010 – 2020 National Disability Strategy**, an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), launched 18 March 2011

The Strategy sets out a ten year national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers. Developed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory and local governments under the auspices of COAG, the Strategy is the first time all levels of government have agreed to such a wide ranging set of directions for disability. The shared vision is for an inclusive Australian society that enables people with a disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

The Strategy draws on extensive consultation conducted in 2008-2009 and reported in *Shut Out: The experience of people with disabilities and their families in Australia* (2009). Moreover, it aligns with the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Structured around six broad outcome areas, the Strategy is intended to guide public policy across governments and aims to bring about change in all mainstream services and programs as well as community infrastructure. The six outcome areas are:

- inclusive and accessible communities
- rights protection, justice and legislation
- economic security
- personal and community support
- learning and skills, and
- health and wellbeing

A key initiative of the Strategy is the introduction of a periodic high level report using trend data to track national progress for people with disability in Australia based on the six outcome areas.

The Strategy includes the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into a long-term care and support scheme for people with disability, acknowledging the need to explore alternative approaches to the funding and delivery of services as demand continues to outstrip supply. The Productivity Commission's Draft Report, recommending a National Disability Insurance Scheme, was released in February for public consultation.

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/govtint/nds_2010_2020/Pages/default.aspx

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1.6.5 **Improving the mental health of infants, children and adolescents in Australia**, Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association Ltd (AICAFMHA), March 2011

The AICAFMHA has been established to help meet the needs of workers and consumers in child and adolescent mental health. AICAFMHA brings together professionals from a range of disciplines as well as consumers and carers.

AICAFMHA released this position statement on improving mental health in younger Australians. The position statement describes the organisation's commitment to advocating for the development and implementation of appropriate prevention, promotion and early intervention mental health programs and services for Australia's infants, children, young people and their families. Specifically, AICAFMHA state that a dedicated national policy and plan is necessary to address the unique mental health issues facing these groups.

The position paper describes a range of principles (and their associated background):

- recognition of development and specific needs
- promotion, prevention and early intervention (PPEI) framework
- consumer participation and advocacy
- children, young people and their local ecology
- accessible services, and
- capacity building within local communities

The paper also features supporting statements (and their rationale):

- prevalence
- equity and cost-effectiveness
- stakeholders
- identified risk groups
- accountability and research

- sustainability, dissemination and duplication
- needs of rural and remote communities
- workforce development, and
- e-mental health initiatives

http://www.aicafmha.net.au/resources/files/AICAFMHA_pos_paper_final.pdf

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1.6.6 **Bullying in early adolescence and its association with anti-social behaviour, criminality and violence 6 and 10 years later**, Jennifer Renda, Suzanne Vassallo & Ben Edwards, Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health Journal, 11 March 2011

Despite growing concern about the harmful effects that bullying may have on the health and wellbeing of victims, little is known about the adverse consequences of bullying on the lives of those who bully (Rigby, 2003). This paper describes research that examines the association between adolescent bullying behaviour and subsequent anti-social behaviour among a community sample of Australian males and females. Using regression analysis, the researchers examined the relationship between bullying perpetration at age 13–14 and anti-social behaviour, criminal violence and contact with police or courts six and 10 years later among approximately 800 young adults participating in a 27-year longitudinal study. Analyses controlled for known risk factors for anti-social behaviour at age 13–14 years. Analyses revealed moderate significant associations between bullying perpetration and subsequent anti-social behaviour. Associations were more powerful for males than females, and for short-term than long-term outcomes. The researchers found that engagement in bullying remained a significant predictor of later anti-social behaviour and contact with police or courts even after other risk factors were accounted for.

The researchers note that the findings suggest that bullying in adolescence may be a marker of risk for a continuing pattern of anti-social behaviour, particularly among young males.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cbm.805/pdf>

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1.7 Society and Culture

1.7.1 **Grandmothers and grandfathers looking after grandchildren**, Horsfall, B., Dempsey, D, Australian Family Relationships Clearing House, 28 March 2011

This article presents a snapshot of findings from a research project examining the experiences of grandparents who regularly care for grandchildren. 'Grandchildcare' is defined as time when grandparents are responsible for the care and wellbeing of grandchildren usually in the absence of a parent.

The research involved a secondary analysis of data from Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey Release 7 and qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews with six grandfathers and eight grandmothers who cared, to varying degrees, for at least one grandchild.

Of the 3,277 grandparents who responded to the HILDA survey, 73% reported seeing a grandchild once a month or more frequently. Grandmothers were likely to see grandchildren significantly more often than grandfathers with 56% of grandmothers reporting they had seen a grandchild at least once a week compared to 49% of grandfathers.

Of the 1,702 grandparents who confirmed they had ever looked after a grandchild, 44% were doing grandchildcare once a week or more often. Grandmothers provided grandchildcare significantly more frequently than grandfathers, with 47% of grandmothers doing grandchildcare at least once per week or more often, compared to 41% of grandfathers.

The interviews conducted with grandparents explored their personal experiences of grandchildcare and shed some light on significant patterns emerging in the quantitative national survey data.

This research demonstrates that grandparents, especially a substantial proportion of grandmothers, are filling the shortfalls of formal childcare.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/aifrc/pubs/newsletter/frq018/frq018-3.html>

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1.7.2 **Teenagers, legal risks and social networking sites**, Melissa de Zwart, David Lindsay, Michael Henderson and Michael Phillips, Monash University, March 2011

This project was developed to address an identified gap in the research to investigate the legal risks (e.g. threats to privacy, infringements of intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright), defamation) of social networking, as experienced by secondary school students, their parents and teachers. Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become part of everyday life for most young people, and help them develop part of their socialisation and identity formation. SNS include sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo and Twitter.

As part of this study, 1004 middle school (Years 7–10) students, 204 middle school teachers and 49 parents of middle school students were surveyed about SNS use and risk perceptions. In addition, focus groups and a comprehensive literature review were conducted.

The project found that while students in middle school (and their parents and teachers) were generally aware of SNS risks (e.g. cyber bullying, stalking, grooming) they was a lack of understanding of legal risks. Other key findings from the survey include:

- 94.4% of middle school students had used SNS, with Facebook (93.4%) and MySpace (26.6%) the most popular
- the majority (80.4%) of parents had seen their children's SNS page
- photos of themselves and friends was the most popular content posted by students, but posting third party content (e.g. music, videos, photos of celebrities) was also prevalent
- parents and teachers were reportedly particularly concerned about cyber bullying, stalking and grooming, but less concerned of legal risks such as identity theft and disclosure of personal information, and
- despite the concerns of the aforementioned risks, high proportions of students did not talk to parents (46.1%) and teachers (74.6%) about SNS use and risks

The authors made a series of recommendations from the data collected, including:

- education of young people and their parents and teachers about the full range of legal risks potentially encountered while using SNS
- teaching legal literacy in the digital environment should use real life case studies, such as those developed by the authors as an outcome from the project (Education Resource Book)
- legal and ethical issues of posting photographs (including privacy, confidentiality, defamation, copyright) requires specific attention, and
- encourage the enforcement of SNS service providers to enter into a self-regulatory agreement

<http://www.newmediaresearch.educ.monash.edu.au/moodle/course/view.php?id=37>

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1.7.3 **The impact of social media use on children, adolescents and families**, Gwenn O'Keeffe MD, Kathleen Clarke-Pearson MD, and the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Communications and Media, Pediatrics, 127, 800-804, March 2011

This article examines some of the benefits and potential risks associated with young people's use of social media sites, from the perspective of practicing pediatricians. The authors identify several benefits from children and adolescents using social media sites, including increased opportunity for socialisation and communication with peers, improved educational opportunities, and greater access to health-related information. The authors also highlight some potential risks associated with the use of these sites. These risks include providing an avenue for bullying and harassment by peers, complications arising from the sharing and distribution of sexually explicit photographs (or "sexting"), a potential loss of privacy, depression, and susceptibility to aggressive marketing and advertising. The authors argue that pediatricians have a role to play in helping parents understand the opportunities and risks associated with social media. They advise pediatricians to encourage parents to talk with their children about their use of social media sites and help educate parents about the technologies their children are using.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/peds.2011-0054v1>

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1.7.4 **Fathering in Australia among young couple families with young children**, Jennifer Baxter, Diana Smart, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Government, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 7 March 2011

This report aims to increase understanding of the many ways in which fathers in couple families with young children contribute to family life, through the study of their time investment with children, their supportiveness as partners, their financial contribution, their parenting behaviours and styles, and their perceptions of their own adequacy as fathers. The impact of fathers on children's wellbeing is also examined. The report uses data from Waves 1 to 3 of *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)*, a large-scale, nationally representative study of children and families.

Some findings regarding fathering include:

- when children are young, fathers rarely withdraw from the labour market to take over caring responsibilities for children
- on many measures of father, fathers who were more involved on one dimension (for example, time spent doing child care tasks) were also involved on another dimension (for example, having higher parental warmth)
- more involved fathers remained more involved as children grew
- fathers who exhibited more positive parenting style continued to do so as children grew
- despite differences in parenting styles of mothers and fathers, within couples, correspondence between mothers' and fathers' involvement
- the great majority of fathers (as well as mothers) saw themselves as average or better than average parents
- only a very small percentage rated themselves as 'not very good' or 'has some trouble' at being a parent
- within couples, mothers' and fathers' self-efficacy were correlated, such that when mothers rated themselves as being better parents, fathers tended to also do so
- relatively high proportions of fathers of very young children, compared to older children, rated themselves as being a very good parent
- the percentage of fathers reporting themselves as being average parents increased over the cohorts/waves
- fathers' parenting self-efficacy was related to their involvement with their children and family, although this appears to be unrelated to having the 'provider' role, and
- a higher rating of fathers' parenting self-efficacy was also positively associated with children's socio-emotional and learning outcomes

The report found that Australian fathers play a vital role in their families. The role is sometimes different, but complementary, to the role of mothers. The analyses showed that fathers made a major contribution to the family income, they were supportive of their partners, they participated in unpaid work within the home (albeit at lower levels than mothers), they spent time with children (although again, at lower levels than mothers), and they were generally parenting well and felt they were doing a good job in their fathering role. Many of these qualities were linked. Exploration of characteristics or circumstances that facilitated or hindered fathers' involvement in particular included fathers' working arrangements, their mental health and the quality of relationships between partners. Clear-cut effects of fathering on children's socio-emotional and learning outcomes were found, even after taking into account the contribution of mothers. The report concludes that fathering 'matters' for children and families and there are tangible benefits to be gained from fostering fathers' involvement in their families.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/about/publicationsarticles/research/occasional/Documents/op37/OP37.pdf>

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1.8 International

1.8.1 **What determines the return to education: an extra year or a hurdle cleared?** Sarah Smith, Matt Dickson, Institute for the Study of Labor (Germany), 23 March 2011

The 1973 Raising of the School Leaving Age (RoSLA) in England and Wales has been used to identify returns to years' schooling. However, the reform affected the proportion with qualifications, as well as schooling length. To shed light on whether the returns reflect extra schooling or qualifications, the authors exploit another institutional rule, 'the Easter Leaving Rule', to obtain unbiased estimates of the effect of qualifications. They find sizeable returns to academic qualifications, increasing the probability of employment by 40 percentage points. This is more than 70% of the estimated return based on RoSLA, suggesting that qualifications drive most, but not all, of the returns to education.

This has implications for plans to further raise the education leaving age, suggesting that returns will be higher if students are compelled to take nationally recognised exams at the end of their final year of education. Thus, raising the minimum school leaving age to 18, when A-levels and equivalent exams are taken, should have a much greater effect on outcomes than raising the minimum age to 17, an age at which nationally recognised exams are not traditionally taken.

<http://www.ftp.iza.org/dp5524.pdf>

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1.8.2 **Hidden talents – exploiting the link between engagement of young people and employment**, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) (UK), 17 March 2011

The Local Government (LG) Group commissioned NFER to undertake research to support local authorities by identifying a range of opportunities for local authorities and businesses to work together for mutual benefit. The research also aimed to identify and provide case studies of how local authorities have and can create linkages between their work to engage young people, economic development and business support to achieve improved outcomes for young people and employers.

The term NEET is used in this report and adopted by the UK Government to refer to young people aged 16-25 who are not in education, employment or training.

The following nine themes emerged from the case study examples identified by the research:

1. simplify opportunities for the business community to work with young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
2. engage local businesses in strategy development and designing offers for young people NEET
3. use communication processes to create opportunities for young people NEET
4. support planning officers to work with businesses to create opportunities for young people NEET
5. research the local drivers causing young people to become NEET and develop better targeted support
6. raise awareness of how businesses and employers can offer opportunities for young people NEET, and support them to provide such opportunities
7. take advantage of new funding arrangements to develop innovative early interventions for young people NEET
8. identify and use potential links between initiatives for vulnerable young people NEET, enterprise development and business support, and
9. involve local businesses in careers information, advice and guidance in schools

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/HITA01/HITA01.pdf>

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1.8.3 **The civic and political significance of online participatory cultures among youth transitioning to adulthood**, Joseph Kahne, Nam-Jin Lee & Jessica Timpany Feezell, Digital Media and Learning Research Hub (DML Central) (US), February 2011

This US report examines the influence that non-political online participatory mediums have on young people's civic and political engagement.

Two surveys were conducted of young people between the ages of 18 to 35 years. One survey targeted 5,505 junior and senior level high school students from 21 Californian high schools. While the second survey was made available nationally through on-line computer access as part of project conducted by the University of Chicago.

The report found that participation in non-political online mediums can serve as a gateway for young people's participation in civic and political life, including volunteering, community problem-solving, protest activities and providing a political voice.

The report's findings suggest that young people involved in politically driven online mediums were more likely to participate in political activities. Whereas, those who primarily participated in interest-driven mediums were more likely to actively engage in civic and community activities such as, volunteering and raising money in their community.

The report also found that parental involvement, strength of a young person's ideology, college student status and political interest were found to be strong and consistent predictors of increased politically driven online participation.

<http://www.apo.org.au/research/civic-and-political-significance-online-participatory-cultures-among-youth-transitioning-ad>

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1.8.4 **State of the world's children 2011: Adolescence - an age of opportunity**, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), February 2011

This report examines some of the challenges and opportunities faced by adolescents around the world today. The report also argues that investing in adolescence is important for a range of reasons: the fact that it is a principle under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to consolidate recent gains in improving early childhood health and schooling, and because adolescence is a period of transition in which people are at particularly vulnerable to social and economic disadvantage, marginalisation and exploitation. The report argues that adolescents are healthier than they have been in the past. However, significant numbers of adolescents around the world continue to experience disadvantage in terms of malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, mental health problems, and disability. Furthermore, one in five adolescents worldwide does not attend school, while many are being forced into conflict situations, child labour and sexual exploitation.

The report calls for greater investment in the collection of nationally comparable data on adolescent welfare as well as investment in young people's education and training, their participation in decision making, legislation and policies that promote adolescent rights, and the eradication of poverty.

http://www.unicef.org/sowc2011/pdfs/SOWC-2011-Main-Report_EN_02092011.pdf

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2. Resources

2.1 **Families in regional, rural and remote Australia**, Facts Sheet, Jennifer Baxter, Matthew Gray, Alan Hayes, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 30 March 2011

Reportedly, Australia is one of the most urbanised countries in the world, with over two-thirds (69%) of the population living in major cities and has one of the lowest population densities outside of its major cities. Despite the vastness of Australia and the profound impact that this has on the lives of the peoples living in rural and remote areas, relatively little is known about families living in these areas of Australia compared to those living in major cities.

This Facts Sheet describes how the characteristics of families differ between the 'city' and the 'country' or 'bush' and while words such as these are used in everyday language, it is very difficult to identify exactly where the city ends and the country begins. One way of categorising regions is in terms of the road distance from services and this is the standard method to define remoteness for statistical purposes in Australia. Most of the information in this Facts Sheet is provided for the Australian population in: major cities (69%), inner regional (20%), outer regional (9%), remote (1.5%) and very remote (0.8%) regions.

This Facts Sheet includes data on:

- household type
- family structure
- age distribution
- access to services
- how children's lives differ according to geographic remoteness
- children's preferences about how to spend their free time
- amount of time children spend outside compared to inside
- children's extracurricular activities
- parents' expectations about their children's educational attainment
- parents' views on the safety and desirability of their neighbourhood for their children,
- children's developmental outcomes

The analysis of regional statistics indicates that families living in the 'bush' may differ in some important ways compared to those living in the city. Those in remote or very remote areas are more likely to be Indigenous than those living in inner regional areas or major cities; and a greater proportion of those in very remote areas live in multi-family households.

While family structure does not differ markedly across regions varying in remoteness, Indigenous people are more likely to live in one parent families, especially in remote and very remote areas.

Old age dependency ratios are higher in inner regional areas, reflecting trends for many Australians to leave major cities on retirement.

Access to services and educational aspirations are generally more limited in outer regional areas. Geographic area has some effect on how children spend their time, with increasing remoteness being associated with more time spent outdoors while engagement in extracurricular activities is higher in major cities. Compared to parents in inner regional and outer regional areas, those in major cities are less likely to provide an unfavourable view of their neighbourhood parks and playgrounds, and access to basic services. There are also differences indicated in children's developmental outcomes across geographic areas, with children in major cities doing better for physical development and learning outcomes than children in other areas.

The Facts Sheet concludes that while there are many similarities in the nature of families and their lives across areas of varying remoteness, overall distance still exercises some 'tyrannous' influences on the lives of Australians and their families.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/factsheets/2011/fs201103.pdf>

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2.2 **CAFCA Practice sheet – Working with Indigenous children, families, and communities: Lessons from practice**, Price-Robertson R., & Myfanwy McDonald M., (in partnership with Lewis, P., & Bamblett, M., of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency), Australian Institute of Family Studies, March 2011

This practice sheet utilises the lessons learnt from services that are working effectively to reduce Indigenous disadvantage. The information is likely to be of most use to organisations, services, agencies and program and project managers who are planning or delivering Indigenous-specific services, or who are operating in areas where there are large numbers of Indigenous service users.

The suggestions for consideration outlined in this practice sheet are general principles based upon lessons from research and practice, illustrated by brief case studies. Some of the methods discussed include:

- working *with* (rather than working "on") Indigenous communities
- ensuring your service is culturally competent
- focusing on attracting and retaining the right staff
- cultivating networks and relationships, and
- adopting an action research approach

Further resources and references on these topics are included in the practice sheet.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/pubs/sheets/ps/ps6.html>

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2.3 **Social inclusion in the family support sector**, Caruana, C., and McDonald, M., Australian Institute of Family Studies, 4 March 2011

This briefing discusses the relevance of social inclusion principles to the family support sector, outlines some practical ideas for service providers to reflect upon and provides resources and references for further reading.

Social inclusion and exclusion are complex and contested terms, however this briefing provides some basic definitions and ideas around these concepts. In the key messages section, social inclusion is described as the opportunity for people to learn, work, connect with others and have a voice. The following five groups of people were identified by the Australian Social Inclusion Board 2010 as being potentially vulnerable to aspects of social exclusion:

- aged people
- public housing rental tenants
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- one-parent families, and
- people on non-English speaking backgrounds

A key message from the briefing is that socially inclusive practice requires services to focus on strategies that will make their *services* easier to reach for all people, thus inverting the approach that characterises particular groups as “hard to reach”.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/b019/b019.pdf>

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2.4 **Child abuse and neglect statistics**, Lamont L, Australian Institute of Family Studies, updated 28 February 2011

This National Child Protection Clearinghouse resource sheet presents and discusses a snapshot of data collected by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on child protection activity in Australia.

The data reveal that in Australia, during 2009-10, there was a 16% decrease in reports of suspected child abuse and neglect made to state and territory authorities (286,437 compared to 339,454 in 2008-09), the first decrease in notifications in 10 years. The total number of finalised investigations also decreased, with 131,689 finalised investigations recorded across Australia in 2009-2010 compared to the 162,259 recorded in 2008-09. The total number of substantiations of notifications received across Australia also continued to decrease in 2009-10, falling from 54,621 substantiations in 2008-2009 to 46,187 in 2009-10.

The resource sheet provides a breakdown of the 4 primary substantiated maltreatment types in Australia for 2009-2010 and their incidence. These are: emotional abuse (37%); neglect (28.7%); physical abuse (22%); and sexual abuse (12.7%). The report also shows that in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory emotional abuse was the most commonly substantiated maltreatment type, while in Western Australia, and the Northern Territory neglect was the most commonly substantiated maltreatment type.

Despite a decrease in substantiations, AIHW data show that the number of children residing in out-of-home care has continued to rise in all jurisdictions since 2000. At 30 June 2010 there were 35,895 children in out-of-home care, 94% of whom were in home-based care (foster care 49.1%), kinship care (48.5%) and other home-based care (2.2%), and 5% of whom were in residential care.

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

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2.5 **Early Years Learning Framework**, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, February 2011

On 2 July 2009, COAG endorsed the Early Years Learning Framework. The Australian Government has provided copies of the Early Years Learning Framework and Families' Guide early childhood services across Australia.

It is expected that, following a period of familiarisation, each early childhood service will develop their own strategy to implement the Framework, taking their own unique context into consideration.

An Educators' Guide to support implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework, was released on 6 December 2010. Hard copies of the Educators' Guide, along with a CD of resources, were delivered to early childhood services in February 2011.

Copies of the Educators' Guide, the Early Years Learning Framework and the Families' Guide, are now available for download.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/policy_agenda/quality/pages/earlyyearslearningframework.aspx

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3. Events and Conferences

3.1 **National Disability and Carer Congress: Make Every Australian Count**, Melbourne, 2–3 May 2011

This conference, convened by the National Disability and Carers Alliance, will examine the Productivity Commission's interim report on Disability Care and Support and the proposal for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The conference will provide an opportunity for people with a disability, their families and carers and disability service organizations to consider what an NDIS would mean for the way services are funded, managed and provided.

<http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/national-disability-and-carer-congress-2011/>

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3.2 **Seeing clearly – Identifying harm and risk of harm**, Encompass Family and Community, Brisbane, 25 May 2011

This half-day workshop specifically targets the issues of how to prevent and identify harm and the risk of harm to children and young people in out of home care.

Participants will examine the concepts of harm and likely harm as relevant to legislative obligations, the Statement of Standards and the requirements of the Department of Communities. They will then explore how these concepts work in practice through a series of activities including consideration of mandatory reporting requirements.

<http://www.efac.com.au/workshops.htm#decision>

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3.3 **QCOSS Conference 2011 Resilient Communities – Fairer Queensland**, QCOSS, Brisbane, 8 – 9 August 2011

This year's conference focuses on reconnecting communities after the recent natural disasters and how to plan for an even more resilient future.

Conference themes include reflections and guidance on the recovery, focusing on the needs of people experiencing disadvantage and tangible ways to improve their lives, building skills towards more client-centred resilient service delivery and a debate on whether or not fairness is still on the public agenda.

<http://www.qcoss.org.au/Article.aspx?type=event&id=7933>

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4. Media Releases / Communication and Speeches

4.1 **Inquiry into the administration of health practitioner registration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)**, 24 March 2011

On 24 March 2011, the Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Peter Dutton announced a Senate Inquiry into the administration of health practitioner registration by Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Inquiry is being conducted by the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee and is due to report by 13 May 2011. Submissions to the Inquiry closed on 14 April. Information about the Inquiry, submissions received and public hearings can be accessed at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/fapa_ctte/health_practitioner_registration/index.htm

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4.2 **Nordic nations show the way to lift children out of poverty**, Andrew Scott, The Age, 15 March 2011

This article reports that more than half a million, or one in eight, Australian children continue to live in poverty and whilst various political and economic commentators have called lately for bold reforms, the kind of 'reforms' many have in mind, such as further privatisation, deregulation or other measures that would increase inequality, are not what is needed.

The article reports that Instead, cutting child poverty in Australia towards the much lower levels achieved in the Nordic European nations of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland would be a genuinely bold reform deserving of support.

Reportedly, the Nordic countries' successes for children result from their strong investment in public child care, provision of substantial paid parental leave and effective regulation of working hours and these policies promote secure and appropriate jobs in terms of work/family balance, boost women's labour force participation and reduce joblessness among families with children.

The Council of Australian Governments recently agreed on overhauling healthcare funding and the Prime Minister has emphasised plans to increase workforce participation. It is suggested that both initiatives can help reduce the stark inequalities that disadvantage so many Australian children.

<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/nordic-nations-show-the-way-to-lift-children-out-of-poverty-20110314-1bufh.html>

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4.3 **Will access to 'gap year' Youth Allowance improve regional students participation in higher education?** Coral Dow, Parliamentary Library, Flag Post, 14 March 2011

In the recent Senate debate on Senator Nash's private member's bill to extend the criteria for Independent Youth Allowance to Inner Regional students, the issue of why so few regional students go on to tertiary education was raised and an argument made, that the ability to take a gap year and qualify for Youth Allowance would improve regional students' access to and participation in higher education.

This article suggests that from past experience, that if the bill, which has passed the Senate, is debated and passed in the House of Representatives, it may do little to improve the regional participation rate in higher education.

The article concludes that it may be more strategic to target programs that improve school retention rates and overcome cultural factors that influence student aspirations and choice.

<http://parliamentflagpost.blogspot.com/2011/02/will-access-to-gap-year-youth-allowance.html>

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4.4 **My School: getting better by degrees?** Chris Bonnor, Inside Story, 8 March 2011

The first version of My School was unveiled in January 2010. This is the first of three articles and assesses the improvements made to the latest version of My School 2.0, released on 4 March 2011, to enable comparisons between schools. The second will outline what the new My School website says about Australia's schools. The third will look at the broader question of what makes a good school.

<http://inside.org.au/my-school-2-0-getting-better-by-degrees>

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