



Director's report

Alan Hayes

Earlier this year, after over 10 years as Director of AIFS, I formally advised the Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP of my intention to leave the Institute in order to accept an ongoing appointment from the University of Newcastle as Distinguished Professor of Family Studies and Director of the Family Action Centre, within the Faculty of Health and Medicine. I will take up this new position on 1 July 2015.

I have been honoured to serve as director, privileged to have such talented colleagues with whom to work, and indeed fortunate to have had this opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing of Australia's children, families and communities. It has been most gratifying to see the Institute extend its reach, relevance and responsiveness, while ever-strengthening the rigour of its research, evaluation and dissemination programs.

The vital ingredient in its success has, as with all organisations, been the quality of the staff whom we have managed to attract and retain. Their capacity, talents and willingness to "go the extra mile" have been, and continue to be, so impressive. I particularly value the loyalty, collegiality and commitment of my Deputy Directors, Dr Alison Morehead, Dr Matthew Gray, Ms Sue Tait and Dr Daryl Higgins, Assistant Director Ruth Weston PSM, and senior managers. They have been truly impressive.

I have also greatly appreciated all those across the Australian Government and beyond who have consistently supported me throughout my time here and, more importantly, valued the Institute and its work.

AIFS Agency Plan

The development of an AIFS Agency Plan is now a requirement under the new *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA). The Agency Plan will be a high-level strategic document that outlines AIFS' research and corporate priorities for the next four years. It will consolidate the previous AIFS Strategic Directions and Research Directions

into one document. The Agency Plan outlines AIFS' vision, mission and values, reflecting the environment in which we work and conveying the ways in which we conduct our work. It also profiles our current research focus, identifies research opportunities for the future and lists some of our recent achievements. The Agency Plan will be available on our new website in August this year.

New website

The new AIFS website was launched in May to better communicate the vast experience and knowledge of the institute. It features a fresh and attractive responsive design, showcasing AIFS research expertise, current projects, researchers, resources, publications and podcasts. Visit the website at <www.aifs.gov.au>.

AIFS 2016 conference

The 14th biennial AIFS conference will be held at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre from Wednesday 6 July to Friday 8 July 2016. The organisation of the conference is progressing well and it promises to maintain its reputation as Australia's premier family studies conference.

Families and Children Activity Expert Panel

The Institute has been commissioned by Department of Social Services to manage the establishment of a panel of experts to support, strengthen and evaluate the department's Families and Children Activity. The panel will help to increase the use of evidence-based programs and practices and continue to build this evidence base through evaluation, with a focus on prevention and early intervention approaches.

Evidence-based program profiles for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners are now available. These profiles highlight programs that have a sufficient evidence base to be considered approved for use under the

30% requirement for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners. These profiles, and other information about the Expert Panel, can be viewed at www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/expert-panel-project.

Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants

Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants is a long-term research project about how humanitarian migrants settle into a new life in Australia. It is being conducted over five years, with annual data collections spanning participants' early months in Australia through to their eligibility for citizenship.

Early findings from the first wave indicate that humanitarian migrants in the first few months following their settlement in Australia appear to be adjusting quite well to their new lives, and most feel they have been made welcome. Although few were in employment, most were taking classes to improve their English language skills. However, a substantial minority was suffering mental health difficulties, which is most likely a result of traumatic events experienced before their arrival to Australia.

Planning is well underway for Wave 3 of the study.

Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children is a major study following the development of 10,000 children and families from all parts of Australia commenced in 2004.

The next wave of the survey design is complete and includes new measures covering areas such as educational pathways (school, tertiary education, apprenticeships etc.), gambling, driving and work.

The survey will be in the field again in late 2015, when the participants will be aged 12–13 and 16–17 years old.

Vale Professor Graeme Hugo AO (1946–2015)

It was with great sadness that the Institute learned of the death of Professor Graeme Hugo AO in January 2015. Professor Hugo was

a most eminent academic and highly respected public intellectual who contributed greatly to the understanding of Australian society.

Professor Hugo was a graduate of the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the Australian National University, and completed his PhD on circular migration in Indonesia. At the time of his death, he was a professorial research fellow and the director of the Australian Population and Migration Research Centre at the University of Adelaide. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2012.

He gave an excellent seminar at AIFS in May 2014 titled *Recent and impending demographic change in Australia: Implications for households, family and housing* (available on at tinyurl.com/o67v23l). In this talk, he argued that contemporary demographic shifts occurring in Australia have important implications for households and families, and yet the demography of the family has been neglected in the analysis of change in the Australian population.

The condolences of all at the Institute are extended to his family, friends and colleagues.

Concluding remarks

As I embark on the next stage of my journey, I have a sense that the timing is right both for AIFS and for myself. The Institute is well positioned to go from strength to strength. The suite of longitudinal studies, the growth of our evaluation capacity, the extension of our dissemination activities, and our well-developed governance, management and accountability infrastructure, all are reflective of a strong, vibrant and sustainable organisation.

I extend my very best wishes to my successor in taking AIFS to the next exciting stage of its development. I leave with so many rich and warm memories and a deep sense of satisfaction and pride in the achievements of all those I have been so proud to call my colleagues. I have had such a wonderful time contributing to an outstanding organisation!

