



Participant Information Sheet: Survey of Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP) and Family Law System Professionals

Review of Family Relationship Services

Researchers

Chief investigator

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Co-investigators (AIFS)

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External co-investigators

Professor Victoria Hovane (Tjallara Consulting Ptd Ltd) (First Nations Research Partner), Mr Andrew Metcalfe (External Review Lead)

Introduction

This Participant Information Sheet tells you about this research project. Knowing what is involved in the research will help you decide if you want to take part.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

You will receive a copy of this information sheet to keep.

What is the research about?

The aim of this research project is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the current Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP) and its ability to meet the needs of families.

The FRSP provides a range of support and education services for separated and separating parents with the aim of improving the wellbeing of Australian families. These form part of a broader range of services available for separated and separating families (adults and children) in the family law system. This research will help us to understand the needs of separated and separating families and whether services funded under FRSP are meeting these needs.



The research program supporting the Review also includes a survey of separating or separated adults, in depth interviews with separating or separated adults who have used family law system services as well as those who have not used these services, and administrative data from service providers.

An online, anonymous survey is one part of the Research supporting the project and is the purpose of the following participant information sheet. More information is provided below.

Who is involved in the project?

In September 2023, the Australian Attorney-General, the Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC MP, announced that Andrew Metcalfe AO will lead a review of Family Law Services, focusing on those services funded under the Government's FRSP.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has been commissioned and funded by the Australian Attorney-General's Department to undertake research between late October 2023 and June 2024 that will inform this Review and this survey is an important part of this research.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate because we would like to understand the views and experiences of the broad range of professionals involved in managing, operating, and providing services under the Family Relationship Services Program, together with professionals involved in referring clients to these services or providing other family law system services to separating or separated clients.

Participating in this research might benefit you, as sharing your knowledge, ideas, and experiences might be empowering through fostering collaboration and contributing to potential change and improvements of service delivery.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You can leave the study at any time, and it won't change your relationship with the researcher(s) or anyone else.

To the extent possible, your participation in this research will be kept confidential. No-one apart from the research team will know you have participated. If you do decide to leave the study, you will need to do this by emailing FRSPreview@aifs.gov.au

What will the researchers do and when?

As part of this research, the researchers have provided a survey link to consenting individuals. The link will direct consenting individuals to an anonymous, online survey. If you would like to participate, please open the link on the next page of this document.

Surveys are available early November (now) and must be completed before 1 January 2024. Consenting participants will be able to complete the surveys at a time and location that is convenient for them, though the research team advise participants to complete surveys in a quiet and private location.

Most questions in this survey will ask you to select a response from the options provided. There are a small number of questions that allow you to provide a comment. Please do not provide any information that may identify you in the questions requiring a comment.

Completing the survey questions will take approximately 30 minutes. There is no payment for participation. We need as many responses as possible to ensure that the survey findings are representative and reliable.



What will happen to my information?

Your information will be used to inform a final research report.

We take your privacy and personal security seriously and safeguards are in place to protect it.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this research project and that can identify you will remain confidential unless otherwise permitted by you, or as required by law. The procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of your information during the collection phase and the later publication of results include:

- To the extent possible, your participation in this research will be kept confidential. Any information that you provide will be treated confidentially within the limits of the law. No-one apart from the research team will know you have participated.
- No identifying data will be collected in this survey. Participants are asked NOT to include any identifiable information, or information that may potential identify them, in their survey responses. If any identifiable or re-identifiable information is provided, it will be identified in the verification process and deleted from the survey responses so that it is deidentified and anonymised.
- You are free to stop the survey at any time, to not answer any questions and to delete your answers prior to submitting your responses.
- Our project report will only include the de-identified/anonymised survey data.

It is important that you know there is a limit to confidentiality. For example, if you tell us about any unreported current illegal activity, unreported abuse, or disclose something that makes us concerned for your safety or the safety of another person, then we may be obliged to pass this information onto the relevant authorities.

The Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department will retain the Intellectual Property in the data.

If the Attorney-General authorises the release of the public research, you will be provided with a shorter summary of the research results. Please let us know if you do not wish to receive the summary.

What are the potential risks?

It can be upsetting to talk about the experiences of separated/separating families. We have listed the contact details for some supports at the end of this sheet. Contact details for support services are also provided at the start and end of the survey. We have also given you a copy of our protocol guidelines. These have more information on available support if you become distressed or upset.

Additionally, you are free to stop the survey at any time, to not answer any questions and to delete your answers prior to submitting your responses.

Data storage and security

Data collected in this research will be securely stored and retained by AIFS on the AIFS cloud services, in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and access only permitted for authorised researchers and required AIFS staff. The information you provide will not be used in any way that may identify you. You may access our privacy policy at aifs.gov.au/aifs-privacy-policy

At the conclusion of the project, the de-identified/anonymised information will be retained at the Australian Institute of Family Studies indefinitely.

Culturally restricted information

It is not the intent of this project to collect culturally restricted information. If the survey touches on topics which pertain to culturally restricted information, you can refuse to answer any questions, and/or provide guidance on how any information you do provide is handled and used.



Inclusion and exclusion criteria

We invite you to participate in this survey if you are:

- a program manager, service coordinator or practitioner working in any of the following **Family Relationship Services Program services**:
 - Family Relationship Centre
 - Family Relationship Advice Line
 - Family Dispute Resolution
 - Regional Family Dispute Resolution
 - First Nations Family Dispute Resolution
 - Family Law Counselling
 - Children's Contact Services
 - Post Orders Program/Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Program
 - Supporting Children after Separation Program
 - Family Law Pathways Network
- an executive or staff member of a service provider organisation operating any of the above **Family Relationship Services Program services**
- a **family law system professional** including:
 - a lawyer
 - a judicial officer/registrar or other employee of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia or Family Court of Western Australia
 - a family report writer/single expert
 - an employee of a Legal Aid Service (including Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) or Community Legal Centre
 - a private Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner or mediator
 - a Domestic and Family Violence Professional
 - a counsellor or other therapeutic professional who provides services in private practice to adults or children in separated families
 - a professional involved in the provision of family dispute resolution support through online mechanisms
 - a professional who is involved in parenting support programs, including through online mechanisms.
- To the extent possible, your participation in this research will be kept confidential. Any information that you provide will be treated confidentially within the limits of the law.

Take the survey

If you would like to participate, please open the [online survey](#) or scan the QR code.

The survey will close on 1 January 2024.



Contacts

The research is being led by the Institute's Family Law, Family Violence and Elder Abuse Research Team. Concerns relating to project ethics may be directed to the AIFS Ethics Committee Secretariat via ethics-secretariat@aifs.gov.au or (03) 9214 7888.

In an emergency, where there is an immediate risk to your safety or the safety of another person, please call **000**.

T (03) 9214 7888 **E** info@aifs.gov.au **W** aifs.gov.au
Southgate Towers, Level 4, 40 City Road, Southbank VIC 3006


ABN: 64 001 053 079



The Australian Institute of Family Studies acknowledges the traditional Country throughout Australia on which we gather, live, work and stand. We acknowledge all traditional custodians, their Elders past, present and emerging, and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to their culture, community, land, sea and rivers.

About the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies is based in Melbourne. It is an independent statutory agency, established by the Commonwealth Government in 1980 and aims to help in the development of better policies for the future of Australian families.

More detailed information can be obtained from our website: aifs.gov.au

Complaints

You can complain to:

- The Executive Director of Research, AIATSIS, 51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601, (e) ethics@aiatsis.gov.au
- The Chair of the AIATSIS Research Ethics Committee, AIATSIS, 51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601, (e) ethics@aiatsis.gov.au

If you think has been a breach of your privacy you can write to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001 or call 1300 363 992.

Ethics Committee Clearance

The AIFS Ethics Committee and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Research Ethics committee have reviewed and approved this research.

Getting help

We are unable to provide advice or to assist with specific concerns in relation to individual matters. These contacts may be able to provide support:

- Call **13YARN** (13 92 76) to speak with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter, available 24 hours, 7 days a week.
- Contact **QLife** an anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral service on from 3pm to midnight every day on 1800 184 527 or via webchat at www.qlife.org.au
- Contact the **Family Relationship Advice Line** about family relationship issues and parenting arrangements after separation. Phone 1800 050 321 or www.familyrelationships.gov.au.
- Contact the **National Sexual Assault Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service** for 24/7 information or support about domestic and family violence. Phone 1800 737 732 (1800 Respect) or www.1800respect.org.au.
- Call **000** if you are worried about your safety, or the safety of another person.

