

Australian Institute of Family Studies
Statement of Expectations

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (the Institute) is the Australian Government's key family research agency in the area of family wellbeing. It is an independent statutory authority established in 1980 under the *Family Law Act 1975*. The Institute disseminates findings to policy-makers, service providers and the broader community and provides an evidence base for developing policy and practice related to the wellbeing of families and children.

The Director of the Institute is a statutory appointment under the *Family Law Act 1975*. The Government recognises and respects the statutory independence of the Director. It is imperative that as Director, you act independently and objectively in performing functions and exercising powers as set out in the *Family Law Act 1975*. I request that you act in a professional, efficient and effective manner in fulfilment of your statutory responsibilities.

The Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent build on the requirements of the Institute. This process enables the mechanisms for accountability and transparency and provides strategic direction for enabling the Institute to meet its objectives.

In order to successfully achieve the required outcomes of this Statement of Expectations, I expect the Institute, in addition to undertaking its functions set out in the *Family Law Act 1975* will:

- Undertake impartial, policy-relevant research on a broad range of family related issues that is of the highest standard and of value to key stakeholders from its contract undertakings and other activities; and act as a source of expertise in providing research based information on family issues to a range of portfolios across the Australian Government.
- Work collaboratively with my Department to ensure that its research informs and influences policy development and assists the Government to make informed decisions on work and family issues.
- Brief me regularly on the activities of the Institute and any significant events and emerging issues relating to the business of the Institute in a timely manner and provide relevant information to my Department in parallel, including responding to requests from my office in a timely manner.
- Pursue research opportunities consistent with the priority areas outlined in the Institute's Agency Plan, as well as actively disseminating research findings to policy makers, practitioners and the general public across Australia and internationally.

In performing its role and pursuing the priorities outlined above, I expect the Institute to:

- Maintain mutually-beneficial working relationships with key stakeholders, including the Australian Government, State and Territory and local governments, providers of services to families and children, researchers and policy-makers and the broader Australian community.
- Work within the frameworks of all relevant legislation (including the *Family Law Act 1975* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*) covering your responsibilities to your Annual Report, risk management, proper use and management of public resources, budget estimates, corporate plans, accounting records and preparation and auditing of annual financial statements. You are responsible for exercising powers and discharging duties in good faith in the best interests of the Institute and therefore the Commonwealth.

- Ensure that staff employed by the Institute adhere to the *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act). Under the PS Act, agencies are required to uphold and promote the Australian Public Service (APS) Values. All APS employees are required to adhere to the APS Code of Conduct as provided by Section 13 of the PS Act. The Institute is also required to comply with the APS Bargaining Framework.

The Department and the Institute operate within the same broad policy platform in a manner consistent with the requirements established by the *Family Law Act 1975*. The Secretary of the Department plays an important role in providing the government with policy advice in its oversight of portfolio agencies. Conducive to an effective working relationship, I expect that my Department will continue to consult with the Institute on any issue that may impact on its obligations under relevant legislation and that you will similarly inform the Secretary (or the Department) of relevant issues and information affecting the portfolio.

In conclusion, the Government is committed to ensuring that the Institute remains a high performing and responsive agency that makes a profound and positive contribution to the lifetime wellbeing of Australian families by providing research that advances knowledge and informs family policy and service delivery.