

OUTPUT GROUP 2 –
SOCIAL POLICY

4



OUTPUT 2.1 – SOCIAL POLICY

Output	Performance Information
Advice, briefing and support to the Prime Minister on social policy issues	The degree of satisfaction of the Prime Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary, their offices and the departmental executive with the quality, accuracy and timeliness of policy advice and achievement of key tasks, as expressed through formal and informal feedback mechanisms.
<i>Design and implementation of national exercises of pandemic preparedness as part of whole-of-government planning to prevent and prepare for a possible human influenza pandemic.⁵</i>	<i>Pandemic exercises achieve their exercise objectives and a basis for reviewing and refining plans and policies where appropriate.</i>

ROLE OF THE DIVISIONS

Social Policy output 2.1 is delivered by the Social Policy Division and the Social Support, Immigration and Citizenship Branch (SSICB) of the Families, Immigration and Social Support (FISS) Division.

Social Policy Division provides advice to the Prime Minister on policy relating to the health and productivity of the Australian community and national policy on Indigenous affairs. Our work spans: health, ageing and sport policy, skills development, education and employment assistance and oversight of national policy on Indigenous affairs, including closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

The role of the division is to support the development, implementation and review of the government's social policy agenda. This includes analysis of current and emerging issues which impact on health, productivity and Indigenous affairs, review of the effectiveness of the existing social policy framework and contributing to policy reform relevant to the Australian Government and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Our advice is informed by consultation with Commonwealth, state and territory departments, industry and community stakeholders.

SSICB provides advice to the Prime Minister on pensions reform, housing, homelessness, disaster recovery, migration and disabilities.

⁵ Following a review of our organisational structure in June 2008, from 2008–09 issues relating to human influenza pandemic prevention and preparedness are now reported against Output 3.2.

OUR PERFORMANCE

In 2008–09 we made a strong contribution to key priorities in the government’s social policy agenda, with our work mainly focused on the following initiatives:

- Finalisation of the 2008 COAG Reform Agenda through strategic leadership and participation in five of the seven COAG working groups established in December 2007 to drive reform of the Commonwealth–state financial relations framework. Social Policy Division and the SSICB were actively engaged in the Health and Ageing Working Group, the Productivity Working Group, the Working Group on Indigenous Reform, Housing Working Group, and an officials Disability Reform Working Group.
- Development of the government’s social policy response to minimise the impact of the global financial crisis through drafting key elements of the Jobs and Training Compact and contributing to development of the \$650 million Jobs Fund.
- Preparation of the Prime Minister’s first Annual Statement to parliament on Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage, in collaboration with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- Development of specific 2009–10 Budget outcomes, particularly providing input to the government’s response to the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education and to measures funded through the Health and Hospitals Fund and the Education Investment Fund.
- Preparatory work for the government’s response to the June 2009 final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

Our major achievements against these priorities are described in the following sections. We were commended on our contribution to COAG outcomes over 2008–09 and the support provided in finalising the Statement to parliament on Closing the Gap. The Prime Minister, other relevant ministers, parliamentary secretaries, their offices and the department’s executive provided positive feedback on the quality of policy advice and consistent achievement of key tasks.

SPECIAL FEATURE: CLOSING THE GAP ON INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE



Photo: Front cover of *Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage: The Challenge for Australia*

On 13 February 2008, the Prime Minister gave the national Apology to Australia's Indigenous people. As well as acknowledging past wrong-doings, the national Apology included a commitment to move forward together as a nation to build a stronger and fairer Australia and close the gap in real life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

On 26 February 2009, the Prime Minister delivered the first of his promised annual statements to parliament on progress in closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage – one of the toughest challenges on the government's reform agenda. The Prime Minister's statement occurred in an atmosphere of community hope and expectation for a new beginning in relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians as a result of the historic national Apology the year before.

The Prime Minister's statement detailed the government's new approach to Indigenous policy. It also provided an opportunity to report on measures put in place to help achieve the six targets agreed by COAG in 2008 relating to Indigenous life expectancy, infant and child mortality, health, education and employment. Since the commitment to the targets was made, Commonwealth, state and territory governments have worked hard behind the scenes, to develop new agreements, secure new funding and commit to new levels of performance and accountability.

Development of the Prime Minister's statement to parliament and an accompanying published report was led by the Indigenous Policy Branch within the Social Policy Division. The Branch provides advice to the Prime Minister and departmental executive on native title, land rights, and reconciliation and the

effectiveness and outcomes of whole-of-government policy development and service delivery arrangements in Indigenous affairs. It also assists divisions across the department to provide advice on matters impacting on Indigenous Australians which is integrated and reflects a whole of government perspective.

Given the shared responsibility of Commonwealth agencies for developing and implementing the government's strategy to Close the Gap, the report was prepared on a whole-of-government basis, with the Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs providing strategic direction. Agencies contributed extensive information on the needs of Indigenous communities, existing programs and proposed policy initiatives. The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs played a pivotal role given its responsibility for Indigenous policy coordination. In addition, states and territories were engaged via the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform. The Prime Minister's office was directly involved given the priority of closing the gap to the government's reform agenda and the Prime Minister's personal commitment.

A central theme of the report was the importance of setting a new relationship with Indigenous Australians, based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility. The government's reform agenda is predicated on this commitment.

The starting point for the report was to identify and quantify the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the key areas identified by COAG of life expectancy, infant and child mortality, early childhood education, literacy and numeracy skills, school completion rates, and employment outcomes. This information is vital to understanding the depth and complexity

of the Closing the Gap challenge. It is vital to the development of trajectories that show the effort required to achieve each of the Closing the Gap targets and to measure performance against them. Drawing together and analysing this baseline information again highlighted the shortcomings of existing information and the work required to develop robust data to support reliable comparisons across programs, jurisdictions and geographical regions. It provided an impetus for further work by Commonwealth data agencies and departments as well as their jurisdictional counterparts.

In October and November 2008, COAG agreed a series of new National Partnership Agreements to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage. Through these agreements, all governments have pledged to develop and implement coordinated strategies to address the causes and determinants of Indigenous disadvantage, underpinned by a new approach to governance and shared accountability. The report outlined the components of that commitment including a \$4.6 billion program of targeted reform measures to be implemented through the National Partnership Agreements on Closing the Gap in: Indigenous Health Outcomes, Remote Indigenous Housing; Indigenous Early Childhood Development; Indigenous Economic Participation; and Remote Service Delivery. The report flagged future COAG activity to sustain these partnerships including a COAG meeting in 2009 with an Indigenous focus.

The experience of previous efforts to close the gap has demonstrated that achieving good results requires commitments from the broader corporate and community sectors, underpinned by corporate and philanthropic partnerships to help deliver real and sustainable results. Initiatives encouraging these partnerships were outlined in the report which also acknowledged the critical role of the community sector through a wide range of practical initiatives.

A specific initiative announced in the report was the Coordinator-General for Remote Service Delivery to ensure the effective planning and accelerated delivery

of services in remote communities. The Coordinator-General will monitor the implementation of the COAG reforms in housing, infrastructure and employment in remote Indigenous communities. In addition to this, a commitment of \$58 million was announced to expand eye and ear health services for Indigenous Australians.

As well as documenting examples of practical measures implemented on the ground in the preceding year, the report set out the government's priorities for 2009, in particular, to meet the needs of remote Indigenous communities and to support Indigenous economic development.

The Prime Minister's first statement to parliament on Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage was prepared shortly after the new reforms had been agreed by COAG with those agreements in the early stages of their implementation. As such, the foundations for Closing the Gap were being put in place but time would be needed before the impact of these reforms could be demonstrated against the COAG targets. Building on the momentum of the Apology, community expectations of progress against the COAG targets were high. However, the reality is that Closing the Gap will take time with reforms needing to be implemented and allowed time to work prior to their impact on the targets being realised.

Preparation of the second report will also be challenging as the various COAG National Partnership Agreements will still be in the early stages of implementation. Again, community expectations will be high. The second report will be able to report on progress made to date in implementing reforms, what has been achieved, and the efforts underway to meet the COAG targets. However, the work involved in reporting will pale in comparison to the effort required by all governments, the corporate and community sectors and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

2008 COAG Health Reform Agenda: A strong contribution was made to the finalisation of the 2008 COAG Health Reform Agenda through the Health and Ageing Working Group, chaired by the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP. This work included completion of a \$64 billion National Health Care Agreement (NHCA) which provides funding over five years for state and territory health systems. In addition to setting a new accountability framework for Commonwealth and state outcomes delivered under the NHCA, this work included a commitment to three new national partnership agreements for Hospitals and Health Workforce Reform, Preventive Health, and Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes.

2008 COAG Productivity Reform Agenda: A lead role was played by PM&C in developing the National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development through the COAG Productivity Agenda Working Group, chaired by the Minister for Education, the Hon Julia Gillard MP. This agreement commits the Commonwealth and the states to improve vocational skills training for Australians. We also contributed to the finalisation of the Productivity Places Program (PPP) national partnership and the TAFE Fee Waivers for child care qualifications national partnership. The PPP national partnership funds the delivery of over 700,000 additional training places to target areas of critical skills shortages and emerging skills needs.

We also participated in the development of the National Education Agreement which commits governments to a comprehensive framework for school performance reporting. This work also included commitment to three Smarter Schools national partnerships to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, teacher quality and education outcomes for disadvantaged school communities.

2008 COAG Indigenous Reform Agenda: The Working Group on Indigenous Reform, was chaired by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP. This group of which we were key participants delivered on the government's commitment to start closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage through finalising the National Indigenous Reform Agreement and national partnerships on Indigenous Economic Participation and Remote Service Delivery. Our involvement in the closing the gap work has continued in 2009, focusing on the development of a significant number of items for consideration at the July 2009 COAG meeting and beyond.

Jobs and Training Compact: We played a central role in developing the Jobs and Training Compact in response to the global financial crisis, which incorporates the Compacts with Young Australians and Retrenched Workers as well as the \$650 million Jobs Fund. We chaired the working group, supported by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, which negotiated state agreement to the Youth Compact. COAG endorsed the compact on 30 April 2009. It commits governments to immediate, concerted action to maximise youth engagement, retention and attainment in education and training. This includes a commitment to a training entitlement for young people, a National Youth Participation Requirement, and bringing forward the target of a 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate from 2020 to 2015. In 2008–09 the division also supported the Prime Minister's attendance at local jobs forums in seven priority employment regions across the country.

Prime Minister's first Annual Statement to Parliament on Closing the Gap: In 2008 the Prime Minister committed to report annually on progress made in closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. On 26 February 2009 the Prime Minister delivered the first Annual Statement to parliament on Closing the Gap. The division provided significant support for delivery of this statement and the accompanying report, in collaboration with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Health and Hospitals Fund (HHF): Contributions were made to the development of the HHF measures announced in the 2009–10 Budget. The HHF package committed more than \$3.2 billion comprising:

- \$1.3 billion over six years to deliver a world-class cancer care system, including modernising and improving detection and screening
- \$1.5 billion over seven years for the development of health infrastructure and projects of national significance
- \$430.3 million over six years to support translational medical research infrastructure.

Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education: In its response to the findings of this review, the government has invested more than \$5 billion in the higher education system in order to drive comprehensive reform across the university sector. The division worked closely with relevant agencies to coordinate policy advice to the Prime Minister on the government’s response to the review. This final package included funding of \$1.5 billion for teaching and learning, \$0.7 billion for university research, \$1.1 billion for the Super Science initiative and \$2.1 billion from the Education Investment Fund for education and research infrastructure.

Single Indigenous Budget Submission: We managed coordination of the 2009–10 Single Indigenous Budget Submission. The submission comprised a number of proposals across seven portfolios, including cross-portfolio proposals. We provided advice to line agencies on Cabinet and Budget processes, negotiating policy positions with other central agencies. We also provided advice to the Prime Minister on each proposal to ensure the government’s priorities were reflected in the development of the submission.

Secretaries’ Group on Indigenous Affairs: The heads of agencies administering the Australian Government’s Indigenous programs make up a Secretaries’ Group on Indigenous Affairs. This group provides whole-of-government advice on matters relating to Indigenous affairs. During 2008–09, the secretaries group met seven times. The group is chaired by our Secretary, and the Social Policy division provides secretariat support for the meetings.

Northern Territory Emergency Response: Advice, coordination and support was provided for the Prime Minister and departmental executive on matters relating to the policy options and financial and legislative arrangements for the future of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). We provided specific advice to the Prime Minister in response to the report of the NTER Review Board in 2008–09 and for the government’s approach in the future.

Football Federation Australia’s bid to host the FIFA World Cup in 2018 or 2022: The Australian Government and COAG committed to work in support of Football Federation Australia’s (FFA) bid to host the 2018 or 2022 FIFA World Cup. The support of all Australian governments is a key element of a successful bid. We play a central role in this process, which is led by the Department of Health and Ageing. Our engagement includes participation in a Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee and associated subcommittees, a COAG officials working group, and a working group established by FFA with state, territory and Commonwealth officials.

National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission: In 2008–09 we provided advice to the government on the commission’s interim report and started a significant phase of work on the government’s response to the long-term reform agenda for the health system. This work will continue over 2009–10.

Pensions reforms: In May 2008 the government announced a review into the financial security of seniors, carers and people with a disability as part of the wider review into Australia’s Future Tax System. We provided input into the Harmer Review and advice to the

Prime Minister about the development of the Secure and Sustainable Pensions package as part of the 2009–10 Budget.

Housing and homelessness: We played a key role in the development, through COAG, of a new national housing agreement and associated housing partnership agreements, including agreements for remote Indigenous housing, social housing and homelessness. These were developed in discussions with the states and territories in the Housing Working Group and through the provision of strategic advice to ministers. These agreements included additional Commonwealth funding of around \$1.7 billion over five years, replacing the previous Specific Purpose Payment arrangements as part of broader reforms to Commonwealth-state financial relations. We also contributed to the development of the government's White Paper on Homelessness which was released in December 2008 and led the development of the social housing component of the Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan National Partnership Agreement, which will provide an additional \$5.6 billion for social housing.

Disaster recovery: The bushfires that swept through Victoria in February 2009 were the worst in living memory. In the aftermath of the bushfires, the division played a key, guiding role in the Commonwealth's response to the recovery and reconstruction needs of Victoria. This included providing advice to the Prime Minister and the government to ensure a strategic approach was taken. Given the extensive devastation and damage to bushfire-affected communities, the division dedicated additional resources to progress this critical work.

The Prime Minister received advice on the government response to floods in New South Wales in March and May 2009, and in Queensland in November 2008 and February and May 2009.

PM&C also played a central role in progressing the work of the COAG Natural Disaster Arrangements Working Group, including supporting the examination of natural disaster relief and recovery funding arrangements.

Migration: Strategic policy advice was provided to the Prime Minister about reforms to permanent and temporary migration arrangements. These reforms were designed to more tightly target permanent and temporary migration arrangements towards skills in demand and address compliance concerns to effectively target and retain integrity in the programs. We also provided advice about the commitment to a four-year planning framework for the Humanitarian Program.

Disabilities: We contributed to the development of key elements of the National Disability Reform Agenda, including the new National Disability Agreement, by supporting Australian Government officials and providing advice to the Prime Minister during the negotiation process conducted through COAG.

SPECIAL FEATURE: VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES



On Saturday 7 February 2009, one of the most devastating bushfires in Australia's modern history blazed through a number of rural Victorian towns, tucked in some of Victoria's most picturesque areas. By the time the fires were reduced to glowing embers, 173 people had lost their lives and more than 2000 properties were destroyed, with another 1400 properties damaged. The devastation left behind immense challenges for the Victorian community, its people and its services.

As a horrified nation watched the inferno, the Prime Minister was on his way to Victoria within hours to offer the Commonwealth's support and assistance.

While states and territories have primary responsibility for the protection of life and property, the Commonwealth provides critical support when jurisdictions' resources are overwhelmed. We have a central role in coordinating this assistance. Families, Immigration and Social Support Division (FISS) and Homeland and Border Security Division (HBS) supported the development and implementation of a whole-of-Commonwealth Government response and recovery strategy including providing extensive policy advice to the Prime Minister.

This work covered a wide range of core public service activities including high-level Ministerial secretariat support; preparing submissions for government consideration, facilitating the making of an emergency declaration under the *Privacy Act 1988*; providing submissions to the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission; and strategic policy work mandated by the Council of Australian Governments.

During the first few days of the crisis, HBS officers were focussed on supporting key crisis response coordination mechanisms. This included twice-daily meetings of a Commonwealth Victorian Bushfire Taskforce (CVBTF). Initially chaired by the Prime Minister, the CVBTF was an innovation of the Prime Minister to expedite decision-making between ministers and senior government officials.

As well as this, the Australian Government Counter-Disaster Taskforce was convened by the deputy National Security Adviser.

HBS officers provided the secretariat support for these taskforces and liaised with a wide range of Australian Government agencies. This included agencies such as Emergency Management Australia, within the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs, the Department of Human Services as well as the Australian Defence Force. HBS officers coordinated the input of these agencies to provide an immediate response to need as well as longer-term strategic planning. Fuelled mostly by adrenaline and coffee, the HBS officers' efforts resulted in a well-coordinated and coherent whole-of-Australian Government response to the crisis.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, the Commonwealth Government announced a comprehensive Recovery Assistance Package. FISS officers provided policy advice and coordination for numerous social and economic issues covering all aspects of the affected communities' needs. These included forensics, clean up and demolition, psychological counselling, housing, aged care, small business and primary producers, income recovery subsidy, environment, tourism, taxation assistance and case management.

During this period FISS officers briefed the Prime Minister on mobilising support and payments to the Victorian Government through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements determination and to affected individuals through the Australian Government Disaster Relief Payment. This required us to work closely with a vast range of Commonwealth and state agencies as well as key non-government organisations. Working across governments and the community sector in a time of crisis provided important insights into integrated and coordinated delivery, as well as a strong sense of connection to a wide network of agencies and individuals.

Photo: State Emergency Service volunteers and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd at Kinglake. Photo courtesy of Mountain Monthly.

OUTPUT GROUP 2.2 – WORK AND FAMILY

Output	Performance Information
2.2 Work and Family	
Advice, briefing and support to the Prime Minister on work and family issues, including child care and early childhood education, child care and family impact statements.	Satisfaction of the Prime Minister, the Minister Assisting and the parliamentary secretaries, their offices and the departmental executive, with advice, briefing and support on work and family issues.
Manage and develop the State of the Family report.	Satisfaction of the Prime Minister and key stakeholders with the first annual State of the Family report and the level of satisfaction and public interest.

ROLE OF THE DIVISION

The role of the division, now known as the Families, Immigration and Social Support (FISS) Division (incorporating the Social Inclusion Unit), is to develop policy advice on a wide range of issues, including early childhood development and child care, workforce participation, families, women's issues, community services, social security, housing, employment, disability, carers, seniors, veterans, immigration, citizenship, disaster recovery and social inclusion.

The **Social Support, Immigration and Citizenship Branch** advises on social security, housing, employment, disability, carers, seniors, veterans, immigration, citizenship and disaster recovery. The performance of this branch is described at Output 2.1 on page 44.

The **Office of Work and Family** advises on policies to support early childhood development and child care, workforce participation, families, and women's issues, and to help families balance their work and caring responsibilities. The performance of this branch is described at Output 2.2 on page 52.

The **Social Inclusion Unit** provides whole-of-government policy advice and drives progress across the government's social inclusion agenda and its key priority areas. It also provides secretariat support to the Australian Social Inclusion Board and the Community Response Task Force. The performance of the Social Inclusion Unit is described at Output 2.3 on page 56.

The FISS division is also responsible for managing the family impact statement process for Cabinet, the department's relationship with the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the development of the annual *Families in Australia* report (FIA, formerly referred to as the *State of the Family* Report).

OUR PERFORMANCE

The Office of Work and Family within FISS Division provided advice, briefing and support to the Prime Minister and other relevant ministers, parliamentary secretaries and the Secretary on a range of work and family issues, including early childhood development, child care, workforce participation, paid parental leave and the impact of policies on families. We also produced the *Families in Australia: 2008* report.

Informal feedback indicates that the Prime Minister, other relevant ministers, parliamentary secretaries, their offices and the departmental executive were satisfied with the quality and timeliness of policy advice, and the achievement of key tasks.

The *Families in Australia: 2008* report received favourable press coverage and more than 550 hard copies were distributed. Informal feedback indicates that the Prime Minister, other relevant ministers, their offices and stakeholders were satisfied with the publication and support the publication of a report on an annual basis.

SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

Sarah and Hanah having fun drawing as part of the School Holiday program held at PM&C and run by the YMCA. The School Holiday Program is open to all APS staff with PM&C staff receiving priority.

Photo: PM&C School Holiday Program participants Sarah and Hanah.



Early childhood development: The early years of a child's life have a profound impact on future health, development, learning and wellbeing. Well designed support helps promote good outcomes for children. The government has committed to a number of key reforms in this area and we played a key role in supporting the implementation of these commitments. We played an active role in the progression of key early childhood agreements with the states and territories through COAG, including the finalisation of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education and the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development.

These agreements were developed through discussions with the states and territories in the Productivity Agenda Working Group and the Working Group on Indigenous Reform. We were particularly involved in providing advice to ministers on the development of these agreements. The agreements provide over \$1.5 billion to states and territories over six years to ensure all children in the year before formal schooling have access to a pre-school program by 2013, and to improve Indigenous childhood outcomes.

Building on these agreements, we were very involved in developing the National Early Childhood Development Strategy, the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care before their consideration by COAG in July 2009. The next significant stage of work will involve final decisions on the National Quality Agenda and progressing the development and further consideration of priority actions identified through the National Early Childhood Development Strategy.

Secretaries' Steering Committee on Early Childhood Development/Deputy Secretaries' Group on Supporting Young Children and their Families:

The Secretaries' Steering Committee on Early Childhood Development and its successor, the Deputy Secretaries' Group on Supporting Young Children and their Families, oversee the range of early childhood reforms the Australian Government and COAG have under way. We support the monthly meetings of the Deputy Secretaries' Group.

Paid parental leave: We guided the policy development work by the Paid Parental Leave Interdepartmental Committee in parallel to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Parental Leave, whose final report was provided to government in March 2009. We worked with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Treasury and the Department of Finance and Deregulation to develop costed Paid Parental Leave options for consideration in the lead-up to the 2009–10 Budget announcement of a government-funded scheme. We are working with relevant agencies to oversee the implementation of the Paid Parental Leave scheme, which will commence in January 2011.

Family Impact Statements: To ensure that members of Cabinet have the best possible information on which to base their decisions, the government has committed to ensuring the quality and rigour of Family Impact Statements contained in Cabinet submissions. We have developed an improved process for these impact statements to ensure they are of a high standard and based on robust evidence and research. Comprehensive guidelines and additional resources have been developed and made available on a dedicated page on our website.

Families in Australia: 2008 report: The government has committed to publishing an annual *Families in Australia* report, which will replace the *State of the Family* report. Released in December 2008, the inaugural report and the accompanying *Snapshot* had a distribution of more than 550 copies on paper and in CD ROM format. There has been a positive response to the report in the press and from a broad range of organisations and individuals. These reports, to be produced annually, aim to inform the public about Australian families and encourage interest and debate in the community. We have started developing the 2009 report, due for release in late 2009.

Carers: We contributed to discussions on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission recommendation that amendments be made to federal protection against discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities, specifically on the needs of people who are carers and in paid employment and the legislation that may be needed at the federal level. We also worked with FaHCSIA, DEEWR, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Attorney-General's Department on the government's response to the Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

Seventeen month old baby Cordelia Whatman with mum Rachel Vance, dad Warrick Whatman and big sister Octavia enjoy morning tea in Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's office. The Prime Minister took time out from his busy schedule to play with the children.

At three months old, Cordelia was diagnosed with a disease called Biliary Atresia which was rapidly destroying her liver. She became critically ill last year and only a transplant could save her.

Following a year-long ordeal, Warrick, a member of PM&C's Web Services team, returned home from Sydney with Cordelia in February after a lifesaving transplant.

"She is lucky because she was extremely sick before she got the transplant so it was lucky it came when it did," Ms Vance said later.

Cordelia is now a happy healthy two year old.



Photo: PM&C Staff member Warrick Whatman and family with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. Photo courtesy of News Limited.

Around 94 per cent of Australians support organ donation but only a small number, two per cent in the ACT, are actually on the Organ Donor Register.

PM&C staff participated in the ORGANised walk and the Organ Donor Awareness Week. These events aimed to raise funds and donation rates in Australia by focussing on the pressing need for organ and tissue donation, encouraging families to discuss their wishes, highlighting the success of organ transplantation in Australia and promoting the Australian Organ Donor Register. For more information on organ donation call 1800 777 203 or go to www.medicareaustralia.gov.au and follow the links.

OUTPUT GROUP 2.3 – SOCIAL INCLUSION

Output	Performance Information
<p>2.3 Social Inclusion</p> <p>Advice to the Deputy Prime Minister on social inclusion matters and support to the Australian Social Inclusion Board (ASIB).</p>	<p>Satisfaction of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister (for social inclusion), the parliamentary secretaries, their offices and the departmental executive.</p> <p>Satisfaction of the chair of the ASIB with the quality and timeliness of papers for consideration by the board and the support provided to the board by the department secretariat.</p>

OUR PERFORMANCE

The Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) provided advice to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister (in her capacity as the Minister for Social Inclusion), the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Secretary on a range of issues relating to the government’s social inclusion agenda. These issues included the development of the social inclusion principles, the needs of jobless families with children and locations of concentrated disadvantage. The SIU also supported six meetings of the Australian Social Inclusion Board (ASIB) in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Gawler (SA) and Kempsey (NSW).

Informal feedback indicates that the Prime Minister, other relevant ministers and the Chair of ASIB were satisfied with the quality, accuracy and timeliness of the advice and the achievement of key tasks.

Principles for Social Inclusion in Australia: Developed with advice from ASIB, these principles provide guidance to the government, individuals, business and community organisations about how to take a socially inclusive approach to their activities.

Communicating the social inclusion agenda: SIU staff provided numerous presentations to government agencies, community and non-profit sector representatives, and at a range of conferences, to provide information about the nature and progress of the social inclusion agenda.

National compact with the non-profit sector: We are working with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to develop a national compact between the government and the non-profit sector. It will outline how the government and the non-profit sector will work together with a view to developing a partnership of engagement and open dialogue.

COAG: We provided strategic policy advice to government to drive progress on social inclusion through the COAG reform agenda. Within COAG’s Business Regulation and Competition Working Group. We are taking the lead at the Commonwealth level alongside the Treasury and the Department of Finance and Deregulation to work with states and territories to progress a standard charter of accounts for the non-profit sector and to consider a nationally consistent approach to fundraising.

SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

Tanya Kemp and fluffy friend, from the Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) provided a free lunch time session in the PM&C courtyard. Staff organised the session as part of the RSPCA 'Happy Tails' campaign. Staff had the opportunity

to pat and play with a number furry critters and to gain awareness of how to care for animals. During the campaign staff donated a large amount of linen. The RSPCA is often in need of donations of linen for use in their shelters.



Photo: Tanya Kemp from the RSPCA.

Locational approaches: We undertook analysis to provide advice to government on locations of concentrated disadvantage. This analysis is now being used to inform decisions about how government programs can best be targeted to areas of greatest need.

Secretariat support: During the year we organised and provided secretariat support for ASIB meetings and helped the board provide advice to government on a range of matters. This included advice about how programs or initiatives in locations should be approached, how to develop effective programs for children at risk, advice on how to provide inclusive services for jobless families, and development of the recent publication, *Building Inclusive and Resilient Communities*.

The ASIB compendium of headline indicators of social inclusion, prepared with our research support, will help the board develop advice on how to improve social inclusion and identify groups requiring particular attention. The board also hopes the compendium will generate discussion about social inclusion and what it means to be excluded in a relatively prosperous country like Australia.

We are also responsible for providing secretariat support to the Community Response Taskforce. Since its establishment in January 2009, the taskforce has met twice and provided a range of advice to government on how to assist the most vulnerable Australians during the global financial crisis.

