



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CHILD SUPPORT

CRAWFORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, SPRINGBANK ROOM
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, CANBERRA , AUSTRALIA
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Australian Research Council



Dr Christine Skinner

ABSTRACT

This paper will give an historical overview of the development of child support policy from the time the radical 1991 Child Support Act introduced a new Child Support Agency up to the present day plans under the Conservative Coalition's 2012 Welfare Reform Act. It will discuss the early catastrophes arising from a lack of research, the failure to understand father's behaviors and beliefs and the effects of massive protests from fathers' groups on policy amendments. Together this served to increase complexity further leading to administrative chaos, terrible rates of compliance and considerable human misery. The failure of incremental change that continued under the Labour government and the dogged political belief in a rational administrative solution will be explored before consideration of the radical policy U-Turn under the 2008 Act which freed up all parents to make their own private agreements outside the CSA. It will end on a cautiously optimistic note describing the approach adopted by the current Coalition government – which is to change behaviors via the use of nudge tactics and more holistic relationship support services.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Christine Skinner has over 20 years' experience as a social policy academic and her main research interest focuses on child maintenance/ child support policy. She has explored parents' child maintenance obligations using both quantitative and qualitative methods and was a member of the team that produced the path-breaking national survey of separated fathers in 1999. Christine has led, advised and directed influential studies at national, and international levels and is highly regarded in her field attracting commissions from a number of prestigious organisations including; the Economic Social Research Council, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Nuffield Foundation, and Gingerbread. On many occasions she has acted as an expert policy advisor on government funded research projects and advised the Government's Work and Pensions Select Committee inquiry into child support policy. Most recently, she was a member of the Coalition Government's 'Family Support Services Expert Steering Group' which developed innovative relationship support services for separated parents for implementation under the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Currently, she is directing a series of international research seminars over two years (2014-16) funded by the ESRC 'Child Maintenance: International Perspectives And Policy Challenges' (ESRC Award Ref: ES/L000792/1).

Professor Daniel Meyer

ABSTRACT

A brief overview of child support policy in the US and the ways it has changed over the last 40 years will be presented to set the context for understanding current US policy dilemmas. The presentation will then focus on three recent societal trends in the US that produce challenges for child support policy: (a) an increase in family complexity, particularly parents who have had children with more than one partner; (b) an increase in the number of children who are spending significant amounts of time with both parents after divorce or separation; and (c) an increase in economic insecurity for both parents, with a special focus on the extent to which increases in incarceration limit the ability of parents to provide for their children. For each of these trends, new research on the number of families affected will be presented, current US policy will be described, including recent innovations in policy, and the research summarizing what we know about the effects of policy will be discussed.

BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Meyer is the Mary C. Jacoby Professor of Social Work and an Affiliate of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. He holds a PhD in Social Welfare and graduate degrees in Social Work and Business. In addition to his faculty appointment in the School of Social Work, he has been a practicing social worker and a policy analyst for US Department of Health and Human Services. He is currently a Visiting Scholar at the University of York (UK). His current research interests include effects of child support policy and welfare reforms; international approaches to child support policy; the economic well-being of women after they leave welfare; multiple-partner fertility, and how much individuals know about the social policies that affect them. He is Principal Investigator, with Maria Cancian, of the Child Support Research Agreement, a long-standing agreement to conduct policy-relevant research in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. He and Professor Cancian are also leading a team evaluating new approaches to child support policy for fathers in eight states. He is a member of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.

Joint Keynote

ABSTRACT

In this presentation, we show trends in the prevalence of lone-parent families and their different poverty rates across rich countries. One of the governmental responses to these trends has been changes in child support policy. We compare the basic features of child support policy regime types in 14 countries (including Australia, the US and the UK), the locus of formal decision making, the determination of maintenance amounts and consider the enforcement and penalty provisions used in the event of non-compliance. We then focus in on a particular issue: whether nonresident parents have equal financial obligations to children in different complex family situations. Countries differ in their equality approaches; each of the four main policy strategies we identify has advantages. The presentation sets the stage for discussion about how policy in Australia compares to other countries.

DAY 1: CHILD SUPPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

10.00 – 10.45	REGISTRATION AND MORNING TEA
10.45 – 11.10	WELCOME PROFESSOR RICHARD CHISHOLM AM PROFESSOR TONI MAKKAI
11.10 – 12.00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1 <i>Child Support Policy U-Turns: The UK case study</i> DR CHRISTINE SKINNER
12.00 – 12.40	<i>Discussion</i>
12.40 – 1.30	LUNCH
1.30 – 2.20	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2 <i>The 'Supporting Parents Supporting Kids' project: Experimental innovation in US child support policy</i> PROFESSOR DANIEL MEYER
2.20 – 3.00	<i>Discussion</i>
3.00 – 3.30	AFTERNOON TEA
3.30 – 4.20	JOINT KEYNOTE ADDRESS 3 <i>Child support comparisons across 14 countries: Typologies & tensions</i> PROFESSORS DANIEL MEYER & CHRISTINE SKINNER
4.20 – 5.00	<i>Discussion</i>
5.00 – 5.15	INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF CHILD SUPPORT SCHOLARS WEBSITE LAUNCH DR KAY COOK
5.15 – 5.20	CLOSE
5.30 – 7.30	WELCOME RECEPTION THE DRAWING ROOM, UNIVERSITY HOUSE

DAY 2: CHILD SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA – RECENT STUDIES

8.15 – 9.00	REGISTRATION AND TEA/COFFEE
9.00 – 9.10	WELCOME DAY 2 PROFESSOR RICHARD CHISHOLM AM
9.10 – 10.00	SESSION 1 <i>The income consequences of relationship breakdown – A comparative cross-country analysis</i> PROFESSOR MATTHEW GRAY, DR LIXIA QU, PROFESSOR DAVID DE VAUS, & DAVID STANTON
10.00 – 10.30	Discussion CHAIR: EMERITUS PROFESSOR MEREDITH EDWARDS
10.30 – 11.00	MORNING TEA
11.00 – 11.50	SESSION 2 <i>Preliminary findings from the Child Support Reform Study</i> ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BRUCE SMYTH, PROFESSOR BRYAN RODGERS, DR VU SON & MARIA VNUK
11.50 – 12.20	Discussion CHAIR: PROFESSOR PETER MCDONALD
12.20 – 1.10	LUNCH
1.10 – 2.00	SESSION 3 <i>Key findings from the Longitudinal Study of Separated Families</i> RUTH WESTON PSM AND THE FAMILY LAW EVALUATION TEAM
2.00 – 2.30	Discussion CHAIR: PROFESSOR PETER WHITEFORD
2.30 – 3.00	AFTERNOON TEA
3.00 – 3.50	SESSION 4 <i>Women's experiences of child support: accounting for the financial and social dimensions of money</i> DR KRISTIN NATALIER, DR HAYLEY MCKENZIE & DR KAY COOK
3.50 – 4.20	Discussion CHAIR: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LISA YOUNG
4.20 – 4.30	SUMMARY AND CLOSE
6.00 – 9.00	SYMPOSIUM DINNER COURGETTE RESTAURANT 54 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra

DAY 3: CHILD SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA – OTHER ISSUES

8.15 – 9.00	REGISTRATION AND TEA/COFFEE
9.00 – 9.10	WELCOME DAY 3 PROFESSOR RICHARD CHISHOLM AM
9.10 – 9.30	SESSION 5 <i>Children's understanding of money in families</i> DR SHARON BESSELL
9.30 – 9.50	<i>Discussion</i> CHAIR: PROFESSOR LAWRIE MOLONEY
9.50 – 10.25	SESSION 6 <i>Earning capacity and child support</i> ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LISA YOUNG <i>Discussant</i> JUDGE GEOFFREY MONAHAN
10.25 – 10.45	<i>Discussion</i>
10.45 – 11.05	MORNING TEA
11.05 – 11.50	SESSION 7 <i>Child support and mediation practice</i> KIM FRASER
11.50 – 12.35	<i>Panel</i> DR ANDREW BICKERDIKE, JENNIFER HANNAN, CLIVE PRICE <i>Discussion</i> CHAIR: PROFESSOR LAWRIE MOLONEY
12.35 – 1.25	LUNCH
1.25 – 1.45	SESSION 8 <i>Research translation and future directions</i> PROFESSOR BRYAN RODGERS
1.45 – 2.10	<i>Discussion</i>
2.10 – 2.50	PANEL SESSION 9 <i>Lessons learned ...</i> DR CHRISTINE SKINNER, PROFESSOR DANIEL MEYER, MICHAEL FLETCHER, EMERITUS PROFESSOR MEREDITH EDWARDS AM
2.50 – 3.15	AFTERNOON TEA
3.15 – 3.45	PARTING REFLECTIONS FROM THE FLOOR
3.45 – 4.00	CLOSING COMMENTS PROFESSOR RICHARD CHISHOLM AM, DR KAY COOK, A/PROF BRUCE SMYTH

ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1: THE INCOME CONSEQUENCES OF RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN – A COMPARATIVE CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

PROFESSOR MATTHEW GRAY, DR LIXIA QU, PROFESSOR DAVID DE VAUS & DAVID STANTON

One of the most significant family-related changes in recent decades has been the increase in relationship breakdown. This has led to a substantial increase in single-parent families. Research from a number of countries has shown that relationship breakdown is associated with a significant fall in financial living standard, especially for women with children. The issue continues to be a serious concern to policy makers. Countries have varied policy in place to assist these families and mitigate the negative economic impacts of relationship breakdown. This paper examines the economic consequences of relationship breakdown in five OECD countries (Australia, Britain, Germany, South Korea, Swiss, and the United States) using longitudinal data. These countries have been chosen because of the availability of comparable longitudinal data and because they represent a range of family law and income support system approaches to dealing with the economic consequences of relationship breakdown. The paper will seek to understand how the short-term and longer-term economic impacts of relationship breakdown vary across the five countries and reasons for any differences which are found.

SESSION 2: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE CHILD SUPPORT REFORM STUDY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BRUCE SMYTH, PROFESSOR BRYAN RODGERS, DR VU SON & MARIA VNUK

Sweeping changes to the Child Support Scheme were introduced between 2006 and 2008, featuring a dramatically different system for the calculation of child support. The extent to which the new Scheme is perceived to be 'fairer' and has improved the wellbeing of children and their families is of considerable policy interest, both in Australia and overseas. This paper presents preliminary findings from the Child Support Reform Study, comprising a national random sample of 5,046 Child Support Agency (CSA) clients surveyed just prior to, and one and three years after, the introduction of a new child support formula on 1 July 2008. The data are from a large, ARC-funded, cross-sequential study of the impacts of the new Australian Child Support Scheme. In this paper we explore: (a) the prevalence of shared-time parenting; (b) client knowledge of the child support parenting time adjustment rules and FTB splitting rules; (c) financial living standards pre- and post-reform; (d) child support compliance and perceptions of fairness; and (e) family dynamics and family wellbeing pre- and post-reform.

SESSION 3: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF SEPARATED FAMILIES

RUTH WESTON PSM AND THE FAMILY LAW EVALUATION TEAM

Ruth Weston will present some of the findings from the AIFS Longitudinal Study of Separated Families.

SESSION 4: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF CHILD SUPPORT: ACCOUNTING FOR THE FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF MONEY

DR KRISTIN NATALIER, DR HAYLEY MCKENZIE & DR KAY COOK

This presentation describes the alignment and differences between child support policy on the books and the lived experiences of policy, as evidenced by findings of three qualitative studies incorporating women's experiences as child support payees. We argue that analysing women's experiences of child support requires a re-thinking of the transfer and use of child support as not only financial practices. Women's decisions about calculating, claiming, receiving and using child support reflect and impact upon their relationship with an ex-partner, bargaining and reciprocity between parents, and the social meanings of money. This approach in turn has implications for the choice of methods used to capture the often hidden dimensions of how women experience child support.

SESSION 5: CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF MONEY IN FAMILIES

DR SHARON BESSELL

This presentation draws on an ARC Linkage project, which aimed to gain insight into children's views of what makes strong and supportive communities. The project involved participatory research with 108 children aged between eight and twelve years, across six sites in Eastern Australia. The research found that both family finances and public resources matter greatly to children's experience of community. Children explained how the financial position of their families shaped the ways in which they engaged – or

ABSTRACTS

did not engage – in community activities, both within and outside school. Some children spoke of the ways in which financial hardship within their families limited their ability to take part in a range of activities. Children also spoke of the trade-offs between time with their parents and money for both activities and consumer goods. This paper discusses the range of perspectives children expressed on money within their families. It also explores the extent to which children understood their families' financial situation

SESSION 6: EARNING CAPACITY AND CHILD SUPPORT

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LISA YOUNG

Earning capacity decisions in child support decision-making was once a hot topic. The fathers' rights groups were particularly vocal in criticising the assessment of parents on earning capacity rather than income. This paper considers the caselaw and decision-making prior to the introduction of the current provisions. It goes on to critique the reform process that led to the amendments and the Report that recommended them. The paper then critiques the new provisions in detail and explains how they apply in practice. In particular, the paper identifies the unexpected outcomes of the amendments. The paper argues that this is a good example of law reform being driven by pressure groups and as a result failing to promote the underlying principles of the child support legislation, and thus providing outcomes that are neither fair nor proper for parents and children.

SESSION 7: CHILD SUPPORT AND MEDIATION PRACTICE

KIM FRASER

The Australian family law system has generally not aimed to provide services to assist separated parents to discuss child support matters directly with each other. Moloney, Smyth and Fraser have recently suggested that in an increasingly complex social landscape of diverse family forms and parenting arrangements, some families would benefit from facilitated joint discussions about workable financial solutions to questions of ongoing parenting obligations – solutions that may fall outside the administrative assessment guidelines that inform child support determinations. This session explores several questions: (a) Which child support issues typically get raised in Primary Dispute Resolution practice? (b) How has child support been thought about within the broader family law system in Australia? (c) Where can separating parents go to get help to talk with each other about child support? and (d) What might a system look like that can simultaneously accommodate the discussion of parenting arrangements and child support?

SESSION 8: RESEARCH TRANSLATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

PROFESSOR BRYAN RODGERS

In this session, Professor Bryan Rodgers will start to join some of the dots between findings across sessions, and discuss (a) research translation issues, and (b) lines of inquiry for future research.

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

DR SHARON BESSELL

Sharon Bessell is a senior lecturer and Director of the Children's Policy Centre at the Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University. Sharon's research interests revolve around social policy, social justice and the human rights of children. Her research has focused on issues of children's participation and citizenship; child labour; child protection; support for children without parental care; children, communities and social capital; and quality education. Sharon has a keen interest in research methodology, and has published widely on undertaking research with children. She has worked in Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific as a researcher, with non-government organisations and as a consultant.

DR ANDREW BICKERDIKE

Andrew Bickerdike is CEO of Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) and Deputy President of Relationships Australia National. He holds tertiary qualifications in both economics and psychology and a

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Doctorate in dispute resolution. Andrew has experience and specialist training in individual, marital and family therapy, and family dispute resolution and has practiced as a mediator and family dispute resolution practitioner for over 15 years. He has a particular interest in research and evaluation and has initiated and many research projects examining the efficacy of family services programs, and in particular mediation services, in the naturalistic setting. These have attracted national and international interest and have influenced the design of models of practice. Andrew is a member of the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council (NADRAC), a member of the National Advisory Board of the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia and a member of the Civil Justice Evidence Base Working Group.

PROFESSOR RICHARD CHISHOLM AM

After graduating with degrees from Sydney and Oxford, Richard was admitted as a solicitor, and later as a barrister, and worked as an academic at the Law School at University of New South Wales, specialising in family and children's law. In 1993 he was appointed a Judge of the Family Court of Australia. Since retirement from the bench in 2004, he has resumed academic work and is currently an Adjunct Professor of Law at the Australian National University College of Law. He has worked with various bodies associated with law reform and children's rights, and is an honorary consultant to Family Relationship Services Australia and a member of the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) Advisory Council. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2009.

DR KAY COOK

Kay Cook's is a Vice Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow within the Centre for Applied Social Research at RMIT University. Her work explores how new and developing social policies such as welfare-to-work, child support and child care policies, transform relationships between individuals, families and the state. By making explicit the connections between political processes and subjective responses, Dr Cook seeks to provide tangible evidence to policymakers and service providers to affect more humanistic reform. To this end, Dr Cook's work has been taken up by the Australian Law Reform Commission in their inquiry into Family Violence and Commonwealth Law, and her current research directly informs the federal Department of Human Services' delivery of welfare services. Dr Cook is the incoming Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Family Studies and co-convenor of the Australian Sociological Association Family, Relationships and Gender thematic group.

PROFESSOR MEREDITH EDWARDS AM

Meredith Edwards is Emeritus Professor at the University of Canberra. She is an economist who has been a lecturer, researcher, policy analyst and administrator through her career. From 1983 to 1997, she advised on some major social policy, education and labour market issues in the Commonwealth Public Service, including in the role of Deputy Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet from 1993. She served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra from 1997 to 2002, and set up the National Institute for Governance in 1999, of which she was Director until 2004. She is the author of Social Policy, Public Policy: From Problem to Practice – based on case studies she was involved in during her career in the Commonwealth Public Service. Meredith was a member of the Wran Committee on Higher Education Funding (1988-1989) and a member of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (1988-90 and 1994-2001). She is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), and was President of the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand (ACT Branch) from 1994-1996. Meredith chaired a review of the research program of ANZSOG in 2007. She is Chair of the Board of the Closing the Gap Clearing House, member of the ANPHA Research Advisory Committee and she is a member of the United National Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

MICHAEL FLETCHER

Michael Fletcher has more than 25 years' experience as an economic and social policy advisor and researcher. His main areas of research have been social welfare, family assistance policies, child support, and employment policy. He is currently a Senior Lecturer at the School of Social Sciences and Public Policy, AUT University, Auckland. Prior to this, Michael held various senior positions in the New Zealand public service including General Manager, Policy and Research at the New Zealand Families Commission and Principal Advisor, Social Assistance, at the Ministry of Social Development. He has also acted as a consultant researcher or advisor to a number of Government agencies including the New Zealand Treasury, the Department of Labour and the Ministry for Maori Development/Te Puni Kōkiri, the

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Government's 2011 Welfare Working Group. In 2008 he co-authored a major report on child poverty for the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Barnardos. Michael holds a post-graduate degree in Economics and is currently completing a PhD on the financial costs of separation in New Zealand and the New Zealand Child Support system. He is the Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy's New Zealand correspondent.

KIM FRASER

Kim Fraser is a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner, Educator and Trainer at the Family Mediation Centre (FMC) Mediation and Counselling VIC. Kim commenced her career with FMC 24 years ago as a Financial Counsellor. It is this unique skill set that she takes with her into her mediations. Kim educates and trains both the public and students in dispute resolution, children and property matters.

PROFESSOR MATTHEW GRAY

Matthew Gray is Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and Director of Research, College of Arts and Social Sciences. He was previously Deputy Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2005–2010), and has published research on a wide range of social and economic policy issues including those related to Indigenous Australians. He has particular expertise in work and family issues, labour economics, social capital and social inclusion, measuring wellbeing, the economic consequences of divorce, child support, and social and economic policy development. He has undertaken extensive work on economic policy issues involving Indigenous Australians, including health status, labour market outcomes, poverty and the CDEP scheme. Professor Gray has extensive experience in evaluating major government policies and programs having led the Australian Institute of Family Studies evaluation of the 2006 changes to the family law system and having been heavily involved in evaluating the Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. He has undertaken consultancies for a wide range of organisations including the Attorney-General's Department, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations, the former Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, OECD, and the New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation. During 2004-05 Professor Gray was a member of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support.

JENNIFER HANNAN

Jennifer is Executive GM, Services for Anglicare WA and has worked as a Therapist and a Manager in FSP Services for 30 years. Jennifer oversees Counselling and Education Services, Men's Services, Domestic Violence Services, Family Dispute Resolution Services, Contact Services, the Parenting Orders Programme, three Family Relationship Centres and Community for Children's programmes across WA. Jennifer is currently on the Board of FRSA and also has positions on a number of other Boards including, the Department for Child Protection Department (WA) Case Review Board, the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre Board and the Family Law Council of Australia.

PROFESSOR PETER MCDONALD AM

Peter McDonald is Professor of Demography in the Crawford School. He is President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population for the years, 2010-2013 and is a Member of the Council of Advisers of Population Europe. He is frequently consulted on the issue of population futures (causes, consequences and policies) by governments around the world, especially in Australia, Europe and East Asia. In 2008, he was appointed as a Member in the Order of Australia. He is Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research. In 2012, he was appointed as an inaugural ANU Public Policy Fellow. He is a member of the Australian Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration. He has worked previously at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the World Fertility Survey and the University of Indonesia.

DR HAYLEY MCKENZIE

Hayley McKenzie is currently an Early Career Development Fellow at Deakin University. She completed her PhD in 2012 with the thesis entitled 'Accepting the unacceptable: Patriarchal hegemony and child support arrangements', which explored how single mothers understood their child support arrangements. This sociological project was framed by a critical feminist epistemology, and drew on the qualitative methods of constructivist grounded theory and situational analysis. Given the grounded theory approach,

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

the thesis progressively built a process model of how low-income payee mothers came to accept what they considered to be unacceptable child support arrangements, a situation that was entrenched due to their reliance on state income support payments which mandated the collection of child support payments. Her current research and teaching interests focus on family and social policy, and exploring the inequities experienced by particular social groups who are reliant on social and institutional policies.

PROFESSOR LAWRIE MOLONEY

Lawrie Moloney is a Senior Research Fellow (part time) at AIFS and also holds an adjunct professorial position with the School of Public Health in the Faculty of Health Sciences at La Trobe University. Lawrie is a practising psychologist and family therapist who has published more than 200 articles, chapters, books and reports mainly in the area of children, parenting and separation. He is interested in the theory and practice of dispute resolution, especially within a family context, and in the practice questions and social issues arising out of what is broadly termed "family law". Lawrie is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Family Studies.

JUDGE GEOFFREY MONAHAN

Geoffrey Monahan is a Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia sitting in Sydney hearing family law and child support cases. Prior to his appointment in 2008 he was an Associate Professor in law at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and prior to that, he was in private practice as a solicitor. His Honour is the author and co-author of several books including 'Family Law in Australia' Butterworths, 8th edition, 2013. He is also the co-editor of the book 'Children and the Law in Australia' published by Butterworths in 2008. His Honour was a past editor of Current Family Law and he is currently on the editorial board of the Family Law Review. He has also enjoyed a long association with the International Bar Association (IBA) and is currently the Secretary of the IBA's Judges Forum. His Honour was also a long-serving member of both the Family Law and Children's legal Issues Committees of the NSW Law Society and he was President of the Inner West (Sydney) Law Society from 1997-2000.

DR KRISTIN NATALIER

Kristin Natalier is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology in the School of Social Sciences, University of Tasmania. Dr Natalier is an expert in qualitative methods, specifically in-depth interviewing and qualitative policy analysis. In the field of child support studies, Dr Natalier has published in Australia and internationally on how mothers and fathers understand child support money both as an economic resource and a means of managing relationships between parents, and between parents and children. Thus, modes of transfer, compliance and the use of child support reflect mothers' and fathers' responses to both their financial position and their relationship with each other and their children.

CLIVE PRICE

Clive Price is the Director of UnitingCare Unifam Counselling and Mediation, and is based in Sydney. He is a qualified family therapist, and is recognized as one of the most experienced Family Dispute Resolution practitioners in Australia.

PROFESSOR BRYAN RODGERS

Bryan Rodgers is Professor of Family Health & Wellbeing at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute, Australian National University (ANU), and a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Principal Research Fellow. He is author of over 200 publications, mostly in international academic journals. He was co-author with Jan Pryor of Children in Changing Families: Life After Parental Separation (Blackwell; 2001). Bryan's research interests include: the epidemiology of common mental disorders, substance use and gambling; childhood predictors of adult mental health; the interaction between family relationships and mental health; interventions to prevent mental health problems and minimise their impact on social and economic functioning.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BRUCE SMYTH

Bruce Smyth is an Associate Professor at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute, Australian National University, and was recently awarded an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship to study the high conflict post-divorce shared-time family. Prior to this Bruce worked at the

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Australian Institute of Family Studies as a Senior Research Fellow, and was a member of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support. He has published widely in the area of post-separation parenting.

DR VU SON

Vu has a PhD in economics from the Australian National University, and is currently working at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute as a data analyst on the Child Support Reform Study with Bruce Smyth and Bryan Rodgers. His areas of interest include: applied micro-economics; poverty and inequality; post-separation financial living standards; and child support.

MARIA VNUK

Maria Vnuk has been working in the area of child support and family research for 17 years. She has a Masters in Public Policy and is currently a PhD candidate at the Australian National University. Her thesis topic is "Separated mothers with a child support liability in Australia: Does gender matter?" She is a Senior Researcher in child support policy for the Department of Social Services and is a partner investigator on the ANU Child Support Reform Study.

RUTH WESTON PSM

Ruth Weston joined the Australian Institute of Families Studies in 1982, after training as a psychologist at the University of Melbourne. Much of her work at the Institute has focused on family transitions and wellbeing at both macro- and micro-levels. In the 2008 Australia Day Honours List, Ruth received an award of the Public Service Medal (PSM) "for outstanding public service as a researcher and contributor to policy development, particularly in the areas of separation and divorce, family law, family relationships, fertility decision-making and child support." Ruth has undertaken research on contract for various Commonwealth and State Departments.

PROFESSOR PETER WHITEFORD

Peter Whiteford is a Professor in the Crawford School of Public Policy at The Australian National University, Canberra. Between 2008 and 2012 he worked at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney. He previously worked as a Principal Administrator in the Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris. His work at the OECD encompassed pension and welfare policies in OECD countries, Eastern Europe and China. He also worked on child poverty, family assistance policies, welfare reform, and other aspects of social policy, particularly ways of supporting the balance between work and family life. He has published extensively on various aspects of the Australian and New Zealand systems of income support. In July 2008, he was appointed by the Australian government to the Reference Group for the Harmer Review of the Australian pension system. He was an invited keynote speaker at the Melbourne Institute-Australia's Future Tax and Transfer Policy Conference held in June 2009 as part of the Henry Review of Australia's Future Tax System, and he participated in the Australian Government Tax Forum held in Canberra in October 2011.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LISA YOUNG

Lisa Young is a graduate of the University of Western Australia and Cambridge and admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Western Australia and the High Court. After practising as a commercial and then family lawyer, Lisa moved to academia first at the University of Western Australia and then Murdoch University. She has taught family law for 20 years and is lead author of Family Law in Australia as well as joint Editor of Children and the Law in Australia. Lisa has been the Editor of the Australian Journal of Family Law since January 2012 and publishes in the area of children, property and child support. Lisa has been a Senior Case Officer with Child Support, DHS for 15 years.

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