

**Attachment E1****Review of Family Relationship Services****Draft Project Information Sheet – Client (parent/carer) - Interview****Participant Information Sheet  
Client Interviews**

**Project Title:** Review of Family Relationship Services

**Researchers:**

**Chief Investigator** – Dr Rachel Carson (AIFS)

**Co- Investigators**

Dr Rae Kaspiew (AIFS – Research Director Systems and Services)

Dr Lixia Qu (AIFS)

Mr John De Maio (AIFS)

Dr Jody Hughes (AIFS)

Dr Luke Gahan (AIFS)

Dr Kei Sakata (AIFS)

Ms Liz Wall (AIFS)

Dr Emily Stevens (AIFS)

Dr Briony Horsfall (AIFS)

Ms Sarah Callahan (AIFS)

Ms Sarah Nguyen (AIFS)

Ms Daisy Smith (AIFS)

Dr Salma Ahmed (AIFS)

Dr Nina Hudson (AIFS)

**External Co-investigators**

Professor Victoria Hovane (Tjallara Consulting Ptd Ltd) (First Nations Research Partner)

Mr Graeme Head (External Review Lead)

**Organisation:** Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

**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 how the current Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP) are meeting 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 aid us to understand the needs of separated and separating families and whether services funded under FRSP are meeting these needs. <It is important for the research and Review

to understand the needs of First Nations families and how well they are met by FRSP and other services.>

Interviews with individuals regarding the services obtained for separated and separating families (adults and children) 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 late 2023, the Australian Attorney-General, the Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC MP, announced that Andrew Metcalf 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 by the Australian Attorney-General's Department to undertake research between late October 2023 and June 2024 that will inform this Review and these interviews are an important part of this research.

### **Why have I been invited to participate?**

You have been invited to participate because we would like to gain information about the services provided for separated and separating families (adults and children) and gain the perspective of people who have used these services or may need them. Eligibility criteria is outlined on page 4 of this document.

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

Participation 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. Your decision to participate will make no difference to any current or future contact you might have with Family Relationship Support Services, family law services or the courts. If you do decide to leave the study, you will need to do this by emailing [FRSPinterviews@aifs.gov.au](mailto:FRSPinterviews@aifs.gov.au) by April 1, 2024.

### **What will the researchers do and when?**

The researchers will be arranging a series of interviews to talk to adults from separated or separating couples to discuss services in relation to their separation. Participation in an interview will involve responding to a range of questions about your experiences using services for separated and/or separating families (adults and/or children), and for those who have not used services, the reasons why no services were used.

Interviews will happen from January 2024 to March 2024. Interviews will take approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted by telephone or in person. The interview can be arranged at a time that is convenient for you. As a thank you, we will give you a \$50 Woolworths or Coles grocery gift card (electronic or physical card). These cards cannot be used for the purchase of alcohol or cigarettes.

### **What will happen to my information?**

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

We take your privacy and personal security very 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 spoken to us. Your participation will not affect your entitlement to any services.
- Participants will be asked to not reveal personal identifying detail on other participants outside the interview setting.
- Only the interview and/or focus group organiser will have access to the recording and/or transcripts.
- The company used by AIFS for qualitative research transcription is subject to strong data security and privacy processes. An encrypted filing procedure will be adhered to between AIFS and the transcription service provider to ensure privacy and confidentiality of interview participants.
- We will verify transcripts and remove identifying information (such as your name, organisation name and specific suburb/city/town name) provided in any discussions.
- Additionally, you will be free to stop the interview at any time, to not answer any questions, and can request that we not use any information we have collected from the interview up to seven days after the interview.
- Our project report will only include the de-identified/anonymised interview 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. We have also given you a copy of our protocol guidelines. These have more information on available support if you become distressed or upset.

Additional measures to protect participants from risk include:

- You can choose not to answer a question during the interview.
- You are free to stop the interview at any time.
- You can ask that we not use any information we have collected from the interview up to 7 days after the interview.

### **Data Storage**

During the project the data collected in this research will be held securely in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the information you provide will not be used in any way that may identify you. You may access our privacy policy at [AIFS Privacy Policy | Australian Institute of Family Studies](#).

With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded, and all the information collected will be kept in a safe and secure place. All identifying information will be removed from the transcript. The original recordings and transcript will be destroyed once the de-identified transcript has been verified. Only approved members of the research team will have access to the information. 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 interviews touch 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. You can also request that any information you provide be excluded from the recording or deleted by the research team.

## **Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

To be eligible to participate you need to be over 18 years of age and be separating or recently separated from a partner. We wish to talk to adults from separated or separating couples who have:

- used FRSP services,
- used other (non FRSP) services, and
- not used any services for separating couples (i.e., have settled matters privately).

## **Contacts**

***Please contact the research team to arrange an interview if you are interested in helping with this important study on [FRSPinterviews@aifs.gov.au](mailto:FRSPinterviews@aifs.gov.au).***

If you would like any more information, please call the Australian Institute of Family Studies on 03 9214 7992.

## **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: [www.aifs.gov.au](http://www.aifs.gov.au).

## **Complaints**

Concerns or complaints relating to the project may be directed to:

- the AIFS Ethics Committee Secretariat at the following email address: [ethics-secretariat@aifs.gov.au](mailto:ethics-secretariat@aifs.gov.au) or on (03) 9214 7888,

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 has 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](http://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](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au).

**1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** provides support to people impacted by sexual assault, domestic violence, family violence, or abuse. You may call any time - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is also a chat online available at any time too.

**Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636)** provides support, information and referrals to anyone experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety, or who is experiencing a difficult time. You may call any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is online chat between 3pm and 12midnight (AEST), 7 days a week.

**Lifeline – (13 11 14)** provides crisis support and suicide prevention services to anyone experiencing a personal crisis. You can call Lifeline on 13 11 14 at any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is also an online Crisis Support Chat between 7pm and 12 midnight (AEDT), 7 days a week

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](http://www.1800respect.org.au).

Call **000** if you are worried about your safety, or the safety of another person.