



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

EI
2018
ENGAGEMENT
AND IMPACT



Engagement and Impact 2018

University of South Australia

USA16 (SS) - Impact

Overview

Title

(Title of the impact study)

Reforming child protection policy and practice

Unit of Assessment

16 - Studies In Human Society

Additional FoR codes

(Identify up to two additional two-digit FoRs that relate to the overall content of the impact study.)

13 - Education

17 - Psychology and Cognitive Sciences

Socio-Economic Objective (SEO) Codes

(Choose from the list of two-digit SEO codes that are relevant to the impact study.)

92 - Health

93 - Education and Training

94 - Law, Politics and Community Services

95 - Cultural Understanding

97 - Expanding Knowledge

Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) Codes

(Choose from the list of two-digit ANZSIC codes that are relevant to the impact study.)

80 - Preschool and School Education

81 - Tertiary Education

86 - Residential Care Services

85 - Medical and Other Health Care Services
87 - Social Assistance Services
69 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (Except Computer System Design and Related Services)
75 - Public Administration

Keywords

(List up to 10 keywords related to the impact described in Part A.)

Child Protection

Child Abuse and Neglect

Evidence-Based

Public Health Approach

Aboriginal Children

Sensitivities

Commercially sensitive

No

Culturally sensitive

No

Sensitivities description

(Please describe any sensitivities in relation to the impact study that need to be considered, including any particular instructions for ARC staff or assessors, or for the impact study to be made publicly available after EI 2018.)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research flag

(Is this impact study associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content?)

NOTE - institutions may identify impact studies where the impact, associated research and/or approach to impact relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations, communities, language, place, culture and knowledges and/or is undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations, and/or communities.)

Yes

Science and Research Priorities

(Does this impact study fall within one or more of the Science and Research Priorities?)

Yes

Science and Research Priority	Practical Research Challenge
Health	Better models of health care and services that improve outcomes, reduce disparities for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, increase efficiency and provide greater value for a given expenditure.

Impact

Summary of the impact

(Briefly describe the specific impact in simple, clear English. This will enable the general community to understand the impact of the research.)

The impacts of child abuse and neglect are wide-ranging, devastating and intergenerational. The University of South Australia's (UniSA) Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) has led the national response with the world-first utilisation model for the application of evidence and research to inform policies and support strategies and programs in child protection. This has informed every significant Australian inquiry into the child protection system and reform efforts over the past fifteen years. UniSA has shaped national intervention frameworks (e.g. National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, with 70 national actions, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse), identifying priority action areas and developing indicators for monitoring progress.

Beneficiaries

(List up to 10 beneficiaries related to the impact study)

Vulnerable Australian children and families including families over-represented in the child protection system

Human services practitioners and professionals

Policy makers and agencies

Non-government agencies and peak bodies

Government departments and decision makers including: Federal Departments of Social Services and Human Services

State Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Child Protection, Health, Communities and Social Inclusion, Education and Child Development

Attorney General's Department

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, refugee families and families who have experienced homelessness

Countries in which the impact occurred

(Search the list of countries and add as many as relate to the location of the impact)

Australia

England
Scotland
Ireland
Switzerland
Finland
Canada
United States of America

Details of the impact

(Provide a narrative that clearly outlines the research impact. The narrative should explain the relationship between the associated research and the impact. It should also identify the contribution the research has made beyond academia, including:

- *who or what has benefitted from the results of the research (this should identify relevant research end-users, or beneficiaries from industry, the community, government, wider public etc.)*
- *the nature or type of impact and how the research made a social, economic, cultural, and/or environmental impact*
- *the extent of the impact (with specific references to appropriate evidence, such as cost-benefit-analysis, quantity of those affected, reported benefits etc.)*
- *the dates and time period in which the impact occurred.*

NOTE - the narrative must describe only impact that has occurred within the reference period, and must not make aspirational claims.)

For the past fifteen years, UniSA's ACCP has led an evidence-based approach to every significant Australian inquiry into the child protection system and subsequent reform effort. UniSA has overseen more than 150 projects in the field of child welfare, undertaking a multi-million-dollar program of research into the prevention of and response to child abuse and neglect. In doing so, it has developed far-reaching frameworks and supported more than 5,000 policymakers and practitioners in the field and made a significant impact on one of the biggest social and health challenges of our time.

The impacts of child abuse and neglect are wide-ranging, devastating and intergenerational. It is estimated that 5-10 percent of Australian adults have experienced physical abuse in childhood, with 4-8 percent of boys and 7-12 percent of girls experiencing penetrative sexual abuse. UniSA recognised that a research-driven evidence base and uptake of research to guide decision making and program development in child protection was lacking. In response, UniSA's ACCP led innovations that have improved knowledge creation and dissemination systems, changing the interface between child protection practitioners and researchers. Its unique, world-first research-utilisation model has led to changes in national regulatory, policy and service systems, enhancing outcomes for children, families and practitioners, including direct interventions through program partnerships.

Research by UniSA and its partners provided the evidence base that underpinned the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020. The Framework arose from a landmark agreement between federal, state and territory governments and a coalition of over a hundred NGOs, creating an unprecedented, unified national approach to child protection. ACCP's research base directly informed the adoption of a 'public health approach' endorsed within the National Framework. UniSA publications are referenced throughout the Framework itself – its research shaped identification of priority action areas, informed indicators for monitoring progress and shaped the activities for the three Framework action plans developed to date.

The Framework resulted in over 70 national actions including new National Standards for Out of Home Care (2011), the creation of the position of National Children's Commissioner, workforce upskilling programs (including the direct training of over 5,000 practitioners and 40 master trainers in child focused practice across Australia) and the endorsement of a coherent national research agenda.

UniSA has broadened the traditional sources of research funding, enhancing return on investment and leveraging more than \$11 million in public, private and philanthropic funds for child protection research. The approach has led to improved workforce health and retention, and higher quality and reach of services. For example, ACCP's implementation of models in frontline service delivery in Alice Springs led to strategic workforce planning – enhancing the proportion of Aboriginal staff employed as practitioners in family support work, improving staff retention (0 percent turnover), enhancing reach and effectiveness of service delivery, with five times as many

families receiving services, and improving results on placement prevention and family reunification.

In 2016 the SA Government Child Protection Systems Royal Commission relied on research support and expert assistance from UniSA's ACCP, in particular its analysis of the implementation and outcomes of several prior state child protection inquiries. The Commission led to the drafting of the Children and Young People (Safety) Bill 2017 and the establishment of an Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) overseen by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, with a \$12 million investment by the state government.

UniSA is a key partner in EIRD, deploying evidence-based knowledge, data collection and mapping into the development of new strategies to better support vulnerable families and to ensure programs are effective. ACCP's critical analysis of the assumptions that underpinned failed reforms to date has shed new light on the reasons for contemporary failures in the system. Through rapid insight, realignment and testing cycles, new solutions have been implemented across multiple SA government portfolios.

UniSA researchers had a key role in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse from 2012. ACCP Co-Director, Prof Leah Bromfield, was appointed Professorial Fellow to the Royal Commission leading its extensive research program of over 100 research projects with 70 national and international research consortia. This approach to research and research translation established a new framework subsequently adopted internationally by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the UK.

UniSA has made significant efforts to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in care and protection systems, including by incubating the Positive Futures program at UniSA – the first Indigenous-governed and led institution dedicated to child protection. Working with grassroots providers, ACCP has supported the development, scale-up and \$90 million roll-out of 51 Indigenous Parenting Support Services across urban, regional, rural and remote NT and SA, providing intensive family support for Aboriginal families with children who are at risk of abuse/neglect. The program's provision of 1:1 support and emphasis on employing Aboriginal workers has helped Aboriginal families establish supportive networks and relationships among their communities.

Associated research

(Briefly describe the research that led to the impact presented for the UoA. The research must meet the definition of research in Section 1.9 of the EI 2018 Submission Guidelines. The description should include details of:

- what was researched
- when the research occurred
- who conducted the research and what is the association with the institution)

For more than fifteen years UniSA has lead a strategic and systematic approach to understand the evidence base of the child protection sector, including the nation's first audit of child protection research and its strengths and limitations in informing child protection practice, policy and legislation in Australia and internationally. Partnering with end users such as UnitingCare and the Australian Institute of Family Studies, UniSA created new theoretical insights into how research could be used in child protection policy and practice, and developed translational interactive methods with research users (policy makers and practitioners) to enhance the uptake and application of research in child protection.

UniSA researchers provided ongoing data, analysis and expert advice from 2012 onwards to the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. In 2014 UniSA's ACCP was engaged by the South Australian Child Protection Systems Royal Commission to research the assumptions underpinning longstanding child protection practice, the status of recommendations and actions arising from numerous independent child protection inquiries in South Australia and the effectiveness of child protection and care models.

FoR of associated research

(Up to three two-digit FoRs that best describe the associated research)

16 - Studies in Human Society

References (up to 10 references, 350 characters per reference)

(This section should include a list of up to 10 of the most relevant research outputs associated with the impact)

McDougall et al., Parkinson, S., Lewig, K., and Arney, F. (2016) The implementation of recommendations made by independent child protection inquiries in South Australia: A report to the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, Australian Centre for Child Protection, Adelaide.

Bromfield, L., Hirte, C., Octoman, O. & Katz, I. (2014). 'Child Sexual Abuse in Australian Institutional Contexts: Final Report', delivered to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Arney, F. & Scott, D., Eds. (2013) Working With Vulnerable Families A Partnership Approach. Second edition. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Bromfield, L., Lamont, A., Parker, R., et al. (2010) "Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: The cooccurrence of domestic violence, parental substance, misuse, and mental health problems, NCPC Issues, No. 33. <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/issues-safety-and-wellbeing-children-families>

Humphreys, C., Holzer, P., Scott, D., Arney, F., Bromfield, L., Higgins, D. & Lewig, K. (2010). The planets aligned? Is child protection policy reform good luck or good management? *Australian Journal of Social Work*, 63(2): 145163.

Lewig, K., Arney, F., Salveron, M. (2010). Challenges to parenting in a new culture: Implications for child and family welfare. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 33(3):32432.

Arney, F., Bromfield, L., Lewig, K., Holzer, P. (2009) Integrating strategies for delivering evidenceinformed practice. *Evidence and Policy*, 5(2), 179191.

Scott, D. (2009). The landscape of child maltreatment. *The Lancet*, Vol 373 No 9658, 101102.

Bromfield, L.M. & Arney, F. (2008) Developing a road map for research: Identifying the priorities for a national child protection research agenda. *Child Abuse Prevention Issues*, 28.

Higgins, D.J., Adams, R.M., Bromfield,L.M, Richardson, N., & Aldana, M.S. (2005) National Audit of Australian Child Protection Research 1995-2004.

Additional impact indicator information

Additional impact indicator information

(Provide information about any indicators not captured above that are relevant to the impact study, for example return on investment, jobs created, improvements in quality of life years (QALYs). Additional indicators should be quantitative in nature and include:

- name of indicator (100 characters)*
- data for indicator (200 characters)*
- brief description of indicator and how it is calculated (300 characters.)*