

Family support services in Australia

These approaches to the provision of family support help shape the current and planned family support services which are within the scope of this study. The high-level description of services provided or funded by community services departments describes:

- 'in scope' services which are common to all jurisdictions
- 'in scope' services which are (apparently) unique to a particular jurisdiction or jurisdictions
- 'in scope' services which are planned or which are in the process of being established
- primarily where each 'in scope' service activity sits on the 'continuum of care' scale, noting that these may contain services operating at more than one point of this scale
- services which are 'on the borderline' in that they contain strong elements of family support, but may also have a specific issue focus

In outlining the services provided, the scope boundary relating to definition of 'community services departments' should be kept in mind. This is critical to any assessment of the services available to Australian families. Because of the diverse nature of the community services portfolios in each jurisdiction, some services are included as 'family support services' in some jurisdictions, but not in others. This situation can be illustrated in the area of initial support services for new mothers. These services exist in many jurisdictions but, because they are often delivered through maternal and child health workers, they are included in this scoping study where community services and health are in the same department, but are not included for those jurisdictions where health is in a separate department.

The services described below are either provided directly by community services departments, or by agencies funded under specific programs. A summary of the funding programs as at June 2000 is shown below.

Jurisdiction	Funding Programs
New South Wales	Community Services Grants Program Families First
Victoria	Victorian Parenting Services Family Support Program Strengthening Families
Queensland	Child Protection and Family Support Community Support Services Child Care
Western Australia	Family Support and Neighbourhood Houses Home Visiting Services Parenting Services
South Australia	Family and Community Development
Tasmania	Community Services Program
Australian Capital Territory	Children's Services Program Family, Individual and Community Support Program
Northern Territory	Family and Children's Services
Commonwealth	Family Relationships Services Program Former Department of Health and Family Services funded agencies services Stronger Families and Communities

It is important to note that not all services funded under these programs provide 'in scope' family support services. Often, a single funding program may cover a wide range of services, including domestic violence, emergency relief, child abuse prevention and the like. Family support services can usually be isolated to a certain degree, but there is considerable overlap in the services provided. Certain pragmatic funding decisions and historical anomalies may also impact on services funded under particular programs.

In addition, other government departments provide a wide range of family support services. These are not considered in this report. Examples include the parenting education programs run by Queensland Health, and the counselling programs which are operated in rural areas by primary industry departments or their equivalent. Education departments in the States and Territories also run programs which could be within the definition of family support services, and these programs are also not examined in this phase.

'In scope' family support services

As outlined in the Program Logic Statement on pages 4–6, for this report family support services are grouped into six categories: information and referral; education/skills development; counselling, mediation and therapy; residential and in-home support; advocacy; and 'other'.

Information and referral

Media information campaigns—parenting

Most of the jurisdictions visited undertake a range of media campaigns designed to raise awareness of particular issues and to provide information about services and resources available to the public and to professional staff. These campaigns may be associated with particular budget initiatives, such as the Commonwealth's Strengthening Families and Communities Strategy which involved wide dissemination of kits containing information on the strategy, as well as information sessions.

Media campaigns are conducted regularly by States and Territories, and tend to focus on parenting—often with an emphasis on tips for good parenting. Promotion of parenting information and resources forms an important part of such campaigns. The program of campaigns may be a regular one, such as is the case in Western Australia, which conducts regular corporate communications activities, or campaigns which are linked to particular initiatives, such as the launch of parenting resources.

Media campaigns are universal in nature, and work at the primary, preventive end of the continuum of care.

Media information campaigns—'Weeks' and 'Days'

Several topic-specific 'weeks' are celebrated throughout the year. While most are State-specific, others are national. Some topics of focus are clearly out of scope for this study—such as Domestic Violence Prevention Week, Child Protection Week, etc. Others have strong claims to be considered within the scope, such as weeks focussing on particular age groups, such as 'Under 8's week' which, in addition to activities for children, involves information for parents as well. These 'weeks' seek to bring important issues relating to families to public attention, and provide information, resources and activities for parents and children.

Similarly, international 'days' are often used by jurisdictions to focus attention on family issues. An example in recent years was the launch of the departmental web site, including new parenting guides, in Queensland on International Families Day, followed by a family 'picnic in the park', partly sponsored by the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care Queensland.

'Weeks' and 'Days' are universal in nature, and work at the primary, preventive end of the continuum of care.

Commonwealth Communication Strategy

The Communication Strategy under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy will, amongst other initiatives, promote and reinforce the significance of good parenting and strong family relationships to children, communities and Australia's future. A range of media will be used to promote the strategies, with \$8 million committed over 4 years.

Departments are increasingly using the Internet as a medium for dissemination of information to the public, with web sites often containing information about departmental family support initiatives, and online access to information about services and resources available.

Parenting centres

Several jurisdictions have parenting centres. These centres may be central, statewide services or regional or local centres, or a combination of both. Some may be provided from mobile resource libraries or similar.

Parenting centres provide a venue or service for parents to access resources, and to find information about parenting topics of relevance to their circumstances. Parenting centres may also provide some 'on the spot' advice or counselling to parents, and will provide referrals to appropriate services.

Parenting centres also operate, or are planned, in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. In the Australian Capital Territory, this service is provided by the Regional Community Services. Many of the resources have been shared in some sense across the States, and initiatives in one State may have been adapted on occasions by others to meet local needs and conditions.

Parenting centres are generally developed, staffed and operated by departmental officers. In Victoria, some regional parenting centres are funded by the department and operated by the non-government agency. These are the Parent Link services.

Family centres

These centres are similar to parenting centres, but are not limited to parenting issues. Examples include the family centres to be funded under the New South Wales Families First strategy. These are 'one stop shops' for families and provide information and a focal point for other family support services. They will negotiate with service providers to conduct parenting information or other sessions, such as parent skills workshops, networking or other identified service needs. A similar centre, with a broader range of services, has been planned in Queensland.

Parent Lines (or Family Lines)

These are generally 24-hour telephone services which offer information, advice, referrals and brief counselling and support to parents and families. In most cases they are departmentally managed and operated, although the Queensland service is provided by a non-government agency. Staff may come from a variety of backgrounds, including health, education, child protection or other community services.

These services have a universal focus, and are widely used by parents from all backgrounds, and with children of all ages.

Parent Line services may produce their own resources, or use those of the parenting centres. Parenting SA provides an example of integration of the development and production of resource materials, and the delivery of the telephone service. This service is highly regarded throughout the community.

The only jurisdiction without a specific Parent Line service is the Northern Territory, which is considering either establishing one, or partnering with another State to provide services.

Information and referral activities generally fall within the primary or universal category along the continuum of care.

Education/skills development

Research, development and production of resources and education programs

An important facet of the work of parenting or family centres, and of individual departments, is the development of resources, particularly in relation to parenting.

Centres in most State and Territory jurisdictions, including centres such as Parenting SA, the Victorian Parenting Centre, and the Queensland Positive Parenting Coordination Section, all produce comprehensive parenting guides. These may be in the form of 'tip sheets' such as in South Australia, magazines such as in New South Wales and Western Australia or age-specific booklets such as in Queensland. Many of the resources are also available on departmental web sites.

Statewide parenting or family centres also take a lead role in development of parenting education. For example, the Victorian Parenting Centre is a statewide service established in 1997. It is engaged in research and evaluation of parenting education strategies and resource materials, and produces a range of multimedia culturally sensitive resource materials and proactive strategies relating to parenting and family development for providers of local multidisciplinary family services and for families. It delivers training to parenting professionals, provides statewide coordination of parenting skills development services and supports, develops and promotes empirically validated models of parenting education. It has a best practice focus, and ensures that professionals working with children and families have access to high quality resources and training in the delivery of parenting education.

Parenting centres in most jurisdictions use the 'Positive Parenting Program' developed by the University of Queensland in the education and skills building courses they conduct. The Northern Territory, which does not have a parenting centre, is soon to fund a non-government agency to deliver this program for families in the Territory.

Under the Commonwealth's planned Stronger Families Fund, a national clearing house will be established for local communities to access information and research on successful projects.

Family relationships education

Family relationships education is largely provided by the Commonwealth, under the Family Relationships Services Program. The program is a universal, preventive service which aims to provide skills to enable people to develop stable and positive relationships. Courses are directed at people throughout the relationship cycle, from pre-marriage, during marriage, when re-partnering, divorcing, parenting—from birth of children to adolescents, children moving from home (empty nest)—and retirement. Course materials may be set or negotiated with participants, to address particular issues.

Some other jurisdictions fund organisations which provide relationships education as part of an overall parenting or family education program. However, the majority of services providing specific relationships education are funded by the Commonwealth. Specialist services are directed to Indigenous communities, men, and young women.

In addition, relationships education will be provided in new and responsive ways through the Early Intervention, Parenting and Family Relationship Support agenda of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

Parenting education

Most jurisdictions provide or fund organisations which provide parenting and/or family skills education programs for parents. Some of these are provided through parenting centres, as noted above. These services may be delivered as group programs, or as individualised programs for families. Some services focus on particular parenting issues, while others may focus on particular parenting circumstances, such as sole parenting or fatherhood. Services are designed to provide participants with practical skills, resources and support to assist them to more effectively fulfil their role as parents or family members.

Skills development programs are generally formalised, and will often run for several sessions.

Examples of these programs include the Commonwealth's Family Relationships Skills Training program, which provides structured group and individual skills training for families, with specialist services directed to Indigenous families and to men; the parenting courses conducted by the Western Australian Parenting Help Centre, the Victorian Parenting Centre, and in most jurisdictions by either parenting or family centres or non-government agencies or both.

Services are generally universal, but may also be directed to selected groups of people. As with other universal services, participants may have particular issues or concerns, or simply be seeking to enhance their existing skills and to develop their ideas on parenting or family issues.

New services in this area will be provided under the Commonwealth's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, with the Early Intervention, Parenting and Family Relationship Support initiative earmarking funds for education programs.

Education and resource services for family support workers

These services are focussed not on the clients of family support services, but on the workers who undertake the direct service planning and delivery. In some jurisdictions, such as the Australian Capital Territory, these services may be funded specifically in the area of family support. In other jurisdictions, these activities may form part of a larger community services worker strategy, and be provided through peak organisations, such as the Councils of Social Services, Family Support (Services) Associations, and also by volunteer centres and other networks.

Another important means of providing support, resources and supervision for workers are the programs which are provided for volunteers, including volunteers who undertake home visiting. An example of this type of service is the Family Support Workers service type within the New South Wales Families First Strategy, where qualified family support workers are responsible for recruiting, training and supervising home volunteers. They match volunteers to families needing home visits, and develop other ways to support families, including development of parenting groups.

Although these types of services are not client focussed, they play an important part in delivering services to strengthen and support families in their parenting and relationship roles.

The Commonwealth will provide funds under the Early Intervention, Parenting and Family Relationship Support initiative of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to

develop and provide training resources for legal, medical and other professionals to help them identify, assist and refer individuals and families to needed support.

Education—ACT ‘unique’ services

A unique feature of the Australian Capital Territory is the community services department’s link with the school system. Education services and community services are in the same department, and close links have been developed by organisations funded under the Family, Individual and Community Support Program and local schools. The approach taken centres around looking at the student’s issues in the context of their family—the student is not seen as the sole client of the service being offered. Examples of these programs include the Woden School SASH (Schools Agencies Student Home) Program, which was developed to strengthen the links between the school, students and their families and the service providers involved with students at the school. Similarly, the Tuggeranong SupportLink community referral system, which allows teachers and school counsellors to refer people for assistance to a central information and referral coordination centre, has delivered anger management sessions in high schools in the local area as part of normal coursework.

- Services in other States and Territories may also provide similar programs within schools. Other education departments will also undertake (or fund) programs of this nature for students and their families. However, within the scope boundary of the study—services funded or provided by community services departments—the direct connection with schools programs as an integral part of family support services is not replicated in other jurisdictions.
- Education services and skills training may be at any point on the continuum of care, from the primary or universal end for broadly based parenting programs, through to the tertiary end, with intensive family skills work for individual families.

Counselling, mediation and therapy

Services falling into this category are generally selective or secondary services, in that they are directed to individuals or families who have particular issues, concerns or problems relating to their ability to care for their children, or their management of family relationships. All jurisdictions provide or fund services within this category. Services are usually centre-based, but may also be provided via telephone or during visits to the family’s home. A counselling service may often be the first point of referral from information and referral services. The nature of the counselling, mediation or therapy may vary widely, from ‘one-off’ telephone counselling sessions to ongoing, intensive counselling and therapy. Mediation services may be very intensive, with ongoing involvement of the separating parents of children or of young people and their parents or carers.

States and Territories fund counselling services under their general family support or similar programs. In the Northern Territory, departmental officers, particularly those providing services outside the main towns, provide counselling in relation to parenting issues and marriage guidance. In Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia, counselling services are part of many funded agencies’ services, and relate to both individuals and family groups.

The approach taken to counselling is illustrated in the Victorian family counselling program. This program is run by professional staff who offer structured guidance and support to

individual family members or groups of families. Family counsellors encourage and support families with difficulties such as partner relationships and parent-child relationships. Some family counselling agencies offer in-home support in addition to centre-based or telephone counselling. Some agencies will provide services to any person or family referred to them, while others are more targeted, particularly in relation to families with child protection concerns. Similar approaches are taken by services in other States and Territories.

The Commonwealth funds family relationships counselling services, family mediation services, and adolescent mediation and family therapy services. Specialist services are provided for men and young women. Most services are centre-based, and aim to assist couples to develop conflict resolution and negotiation skills to enable them to manage and resolve relationship issues.

Mediation services seek to assist parents to resolve issues during separation and divorce, including parenting responsibilities. Adolescent mediation programs assist participants to resolve conflict between the young people and their parents or carers. Therapy services work with the young person and their family to strengthen family relationships, in order to keep the young person in touch with their family.

These Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy services have a focus on preventing youth homelessness, and hence could be considered to be 'issue-based' and thus out of scope. However, departmental staff considered these services to be primarily related to strengthening family relationships, and thus, on balance, they have been included as 'in scope' for this study.

Residential and in-home support

In all jurisdictions, there are family support services which are provided in residential settings—sometimes specialist residential facilities, but most commonly in the family's own home.

Professional home visiting

Several State and Territories provide initial home visiting services as part of a universal child health and support program. In many States and Territories, these initial visits are by a child health nurse, operating from community health centres, hospitals or maternal and child health centres. Where health services are part of the community services department, these visits may be considered to be in scope for this study. Where responsibility for health is with another department, they will be excluded due to the scope boundary of this study.

These visits, which initially were primarily related to child health surveillance, are increasingly becoming more broadly based, with the aim of providing all new mothers with an initial visit by a professional worker to identify any problems or concerns which may exist in relation to the parents' ability to care for the child. The extent to which this shift has taken place varies.

In some States, an initial visit may be by a specialist Family Support Worker, such as is the case under the New South Wales Families First program. For families with specific needs, or where there is risk of harm to children, ongoing home visiting and casework may be undertaken, with weekly or fortnightly visits from appropriate professional staff. The aim of these services is to strengthen the family's capacity to care for their children. Modelling of positive parenting strategies by the in-home worker is a key service strategy. These families

may also access other services such as counselling services, parent education groups and the like, in addition to home visits.

In Western Australia, a new program of universal visiting of new mothers will be run as a joint initiative with the health department.

Volunteer home visiting

- Volunteers also provide in-home support. Generally, an agency is funded to recruit, train, supervise and match volunteers with families needing extra support. The in-home support programs focus on providing practical 'hands on' help and advice to families, often in their own homes. Volunteers provide friendship, and contacts with other families in the local community and assist with day to day tasks such as child minding, cooking and household cleaning. Part of the role of the volunteer is also to model positive parenting behaviour. Workers also assist families in learning about and accessing relevant community services. The program, in common with family counselling, is broadly targeted to families with support needs.
- In States and Territories, in-home visiting is part of larger funding programs. The Commonwealth's 'Good Beginnings' program, which has been implemented in a number of areas around the country, is an example of a specific program in its own right.

Good Beginnings is a family-centred program based on volunteer home visiting of families with new babies. Four pilot sites were established in 1997, with each project managed by a professional who is responsible for recruitment, screening and training of 'community parents'. These parents are matched with families who have been referred by local services or who have asked for home visiting. The program is voluntary, and is designed to provide practical assistance to families with babies and young children, particularly those who do not have other support systems.

The program is managed by Good Beginnings Australia Ltd, and includes on its Board of Directors representatives of NAPCAN and the Lions Club of Sydney who have been key players in the establishment of the program.

The program was developed by researching, developing and testing a number of family centred programs and initiatives. The project aims to develop strong family and community links necessary to strengthen families and neighbourhoods. This has been achieved partly by consultation with families in their home or local neighbourhood, identifying needs and building on existing strengths.

- In addition to family-focussed activities, the program is engaged in providing training and support for volunteer and professional staff; development of best practice guidelines; community information packages; and sharing of resources with local health, welfare and community agencies.
- Volunteer home visiting programs are placed primarily at the preventative end of the continuum of care. Formal training for workers has been developed in several States and Territories. In Victoria, a Certificate in Family Support Work is offered to provide a professional training opportunity in this field.

Residential programs

A number of jurisdictions provide residential services for families experiencing particular difficulties which cannot be adequately addressed by home visiting alone.

In Western Australia, for example, there is a centre providing intensive residential support for new mothers. The department and funded agencies also run programs at family camps venues, where families participate in a range of activities designed to enhance parenting skills and family relationships.

Early parenting centres are located in three areas of Victoria, and cover the State. These centres are primarily for mothers with new babies or children aged up to 3 years. Referrals are primarily from Maternal and Child Health nurses. The centres provide residential services up to 5 days, day stays, and some outreach services. In-home support is also provided.

Services may be on any point of the continuum of care, from the universal home visits from child health or family support workers, to the tertiary end for the intensive residential services.

Advocacy services

Family support services funded by various jurisdictions will advocate on behalf of clients as required. These advocacy activities are generally incorporated with other forms of family support. Some agencies are, however, funded specifically to provide individual advocacy services for people. These services, which may be run from neighbourhood centres or private houses or other community service venues, will assist individuals and families to access particular entitlements, such as government pensions or benefits, or will negotiate on behalf of the person with service providers.

Advocacy services are generally regarded as secondary services on the continuum of care.

Other family support services

Playgroups

Most jurisdictions fund agencies to provide playgroup services. These may be run by a coordinator, who will assist parents to provide playgroup activities for children and who will provide a non-threatening or non-stigmatising means of positive parenting behaviour modelling, as well as networking and referral for parents.

Playgroups and related activities may be provided in parents' homes, at community venues or in informal settings. A mobile crèche service operates in a number of States, including South Australia, and playgroups are run in caravan parks in Queensland.

Funding for additional playgroup services will be provided under the Commonwealth's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

Self-help groups and networks

These services may be separately funded under one of the State, Territory or Commonwealth programs, or be provided as part of the operations of a neighbourhood house or centre. Facilitation, coordination and support for these groups may be provided by family support workers attached to other community services agencies, or the group may have a funded coordinator position or worker.

Self-help groups and networks cover a wide range of issues, and may operate through regular meetings or group work sessions, drop in centres, specific activities or some combination of these.

Children's contact services

These services, which are funded by the Commonwealth under the Family Relationships Services Program, provide supervised handover of children between custodial and non-custodial parents. They may also provide supervised contacts where there is risk of harm to the child, or risk of the child not being returned to the custodial parent.

Best Start—a 'unique' Western Australian program

In Western Australia, Best Start focuses on Aboriginal parents and children, and provides extensive services throughout Perth, regional towns and remote areas of the State. It is targeted at parents or other carers with children aged from birth to 5 years, and provides a range of parenting skills and modelling services for parents and carers. Workshops, activities and playgroups are run by local coordinators to help improve the life opportunities for young children. Culturally appropriate materials and coordinator training conferences support the service delivery arm of the program. The program is a cross-departmental one, with involvement of the health and education departments.

These other support services may be located at the primary or secondary point along the continuum of care.

'Borderline' family support services

Children's/young people's/men's telephone services

A national Kids HelpLine provides telephone information, advice and assistance to children and young people and refers them to other services. These services can be considered to be 'borderline' family support, in that their focus is not solely on family issues, but may cover a range of other issues which the child or young person has. Similar telephone services and some Internet services for young people are provided in some jurisdictions, but usually through specific youth programs. Men's Info Lines and similar are also in operation in many areas. These services are primarily targeted at men as perpetrators or victims of domestic violence, but, due to lack of other available services, cover parenting, relationship and health issues as well.

Neighbourhood centres or houses

Neighbourhood centres or houses are a difficult area. In some jurisdictions, funding is provided to a neighbourhood house 'in scope' in some jurisdictions, such as Tasmania where they provide counselling, home visiting or similar services described above. In Western Australia, these services offer support to families, individuals and community groups in the form of practical assistance, informal counselling or advice, arranging group activities and linking to other community resources and support networks. The Community Link and Network (CLAN) services funded under this program recruit, train, supervise and support volunteers who go into homes to offer friendship, support and advice regarding

daily living matters especially with regard to raising and caring for children. Neighbourhood houses are moving away from their traditional role of offering a venue for recreation-based activities, and are moving towards providing social networking, knowledge and skills programs. Neighbourhood houses do not simply offer a venue for provision of services, but the actual services themselves.

In most States, however, neighbourhood houses are generally funded by community services departments for coordination of services only, not for service provision. Individual neighbourhood houses may develop services, which are then funded under other programs such as family support, disability, child care and the like. When separately funded for these activities, these activities are in scope for this study. When funded solely to coordinate these activities which are provided by other agencies they are outside the scope of this study.

Residential services for new mothers

Some centre-based facilities are designed to assist new mothers to cope with child behaviour problems such as sleeplessness, constant crying or feeding difficulties. These centres are often operated by the health services areas of departments where health and community services are in the same department, or by separate health departments. These services are considered as borderline for this study, due to a perceived health surveillance focus.

Aboriginal and Islander child care agencies

These services are generally jointly funded by the Commonwealth and States, and are focussed on child protection and family welfare and support. Much of their work is involved in the tertiary sector, with particular focus on children and families in contact with the child protection system. While these activities are generally considered to be out of scope of the Family Support Services Scoping study, the agencies also provide a range of support activities for families, and seek to work in ways to prevent families from entering the statutory child protection system, which would be in scope.

Reconnect

Family support is also provided under a number of targeted services, such as the Reconnect Program, an early intervention program for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and for their families. Services assist young people and their families through counselling, family mediation and practical support. The primary objective is to improve the level of engagement of homeless young people or those at risk of homelessness, in family, work, education, training and the community. Although much of the work undertaken within this program is out for this study, some activities, particularly with young people and their families prior to the young person becoming homeless, could be considered within the broad framework of family support for the study.

Domestic violence and child abuse prevention

A number of agencies funded by community services departments are involved in development and delivery of services relating to people experiencing domestic violence and child abuse. These services are often undertaken by agencies funded under the Commonwealth Family Relationships Services Program, and seek to support families experiencing violence or abuse. State-funded services are usually funded under specific

programs, or can be readily identified, However, the services provided by domestic violence and child protection-funded agencies can often be considered to be general family support. Many agencies funded under these programs are multi-faceted, and some of their services will be in scope while others are not.

Other borderline services

Family support is an element of many Northern Territory departmental and funded services, such as the Living with Alcohol program, disability services and the like. Many service providers are multi-faceted, and will provide a range of services, which may vary according to the particular needs of the local community. Specialist workers in health, family violence, sexual assault or disability will also provide generalist family support services to individual families as necessary, particularly if no other services are available. Many workers would not identify themselves as 'family support' workers, although some of their work involves supporting families to care for children.

The Australian Capital Territory Child Health and Development Service, which focusses on children with attention deficit disorder and other developmental difficulties, would normally be out of scope, but is not exclusive to children with these problems, and so could be considered borderline.

The Western Australian Department of Family and Community Services funds a number of services which have strong elements of family support. These include the Family Tracing and Reunion services, which provide people with links to their birth families. Services are provided to Aboriginal people who have been removed from their family or community, former children in care, United Kingdom child migrants and adopted people. These services, however, tend to be 'issue-based' and so would largely fall out of scope of the current study. Similar services are provided by most jurisdictions, although not exclusively by community services departments.

Family Court counselling, funded by the Commonwealth, is also provided by departmental staff in some States. This involves mandatory counselling prior to progressing further with Family Court matters. Once again, these services tend to be issue-based.

Intensive psychiatric services in Western Australia may fall into the study scope. Although primarily for clients with a domestic violence or child protection issue, there is some relationship counselling involved. Departmental officers provide some services, and others are purchased from non-government agencies.

The Victorian Families First services operate towards the tertiary end of care, at points just prior to the removal of children or at reunification of children in care with their families. Family Preservation services are child protection funded, and provide intensive support for families where child protection concerns exist. These services are more likely to be out of scope, as child protection is the main criterion for service access.

Emergency 24-Hour Care Operational Grants in Queensland are provided to licensed Family Day Care schemes and other approved organisations towards the operational costs associated with the provision of emergency 24-hour care for children at risk of abuse or neglect. These could generally be considered to be issue-based and hence, on balance, out of scope.

A small number of services are funded by Disability Services Queensland (now a separate department) to provide early intervention and support for families where a child has a disability. These services may be considered borderline, but, due to new organisational

arrangements, would be out of scope as they are provided by another department, although in the broader sense they are in scope for family support.