

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Culturally responsive family services

**Dr Susan Armstrong from the Social Justice and Social Change, is collaborating with Anglicare, CatholicCare and Interrelate Family Centres to provide research to support Family Relationship Centres in Parramatta and Bankstown to develop a culturally responsive model of family dispute resolution.**

'Family relationships can be difficult at times and separations may be traumatic, so outside help can be beneficial to mediate disputes and help deal with family issues,' explains Dr Armstrong. 'But if you come from a background that is culturally and linguistically diverse, you may be less likely to approach mainstream services for assistance with family matters, and if you did, you would want to know that the service would respect your cultural background.' To facilitate culturally and linguistically diverse families to use Family Relationship Centres and to ensure that Family Relationship Centres are responsive to families' cultural context, CatholicCare and Anglicare initiated research for the centres they manage in Bankstown and Parramatta. The research draws on the expertise of a number of ethno-specific, multicultural and faith based organisations in western Sydney to determine what Family Relationship Centres can do to assist a greater proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse families. The team also consults mediators, family dispute resolution practitioners and family relationship centres nationally to identify good practice in providing culturally responsive family dispute resolution.

Family Relationship Centres at Parramatta and Bankstown will trial and refine the strategies identified by the research. A range of indicators will be used to evaluate the success of fostering culturally responsive family dispute resolution at these two centres.



Family disputes and separations can cause distress, illness and loss of social and financial security, which affects not only the family but their community. Family Relationship Centres are in a better position to help people when their services more effectively take into account people's cultural and linguistic diversity in our complex, modern multicultural society.

**Project Title:** Partnership in Tender for Family Relationship Centres with Anglicare (Parramatta) and CatholicCare (Bankstown)

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