



Australian Government Initiative

# Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP)



STRATEGIC PLAN 2005–2008

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# Introduction

The Australian Government first funded family relationship services in 1959. Today the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP) has evolved to address a multitude of complex family relationship issues. The FRSP is jointly funded by the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), is administered by FaCSIA and is delivered by non-government organisations.

In the May 2005 Budget, the Australian Government announced major reforms to family law and the development of a new family law system. These reforms are the most significant in the last 30 years and are a major driver of the FRSP strategic priorities over the next three years. The goals of the family law reforms is to:

- strengthen relationships through early intervention and prevention services
- change attitudes and behaviours surrounding family conflict and separation
- help prevent and reduce the impact of separation and, where separation does occur, help parents agree on what is best for their children rather than going through the court system.

Wide-ranging consultations were undertaken with key stakeholders to develop the priorities and outcomes represented in this Strategic Plan. The key theme areas identified in this plan have arisen out of these consultations, and a review of the program conducted in 2004.

The Strategic Plan is intended to provide a strong platform to enable the FRSP to continue to contribute to the development of an Australia in which:

- all Australian children, young people and adults are enabled to develop and sustain safe, supportive and nurturing family relationships: and
- the emotional, social and economic costs associated with disruption to family relationships are minimised.

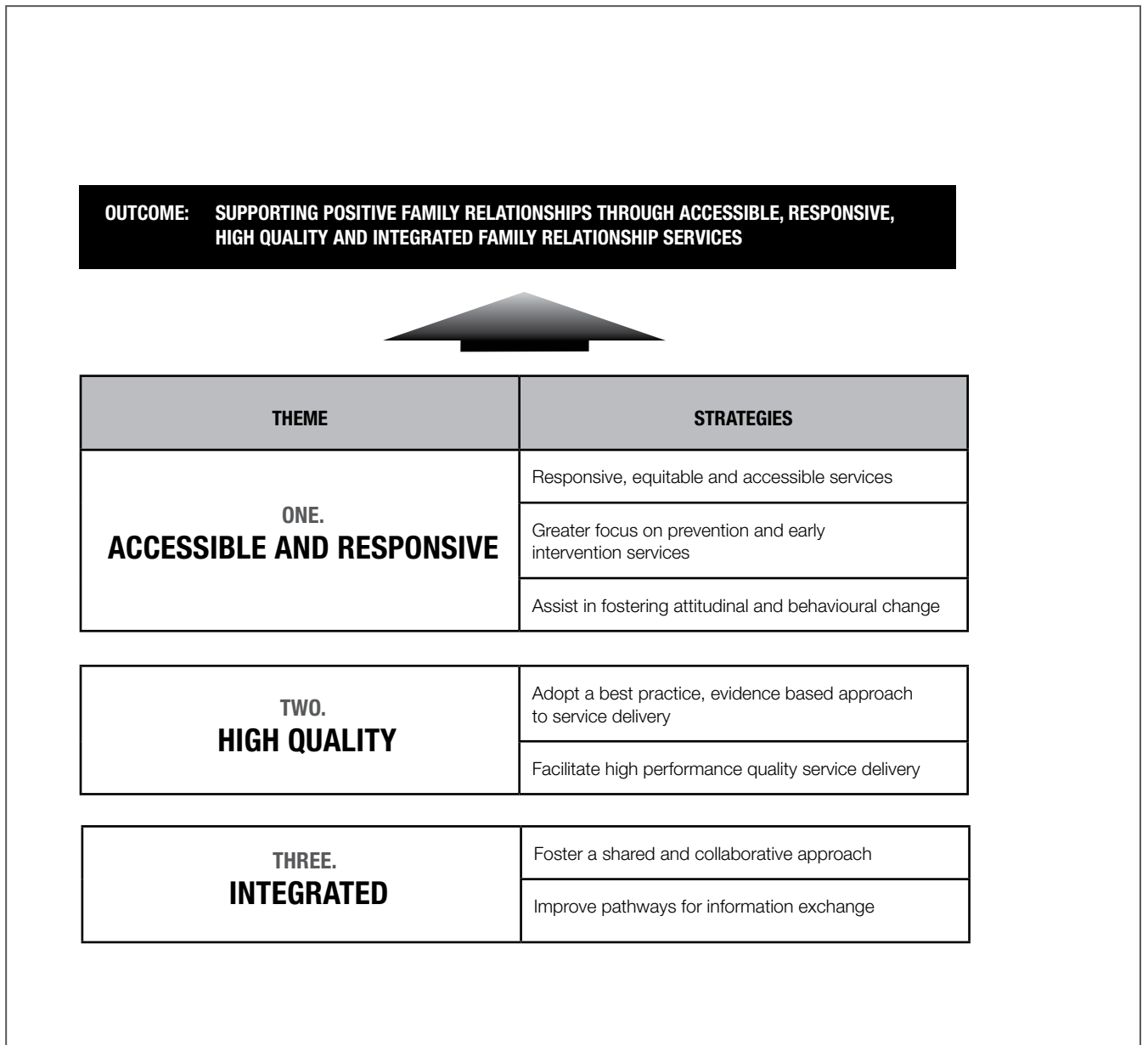
Over the next three years, FaCSIA, AGD and the FRSP service delivery sector will work together to progress the identified priority areas, streamline processes and effectively reduce red tape.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and refined as goals are achieved, progressed, or as priorities change. Forums will be convened every year to provide opportunity to contribute to the strategic direction of the FRSP.

This Strategic Plan aims to set a clear agenda for the FRSP so that we can meet the challenges ahead in, delivering (1) accessible and responsive, (2) high quality and (3) integrated services.

Any feedback or comments relating to this Strategic Plan can be emailed to [frsp@frsp.gov.au](mailto:frsp@frsp.gov.au).

**Figure 1: FRSP STRATEGIC PLAN 2005 – 2008**



# FRSP Theme 1: Accessible and Responsive

The FRSP reflects a commitment to improving access to services. In order to meet the needs of all family members the FRSP will aim to be timely, accessible, flexible and innovative. The FRSP will focus on, the best interests of children and recognise and build on the existing strengths of the program.

## *Strategy 1.1: Responsive, equitable and accessible FRSP services*

PRIORITY	OUTCOME
<b>1.1.1 Implement new and expanded services to support families</b>	The capacity of the FRSP to provide family relationship services to the wider community is increased in response to the Family Law reforms and the additional funding announced in the 2005/06 Budget.
<b>1.1.2 Improve responsiveness to children and young people</b>	Skilled practitioners facilitate the inclusion of children and young people in decision-making where appropriate. FRSP services provide child focussed services.
<b>1.1.3 Improve service delivery to a diverse society</b>	All people, irrespective of ability, cultural, economic and social differences have equal access to FRSP services.  FRSP service providers promote mutual respect and understanding; encourage tolerance of difference and are non discriminatory in service delivery.
<b>1.1.4 Enhance access and service delivery to Indigenous people</b>	The FRSP provides culturally appropriate services to Indigenous people.
<b>1.1.5 Engage groups that have barriers to access</b>	Service delivery to groups who may experience a range of barriers in accessing FRSP services is increased. These groups include men, people experiencing mental health and drug and alcohol issues, Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young people. FRSP services provide services to all family members.
<b>1.1.6 Enhance capacity for FRSP service delivery to respond to people experiencing family violence</b>	FRSP service providers respond to families experiencing family violence at all stages of relationship development. This includes early intervention and prevention responses that deliver relationship education services at the point of family formation, through to counselling services delivered to families in conflict, who are considering separation or have separated.
<b>1.1.7 Enhance services to people living in regional, rural and remote areas</b>	People in regional, rural and remote areas have greater access to FRSP services that provide high quality, innovative and flexible practice models that best meet the needs of people in these areas.

## *Strategy 1.2: Greater Focus on Prevention and Early Intervention for All Families*

One of the aims of the FRSP is to improve the wellbeing of families and children by supporting positive family relationships through access to prevention and intervention as early as possible. The FRSP plays a major role in assisting families to communicate effectively to negotiate and resolve conflict before and after separation.

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>1.2.1 Help families earlier</b>	The FRSP helps families earlier, assisting them to communicate effectively, negotiate and avoid conflict before and after separation.

## *Strategy 1.3: Assist in fostering attitudinal and behavioural change*

The FRSP will need to assist families to resolve their relationship and parenting issues in light of major reforms to the family law system as announced in the 2005-06 Budget. The introduction of the new system means changes to the law and changes to court procedures. These changes are intended to facilitate a cultural shift away from litigation and towards dispute resolution and to encourage cooperative parenting after separation.

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>1.3.1 Support implementation of amended Family Law Act</b>	FRSP service providers assist families to focus on the needs of their children and resolve relationship difficulties.  FRSP service providers and the community are informed about family law reforms.

# FRSP Theme 2: High Quality

The FRSP aims to provide high quality services and best practice interventions delivered by qualified and competent practitioners in safe, well-managed services. Services should be provided in environments where clients can feel comfortable and confident that their needs will be addressed.

To achieve this, continuous improvement in practice and service delivery is needed. This will improve family relationship services to the public and better equip service providers to meet the needs of families seeking their services.

## *Strategy 2.1: FRSP adopts a best practice, evidence-based approach to service delivery*

Best Practice is about continuous improvement. This can be achieved by review of practice and outcomes, the sharing of knowledge and findings, and embracing opportunities for improving services. An evidence-based approach uses research to identify effectiveness.

PRIORITY	OUTCOME
<b>2.1.1 Establish a Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP) National Research and Evaluation Agenda</b>	<p>Research and analysis is used to determine the best service delivery models for families in need of relationship help.</p> <p>Best practice is promoted across the full range of FRSP services.</p>

## *Strategy 2.2: Facilitate high performance quality service delivery*

PRIORITY	OUTCOME
<b>2.2.1 Improve program administration and management, including reducing 'red tape'</b>	<p>Development and use of a range of management tools informs policy, decision-making, funding, evaluation and placement of new services.</p> <p>Streamlined processes assist FRSP service providers to administer service delivery and reduce unnecessary red tape.</p>
<b>2.2.2 Increase the diversity and competence of the FRSP workforce</b>	<p>Targeted strategies intended to recruit and retain staff from diverse backgrounds are explored and developed in consultation with FRSP service providers.</p> <p>Strategies intended to recruit and retain qualified and competent staff are explored and developed in consultation with FRSP service providers.</p>
<b>2.2.3 Support FRSP service providers</b>	<p>Appropriate measures are in place to ensure FRSP service providers are adequately supported during the development and implementation of policy and program management.</p>
<b>2.2.4 Increase the focus on outcomes</b>	<p>Further develop and implement the FRSP Performance Framework and Key Performance Indicators to increase the programs outcomes focus.</p>

# FRSP Theme 3: Integrated

The Australian Government supports the use of collaboration and partnerships to achieve positive outcomes for families. FRSP service delivery will continue to be enhanced through the establishment and maintenance of cooperative networks and collaborative relationships with the local community.

## *Strategy 3.1: Foster a shared and collaborative approach*

PRIORITY	OUTCOME
<p><b>3.1.1 Collaboration is recognised</b></p>	<p>Program documentation reflects the Government's commitment to collaboration between services.</p> <p>FRSP service providers collaborate and cooperate with other relevant agencies to provide integrated responses.</p> <p>FRSP policy and program management reflects a whole-of-government approach to service delivery.</p> <p>FRSP service providers work in an integrated way that fosters strong links with other agencies to assist families in accessing services outside the scope of the FRSP.</p>

## *Strategy 3.2: Improve pathways for information exchange*

PRIORITY	OUTCOME
<p><b>3.2.1 Formalise consultative mechanisms to enhance sector feedback</b></p>	<p>The departments and the sector have a clear understanding of how and when the sector will be consulted.</p> <p>Sector feedback contributes to FRSP policy development.</p>





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

Family Relationship Advice Line – Free call 1800 050 321