



MEDIA RELEASE

22 JANUARY 2008

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SERVICES STRUGGLE TO COMPETE

Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA), the peak national body for the family relationships sector, is calling for increased Federal Government investment to help community organisations match the salaries paid in the public and private sector.

"Currently family relationship services are struggling to compete for staff at a time when services are experiencing record levels of demand", said FRSA's Executive Director Sam Page.

"Our member organisations estimate that the gap in salaries for qualified practitioners (including qualified and experienced counsellors, educators and family dispute resolution practitioners) between the community sector and the public/private sector is between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per annum for each full time equivalent position."

Effective support during significant transitions, such as separation, can substantially reduce conflict and increase parental cooperation focused on the needs of children, whilst building family resilience and strengthening relationships. The recruitment of staff threatens the capacity of the sector to continue to deliver for government, and communities more broadly.

"One of our practitioners was offered a position in government at a salary more than double the hourly rate we can afford to pay. Another qualified practitioner sought government employment as they were unable to manage the drop in salary at over \$25,000 per annum, due to family reasons. In addition, superannuation rates for practitioners in the community based services are 42 per cent less than that of their counterparts in the public sector", said Christine Hodge, Director Centacare Catholic Family and Community Services.

FRSA's Federal Budget submission outlines the issues currently faced in the family relationship sector and recommendations to address these. For a copy of FRSA's Federal Budget Submission, please email communications@frsa.org.au

-ENDS-

FRSA Media Contact: Bonnie Montgomery, 02 6162 1811 or 0406 628 239

Family Relationship Services Australia is the national peak body for over 100 family relationship service providers, operating in more than 400 locations across Australia. FRSA's vision is for an Australian society that is enriched through respectful relationships in all their diversity.