



FAMILY ACTION CENTRE 2016-2020

FAMILY ACTION CENTRE | STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2016 - 2020

PROMOTING WELLBEING

& TRANSFORMING QUALITY
OF LIFE IN OUR REGION

ADVANCING THE DISCIPLINE

OF FAMILY STUDIES THROUGH
TEACHING & LEARNING

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

WITH INSPIRED GRADUATES
& REMARKABLE STAFF

FOCUSING ON FAMILIES

IN RESEARCH & PRACTICE LINKAGES
WITH GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY

BUILDING CAPACITY

THROUGH FAMILY SUPPORT
& OUTREACH PROGRAMS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Family Action Centre (FAC) is a research, teaching and practice centre focused on families and their communities. The Centre produces innovative, dynamic and enduring work that aims to strengthen family and community well-being. The FAC is committed to addressing factors that affect health and wellbeing, and the social and educational paths of families, particularly for those challenged by increasingly complex vulnerabilities.

The FAC operates within the Faculty of Health and Medicine and the School of Health Sciences and offers degrees in Family Studies at undergraduate and postgraduate coursework and research levels through the **Graduate Certificate in Family Studies** and the **Master of Family Studies** and the **PhD in Family Studies**. Professional development education is also offered to enhance workforce capacity in a range of critical practice areas. Family Studies graduates make a difference in the world, by engaging with learnings from across the globe to support our local regions and their families and communities.

The Centre delivers family support and **outreach services**, such as parenting programs, family inclusive practice programs and health evaluation initiatives. The wealth of outreach expertise and experience, supports and grounds the teaching and research. The Centre hosts a range of students from various disciplines in an inter-professional placement unit, and also provides opportunities to student volunteers to participate in our family support programs, where they liaise with human service workers in education, health, and family and community services.

The FAC is a national leader in **fatherhood and family wellbeing research**, with a focus on fathers of young children and babies and supporting these fathers in their relationship with their families. An emerging area of research strength is **Strong Families-Capable Communities** with its focus on harnessing the collective capabilities of communities to address complex problems confronting families. The Centre's research in these fields provides evidence for policy and service system innovations that better mobilise capabilities to improve individual, family and community outcomes.



PURPOSE & VALUES

The FAC will be nationally and internationally acknowledged for its leadership in the development of integrated family support solutions through innovation and excellence in outreach, education and research. A commitment to equity, excellence and social justice will underpin everything that we do.

MISSION

The FAC mission is to improve health and well-being by (i) undertaking world class family studies research that spans discipline and geographic boundaries to provide integrated solutions to major regional, national and global health, wellbeing and education challenges, (ii) producing remarkable healthcare professionals through research-led innovative programs of teaching and learning, and (iii) building regional, national and global communities of practice to facilitate outcomes in health-related care.

MAIN FUNCTIONS

The Centre functions are in alignment with and respond to the University's main aspirations and strategy as expressed in The University of Newcastle (UON) *NeW Futures* ten year strategic plan. They are to:

- Promote wellbeing and transform quality of life in our region
- Focus on families in research and practice linkages with government and industry
- Advance the discipline of Family Studies through teaching, learning and research
- Engage communities with our inspired graduates and remarkable staff
- Build community capability through family support and outreach programs

OBJECTIVE 1

The FAC will be distinguished by the excellence and impact of our research and publications, and the quality of our teaching.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND ACTIONS

This strategy aims to unleash the assets and strengths bound up in the Centre to build the scale, excellence and impact of our research and teaching. Our research will inform new ways to collectively address complex problems confronting families and their communities. Our Family Studies graduates will master a key set of integrated, evidence-informed skills for emerging roles in health and education related professions and the social assistance workforce.

ACTION AREA	ACTION AREA	ACTION AREA
<p>Launch a powerful and co-ordinated approach to tackling complex and systemic social issues that enhances community capability through culturally and sensitive outreach and research. Co-create programs of prevention and intervention that test promising ideas, synergise learning and fast-cycle sharing and lead to breakthrough outcomes</p>	<p>Extend the pioneering work within the discipline of Family Studies with an evolving and inspired curriculum that is based on transdisciplinary collaborations in research, teaching and practice. Establish undergraduate pathways to Family Studies coursework and Higher Degree Research</p>	<p>Facilitate inter-professional and international short-term study abroad, exchange or placements within and beyond our range of community outreach, teaching and research programs. Generate productive partnerships with other universities and consortia, Agencies, Governments and Non-Government Organisations to aggressively support the quality and substance of our programs, teaching and research</p>

OBJECTIVE 2

The FAC will have a demonstrable civic and social impact globally and in each of the university's regional communities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND ACTIONS

This strategy will have an over-arching focus on transforming our region by supporting families in our local communities through the provision of innovative, capacity and capability building programs informed by a base of well-established evidence. These programs will transform well-being and quality of life through directed activities and support services for families and children in our regional communities. Through commitment to reciprocity and collective action we will work with our partners to drive social innovation and transformation.

ACTION AREA	ACTION AREA	ACTION AREA
Increase industry and community organisations' support for the programs, research and evaluation conducted by the Centre, and invest in established external collaborations with relevant branches of government to maximise scope for innovation, knowledge translation and information exchange across each of our areas of operation	Improve access to care and education in underserved communities through developing innovative engagement strategies both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Extend and develop an approach to family wellbeing that is focused on parenting and prioritises father inclusive practice and co-parenting and advances research, programs and policy	Deliver programs and workshops with a strengths-based practice focus, and appropriately targeted family support services provided along a continuum of family and community needs with a focus on the life course. Prioritise innovative ways to coordinate services that achieve improved and sustainable impacts for families and communities

OBJECTIVE 3

The FAC will be recognised as a leader in research engagement between industry, government and community organisations.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND ACTIONS

This strategy aims to mobilise our networks to establish communities of practice linking inter-sectoral partners with our staff and students. These groups will share expertise and resources and become sector leaders and agents for positive social change. This strategy will have an over-arching focus on accessing resources to support family focused research, and develop the careers of our research higher degree graduates and early career researchers through the provision of opportunities to travel and engage with international research collaborations.

ACTION AREA	ACTION AREA	ACTION AREA
<p>Passionately ensure that students synthesise knowledge so that as professionals they will work across organisational boundaries and provide exceptional services in Government agencies (Federal, State and Local) and non-government, community sector organisations working with families</p>	<p>Internationalise the study of families, through key strategic partnerships in India, Indonesia and the USA to deliver innovative postgraduate programs, research higher degree (RHD) opportunities and develop professional development courses that are sector relevant and accessible, and can be delivered to an international market while also creating opportunities for further studies at UON</p>	<p>Extend our research scope in the areas of <i>Fatherhood and Family Wellbeing</i>, and <i>Strong Families–Capable Communities</i>. Increase the number of formal research agreements with national and international organisations and universities, as well as other Faculties and Schools within UON. Embed research opportunities in Family Studies undergraduate and postgraduate degrees</p>

FAMILY ACTION CENTRE **IMPACT & INFLUENCE**



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