

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

August 10, 2006

### **New Children's Contact Service to assist separated families**

It will now be easier for children of separated parents in Adelaide's northern metropolitan areas to maintain contact with both parents, with the opening of a new Children's Contact Service (CCS) at Salisbury.

The Salisbury Children's Contact Service, which commenced on July 3, provides a safe, professional and child-focused environment for children of separated parents to move freely from one parent to another, particularly where there is a risk of conflict or violence at handover times.

In 2004 there were 4147 divorces in South Australia – more than half of these involving children<sup>1</sup> - with even higher numbers of separated or separating parents. When parents separate, it is important for a child's wellbeing and future development to stay connected with people important in their lives. Anger, hostility and fear can make it difficult for parents to manage contact arrangements and maintain these connections. The Children's Contact Service (CCS) can help reduce stress for children and parents in these circumstances.

The CCS aims to help parents to develop their own ways of managing contact arrangements that are in the best interests of their children. For example, staff may speak to parents about alternative ways to manage their contact arrangements or refer parents to other services, such as mediation, to negotiate a parenting plan.

The CCS also provides supervised contact time where agreed to by both parents or if court ordered. However, the Children's Contact Service is not required to enforce court orders. CCS staff work with parents to establish the best ways to provide the service and assist them to meet contact orders where possible and where it is in the best interests of the child.

The Salisbury CCS is run by Relationships Australia (SA) in partnership with UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide. Relationships Australia (SA) also currently runs a Children's Contact Service at Hindmarsh, which has assisted 570 people in the past year.

**The Salisbury CCS administration operates from Shop 8, Salisbury Cinema Complex, Gawler Street, Salisbury between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.**

**Tel: 8285 4499 Fax: 8284 4494**

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Divorces, Australia 2004 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3307.0.55.001>).

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**For more information or to request an interview, call:**

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