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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **EROSION IN SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES – JUST THE BEGINNING**

Family Relationship Services Australia, the national peak body for family and relationship services is extremely disappointed with the Australian Government's cut to family counselling in the 2010 Federal Budget.

"Family Counselling assists people to resolve their family relationship issues. It prevents family breakdown and reduces family conflict - particularly during separation. It also helps families adjust when separation occurs which is critical to the wellbeing of children over the long-term" said Samantha Page, FRSA Executive Director.

"Currently the Australian Government investment in family counselling barely meets demand; with long waiting lists in many areas. It is the Australian Government's main stream of investment in prevention and early intervention for families experiencing difficulty."

"To cut \$4.5 million overall from this essential program represents a significant erosion in support for families."

We are very concerned that this is just the beginning and that even more significant cuts are planned in the post-election 2011 Federal Budget. In briefings with the Attorney-General's Department tonight, future cuts of more than \$40 million have been flagged and yet these do not appear in the 2010 Federal Budget papers.

Cuts of any nature are not warranted. The major 3 year study '*Evaluation of the 2006 Family Law Reforms*' undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies provided solid evidence in support of community based services for families. That study alone involved 28,000 people who said that the support services they received helped them to manage in a more positive way the conflict and distress of separation where children are involved.

This is backed up by every major review of family relationship services over the past decade which have consistently recommended increased investment in prevention and early intervention and expansions to community based services. By reducing current investment and planning even more cuts in the future, this Government is walking away from family law reforms and acting contrary to its own evidence base.

-ENDS-

Available for comment:

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**Family Relationship Services Australia is the national peak body for over 140 family relationship and support service providers, operating in more than 600 locations across Australia. For more information visit**

[www.frsa.org.au](http://www.frsa.org.au)