



Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing,  
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

# Impact of Income Management for Child Protection Clients: a new methodology

**Presented by:**

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# Overview

- Background
- Income Management at a glance
  - aim of CPIM
  - aim of VIM
- Previous Evaluation:
  - Methodological limitations
- This evaluation:
  - FaHCSIA and AIFS partnership with oversight by Advisory Committee
  - Methodology: how can we improve on the previous evaluation?
  - Progress so far
  - Next steps

# Background

- In November 2008, the Australian Government implemented a trial of two separate measures of income management (IM) in Western Australia:
  - Child Protection Scheme of Income Management (CPIM)
  - Voluntary Income Management (VIM)
- The trials are being conducted in:
  - Kimberley region
  - Perth/Metro

## Income Management at a glance...

- IM was designed so that a portion of a person's income support and family payments could be directed to meet priority needs, such as:
  - food
  - housing
  - utilities and clothing
- Under the initiative, IM funds cannot be used to purchase excluded goods, such as:
  - alcohol
  - tobacco
  - pornography or
  - gambling products

## So what's the aim of CPIM?

- CPIM is a compulsory IM measure aimed at encouraging 'socially responsible behaviour' and a 'more appropriate use of welfare payments'.
- WA DCP are able to refer their clients to Centrelink for CPIM. If the client is eligible, he/she or the household can be put on CPIM.
- DCP should only refer clients in cases where poor use of financial resources is wholly or partly contributing to child neglect or other barriers the person may be facing (e.g. reunification).

## What is neglect: (as defined by DCP)?

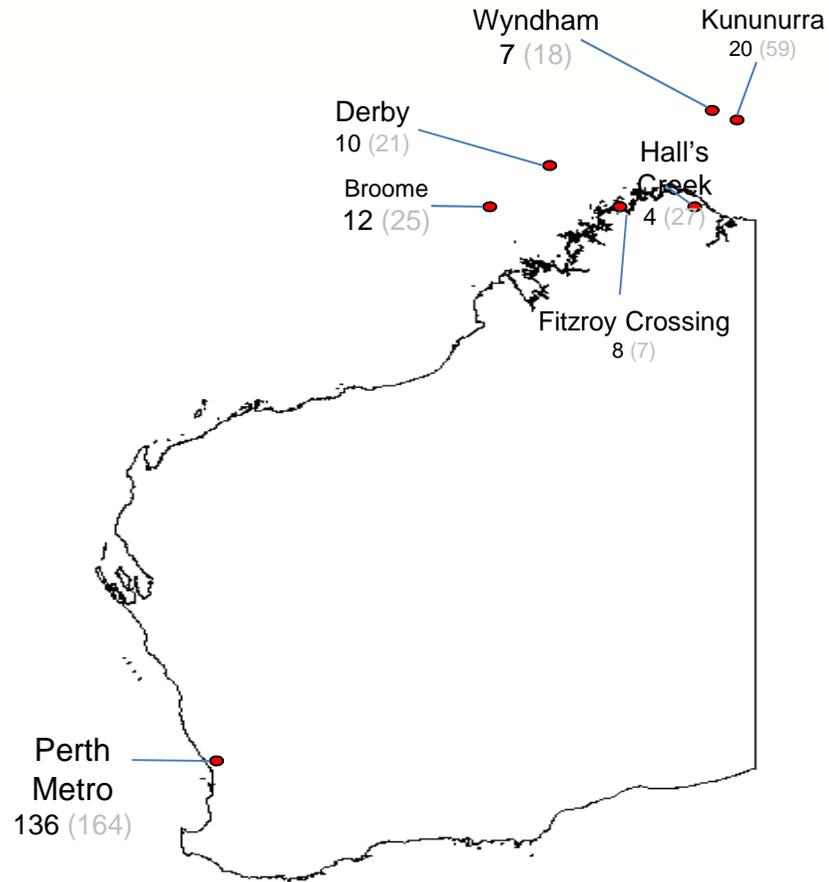
- Neglect is defined by DPC as lack of provision of:
  - adequate food or shelter
  - effective medical, therapeutic/remedial treatment
  - care, nurture or supervision

to a severe and/or episodic/reactive or persistent/chronic extent.

- Neglect can also be categorised as:
  - physical, supervisory, emotional, psychological or education in nature.

# A quick look at the numbers...

CPIM clients: at Dec



# CPIM clients: March 2012

Number of CPIM clients	'ever on'	'currently on'
Males	169	47
Females	477	185
<b>Total</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>232</b>
Indigenous	400	136
Non Indigenous	235	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>227</b>
Perth/Metro	354	151
Kimberly	235	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>221</b>

## What about VIM?

- This IM measure was designed to enable welfare recipients to volunteer for IM:
  - to assist them to better meet their financial responsibilities
  - to contribute to their own wellbeing and/or
  - the wellbeing of their children/family/community.

# VIM clients: March 2012



Number of VIM clients	Ever on	Currently on
Males	596	293
Females	1484	818
<b>Total</b>	<b>2080</b>	<b>1111</b>
Indigenous	1589	821
Non Indigenous	454	265
<b>Total</b>	<b>2043</b>	<b>1086</b>
Perth/Metro	611	336
Kimberly	1390	758
<b>Total</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1094</b>



## Previous evaluation: 2010

- ORIMA Research conducted a 'fit for purpose' evaluation of the IM trials in WA in 2010. This included:
  - Surveys and interviews with clients and service providers, and
  - consultations with key stakeholders about both CPIM and VIM.

# Previous evaluation



- The evaluation found that:
  - IM was generally having a positive impact on people and children.
  - IM may be having a negative impact for some people and those were more likely to be people on the CPIM.
- While ORIMA were unable to provide any further explanation for the disparity in outcomes for people on those two initiatives, they highlighted areas for further investigation.

# This Evaluation - 2012



This evaluation is conducted in partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

Investigators include:

- Dr. Daryl Higgins, AIFS
- Kelly Hand, AIFS
- Agnieszka Nelson, FaHCSIA
- Dr. Judith Robertson, FaHCSIA
- David Ryan, FaHCSIA
- Sue Sutton, FaHCSIA

# This Evaluation - 2012



An Evaluation Advisory Committee has been established as part of this evaluation to provide advice/guidance

Membership comprises:

- Professor Matthew Gray (Chair)
- Professor Fiona Arney
- Associate Professor Judith Cashmore AO
- Dr Adam Tomison

# Methodology

- This project will assess the effectiveness of CPIM in WA, with a focus on filling gaps in the existing evidence base.
- It will evaluate the use and effectiveness of IM in child protection cases where neglect is linked to financial mismanagement and/or hardship.
- It will identify how the impact of IM varies for DCP clients with different individual/family circumstances and with varied presenting issues.

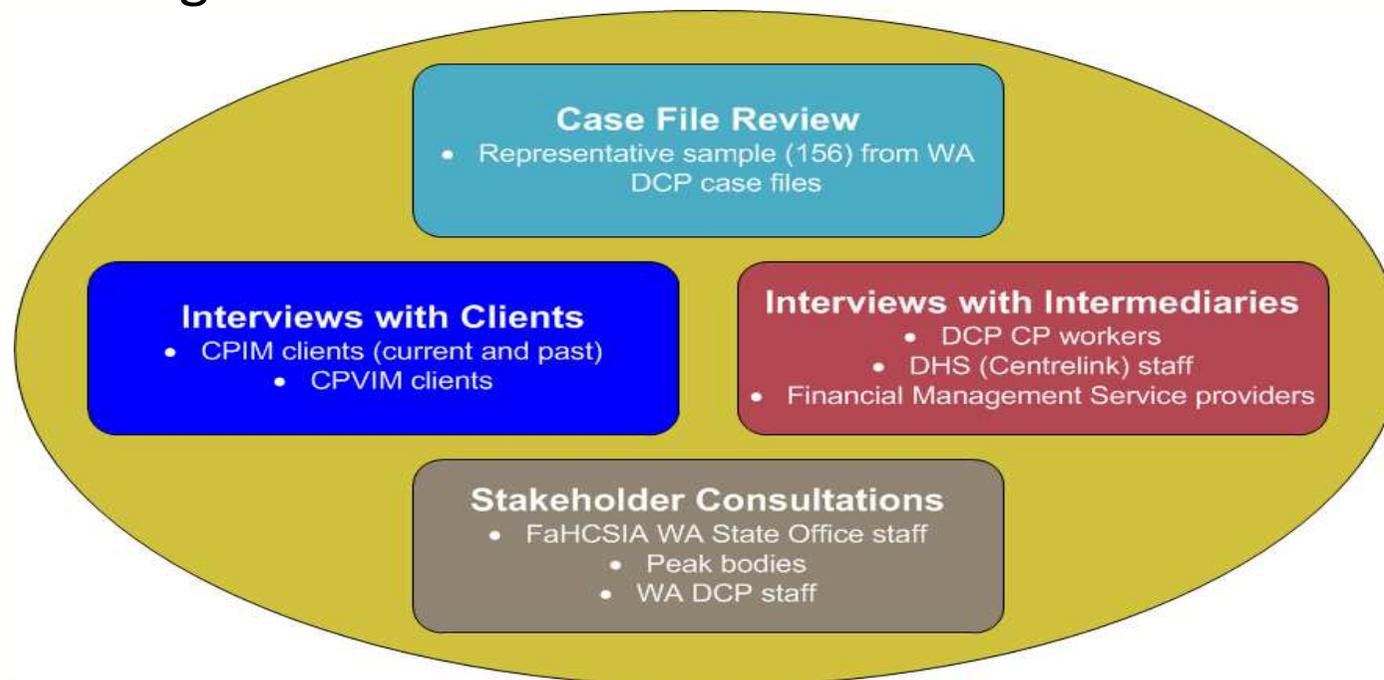
# Methodology



- It draws on new sources of data and methodology, including:
  - in-depth interviews with CPIM clients, former clients and clients who are, or have been, on VIM as a result of a referral from WA DCP;
  - a case-file review of current and former CPIM/VIM clients from WA DCP and a comparison group of child protection clients who have not been income managed;

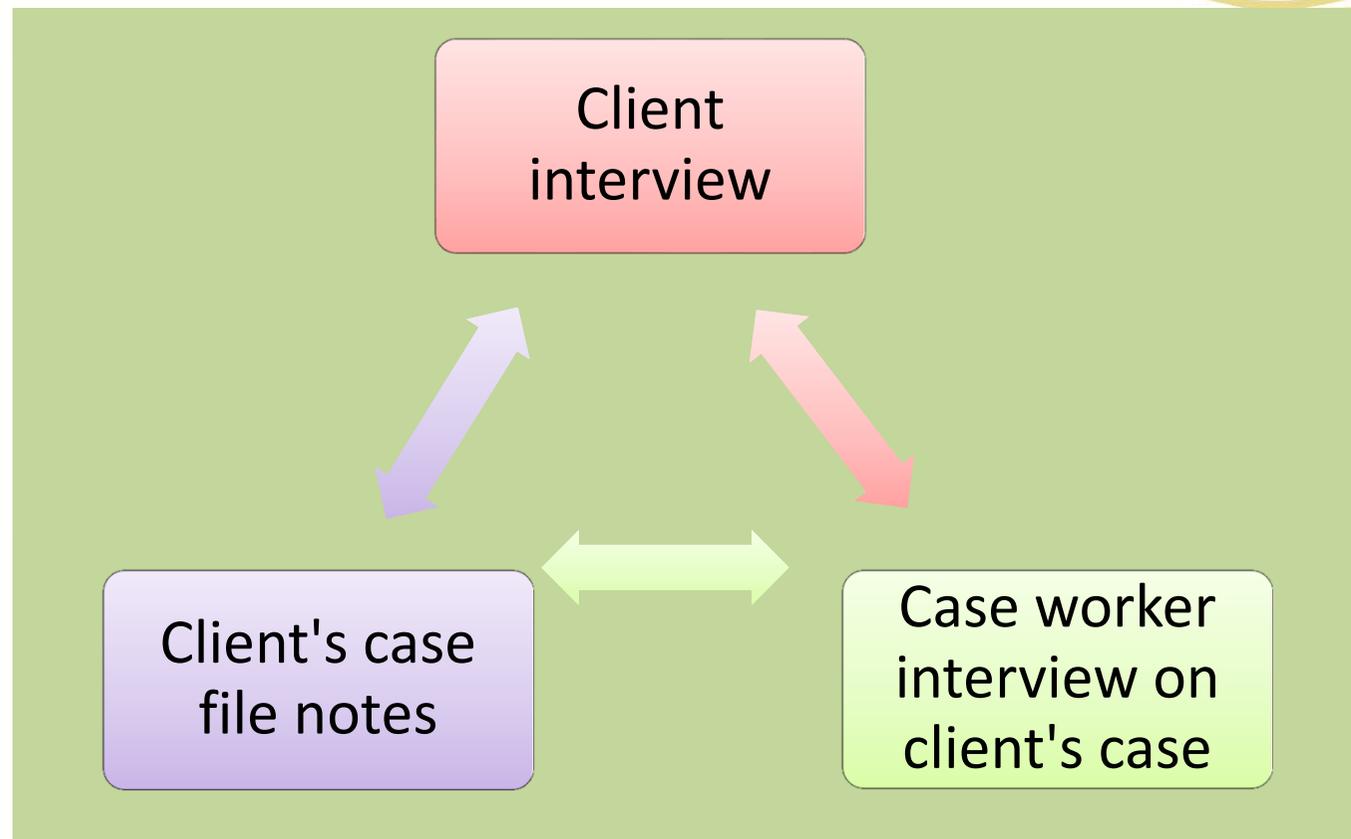
# Methodology

The methodology used in this evaluation is built on an interactive engagement between all the stakeholders involved in the child protection measure of income management in WA



# But wait, there is a twist...

Within the triangulation there is a separate triangulation



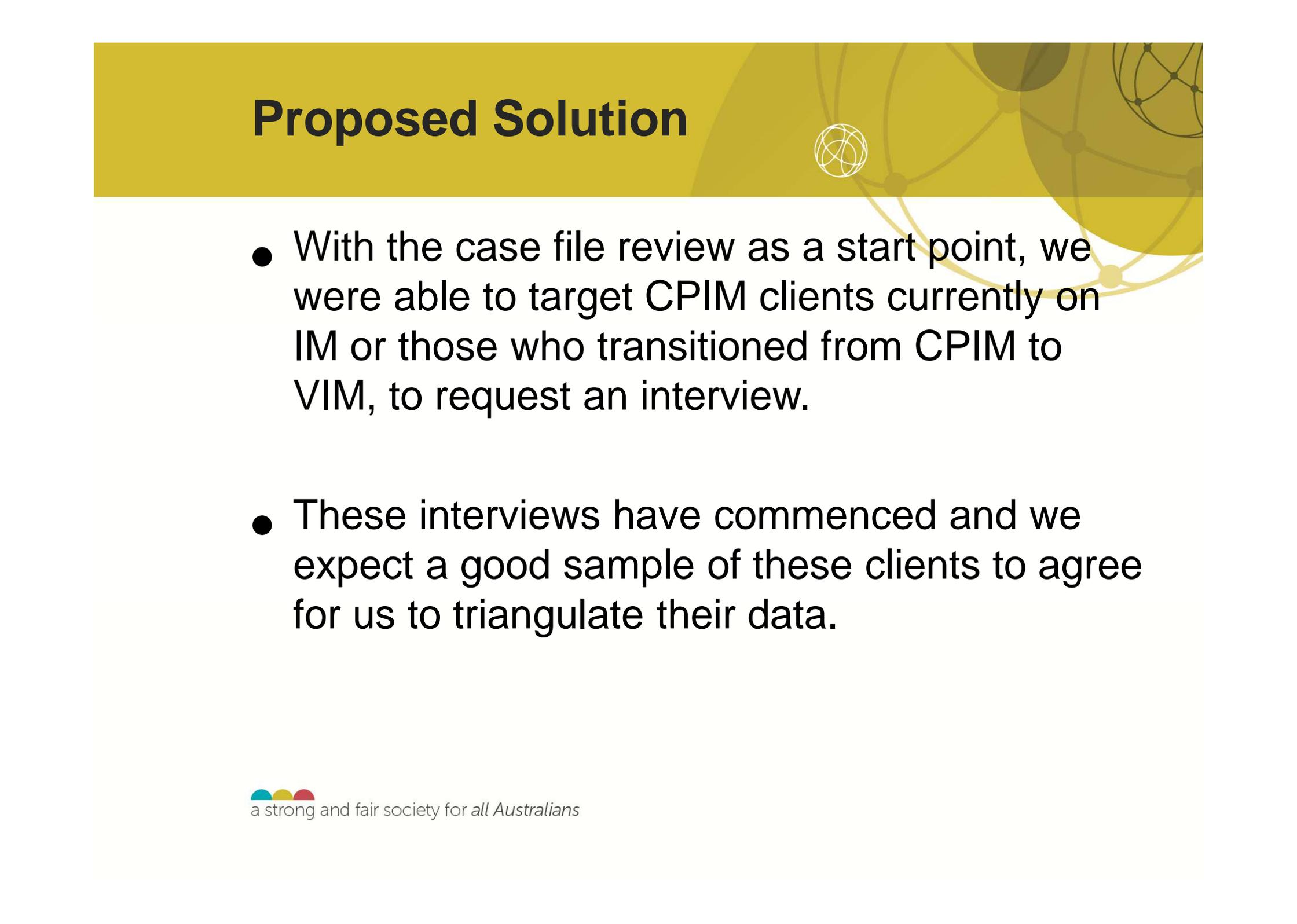
# Case file review sample

- A representative sample of 156 case files has been chosen for interrogation and triangulation.
- The case files comprise a mixture of clients who:
  - have previously been on CPIM;
  - are currently on CPIM; and
  - have been deemed to be suitable for CPIM by the DCP but are ineligible (comparison group)

# Progress so far...

- We started fieldwork in June 2012
- Many clients consented to having their interviews, case files and worker interviews analysed together.
- However, we found that many of the clients' case files were either closed or they were not CP clients.
- This approach did not give us the richness in data we were expecting.

# Proposed Solution



- With the case file review as a start point, we were able to target CPIM clients currently on IM or those who transitioned from CPIM to VIM, to request an interview.
- These interviews have commenced and we expect a good sample of these clients to agree for us to triangulate their data.

# Very preliminary findings...

- There appear to be four distinct cohorts of clients who are referred for CPIM:
  - \_ Cohort 1: vulnerable families;
  - \_ Cohort 2: families with multiple presenting issues;
  - \_ Cohort 3: families in need of financial assistance/advice; and
  - \_ Cohort 4: families with intergenerational dysfunction (entrenched).

## Next steps...

- Test if CPIM plays a different role in each of those cohorts, for example:
  - \_ Cohort 1: Does it improve long term security and family functioning?
  - \_ Cohort 2: Does it address the basic needs which are 'paralysing' the family?
  - \_ Cohort 3: Does it make a difference in child wellbeing and health) when combined with financial counselling?; and
  - \_ Cohort 4: Does it serve as a catalyst for change OR IS there a need for holistic approach?

# Conclusion

- Separating the impacts of IM from those of other policies and programs is challenging.
- Triangulation of case files, client interviews and interviews with DCP case workers is a very powerful tool
- Very preliminary findings seem to indicate that CPIM impacts on clients with different presenting issues differently.

Thank you

