



# Income Management Evaluation and Review

## Background

Income management is part of the Australian Government's commitment to reforming the welfare system. It ensures income support payments are spent in the best interests of children and families and helps ease immediate financial stress, allowing individuals to seek education and work opportunities.

## Evaluation and review of income management

An evaluation and a review on income management in Western Australia have been completed and the reports are publicly available.

There are three evaluations currently being conducted on New Income Management in the Northern Territory, Place-based Income Management and Voluntary Income Management in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

## Evaluation of the Child Protection Scheme of Income Management and Voluntary Income Management Measures in Western Australia (2010)

In 2010, ORIMA Research conducted an evaluation of income management in Western Australia, testing for impacts and early outcomes.

This evaluation found that income management was having a positive effect on the lives of many individuals, children and families in Western Australia, with a majority of those surveyed in the evaluation believing it had a positive impact overall.

The ORIMA evaluation [report](#) is available on the DSS website.

## Review of Child Protection Income Management in Western Australia (2014)

A review was conducted of Child Protection Income Management in Western Australia, which built on the 2010 ORIMA Study. It drew on different sources of data, including a review of child protection case files and in-depth interviews with child protection clients and their child protection case manager. The department undertook the evaluation in a tri-lateral agreement with the Western Australian Department for Child Protection, and with the Australian Institute of Family Studies acting in an advisory role.

The review found that income management is assisting with managing debt and regular payments on housing and utilities, providing stability and relieving stress, leaving people with an improved capacity to manage other problems.

The [report](#) on the review was released in March 2014.

## New Income Management in the Northern Territory

The Australian Government, in partnership with the Northern Territory Department of Children and Families, is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of income management in the Northern Territory.

The evaluation is being conducted over four years by an independent consortium of experts from the Australian National University, the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, in consultation with key stakeholders.

One of the findings from the [first report](#), released in November 2012, was that Indigenous communities perceived an improvement in child wellbeing and ability to afford food.

The final report is due to the department in September 2014\*.

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## Place-based Income Management

The department commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to conduct a comprehensive, mixed-method evaluation of Place-based Income Management.

The evaluation of Place-based Income Management in the trial sites involves comparison with communities with similar characteristics where the policy has not been implemented. The evaluation includes a longitudinal client survey; in-depth interviews with clients and family members; interviews, focus groups and on-line surveys with stakeholders; and analysis of administrative data.

This is the first evaluation that will include a baseline to compare people's experiences before and after going on income management.

The baseline report found that:

- an average of around 60% of people believed income management would change the way they lived, or had already.
- improving their money management and payment of bills and rent were the most prominent reasons for volunteering.

The final report is due to the department in May 2015\*.

## Voluntary Income Management in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands

The Department, in collaboration with the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Human Services, has commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales to conduct an evaluation of Voluntary Income Management in the APY lands.

The evaluation will use administrative data, a survey of community members, interviews with community stakeholders, and a participatory research activity with a community reference group.

The final report is due to the department in July 2014\*.

\*Due dates for reports are a guide only.

## Where can I find out more?

To find out more on the evaluations of income management, visit [dss.gov.au](http://dss.gov.au) or email [evaluation@dss.gov.au](mailto:evaluation@dss.gov.au).

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide. The information is accurate as at June 2014.