

# Building resilience and ameliorating risk in Pacific Island children and young people in South Western Sydney

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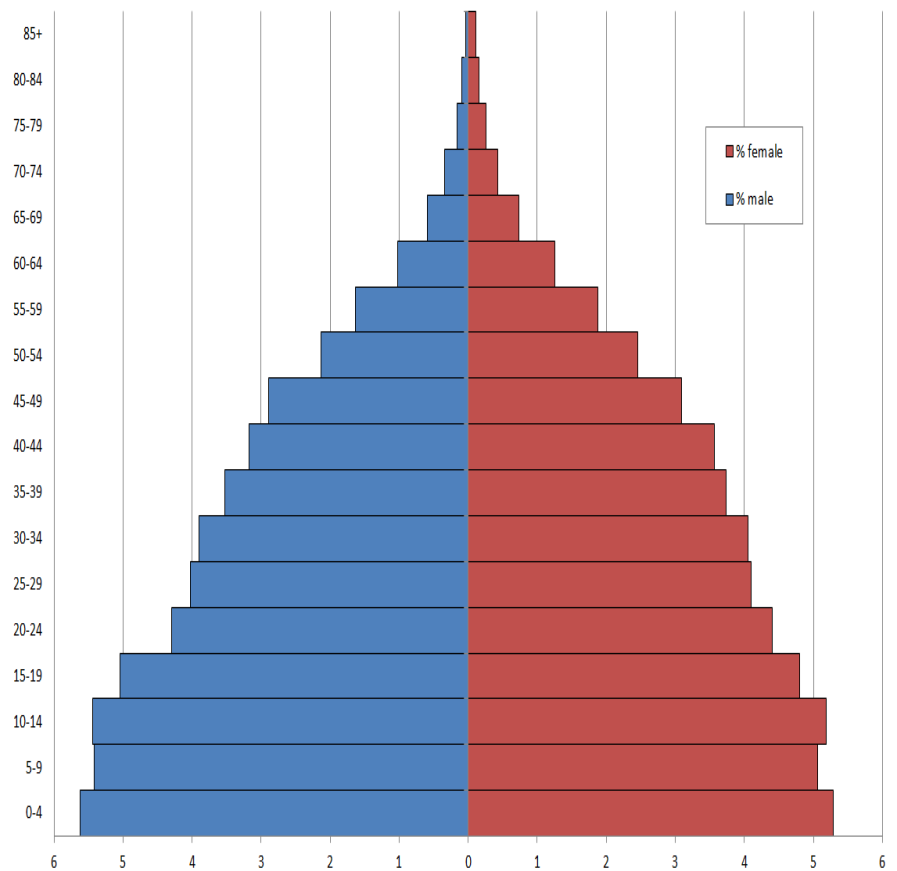


**Health**  
South Western Sydney  
Local Health District



# Pacific Islander (PI) population in Australia

- 1.3% of Australian population are of PI background
- Young population
- PI families composed of multiple family members living in the same household
- Extensive kinship networks



Source: <http://devpolicy.org/pacific-islanders-in-australia-where-are-the-melanesians-20140828/>

# Top 5 PI ancestry in NSW

- Tongan
- Fijian (includes Fijian Indians)
- Samoan
- Cook Islanders
- Maori



# Previous research

- Limited research done in Australia on PI Children and Young people (ChYP)
- Ravulo (2016): PI youths were over-represented in the juvenile justice system
  - Ravulo J. Pacific Youth Offending within an Australian Context. Youth Justice 2016; 16(1): 34-48
  - Ravulo J. Pacific Communities in Australia. Sydney: University of Western Sydney; 2015.
- Burton et al (1999): PI mothers presented later for first ANC visit, increased risk of adverse perinatal outcomes
  - Burton A, Lancaster P. Obstetric profiles and perinatal mortality among Pacific Island immigrants in New South Wales, 1990-1993. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 1999; 23(2):179-84



# Why were we concerned?

- Clinical experience and anecdotal reports suggested that **PI ChYP** were over-represented in child protection clinical presentations, juvenile justice, and poor school performance
- Health concerns including obesity, poor oral health, infectious diseases, and poor immunisation coverage
- Health Promotion Service and Public Health Unit in SWS also identified health, wellbeing, and access concerns for PI population



# Where is South Western Sydney (SWS)?



# Aims

- To describe the health and wellbeing of PI ChYP in SWS
- To identify risk and protective factors for PI ChYP
- To develop resilience enhancing interventions based on community consultation



# Methods – Quantitative data sources

- Hospital separations data
- Epidemiology and public health data
- Best available data from welfare, juvenile justice, education
- Clinical child protection data for SWS (2013-2015)
  - child-at-risk clinic attendance
  - acute child maltreatment assessments
  - Simple descriptive analysis was performed





# Methods - Qualitative

- Focus group discussion (FGD)
  - Pacific Children, Young People and Families working group in SWS ran a PI community forum in October 2016: FGDs X 4
- Key stakeholder interviews
  - Prominent PI community members who were well known for their work with PI ChYP in SWS
  - In-depth semi-structured telephone interviews with 4 key stakeholders
- Thematic analysis carried out specifically searching across content for repeated patterns of meaning



# Results

WHAT WE FOUND

# SWS PI population

## Ancestry - Top 10 NSW LGAs ranked by size

export

reset



Ancestry - Pacific Islander	2011		2006		Change
Area	Number	Pacific Islander %	Number	Pacific Islander %	2006 to 2011
Campbelltown City	5,823	3.99	4,637	3.24	+1,186
Blacktown City	10,159	3.37	8,106	2.98	+2,053
Griffith City	799	3.28	546	2.29	+253
Liverpool City	4,191	2.33	3,297	2.00	+894
Canterbury City	2,726	1.98	2,828	2.18	-102
Auburn City	1,328	1.80	1,345	2.07	-17
Fairfield City	3,361	1.79	2,529	1.41	+832
Botany Bay City	659	1.67	674	1.87	-15
Holroyd City	1,634	1.65	1,380	1.54	+254
Bankstown City	2,865	1.57	2,333	1.37	+532

1.3% of NSW population

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented by id, the population experts.

Sourced from: <http://multiculturalnsw.id.com.au/multiculturalnsw/ancestry-introduction?COIID=120>

# SWS Pregnancy and birth data

		PI	NSW
Maternal age	10-19	1.6%	3.1%
	40-49	5.9%	4.5%
Gestational age <37 weeks		7.4%	7.6%
Birth weight	SGA	12.6%	9%
	LGA	14.9%	10.7%
	Appropriate BW	71.7%	79.9%
Smoking in 1 <sup>st</sup> half of pregnancy		4.7%	7.7%
Gestational diabetes		2%	6.8%
First antenatal visit $\geq$ 16 weeks		8.1%	2.7%
Full breastfeeding		71.6%	81.3%

Sourced: Australian Bureau of Statistics

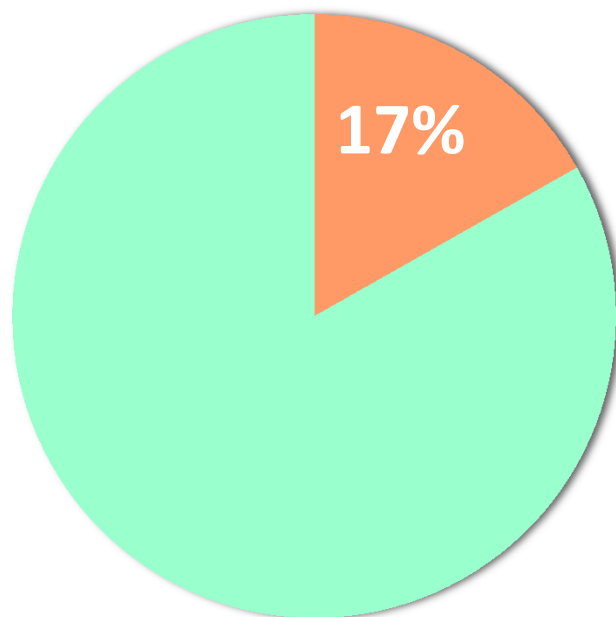
# Juvenile Justice (JJ) data

- October 2016: 8% of SWS Juvenile Justice clients in detention were of PI ethnicity
- Between October 2015-2016, 3% of supervision orders for Campbelltown JJ and 13% for Fairfield JJ were of PI descent

# Audit of child maltreatment clinical data

# Acute child maltreatment presentations

- 279 acute child maltreatment assessments (2013 – 2015)



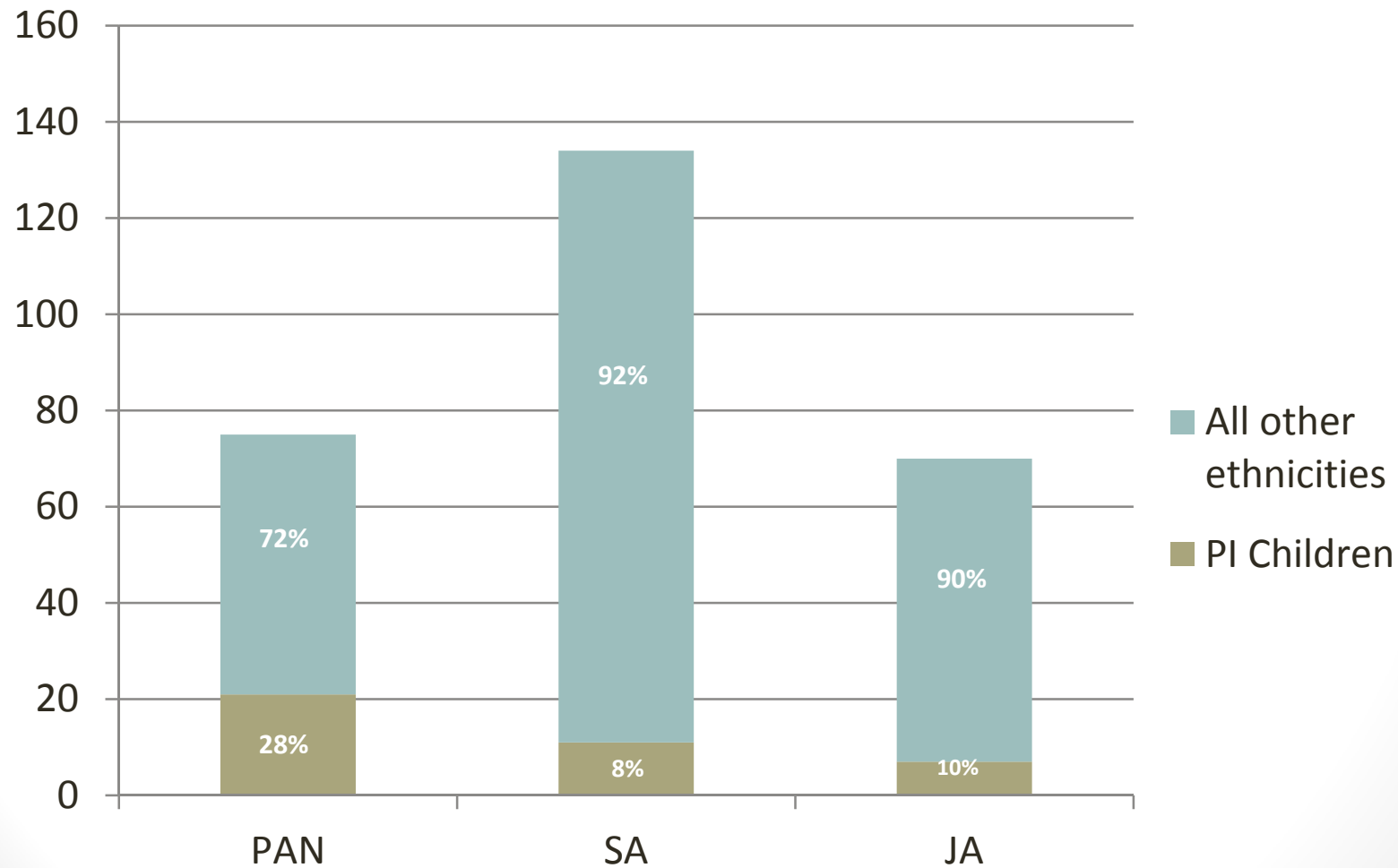
■ PI Children  
■ Other ethnicities

59% of PI ChYP had no carer/parent present at assessment

30% of all other ethnicities had no carer/parent present

Note: The total PI population in SWS LGAs range from 1 to 4%.

# Acute child maltreatment assessments



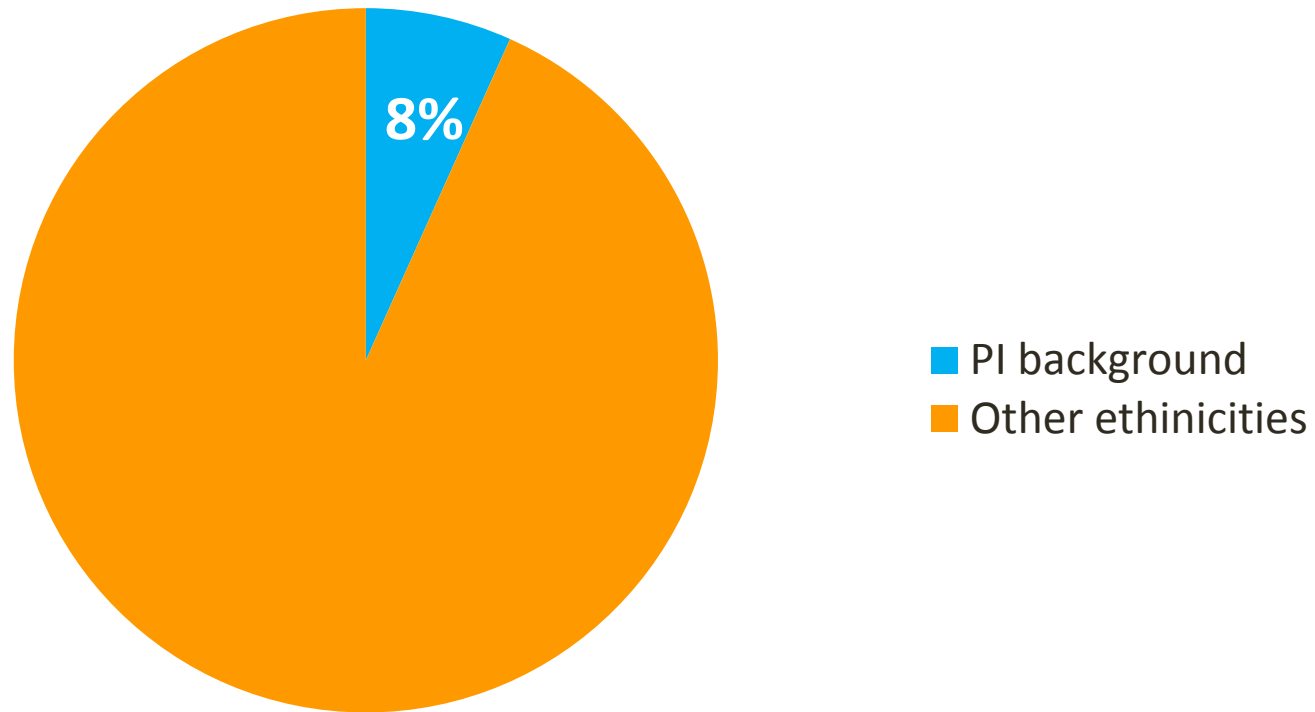


## PI ChYP demographics and outcomes- Acute Child Maltreatment assessments

	Average age	Out of home care (OOHC) placement
PI children	8.5 years	<b>59%</b>
All ethnicities	7.4 years	31%

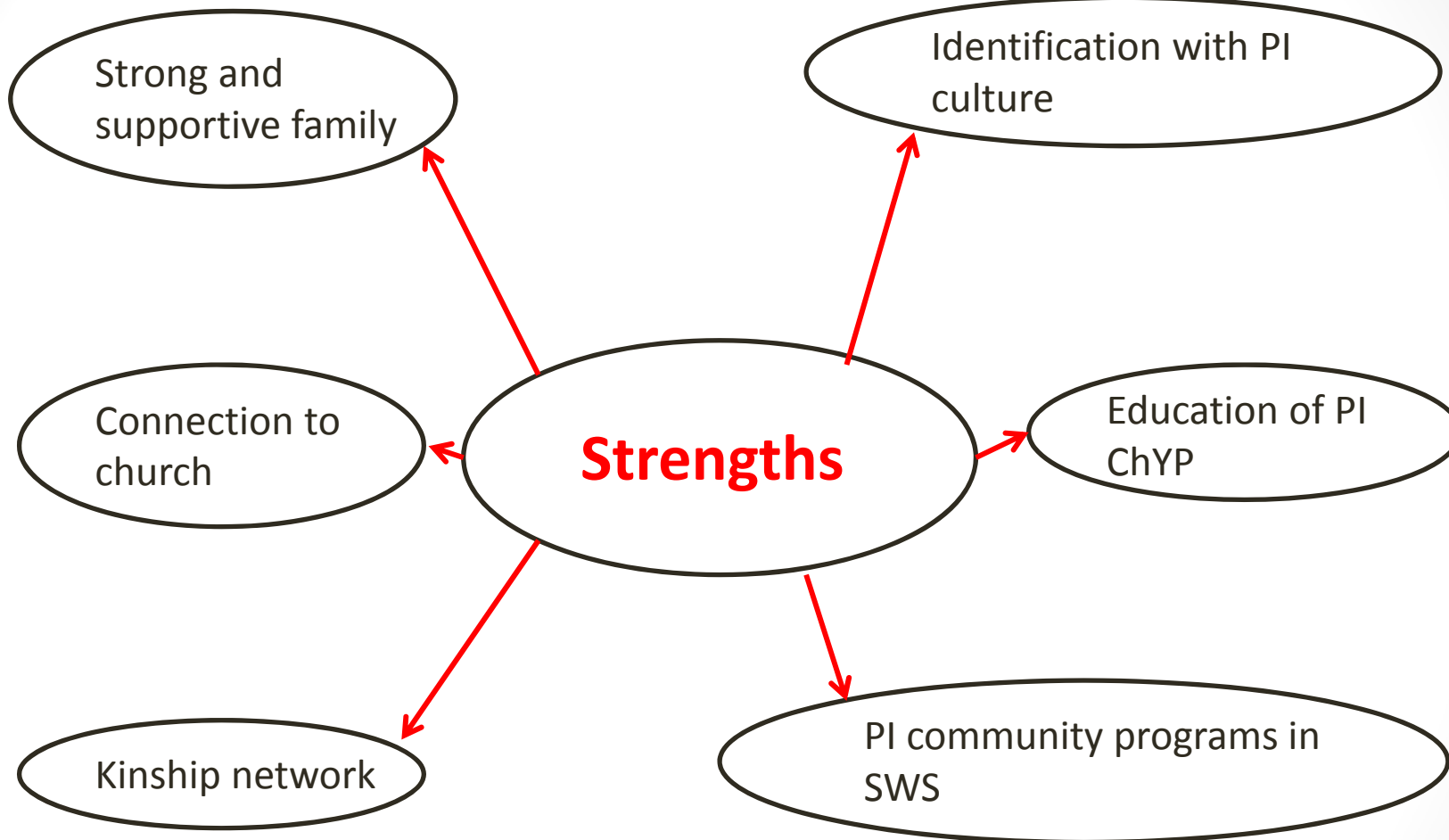
# Child at-risk clinics

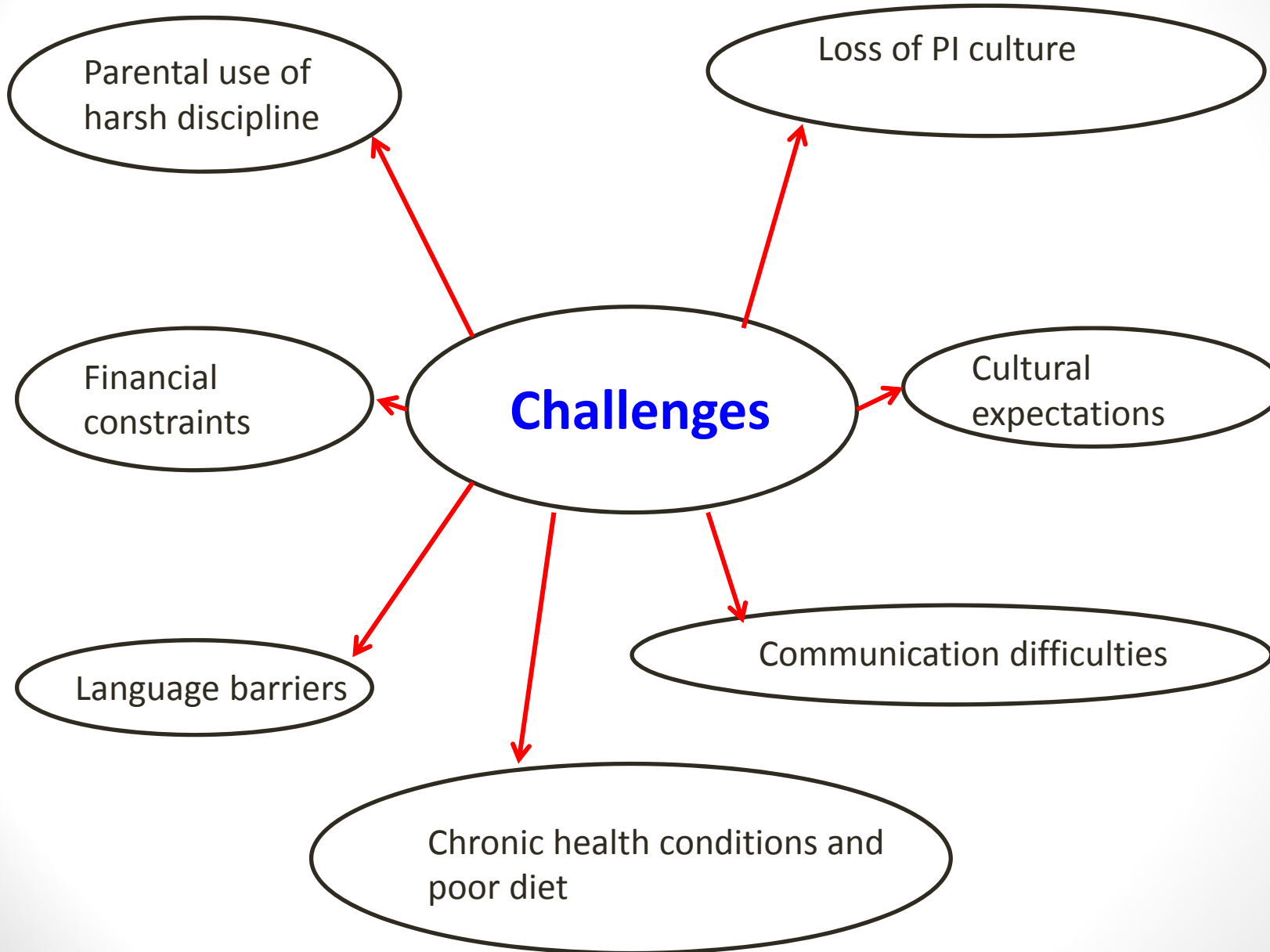
- 238 children seen in at-risk clinics (2013 – 2015)



Note: The total PI population in SWS LGAs range from 1 to 4%.

# **Qualitative data from PI community consultations**





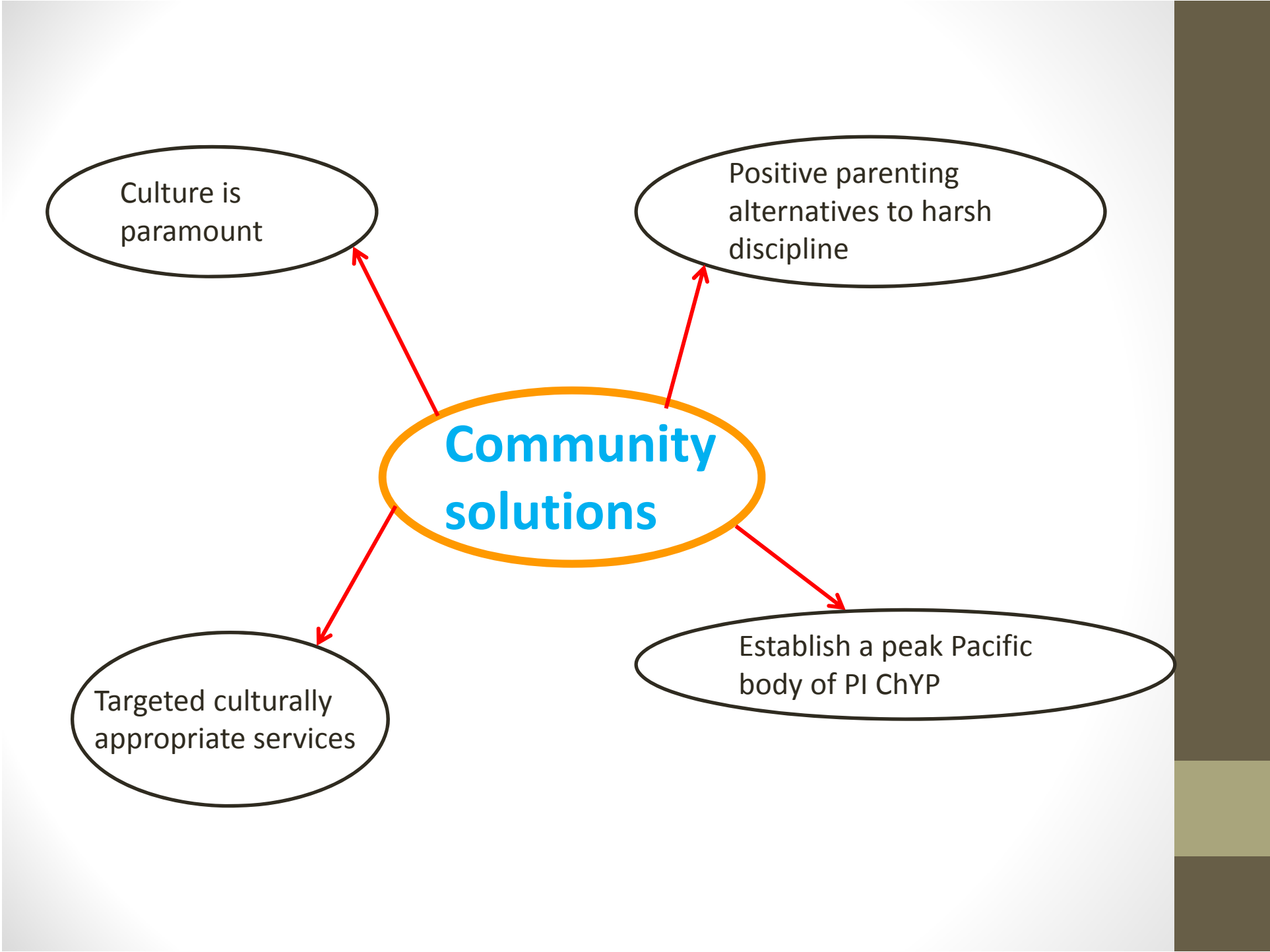
Culture is paramount

Positive parenting alternatives to harsh discipline

**Community solutions**

Targeted culturally appropriate services

Establish a peak Pacific body of PI ChYP



# Limitations

- Poor identification of the PI population in Australia
  - making collection of data on health, education, welfare, and justice difficult
- Qualitative data collected on the community were from more active community members who volunteered to participate in the community forum

# Conclusion



- A disproportionate number of PI ChYP present for acute child maltreatment assessments and to child at-risk clinics in SWS
- PI ChYP are over-represented in juvenile crime statistics
- Little else known about health differentials for PI ChYP
  - anecdotal reports suggest that there may be more concerns
- There are significant PI community concerns
- There is an urgent need for better identification of PI ChYP needs in health, education, welfare, justice





**We hope to build better services for this vulnerable population through community interventions that build on family and community resilience while enhancing positive parenting.**

**“There is a good structure within Pacific Islander communities where families look after each other” (Samoan man)**

**“Our people, you know, are church goers whether they believe or not, they go, church is very big part of their life” (Tongan woman)**

**“Loss contact, loss their identity, sense of belonging and where they come from” (Tongan man)**

**“Lack of language skills, language barrier” (Tongan woman)**

**“Back home discipline is a big thing you know. Physical discipline is how we were raised up, that’s how I was raised up. Physical discipline, you know my mum would use a wooden spoon and smack me on the head. And I did it to my kids too. Here in Australia, mentality of the Islanders is we turn out ok.” (Tongan woman)**

**“The culture is creating, you know, anxiety at the standard and what the family is going through because the family has to pay the rent, the bill, and top of that the family has to donate and put money in, if you are not going to put money in you are going to be flamed, and you will be abandoned” (Samoan woman)**