



## PREAMBLE - NOEL PEARSON

*Our Local Commissioners are following in the steps of our Old People who laid the foundations for our clear-sighted vision of a future in which our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have the same opportunities in life as non-Indigenous kids; a future too in which kids grow up learning their ancestral languages, visiting and knowing the important cultural places on their country, and knowing the stories, history and people that give them their special and unique identity.*

*Future generations will in turn draw strength from the reform leadership that the FRC Local Commissioners today provide to our people in the welfare reform communities.*

*Indeed, the FRC is providing a critically important example of effective Indigenous reform leadership across the nation - an example that stands out in stark relief in the often bleak landscape of Indigenous affairs. For example, we have recently seen and heard the Western Australian government's struggle to imagine a sustainable future for its remote Indigenous communities, and the distressing talk of closing communities down in that state. Yet the FRC demonstrates in no uncertain terms that a transformation can occur in remote communities when a local Indigenous leadership ready, willing and capable of leading change is empowered to do so.*

*The FRC and the Local Commissioners have achieved remarkable things in only a short period of time. The FRC continues to prove very effective in helping those who need it most to manage their money through income management orders (the BasicsCard) to ensure there is food on the table and that bills can be paid. Indeed, I believe that the FRC model of Welfare Reform provides the fairest and most effective approach that we have seen in this country.*

*The FRC continues to build traction in terms of school attendance results and in other areas also the FRC continues to set new, higher expectations for individuals, families and communities, and to hold people to these expectations when they fall short.*

*This is very important progress. I commend the work of the FRC and its Local Commissioners, and I urge others to learn from and build on its success by empowering Indigenous reform leaders to lead change.*

Noel Pearson

