

# LOCAL COMMISSIONERS' YEAR IN REVIEW



## Coen Local Commissioners' report

Our experience as Local Commissioners over the past year has been one of highs and lows. We see there is a long way to go for some of our community members but with faith, dedication and patience we continue to support our mob to find the right path. Working collaboratively with all stakeholders is crucial for a good outcome. Our partners assist with educating and supporting those who have fallen off the path to find their way back.

Housing has been a hot topic in Coen in the past year. Lack of housing has caused overcrowding which is contributing to many of the issues coming before the Commission in Coen. These issues include domestic violence, alcohol related incidents and school absences. A core group of agencies have reconnected to

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form the 'Coen Interagency Group', chaired by Sergeant Alan Dewis and organised by Fran Maddern, Manager

Government Coordination with DATSIP. The Coen Interagency Group meets to discuss concerns on behalf of the community and actions resolutions with the support of the Government Champion, Katerina Carroll, who attends and participates in these meetings every second month. Overcrowded housing and long term maintenance issues have been some of the items on the agenda for which the group have sought assistance from the Government Champion for higher level government intervention.

Domestic violence continues to be a major issue in Coen with the FRC receiving seven domestic violence breaches and nine domestic violence orders between January and June 2016. Legislative changes to the FRC Act which received royal assent on 17 December 2015 introduced the domestic violence trigger to the FRC conferencing process. Clients scheduled for conference on domestic violence matters are currently referred to the Wellbeing Centre for counselling. We would like to see specific programs available to perpetrators and victims of abuse. The community is working together towards a safe haven, a place for people to feel safe when they find themselves having to escape from domestic violence. An old demountable building has been sourced through the council and we are awaiting approval for the gifting of this building to the community for this purpose.

In March 2016 there was talk of an increase in humbugging of our Elders. In response we decided that our Elders may benefit from participating in voluntary income management and decided to have a yarn with them about how this money management strategy may be able to assist them in their situation. We held a presentation at the Day Respite Centre for the Elders with the assistance of St Johns staff members. Three Elders were interested and signed up to voluntary income management in the weeks following the presentation with a further three people signing up by the end of the financial year.

We cannot express enough, the need to continue a collaborative working relationship with all stakeholders who service the Coen community. Unless we all work together to address the issues affecting our community we cannot expect to get the outcomes our people deserve.

**Coen Commissioners Peter Peter, May Kepple, Garry Port and Elaine, Alison and Maureen Liddy**

*Motivational Interviewing Training*

