



Governance

External governance

The FRC, as an independent statutory authority, falls under the umbrella of DATSIP, whose Director-General is the Chair of the Family Responsibilities Board. The FRC Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner (if appointed) and Local Commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council under recommendation by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The Minister and FR Board have advisory relationships to the FRC Commissioner.



Ministerial portfolio

For the period 1 July 2019 to 20 May 2020 the Minister responsible for administering the FRC Act was the Honourable Jackie Trad, the then Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. On 21 May 2020 the Honourable Craig Crawford MP was sworn in as Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and assumed responsibility for the FRC Act's administration.

Family Responsibilities Board

Part 12 of the FRC Act provides for the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board). Under section 117 of the FRC Act, the FR Board has a mandate to: give advice and make recommendations to the State Minister about the operation of the Commission; if asked by the Commissioner, give advice and make recommendations to the Commission about the performance of its functions; and consider the reports submitted by the Commission.

The FR Board consists of one person nominated by the State Minister (chairperson of the FR Board), one person nominated by the Australian Government and one person nominated by the Cape York Institute. FR Board members are appointed by the Governor in Council for the term stated in the member's instrument of appointment.

Governance



The FR Board members as at 30 June 2020 were:

Dr Chris Sarra	Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) as the Chair
Mr Ray Griggs	AO, CSC, Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
Mr Noel Pearson	Founder, Cape York Partnership representing the Cape York Institute.

The FRC Act requires the FR Board to meet every six months. The meeting may be held by using any technology available which will allow for efficient and effective communication. The FR Board members must meet in person at least once a year. A quorum for the FR Board is comprised of two members. Meetings during the reporting period are reflected below.

Date of FR Board meeting	Venue	Attendees
28 November 2019	Room 41.01 1 William Street, Brisbane	Dr Chris Sarra (Chair), Director-General DATSIP; Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC, Chief Executive Officer, NIAA; and Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, Cape York Institute.
5 May 2020	Teleconference	Dr Chris Sarra (Chair), Director-General DATSIP; Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC, Chief Executive Officer, NIAA; and Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, Cape York Institute.

Executive management

The Commission's EMT is comprised of the Commissioner, the Registrar, the Client Manager and the Executive Officer (Finance). The EMT plays a critical role in the corporate governance and service delivery of the Commission by:



- providing value-based leadership whilst being a role model for innovation, teamwork and problem solving
- demonstrating and incorporating high standards of integrity and ethical behaviour
- ensuring transparency and accountability through effective decision-making and communication with employees and service providers
- providing a clear future direction for the Commission and
- providing leadership and direction on:
 - issues relating to the ongoing financial and non-financial operations of the Commission and the performance of its governance structure and
 - the operation, performance and reporting of the Commission with regard to its obligations under the FRC Act and other relevant legislation.



Governance

Due to the small size of the Commission, the role of the EMT also encompasses the corporate stewardship functions associated with the Commission's operational performance. In addition, the EMT oversees the operations of finance, information management, human resources and planning, audit, risk management, systems review and workload and performance management. The EMT met on a regular basis throughout the 2019-20 year.

Queensland public service values

Customers first	Be courageous
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your customers • Deliver what matters • Make decisions with empathy 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own your actions, successes and mistakes • Take calculated risks • Act with transparency
Ideas into action	Empower people
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge the norm and suggest solutions • Encourage and embrace new ideas • Work across boundaries 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead, empower and trust • Play to everyone's strengths • Develop yourself and those around you
Unleash potential	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect greatness • Lead and set clear expectations • Seek, provide and act on feedback 	

The Commission has structured its operations in accordance with the objects and principles of the FRC Act and the Queensland Public Service Values: customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous and empower people. The Commission's Service Charter pledges the best service we can provide and pledges to work with the Australian and Queensland Governments, stakeholders and clients to deliver outcomes for the welfare reform communities. In doing so the Commission nurtures a spirit of inquiry and innovation. Our Local Commissioners and registry staff know their customers and value the cultural needs and family connectedness of community members. Decisions are made with an understanding of where each client comes from and what has influenced their behaviour. The exercise of authority under the FRC Act is governed by this empathy. The Commissioners are challenging the negative social norms in their communities every day, encouraging clients to cross the boundaries of their inappropriate social behaviours. To do so requires courage from the Local Commissioners and registry staff and from Commission clients.



Public sector ethics and Code of Conduct

Excepting the Family Responsibilities Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and the Local Commissioners, staff of the Commission are employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*. Employees are made aware of their ongoing responsibilities, duty of care and requirements under the core legislation governing the Commission as published through Commission policies, protocols and guidelines which are readily available to employees on the intranet. Online fraud and corruption and Code of Conduct training is included in induction processes for new employees and is completed by all employees on an annual basis. To further assist Commission employees with ethical decision-making and in understanding the Code of Conduct, the Commission has a supplementary policy document titled Workplace Policy. This policy presents a broad framework for ethical behaviour, supports the Code and is consistent with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008*, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, the FRC Act and relevant Public Service Commission (PSC) policies and directives. The Code of Conduct and Workplace Policy are both available in hard copy at all Commission premises.

The Local Registry Coordinators for the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge will facilitate Code of Conduct training for the Local Commissioners upon their reappointment in July 2020. Aside from the fundamental principles of the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct which are strictly adhered to, the principles of natural justice, conflict of interest and confidentiality are established and strongly reinforced with Local Commissioners through the Local Commissioners' Handbook and the Local Commissioners' Conference Guidelines.

Alignment with the ethics principles is further achieved through the Commission's Strategic Plan which incorporates objectives based on enhancing and strengthening socially responsible standards of behaviour both within the registry and in the five welfare reform communities.

Human Rights

The *Human Rights Act 2019* came into effect on 1 January 2020. The Act is a framework for the Queensland public sector and places the human rights of individuals at the forefront of government and public sector service delivery. It is therefore clear that as employees in a public entity, and as employers, we must consider the impact of our decisions and actions on the human rights of those we serve.

The Commission is committed to building a culture that respects and promotes human rights. To build upon this commitment, all employees have completed the online 'Public Entities and the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*' course through the iLearn program provided by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. In-house training to be delivered by the Queensland Human Rights Commission was scheduled for April 2020, however, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has now delayed this training until the 2020-21 financial year. Training in regard to the legislative requirements of the *Human Rights Act 2019* will be conducted on an annual basis for all employees and included as mandatory induction training. Local Commissioners will also receive human rights training incorporated in their annual Local Commissioner Development Week.

The Commission has reviewed its complaints management policies to incorporate the need to identify and deal appropriately with a human rights complaint in a transparent process. The Commission has adopted the 'receive/assess/consider/resolve/respond/learn/report'



Governance

methodology to handle human rights complaints. The policy states that the Commission will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and will properly consider human rights when making decisions in regard to complaints. The Commission received no human rights complaints during the reporting period.

Risk management

The Commission's risk management framework establishes a mechanism to identify, assess and manage real or potential risks. The framework supports a positive risk minimisation and management culture which focuses on:

- strategic risks – risks which present as challenges to the Commission's strategic direction and vision, and
- operational risks – risks which present as challenges to the daily activities of the Commission in delivering its services.

In applying the risk management principles, the Commission has a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The framework of this plan incorporates five key elements: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and review. The plan states a shared legal responsibility and accountability between, and a commitment by, all employees to implement the BCP. Employees are individually responsible for contributing to the BCP and to the health and safety of others by reporting workplace injury, incidents, illness and hazards. Employees are also responsible for seeking to reduce the vulnerability of the Commission to internal and external events and influences that may impede achieving the goals of the Commission. The BCP commences with an integrated approach to managing all risks that may impact strategic and business objectives and moves to reviewing and re-evaluating identified risks and reporting to the EMT.

Internal audit

The Commission is a small organisation, and as such a separate audit committee has not been established. Additionally, a specific internal audit function is not required unless directed by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Responsibility for audit functions is included as part of the role of the EMT in the corporate governance and service delivery of the Commission.

The Executive Officer (Finance) is responsible for performing internal audits to ensure efficiency and economy of systems and to identify financial, operational and business continuity risks. Audit results are reported to the Commissioner and Registrar to determine whether remedial actions are required and to establish compliance with statutory requirements and best practice.

Throughout the reporting period, the EMT requested periodic audits of the Commission's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for quality assurance purposes. These audits were undertaken to assist in maintaining the integrity of our underlying data used for operational and statistical reporting purposes, as well as to ensure continuous improvement in delivering flexible, effective and efficient services.

The results of internal audits undertaken during the reporting period did not identify any significant deficiencies in internal control processes nor any operational or financial risks of a systemic nature that required external remedial action.



External scrutiny

For the period 1 July 2019 to 20 May 2020 the Economics and Governance Committee had oversight responsibility for the Commission under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. Effective from 21 May 2020 oversight responsibility for the Commission transitioned to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee following amendments to Schedule 6 of the Standing Orders to reflect changes in ministerial portfolio arrangements – the appointment of the Honourable Craig Crawford MP as the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The committee is responsible for examining Bills, considering policy, examining estimates, assessing the Commission's accounts in regard to integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management and assessing whether the Commission is performing its legislative functions and meeting its obligations as a statutory body.

On Monday 25 November 2019, by invitation, Commissioner Williams, Registrar Maxine McLeod and Executive Officer (Finance) Tracey Paterson appeared at a public briefing before the Queensland Parliament's Economic and Governance Committee in Brisbane. The purpose of the briefing was to assist the Committee with its oversight of the functions and performance of the Commission. At the briefing Commissioner Williams provided an opening statement advising of the functions, financial environment, and present and anticipated future challenges facing the Commission. She then addressed questions from the committee members in regard to the key operational focus and strategic plans for the FRC. The committee was particularly interested in the link between income management and referrals to service providers to initiate behavioural change.

The Commission is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments. As such the Commission is also subject to review from Federal bodies. During the reporting period Commission officers gave evidence to the Standing Committee on Community Affairs, Legislation Committee, on the Inquiry into the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019. Full details of the submission can be found in the Significant events and achievements section of this report.

Information systems and records governance

The Commission has a service level agreement with the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) for information and communication technology services. This agreement ensures that the Commission complies with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, whilst providing a high level of security and support.

The Commission's ICT system plays a vital role in supporting employees in the Cairns registry and regional offices. The Commission, in conjunction with CAA, has policies and network protocols in place to ensure all employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding ethical information access, transference, usage and management. These systems capture and retain information, preserve the integrity of information and provide a high level of security and confidentiality.

This year substantial time was allocated to ensuring continuity of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most staff were required to work remotely during the second half of this financial year. Information security and access were paramount and carefully considered in escalating the capability of Commission employees to transition to working from home.



Governance

Various projects were undertaken by our ICT Administrator, Jeffrey Dela Cruz, during the reporting period comprising changes to our ICT systems as detailed below:

- To further refine the operations, particularly in the case management environment, a data reporting review commenced. Developments were customised and applied to the database structure in the CRM system to reflect quality outcomes.
- The registry desktop system was replaced and upgraded which included configuring the system in line with the Queensland Government's Information Security Policy. The policy seeks to ensure all agencies apply a consistent, risk-based approach to the implementation of information security to maintain confidentiality, integrity and availability. The Commission is still in the process of implementing the Information Security Management System and it is expected to conclude the project in the 2020-21 financial year.
- Microsoft Teams has been implemented for more collaborative communication between staff members and stakeholders during COVID-19. This tool allows the Commission to share, meet and collaborate in real-time via desktop application, moderately functional web-based application, or mobile application. The Queensland Government released a Collaboration Platform Policy in May 2020 to advise and provide guidance in the use of Microsoft Teams as the primary platform for intra and interdepartmental collaboration.

The Commission will continually aim to implement innovative and technology driven solutions to work more efficiently whilst complying with best practice principles. A priority of the Commission is to increase its ability to work in a more sustainable paper free environment. The finance section of the registry successfully transitioned to a paperless environment in January 2019, markedly increasing efficiencies in time management, and streamlining accounts payable and payroll processes.

The Commission can report that no breaches of information security have occurred to date, and no records have been lost due to disaster or other occurrences.

The Commission complies with recordkeeping practices in accordance with section 141 of the FRC Act, the *Public Records Act 2002* and sections 7, 22 and 23 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. Approximately 90 percent of Commission records are held in digital format.

As the Commission has been dependent upon funding commitments from the Queensland and Australian Governments on an annual basis, only those records which are identified as falling within section 141 of the FRC Act are destroyed. All other public records have been retained. No records have yet been transferred to the Queensland State Archives.



Workforce profile

At 30 June 2020 the Commission had an employee establishment of 19 positions occupied by 18 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members, including positions servicing the regional communities. Regional positions include Local Registry Coordinators based in Aurukun and Doomadgee. The Commission employs 29 Indigenous Local Commissioners who are employed on a fee for service basis under the remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland Government Bodies. The figures below are based solely on the public servant workforce profile of the Commission.

Workforce profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Of the 18 FTEs, 12 are permanent staff, 5 are temporary staff and 1 is on a set contract term (FRC Commissioner's tenure is set by the Governor in Council)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 percent of our workforce is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 78 percent of our workforce are women
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 percent of our workforce reside in remote communities

Since the establishment of the Commission employee and job classification levels have altered from time to time as a result of operational reviews. During this financial year the Commission has experienced a permanent separation rate of zero percent.

The Commission conducts all recruitment and selection processes in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008* and relevant PSC policies and directives. New employees are welcomed through the Commission's online induction process which provides information in regard to the Commission and links to all human resource policies. Each is mentored by a staff member to assist them to become familiar with the Commission and what is expected of them in their role.

During the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid.

Performance management

To facilitate employee development, each employee together with their manager signs a Performance and Development Agreement which is linked to the Commission's strategic objectives. The agreement sets out identified learning activities, supports the development of competencies, professional skills and personal attributes, and is designed to identify and record knowledge and skills gaps together with learning objectives.



Governance

Flexible working arrangements and wellbeing

The Commission promotes policies and activities to support a healthy work-life balance. Flexible work arrangements are actively accessed, and employees are provided the opportunity to work from home where appropriate. Part-time or job share work opportunities exist, and hours of work arrangements including the opportunity for purchased leave are available. These flexible arrangements are also offered in order to assist in balancing work and carer roles where required. Employees are also encouraged to use their annual leave.

To prevent the onset of desk-related neck, back, shoulder, elbow and wrist injuries, and to manage symptoms which may already exist, the Commission offers employees access to ergonomic specialist services.

Employees across the public service contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic response in a range of different ways. Commission employees contributed to this effort by continuing to deliver essential services. Financial support was provided to staff in relation to obtaining the flu vaccine and a risk profile was conducted with each staff member to assist logistics and timeliness for their working from home transition. The Commission implemented the working from home transition by optimising flexible and remote working arrangements. The working from home transition proved a seamless process with the assistance of our ICT Administrator and the purchase of additional ICT requirements. Communication was enhanced with Microsoft Teams and telephone and video conferencing. As the Queensland Government eased physical and business restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission progressively and safely began returning staff to the workplace. The Commission implemented measures to support physical distancing and enhanced hygiene including additional cleaning and limiting employee numbers in offices. All staff who are required to travel for work are issued with a 'travel safe pack' equipped with masks, gloves, tissues and hand sanitiser. As at 30 June 2020 approximately 30 percent of staff members were still working from home.

Professional development

The Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners on an ongoing basis to ensure it actively works to restore local authority by:

- assisting the Local Commissioners to enhance and expand upon relationships with other Indigenous organisations, service providers, government departments and agencies
- assisting the Local Commissioners with the delivery of training modules on statutory interpretation and applying a decision-making framework consistent with the FRC Act
- conducting a planning week during which the Local Commissioners presented their community reports incorporating the setting of strategic priorities, analysis of unique challenges and the development of a vision for the future
- conducting a review of operations during which statistics were presented and analysed, FRC objectives were reassessed and goals refreshed
- delivering an I-Assist Indigenous Suicide Awareness Program and Consultation which expanded upon the LivingWorks Australia safeTALK workshop conducted at the Local Commissioner Development Week held in June 2019.

Governance



The broader focus of the Commission's professional development program for employees is on:

- promoting skills development, career enhancement, and supporting a culture of ongoing learning through participation in internal workshops
- on-the-job training and courses conducted by specialist external training providers
- ongoing in-house training delivered by the Commissioner on statutory interpretation and application of the FRC Act to registry practices and procedures
- building a resilient workforce by providing online courses in Ethical Decision-Making, leadership and people management skills, Recognise, Respond, Refer – Domestic and Family Violence, Fraud and Corruption Control, Information Privacy, Conflict of Interest, Public entities and the *Human Rights Act 2019* and finance and procurement fundamentals
- promoting cultural capacity by providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training upon induction
- facilitating visits to welfare reform communities for new employees to increase their awareness of each unique community and enhance their understanding of the conferencing environment
- providing flexible work practices to enable employees to study whilst continuing to meet operational and client needs
- providing financial assistance and leave arrangements under the Commission's Study and Research Assistance Scheme.

During 2019-20 employee professional development, training, and workshops cost \$16,997 excluding travel costs. This investment provides a platform for the Commission to foster the development of new skills, monitor, evaluate and improve business processes and improve service delivery.

Publication of information online

For information regarding right to information and information privacy refer to the Right to Information section on the Commission website. For Indigenous matters and complaints management, refer to the Additional Published Information under Right to Information on the Commission's website at <https://www.frcq.org.au>. For consultancies and overseas travel, refer to the Queensland Government Open Data website at <https://data.qld.gov.au>.

Publications by the Commission during 2019-20

1. Annual Report 2018-2019
2. Quarterly Reports 44 - 47 (April 2019 to March 2020)

All publications are available on the Family Responsibilities Commission's website: <https://www.frcq.org.au>.