

# Preamble Noel Pearson



*Now in its twelfth year the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) remains a stand-out example of Indigenous empowerment and capability building in Australia. This targeted model of income management provides our families with access to support services that help them build capabilities and take responsibility for their lives and their children's lives.*

*At the heart of this model is a genuine and robust belief in the capacity of people to improve their lives when provided with support and the steady guidance of their local Elders, acting as Local Commissioners of the FRC.*

*Although not well understood, the FRC is one of the best models of early intervention in the country – providing people with early and rapid referral to support services so they have a real opportunity to take positive action to address problems before formal intervention by government.*

*For this reason, it is encouraging to see that this year the FRC has increased early referrals to support services by almost 400 per cent. This change allows Local Commissioners to use client conferences to apply a more holistic approach, using support services in conjunction with income management to encourage our community members who need support.*

*The beneficial impact of this early intervention on our Indigenous children cannot be overstated and should continue to be supported and recognised by all stakeholders.*

*The FRC is also a powerful example of local Indigenous empowerment. This year, Local Commissioners held over 90 percent of conferences alone, applying their skills and knowledge of their own people to effect behavioural change in hundreds of community members. I commend them all for their resolute commitment and energy, which has been unwavering in the face of COVID-19.*

*My great hope for the coming year is that the Australian and State Governments continue to recognise the enormous value of the FRC and commit to providing the breadth and quantity of support services that our clients and their children need to build a life that they have reason to value. Together, we can build a brighter future for existing FRC communities and all others that wish to use this model to build local capability and empowerment.*

*Finally, I want to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to Commissioner Tammy Williams and all our Local Commissioners for their tremendous service to our people. You are an exemplar of kindness, commitment and justice and this year's successes are owed to you.*

*Noel Pearson*