



Significant events and achievements

Significant events

The past fiscal year has seen quite a few significant events which, together with significant challenges experienced and reported separately in this Annual Report, have had an impact upon the internal operations and future outlook of the FRC.

Appointment of FRC Commissioner

The Commission was pleased to announce the appointment of Tammy Williams as its new Commissioner to build on the legacy left by David Glasgow who retired after 11 years as CEO and inaugural Commissioner. Commissioner Williams commenced on 2 September 2019 and her appointment was made effective until 30 June 2020 pending further negotiations between the Queensland and Australian Governments and policy work into the future direction of the FRC. Commissioner Williams is the first Aboriginal and female Commissioner to be appointed as CEO of the FRC. The former Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Jackie Trad MP, stated: *“Ms Williams’ appointment as Commissioner provides strong leadership for the Welfare Reform communities serviced by the FRC. Ms Williams has the energy, vision and ability to communicate across local, corporate and government levels and offers a strategic and fresh leadership approach.”* We are pleased to advise that on 2 July 2020 Commissioner Williams was reappointed as CEO for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

David Glasgow’s significant contribution as the Commission’s CEO is well known. He led the Commission since its inception in 2008 and is now celebrating the end of an exceptional career that has achieved many goals. He has given the Commission and those working within it direction, guidance and inspiration. He will be greatly missed by the Commission, its strategic partners, service providers and many community members in the welfare reform communities.

Reappointment of Local Commissioners

On 24 October 2019 the Governor in Council under the FRC Act approved the appointment of five new Local Commissioners and the reappointment of 24 existing Local Commissioners to the FRC for the period 1 November 2019 to 30 June 2020. The five new Local Commissioners included two Commissioners for Hope Vale, Robert Gibson and Priscilla Gibson, two Commissioners for Doomadgee, Dawn Aplin and Isabel Toby, and one Commissioner for Mossman Gorge, George Ross-Kelly. The appointment of these additional Local Commissioners provides the Commission with diversity of expertise, gender and cultural authority. From 1 July 2020 all Local Commissioners were reappointed until 30 June 2021.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

On 12 December 2019 the Commission was pleased to receive an executed MOU between the Australian and Queensland Governments setting out an agreed basis of funding, administration and reporting arrangements for the operation of the Commission covering the period 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2021. The MOU delivers some certainty to the Local Commissioners going forward and demonstrates the Australian and Queensland Governments’ commitment to the Commission’s continuing role in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale

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and Mossman Gorge. The delivery of the MOU has provided the Commission with stability and certainty going forward which has also assisted to re-establish the Commission's relationship with service provider partners and partner agencies.

Tabling of 2018-19 Annual Report

The Commission is pleased to report the 2018-19 Annual Report was tabled by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to Parliament on 20 March 2020. This represents the last annual report delivered by former FRC Commissioner David Glasgow who commenced as the inaugural FRC Commissioner in 2008.

Proposed transition from Cape York Income Management (CYIM) to the Cashless Debit Card

On 23 September 2019, following an invitation received to present 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, Commission officers gave evidence to the Committee by tele-link. The Committee's consideration related in principal to the future of CYIM (administered through a BasicsCard) and the transition of income management participants in FRC communities onto the Cashless Debit Card.

Commissioner Williams informed those present of the highly targeted approach to CYIM as exercised by the Local Commissioners which is clearly supportive of local authority and decision-making. Separate written submissions were provided to the Committee to support the views of the Commission and Local Commissioners in their fight against long-term welfare dependency and for self-determination in their communities. In the Local Commissioners' submission, they stated – *"Our model puts power in our hands through the FRC, so as respected local leaders we can intervene where people are not meeting their basic responsibilities to their children and our community. We bring people to the FRC for conferencing, and we have power to intervene with care, support and love – sometimes with tough love, which is when income management is an important tool for us. Our model is not a blanket approach"*.

Members of the Committee were left in no doubt that the FRC supports the transition from the BasicsCard to the Cashless Debit Card in FRC communities, and that whilst it was not the subject of the inquiry, suggested that the Committee may give consideration to the FRC model as a basis for a more nuanced, culturally appropriate mechanism for delivering income management in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.

Local Commissioner Development and Planning Week

The Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners as required under sections 22 and 35 of the FRC Act – Commissioner and Registrar's functions. A Local Commissioner Planning Week was conducted from 23 to 26 September 2019. Local Commissioners from each community travelled to Cairns and presented to the delegates community reports incorporating their desire for strengthening relationships, setting strategic priorities, meeting challenges and developing a vision for the future. A review of



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operations was conducted by the Client Manager, Camille Banks, during which statistics were presented and analysed, FRC objectives were reassessed and goals refreshed. An I-Assist Indigenous Suicide Awareness Program and Consultation was conducted which expanded upon the LivingWorks Australia safeTALK workshop conducted at the Local Commissioner Development Week held in June 2019. The planning week also provided the opportunity to officially transition from the leadership of Commissioner David Glasgow to newly appointed Commissioner Tammy Williams.

Achievements

Student achievement

Each year the Local Commissioners present school awards to provide positive recognition and support for those students (and their families) who regularly attend school, to encourage better attendance, and to reiterate the importance of education in establishing a successful life for the future. The Commission's annual School Awards presentations were conducted in December in each of the five communities. Prizes were awarded for attendance achievements and included certificates, medals, and other incentives.

Client achievement

As part of the review of operational strategies, the Commission implemented a Client Incentive Program, an initiative which provides the Local Commissioners the opportunity to acknowledge and reward two FRC clients from each community who have demonstrated significant improvement in behaviour and/or attitude each quarter. The program is aimed at creating and fostering a sense of value for clients in achieving the goals set by, and for them, and boosting their commitment to achieving those goals.

Local Commissioners reported the client's delight at receiving the gift, as well as their own pleasure and pride in being able to deliver the incentive. The program appears to have been a success in reinforcing the positive relationship between clients, the Commission and changed behaviour. Celebratory morning teas were also hosted in Hope Vale and Aurukun with service providers and clients to recognise and encourage client progress and build on relationships through increased communication.