

Family Responsibilities Commission

*Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and
the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships*

Quarterly Report

No. 10

October 2010 to December 2010



*Report prepared by the Family Responsibilities Commission under the leadership of
Commissioner David Glasgow*

Executive Summary

The Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) commenced operation on 1 July 2008 and is now in its third year of operation. The focus of the first year of operation was the establishment of the Commission inclusive of infrastructure and the commencement of regular conferencing schedules in each of the communities. In its second year of operation the Commission focused on the consolidation of administrative processes. During the third year the Commission is supporting the development and local authority of its Commissioners and their role in the future of the communities. In quarter ten a key priority of the Commission was to meet the impact of the operational and logistical needs of additional Aurukun sittings and the implementation of the Active Family Pathways Case Coordination framework.

The Commissioners wish to congratulate all those children that successfully completed another year of schooling and were proud to present awards and praise those children with excellent school attendance and the most improved scholastic student at each school. Commissioners in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale attended ceremonies with schools whilst the Mossman Gorge community held a barbeque for the entire community at which the Commissioners presented awards and words of encouragement to students and families. The Commissioners strongly encourage all families, carers and students to ensure school attendance is a high priority in 2011. Mossman Gorge Commissioners welcomed the Family Responsibilities (FR) Board and Cape York Welfare Reform Board to Mossman Gorge in November and appreciated the opportunity to speak with Board members. The Commissioners of Aurukun and Commissioner Glasgow were profiled by the ABC news program 'Stateline' and, Commissioners Glasgow, Woolla and Poonkamelya, on behalf of all Commissioners, discussed the benefits and impacts of the Commission. The Commission and Department of Justice and Attorney-General successfully held mediation training in Coen attended by Commissioners and local community representatives. The training focused on dispute resolution and working together as a community to resolve problems when they arise.

The Commission commenced conferencing in quarter ten in accordance with the scheduled sittings calendar; however, in response to a request from the Family Responsibilities (FR) Board, adjusted the sitting calendar to allow weekly sittings in Aurukun during November and December 2010. Seven hundred and thirty-four agency notifications were received that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, which was a marginal increase from quarter nine of 726. Six hundred and nine conferences were held as compared with 336 in quarter nine, an increase of 273. The number of conferences in Aurukun increased by 207 from quarter nine to quarter ten, a direct result of the additional sittings.

The Commission thanks Commissioners, staff and agencies who contributed to meeting the resource and time demands for the additional sittings in Aurukun during the quarter. The additional sittings resulted in 256 people in Aurukun attending conference at least once during the quarter. A number of clients attended the Commission multiple times to allow the Commissioners to reinforce the importance of school attendance for all children for which the client had parental or caring responsibilities. School Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) were also pivotal during this period, meeting with parents everyday their child was absent from school without a reasonable excuse. The Commission would like to acknowledge and thank the ACMs for also reinforcing parental roles and responsibilities, which contributed to the significant increase in school attendance.

Although most clients were willing to attend and continue ongoing discussions with the Commissioners, the intensity of weekly sittings caused some clients to display negative behaviours towards the Commissioners and Registry staff when delivered with a further notice to attend the following week. Overall the Commissioners report that positive outcomes were achieved with entire families held to account in ensuring the children attend school. A number of previously recalcitrant clients agreed to work with the Commissioners, Attendance Case Managers and the Principal to ensure consistent

attendance. This is evidenced by an increase in school attendance from 54.1 percent in term 3 to 64.8 percent in term 4.

Decreases in school attendance were experienced in three of the four communities when comparing term 4, 2010 against term 4, 2009. In Aurukun, school attendance increased by 3.2 percentage points from term 4, 2009. This increase is attributed to the additional Commission sittings in Aurukun and the efforts of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) to renew the engagement of children and their families. Coen and Mossman Gorge experienced a decrease of 2.8 percentage points and 1.8 percentage points respectively from term 4, 2009 to term 4, 2010. Hope Vale experienced a decrease of 3.5 percentage points from term 4, 2009 to term 4, 2010. The Commission is hopeful the introduction of the CYAAA to the Hope Vale State School will result in school attendance increasing rather than decreasing.

The Commission continued to monitor and case manage clients, case managing 247 clients in quarter ten. This compares against the 296 clients that were being case managed in quarter nine. The number of referrals to service providers increased from 76 in quarter nine to 129 in quarter ten, with the majority of referrals to the Queensland Corrective Services run Ending Family Violence Program.

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Abbreviations

ACMs	Attendance Case Managers
ACMF	Attendance Case Management Framework
AFP	Active Family Pathways
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CITEC	Centre for Information Technology and Electronic Communication
CRAC	Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation
CYDN	Cape York Digital Network
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy
DET	Department of Education and Training
EFVP	Ending Family Violence Program
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
FIM	Family Income Management
FR Board	Family Responsibilities Board
IT	Information Technology
RIS	Regional Intake Service
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
TSS	Transition Support Services
VIM	Voluntary Income Management
WBC	Wellbeing Centre
Also:	Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership (the Institute)
	Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)
	Mr David Glasgow, Family Responsibilities Commissioner (the Commissioner)
	<i>Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008</i> (the Act)
	Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry)
	Family Responsibilities Board (the Board)

Family Responsibilities Commission

Cape York Welfare Reforms

Report to 31 December 2010.

1. Context

Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) envisages a process of moving people from passive welfare dependence to engagement in the real economy. The process of this transition includes increasing individual responsibility through engagement in labour markets (i.e. real jobs), increasing responsible tenancy and/or home ownership and limiting the role of governments (federal, state and local) in people's lives to align with that provided by governments in mainstream Australia.

Welfare Reform is also about social development. The loss of traditional cultural values and practices has adversely impacted on the social development of Cape York communities (Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge). CYWR aims to rebuild basic social norms that are the fabric of any society, such as sending children to school, abiding by the law and taking care of one's family or house.

A key plank of CYWR was the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission). The *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the Act) was passed in the Queensland Parliament on 13 March 2008 and sets out the statutory obligations of the relevant Queensland departments to notify the Commission where a parent/carer is not meeting pre-determined obligations. For example:

- The Department of Education and Training must submit a School Attendance Notice to the Commission if a child is absent for three full, or part, days of a school term without reasonable excuse, or where a child of compulsory school age is not enrolled to attend school.
- The Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) must submit a Child Safety Notification where the Chief Executive becomes aware of an allegation of harm or risk to a child.
- The Magistrates Court must submit a Court Offence Notice if a person is convicted of an offence.
- The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services), or the provider of public housing, must submit a Tenancy Breach Notice if they believe that the tenant has breached their public housing tenancy agreement.

The Commission receives agency notifications from the departments mentioned above. Once received, a process is followed which determines if the person is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Upon determination of jurisdiction, the matter is then referred to the Local Commissioners for a decision about whether to order the person to attend a conference.

When a conference is convened the client may be encouraged to enter into a Family Responsibility Agreement (FRA), or an order may be made to refer the person to community support services. The matter is then case managed by the Commission for the period of the order/agreement. Where a person does not comply, Show Cause proceedings are initiated and the client is ordered to attend before the Commission to explain reasons for non compliance and, if necessary, an order for Conditional Income Management (CIM) may be made.

2. Partners / Service Providers

The Commission has been in operation for a period of two and a half years. During this time has conducted a significant number of conferences with clients brought to the attention of the Commission through the submission of 6336 agency notifications within jurisdiction. Staff of the Commission have developed strong working relationships with the agencies and community support service providers both in the communities and regionally, and will continue to build upon those relationships throughout the life of the trial.

As a result of attendance at a conference, clients may either enter into agreements or be directed to attend relevant community support services such as the Wellbeing Centres (WBCs) to address alcohol and/or drug misuse; gambling, parenting or social health related issues; Parenting Programs to assist in implementing good parenting practices; Family Income Management (FIM) to assist with budgeting and meeting priority needs of individuals and families; school Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) to ensure children attend school; and Queensland Corrective Services' (QCS) three day Ending Family Violence Program. Many services continue to lack full functionality with staff turnover and logistical issues preventing ongoing servicing of clients. The Commission is hopeful that providers will find the impetus to place full services on the ground. As the Commission is now in its final year of operation the full impact of the Commission and service provider referrals will never reach anticipated potential if action is not taken.

The Commission continues to support service providers and the process of change by providing training, briefings, procedures and assistance when requested and operationally possible. The Commission has implemented improved IT programs to allow ease of reporting, provided presentations and briefs to new and existing service provider staff in the communities and remained flexible and understanding of the limitations of the individual staff and their organisations. The Commission, under its mandate, continues to monitor and identify gaps in service delivery, coordination and cooperation between government agencies, service providers and non-government organisations in each of the communities.

Where a client enters into an agreement or a direction is made a case plan is developed. The case plan may include a number of referrals to community support services. Service providers are required to complete a pre-populated spreadsheet provided by the Commission to the service provider by the fifth day of each month, advising if the client has attended and engaged with the provider and the progress they are making in their case plans.

As a result of the progress reports received, clients' cases are assessed to establish whether they are meeting their obligations under the agreement or order. Additional information is sought from partner agencies and service providers with local knowledge. All information is gathered to provide a firm basis for decisions to be made relating to the best course of action for clients. Where appropriate, recommendations for Show Cause proceedings or case reviews are initiated. The complexity of client obligations requires comprehensive information sharing and cooperation between the Commission, service providers and associated agencies to ensure clients can realistically meet the requirements of their case plan.

A total of 129 referrals to community support services were made in quarter ten relating to 75 individuals. As at 31 December 2010, 247 clients were being case managed by the Commission. This compares against the 296 clients that were being case managed in quarter nine. As the Commission enters its final year of operation, some clients continue to reappear before the Commission, including those who are not compliant and remain resistant to seeking ongoing

intervention to address their personal issues. These clients have subsequently been placed on Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders, contributing to the decrease in client case plan numbers. The decrease in clients which service providers are required to report upon to the Commission allows the service providers to direct resources and time to engage community members on a voluntary basis and develop sustainable programs in communities moving towards the future of community controlled services. The Commission strongly encourages service providers to consider the impact of the Commission ceasing on 1 January 2012. The impact will reflect in the ceasing of case plans still in force as at 1 January 2012, the need to ensure continuity for the communities, particularly Commission clients, and generally meeting the Welfare Reform agenda.

The Commission has identified the need to assist those clients not progressing with service providers or within the expectations of the Commissioners to improve family lives. To address this issue the Commission implemented the Active Family Pathways (AFP) case coordination framework in November 2010. The AFP is offered to selected individuals and families requiring assistance and support to navigate services and agencies and access the personal assistance they require. The model is voluntary and a collaboration between the Commissioners, Local Coordinators and Case Management team to target clients and assist in the restoration of clients taking primary responsibility for their families. There are currently five clients under the AFP framework. The Commission hopes to increase to eleven clients once sittings commence in 2011.

The Commission and the Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services) successfully continued to deliver the Ending Family Violence Program in all four welfare reform communities and conducted a total of four programs in quarter ten. Two programs were held in Aurukun and one each in Hope Vale and Coen. It is anticipated the Mossman Gorge Program will be held early in 2011. Attendees have comprised both Commission clients on case plans and Probation and Parole clients. The Commission works closely with the Department of Community Safety to ensure the attendance of clients and that family and community understand what is expected of clients who participate in the Program. For quarter ten, 39 clients were referred to the Ending Family Violence Program with a total of 14 clients successfully completing the program. Of the twenty programs scheduled four were re-scheduled due to sorry time and participants being unable to attend because of funeral and family commitments. For each program held, there are a limited number of spaces allocated. The Commission therefore fills those spaces available, and then schedules the additional clients for the next program allocation. The balance of those clients referred for the quarter that were unable to attend due to full program numbers will be scheduled to attend as spaces become available in quarter 11.

The Commission and the Department of Community Safety both report positive and productive outcomes from clients that have attended the program and advise the specialised facilitator, assisted by the Commissioners or Commission staff, greatly impacted on the participation levels of the clients. The continuation of this program is critical to ensure the maintenance of case plan referrals, and as such is a priority of the Commission. While efforts to date have identified areas for better collaboration between the Wellbeing Centres and Department of Community Safety, funding is still needed to sustain the program. The Commission is currently exploring this with a range of stakeholders.

The Commission is conscious of community feedback that has expressed a need for Wellbeing Centres to be a 'one stop shop when people need help, either before, during or after crises'. The Commission takes seriously the need to negotiate community expectations, the referral needs of the Commission and the role and capacity of Wellbeing Centres. As such the Commission is, as a matter of priority, working with the Wellbeing Centre stakeholders (Royal Flying Doctor Service and Department of Health and Ageing) to ensure responsive operational arrangements. A priority of the

Commission is to work with Wellbeing Centres on matters of suitable and sustainable staffing arrangements, including addressing the challenges of recruiting appropriately skilled and experienced personnel; and operating hours to ensure the Wellbeing Centres are regularly available and responsive to community needs during times of particular need or crises.

Cape York Partnerships has advised that the school Attendance Case Management team have recruited new staff who are due to commence in the communities at the beginning of the 2011 school year. During the additional sittings in November, the Commissioners, Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) and CYAAA Principal met weekly to prioritise children and their families requiring assistance to ensure consistent school attendance. The Commission then held conferences with those parents and carers that were clients under the Act, to assist families to address the issues preventing the children attending school. The development of the Opportunity Hubs by Cape York Partnerships in the CYWR communities is anticipated to provide community members and clients with greater privacy and comfort in dealing with matters of budgets and finance.

The Commissioners have commenced a small number of referrals to the long awaited Parenting Programs in Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge and Coen. The Commissioners are hopeful Cape York Partnerships Opportunity Hubs will provide greater uptake and support for the programs by parents and carers.

The separately funded and operated Aurukun Parenting Program continues to advise that lack of resources has limited the number and type of referrals. In quarter ten, a lack of suitably trained and qualified staff to deliver services remained a constraint to the delivery of the program. This lack of services impacted on clients and community members referred to the program and their ability to meet Child Safety Services case plan requirements.

Commissioners have continued to engage with the parents of chronically truant children and seek assistance and services for the parents and children. Commissioners frequently remain frustrated, however, due to the lack of services with a child health and welfare focus. Queensland Police Service (QPS) is currently working with the Commission and Child Safety Services to gain support and resourcing to provide community education programs such as 'Be Strong, Be Heard' to children in the CYWR communities. The 'Be Strong, Be Heard' program is funded to operate in 16 Cape communities. Specialised QPS officers travel to these communities to engage with appropriate community members to discuss disclosure of child abuse and neglect issues, and to provide support to those who speak out. Further education is also provided to community groups/schools/children about protective behaviours.

The Commission remains supportive of the engagement of a school nurse in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale and other health professionals working either permanently or on a regular visiting schedule to the CYWR communities. All Commissioners advised that mental health deteriorated and violence increased dramatically over the holiday period. They strongly encourage services and agencies to consider allocating preventative education and resources in anticipation of the events occurring amongst young people and adults next year. The Commissioners advise that the visiting sporting teams and players from the National Rugby League, Australian Rules Football and National Basketball League provided excitement and happiness to both children and parents, and some relief from the serious issues of community. The time and considerations taken by the players and staff are greatly appreciated.

3. Business Operations

Operational

In meeting obligations under Part 3 of the Act, the Registry commenced operation on 1 July 2008 with a central Registry office established in Cairns and local Registry offices operating in each of the four CYWR communities.

The Registry is managed by the Registrar, with seventeen Cairns based administrative staff who provide corporate and operational support to the Commissioner and Local Commissioners. Additional temporary staff were engaged to provide further administrative assistance, as required to assist with client conferencing preparation during November and December 2010.

The Commission's Client Relationship Management (CRM) database was utilised effectively throughout the tenth quarter. The new client record keeping system is fully functional and further enhancements to the capabilities of the database will be ongoing.

Financial

The total budgeted funding inflows for this trial project are \$14.603M. This funding consists of a Commonwealth Government grant of \$3.5M received in 2007-08, \$9.374M allocated under administered funding through the Department of Communities by the Queensland Government, supplementary funding of \$1.327M endorsed by the FR Board for additional staffing and Commissioner training and projected and actual interest on our operating bank account of \$0.402M until the expiry of the Act on 1 January 2012.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 July 2010 to 31 December 2010 totalled \$1.614M. This income consisted of:
 - \$1.326M in funding received in the first half of the financial year to 31 December 2010 from Queensland Government funding¹;
 - \$0.060M in funding received in quarter nine from the CYWR Service Procurement Fund to offset the annual 2010-11 salary and on-costs for the Principal Case Manager's position;
 - \$0.192M received in quarter nine from the CYWR Service Procurement Fund for Local Commissioner training and additional staffing; and
 - \$0.036M received in interest.

The Commission anticipates receiving a further \$1.578M in normal operating costs in January 2011, \$0.807M in additional funds for additional Aurukun conferences in November and December

¹ (Note: In preparing the quarter ten report, the Commission found that the previous quarterly report incorrectly stated that:

- \$1.586M in funding received in the first half of the financial year to 31 December 2010 from Queensland Government funding;

The quarter nine report should have stated:

- \$1.326M in funding received in the first half of the financial year to 31 December 2010 from Queensland Government funding)

2010 and for the costs associated with the client database and IT infrastructure changes and interest of \$0.042M in the period to 30 June 2011.

- The balance of available funds after expenses as at 31 December 2010 is \$1.479M. The total includes funding released for the six months to 31 December 2010 and the 2009-10 surplus.

Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2010 was \$1.156M (Table 1). This total represents 27 percent of the projected annual expenditure of \$4.284M as stated in the 2010-11 projected expenditure, disclosed on pages 3 to 53 of book 3 in the 2010-11 State Budget papers.

In referring to Graph 1, 98.1 percent of total expenditure in quarter ten is represented by the following:

salaries and recruitment costs	63.9 percent
Local Commissioner fees	9.7 percent
airfare and accommodation costs	6.3 percent
information technology costs	5.1 percent
operating costs	4.2 percent
consultants costs	3.3 percent
property costs	3.2 percent
vehicle costs	2.4 percent

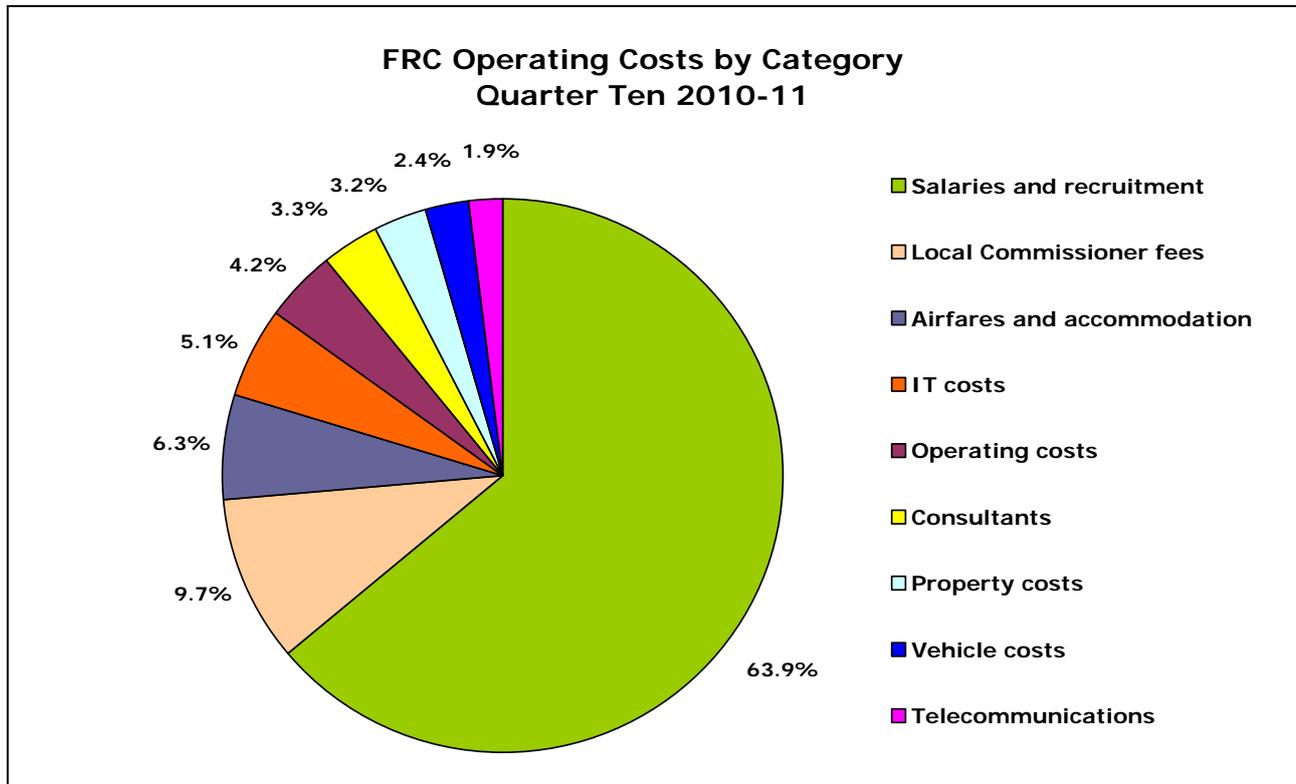
Expenditure variances from quarter nine to quarter ten are attributed to:

- **Salaries and recruitment** - salaries and on costs increased by \$114K due to the appointment of Deputy Commissioners and the extension of the engagement of temporary staff to assist with additional conferences conducted in Aurukun during November and December 2010.
- **Local Commissioner fees** – increased by \$23K due to additional conferences held in Aurukun in November and December 2010.
- **Telecommunications** – increased \$9K during the quarter.
- **Airfares and accommodation** – staff related travel and accommodation increased by \$5K due to the travel associated with additional conferences during the quarter.
- **Operating costs** – decreased by \$11K as a result of the printing costs associated with the Commission's 2009-10 Annual Report incurred in quarter nine.
- **Consultants** – decreased by \$16K due to reduced service charges for financial processing, human resources and further consultancy fees incurred in quarter ten.
- **Vehicle costs** – decreased by \$18K due to the replacement of a vehicle and charges associated with the early reassignment of an existing QFleet lease agreement in the previous quarter.
- **IT Costs** – decreased by \$33K due largely to service charges yet to be levied from Cape York Digital Network and Corporate Administration Agency in Quarter 10.
- **Property costs** – decreased by \$34K as a result of the payment of Aurukun office rental and service charges in advance, following the completion of negotiations with the Aurukun Shire Council on office rental figures, associated security and other service charges during quarter nine.

Expenditure 1 July 2010 to 31 December 2010	Total Expenditure Qtr9	Total Expenditure Qtr10	Total Expenditure Variance Qtr9 to Qtr10
Salaries and recruitment	624,448.88	738,708.17	114,259.29
Local Commissioner fees	88,640.95	111,706.12	23,065.17
Telecommunications	12,209.88	21,650.14	9,440.26
Airfares and accommodation	66,851.21	72,444.07	5,592.86
Operating costs	60,106.37	48,784.54	-11,321.83
Consultants	54,410.49	38,102.68	-16,307.81
Vehicle costs	46,434.98	28,244.83	-18,190.15
IT costs	92,004.99	59,419.22	-32,585.77
Property costs	71,828.19	37,456.28	-34,371.91
Total expenditure	\$1,116,935.94	\$1,156,516.05	\$39,580.11

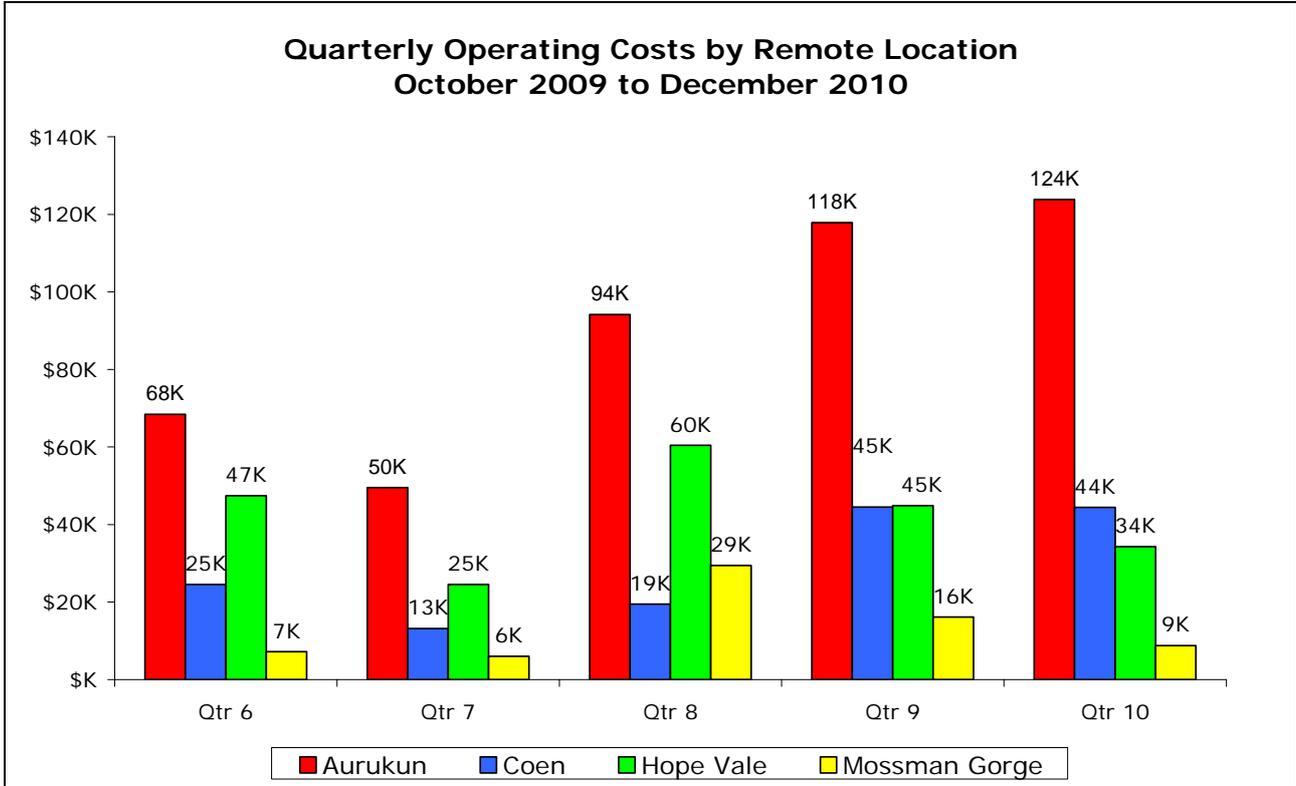
Table 1: Unaudited YTD expenditure including variations between quarter nine and quarter ten

The Commission's total quarter ten 2010-11 operating costs by categories and by percentage of total expenditure is represented in the graph below:



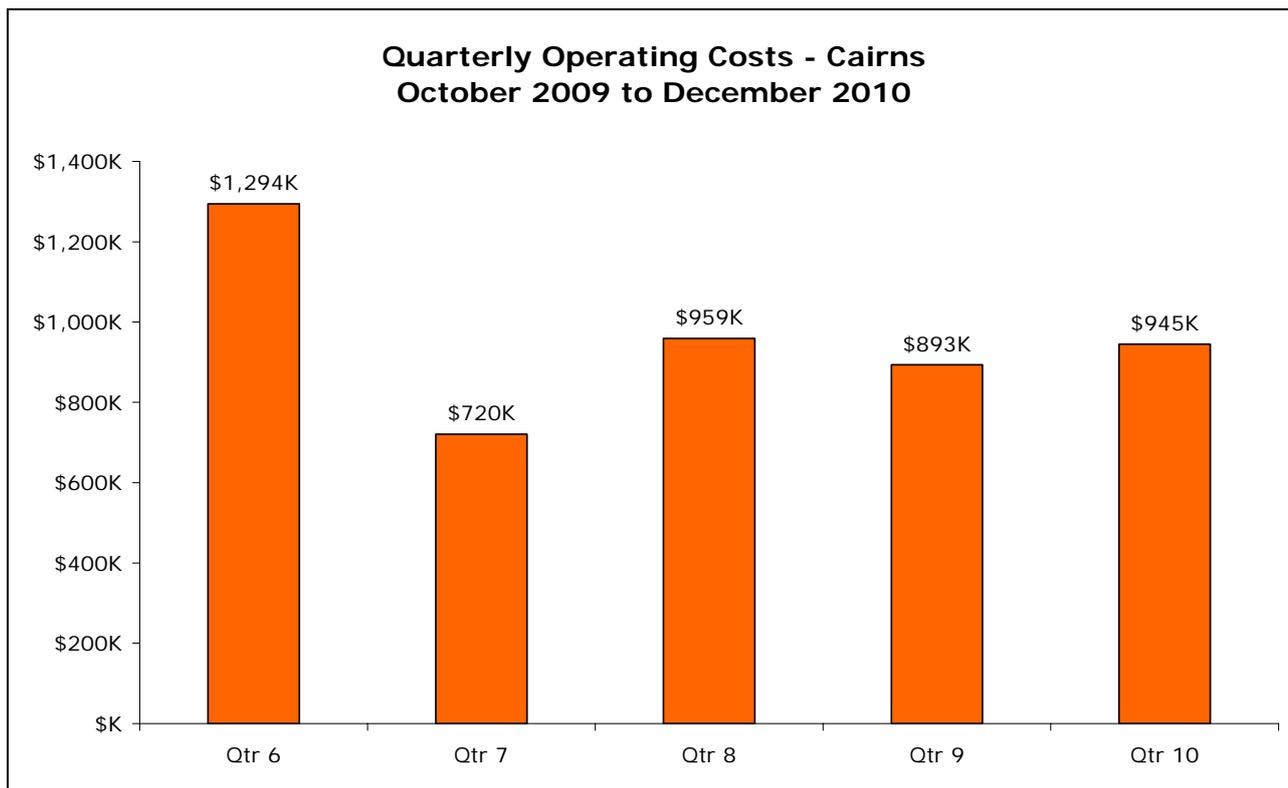
Graph 1: Total FRC Operating costs 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2010

Regional operational expenditure is categorised below by location and quarter. These figures exclude Local Coordinators' salary costs, which are incorporated in the Commission's global operating costs. These figures include Local Commissioners' fees for the December 2010 quarter (totalling \$112K). Expenses in Aurukun were higher in quarter ten as a result of additional conferences held during this period.



Graph 2: Operating costs by remote location 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010

Cairns office operational costs (below) in quarter ten are compared to previous levels of quarterly expenditure incurred.



Graph 3: Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010²

² Qtr 6 Expenditure includes \$569K in grants expenditure for staff accommodation in Aurukun and Office refurbishment in Mossman Gorge.

4. Activities / Achievements

Intake and Assessment Phase

The Commission became operational on 1 July 2008 and commenced conferencing on 12 August 2008. In quarter ten the Commission received 939 agency notifications, some of which related to more than one person. Of that figure 734 notifications (78 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 205 notifications (22 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

During the intake phase, notifications are assessed to establish whether the person/s notified are within the jurisdiction of the Commission in accordance with the Act. Section 49 of the Act provides that the Commission can deal with an agency notification relating to a community member. Section 7 of the Act defines a community member as being a person who is a welfare recipient and who also lives in one of the four CYWR communities or has lived there for a period of three months since 1 July 2008.

Conferences

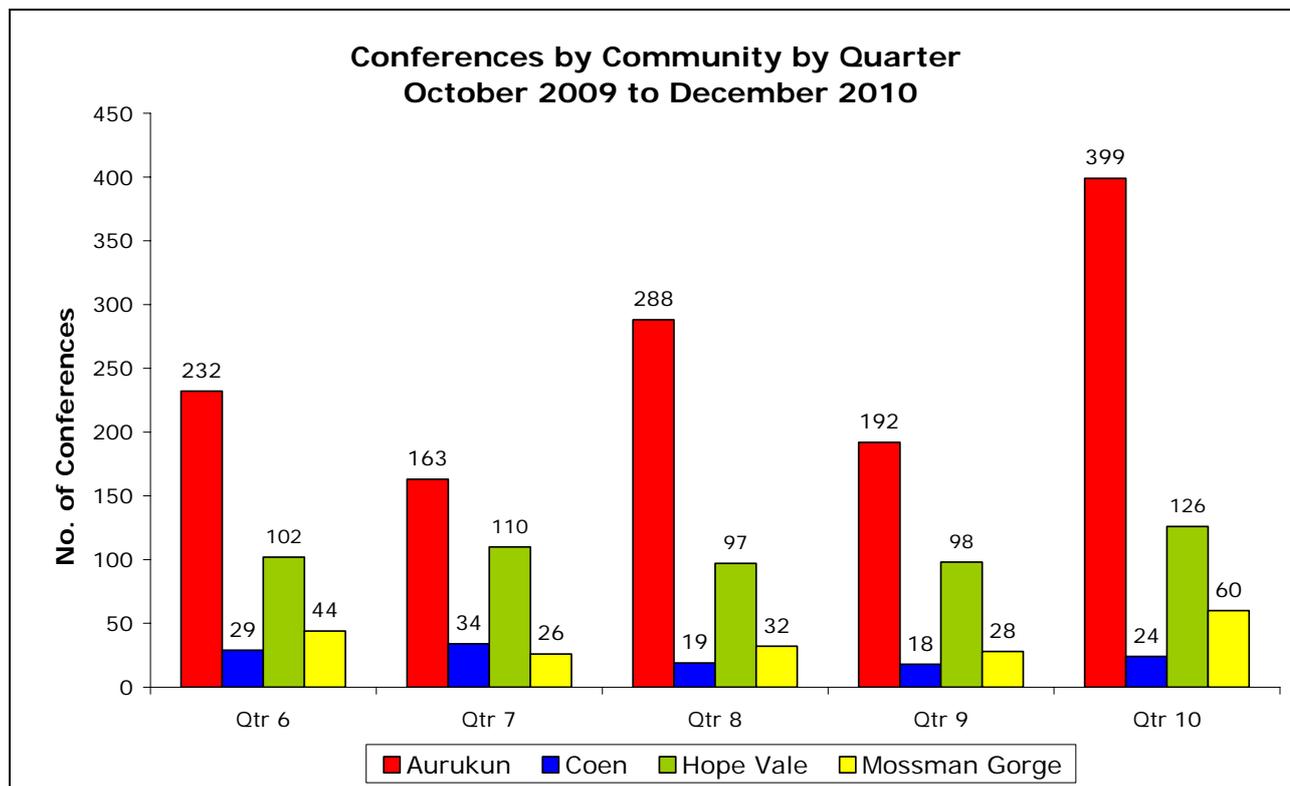
The objective of the Commission, as set out in the Act, is primarily to conduct conferences with community members and to encourage clients (individuals and families) to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour whilst promoting the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in the CYWR communities.

In quarter ten a total of 609 conferences were held (see Graph 4), which resulted in 36 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 44³ orders made to attend community support services and 88 Conditional Income Management orders. Other outcomes included no further action, rescheduling, scheduling to return for review with compliance and the assignment of personal responsibility actions. The Commission was able to service all scheduled sittings in this quarter in all communities as per the calendar and additional sittings were added upon the request of the FR Board during the course of the quarter. Aurukun conferences accounted for 66 percent of the total number of conferences held, reflecting the high number of notifications attributed to the Aurukun community at 60 percent of all notifications within jurisdiction. The Commission commenced additional sittings in Aurukun on 2 November 2010, with the last sitting on 16 December 2010. For six weeks, sittings were held every week with an average of 45 clients brought to a conference each week. The Commission maintained scheduled sittings in Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge with the Deputy Commissioners engaged to attend the sittings. Coen conferencing was impacted by the closure of the airfield, resulting in conferences being conducted by teleconference with Deputy Commissioner Curtin attending in the Cairns Registry and the Coen Commissioners and clients in community. With the re-opening of the airfield, it is anticipated the Commission will conduct conferences face to face when possible, but teleconferencing is considered to be successful in conducting conferences.

The operational requirements of weekly sittings impacted on the Commissioners and Local Coordinator as the delivery of notices to attend conference, three day conferencing, delivery of case plans to service providers, assistance to the Ending Family Violence Programs and general client business occurred simultaneously during this period. The Registry staff supported the Aurukun

³ (Note: In preparing the quarter ten report, the Commission found that the previous quarterly report incorrectly stated 49 directions were made to attend community support services. The quarter nine report should have stated 27 directions were made to attend community support services.)

Commissioners and Local Coordinator to allow timetable scheduling and legislative requirements to be met in tandem with on the ground client interactions. To meet operational requirements meetings with stakeholders, where possible, were scheduled during lunch breaks or after hours. The Commission appreciates the cooperation and understanding of stakeholders during this busy time. The Commission would also like to acknowledge the commitment by stakeholders to the collaborative process required that resulted in a significant improvement in school attendance in quarter ten, particularly the ACMs who achieved a 100% rate of follow up with the parents and carers of children who were absent without a reasonable excuse. Of particular note is the tireless dedication and persistence of the Commissioners in maintaining weekly sittings and working with the families of those children who were not attending school regularly.



Graph 4: Conferences by community and quarter 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010

Case Management

As at 31 December 2010, 247 clients were being case managed. Clients facing significant barriers such as addiction, repeat cycles of violence and homelessness may lack the capacity to comply with all aspects of a case plan and these personal details may not be revealed in the first contact with the Commission. This may require referral to more than one service provider or the client attending conference on a different matter and having a case plan reviewed to reflect the complexity of issues faced by the client. The Commission recognises that the availability and capacity of services is also preventing some clients from being able to comply with their case plans. With the advent of the Active Family Pathways (AFP) referral option, the client may have multiple goals under the AFP referral. These referrals are discussed with the AFP Support Officer and realistic timeframes are allocated. The AFP referral option may include, for example, a twelve month case plan referral to FIM for budget management or to the WBC to address domestic violence issues. The Commissioners made 129 referrals (see Table 2) relating to 75 clients during quarter ten, the majority of which were referrals to the Queensland Corrective Services' Ending Family Violence Program.

Although the primary focus of conferences is to discuss the notifications relating to the client, rarely is this the sole outcome of a conference as clients often require specialised assistance in navigating the multiple servicing requirements of agencies. Commissioners and Local Coordinators continue to see clients who seek assistance with contacting agencies such as Centrelink Remote Servicing, Queensland Corrective Services, Magistrates Courts, State Penalties Enforcement Registry and Child Safety Services. In addressing continued school absences of high school children, the Commissioners have developed relationships with TSS, DET, Abstudy and parents in a consolidated effort to ensure children remain engaged in the education system.

The AFP Case Coordination framework has commenced with participating clients identifying goals and developing plans to achieve those goals. AFP clients have undertaken to work with the AFP Support Officer to work towards their goals and engage with service providers to address personal issues.

Referral Type	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	TOTAL
FIM	41	22	21	10	29	123
WBC	80	93	25	21	31	250
ACM	22	10	5	1	5	43
Parenting Program	7	2	4	5	18	36
EFVP	0	35	23	31	39	128
Active Family Pathways	0	0	0	0	5	5
Other	5	8	5	8	2	28
TOTAL	155	170	83	76	129	613

Table 2: Referral services by quarter as at 31 December 2010

Show Cause recommendations continue to be assessed on a case by case basis by the Commissioners, primarily because the assessment draws upon the service providers' monthly progress reports, requested summary reports at the initial investigation stage and Commissioners' local knowledge. The Registry and Commissioners continue to offer training and direction to service providers for the induction of new staff, provide feedback on the reporting process and encourage staff to attend conference proceedings in each CYWR community and discuss with the Local Commissioners the decision making processes. The Commission has extended reporting deadlines to service providers reporting excessive workloads and worked with service providers and their IT systems to improve their ability to meet reporting requirements. The Registry is working with service providers to improve line management control and establish responsibilities for reporting, encouraging each service provider to engage a quality assurance process before submission to the Commission.

It should be noted that the number of clients case managed (247) includes clients who are incarcerated, out of community, in hospital and on probation orders. In these circumstances not all clients are investigated for Show Cause proceedings but are monitored pending changes to their situation.

During quarter ten, 15 Show Cause hearings were held in Aurukun and Hope Vale (see Table 3). These matters resulted in:

- 4 Clients Income Managed and ordered to comply with the Case Plan
- 3 Clients Rescheduled and ordered to comply with the Case Plan
- 3 Clients Rescheduled
- 3 Clients No Further Action
- 1 Client ordered to comply with the Case Plan

- 1 Client Income Managed

With fewer clients subject to case plans, the number of clients available for Show Cause investigations remains low. Only in exceptional cases will the Commission initiate Show Cause proceedings on a client already Conditionally Income Managed. As many of the clients not attending service providers are already under CIM orders, the pool of clients for Show Cause investigations has decreased.

Community	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	TOTAL
Aurukun	28	9	15	4	12	68
Coen	0	0	2	0	0	2
Hope Vale	13	4	3	4	3	27
Mossman Gorge	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	41	13	20	9	15	98

Table 3: Show Cause Notices by quarter as at 31 December 2010

The thirteen applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received in quarter ten is approximately three percent of those clients income managed since the commencement of the Commission (458 as at 31 December 2010). The Commission encourages clients to lodge applications where their circumstances may have changed warranting a change to their Agreement or Order. The Commissioners are encouraged to assist clients to provide evidence of why the application should be considered, such as clients seeking work opportunities and attending service providers. Each application is considered on its own merit and clients are encouraged to take on personal responsibility actions when CIM orders are revoked.

Outcomes of the 13 applications received are as follows (see Table 4):

- 8 CIM orders revoked
- 2 Applications dismissed
- 1 Application dismissed and client income management extended
- 1 Application dismissed and client ordered to comply with new case plan
- 1 Application received, decision pending

Community	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	TOTAL
Aurukun	0	4	6	8	2	20
Coen	0	2	1	1	0	4
Hope Vale	6	7	11	4	11	39
Mossman Gorge	0	0	4	3	0	7
TOTAL	6	13	22	16	13	70

Table 4: Amend or End Applications Order by quarter as at 31 December 2010

Conditional Income Management

Eighty-eight CIM orders were made in quarter ten. Since the commencement of the Commission 458 CIM orders have been made. CIM orders are made in the following circumstances:

- the client has failed to attend two scheduled conferences; or
- the client is not complying with case plan requirements; and/or
- the Commission is continuing to receive additional notifications relating to those clients.

Since the Commission commenced operations, 79 percent of clients have received multiple notifications. Commissioners report that many of these clients have been given numerous opportunities to engage in case plans, attend conference or take action to have CIM orders amended (such as attend service providers) and have refused, which has resulted in 458 CIM orders being made relating to 338 clients. The 458 CIM orders are inclusive of original orders made plus extensions and/or amendments to the original CIM orders.

The Commission acknowledges that a client's circumstances can change during the course of the case plan. This is reflected in the CIM orders that are unable to be enacted due to the client not currently receiving income support payments. These clients may be working or choosing not to receive income support payments. The order remains current for 12 months and will be enacted if the client claims payments that are subject to income management jurisdiction during this period. The Commission continues to work closely with Centrelink to monitor these clients. In addition community members in CYWR communities who are CDEP participants are subject to removal from the program under a recommendation from the Commission and subsequent decision from FaHCSIA.

For those clients subject to CIM, the Commissioners review their progress at the six and nine month point of their order and discuss future options. Some clients continue to advise of their desire to remain on CIM for an extended period under a new case plan and/or decrease the percentage managed from 75 to 60 percent.

Commissioners continue to report that a number of clients are requesting CIM orders and to be placed on a BasicsCard as they view the income management as a means to stabilise the household and ensure bills are paid and children are fed. These clients ask that the Commission order the income management rather than request Voluntary Income Management (VIM) due to pressures from spouses and family members. Those clients who do request VIM, advise it assists in the management of household budgets and provides a tool for savings for special occasions such as Christmas. Since commencement, 32 clients and community members have successfully applied for VIM.

Community	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	TOTAL
Aurukun	37	21	46	27	59	190
Coen	11	10	2	2	4	29
Hope Vale	21	13	15	15	17	81
Mossman Gorge	7	3	5	5	8	28
TOTAL	76	47	68	49	88	328

Table 5: Quarterly Conditionally Income Managed orders as at 31 December 2010

Notifications

For the period 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2010 the Commission received a total of **939** agency notifications⁴ of which 734, or 78 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Of the 734 notifications that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, they comprised:

- 345 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 339 School Attendance notifications
- 34 Child Safety notifications
- 16 Housing Tenancy notifications

⁴ Counting rules are that an agency notification is counted on the basis of number of "clients" on the notification, for example: a child safety notification relating to two parents is counted as two notifications.

Of the 205, or 22 percent, not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 170 Magistrates Courts notifications, 23 School Attendance notifications, 9 Child Safety notifications and 3 Housing Tenancy notifications.

Details for each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun's 440** notifications comprise **60 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:
 - 215 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 211 School Attendance notifications
 - 8 Child Safety notifications
 - 6 Housing Tenancy notifications

20 Magistrates Courts notifications, 13 School Attendance notifications and 1 Child Safety notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

399 conferences have been held in Aurukun this quarter.⁵

- **Coen's 37** notifications comprise **5 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:
 - 32 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 3 School Attendance notifications
 - 2 Child Safety notifications

11 Magistrates Courts notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

24 conferences have been held in Coen this quarter.⁶

- **Hope Vale's 208** notifications comprise **28 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
 - 112 School Attendance notifications
 - 70 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 18 Child Safety notifications
 - 8 Housing Tenancy notifications

10 School Attendance notifications, 8 Child Safety notifications, 3 Housing Tenancy notifications and 1 Magistrates Courts notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

126 conferences have been held in Hope Vale this quarter.⁷

⁵ The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

- **Mossman Gorge's 49** notifications comprise **7 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
 - 28 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 13 School Attendance notifications
 - 6 Child Safety notifications
 - 2 Housing Tenancy notifications

138 Magistrates Courts notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

60 conferences have been held in Mossman Gorge this quarter.⁸

⁸ The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.

5. Data Summary and Trends

Notifications decreased from 975 in quarter nine to 939 in quarter ten. Housing Tenancy notifications increased significantly and Child Safety notifications decreased. The Commission anticipated that quarter ten would show an increase in Housing Tenancy notifications. The decrease in Child Safety notifications has resulted from new processing procedures within Child Safety Services.

Housing Tenancy notifications increased this quarter to 16, which is in contrast to the one received in quarter nine. The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) had advised that the decrease in the number of notifications from quarter eight to quarter nine was due to turnover of staff. This was addressed and the Commission received further housing notifications for quarter ten. The Commission has continued to work with the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) to improve service delivery and achieve a consistent outcome to the reporting requirements of the Commission.

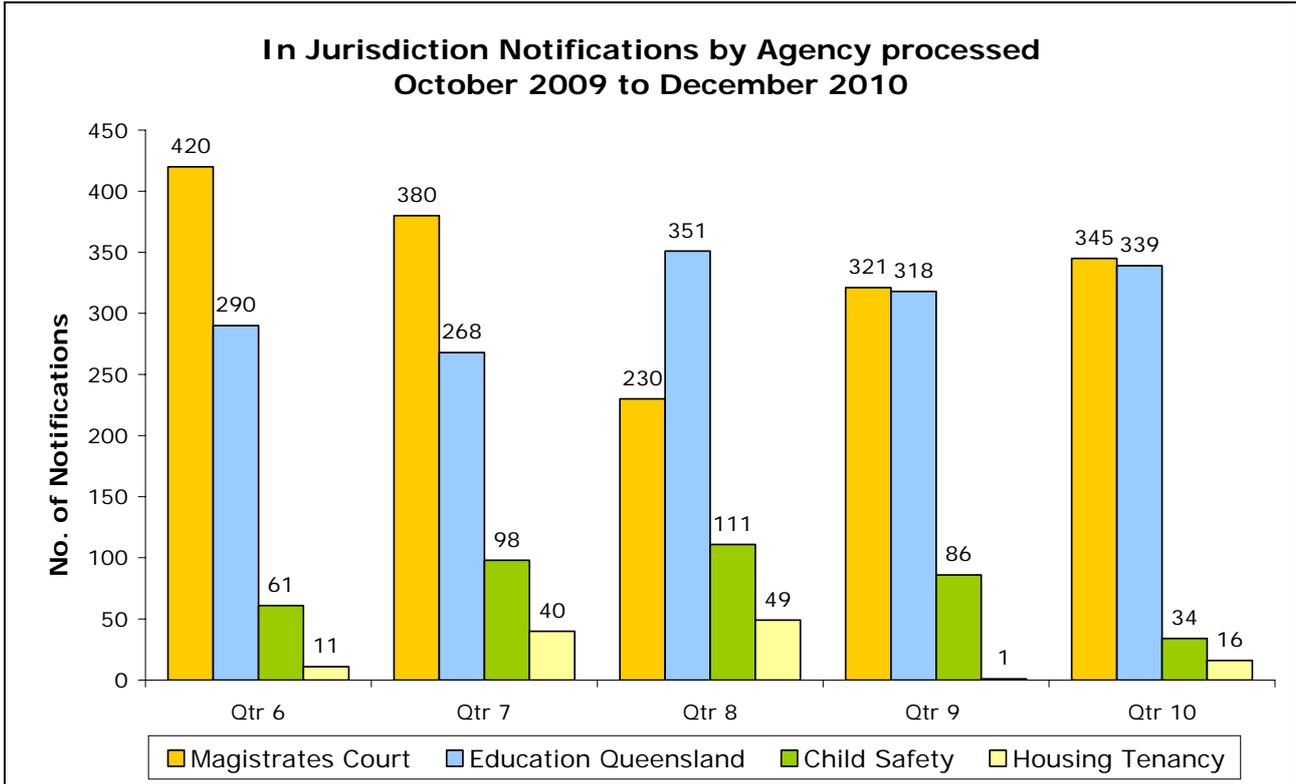
Decreases in school attendance were experienced in three of the four communities when comparing term 4, 2010 against term 4, 2009. In Aurukun school attendance increased by 3.2 percentage points from term 4, 2010 (64.8 percent) when compared against term 4, 2009 (61.6 percent), as a result of the extra conferences held in Aurukun to address school attendance notifications. Coen experienced a decrease of 2.8 percentage points, while Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge experienced a decrease of 3.5 and 1.8 percentage points respectively from term 4, 2009 to term 4, 2010. Caution should be used when examining the percentage changes in attendance for both Mossman Gorge and Coen communities. Both these communities have relatively small numbers of students and a small numerical change can result in a large percentage difference in the overall attendance figures. Changes with record keeping practices over time may impact on the ability to compare school attendance across years. The Commission notes that secondary school students are not currently case managed as part of the Attendance Case Management Framework but are included in the Education Queensland attendance statistics.

At the request of the FR Board, the Commission scheduled weekly sittings in Aurukun from November until December with a focus on school attendance notifications to assist in addressing the decline in school attendance. School Attendance notifications decreased slightly from 229 in quarter nine to 211 in quarter ten reflecting improving school attendance. The Commission continues to emphasise to parents and carers the importance of school attendance and prompt arrival times to prevent absentee and poor attendance records. School attendance notifications for Hope Vale have increased in this quarter. The Commission did not receive school attendance notifications from the Hope Vale State School for the latter part of term three preventing the Commission addressing poor attendance with the parents at the time of the occurrence. The Commission has since received the backlog of notifications that were collated and scheduled in quarter ten.

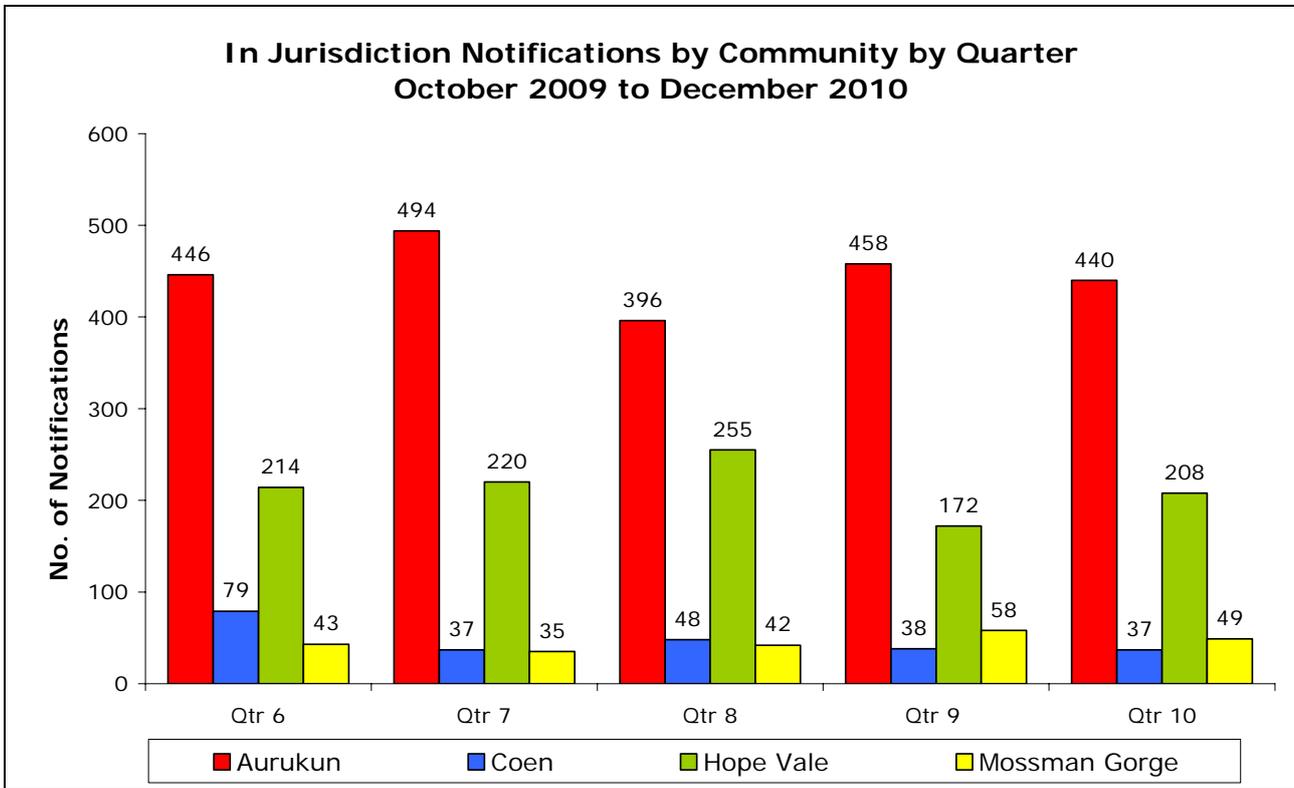
Child Safety notifications decreased from 86 in quarter nine to 34 in quarter ten. The formation of Child Safety Services Far North Regional Intake Service (RIS) commenced on 6 September 2010. RIS aims to streamline the intake process across the Far North by receiving and recording intake matters, as well as referring notifications to the Child Safety Service Centre for investigation. The formation of the RIS may have contributed to the decrease in Child Safety notifications but both the Commission and the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) remain cautious in evaluating the data trend as many environmental and operational factors can impact the notifications received. A number of new Child Safety officers have commenced in CYWR communities in quarter ten. The existing Child Safety officers and Commissioners are working to

support their acceptance and relationship building in the relevant communities. As a result Child Safety officers report that local communities are gaining a greater understanding of their role as service providers and are engaging with them to improve the welfare of the children in the household.

Magistrates Courts notifications increased this quarter to 345 from 321 received in the previous quarter. Magistrate Courts notifications increased in Aurukun and Coen from 190 and 16 in quarter nine to 215 and 32 in quarter ten respectively. The Commission notes the Queensland Police Service continue to initiate community engagement activities—such as working with truants, education programs, supporting Dry Houses and their tenants and engaging with liquor outlets for the responsible service of liquor and bulk purchasing—to reduce criminal activity and socially irresponsible behaviour.



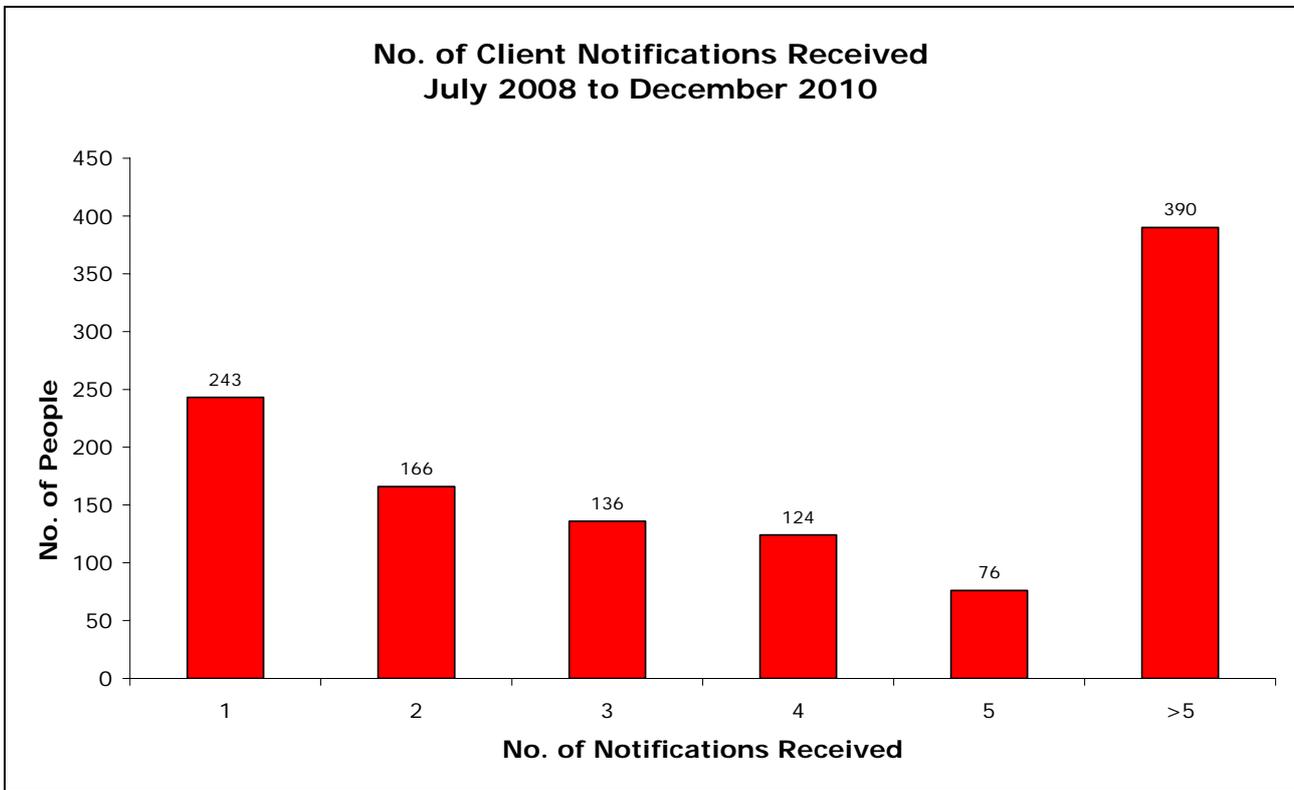
Graph 5: Notices by agency processed 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010



Graph 6: Notifications by community and quarter 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010

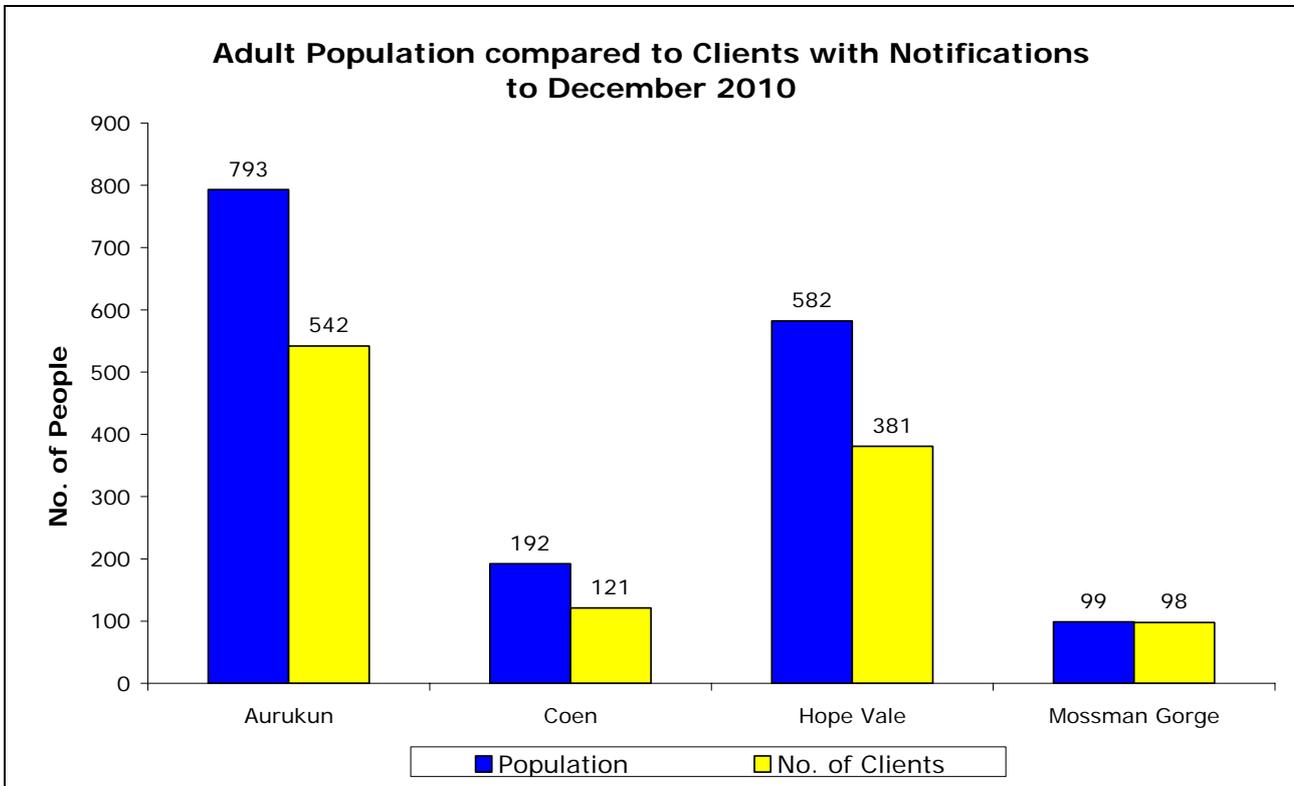
The Commission held 609 conferences across the four communities in quarter ten, an increase from 336 conferences held in quarter nine. Aurukun experienced the most significant increase in conference numbers from 192 in quarter nine to 399 in quarter ten due to the additional sittings and large numbers of clients attending conferences every day of the sittings. Coen experienced an increase in conferences from 18 in quarter nine to 24 in quarter ten. Although the airfield was closed, the use of teleconferencing enabled all scheduled conferences to proceed. The Commission acknowledges the cooperation of the Commissioners and clients in using the teleconferencing process.

Thirty-four percent of clients have received more than five notifications since 1 July 2008. In many instances this illustrates multiple child absences for the one family or multiple Magistrates Courts notifications relating to one incident. As the Commission continues to see repeat clients, the number of orders to place clients on income management increases with Commissioners providing the client numerous opportunities to engage with service providers or take action to reduce notifications (such as children attending school regularly). To date, 21 percent of clients have received only one notification.



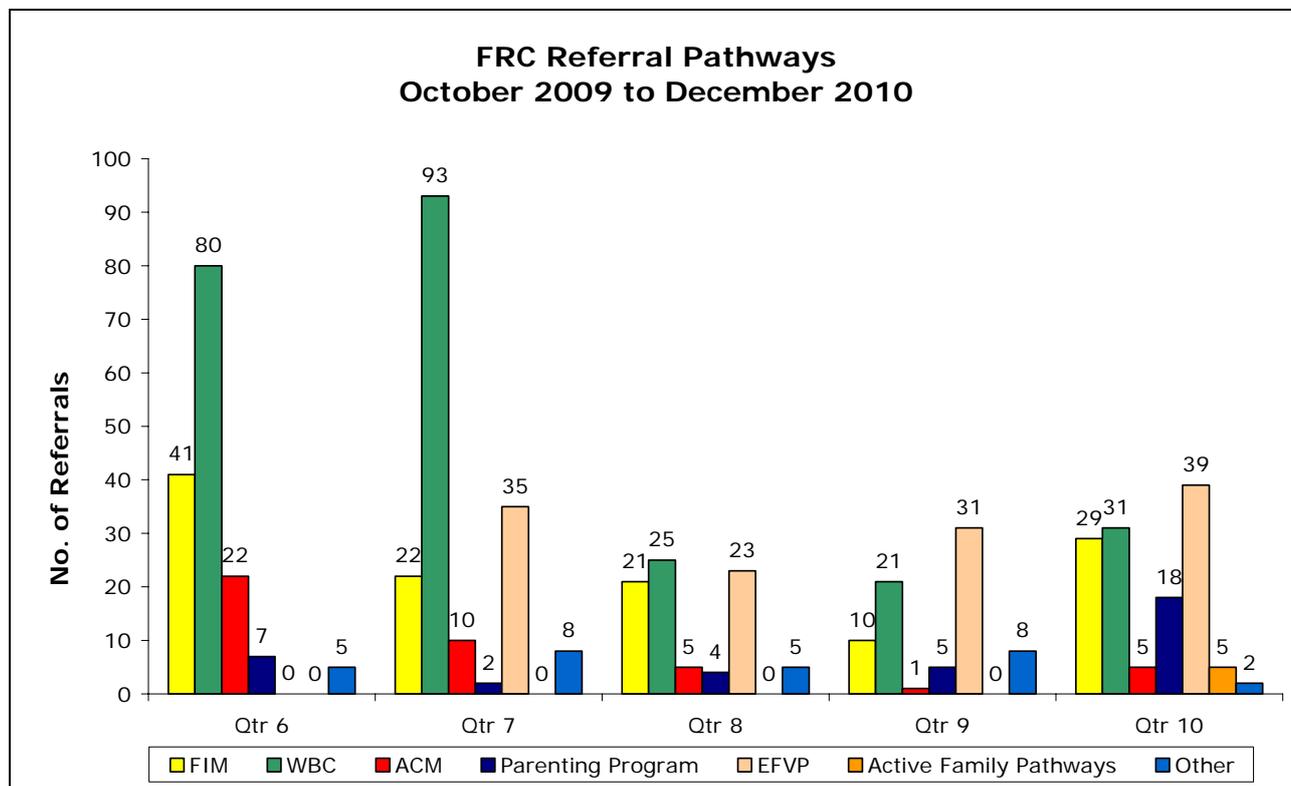
Graph 7: Clients by number of notifications 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2010

(Note: Counting rules stipulate that where multiple charges are received each charge is counted as an individual notification or each child's absence is counted as one notification – i.e. if three children from the one family were absent, that was counted as three notifications).



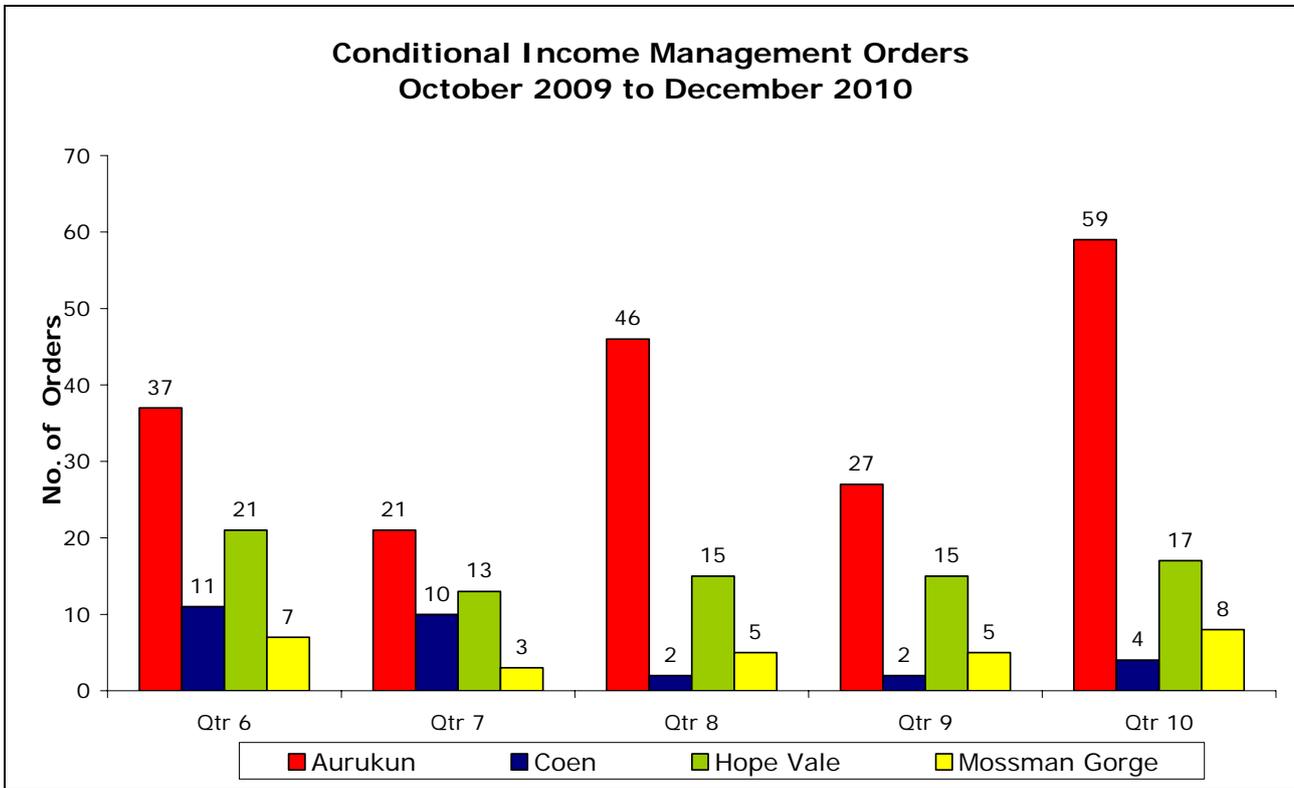
Graph 8: Number of clients who have received notifications up until 31 December 2010 in comparison to population figures of adults (17 years and over) provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP Figures. NOTE: Mossman Gorge is a community which has a highly transient population with family members from other communities residing there for short periods of time. They meet the residential criteria of the Act and therefore are dealt with by the Commission but may later move out of the community to return to their original communities.

Referrals to service providers increased from 76 in quarter nine to 129 in quarter ten (see Graph 9) as service providers reported increased ability to intake clients. The Act stipulates the Commissioners must first attempt to gain agreement from the client to form a case plan. The client's knowledge of service providers and willingness to attend is considered in forming the case plan. Whilst the Commissioners can and do order clients to attend service providers, the preference for both the Commission and client is to reach agreement. An example in quarter ten is that FIM have been proactive in engaging existing clients and encouraging new clients in CYWR communities. This has improved the case plan referrals to FIM from the Commissioners.



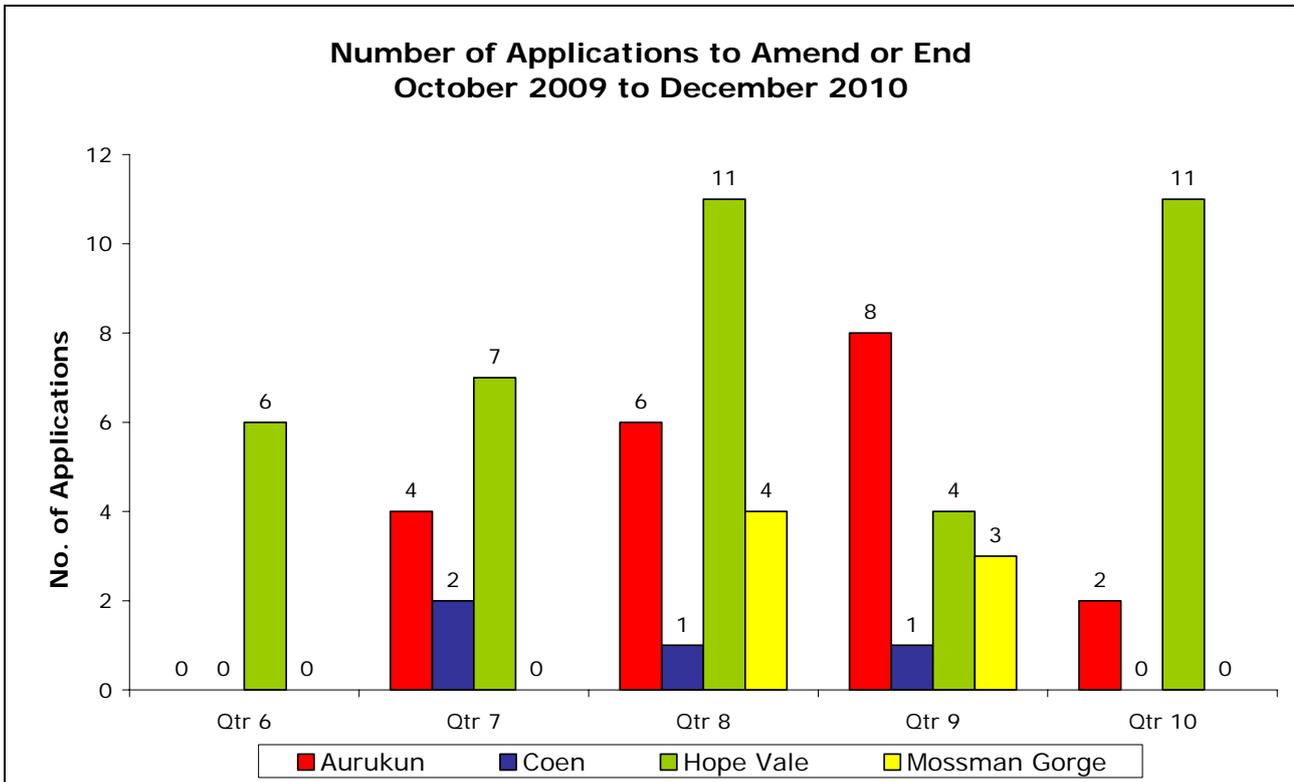
Graph 9: Referral Pathways 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010

Conditional Income Management (CIM) Orders increased from 49 in quarter nine to 88 in quarter ten. Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge remained constant in the number of orders, whereas Aurukun increased in the number of CIM orders made from 27 in quarter nine to 59 in quarter ten, directly correlating to the increase in conferences from 192 to 399. As Commissioners deal with each client and situation individually, the decision to order Income Management is not an inevitable outcome of non-compliance such as not attending or engaging with service providers. Under Section 71 of the Act, the Commissioners must have regard to many factors within the client's life and the impact of the decision. The Commissioners also monitor clients on CIM orders and the impact on the family when the orders are in place.



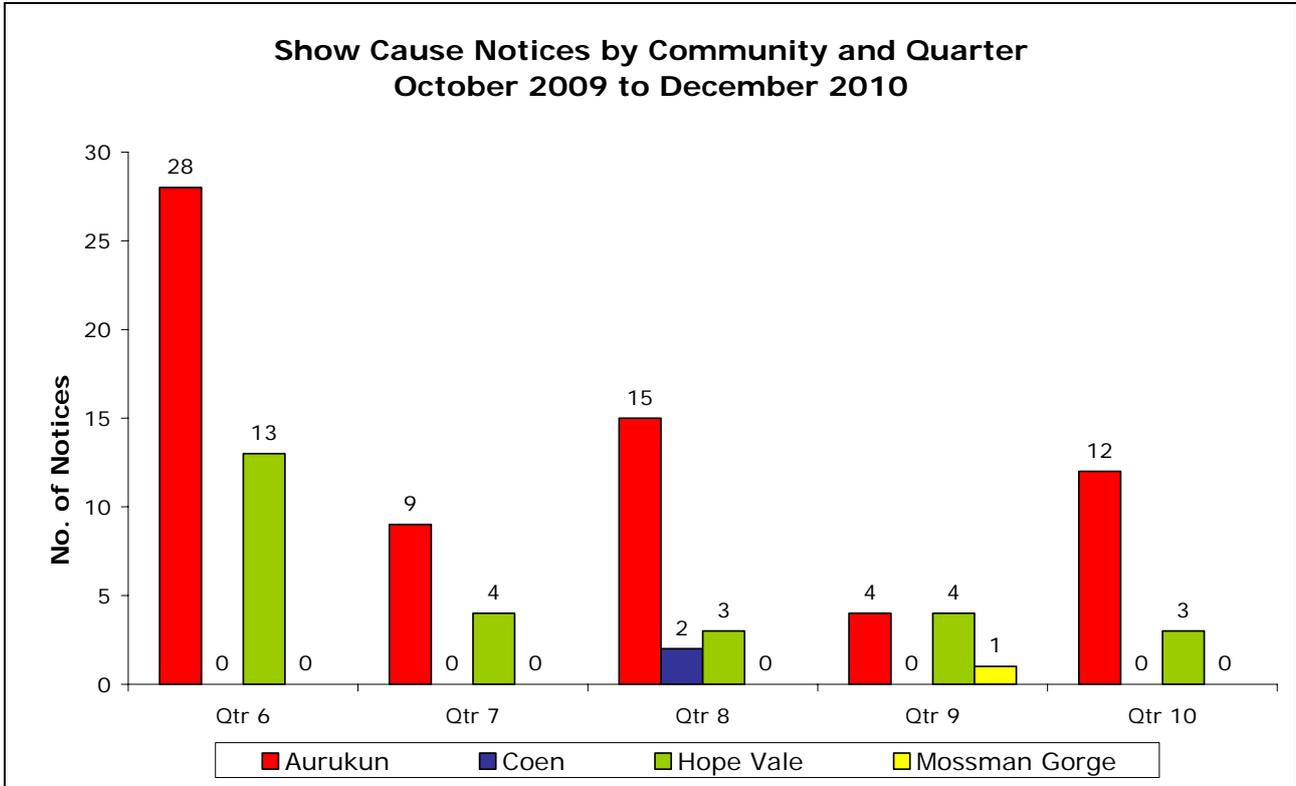
Graph 10: Conditional Income Management 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010.

Thirteen Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were heard by Commissioners in quarter ten, a decrease from 16 in quarter nine. Commissioners view the Amend or End Applications (see Graph 11) as an opportunity to engage with clients regarding their individual circumstances. In some cases this is the first conference attendance for clients as the CIM may have been ordered due to their lack of attendance at two consecutive conferences. The applications to Amend or End encourage the client to provide evidence to the Commissioners to support the application.



Graph 11: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010

The Commission conducted fifteen Show Cause conferences in quarter ten, an increase from nine in quarter nine. The Commission is hopeful that the introduction of Active Family Pathways and meetings with service providers will encourage enthusiasm and renewed engagement of clients to improve attendance at service providers.



Graph 12: Show Cause Notices 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2010

6. Observations / Future Direction

The Commission remains committed to regular and consistent client conferencing and also to developing the Local Commissioners to assist in the restoration of social norms and local Indigenous authority in the Welfare Reform communities.

Commissioners

In this quarter, Commission staff and Local Commissioners continued their participation with agencies to raise awareness of and resolve issues affecting their respective communities including:

- Commissioners referred clients to the Ending Family Violence Programs with four programs completed and 14 graduates in three of the four CYWR communities. For 2010, 16 programs in the four CYWR communities resulted in 73 graduates from 160⁹ directions to attend.
- The FR Board and CYWR Board held their quarterly meetings in Mossman Gorge and were welcomed by Elders and community.
- In the four CYWR communities the Commissioners attended school graduations and concerts and presented awards for school attendance and overall scholastic improvement. Commissioners spoke publicly, congratulating students and parents on excellent school attendance and conveying the pride of the community to students achieving goals and furthering education.
- Induction and legislation training was provided to new Commissioners and experienced Commissioners continued to lead conference processes and decision making.
- Commissioners in Coen and Aurukun met with CYAAA Board members, Mr Noel Pearson and relevant authorities to discuss school attendance, truancy and early intervention strategies.
- Commissioners Glasgow, Woolla and Poonkamelya, supported by other Aurukun Commissioners, were featured on an ABC Stateline profile of the Commission.
- Police Commissioner Atkinson met with Commissioners and commended the excellent work of all the Commissioners and positive impact their work has had on communities.
- The Commission conducted mediation training in Coen for Commissioners and nominated community members that were identified as potential leaders. The workshop was especially successful in Coen and received high attendance and positive feedback.
- The former Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Desley Boyle MP met with Aurukun Commissioners on 1 October 2010 and presented two new Commissioners with certificates and badges of appreciation.

Observations

- Staffing issues at WBC remain outstanding with communities advising of closed centres and lack of appropriately qualified staff to deal with personal issues.
- As tenants changed and families moved, Dry Houses in each community require updating. Mossman police have assisted in ensuring correct signage and placement as Dry House numbers changed from eleven to seven. Coen Dry Houses dropped by one to nine and Hope Vale currently has four Dry Houses.
- Commissioners report that the reinvigoration of the Hope Vale Child Care Centre has resulted in increases in attendance and staff studying to complete a Diploma in Early Childcare.

⁹ Some clients have been served attendance directions more than once as they missed programs for legitimate reasons such as sorry time.

- Aurukun shop managers identified a need in Aurukun for activities for children over the school holidays. At the Three Rivers Tavern, they commenced a bicycle repair and maintenance program and provided entertainment to the children. Unfortunately due to the need to cover the costs of public liability and the lack of available funding they were unable to continue the proposition into 2011.
- In Hope Vale, Millers Block infrastructure is moving ahead rapidly, although the construction of the pool and associated facilities is slow. The much anticipated Business Hub remains surveyed and materials are on site.
- Despite best efforts and many meetings the Aurukun pool was not reopened prior to the school holidays and remains off limits due to the pool pump not working.
- Coen community report positive engagement and increased employment opportunities with the full implementation of the Ranger program across clan groups and many new initiatives in the community.
- Aurukun welcomed Fuji Cameras Sydney and short courses in professional photography for young people provided by skilled photographers.

Challenges

- On the ground implementation of the AFP Case Coordination Framework and agency and service provider participation across all CYWR sites aims to improve client referrals.
- Work is required by service providers to deliver services that cater to families requiring support for children who exhibit behavioural and mental health issues. These issues frequently contribute to poor school attendance, petty crime and socially unacceptable behaviour.
- Suicide prevention and education for families and friends remains an outstanding concern of the Commissioners, especially in regard to children who may be vulnerable to the copycat syndrome.
- Housing issues remain topical in all CYWR communities, including the building of appropriate housing, the renovation of housing, allocation, maintenance and repairs to housing and specific responsibilities of landlords and tenants.
- Debt management and collection remains a serious social issue but is rarely discussed. The Commission is aware that many debts were the result of unethical practices. A mechanism exists for the debts to be waived, however many community members are either unaware or reluctant to deal with the matter. Where the Commission has become aware of such cases, clients have been referred to FIM and/or the Justice Group for assistance.
- The delays in the creation of a leadership body to replace CRAC are of concern. Such delays are contributing to a lack of leadership and direction in Coen.

Future Direction

- The Hope Vale community is eagerly awaiting the introduction of the CYAAA and it is hoped that the implementation of direct instruction may lead to higher attendance rates.
- Cape York Partnerships advise that Opportunity Hubs in Hope Vale, Aurukun and Mossman Gorge are a high priority. These buildings will provide a consolidated service to all the Cape York Partnership streams and programs for community members.
- Amendments to the Act have been passed in the Queensland Parliament in quarter ten. A number of changes in processes will include serving timeframes for Notice to Attend a Show Cause conference and the convening of conferences by three Local Commissioners in

the absence of Commissioner Glasgow. Training of the Commissioners on the amendments will take place in quarter eleven.

- The *KPMG Implementation Review of the Family Responsibilities Commission* was formally released in November 2010. The Commission has implemented many of the relevant recommendations of the review and is continuing to work towards ongoing improvements. The Commission is now preparing to assist the second phase of evaluation scheduled in 2011.
- In late October 2010 the former Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Desley Boyle MP tabled in Parliament the *Family Responsibilities Commission Annual Report 2009-2010*.
- The Commission is currently preparing exit strategies for the cessation of the Commission on 1 January 2012. The Commission is prioritising the development of the Commissioners and their roles in their communities once the Commission ceases. The Commission is also preparing for the administrative aspects of information storage, future staff opportunities and financial arrangements.

7. Appendices

APPENDIX A



SITTING CALENDAR – Version 3a
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION
1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010



WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon/Tues	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
4 JANUARY	DRG					All week
11 JANUARY	DRG					All week
18 JANUARY	DRG					All week
25 JANUARY	DRG					All week
1 FEBRUARY	DRG		2, 3, 4			1, 5
8 FEBRUARY	DRG			9,10	11	8,12
15 FEBRUARY	DRG	15	16, 17, 18			19
22 FEBRUARY	DRG			23, 24	25	22 Board Meeting 26
1 MARCH	DRG					All week
8 MARCH	DRG	8	9, 10, 11			12
15 MARCH	DRG			16,17	18	15, 19
22 MARCH	DRG	22	24, 25			23 26 Social Dev Com
29 MARCH	DRG			30, 31	29 Mar	1 Apr 2 Apr Good Friday
5 APRIL	DRG					All week
12 APRIL	DRG		13,14,15			12, 16
19 APRIL	DRG	19		20, 21	22	19, 23
26 APRIL	DRG		27, 28, 29			30 26 ANZAC Day
3 MAY	DRG			4, 5	6	7 3 May Day
10 MAY	DRG	10	11, 12, 13			14
17 MAY	DRG					17 Board Meeting 18, 19, 20, 21
24 MAY	DRG	24	25, 26, 27			28
31 MAY/1 JUNE	DRG			1, 2	3	31, 4
7 JUNE	DRG		8, 9, 10			7, 11
14 JUNE	DRG			15, 16	17	18 14 Queens Birthday
21 JUNE	DRG	21	22, 23, 24			24 & 25 'Closing the Gap' Canberra



SITTING CALENDAR – Version 3a
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION
 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010



WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon/Tues	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
28 JUNE	DRG					All week
5 JULY	DRG					NAIDOC
12 JULY	DRG			13, 14	Mon-12	14 Hearing Brisbane 15
19 JULY	DRG					21 Estimates Hearing Brisbane 23 Cairns Show Day
26 JULY	DRG	26	27, 28, 29			30
2 AUGUST	DRG			3, 4	5	2, 6
9 AUGUST	DRG		10, 11, 12			9, 13
16 AUGUST	JB					16 Board Meeting 17 18 19 20
23 AUGUST	JB			24, 25	26	23, 27
30 AUGUST	JB	30	31, 1, 2			3
6 SEPTEMBER	JB			7, 8	9, 10	6
13 SEPTEMBER	JB	13	14, 15, 16			17
20 SEPTEMBER	JB					All week
27 SEPTEMBER	JB					All week
4 OCTOBER	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8
11 OCTOBER	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			15
18 OCTOBER	DRG			19, 20	21	18 Board Meeting 22
25 OCTOBER	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 29
1 NOVEMBER	DRG		2, 3, 4			All week
8 NOVEMBER	DRG/RC		9, 10, 11	9, 10	11	8, 12 Social Dev Com
15 NOVEMBER	DRG	15	16, 17, 18			19
22 NOVEMBER	DRG/JB		23, 24, 25	23, 24	25	22 Board Meeting 26
29 NOVEMBER	DRG		30, 1, 2			29 Nov, 3 Dec
6 DECEMBER	DRG/JB			7, 8	9	6, 10
13 DECEMBER	RC	13	14, 15, 16			17
20 DECEMBER	DRG					All week
27 DECEMBER	DRG					Office closed for Holidays

Governance

Part 12 of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* provides for the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (the Board).

The Board has a mandate to give advice and make recommendations to the Minister about the operation of the Commission and similarly to give advice and make recommendations to the Commissioner about the performance of the Commission's functions.

The Board must meet at least every three months and each member must be present at each meeting. The Board's membership consists of:

- Mr Ken Smith Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Mr Noel Pearson Director, Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
- Dr Jeff Harmer Secretary, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Glossary of Terms

Wellbeing Centre (WBC):

These centres are currently operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and are the primary referral agency for the Commission. The Wellbeing Centres provide:

- a holistic, systemic and community-based approach to treating drug and alcohol addiction and related mental health co-morbidities, including family violence and gambling;
- clinical assessments, formal and informal counselling, support for individuals and their families, and support for community-driven activities that build community capacity;
- support for restoring social norms and empowering individuals to take responsibility for making positive choices about their health and wellbeing.

Each WBC is staffed with clinical counsellors and one or more community support workers. Staff are also supported by part-time medical practitioners, mental health nurses and psychiatrists, team leaders and a service development manager.

New buildings have been completed to support the WBC in each community. Services are fully operational at the time of the report.

Family Income Management (FIM):

Family Income Management (FIM) is a voluntary, confidential and free service that is specifically designed to meet the particular needs of Indigenous individuals and families, and provide them with the education, information and ongoing support needed to manage their own money.

FIM provides support and assistance including referrals and access to financial institutions, products and services. It also provides general information, education and ongoing support to individuals and families about improving the outcomes for children.

FIM operates in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge and has been operating in a number of Cape York communities since 2001.

Attendance Case Management Framework (ACMF):

The Attendance Case Management Framework (ACMF) was developed by Cape York Partnerships to support student attendance. The ACMF uses Professor Herbert C Kelman's behavioural change model which identifies three stages leading to behavioural change: compliance, identification, and internalisation. ACMF works with students, parents, schools and the broader community to set the expectation of 100 percent attendance and to build and sustain it as a "social norm".

Under the ACMF, Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) aim to follow up every absence, on the day, to work with families to resolve the reason behind a child's unexplained absence or lateness and to develop strategies to avoid reoccurrences. ACMs also refer parents to support services like FIM or alcohol addiction support as required. Such quick response reduces the incidence of parents being called before the Commission on student attendance-related issues.

ACMs use positive reinforcement to publicly and privately acknowledge 100 percent attendance.

Cape York Partnerships Parenting Program:

The purpose of the parenting program is to support parents to take responsibility and raise happy, safe and healthy children so that every child is cared for. Elements of this program have been developed in response to community engagement indicating a need for training and support for parents in practical parenting skills. The Parenting Program is open to all Parents and Carers to access through Personal Parenting (one on one consultations) or by attending group sessions. This service is attended by voluntary self referral or referral by another service provider. Specific parenting issues can be addressed or the Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is offered consisting of consecutive sessions, skilling parents on behaviour management, building positive relationships, setting goals and expectations.

The Cape York Partnerships Parenting Program is currently operating in Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge.

Ending Family Violence Program:

Ending Family Violence is a culturally specific program designed for Indigenous offenders to help address aspects of their behaviour relating to family violence.

Ending Family Violence is a brief intervention targeting Indigenous offenders who have been convicted of offences related to violence within their family and or community. The program is based on a cognitive behavioural model and utilises both active and experiential learning exercises that are culturally appropriate. The program aims to raise participants' awareness of the impact of domestic violence on the family unit and to investigate options to assist them to change their lifestyle. It is available in both correctional centres and the Probation and Parole service.

Ending Family Violence focuses on the following key areas:

- the nature of violence in families
- the links between alcohol use and violence in families
- awareness of the consequences of violence
- identifying how violence can be prevented
- strengths focus (empowerment)
- developing a relapse prevention and management
- planning to establish positive life style choices.

Cape York Welfare Reform

The Cape York Welfare Reforms are a partnership between four Cape York communities, the Queensland and Australian Governments and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. The Cape York Welfare Reforms aim to address passive dependence on welfare and rebuild social norms in the communities.

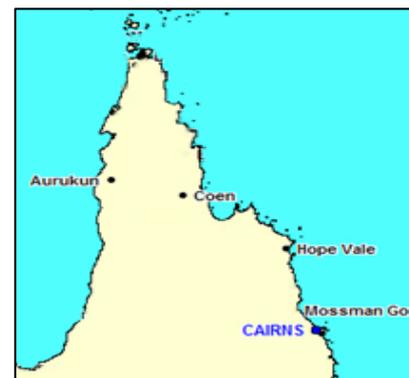
The Cape York Welfare Reform communities are:

Aurukun

Aurukun is on the western coast of Cape York and is approximately 900 kilometres northwest of Cairns, and about 200 kilometres south of Weipa. The community had an estimated resident population of 793 people as at 30 June 2009¹⁰.

Coen

The township of Coen is about halfway between Cairns and the tip of Cape York. It is not a discrete Aboriginal community and is part of Cook Shire. The community had an estimated resident population of about 192 people at 30 June 2009¹¹.



Hope Vale

Hope Vale is situated on the Cape York Peninsula and is 46 kilometres northwest of Cooktown. The estimated resident population of Hope Vale was about 582 people at 30 June 2009¹².

Mossman Gorge

Mossman Gorge is a small Aboriginal community 75 kilometres north of Cairns, 4 kilometres from Mossman (the nearest town), and approximately 25 kilometres by road from Port Douglas. It is not a discrete Aboriginal community and is part of the Cairns Regional Council area. The community had an estimated resident population of about 99 people at 30 June 2009¹³.

For more information on the communities and population compositions view:

www.atsip.qld.gov.au and www.statistics@oesr.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles

Role of the Commission:

Any person who is a welfare recipient living in one of the four CYWR communities and has not met predetermined obligations can be referred to the Commission. A person is a welfare recipient if the person, or their partner, receives certain welfare payments including: Newstart, Parenting Payments, Youth Allowance, Disability Support Pension and ABSTUDY. A person is also a 'welfare recipient' if he/she is participating in CDEP.

The Commission receives agency notifications from a range of government departments, authorities and the Magistrates Courts if:

- the person's child is absent from school three times in a school term, without reasonable excuse,
- the person has a child of school age who is not enrolled in school without lawful excuse,

¹⁰ Adults 17 and over provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP figures.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid

- the person is the subject of a child safety report,
- the person is convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court,
- the person breaches his or her tenancy agreement – for example, by using the premises for an illegal purpose, causes a nuisance or fails to remedy rent arrears.

What does the Commission do?

When the Commission receives a referral after assessing if the person is within the Commission’s jurisdiction, Local Commissioners will determine if the person is required to attend a conference. Conferences are held in an informal setting and the matters that lead to the submission of the agency notification are discussed to ensure the best outcome for the client. The client is encouraged to come to an agreement with the Commission about an appropriate response to the issue that has led to their referral. If the client is unwilling to agree on a course of action, the Commission may order a certain course of action.

The Commission may:

- decide that no action is necessary
- reprimand the person
- recommend that the person attend an appropriate community support service
- direct the person to attend an appropriate community support service under a case plan for not more than a year
- order that the person’s income be managed by Centrelink for a period of between three to 12 months.

Family Responsibilities Commission Processes:

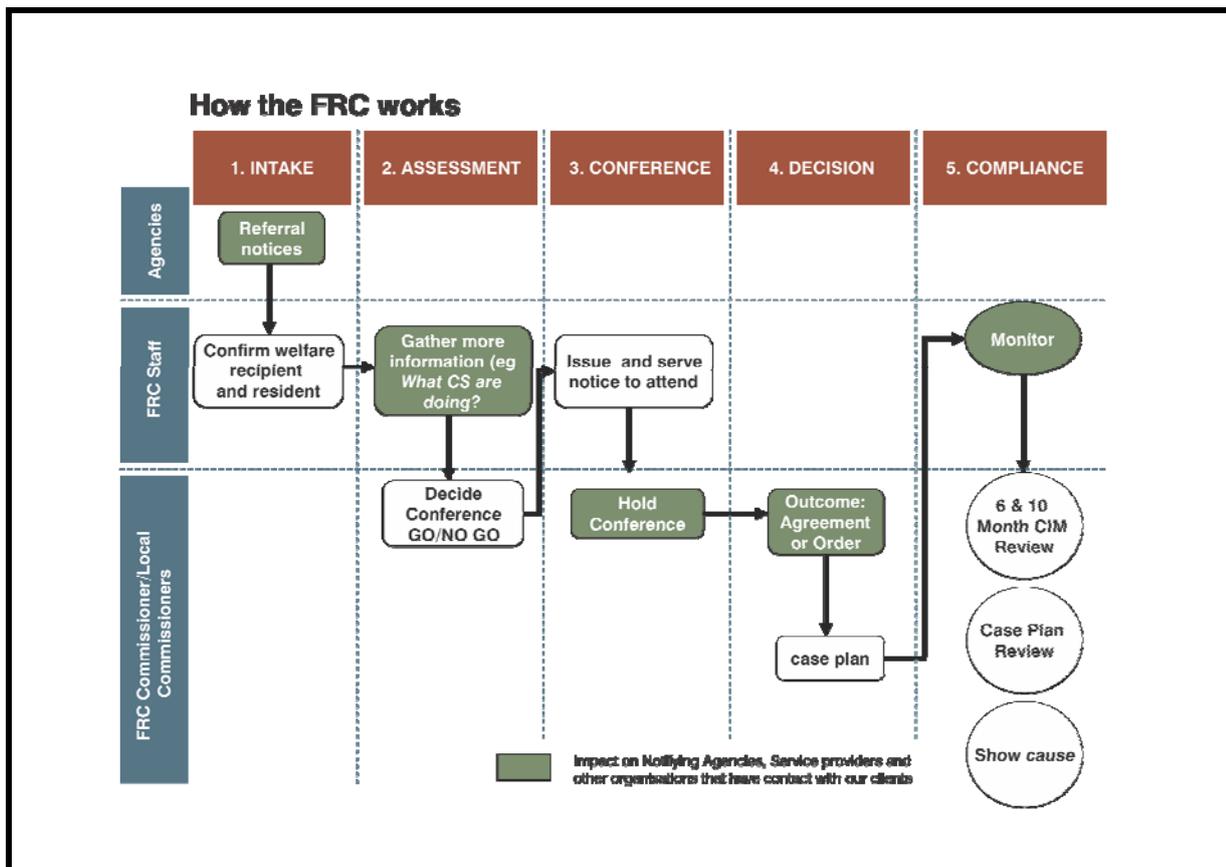


Table 6: Commission processes
CS – Child Safety