

Family Responsibilities Commission

*Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and
The Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Partnerships*

Quarterly Report

No. 11

January 2011 to March 2011



*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. Throughout the third year the Commission continues to support the development and local authority of its Commissioners and their role in the future of the communities.

In quarter 11, like so many others, the Commission faced the full force of Queensland's wet season with the natural disasters in both South East Queensland and Cyclone Yasi affecting the operations of the Commission. The exceptionally devastating floods in Brisbane caused the Commission's computer server to be unavailable for four days in January whilst Cyclone Yasi closed the Cairns Registry office for three and a half days in February. Throughout both events the Commission was able to service all scheduled sittings in this quarter although the prolonged wet season continued to provide operational and logistical challenges.

Commissioner Glasgow, supported by Deputy Commissioner Curtin and the Aurukun Commissioners were featured by the ABC 'Four Corners' program within a profile of Aurukun. The Four Corners program looked back at earlier 'Four Corners' programs showing the way Aurukun was 40 years ago, then 20 years ago, to present day Aurukun, with the Commission featuring as a positive force within Aurukun. The feature is due to be broadcast on 2 May 2011.

The Commission commenced conferencing in quarter 11 in accordance with the scheduled sittings calendar. Over the past quarter 677 agency notifications were received that were within the Commission's jurisdiction which was a decrease from quarter ten of 734. The Commission held 358 conferences as compared with 609 in quarter ten and 336 in quarter nine. Quarter ten conferencing numbers were higher due to the concentrated effort on school attendance in that quarter as opposed to the return to normal conferencing in quarter 11.

School attendance notifications decreased from 339 in quarter ten to 332 in quarter 11. The focus on school attendance in Aurukun continued with the start of the new school year so that parents and carers maintained the momentum of ensuring attendance at school. Hope Vale State School transitioned to the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) this year and anecdotally has experienced an increase in school attendance from term 1, 2010 to term 1, 2011, contributing to a corresponding decrease of 30 school attendance notifications for the quarter. Whilst published data for term 1 is not as yet available to demonstrate attendance results, the Commission will report this data in our next quarterly report. The Commission wishes to recognise and commend the enthusiasm that children, parents, carers, teachers and the community have displayed with the implementation of the new school regime. It is encouraging to see such dedication to learning displayed by all involved. 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. Cooktown State School has been working to improve school attendance for its students from Hope Vale with attention to ensuring children utilise the regular bus service and congratulating good school attendance. Mossman State School continues to be proactive, highlighting the importance of school attendance through articles in their school weekly newsletter. With the continued effort of parents, teachers and the Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) the Commission looks forwards to continued improvement in school attendance rates for all its schools throughout the 2011 year.

The Commission has been working closely with Transition Support Services (TSS) and the parents of Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale boarding school students on the importance of getting their children to

boarding school, conscious of the fact that Cyclone Yasi impeded a number of students reaching selected schools. As a result the Hope Vale Commissioners aided in a coordinated approach with the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council, TSS and Centrelink in assisting with entitlements, enrolments and transport to Cairns, enabling these students to continue on to their respective destinations around Queensland.

The Commission continued to monitor and case manage clients, case managing 198 clients in quarter 11. This compares against the 247 clients case managed in quarter ten. Since commencement the Commission has referred 581 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 50 percent of clients on 12 month case plans over the past two and three quarter years. As the Commission's activities continue the number of clients suitable for case plans declines, whilst the Commission has identified an increased need to provide intensive case coordination through the Active Family Pathways (AFP) framework for a small number of clients who wish to participate voluntarily. The number of referrals to service providers decreased from 129 in quarter ten to 48 in quarter 11 with the majority of referrals to the Queensland Corrective Services run Ending Family Violence Program.

The AFP continued this quarter with participating clients identifying goals and developing plans to achieve those goals. AFP clients have undertaken work with their AFP Support Officer and are working towards their goals and further self determination by engaging with agencies such as the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services), Centrelink and TSS to address issues. The Commission has recently recruited to fill a vacant AFP Support Officer position and to employ an additional AFP Support Officer position to enable the expansion of the AFP client base. The new staff members will commence with the Commission in April 2011.

The Commission continues to strongly encourage service providers to consider the impact of the Commission, subject to current legislation ceasing on 1 January 2012, especially with regard to engaging clients and cementing relationships prior to the cessation of the Commission's referral process.

The Commission will continue working towards reaching its objectives as set out in the Act for the remainder of the life of the Commission. Following on from amendments made to the Act in October 2010, Commissioners in all communities commenced sitting without Commissioner Glasgow chairing the conferences, highlighting the progress Commissioners have made in raising their local authority and skill sets throughout their time with the Commission.

At the time of writing this report the Commission had nine months left of operational life as legislated via the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*. The remainder of this year will be used to crystallise the Commissioners' profiles in their communities and to continue their development from a statutory perspective as well as their personal perspective.

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Abbreviations

ACMs	Attendance Case Managers
ACMF	Attendance Case Management Framework
AFP	Active Family Pathways
ATODs	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Services
CAFS	Child and Family Services
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CRAC	Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation
CYDN	Cape York Digital Network
CYMHS	Child Youth Mental Health Services
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy
DCS	Department of Community Safety
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
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
HACC	Home and Community Care
IT	Information Technology
LIP	Local Implementation Plan
NPARIH	National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing
PHaMs	Personal Helpers and Mentors
PCYC	Police-Citizens Youth Club
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
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 March 2011.

1. Context

The Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) trial (the trial) 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 is 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 welfare recipient in a trial community 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 a determination that the matter is within jurisdiction, it 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 Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) has been in operation for a period of two and three-quarter years at the time of this report and during this time has conducted a significant number of conferences with clients following the receipt of 7013 agency notifications within its jurisdiction. Throughout the operation of the trial, Commissioners and staff of the Commission have developed strong working relationships with the agencies and community support service providers both in the communities and regionally and continue to build upon those relationships.

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 or Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services) three day Ending Family Violence Program (EFVP).

The Commission, in delivering its objectives is dependent on suitable and cohesive service provision. Flexibility in the delivery and effectiveness of services is essential to meet individual needs. The high turnover of service provider staff still remains an issue impeding continuity of service to our clients.

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 Information Technology (IT) systems 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 organisations, especially in regards to the timeliness and quality of monthly reporting. Within its mandate, the Commission 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 and works collaboratively with agencies to address these gaps.

A case plan is developed by the Commission when a client enters into an agreement or a direction is made. The case plan may include a number of referrals to community support services. Service providers are required to submit a monthly progress report (by completing a pre-populated spreadsheet provided by the Commission) 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. The high turnover of service provider staff has resulted in inconsistent and variable reporting and classification within their own organisations. The Commission continues to work with service providers to maintain consistent reporting criteria.

As a result of the progress reports received, a client's case plan is assessed to establish whether they are meeting their obligations under the agreement or order. Additional information is sought from agencies and service providers, which is used together with local knowledge gathered to decide upon the best course of action for the client. 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 48 referrals to community support services were made in quarter 11 relating to 32 individuals. As at 31 March 2011, 198 clients were being case managed by the Commission. This compares to 247 clients case managed in quarter ten. 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. It was initially hoped that the decrease in clients would allow the service providers sufficient opportunity to develop sustainable programs in communities moving towards the future of community controlled services. The Commission continues to strongly encourage service providers to consider the impact of the Commission ceasing subject to current legislation on 1 January 2012, especially in regard to the identification and engagement of new clients with the ending of the Commission's referral process. There remains a need to ensure continuity for the communities, particularly Commission clients, in order to continue meeting the Welfare Reform agenda.

The Commission continues to assist those clients not progressing with service providers (or within the expectations of the Commissioners) to improve family lives through the Active Family Pathways (AFP) case coordination framework. The AFP is offered to select 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 them to identify strategies to restore their primary responsibility for improvement in their lives and that of their families.

The Commission and the Department of Community Safety (DCS) successfully continued to deliver the EFVP in all four welfare communities conducting a total of five programs in quarter 11. Three programs were held in Hope Vale and one each in Aurukun and Mossman Gorge. Attendees included both Commission clients on case plans and Probation and Parole clients. The Commission works closely with the DCS to ensure the attendance of the Commission's clients. For each program held, there are a limited number of spaces allocated. The Commission fills the spaces available, and then schedules the 'excess' clients for the next program allocation. These clients unable to attend the EFVP in quarter 11 will be scheduled to attend as spaces become available in quarter twelve. For quarter 11, 17 clients were referred, and 36 clients were directed to attend the Ending Family Violence Program (some from previous referrals), with a total of 16 clients successfully completing the program.

The Commission and the DCS 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 has been a priority of the Commission throughout this quarter. In February 2011 the Commission aided in securing continuation of funding for the EFVP with additional funds secured from the current Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) allocation. The program will now be delivered by DCS in partnership with the RFDS. The program delivery methodology is currently being negotiated between the DCS and RFDS, with the Commission actively involved to ensure adequate and appropriate service delivery to its clients.

New school Attendance Case Managers (ACM) commenced in all communities at the beginning of the 2011 school year and at the time of writing had settled in well to their roles with the children, parents and carers. Meetings with the Principals of the respective schools and the Attendance Case Managers have re-commenced, with the aim of prioritising children and their families requiring assistance to ensure consistent school attendance.

The Commission has been liaising closely with Transition Support Services (TSS) and the parents of Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale boarding school students ensuring that the transition between primary and boarding school, as well as the return of existing students to boarding school occurs smoothly. TSS assists students to attend secondary schools outside of the communities, providing support mechanisms for their new living and learning environment. Support is then extended beyond year 12 to the attainment of work, training or further education. An example of supporting secondary education is the coordinated approach between the Hope Vale Commissioners, Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council, TSS and Centrelink to assist secondary school students who had been delayed commencing or returning to boarding schools due to Cyclone Yasi by assisting with transport, entitlements and enrolments in the first week of the school term. The Commission is continuing to conference the parents and carers of these children in an endeavour to ensure parents understand the importance of school attendance, and will continue its close liaison with TSS.

The Commission is encouraged by the Coen Wellbeing Centre (WBC) bringing multiple service providers together to work on collaborative projects for the benefit of parents and children of Coen and utilising the facilities of the Wellbeing Centre for the entire community. In February, the Coen WBC invited staff from Queensland Health, Child and Family Services (CAFS), Apunipima Cape York Health Council, the RFDS and the Coen Kindergarten Association in response to community requests to attend a planning meeting to ensure that all agencies were accessing the Coen community and planning future activities together. As a result the following organisations are either utilising the WBC facilities or organising the activity in association with other service providers:

- The Queensland Police Service in Coen in partnership with the Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) and Home and Community Care (HACC) is providing seniors movie days and kids movie nights.
- The community driven first Young Girls Group for 2011 took place in March. The group has been a great opportunity for building relationships, providing an environment for the girls to learn about supporting each other as a team.
- The Women's Group meets on the second Thursday of every month, with the Men's Group meeting on the last Monday evening of each month.

The Commission has supported the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA), Education Queensland, Aurukun and Coen Health Clinics and Child Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS) to assist in the development of an interim referral procedure for school aged children in Aurukun and Coen whilst awaiting the recruitment of two School Based Health Nurses at Aurukun and one in Coen CYAAA. The increasing success of school attendance is simultaneously exposing those children with medical or mental health requirements that are preventing full school attendance. The Commission has identified through the many conferences with the families a need for direct referral for child medical and mental health professionals whilst acknowledging that teachers and carers do not have the expertise or authority to refer to such specialists. Whilst awaiting the recruitment and commencement of School Based Health Nurses, all parties are working collaboratively on a workable referral process. The Commission notes the ongoing commitment of the Aurukun Health Clinic and CYMHS to seek solutions.

In quarter 11 the Commission received monthly progress reports from the Aurukun Parenting Program¹ stating that the program had insufficient staff to action the requests of the Commission and therefore were unable to engage with Commission clients. A number of our clients have obligations to complete Parenting Programs and the Commission cannot provide reviews of clients

¹ Distinct from the Cape York Partnerships Parenting Program in the communities of Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

on Income Management Orders to enact Show Cause notices if clients are unable to comply with case plans due to the lack of a service provider. The Commission views the Parenting Program as a critical component of the service provider referrals and case plan processes.

The closure of the WBCs for a week over the Christmas/New Year holiday period has been highlighted by community members due to loss of service and continuity of client support to address issues at a time which is often associated with additional stress. The emotional, social and financial burden over this period impacts on all community members and the unavailability of the WBC services and the building has been questioned by community members to the Commission.

Currently FIM is supporting the Commission with its commitments in each of the communities. The Parenting Programs in Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge have recently appointed community based consultants.

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 a further sixteen Cairns based administrative staff that provide corporate and operational support to the Commissioner, the Local Commissioners and Local Coordinators.

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 by the Queensland Government and administered by the Department of Communities, 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 January 2011 to 31 March 2011 totalled \$1.602M. This income consisted of:
 - \$1.578M received from Queensland Government Funding.
 - \$.024M received in interest.

The Commission anticipates receiving \$0.807M in additional funds for additional Aurukun conferences in November and December 2010 and for the costs associated with the client database and Information Technology (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 March 2011 is \$2.183M. The total includes funding released for the nine months to 31 March 2011 and the 2009-10 surplus funds.

Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2011 was \$0.898M (Table 1). This total represents 21 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, 99.9 percent of total expenditure in quarter 11 is represented by the following:

Salaries and recruitment costs	62.83 percent
Information technology costs	10.09 percent
Airfare and accommodation costs	5.15 percent
Operating costs	4.56 percent
Local Commissioner fees	4.46 percent
Consultants costs	4.14 percent
Property costs	3.77 percent

Vehicles costs	3.10 percent
Telecommunications	1.89 percent

Expenditure variances from quarter ten to quarter 11 are attributed to:

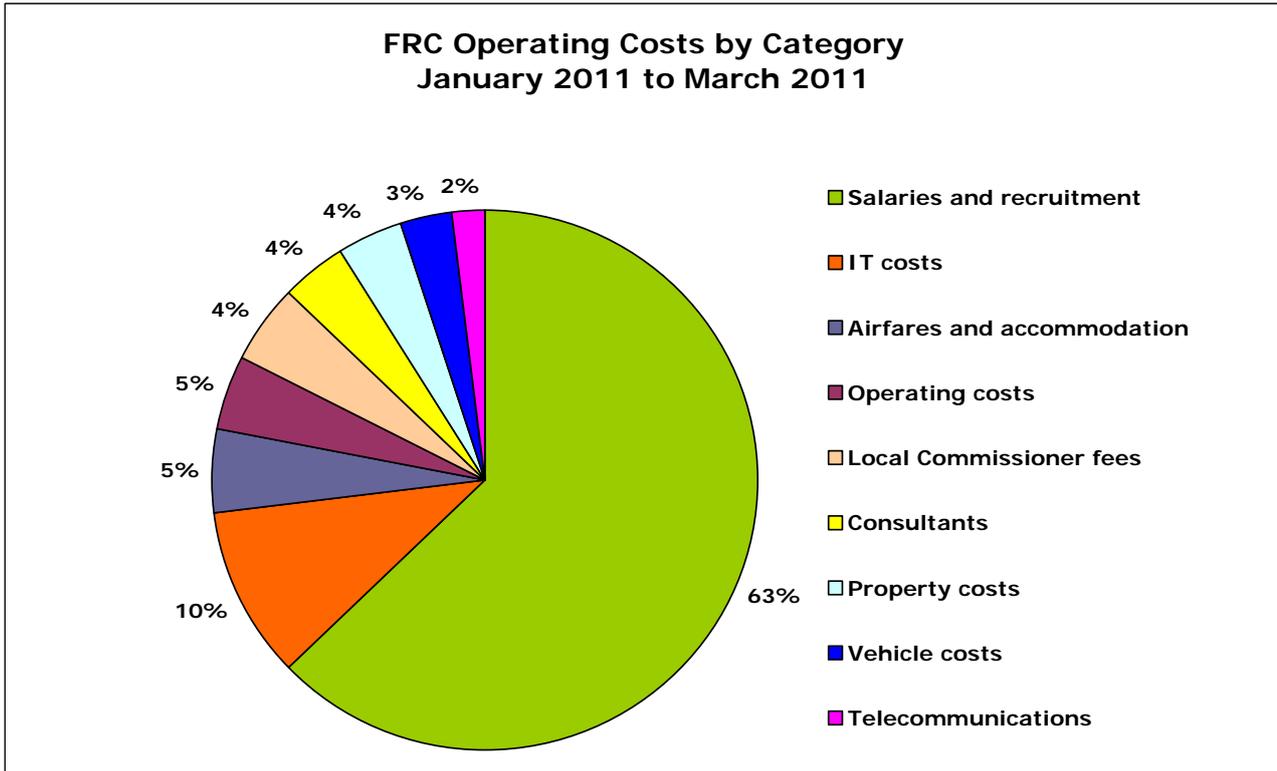
- **Salaries and recruitment** - salaries and on costs decreased by \$175K. This was due to the decreased number of conferences. In the previous quarter there was a significant increase in the salaries expense due to the increased number of conferences.
- **Local Commissioner fees** – decreased by \$72K due to the reduction in the number of conferences.
- **Telecommunications** – decreased by \$5K during the quarter.
- **Airfares and accommodation** – staff related travel and accommodation reduced by \$26K.
- **Operating costs** – decreased by \$8K.
- **Consultants** – decreased by \$1K.
- **IT Costs** – increased by \$31K. Due to charges levied from CYDN in quarter 11 that related to quarter ten. There are yet to be levied charges from CYDN of \$30K that relate to quarter 11.
- **Property costs** – decreased by \$3.5K.

The decrease in these expenses in quarter 11 reflects a return to a normal number of conferences for the quarter. In quarter ten expenses for salaries and recruitment, Local Commissioner fees and airfares and accommodation increased due to the Board's request for weekly conferences in Aurukun to improve the significantly low school attendance numbers.

Expenditure 1 January 2011 to 31-Mar-11	Total Expenditure Qtr 10	Total Expenditure Qtr 11	Total Expenditure Variance Qtr 10 to Qtr 11
IT costs	\$59,419.22	\$90,546.77	\$31,127.55
Vehicle costs	\$28,244.83	\$27,826.82	-\$418.01
Consultants	\$38,102.68	\$37,169.88	-\$932.80
Property costs	\$37,456.28	\$33,876.41	-\$3,579.87
Telecommunications	\$21,650.14	\$17,006.47	-\$4,643.67
Operating costs	\$48,784.54	\$40,937.08	-\$7,847.46
Airfares and accommodation	\$72,444.07	\$46,244.20	-\$26,199.87
Local Commissioner fees	\$111,706.12	\$40,040.05	-\$71,666.07
Salaries and recruitment	\$738,708.17	\$564,012.34	-\$174,695.83
Total expenditure	\$1,156,516.05	\$897,660.02	-\$258,856.03

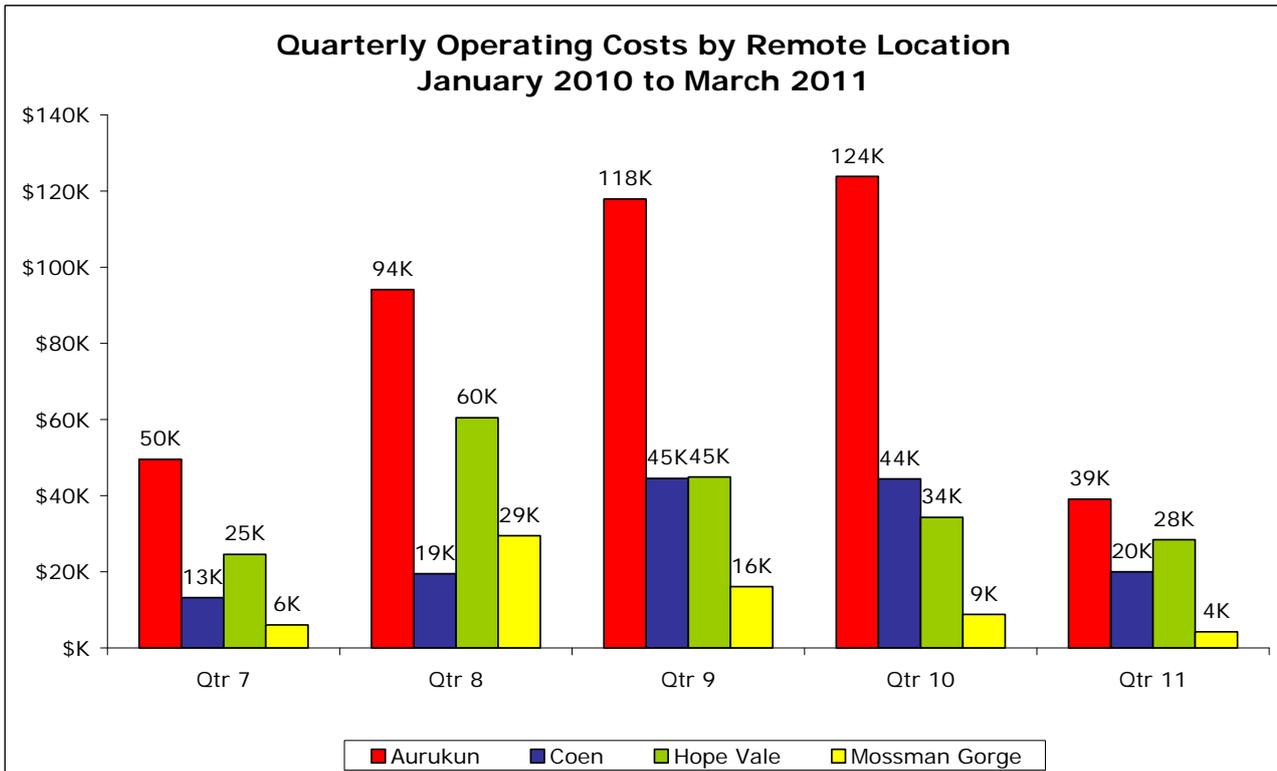
Table 1: Unaudited YTD expenditure including variations between quarter ten and quarter 11.

The Commission's total quarter 11 operating costs by categories and by percentage of total expenditure is represented in Graph 1 below.



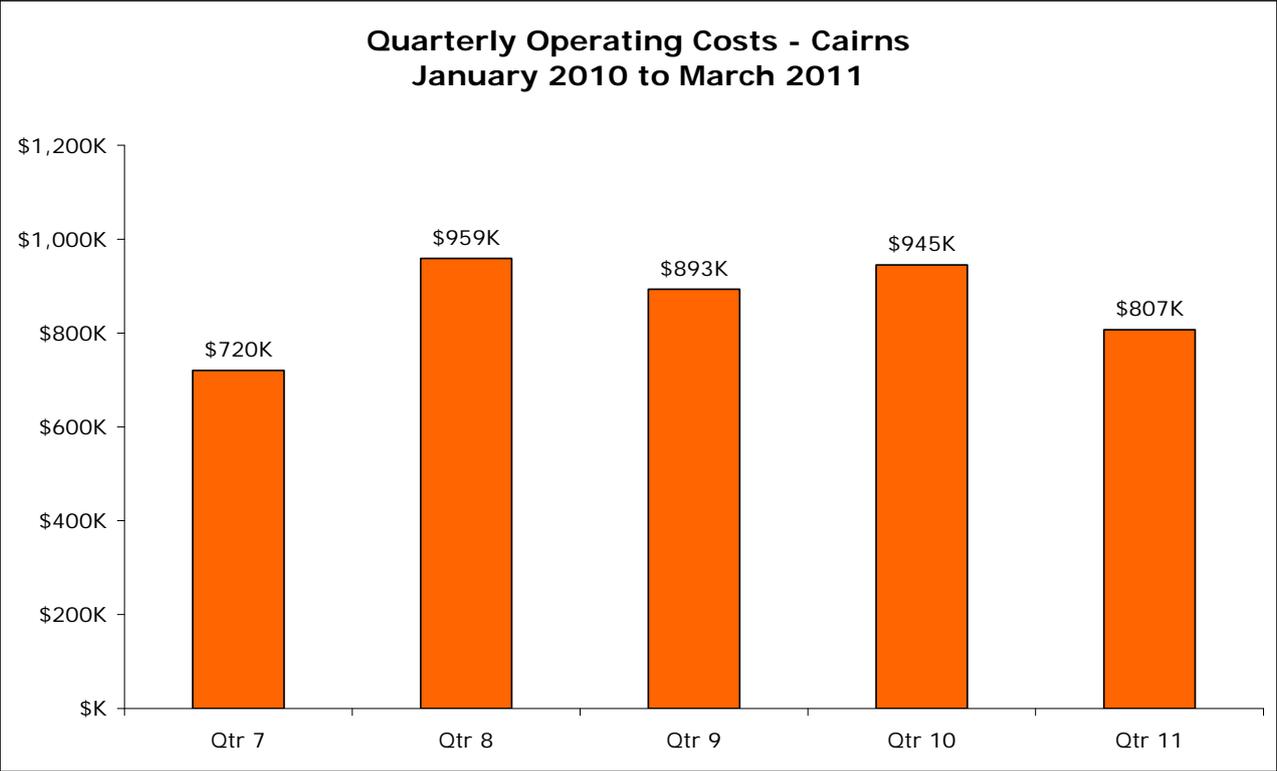
Graph 1: Total FRC Operating costs 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2011

Regional operational expenditure is categorised below (Graph 2) by location and quarter. These figures exclude Local Coordinator's salary costs, which are incorporated in the Commission's global operating costs. These figures include the Local Commissioner's fees for the March 2011 quarter, totalling \$40K. The expenses were lower in quarter 11, in the four CYWR communities, as a result of fewer conferences held during this period.



Graph 2: Operating costs by remote location 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011

Cairns office operational costs (below) in quarter 11 are compared to previous levels of quarterly expenditure incurred.



Graph 3: Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011

4. Activities / Achievements

Intake and Assessment Phase

The Commission became operational on 1 July 2008 and commenced conferencing on 12 August 2008. In quarter 11 the Commission received 830 agency notifications, some of which related to more than one person. Of that figure 677 notifications (82 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 153 notifications (18 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

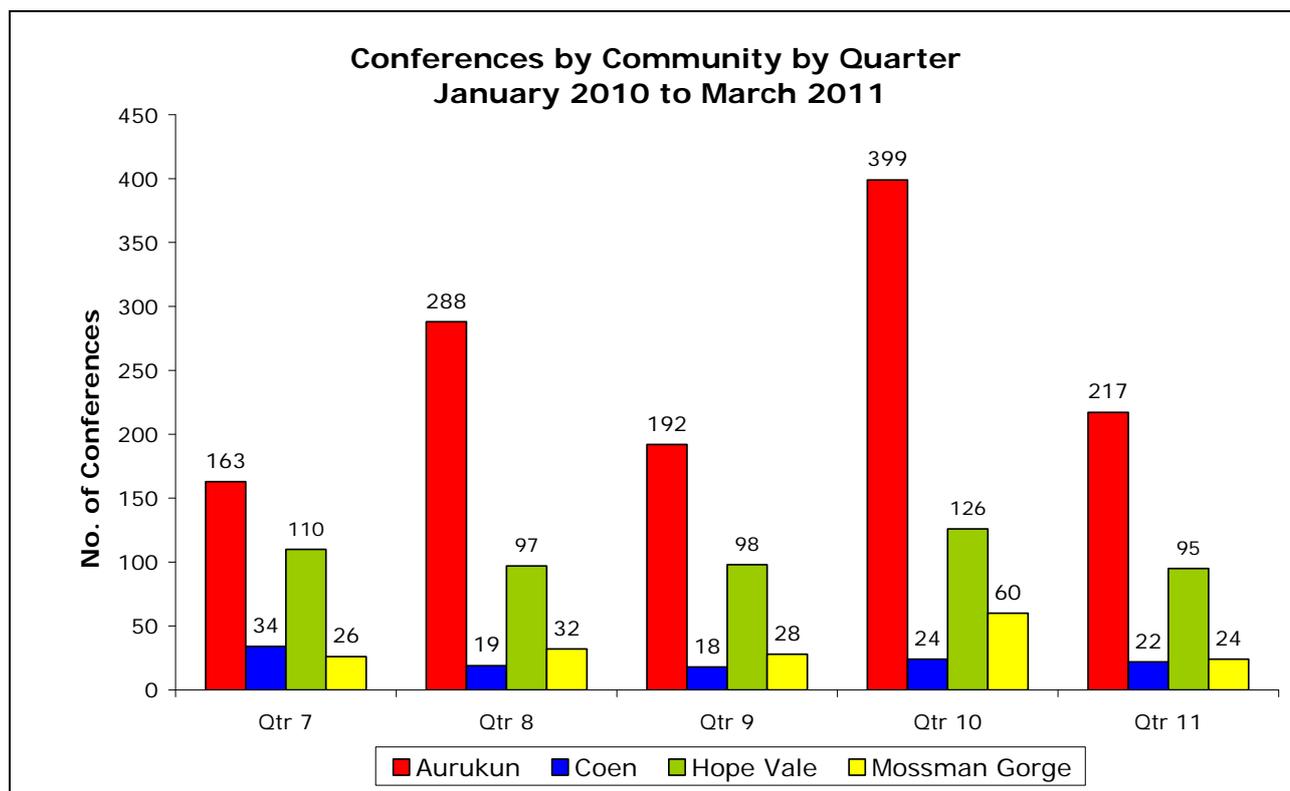
The objective of the Commission, as set out in the Act, is primarily to conduct conferences with community members and to encourage clients (individuals and families) to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour whilst promoting the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable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

In quarter 11 a total of 358 conferences were held compared with 609 in quarter ten and 336 in quarter nine. This decrease is due to the normalisation of conferencing schedule following the significant increase in Aurukun conferences in quarter ten. Quarter 11 conferences resulted in three Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 29 orders made to attend community support services and 39 Conditional Income Management (CIM) 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 for Aurukun and Hope Vale. One conference was cancelled in Coen and two in Mossman Gorge due to the passing of community members and associated sorry business.

Continuity of sittings was maintained during this quarter with the Commission engaging Deputy Commissioner Curtin to attend conferences in Aurukun and Coen. The Commission is now able to provide improved flexibility and continuity of sittings in communities with amendments to the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*. With the addition of section 50A of the Act, in certain circumstances, conferences may now be constituted by three Local Commissioners. During the week of Cyclone Yasi Commissioner Glasgow supported the Aurukun Commissioners conducting scheduled sittings via teleconferencing facilities from Cairns. Commissioner Glasgow assisted with decision making when necessary and was available to authorise CIM orders being made. The Commission further continued to utilise teleconferencing facilities for the Coen conferences held in February. The Commission continuously strives to maintain its sitting schedule despite various weather, operational and logistical issues which may prevent Cairns Registry staff from attending conferences in person.

Aurukun conferences accounted for 61 percent of the total number of conferences held, reflecting the high number of notifications attributed to the Aurukun community at 69 percent of all notifications within jurisdiction. A similar trend of notifications to conferences is reflected for the remaining communities with Hope Vale conferences accounting for 27 percent of the total number of

conferences held and 23 percent of all notifications within jurisdiction. Coen and Mossman Gorge conferences account for six percent and seven percent respectively of the total number of conferences held. These percentages reflect the low number of notifications attributed to both communities at three and five percent of all notifications within jurisdiction (Graph 4).



Graph 4: Conferences by community and quarter 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Case Management

As at 31 March 2011, 198 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. The Commissioners made 48 referrals relating to 32 clients during quarter 11, the majority of which were referrals to the EFVP. Since commencement the Commission has referred 581 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 50 percent of clients on 12 month case plans over the past two and three-quarter years. As the Commission’s activities continue the number of clients suitable for case plans declines, whilst the Commission has identified an increased need to provide intensive case coordination through the Active Family Pathways framework for a small number of clients who wish to participate voluntarily.

The Commission performs various other functions in addition to conference sittings. For example the Commission assists clients to navigate the sometimes complex requirements of service providers and various agencies such as Centrelink Remote Servicing, Queensland Corrective Services, Magistrates Courts, State Penalties Enforcement Registry and Child Safety Services. Assistance of this nature provides a holistic approach which is necessary when liaising at the community level. In addressing continued school absences of high school children, the Commissioners and Registry staff

have developed relationships with TSS, Department Education and Training (DET), Centrelink and parents in a consolidated effort to ensure children remain engaged in the education system.

The AFP Case Coordination framework continued this quarter with participating clients identifying goals and developing strategies to achieve those goals. Many of these strategies have incorporated engagement with agencies such as the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services), Centrelink and TSS to address personal issues. The Commission has recently completed a recruitment process to fill a vacant Active Family Pathway Support Officer position and to employ an additional Active Family Pathway Support Officer to enable the Commission to expand its AFP client base. The new staff members will commence with the Commission in April 2011.

Referral Type	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	Qtr 11	TOTAL
FIM	22	21	10	29	8	90
WBC	93	25	21	31	12	182
ACM	10	5	1	5	0	21
Parenting Program	2	4	5	18	10	39
EFVP	35	23	31	39	17	145
Active Family Pathways	0	0	0	5	0	5
Other	8	5	8	2	1	24
TOTAL	170	83	76	129	48	506

Table 2: Referral services by quarter as at 31 March 2011.

Show Cause recommendations are 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 staff and Commissioners continue to offer training and direction to service providers for the induction of new staff, provide feedback through audit and encourage staff to attend conference proceedings in each CYWR community and discuss with the Local Commissioners the decision making processes. The Registry staff continue to work 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 (198) 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 11, 14 Show Cause hearings were held in Aurukun and Hope Vale. These matters resulted in:

- 6 Clients Rescheduled and ordered to comply with the Case Plan
- 5 Clients No Further Action
- 2 Clients Income Managed and ordered to comply with the Case Plan
- 1 Client Rescheduled until the next sitting

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. The Commission continues to experience difficulties with consistent and accurate monthly reporting from service providers, inhibiting the Commission's ability to bring clients back to conference under the Show Cause provisions of the Act. The Registry provides consistent and clear feedback to service providers

regarding the reporting quality and consistency, also encouraging regular information sessions and training updates.

Community	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	Qtr 11	TOTAL
Aurukun	9	15	4	12	13	53
Coen	0	2	0	0	0	2
Hope Vale	4	3	4	3	1	15
Mossman Gorge	0	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	13	20	9	15	14	71

Table 3: Show Cause Notices by quarter as at 31 March 2011.

Twenty-three applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received in quarter 11 (Table 4). 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. If clients are out of the community and unable to attend their conference in person, the Commission makes every effort to contact its clients and schedule phone conferences so that matters may be heard. 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 23 applications received are as follows:

- 9 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decision pending with conferences scheduled for April 2011
- 9 Applications dismissed
- 3 CIM orders revoked
- 2 Rescheduled

Community	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	Qtr 11	TOTAL
Aurukun	4	6	8	2	9	29
Coen	2	1	1	0	2	6
Hope Vale	7	11	4	11	7	40
Mossman Gorge	0	4	3	0	5	12
TOTAL	13	22	16	13	23	87

Table 4: Amend or End Applications Order by quarter as at 31 March 2011.

Conditional Income Management

Thirty-nine Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter 11. Since the commencement of the Commission 497 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 continues to receive additional notifications relating to that client.

Since the Commission commenced operations, 80 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 497 CIM orders being

made relating to 357 clients. The 497 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 may 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 Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) participants are subject to removal from the program under a recommendation from the Commission and subsequent decision from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

For those clients subject to CIM, the Commissioners review their progress at the six and nine month point of their order. 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. These clients request that the Commission order the income management as a means to stabilise the household and ensure bills are paid and children are fed, in preference to being placed on Voluntary Income Management (VIM) where pressure from spouses and family members can erode the intent of income management. 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 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	Qtr 11	TOTAL
Aurukun	21	46	27	59	18	171
Coen	10	2	2	4	1	19
Hope Vale	13	15	15	17	14	74
Mossman Gorge	3	5	5	8	6	27
TOTAL	47	68	49	88	39	291

Table 5: Quarterly Conditionally Income Managed orders as at 31 March 2011.

Notifications

For the period 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2011 the Commission received a total of **830** agency notifications² of which 677, or 82 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Of the 677 notifications that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, they comprised of:

- 332 School Attendance notifications
- 291 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 46 Child Safety notifications
- 8 Housing Tenancy notifications

Of the 153, or 18 percent, not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 137 Magistrates Courts notifications, 13 School Attendance notifications and 3 Child Safety notifications.

Details for each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun's 464** notifications comprise **69 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:

- 235 School Attendance notifications
- 200 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 21 Child Safety notifications
- 8 Housing Tenancy notifications

16 Magistrates Courts notifications, 10 School Attendance notifications and 1 Child Safety notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

217 conferences were held in Aurukun in quarter 11³.

- **Coen's 20** notifications comprise **3 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 15 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 3 School Attendance notifications
- 2 Child Safety notifications

2 Magistrates Courts notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

22 conferences were held in Coen quarter 11⁴.

- **Hope Vale's 159** notifications comprise **23 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:

- 82 School Attendance notifications
- 55 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 22 Child Safety notifications

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ Ibid.

18 Magistrates Courts notifications, 2 School Attendance notifications and 2 Child Safety notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

95 conferences were held in Hope Vale in quarter 11.⁵

- **Mossman Gorge's 34** notifications comprise **5 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
 - 21 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 12 School Attendance notifications
 - 1 Child Safety notifications

101 Magistrates Courts notifications and 1 School Attendance notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

24 conferences were held in Mossman Gorge in quarter 11⁵.

⁵ Ibid.

5. Data Summary and Trends

In quarter 11 total notifications decreased from 939 in quarter ten to 830. Magistrates Courts, School Attendance and Housing Tenancy notifications decreased whilst Child Safety notifications increased.

Housing Tenancy notifications decreased from sixteen in quarter ten to eight in quarter 11. The majority of the decrease was recorded in Hope Vale with a decrease of eight notifications, from eight in quarter ten to zero in quarter 11. Both Mossman Gorge and Aurukun recorded minor fluctuations for the quarter. The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) report they are working to ensure their tenants are on repayment plans and are only referring clients to the Commission after all other avenues have been exhausted.

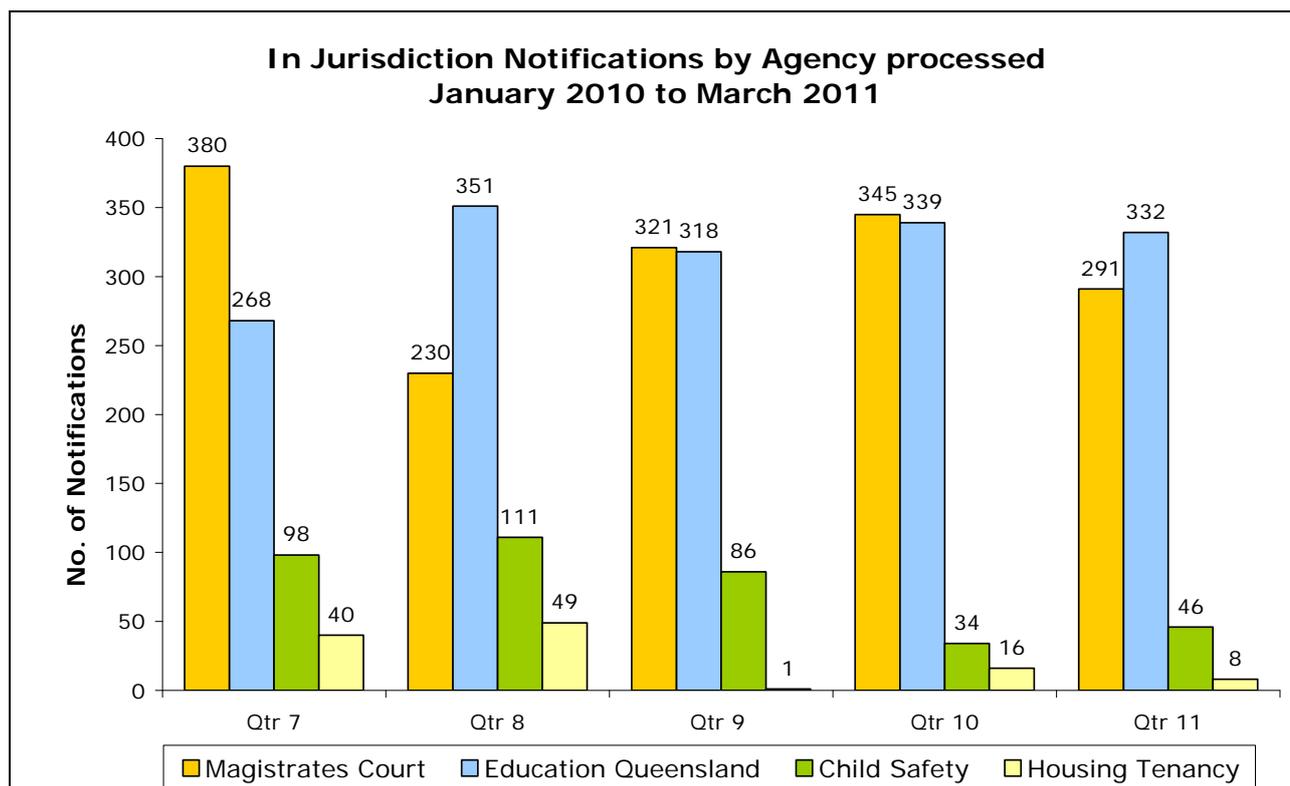
The Commission has previously received school attendance data from the Department of Education and Training (DET) for publication in the Commission's quarterly reports. DET has advised the Commission that the school attendance data for term 1, 2011 will not be available at the time this quarterly report is being compiled due to term 1 being longer than usual. Specific school attendance statistics for term 1 and 2, 2011 will be reported in quarter twelve report.

School Attendance notifications decreased from 339 in quarter ten to 332 in quarter 11. Aurukun experienced an increase of 24 notifications, from 211 in quarter ten to 235 in quarter 11. The extra sittings in Aurukun during quarter ten focused on school attendance with the emphasis continuing in this quarter by our Commissioners. Hope Vale State School transitioned to the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy this year and has experienced a decrease of 30 notifications for the quarter, with a corresponding increase in school attendance. Although the increased attendance is causing some subsequent behavioural issues, the behaviour is reported as being actively managed. As stated above, term 1 data is not yet available to substantiate in real terms the anecdotal increase in attendance. The Commission will report published data in its next quarterly report

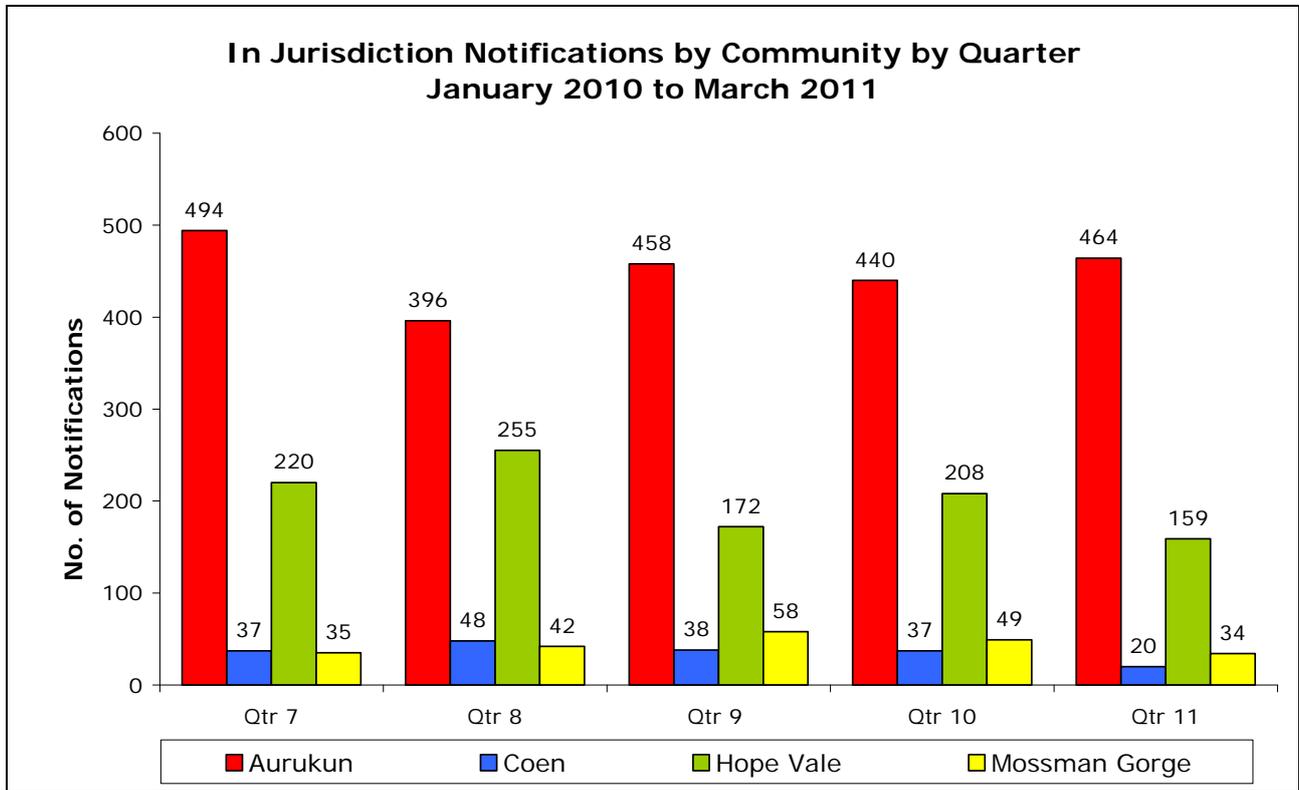
All schools report either a comparable figure or an increase in school attendance from the same time last year. The Commission continues to emphasise to parents and carers the importance of school attendance, especially in regards to acceptance into boarding school for secondary education opportunities. The Commission continues to counsel clients on the importance of prompt arrival times to prevent absentee and poor attendance records. Mossman State School continues to be proactive, highlighting the importance of school attendance through articles in their weekly newsletter. With the continued effort of parents, teachers and the ACMs the Commission looks towards an improved school attendance rate for all schools throughout the 2011 year.

Child Safety notifications increased from 34 in quarter ten to 46 in quarter 11. Aurukun and Hope Vale had an increase of 13 notifications and four notifications respectively, whilst Mossman Gorge registered a decrease of five notifications. Under the provisions of the Act, the Commission receives all notifications from Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) relevant to the four communities, hence the notifications vary greatly in seriousness and results. An increase or decline in Child Safety notifications can only be evaluated in terms of overall trends rather than a positive or negative indication of conditions of children's wellbeing in the communities. The Commission acknowledges the strong working relationship between the Commission and Child Safety officers in improving the understanding of the role of Child Safety officers and the consequences for families if agreements and plans are not fully implemented and adhered by parents and carers.

Magistrates Courts notifications decreased this quarter to 291 from the 345 received in the previous quarter. Magistrate Courts notifications decreased in all communities, however Hope Vale has continued to see a decline in notifications for all quarters since quarter six. Coen decreased by 17 notifications, while Aurukun and Hope Vale both decreased by 15 with Mossman Gorge recording a reduction of seven notifications for the quarter. Queensland Police Service note the ongoing wet season and reduced mobility of residents of the Cape is assisting in locating and charging offenders plus limiting logistics for illegal activities coming into the communities which may contribute to the reduced Magistrate Court matters. The Commission notes the Queensland Police Service continues to initiate community engagement activities to reduce criminal activity and socially irresponsible behaviour such as working with truants, education programs, visiting schools including fortnightly classroom reading time and lunchbox sessions, supporting Dry Houses and their tenants and engaging with liquor outlets for the responsible service of liquor and bulk purchasing.



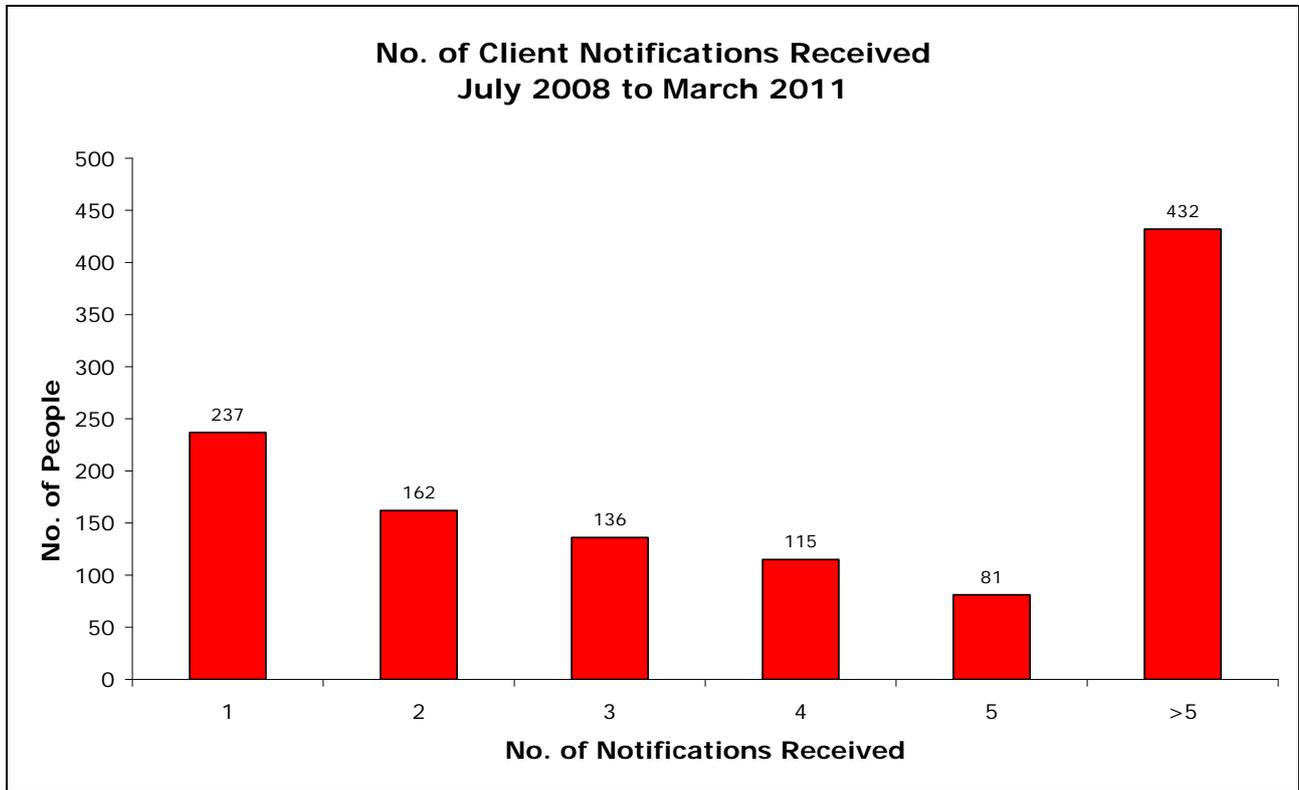
Graph 5: Notices by agency processed 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.



Graph 6: Notifications by community and quarter 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.

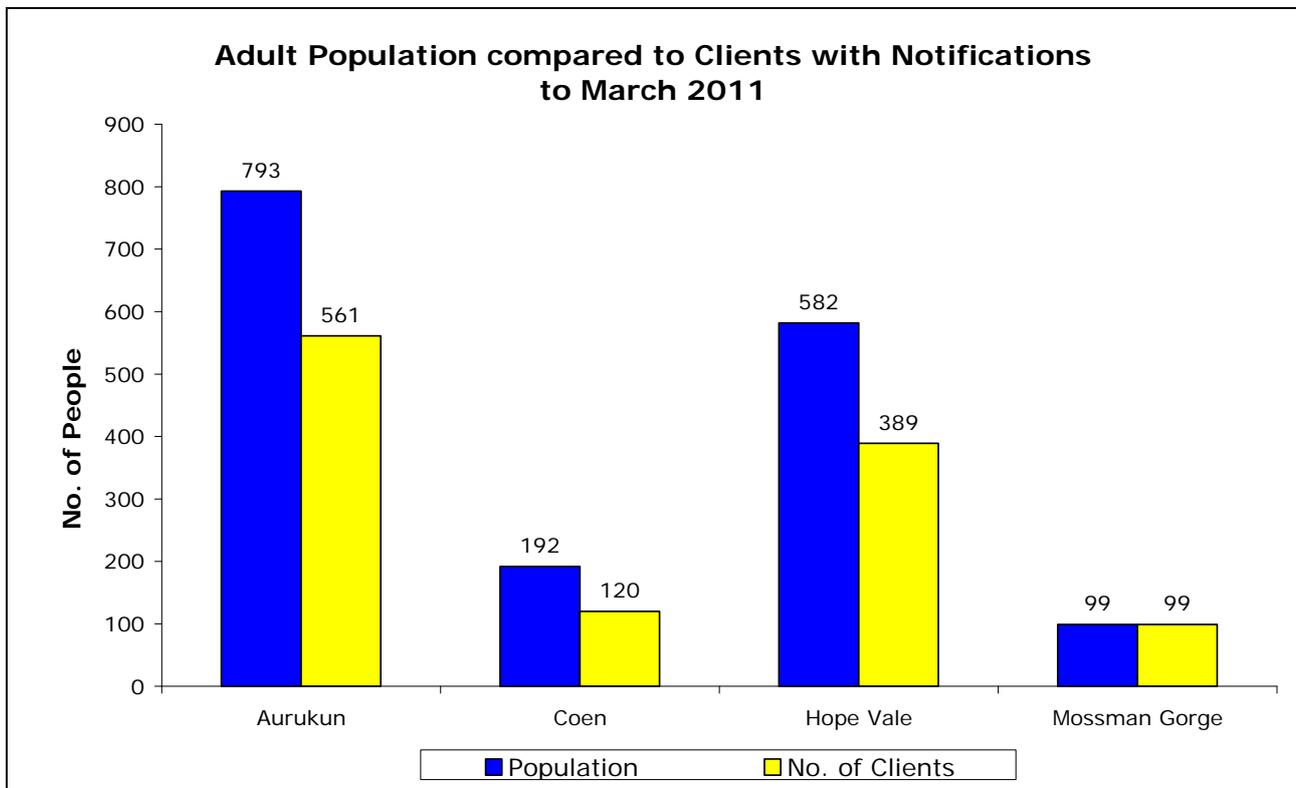
The Commission held 358 conferences across the four communities in quarter 11, a decrease from 609 conferences held in quarter ten. Aurukun experienced the most significant decrease in conference numbers from 399 in quarter ten to 217 in quarter 11 due to the additional sittings and large numbers of clients attending conferences during quarter ten. Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge also experienced decreases in conference numbers for quarter 11 of 31 and 36 respectively. Hope Vale decreased from 126 conferences in quarter ten to 95 in quarter 11 whilst Mossman Gorge decreased from 60 in quarter 10 to 24 in quarter 11.

Thirty-seven 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. To date, 20 percent of clients have received only one notification. The Commission conferenced 27 new clients this quarter.



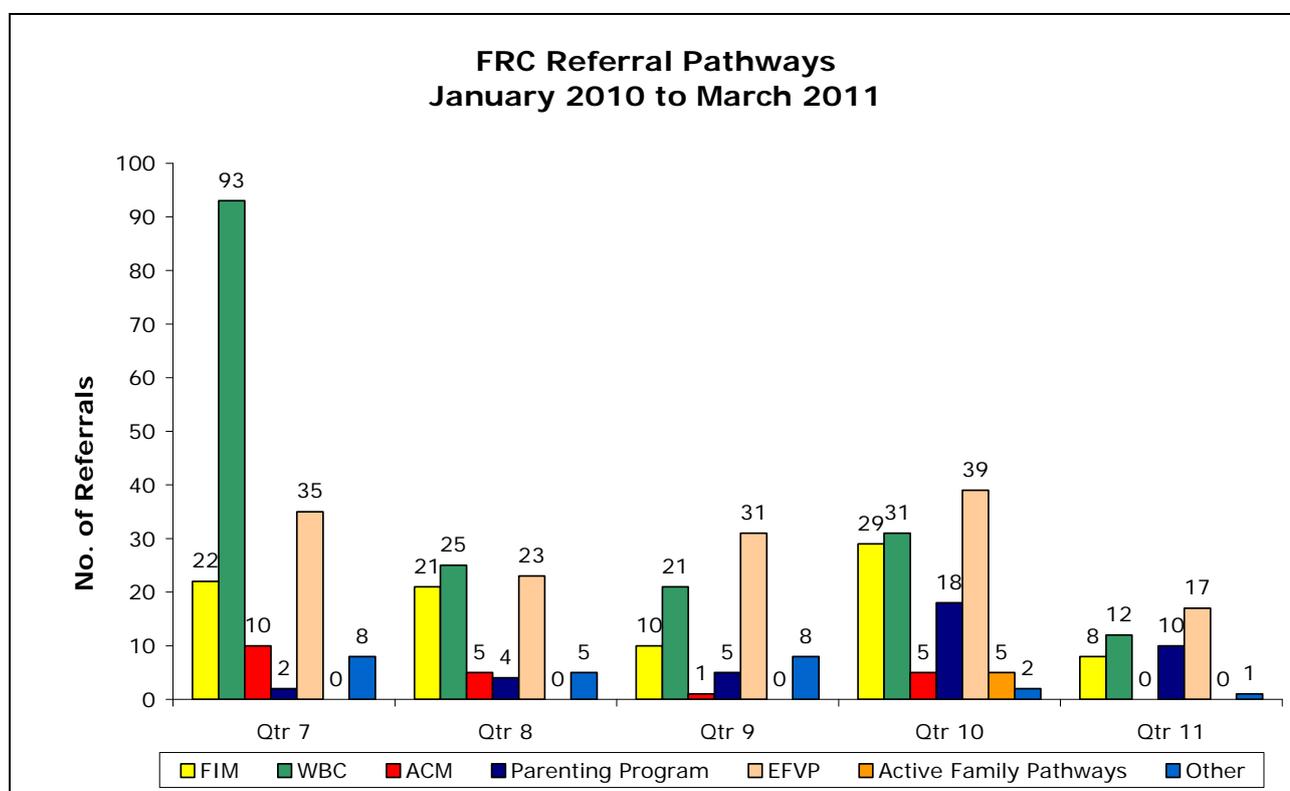
Graph 7: Clients by number of notifications 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2011.

(**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).



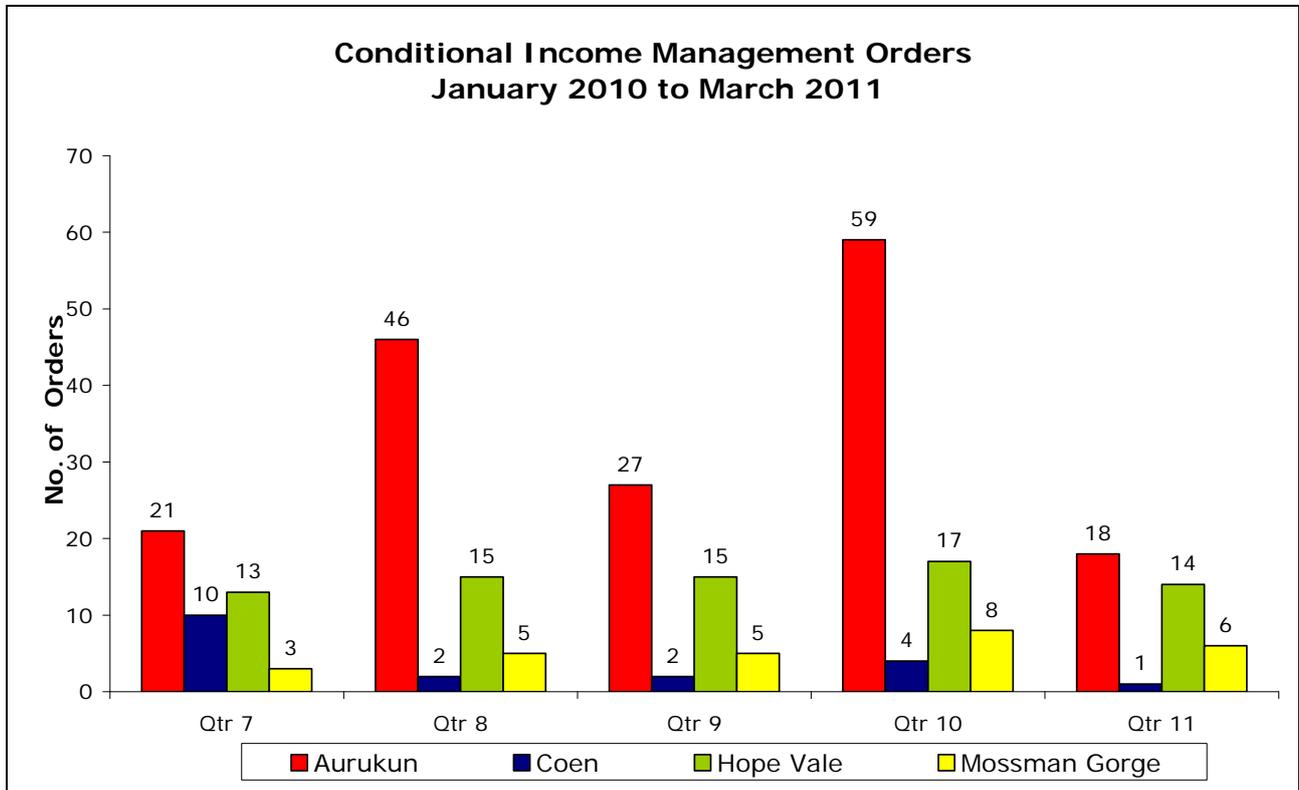
Graph 8: Number of clients who have received notifications up until 31 March 2011 in comparison to population figures of adults (17 years and over) provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP Figures. **NOTE:** Mossman Gorge is a community which has a highly transient population with family members 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 decreased from 129 in quarter ten to 48 in quarter 11 with Aurukun recording the majority of the decrease. Aurukun referrals decreased from 85 in quarter ten to 23 in quarter 11. Commissioners decreased case plan referrals, especially in Aurukun, due to the inability of service providers to accept the number of referrals the Commission would like to make. Service providers report that staffing issues have affected their ability to meet the intake of referrals. The Commission considers the needs of its existing clients and the continuity of service required in meeting their needs to be a priority. To date the Commission has referred 581 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 50 percent of clients on 12 month case plans. Recent statistics have revealed that the number of clients on case plans has declined, whilst the Commission has identified an increased need to provide intensive case coordination through the Active Family Pathways framework for a small number of clients who wish to participate voluntarily. As 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 agreement.



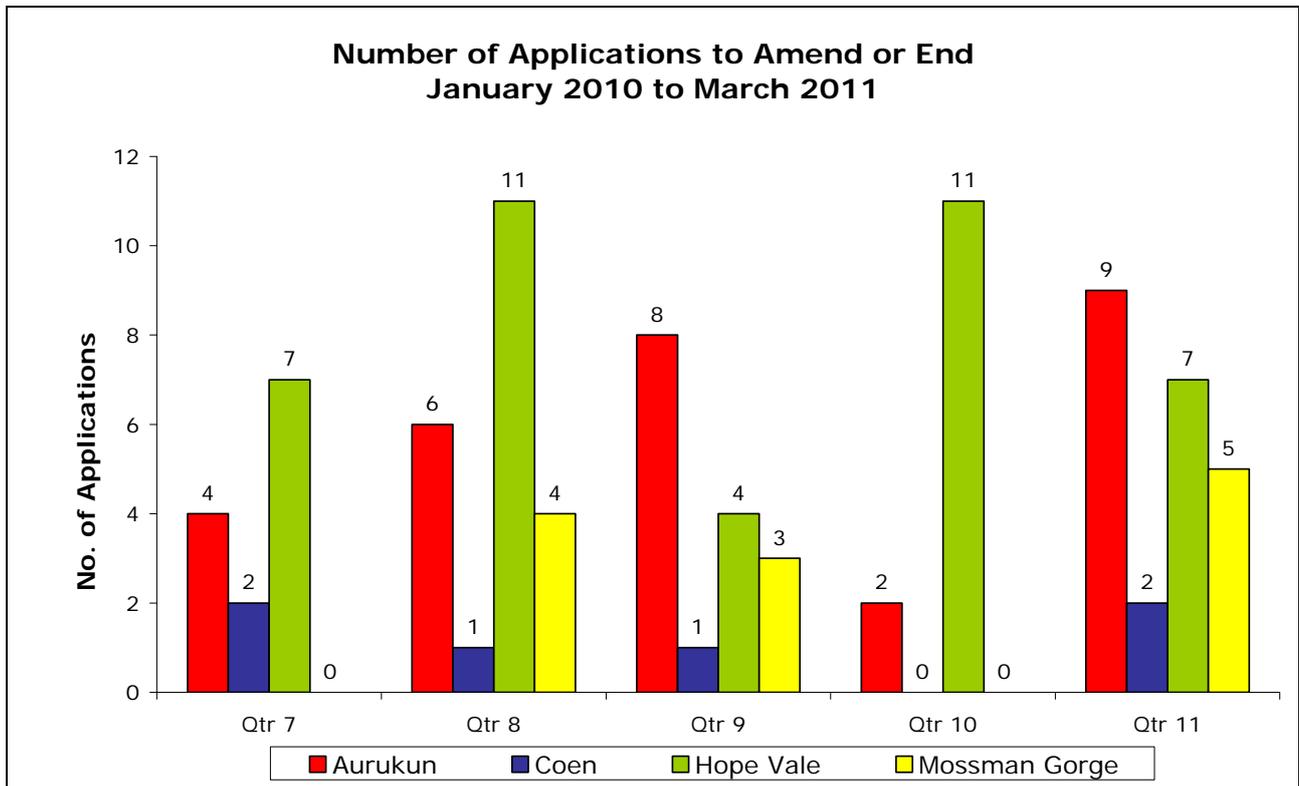
Graph 9: Referral Pathways 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Conditional Income Management (CIM) Orders decreased from 88 in quarter ten to 39 in quarter 11. Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge remained constant in the number of orders, whereas Aurukun decreased in the number of CIM orders made from 59 in quarter nine to 18 in quarter 11, directly correlating to the decrease in conferences from 399 to 217. 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.



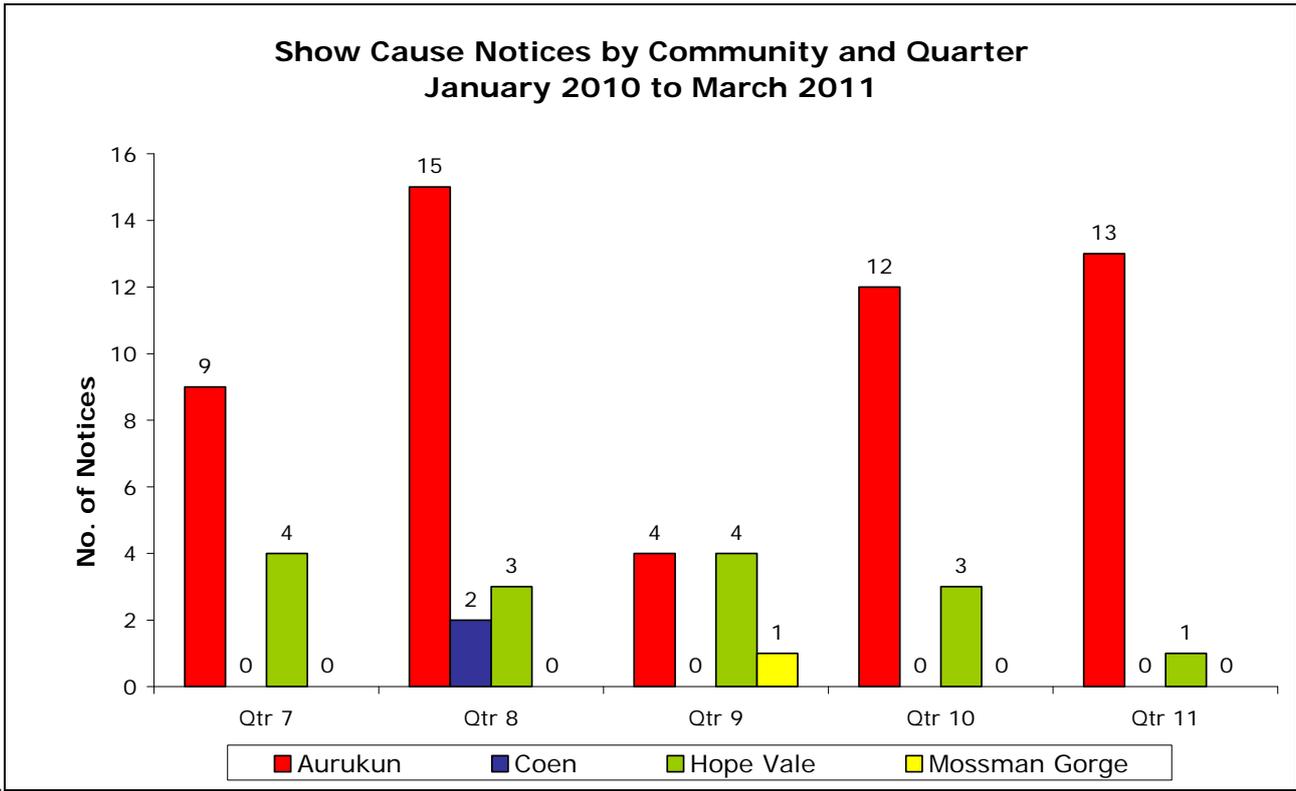
Graph 10: Conditional Income Management 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Twenty-three Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received by Commissioners in quarter 11, an increase from 13 in quarter ten. Commissioners view the Amend or End Applications as an opportunity to engage with clients regarding their individual circumstances and in some cases this is the first conference attendance for the client as the CIM may have been ordered due to their non-attendance at two consecutive conferences. The applications to Amend or End encourage the client to provide supporting reasons and documents to the Commissioners when making the application.



Graph 11: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.

The Commission conducted a total of fourteen Show Cause conferences in Aurukun and Hope Vale in quarter 11, a decrease from 15 in quarter ten.



Graph 12: Show Cause Notices 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011.

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:

- Commissioner Glasgow, supported by Deputy Commissioner Curtin and the Aurukun Commissioners were featured in a Four Corners profile of Aurukun. The Four Corners program looked back at earlier 'Four Corners' programs showing the way Aurukun was 40 years ago, then 20 years ago, to present day Aurukun, with the Commission being a feature of the current profile of Aurukun. The feature is due to be telecast on 2 May 2011.
- The Commissioners, in conjunction with Queensland Police Service, Queensland Corrective Services and Councils, continue to be actively involved in issues concerning their communities, ranging from chronically truant children, to listless and bored children showing disrespect to their Elders and community, to children causing vandalism and theft. The Commissioners, with community members, seek to find solutions to these problems by offering alternative options to the children of the communities. The Mossman Gorge community is offering the opportunity for boys to participate in football and girls to participate in Hip Hop dancing.
- In response to a presentation by the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre at the Commissioners' training week last year, the Commissioners invited the service to their communities to provide information sessions on elder abuse, the rights of the individual and what services were available to both the individual and their carer. The first of these sessions has been well received in Mossman Gorge with the Commissioners encouraging the service to visit the Commissioners in the three other communities.
- Commissioners in Aurukun and Coen were to meet with the Chief Executive Officer of CYAAA and the Executive Principal of the Western Cape College to discuss school attendance, truancy and early intervention strategies. The meeting took place with the Aurukun Commissioners, however due to time constraints the scheduled meeting in Coen did not take place.
- The Hope Vale Commissioners have been very proactive and extensively involved with the Hope Vale State School transitioning to CYAAA at the beginning of this school year.
- The CYAAA Aurukun and Coen campuses are implementing the Club and Culture program with some of the Aurukun and Coen Commissioners volunteering their time to share their culture knowledge with the children of the community.

Observations

- Staff from the Australian Bureau of Statistics visited communities regarding the upcoming census to be held on 9 August 2011. The object of the visits was to encourage community members to complete the census forms and to educate each community in the use of the census information by Government agencies.
- As previously reported in quarter ten, the Aurukun community are still awaiting the reopening of the community pool. Work is required to bring the pool up to a suitable standard to allow it to be reopened.

- The Commission is encouraged by the implementation of the Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) program in Aurukun in partnership with Queensland Health and encourages the expansion of the program into other communities.
- Construction of ten residences in Aurukun (from the 2009-10 National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) program) has been completed.
- In Hope Vale, Millers Block infrastructure is moving ahead rapidly with five new homes completed and another five currently under construction.
- The construction of the Hope Vale pool and associated facilities has slowed, with an anticipated completion date of April.
- The Hope Vale Business Precinct is progressing with site plans nearing completion and the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council has been successful in the tender process.
- The Aurukun Business Precinct is also progressing with plans finalised and the 'Design and Construct Tender' to be advertised in quarter twelve.
- Local police have reported that during the period of the cask wine ban in Mossman Gorge there was a reduction in assaults and domestic violence incidents. Whilst it is not yet possible to definitively link this reduction to the ban, the experience in Mossman and in other centres suggest that cask wine bans of this type have a positive effect. Whilst the trial has now ended there is a good deal of support at a local level for bans of this nature to continue. These issues have been raised with staff of Liquor Licensing Division who have undertaken to explore options in this regard.
- Currently there are 12 Dry House agreements in place in Mossman Gorge. Queensland Police Service have been proactive in supporting Dry House occupants and assisting with signage. Coen currently has ten Dry Houses while Hope Vale has five Dry Houses.
- Construction on the Mossman Gorge Gateway Project commenced on 17 January 2011. Many community members entitled to take up employment opportunities under the Indigenous Employment Plan have taken up alternative employment opportunities due to the delays experienced in the commencement of the project. The Commission has been advised that the Job Guarantee Program will be targeting approximately 40 community members to be trained when the Gateway Tourism Centre opens. Landscaping works have commenced and it is reported up to 8 community members will be involved in these works. Plants for the landscaping works will be obtained from the Mossman Gorge community nursery.

Challenges

- In quarter 11 the Commission faced the full force of Queensland's wet season. The unparalleled floods in South East Queensland caused the Commission's computer server in Brisbane to be unavailable for four days in January whilst Cyclone Yasi closed the Cairns Registry office for three and a half days in February. Despite this the Commission was able to service all scheduled sittings in this quarter.
- Staffing issues at the Wellbeing Centres remained an outstanding issue along with the closure periods of the centres throughout this quarter.
- Incidences of fighting, stolen vehicles and damage to property in Aurukun continue to challenge community leaders, government agencies and service providers. This is compounded with a rise in use of inhalants and the misconceived belief by offenders that the stolen vehicles contain petrol rather than OPAL.
- The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Services (ATODS) programs have been formally handed over to the Royal Flying Doctor Service Well Being Centres in Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. An agreed process is yet to be put in place for the transfer of Commission clients and other referred clients from ATODS to the WBC.

- As reported in quarter nine ongoing delays in the creation of a leadership body to replace the Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation (CRAC) is contributing to a loss of leadership and direction in Coen. This situation remains unresolved.
- The Commission notes that the Local Implementation Plans (LIP) for each of the CYWR communities still remain unsigned. Despite this some of the commitments in the LIPs have been implemented.

Future Direction

- The Commission welcomes the new appointment of the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Honourable Curtis Pitt MP.
- Due to the retirement of FR Board Member Dr Jeff Harmer, the Commission welcomes Mr Finn Pratt, Secretary Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to the FR Board.
- The Commission is at significant risk of losing key staff leading up to the closure of the Commission at the end of 2011, as staff will be keen to secure permanent employment. Due to the small nature of its operations, limited staffing complement and unique skill set required, the risk of losing key staff must be managed as a priority of the Commission. Should key staff chose to uptake employment offers it will be difficult to engage new staff for such a short period of time and train them in specialised roles. A core compliment of staff will need to be retained for a period of time to effectively close down the Commission's operations, vacate Commission premises (Registry and community offices), archive records and dispose of assets. The Commission will also be required to draft and submit the fourteenth quarterly report and 2011-2012 Annual Report after 31 December 2011.
- The Local Commissioners are considered important authorities and role models in their respective communities. The Local Commissioners have been called upon frequently to provide advice to many stakeholders and interested parties some of which include Government Champions, Ministers and senior public service officials relating to the implementation and ongoing operation of the Commission. With the Commission due to cease at the end of the calendar year, the Commission and the FR Board need to consider the Commissioners' futures and if possible source opportunities to ensure their on-going availability to serve their communities.
- The Commission welcomes Phase 2 of the evaluation of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial. Phase 2 will include an assessment of outcomes arising from the work of the Commission and the efficacy of service provision. This is expected to be undertaken in the second half of 2011. The Commission looks forward to providing assistance to the contracted evaluators as and when necessary.
- The Commission looks forward to a full delivery of services by the Wellbeing Centres as DoHA have advised a full complement of staff will be on board by 2011.
- The Commission continues to strongly encourage service providers to consider the impact of the Commission ceasing on 1 January 2012, especially in regard to the identification and engagement of new clients with the ending of the Commission's referral process.

7. Appendices

APPENDIX A



SITTING CALENDAR 2011 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION



1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
3 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
10 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
17 JANUARY	DRG					Staff Training
24 JANUARY	DRG					26 Australia Day Holiday 27
31 JANUARY	DRG		1,2,3			31 Jan, 4 Feb
7 FEBRUARY	DRG			8,9	10	7,11
14 FEBRUARY	DRG	11	15, 16, 17			18
21 FEBRUARY	DRG			22, 23	24	21 FR Board Meeting 25
28 FEBRUARY	DRG	28	1, 2, 3			4
7 MARCH	DRG			8, 9	10	7, 11
14 MARCH	DRG					Staff Training
21 MARCH	DRG			22, 23	24	25
28 MARCH	DRG	28	29, 30, 31			1 Apr
4 APRIL	DRG			5, 6,	7	4, 8
11 APRIL	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			15
18 APRIL	DRG			19, 20	21	18 22 Good Friday
25 APRIL	DRG					25 Easter Monday 26 ANZAC Holiday
2 MAY	DRG		3, 4, 5			2 May Day Holiday 6
9 MAY	DRG			10, 11	12	9
16 MAY	DRG	16	17, 18, 19			16 FR Board Meeting 20
23 MAY	DRG			24, 25	26	23, 27
30 MAY	DRG	30	31, 1, 2			30 May, 3 June
6 JUNE	DRG			7, 8	9	6, 10
13 JUNE	DRG		14, 15			13 Queens Birthday 17 - 19 Laura Festival



SITTING CALENDAR 2011

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION



1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
20 JUNE	DRG			21, 22	23	20, 24
27 JUNE	DRG					Office week
4 JULY	DRG					NAIDOC
11 JULY	DRG		12, 13, 14	12, 13	14	15
18 JULY	DRG					Training Week 20 Estimates 22 Cairns Show Day Holiday
25 JULY	DRG	25	26, 27, 28			
1 AUGUST	DRG			2, 3	4	1, 5
8 AUGUST	DRG		9, 10, 11			12
15 AUGUST	DRG			16, 17	18	15 FR Board Meeting
22 AUGUST	DRG	22	23, 24, 25			22, 26
29 AUGUST	DRG			30, 31	1	29, 2
5 SEPTEMBER	DRG	5	6, 7, 8			9
12 SEPTEMBER	DRG			13, 14	15	12, 16
19 SEPTEMBER	DRG					Office week
26 SEPTEMBER	DRG					Office week
3 OCTOBER	DRG	3	4, 5, 6			7
10 OCTOBER	DRG			11, 12	13	10, 14
17 OCTOBER	DRG		18, 19, 20			17, 21
24 OCTOBER	DRG			25, 26	27	24, 28
31 OCTOBER	DRG	31	1, 2, 3			4
7 NOVEMBER	DRG			8, 9	10	7, 11
14 NOVEMBER	DRG		15, 16, 17			14
21 NOVEMBER	DRG			22, 23	24	21 FR Board Meeting 25
28 NOVEMBER	DRG	28	29, 30, 1			2
5 DECEMBER	DRG			6, 7	8	5, 9
12 DECEMBER	DRG		13, 14, 15			12, 16
19 DECEMBER	DRG					Office week
26 DECEMBER	DRG					Office closed for Xmas

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
- Mr Finn Pratt 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.

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 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 criminogenic 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
- plan 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 2009⁶.



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 2009⁷.

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 2009⁸.

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 2009⁹.

For more information on the communities and population compositions view:

www.indigenous.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,

⁶ Adults 17 and over provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP figures.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ 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:

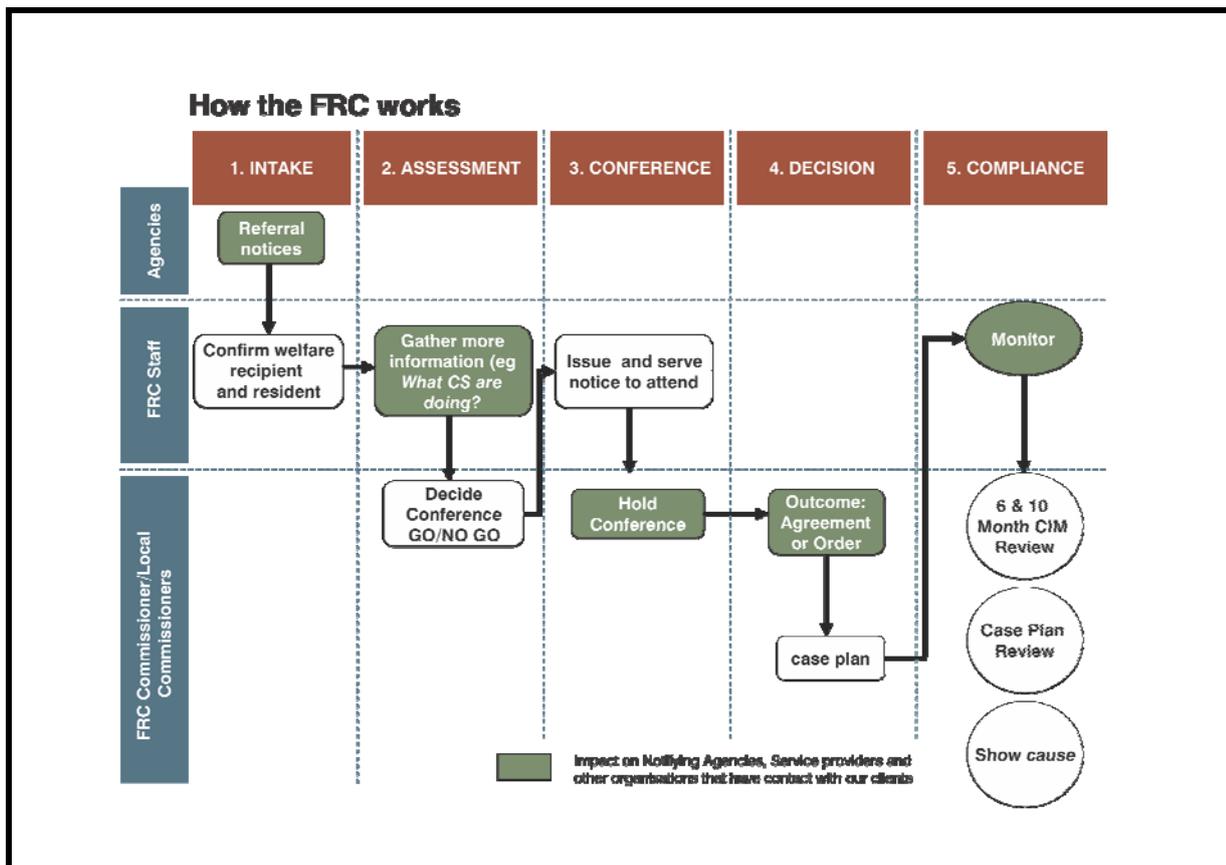


Table 6: Commission processes