

# 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. 12**

**April 2011 to June 2011**



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

## Executive Summary

The Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) commenced operations on 1 July 2008 and is now in its third year. 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 the expansion of their future roles.

One of the most exciting outcomes of this third year is that the Commission has begun to hold conferences led by the Local Commissioners. This is a great achievement and shows great progress towards the goals of welfare reform. These Local Commissioners are, through their work at the Commission, developing leadership skills and authority in their local communities. The Local Commissioners often point out that their jobs do not end at 5 o'clock, but that they are frequently approached by community members outside of conferences for support or to help them resolve a personal or family issue. Rebuilding the authority of the local Elders helps to rebuild community norms and rebuild a supportive and cohesive community.

The Commission was featured on the ABC Four Corners program titled 'Return to Aurukun' which aired on 2 May 2011. The Four Corners program provided a retrospective history of Aurukun from when Four Corners first visited in 1978 and again in 1991, and compared it to the Aurukun of today. The Aurukun Commissioners, assisted by Commissioner Glasgow, presented the operations of the Commission, explained how the Commission engaged with its clients and how clients were assisted to work towards bettering their lives to meet community expectations. The program showed the markedly improved safety and living standards of Aurukun today compared to the previous years and this was supported by the observations of the Commissioners. In particular, the Commissioners pointed to reductions in violence and a greater focus on education in the community.

The Commissioners highlighted the need for the individual and the community to take responsibility for social change, to improve the opportunities for their children through education and to enhance employment opportunities. The Commissioners acknowledged that there had been challenges but confirmed that generally the Commission was viewed in a positive light and that Aurukun was perceived as a community rebuilding itself. External stakeholders, government, non-government organisations and the community have praised the Commissioners for their courage and determination as reflected in the story and have provided support for the extension of the Commission.

In line with the objectives of the Commission, informal training continued this quarter with the Mossman Gorge Commissioners and Local Coordinator travelling to Aurukun in May to observe three days of conferencing with the Aurukun Commissioners. During their visit the Commissioners spent time observing conferences and networking in the community, visiting service providers, the Aurukun Shire Council and the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA). As a result of this trip the Mossman Gorge and Aurukun Commissioners shared their perspectives and experience as Commissioners. Each gained a new understanding of the issues affecting the different communities and learnt new strategies in regard to conference procedures and how best to support clients.

The Commission receives school attendance data from the Department of Education and Training (DET) for publication in the Commission's quarterly reports. Increases in school attendance were evident in two of the four communities when comparing term 2, 2010 to term 2, 2011. In Aurukun the overall school attendance increased by 12.4 percentage points from term 2, 2010 (57.7 percent) to term 2, 2011 (70.1 percent). This continues a significant increase since welfare reform began in 2008. In term 2, 2008, school attendance in Aurukun was worse than any other school in Queensland's discrete

Aboriginal communities at 37.9 percent. Since the Commission began its work, attendance has increased 32.2 percentage points.

A breakdown of the school attendance for Aurukun at both the primary and secondary level reveals that attendance for the primary years has increased by 8.5 percentage points from term 2, 2010 (64.7 percent) to term 2, 2011 (73.2 percent) and increased 29.2 percentage points from term 2, 2008 (44.0 percent). Attendance for the secondary years has increased significantly by 18.8 percentage points from term 2, 2010 (32.7 percent) to term 2, 2011 (51.5 percent), and increased 31.7 percentage points from term 2, 2008 (19.8 percent). Hope Vale exemplifies the difficulty of the work the Commission does. Unfortunately, this term the school experienced a decrease in school attendance of 4.9 percentage points since term 2, 2010, from 83.5 percent to 78.6 percent, and 11.3 percentage points since term 1, 2011, down from 89.9 percent. The Commissioners are working very hard with the school to address absences related to various factors including funerals, public holiday periods and sporting events. Coen experienced a decrease of 5.6 percentage points since term 2, 2010 to 86.6 and a decrease of 6.9 percentage points from its very high attendance in term 1, 2011 of 93.5 percent – above the Queensland State school average of 91.0 percent. Mossman Gorge's attendance increased 0.4 percentage points from term 2, 2010 and has increased 18.6 percentage points since 2008.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Quarterly Report on Key Indicators in Queensland's Discrete Indigenous Communities also show some of the successes the Commission is having. In Aurukun, for instance, reported offences against the person decreased from 141.9 per 1000 persons before welfare reform to 89.3 per 1000 persons in 2009-10. This is still high compared to the state-wide rate of 7.0 per 1000 persons, but shows the effects the Commission and other agencies are having on community safety.

The Commission commenced conferencing in quarter 12 in accordance with the scheduled sittings calendar with only minor changes made when required. During the past quarter 442 conferences were held as compared with 358 in quarter 11, and 436 for the same period in 2010. The increase in the number of conferences held this quarter is due to the Commission sitting for three more weeks compared to the previous quarter, which included the end of the summer school holidays during which the Commission does not hold conferences. Over the past quarter 599 agency notifications were received that were within the Commission's jurisdiction; a decrease of 78 from the previous quarter.

The Commission continued to case manage and monitor 184 clients in quarter 12, a reduction of 14 clients from the 198 in quarter 11. Since commencement the Commission has referred 602 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 51 percent of clients on 12 month case plans over the past three years. As the Commission's activities continue, the number of clients suitable for case plans has declined. The Commission has identified an increased need to provide intensive case coordination through the Active Family Pathways (AFP) framework for clients who wish to participate voluntarily. Clients participating in the AFP case coordination continued working towards achieving their goals throughout the quarter. AFP Support Officers assisted this progress by liaising, on behalf of their clients, with organisations and agencies such as the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services), Transition Support Services (TSS) (DET), Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services), Queensland Health, Centrelink, and service providers such as Attendance Case Managers, Family Income Management, Parenting Programs and the Wellbeing Centres to address personal issues. The recruitment of an additional AFP Support Officer position has allowed the Commission to offer the Active Family Pathways program to clients in Hope Vale and Coen for the first time.

The fact that 14 clients have elected to put themselves into this voluntary intensive case management program is very heartening and shows that they recognise the issues in their life and are actively

working to resolve those issues. Community members are becoming similarly active through Voluntary Income Management (VIM), a program which helps people to manage their money and save for education and special occasions. In the life of the Commission, 34 people have signed up to VIM, showing that they have decided to take control of their finances.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has now been formalised between Department of Community Safety (DCS) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) for the future delivery of the Ending Family Violence Program (EFVP). Under the new arrangement DCS will facilitate 14 programs scheduled from July until December 2011 with RFDS providing administrative support.

The much anticipated reinvigoration by Cape York Partnerships of the Parenting Program in Aurukun will become effective from 1 July 2011. The Commission has identified the lack of a fully functioning parenting program in Aurukun as a significant barrier to the case management of clients, especially those dealing with truant and troublesome children. Once the Parenting Program becomes established, we are hopeful statistics on school attendance and violence in Aurukun will improve even further. The Commission is especially proud of its work in coordination and collaboration with agencies on the ground. One incident in Aurukun this quarter shows how effective service providers can be when they work together. Commissioner Koomeeta, along with the Aurukun Local Coordinator, Justice Group, Aurukun Shire Council and Queensland Police met with young people who were engaged in violent and anti-social behaviour and their parents. The consequences of the children's actions were discussed, and the community's expectation of respect for Elders was made clear. The service providers together made follow-up visits to ensure these students were attending school and had modified their behaviour. As a result, the children were back at school and the parents became more aware of and responsible for their children's behaviour.

On 10 May 2011 the Australian Government announced funding support for an extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) trial and the Family Responsibilities Commission beyond its current end date of 1 January 2012, contingent upon the Queensland Government supporting an extension of the trial. On 14 June 2011 the Queensland State Government announced funding support for a possible continuation of the trial until 31 December 2012 subject to consultations with key stakeholders. Minister Pitt stated "The Family Responsibilities Commission has been a shining example of what can be achieved when communities embrace reform with courage and conviction. It links welfare payments to social benchmarks, including school attendance, and its results in getting children to school have been one, big success story". The Commission welcomes the possible extension and congratulates the Commissioners on the achievements to date. Consultations have now taken place between in the welfare reform communities, the outcomes of which will inform the Queensland Government's decision on the extension.

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### Abbreviations

ACMs	Attendance Case Managers
ACMF	Attendance Case Management Framework
AFP	Active Family Pathways
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy
CYDN	Cape York Digital Network
CYP	Cape York Partnerships
CYSS	Cape York Super Sisters
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DCS	Department of Community Safety
DEEDI	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
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
IT	Information Technology
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NPARIH	National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RIS	Child Safety Services Far North Regional Intake Service
TSS	Transition Support Services
VIM	Voluntary Income Management
WBC	Wellbeing Centre
<b>Also:</b>	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 30 June 2011.*

## 1. Context

The Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) trial (the trial) promotes a process of moving people from passive welfare dependence to engagement in the real economy. 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 (including 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 and 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 when 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 submit a School Enrolment Notice 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.

Once an agency notification is 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 as to whether the person should be ordered to attend a conference and if other relevant persons should be invited to attend with the client.

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 operating for a period of three years at the time of this report and during this time has conducted a significant number of conferences with clients following the receipt of 7612 agency notifications within its jurisdiction. Throughout the operation of the trial, Commissioners and staff of the Commission have developed strong working relationships with agencies and community support service providers, both in the communities and regionally, and continue to build upon these associations.

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 Commission has in the past identified the high turnover of staff among external service providers, lack of appropriately qualified staff to deal with personal issues and gender and cultural diversity amongst staff as a barrier to the continuity of service to our clients. Service providers have attempted to rectify staffing difficulties and a number of staff have been recruited in various capacities. The provision of services to cater for families requiring support for children who exhibit behavioural, social and mental health issues, in addition to suicide awareness and education for children and families, remains an outstanding concern for the case management of clients and the communities in general.

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 continues to provide presentations and briefs to new and existing service provider staff in the communities and remains flexible and understanding of the limitations of organisations, especially in regard 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 which 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 by providing training to new service provider staff on the quality of information provided in the monthly progress reports, and conducting information sessions and updates in the communities.

As a result of the progress reports received, a client's case plan is assessed to establish if 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, 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. This process is essential to ensure that clients are also treated in a fair and just manner.

A total of 121 referrals to community support services were made in quarter 12 relating to 64 individuals. As at 30 June 2011 the Commission was case managing 184 clients. This compares to 198 clients case managed in quarter 11. Over the past three years the Commission has seen some clients continue to reappear at conference, 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 CIM orders, contributing to the decrease in client case plan numbers.

The Commission continues to assist those clients not progressing with service providers (or within the expectations of the Commissioners) 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, and encourages clients to identify strategies to restore their primary responsibility for improvement in their lives and that of their families. The fact that 14 clients have elected to put themselves into this intensive case management program is very heartening and shows that they recognise the issues in their life and are actively resolving those issues.

Queensland Corrective Services, within the Department of Community Safety (DCS), continued to deliver the EFVP in Aurukun, Coen and Mossman Gorge, conducting a total of four programs in quarter 12. Two programs were held in Aurukun and one each in Coen and Mossman Gorge. The programs scheduled for Hope Vale were cancelled due to logistical issues. 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 Commission 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. The clients unable to attend the EFVP in quarter 12 will be scheduled to attend as spaces become available in quarter 13. For quarter 12, 16 new clients were referred to the program. Unfortunately operational difficulties resulted in the cancellation of four programs in the quarter 12 period. The Commission is hopeful DCS will regain the momentum of program delivery to meet the demands of the four communities in the next quarter.

In February 2011 the Commission aided in securing a 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. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has now been formalised between DCS and the RFDS for the future delivery of the EFV program. Under the new arrangement the DCS will continue to deliver 14 programs scheduled from July until December 2011 with administrative support provided by the RFDS.

The absence of a functioning Council Parenting Program in Aurukun has continued through quarter 12. Community members and Commission clients who are in need of substantial parenting counselling/training are unable to receive assistance. The Commission has previously identified the lack of a fully functioning Parenting Program in Aurukun as a significant barrier to the case management of clients. This has been particularly problematic for those clients attempting to deal with truant and troublesome children. A number of our clients have obligations to complete



Parenting Programs and the Commission cannot provide reviews of clients on Income Management orders, or enact Show Cause notices if clients are unable to comply with case plans due to the lack of a service provider. The Commission looks forward to the establishment in Aurukun of a serviceable Parenting Program by Cape York Partnerships in quarter 13. Once the Parenting Program becomes established, we are hopeful statistics on school attendance and violence in Aurukun will improve even further.

### 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 April 2011 to 30 June 2011 totalled \$0.480M. This income consisted of:
  - \$0.395M reimbursement of costs associated with the client database and information technology infrastructure changes. This was received from Queensland Government funding.
  - \$0.056M reimbursement of costs associated with the upgrade of the server hardware and software. This was received from Queensland Government funding.
  - \$0.023M received in interest.
  - \$0.006M received from sundry revenue.

The Commission anticipates receiving \$0.134M in additional funds for the extra conference sittings held in Aurukun during November and December 2010.

The balance of available funds in the bank, after expenses, as at 30 June 2011 is \$0.973M plus \$0.451M in debtors, which was receipted in the first week of July 2011. The total includes funding released for the twelve months to 30 June 2011 and the 2009-10 surplus funds.

#### Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011 was \$1.452M (Table 1). This total represents 34.7 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, 100 percent of total expenditure in quarter 12 is represented by the following:

Salaries and recruitment	34.7	percent
IT costs	17.8	percent
Operating costs	13.9	percent
Depreciation and amortisation	11.6	percent
Property costs	6.4	percent
Local Commissioner fees	5.1	percent
Airfares and accommodation	4.9	percent
External audit	2.4	percent
Vehicle costs	1.8	percent
Telecommunications	1.4	percent

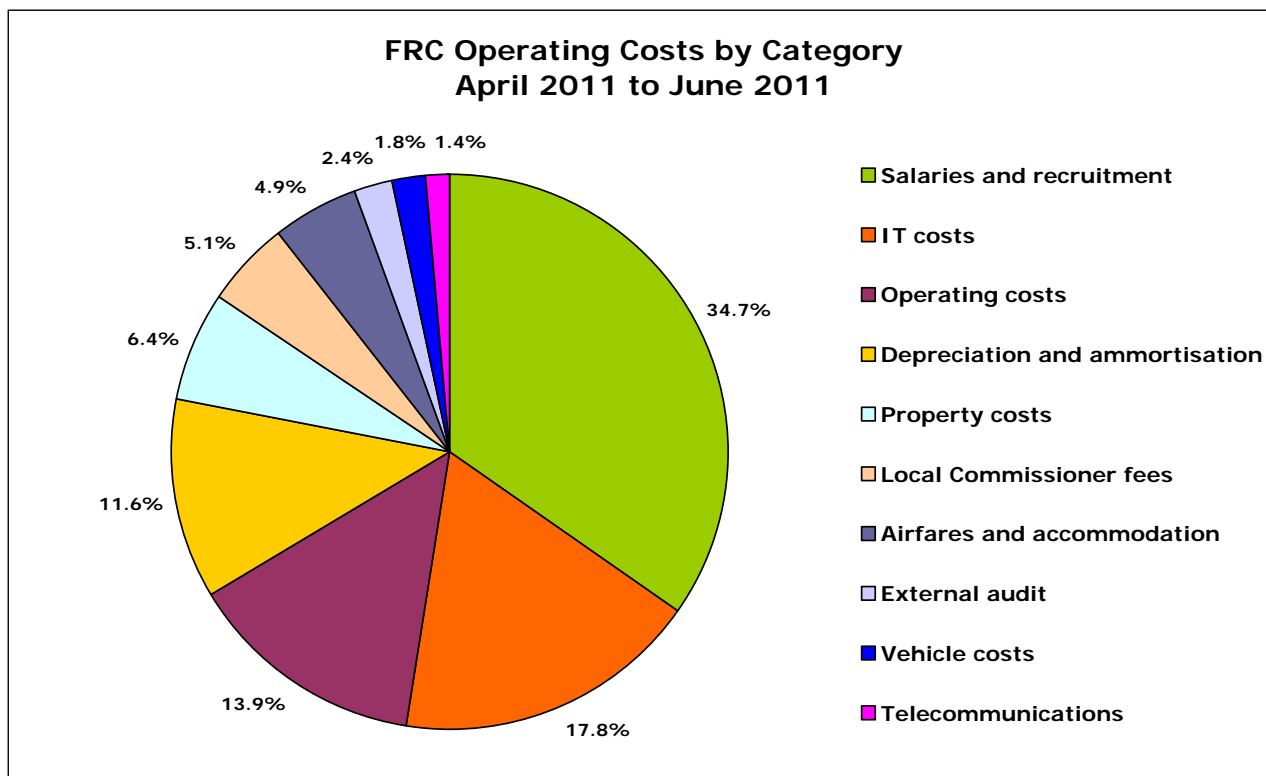
Expenditure variances from quarter 11 to quarter 12 are attributed to:

- **Salaries and recruitment** - salaries and on costs decreased by \$60K due to:
  - Decrease - the accounting adjustment of \$144K to the correct account code.
  - Increase – fringe benefits tax \$27K.
  - Increase – two Active Family Pathways (AFP) fulltime staff employed in April.
- **IT Costs** – information technology (IT) costs increased by \$168K.
  - The delayed invoicing from the Commission’s IT providers; the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA), Cape York Digital Network (CYDN) and Centre for Information Technology and Electronic Communication (CITEC) for services.
  - Upgrade of the Commission’s server \$56K.
  - An accounting adjustment of \$38K to the correct IT account code.
- **Operating costs** – operating costs increased by \$171K due to:
  - Increase – the accounting adjustment of \$140K.
  - Increase – delayed invoicing by supplier \$16K.
  - Increase – legal expenses \$7K.
  - Increase – purchase minor assets that are expensed immediately \$5K.
  - Increase – publication printing \$3K
- **Depreciation and amortisation** – for the year 2010-11 the depreciation on plant and equipment is \$12K and the amortisation on computer software is \$157K.
- **Property costs** – property costs increased by \$59K.
  - The delayed invoicing from the Commission’s property lease agents.
  - The construction of a carport and donga shelter at Mossman Gorge to address ongoing leaks and insufficient drainage.
  - The maintenance of the staff accommodation at Aurukun.
- **Local Commissioner fees** – increased by \$34K due to the increase in the number of conferences. This increase reflects a return to normal conferencing levels after the Christmas, New Year period.
- **Airfares and accommodation** – staff related travel and accommodation increased by \$24K. This increase reflects a return to normal conferencing levels after the Christmas, New Year period.
- **External audit** - the external audit fee for 2010-11 is \$35K.
- **Vehicle costs** – there was a minimal decrease of \$2K during the quarter.
- **Telecommunications** – there was a minimal increase of \$4K during the quarter.
- **Consultants** – decreased by \$48K which reflects the accounting adjustment of \$10K to the correct account code and there were no consultancy costs incurred in quarter 12.

Expenditure 1 April 2011 to 1 June 2011	Total Expenditure Qtr 11	Total Expenditure Qtr 12	Total Expenditure Variance Qtr 11 to Qtr 12
Salaries and recruitment	\$564,012.34	\$504,306.70	-\$59,705.64
Consultants	\$37,169.88	-\$10,858.00	-\$48,027.88
Vehicle costs	\$27,826.82	\$25,883.48	-\$1,943.34
Telecommunications	\$17,006.47	\$20,656.90	\$3,650.43
Airfares and accommodation	\$46,244.20	\$70,441.56	\$24,197.36
Local Commissioner fees	\$40,040.05	\$73,759.42	\$33,719.37
External audit	\$0.00	\$35,015.45	\$35,015.45
Property costs	\$33,876.41	\$92,986.69	\$59,110.28
IT costs	\$90,546.77	\$258,096.58	\$167,549.81
Depreciation and amortisation	\$0.00	\$168,978.37	\$168,978.37
Operating costs	\$40,937.08	\$212,833.43	\$171,896.35
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$897,660.02</b>	<b>\$1,452,100.58</b>	<b>\$554,440.56</b>

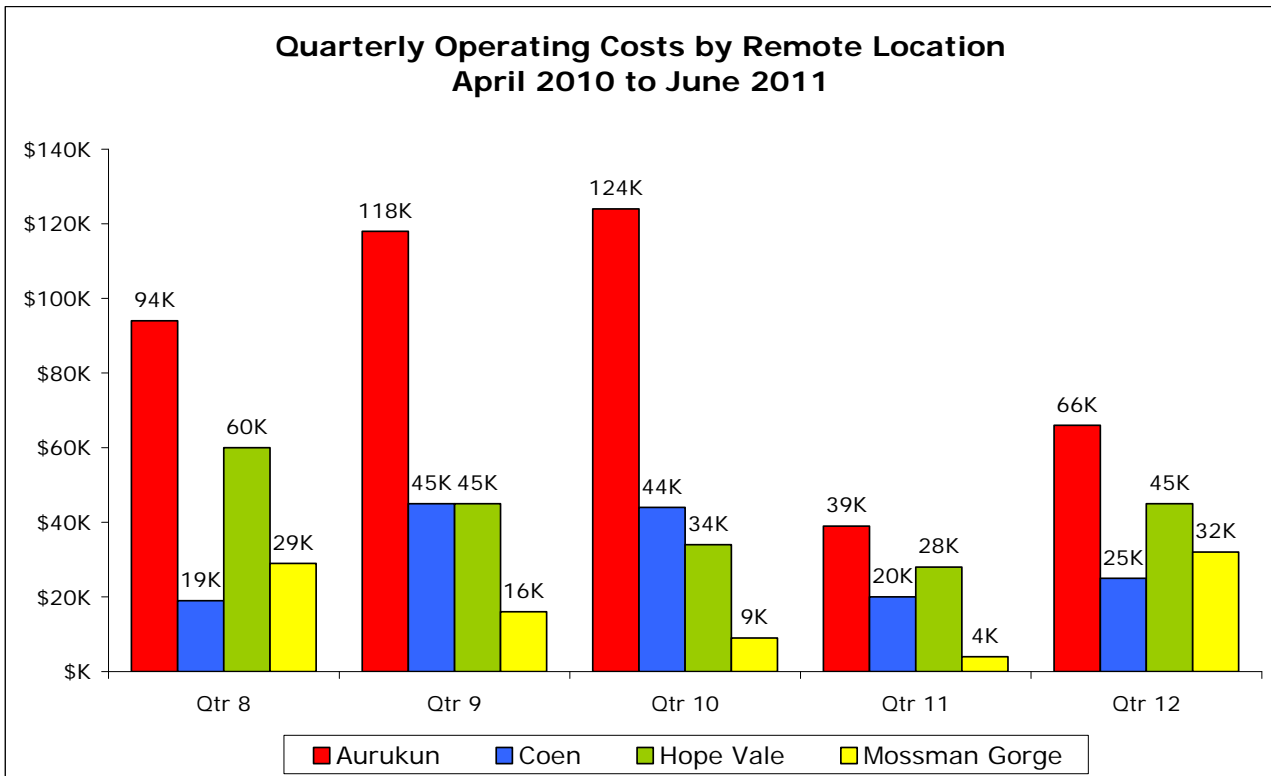
**Table 1:** Unaudited quarterly expenditure and variance for quarter 11 and quarter 12.

The Commission's total quarter 12 operating costs by categories and by percentage of total expenditure are represented in Graph 1 below.



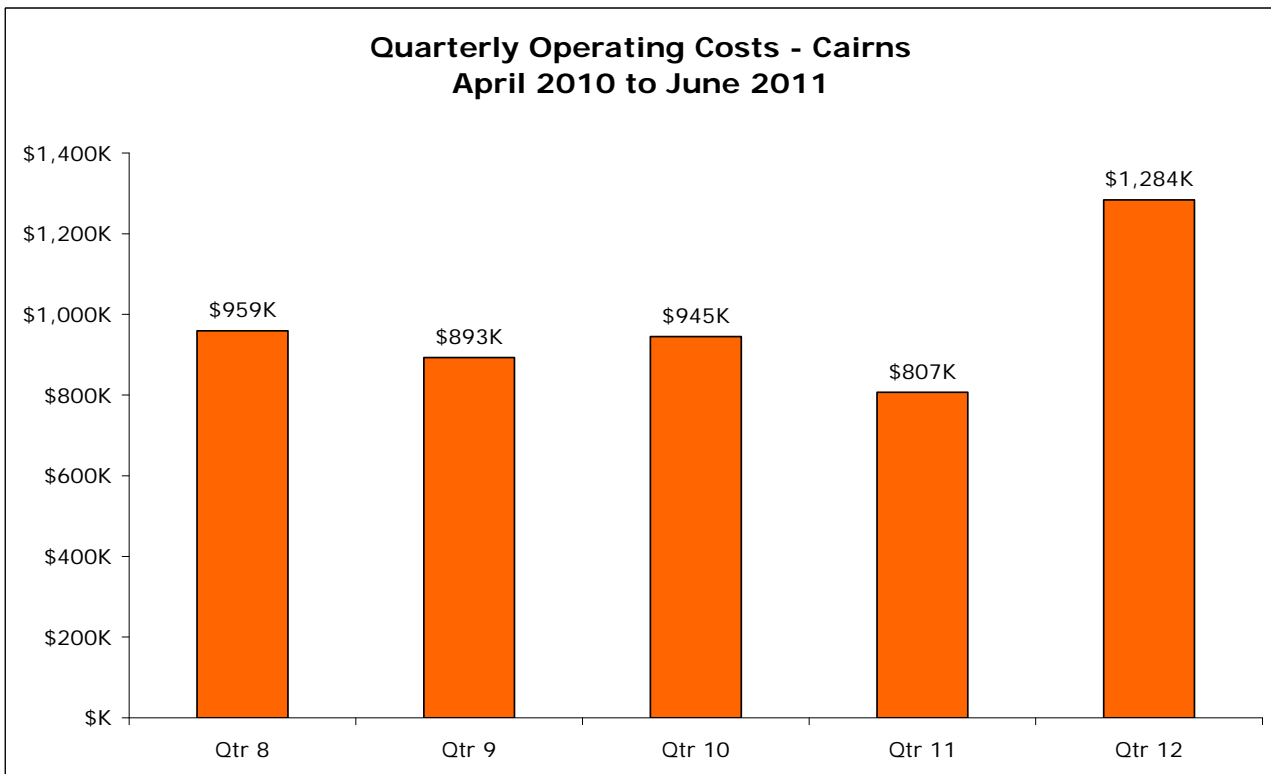
**Graph 1:** Total FRC Operating costs 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011

Regional operational expenditure is categorised below (Graph 2) by location and quarter. These figures exclude Local Coordinators' salary costs, which are incorporated in the Commission's global operating costs. These figures include the Local Commissioners' fees for the June 2011 quarter, totalling \$74K. The increase in costs reflects a return to normal conferencing levels after the Christmas, New Year period.



**Graph 2:** Operating costs by remote location 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011

The Cairns office corporate services and operational costs for quarter 12 compared to the previous five quarters.



**Graph 3:** Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011

## 4. Activities / Achievements

### Intake and Assessment Phase

In quarter 12 the Commission received 925 agency notifications, some of which related to more than one person. Of that figure 599 notifications (65 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 326 notifications (35 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

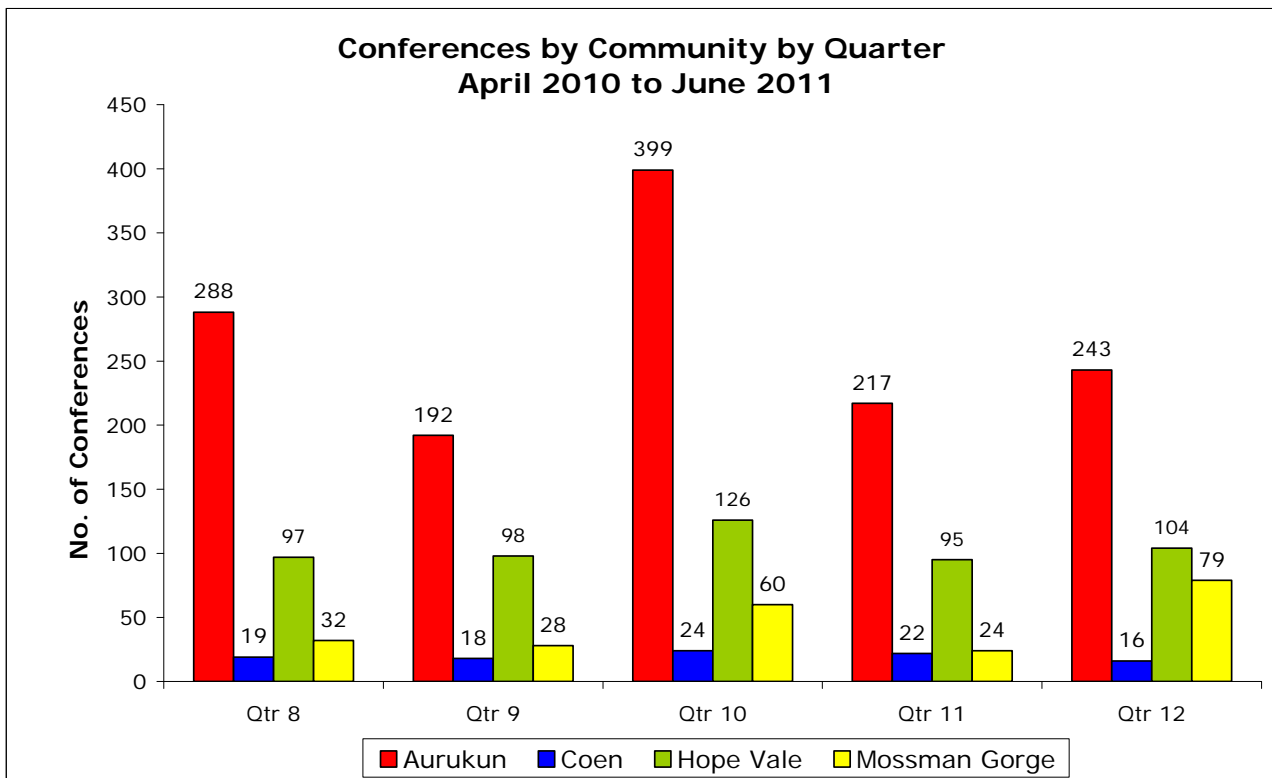
During the intake phase notifications are assessed to establish whether the person/s notified are within the jurisdiction of the Commission in accordance with the Act. Section 49 of the Act provides that the Commission can deal with an agency notification relating to a community member. Section 7 of 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 12 a total of 442 conferences were held compared with 358 in quarter 11. Quarter 12 conferences resulted in 19 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 47 orders made to attend community support services and 47 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 Mossman Gorge. One conference was cancelled in Coen and one in Hope Vale 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 all communities. The Commission has also secured Commissioner Curtin's services during Commissioner Glasgow's absence on annual leave. 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. Aurukun conferences accounted for 55 percent of the total number of conferences held, reflecting the higher number of notifications attributed to the Aurukun community of 52.5 percent of all notifications within jurisdiction.



**Graph 4:** Conferences by community and quarter, 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

## Case Management

As at 30 June 2011, 184 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 121 referrals relating to 64 clients during quarter 12, the majority of which were referrals to the Wellbeing Centre. Since commencement the Commission has referred 602 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 51 percent of clients on 12 month case plans over the past three years. As the Commission's activities continue the number of clients suitable for case plans has declined. However, the Commission has identified an increased need to provide intensive case coordination through the Active Family Pathways framework for clients who wish to participate voluntarily.

In addition to conference sittings the Commission assists clients in navigating 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 enhances community relationships. In an effort to ensure children remain in the education system the Commission has continued to develop and consolidate its relationships with Transition Support Services (TSS), Department Education and Training (DET), Centrelink and parents

The Active Family Pathways (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 service providers and agencies such as the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services), TSS (DET), Department of

Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services), Queensland Health, Centrelink, and service providers such as Attendance Case Managers, Family Income Management, Parenting Programs and the Wellbeing Centres to address barriers that the clients have identified. A number of clients have requested extension of the AFP to address new barriers or goals that have arisen as others have been resolved. In general, AFP clients are identifying realistic and achievable outcomes and are keen to engage with service providers. Aurukun AFP clients have experienced difficulty progressing in their case plans and AFP goals due to the lack of consistent and functioning service providers. The Commission has consulted with Cape York Partnerships (CYP) and Cape York Institute (CYI), and during the last nine months has worked closely with the Department of Communities to encourage the contract implementation of the CYP Parenting Program which will occur on 1 July 2011. The Commission will continue to draw on the services of CYP to ensure budgeting and savings assistance will be maintained for Commission clients. The Commission continues to encourage the Well Being Centre (WBC) to provide services relevant and appropriate for client needs. As at 30 June 2011 the AFP had 14 active clients.

Referral Type	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	Qtr 10	Qtr 11	Qtr 12	TOTAL
FIM	21	10	29	8	30	98
WBC	25	21	31	12	37	126
ACM	5	1	5	0	5	16
Parenting Program	4	5	18	10	23	60
EFVP	23	31	39	17	16	126
Active Family Pathways	0	0	5	0	10	15
Other	5	8	2	1	0	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>457</b>

**Table 2:** Referral services by quarter as at 30 June 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 in a quality assurance process before submission to the Commission.

It should be noted that the number of clients case managed (184) 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 12, one Show Cause hearing was held in Aurukun which resulted in no further action.

With fewer clients subject to case plans, the number of clients available for Show Cause investigations remains low. During this quarter the Commission reviewed a large number of client records and was unable to initiate show cause proceedings on most clients. Many of the clients were already on Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders and only in exceptional cases will the Commission initiate Show Cause proceedings on a client already subject to a CIM order. The Commission continues to experience difficulties with consistent and accurate monthly reporting from some service providers, inhibiting the Commission's ability to bring clients back to conference under the Show Cause provisions of the Act. The Commission cannot show cause clients who have been



unable to engage with a referred service provider, due to the inability of the service provider to provide services to our clients.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Qtr 8</b>	<b>Qtr 9</b>	<b>Qtr 10</b>	<b>Qtr 11</b>	<b>Qtr 12</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Aurukun</b>	15	4	12	13	1	<b>45</b>
<b>Coen</b>	2	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Hope Vale</b>	3	4	3	1	0	<b>11</b>
<b>Mossman Gorge</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>59</b>

**Table 3:** Show Cause Notices by quarter as at 30 June 2011.

Twenty-four applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received in quarter 12 (Table 4). The Commission encourages clients to lodge applications where their circumstances may have altered 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 24 applications received are as follows:

- 7 CIM orders revoked
- 6 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decision pending with conferences scheduled for July 2011
- 6 Applications dismissed
- 4 Applications pending client completing actions directed by the Commission
- 1 CIM percentage reduced from 75 percent to 60 percent.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Qtr 8</b>	<b>Qtr 9</b>	<b>Qtr 10</b>	<b>Qtr 11</b>	<b>Qtr 12</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Aurukun</b>	6	8	2	9	7	<b>32</b>
<b>Coen</b>	1	1	0	2	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Hope Vale</b>	11	4	11	7	11	<b>44</b>
<b>Mossman Gorge</b>	4	3	0	5	6	<b>18</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>98</b>

**Table 4:** Amend or End Applications Order by quarter as at 30 June 2011.

### **Conditional Income Management**

Forty-seven Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter 12. Since the commencement of the Commission 544 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, 81 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 544 CIM orders being made relating to 370 clients. As at 30 June 2011, 31 percent of the Commission's clients were subject to a CIM order. The 544 CIM orders include original orders, extensions and amendments.

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 receiving income support payments at the time the order is made. These clients may be working or choosing not to receive income support payments. The order remains current for 12 months and will be invoked 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 request extensions of the CIM order or a decrease of the percentage managed from 75 to 60 percent to ensure stability in their finances is maintained.

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, 34 clients and community members have successfully applied for VIM. By joining VIM, our clients are showing that they are changing the way they think about money and becoming more responsible with their spending.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Qtr 8</b>	<b>Qtr 9</b>	<b>Qtr 10</b>	<b>Qtr 11</b>	<b>Qtr 12</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Aurukun</b>	46	27	59	18	27	<b>177</b>
<b>Coen</b>	2	2	4	1	0	<b>9</b>
<b>Hope Vale</b>	15	15	17	14	10	<b>71</b>
<b>Mossman Gorge</b>	5	5	8	6	10	<b>34</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>291</b>

**Table 5:** Quarterly Conditionally Income Managed orders as at 30 June 2011.

## Notifications

For the period 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011 the Commission received a total of **925** agency notifications<sup>1</sup> of which 599, or 65 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Of the 599 notifications that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, they comprised of:

- 347 School Attendance notifications
- 185 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 61 Child Safety notifications
- 6 Housing Tenancy notifications

Of the 326, or 35 percent, not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 294 Magistrates Courts notifications, 27 School Attendance notifications and 5 Child Safety notifications.

Details for each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun's 314** notifications comprise **52.5 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:

- 196 School Attendance notifications
- 82 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 36 Child Safety notifications

28 Magistrates Courts notifications, 10 School Attendance notifications and 2 Child Safety notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**243 conferences** were held in Aurukun in quarter 12<sup>2</sup>.

- **Coen's 24** notifications comprise **4 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 9 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 8 Child Safety notifications
- 7 School Attendance notifications

6 Magistrates Courts notifications, 5 School Attendance notifications and 1 Child Safety notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**16 conferences** were held in Coen quarter 12<sup>3</sup>.

- **Hope Vale's 205** notifications comprise **34.2 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:

- 127 School Attendance notifications
- 63 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 13 Child Safety notifications
- 2 Housing Tenancy notifications

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

20 Magistrates Courts notifications, 12 School Attendance notifications and 2 Child Safety notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**104 conferences** were held in Hope Vale in quarter 12<sup>4</sup>.

- **Mossman Gorge's 56** notifications comprise **9.3 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
  - 31 Magistrates Courts notifications
  - 17 School Attendance notifications
  - 4 Child Safety notifications
  - 4 Housing Tenancy notifications

240 Magistrates Courts notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**79 conferences** were held in Mossman Gorge in quarter 12<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## 5. Data Summary and Trends

Total notifications increased from 830 in quarter 11 to 925 in quarter 12. Magistrates Courts and Housing Tenancy notifications decreased while School Attendance and Child Safety notifications increased.

Housing Tenancy notifications decreased from eight in quarter 11 to six in quarter 12. Aurukun recorded a decrease from eight notifications in quarter 11 to zero in quarter 12, whilst Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge recorded minor fluctuations with an increase of two notifications and four notifications respectively. The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) has advised the Commission that the engagement of a case management approach with tenants has reduced the number of notifications to the Commission.

The Commission receives school attendance data from the Department of Education and Training (DET) for publication in the Commission's quarterly reports. Increases in school attendance were evident in two of the four communities when comparing term 2, 2010 to term 2, 2011. In Aurukun the overall school attendance increased by 12.4 percentage points from term 2, 2010 (57.7 percent) to term 2, 2011 (70.1 percent). This continues a significant increase since welfare reform began in 2008. In term 2, 2008, school attendance in Aurukun was worse than any other school in Queensland's discrete Aboriginal communities at 37.9 percent. Since the Commission began its work, attendance has increased 32.2 percentage points.

A breakdown of the term 2, 2011 school attendance for Aurukun at both the primary and secondary level reveals that attendance for the primary years has increased by 8.5 percentage points from term 2, 2010 (64.7 percent) to term 2, 2011 (73.2 percent) and increased 29.2 percentage points from term 2, 2008 (44.0 percent). Attendance for the secondary years has increased significantly by 18.8 percentage points from term 2, 2010 (32.7 percent) to term 2, 2011 (51.5 percent), and increased 31.7 percentage points from term 2, 2008 (19.8 percent). Hope Vale exemplifies the difficulty of the work the Commission does. Unfortunately, this term the school experienced a decrease in school attendance of 4.9 percentage points since term 2, 2010, from 83.5 percent to 78.6 percent, and 11.3 percentage points since term 1, 2011, down from 89.9 percent. The Local Commissioners are working very hard with the school to address absences related to various factors including funerals, return from public holiday periods and sporting events. Coen experienced a decrease of 5.6 percentage points since term 2, 2010 to 86.6 and a decrease of 6.9 percentage points from its very high attendance in term 1, 2011 of 93.5 percent – above the Queensland State school average of 91.0 percent. Mossman Gorge's attendance increased 0.4 percentage points from term 2, 2010 and has increased 18.6 percentage points since 2008.

Caution should be used when examining the percentage changes in attendance for both Coen and Mossman Gorge 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 in record keeping practices over time may impact on the ability to compare school attendance across years. The Commission notes secondary school students are not currently case managed as part of the Attendance Case Management Framework (ACMF) but are included in the Education Queensland attendance statistics.

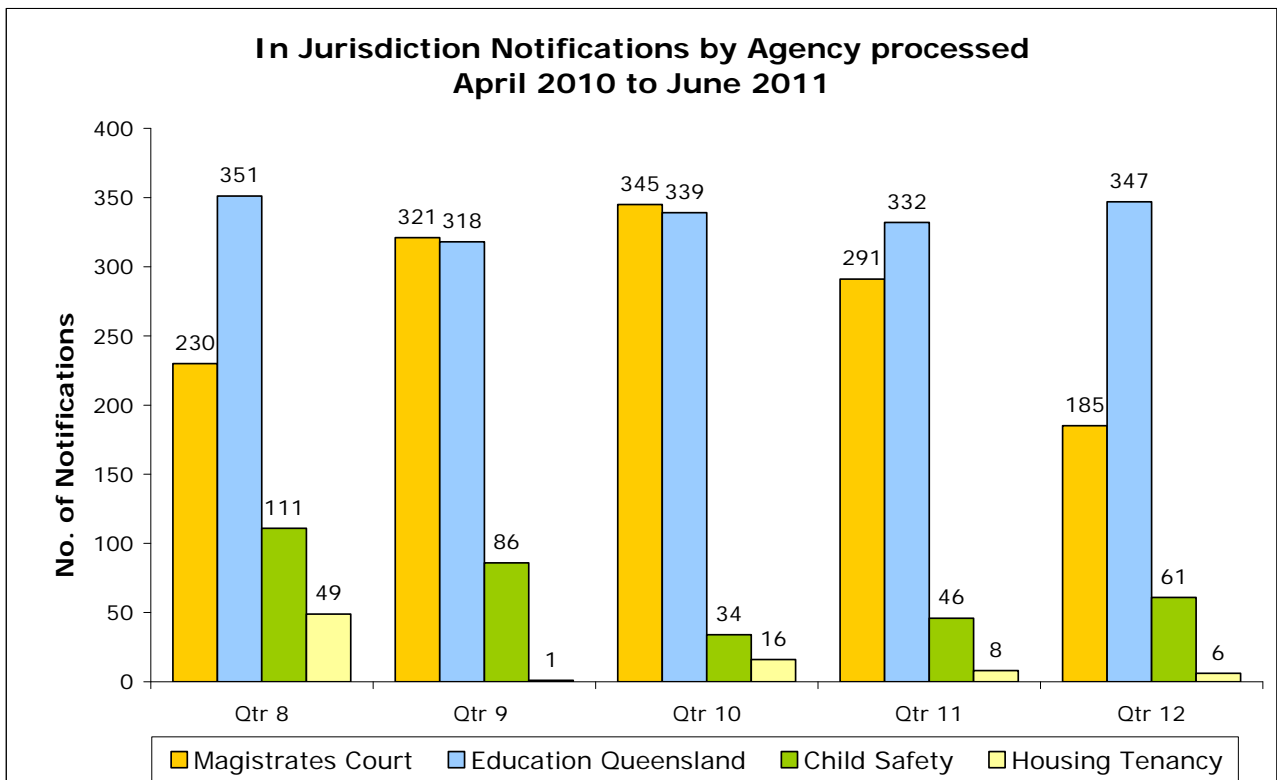
School Attendance notifications increased from 332 in quarter 11 to 347 in quarter 12. Aurukun experienced a decrease of 39 notifications, from 235 in quarter 11 to 196 in quarter 12, whilst Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge experienced an increase of 45 notifications, four notifications and five notifications respectively for the quarter. The Attendance Case Managers reported that the

Hope Vale campus of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy experienced an increase in school attendance absences following the first State of Origin rugby league match on 25 May 2011. The Hope Vale Commissioners and Queensland Police met to address community fighting and bullying and discuss strategies for reducing potential issues that may occur after the next State of Origin rugby league match. Following this meeting the school Attendance Case Managers reiterated to the students the importance of attending school even after major sporting events, and Queensland Police advised of their support to ensure families and children enjoy a restful night at the next State of Origin match. The Hope Vale Commissioners along with Commissioner Curtin met with the Principal of Cooktown State School to discuss the reporting of non-attendance to the Commission regarding Hope Vale students.

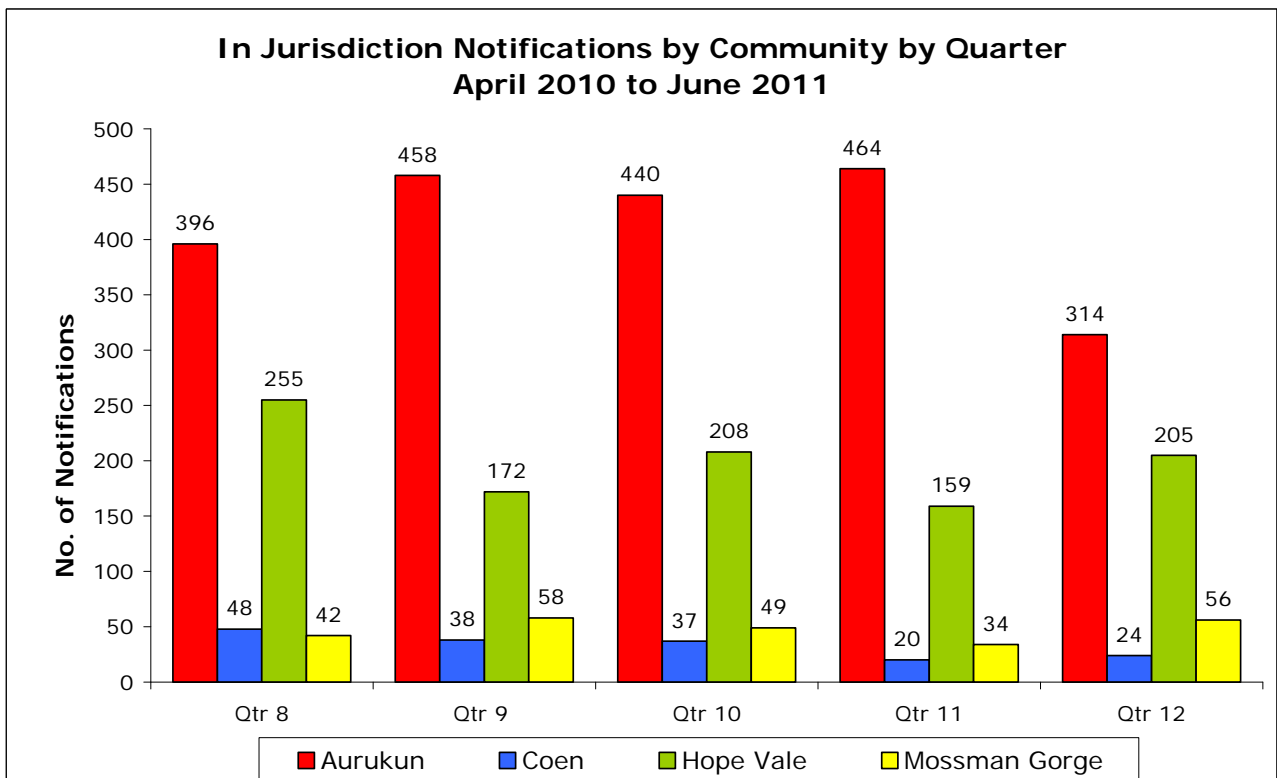
Child Safety notifications increased from 46 in quarter 11 to 61 in quarter 12. Aurukun recorded the majority of the increase with 15 notifications, whilst Coen and Mossman Gorge increased by six and three notifications and Hope Vale decreased by nine notifications. A sustained, full staffing complement in the Welfare Reform communities, including the four Child Safety Officer Family Responsibilities Commission positions, has contributed to greater completion on a number of outstanding Child Safety matters, and hence an increase in notifications to the Commission for the quarter. The Commission continues to work closely with Child Safety Services to initiate early intervention and assist parents to take the necessary actions required to prevent an escalation of a situation and thus avoid the removal of children from their care. 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.

Magistrates Courts notifications decreased this quarter to 185 from the 291 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun and Coen decreased by 118 notifications and six notifications respectively, whilst Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased by eight notifications and ten notifications respectively. In commenting on the reduction in Magistrates Court notifications, the Queensland Police Service (QPS) notes a corresponding reduction in the prosecution of certain categories of offences. For example, for Aurukun, good order offences and domestic violence notifications and offences have trended generally downwards in the last year. It would appear there is some link between prosecutions and notifications and the reduction in prosecutions has contributed to some extent to the reduced notifications. These results give cause for optimism and suggest various initiatives and activities are beginning to have an effect on harmful behaviours. The QPS actively promote positive social gatherings and a reduction in alcohol consumption associated with events such as the State of Origin matches. They have also actively sought to provide mediation to address the issues which underpin the regular violent disturbances which have plagued some of the communities. The QPS employ a senior staff member in the position of Cultural Liaison Officer who provides as part of his responsibilities a mediation service to individuals and groups within the communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Quarterly Report on Key Indicators in Queensland's Discrete Indigenous Communities also show some of the successes the Commission is having. In Aurukun, for instance, reported offences against the person decreased from 141.9 per 1000 persons before welfare reform to 89.3 per 1000 persons in 2009-10. This is still high compared to the state-wide rate of 7.0 per 1000 persons, but shows the effects the Commission and other agencies are having on community safety.



**Graph 5:** Notices by agency processed 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

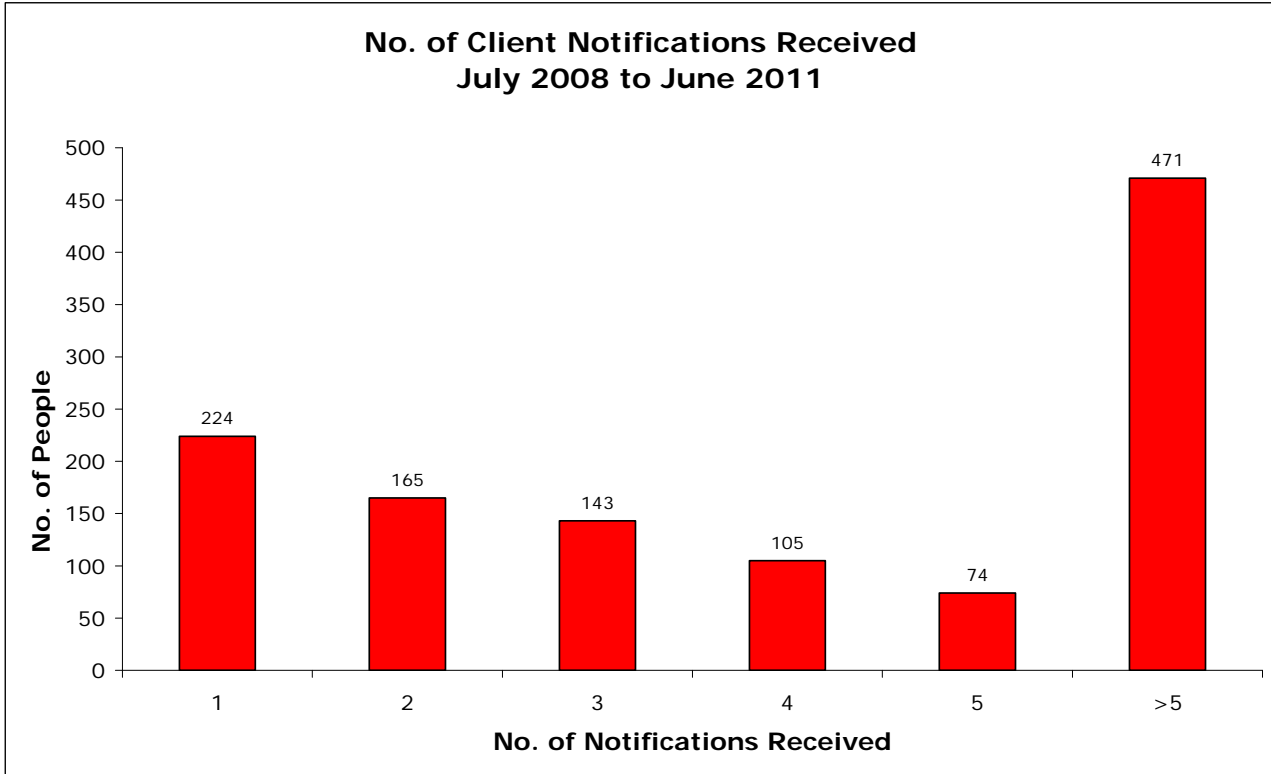


**Graph 6:** Notifications by community and quarter 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

The Commission held 442 conferences across the four communities in quarter 12, an increase from 358 conferences held in quarter 11. For the same period in 2010 436 conferences were held. The increase in the number of conferences held this quarter is due to the Commission sitting for three more weeks compared to the previous quarter, which included the end of the summer school holidays. Mossman Gorge experienced the most significant increase in conference numbers from 24 in quarter 11 to 79 in quarter 12. Aurukun and Hope Vale also experienced increases in conference

numbers for quarter 12 of 26 and nine respectively. Coen decreased from 22 conferences in quarter 11 to 16 in quarter 12.

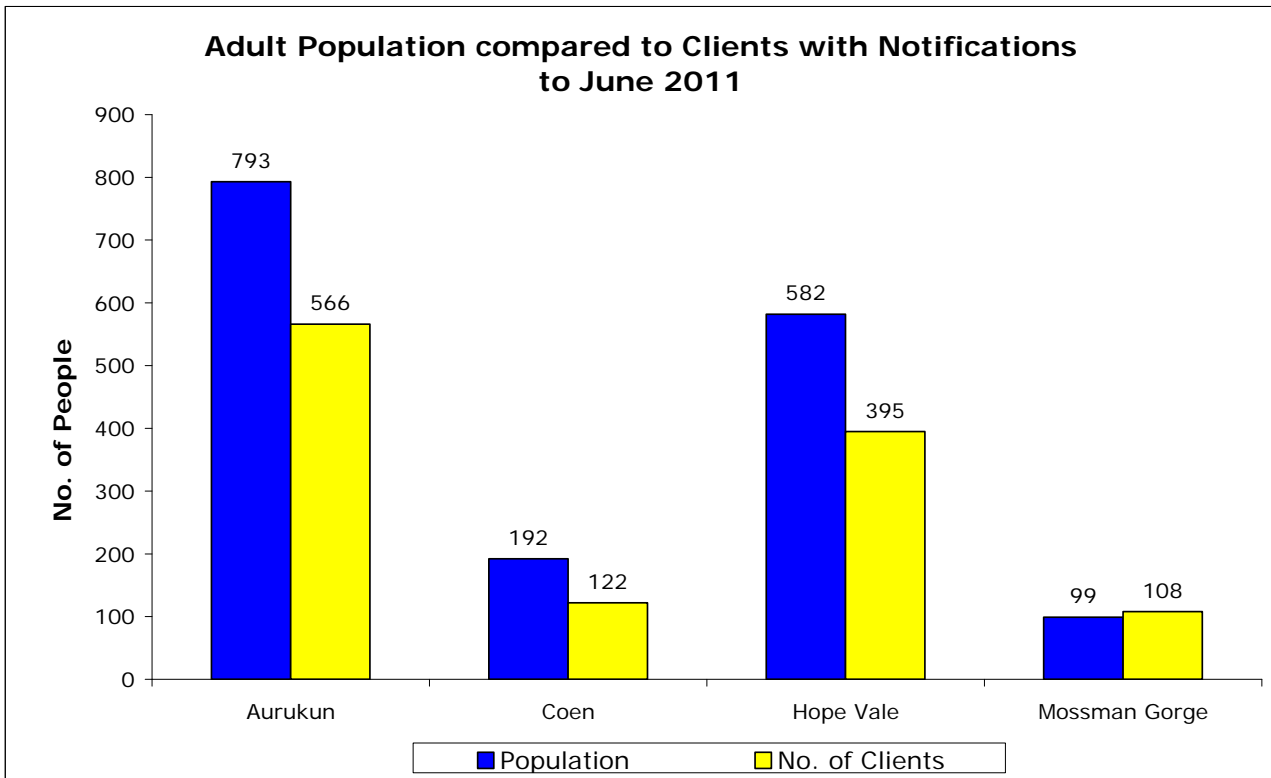
Forty percent of clients have received more than five notifications since 1 July 2008. In many instances this illustrates multiple child absences for the one family or multiple Magistrates Courts notifications relating to one incident. To date, 19 percent of clients have received only one notification. The Commission conferenced 22 new clients this quarter.



**Graph 7:** Clients by number of notifications 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2011.

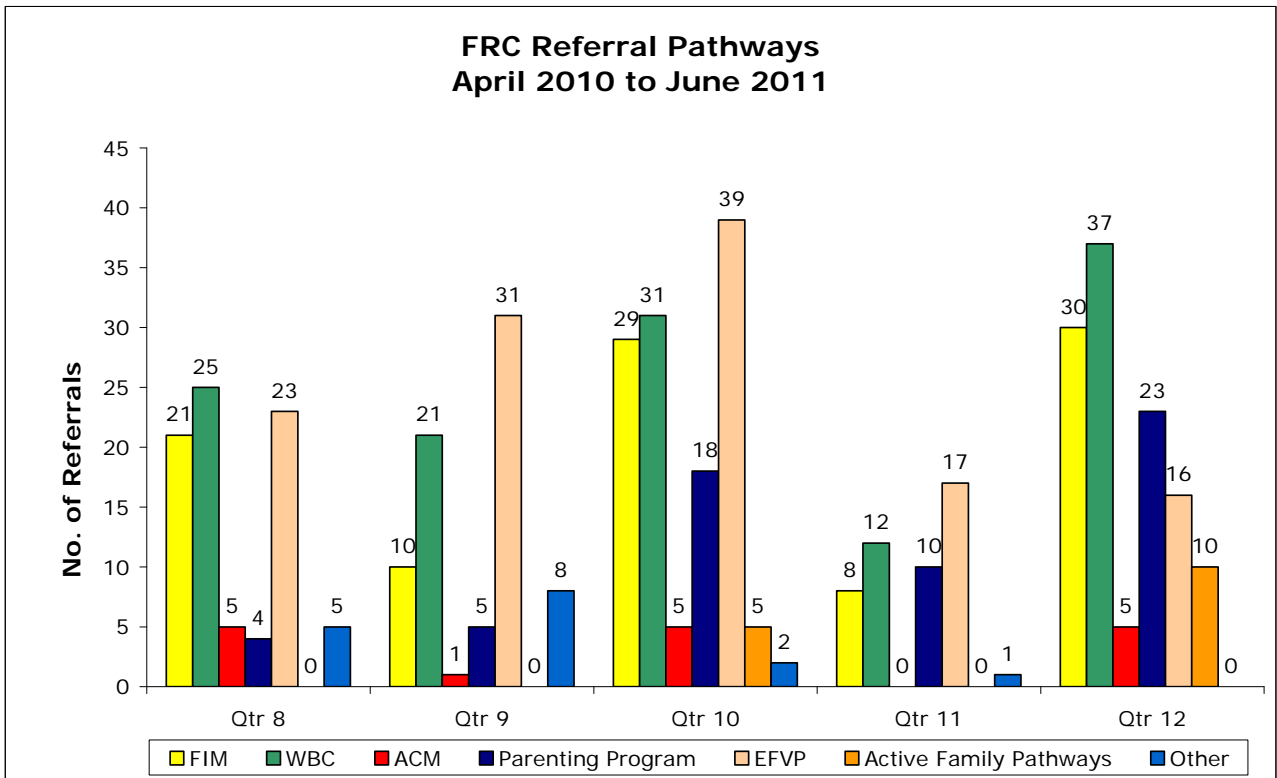
(Note: Counting rules stipulate that where multiple charges are received each charge is counted as an individual notification or each child's absence is counted as one notification – i.e. if three children from the one family were absent, that was counted as three notifications).





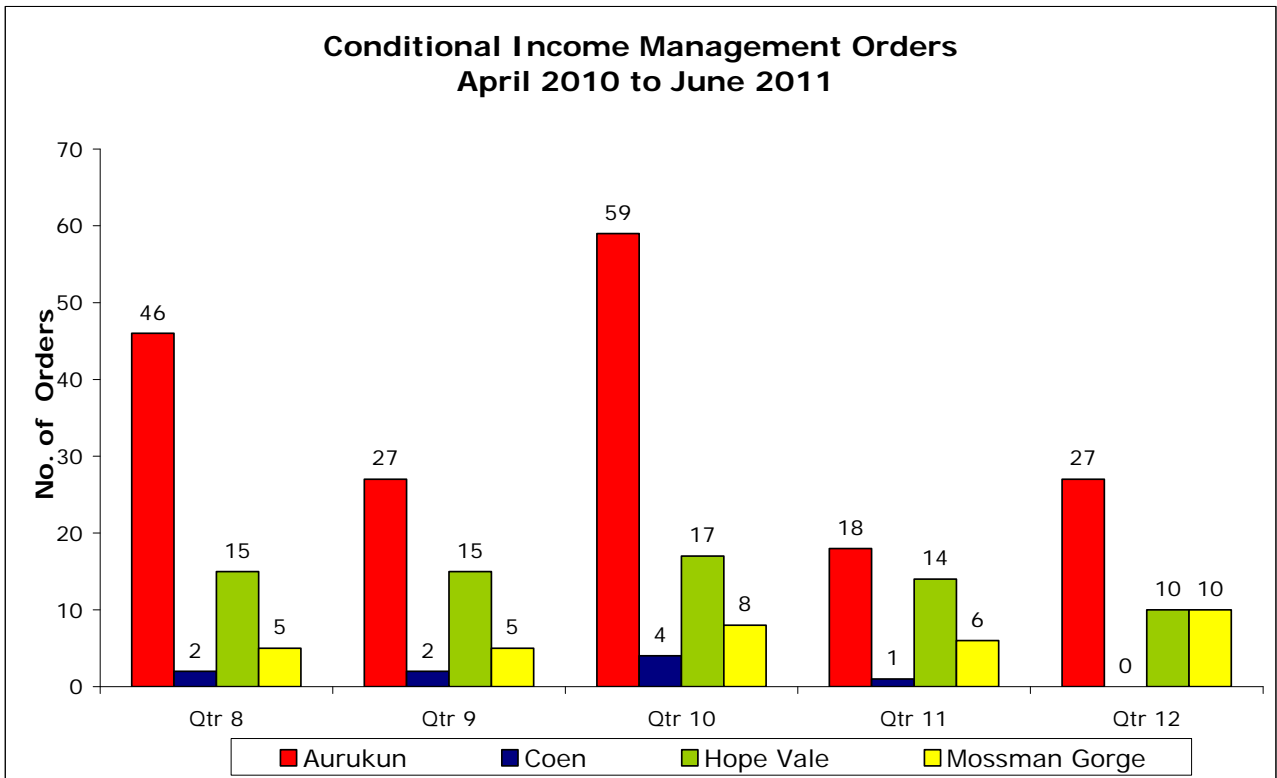
**Graph 8:** Number of clients who have received notifications up until 30 June 2011 in comparison to population figures of adults (17 years and over) provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP Figures. NOTE: Mossman Gorge is a community which has a highly transient population with family members 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 increased from 48 in quarter 11 to 121 in quarter 12 with Aurukun recording the majority of the increase. Aurukun referrals increased from 23 in quarter 11 to 79 in quarter 12. 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 602 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 51 percent of clients on 12 month case plans. Recent statistics have revealed that the number of clients on case plans has declined. 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 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 attend by agreement. The Commission currently has a total of 14 clients managed under the Active Family Pathways framework.



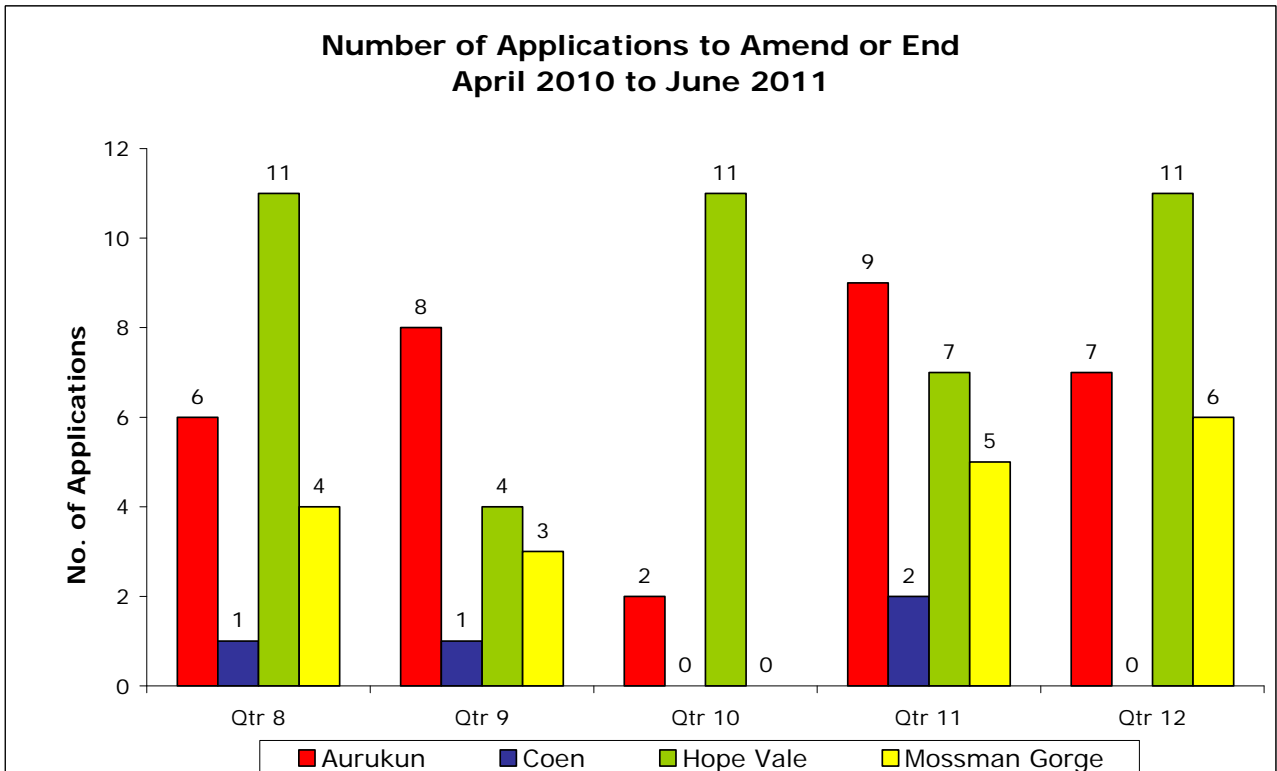
**Graph 9:** Referral Pathways 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

Conditional Income Management (CIM) Orders increased from 39 in quarter 11 to 47 in quarter 12. In Aurukun and Mossman Gorge the number of CIM Orders increased, Coen remained constant, and Hope Vale decreased in the number of CIM orders made. 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.



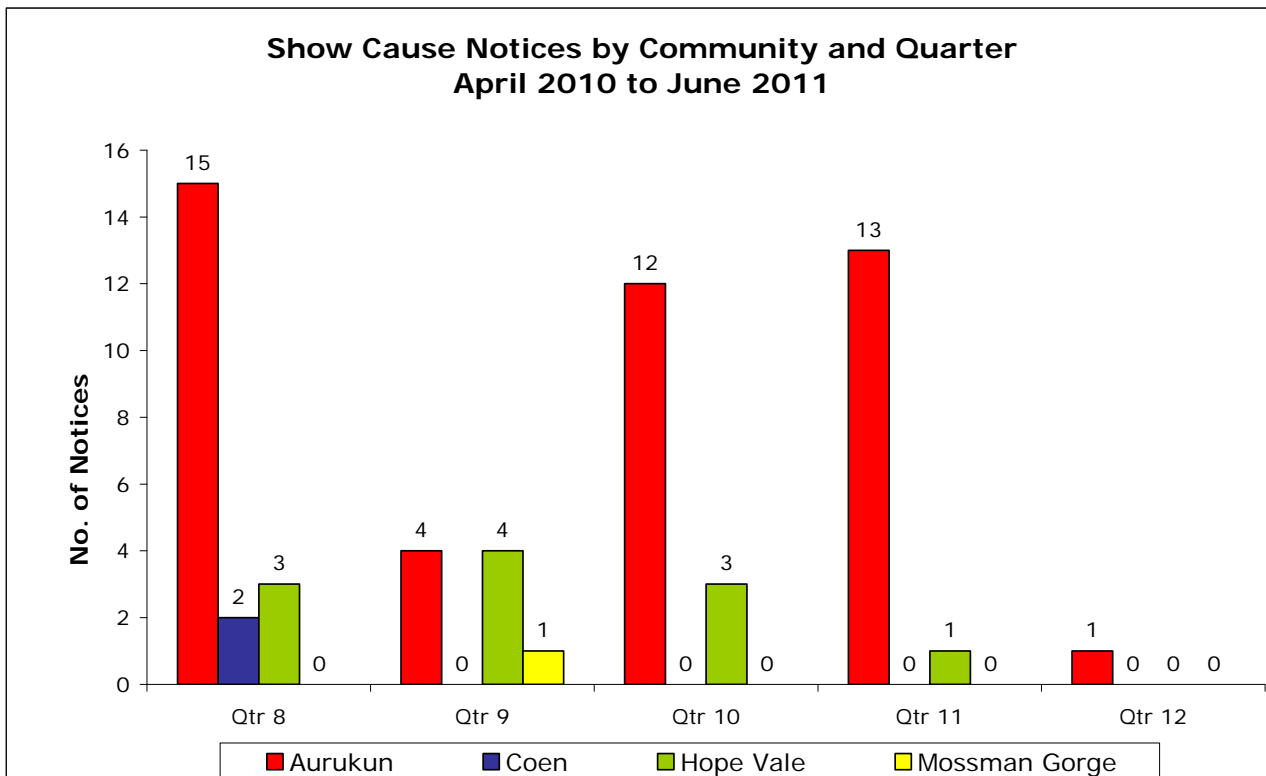
**Graph 10:** Conditional Income Management 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

Twenty-four Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received by Commissioners in quarter 12, an increase of one from 23 in quarter 11. 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 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

The Commission conducted a total of one Show Cause conference in Aurukun in quarter 12, a decrease from 14 in quarter 11. During this quarter the Commission reviewed all Aurukun client records and was unable to initiate show cause proceedings for a number of reasons. The lack of a Parenting Program in Aurukun has hampered the Commission’s ability to meet its statutory obligations to properly assess a client’s willingness to comply with their case plans. This, combined with lack of quality Monthly Progress Reports, has led to less Show Cause proceedings than expected as the Commission must always act in a fair and just manner to assist the client.



Graph 12: Show Cause Notices 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2011.

## 6. Observations / Future Direction

The Commission remains committed to regular and consistent client conferencing and to developing the capacity of 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:

- The ABC Four Corners program televised the 'Return to Aurukun' featuring the Commission on 2 May 2011. The Commission has received encouraging feedback from stakeholders, the wider welfare reform community and community leaders on the presentation of the Commission, clients and community members in a proactive and positive manner.
- Commission Woolla, accompanied by the Principal Case Manager and the Aurukun Local Coordinator attended the first Maternal and Child Health Services Coordination Group meeting at Mookai Rosie Bi-bayan to assist in the development of greater service delivery coordination to the Cape York communities.
- Commissioner Koomeeta along with the Aurukun Local Coordinator, Justice Group, Aurukun Shire Council and Queensland Police met with the parents and children of truant youth. The consequences of the children's actions were addressed, and the community's expectation of respect for Elders made clear. Follow-up visits were conducted to ensure these students were attending school and had modified their behaviour. The community approach was considered particularly successful.
- Mossman Gorge Commissioners, Local Coordinator and Registrar, Tammy Sovenyhazi, travelled to Aurukun in May to observe three days of conferencing. A barbeque was held to welcome the Commissioners and introduce community members and agencies. A meeting was held with the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of the Aurukun Shire Council who provided a brief history of Aurukun. Commissioners visited the Cape York Partnerships Opportunity Hub, the Wellbeing Centre and took the opportunity to visit the Cape York Australian Aboriginal Academy (CYAAA).
- Justice Moynihan and Judge Nase from the Crime and Misconduct Commission met with Commissioners from Aurukun and Hope Vale to discuss the role of the Commission, how the Commission was progressing and what changes they had seen in the community since its commencement in 2008.
- The Hope Vale Commissioners and Queensland Police met to discuss and address community fighting and bullying. In addition, strategies for reducing potential issues occurring after major events such as the State of Origin were developed.
- Commissioner Gibson and school Attendance Case Managers from Hope Vale regularly address children at the school assembly as to the importance of regular school attendance, completing homework and the benefits of education for future employment opportunities.
- The Hope Vale Commissioners and Commissioner Curtin met with the Principal of the Cooktown High School to discuss the reporting of non-attendance of Hope Vale students.
- Lifeline Community Care held an information session for the Mossman Gorge Commissioners. The presentation provided information on the Older Persons Programs and what services are available for those Elders that are carers for grandchildren.
- The Congress Community Development and Education Unit gave a presentation to the Mossman Gorge Commissioners on the establishment of the Cape York Residential

Rehabilitation Service. The service will provide a three to nine month residential program for clients with drug and alcohol related problems, giving a priority to Indigenous individuals and their family members.

- Commissioner Woolla travelled to Coen to observe conferences. Whilst in Coen, Commissioner Woolla provided the Coen Commissioners with an overview of the success of the Active Family Pathways case coordination framework in Aurukun.

## **Observations**

- At the regular Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) stakeholder session, Probation and Parole announced the creation of a new Substance Abuse and Transitional Support position. The Commission is very supportive of this new role to assist with the transition of those returning from prison into their communities. The position has been filled and the Commission awaits the commencement of the successful applicant.
- Tania Major (Young Australian of the Year 2007) visited the community of Aurukun recently and gave a presentation on her Cape York Super Sisters program. Cape York Super Sisters (CYSS) aims to support over 100 young women aged between 13 and 25 to lead happier, healthier and more independent lives through education, training and employment.
- In Hope Vale a community barbeque was held to commemorate the 69th anniversary of the wartime evacuation of Hope Vale people to Woorabinda. Visitors from as far away as Cherbourg attended the commemoration which was to remember and honour those who lost their lives during this period in Hope Vale's history.
- The Commission recognises the ongoing community engagement by Queensland Police in the Welfare Reform communities such as conducting a barbeque and ballgames over the Easter break with the Mossman Gorge community.
- Under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) housing construction continues within the Hope Vale community with a total of three new homes, one of which has been completed. Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) housing construction continues within the Hope Vale community with a total of 60 new homes, 25 of which have been completed.
- The Hope Vale pool has been filled and the parking and driveway sealed. The pool is yet to open for operation and the community is eagerly awaiting the use of the facility.
- The Commission is pleased to report that the Aurukun pool is now open with children using the facility.
- The Jawun Group of Indigenous Corporate Partnerships visited Aurukun and Hope Vale in June, meeting with our Commissioners in Aurukun. Members come from a wide variety of corporate backgrounds including Myer, Wesfarmers, Telstra Corporation Limited and Westpac.
- A Government Champion Negotiation table was held in Aurukun on 24 and 25 June, chaired by Graham Newton, Director-General, Queensland Reconstruction Authority and Aurukun Mayor Pootchemunka.
- A Government Champion Negotiation table was held in Coen also in June, chaired by Dan Hunt, Associate Director-General, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and Allan Creek, Coen community representative.
- The Coen Men's group continues to provide excellent opportunities for dedicated Coen Elders back 'on country' to practice traditional activities such as woomera and spear making and the more modern techniques of leatherwork, the results of which are sold to family members, Coen local stores and tourists. Proceeds are used to purchase more

supplies. A donation was received from the Coen Government Champion, Dan Hunt towards the purchase of further leather.

- Commissioner Glasgow and Registrar Tammy Sovenyhazi attended the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs earlier this year. The Committee has since published a report 'Doing Time - Time for Doing: Indigenous youth in the criminal justice system' recommending that the Australian Government in partnership with the Queensland Government and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership extend the funding of the Family Responsibilities Commission until December 2013, pending further evaluation.

### **Challenges**

- Aurukun continues to suffer break-ins and the theft of vehicles by a small number of young men. Community leaders and Elders have gathered to discuss strategies to prevent the damage and destruction that is impacting on the entire community by the loss of transport and essential items for building repairs and maintenance.
- All communities have advised a lack of child counselling service provision significantly impacts on the community maintaining strong school attendance rates and low rates of truancy.
- The Commission has been advised by community members that the formation of the Child Safety Services Far North Regional Intake Service (RIS) has contributed to a decrease in community members notifying Child Safety Services of children who they perceive are at risk. Commissioners and community members have expressed dissatisfaction with the new process and the manner to be utilised in reporting child safety concerns. Contact can only be made by telephone and not through personal contact. The Commission has worked with Child Safety to resolve these concerns and has been advised that where a community member cannot communicate concerns via telephone, Child Safety staff will take the concerns in person. In addition, RIS workers will be travelling to the communities in the near future to build understanding and trust. The Commission believes that it is important that a sufficient level of engagement is maintained with the communities in view of the dissatisfaction already expressed, and remains committed to working with Child Safety Services towards a satisfactory resolution.

### **Future Direction**

- On 10 May 2011 the Australian Government announced funding support for an extension of the CYWR and the Family Responsibilities Commission. Following this announcement consultations have taken place between the Queensland Government and the four welfare reform communities. On the 14 June 2011 the Queensland State Government announced funding support for a possible continuation of the trial until 31 December 2012.
- Feedback from the Commissioners has been supportive of the Commission extending beyond 2011. The Commissioners advise their communities have not had enough time as yet to re-establish social norms. Commissioners have identified that their communities are starting to take responsibility for themselves and their families, and attitudes are changing, reflecting the shift in outlook to acceptable behaviour and conduct. Furthermore if the trial was to end, the Commissioners are concerned their communities would lose the momentum of change and return to their previous ways.

- Deputy Commissioner Curtin and Registrar Tammy Sovenyhazi met with Minister Pitt regarding issues relating to the potential extension of the trial, the Federal Government budget announcement and the future appointment of new Commissioners.
- The Commission faces administrative challenges over the next six months if the trial is to be extended. Sufficient time is required for amendments to be made to the Act and passed by Parliament; Commissioner and staff contracts to be extended; and client case plans to be amended in line with the Act finalisation. Longer term, the Commission will consider exit strategies, prioritising the development of the Commissioners and their roles in the communities once the Commission ceases. Additionally the administrative aspects of information storage and financial arrangements will need to be considered.
- Induction and training of new Commissioners to be conducted upon appointment by the Governor in Council.
- As reported in quarter 11, 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.



## 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	<del>10</del>	7,11
14 FEBRUARY	DRG	<del>14</del>	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	<del>24</del>	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	<del>16</del>	17, 18, 19			16 FR Board Meeting 20
23 MAY	DRG			<del>24, 25</del>	26	23, 27
30 MAY	DRG	30	31, 1, 2			30 May, 3 June
6 JUNE	RC			7, 8	9	6, 10
13 JUNE	RC		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	RC			21, 22	23	20, 24
27 JUNE						Office week
4 JULY						NAIDOC
11 JULY	RC		12, 13, 14	<del>12, 13</del>	14	15
18 JULY	RC					Training Week 20 Estimates 22 Cairns Show Day Holiday
25 JULY	RC	25	26, 27, 28			
1 AUGUST	RC			<del>2, 3</del>	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		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		24, 28
31 OCTOBER	DRG	31	1, 2, 3			4
7 NOVEMBER	DRG			8, 9		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 John Bradley                      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.

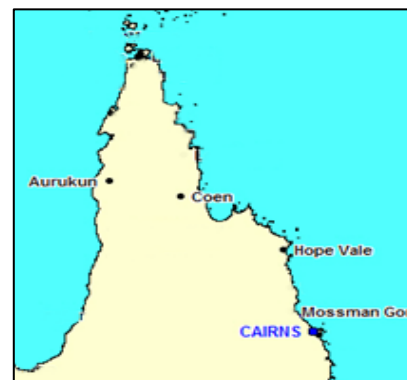
## Cape York Welfare Reform

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 2009<sup>5</sup>.



### 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 2009<sup>6</sup>.

### 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 2009<sup>7</sup>.

### 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 2009<sup>8</sup>.

**For more information on the communities and population compositions view:**

[www.indigenous.qld.gov.au](http://www.indigenous.qld.gov.au) and [www.statistics@oesr.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles](http://www.statistics@oesr.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles)

### Role of the Commission:

The Commission can deal with a welfare recipient living in a Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) community from 1 July 2008 (a community member), if the person, or their partner, is in receipt of certain welfare payments. The full list of payments subject to income management under the Cape York initiative is at [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/guides\\_acts/ssg/ssguide-11/ssguide-11.2/ssguide-11.2.5.html](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/guides_acts/ssg/ssguide-11/ssguide-11.2/ssguide-11.2.5.html).

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,

<sup>5</sup> Adults 17 and over provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP figures.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> 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

