

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. 13

July 2011 to September 2011



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

Executive Summary

During quarter 13, 689 agency notices were received which were within the Commission's jurisdiction, an increase of 90 from last quarter. There were 416 conferences held for the same period, representing a decrease of 26 from last quarter which resulted in 15 Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) being entered into, 37 orders made to attend community support services and 53 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders issued. When compared to last quarter this represents a decrease of four FRA's, ten orders to attend community support services and an increase of six CIM orders. Community members are continuing to support Voluntary Income Management (VIM), an option which allows people to manage their budgets and meet the costs of everyday essentials. Since the commencement of the Commission, 40 VIM agreements have been processed, demonstrating that community members have become proactive in controlling their finances.

The Commission case managed 186 clients during the quarter. The Commissioners made 96 referrals relating to 48 clients, a decrease of 25 referrals from last quarter.

The Commission is encouraged by the progress of 16 clients who have elected to participate in the voluntary Active Family Pathways (AFP) program, an increase of 2 from the previous quarter. These clients have acknowledged the issues in their lives and are actively working to resolve them.

Further activity during the quarter consisted of one Show Cause conference held (the same as for the previous quarter) and 18 Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received. The number of Applications to Amend or End received decreased by six from the previous quarter. Of the 18 applications received during this quarter 15 proceeded to hearing.

An increase in school attendance was only evident in Aurukun when comparing term 3, 2010 to term 3, 2011. In Aurukun the overall school attendance increased by 4.7 percentage points from term 3, 2010 (54.1 percent) to term 3, 2011 (58.8 percent). This continues a significant increase since welfare reform began in 2008. Since term 3 2008 Aurukun's attendance has increased 14.3 percentage points.

In July Local Commissioners travelled to Cairns to participate in a four day workshop. The focus of the workshop was to review the achievements of the Commission to date, the roles of the Commissioners within their communities, how the work of the Commission should transition into the future and an exit strategy for when the Commission ceases. Whilst in Cairns the Commissioners took the opportunity to visit Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan, Apunipima Cape York Health Council and the Red Cross facilities at Douglas House, facilities that provide services to community members of Cape York.

To finalise the week the Commissioners were honoured to host an afternoon with Mick Gooda, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and gained an insight into the role of such a high profile inspirational advocate of Indigenous affairs. Commissioner Gooda acknowledged and congratulated the Commissioners for their fortitude and courage living and working in the communities in which their decisions are not always popular. Commissioner Gooda thanked the Commissioners for the personal sacrifices they make on a daily basis and recognised the personal impact of making tough decisions in regard to family and friends for the long term benefit of the children of the community.

The Commission welcomed the announcement on 19 August 2011 by the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Honourable Curtis Pitt MP, together with the Honourable Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs extending the Cape York Welfare Reform trial until 1 January 2013. Amendments to the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* to allow for the operations of the Commission to continue until the 1 January 2013 are due to be tabled in Parliament in quarter 14. The Queensland Government has

committed \$1.6M for the extension period and the Commonwealth Government has pledged \$16.1M to the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, some of which will be allocated to the Commission.

In line with State guidelines, and being particularly mindful of the cost of recent natural disasters, the Commission has focussed on its obligation to minimise expenditure where possible and to maintain a diligent approach to all financial matters. It has been successful in its endeavours to reduce IT costs, one of the Commission's areas of high expenditure.

The Commission supports service providers and the process of change by providing training, briefings, procedures and assistance when requested and operationally possible. The Commission 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 to address these gaps.

Looking to the future, whilst the Commission acknowledges that service providers, government and non-government, act independently to the Commission and as separate entities, the functioning of these organisations directly affects the Commission in achieving its goals. The Commission has cemented its position as a flexible official structure within the communities which can adapt at short notice to the changing needs of the communities (i.e. the extraordinary Aurukun sittings to improve school attendance). As such the Commission believes that the concept of the FRC can be capitalised upon to pilot welfare reform into new territory and inform future government policy and practices.

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Abbreviations

AFP	Active Family Pathways
ATODs	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs
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
DET	Department of Education and Training
EFV	Ending Family Violence
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
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
RATEP	Remote Area Teacher Education Program
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
SCMs	Student Case Managers
SCMF	Student Case Management Framework
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 30 September 2011.

1. Activities and Trends

Notices

In quarter 13 the Commission received **977 agency notices**¹. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 689 notices (71 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 288 notices (29 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Within jurisdiction notices comprised of:

- 426 School Attendance notices
- 211 Magistrates Courts notices
- 45 Child Safety notices
- 7 Housing Tenancy notices

Of the 288 notices not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 229 Magistrates Court notices, 55 School Attendance notices and 4 Child Safety notices.

Details of notices within jurisdiction for each community are set out below:

- **Aurukun's 358** notices constitute **52 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:

- 256 School Attendance notices
- 81 Magistrates Court notices
- 18 Child Safety notices
- 3 Housing Tenancy notices

15 School Attendance notices and 11 Magistrates Court notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Coen's 26** notices constitute **3.8 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 14 Magistrates Court notices
- 8 School Attendance notices
- 4 Child Safety notices

4 School Attendance notices, 2 Child Safety notices and 1 Magistrates Court notice were processed as not within jurisdiction.

¹ Counting rules are that an agency notice is counted on the basis of number of 'clients' on the notice. For example a child safety notice relating to two parents is counted as two notifications.

- **Hope Vale's 242** notices constitute **35.1 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 137 School Attendance notices
- 87 Magistrates Court notices
- 18 Child Safety notices

36 School Attendance notices, 7 Magistrates Court notices and 2 Child Safety notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Mossman Gorge's 63** notices constitute **9.1 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 29 Magistrates Court notices
- 25 School Attendance notices
- 5 Child Safety notices
- 4 Housing Tenancy notices

210 Magistrates Court notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

Since its commencement the Commission has received 8303 agency notices within its jurisdiction. Total notices increased from 925 in quarter 12 to 977 in quarter 13. Of those notices in jurisdiction Magistrates Court and School Attendance notices increased, Child Safety notices decreased and Housing Tenancy notices remained stable.

Magistrates Court notices increased this quarter to 211 from the 185 received in the previous quarter. Hope Vale and Coen increased by 24 notices and five notices respectively while Mossman Gorge and Aurukun decreased by two notices and one notice.

School Attendance notices increased from 347 in quarter 12 to 426 in quarter 13. Aurukun experienced an increase of 60 notices, from 196 in quarter 12 to 256 in quarter 13, with Hope Vale Mossman Gorge and Coen also experiencing an increase of ten notices, eight notices and one notice respectively for the quarter.

The Commission has received the following school attendance data from the Department of Education and Training (DET) for publication in the Commission's quarterly reports.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	Difference 2008 to 2011
School/Community	Term 3 (%)				
Hopevale State School	83.3	76.6	80.8	75.1	-8.2
Mossman Gorge Community	75.8	78.0	82.3	72.5	-3.3
Western Cape College - Aurukun	44.5	66.0	54.1	58.8	14.3
Western Cape College - Aurukun - Primary	50.5	70.3	62.4	62.6	12.1
Western Cape College - Aurukun - Secondary	26.4	46.2	29.0	37.7	11.3
Western Cape College - Coen	87.4	92.9	89.0	86.5	-0.9

Table 1: School Attendance Rate Summary for term 3 2008 to term 3 2011.

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 Student Case Management Framework (SCMF) but are included in the DET attendance statistics.

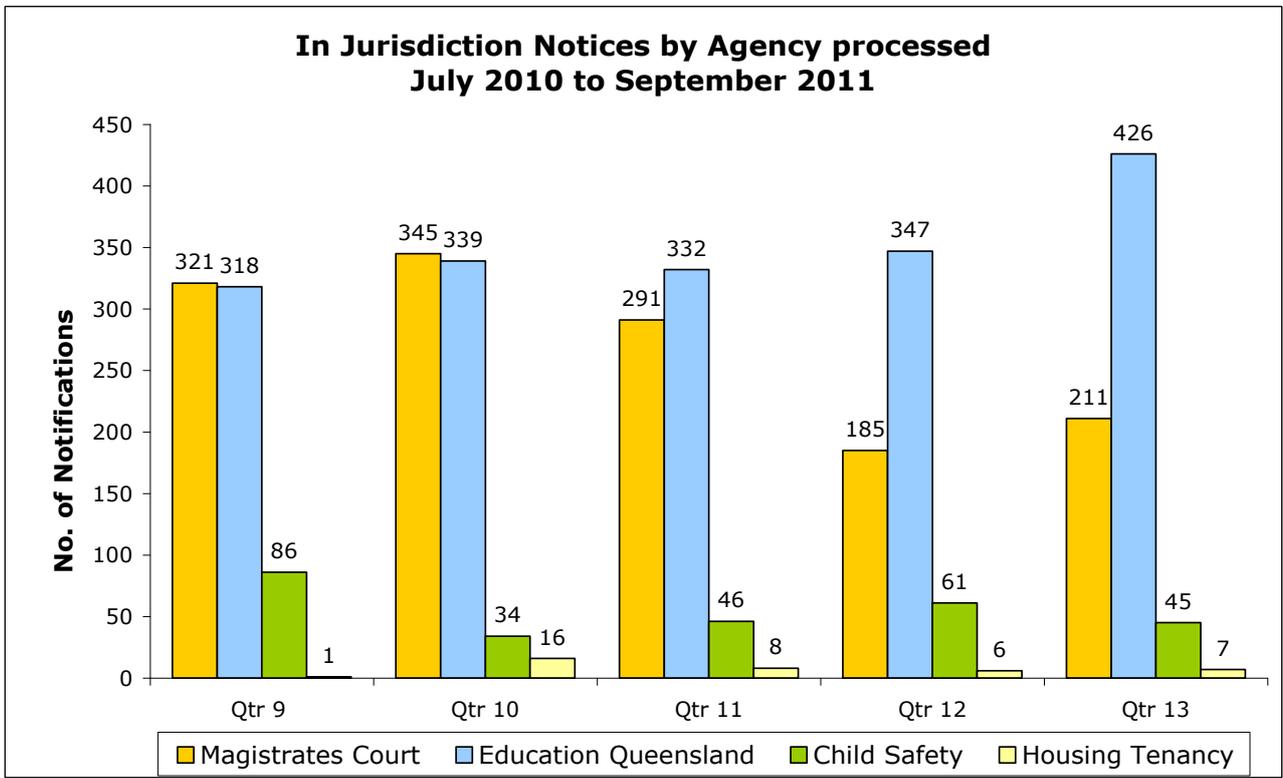
Factors impacting on attendance this quarter include seasonal illnesses which have lowered the attendance rate this term due to increased occurrences of whooping cough and flu in the communities. The Cairns and Mossman Shows are seen as a tradition for Cape York families to attend during term 3, with many schools in the Cape affected by low attendance due to travel to and from the event. Student Case Managers from CYAAA have reported that the number of explained absences notified to schools has increased, showing a gradual building of social norms in relation to parents/guardians contacting the school for student absences.

During the quarter the Commission identified incorrect data in relation to the notices received from DET. The Commission raised concerns with the department and has been advised that the problems are being addressed.

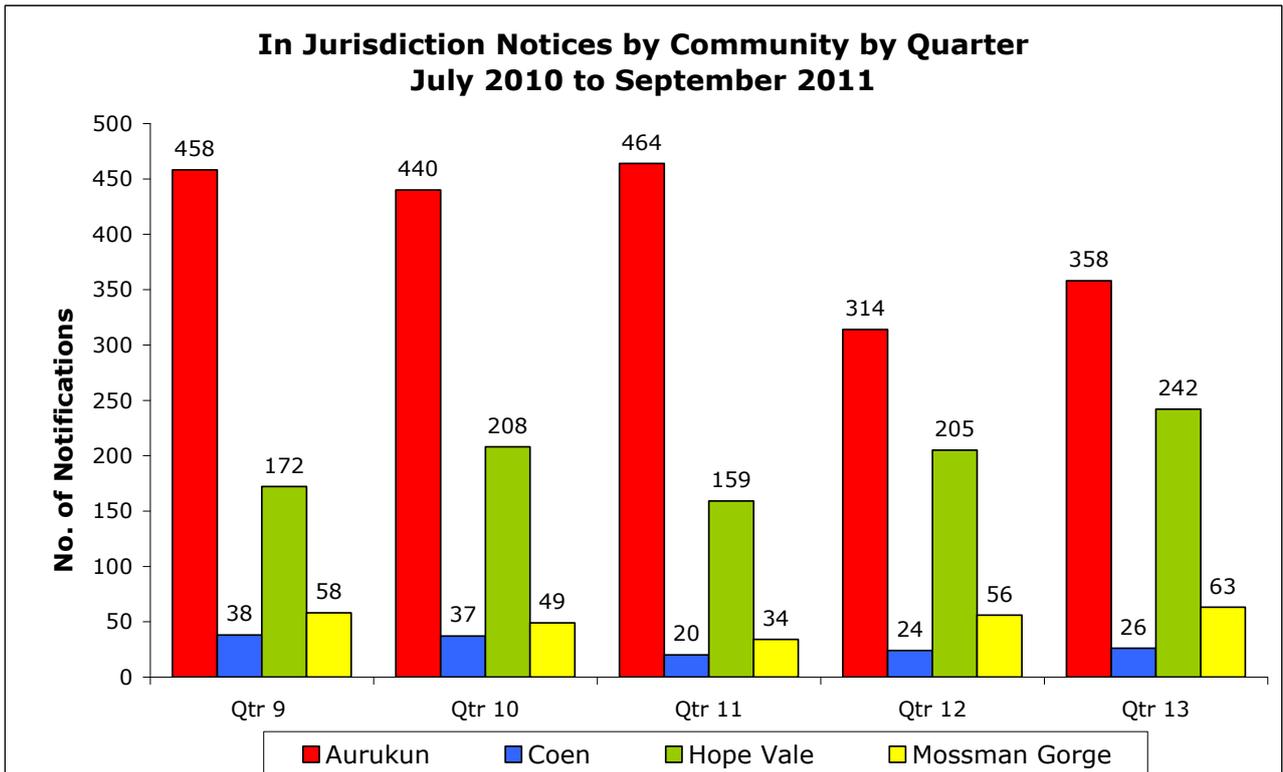
Child Safety notices decreased from 61 in quarter 12 to 45 in quarter 13. Aurukun decreased from 36 notices in quarter 12 to 18 notices in quarter 13 with Coen also decreasing by four notices. Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased by five notices and one notice respectively. Under the provisions of the Act, the Commission receives all notices from the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) relevant to the four communities. Notices vary greatly in seriousness and results. Fluctuations in Child Safety notices are not necessarily indicative of children's wellbeing in the communities.

The Commission has established an effective and proactive working relationship with Child Safety Services over the life of the Commission which has greatly assisted in the standard of care for children in the CYWR communities. With the extension of the Commission to 1 January 2013, the four Child Safety Officer positions (dedicated specifically to the Commission) have not received a corresponding funding extension. Child Safety Services report that the Department of Communities is currently assessing the workload of the four positions with a view to continuing some or all of the positions on a non-recurrent basis. Should the positions not be continued the loss will significantly impact the positive outcomes of the Commission and will create a large gap in service delivery to the welfare reform communities. The Commission identifies this as an adverse step which will affect welfare reform objectives.

Housing Tenancy notices increased marginally from six in quarter 12 to seven in quarter 13. Aurukun and Hope Vale recorded minor fluctuations with an increase of three notices and a decrease of two notices respectively. The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) has advised that they have implemented a process in Aurukun and Hope Vale whereby client engagement in regard to rental arrears and tenancy breaches is now proactively managed by face to face engagement with clients. Measurement tools are utilised to monitor the quality and quantity of client engagement and case management. Monitored data identifies the number of clients with active repayment plans against clients in rental arrears. Personal engagement has facilitated the implementation of repayment plans to meet rental arrears in lieu of immediate intervention by the Commission.

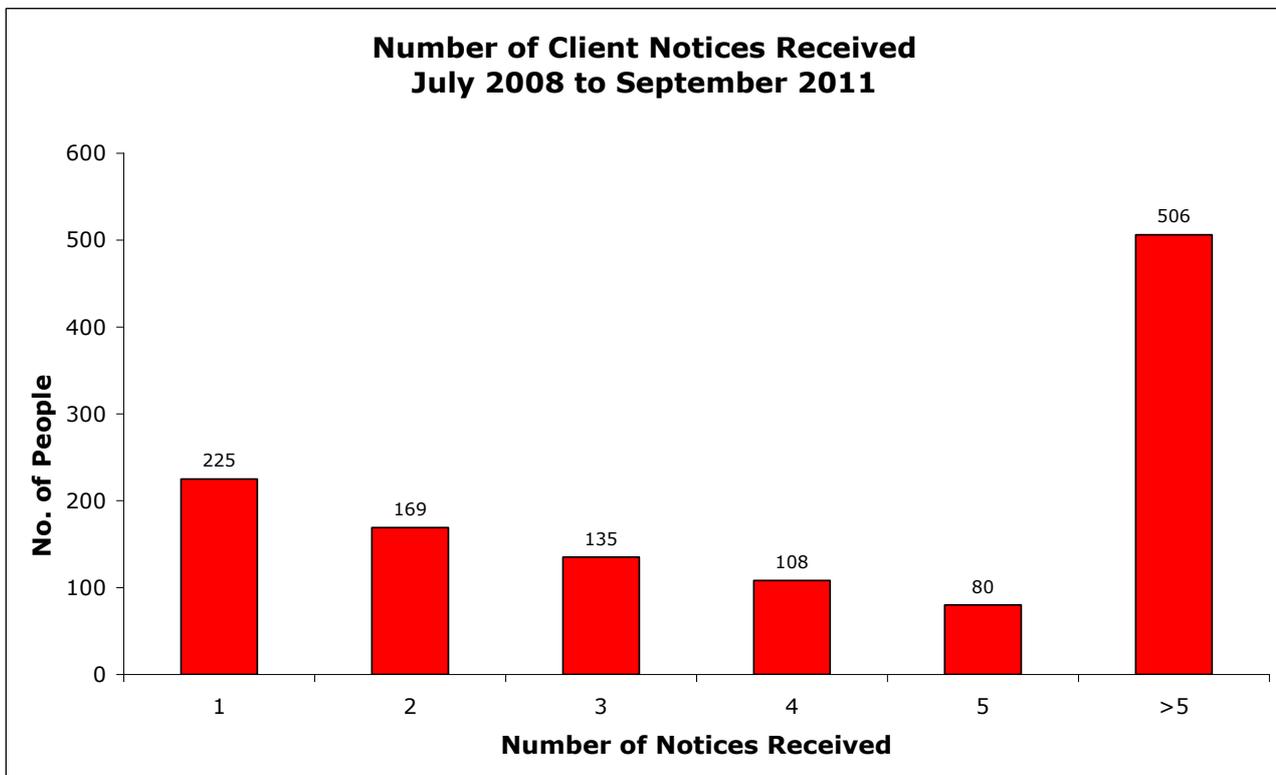


Graph 1: Notices by agency processed 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.



Graph 2: Notices by community and quarter 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

Over the life of the Commission 81.6 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 41.4 percent of clients receiving more than five notices. Frequently this illustrates multiple child school absences for the one family or multiple Magistrates Court notices relating to one incident. To date, 18.4 percent of clients have received only one notice.



Graph 3: Clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 30 September 2011.

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

Conferences

416 conferences² were held across the four communities in quarter 13 resulting in 15 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 37 Orders made to attend community support services and 53 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders as well as no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Thirty-seven new clients were conferenced during the quarter and 20 conferences were conducted independently by Local Commissioners as provided for under the Act. Details of conferencing activity in each community are as follows:

The Commission was unable to service all scheduled conferences in this quarter as per the sitting calendar with the cancellation of five sitting days. Three sitting days were cancelled in Hope Vale with one reduced sitting in Coen and Mossman Gorge. Adjustments to the calendar were made due to the passing of community members and associated sorry business.

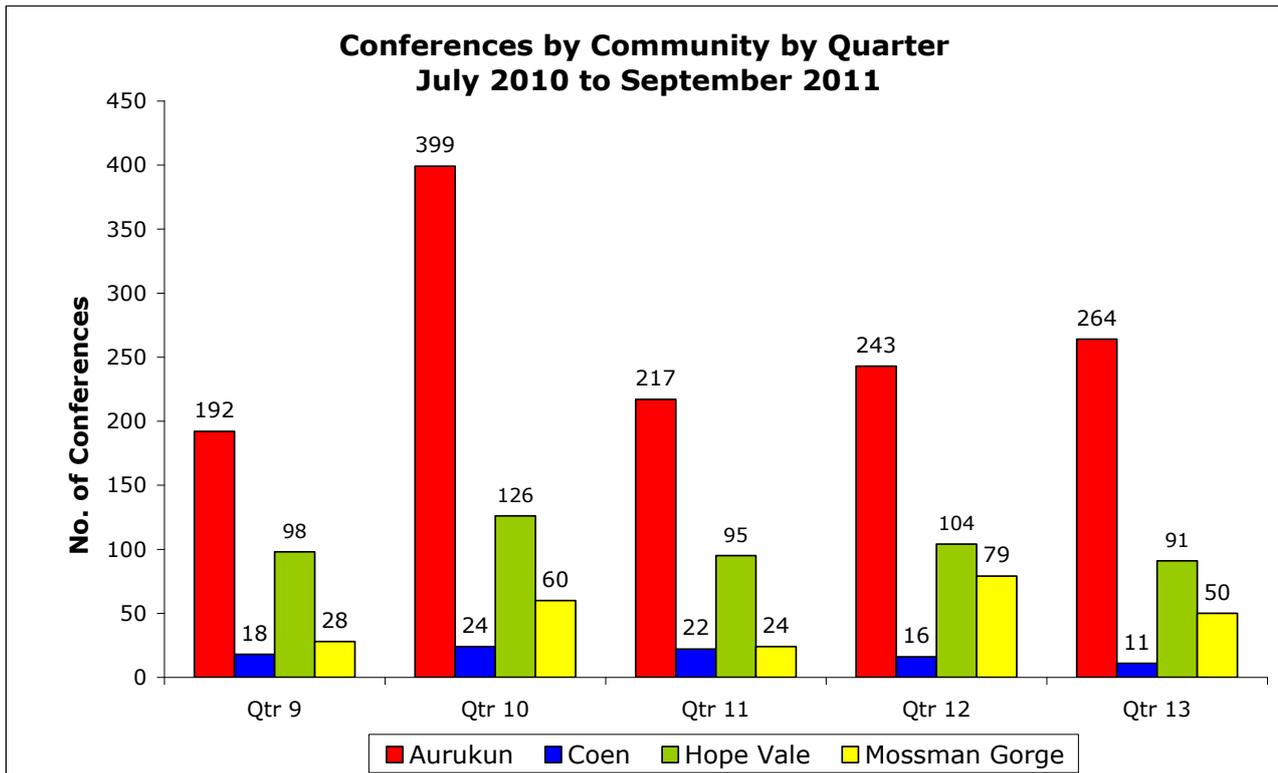
- **Aurukun - 264 conferences** were held in Aurukun in quarter 13.
- **Coen - 11 conferences** were held in Coen in quarter 13. One sitting day was cancelled due to the passing of a community member and associated sorry business.
- **Hope Vale - 91 conferences** were held in Hope Vale in quarter 13. Three sittings days were cancelled due to the passing of community members and associated sorry business.

² 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.

- **Mossman Gorge - 50 conferences** were held in Mossman Gorge in quarter 13. One sitting day was cancelled due to the passing of a community member and associated sorry business.

Although conferences decreased from 442 conferences held in quarter 12, the figure remains higher than for the corresponding period in 2010 of 336. The increased number of conferences in quarter 13 as compared to quarter nine (same period last year) can be attributed to the Commission holding a total of four more sitting days in quarter 13.

The following graph illustrates the number of conferences held in each community from quarter nine 2010 to quarter 13 2011.

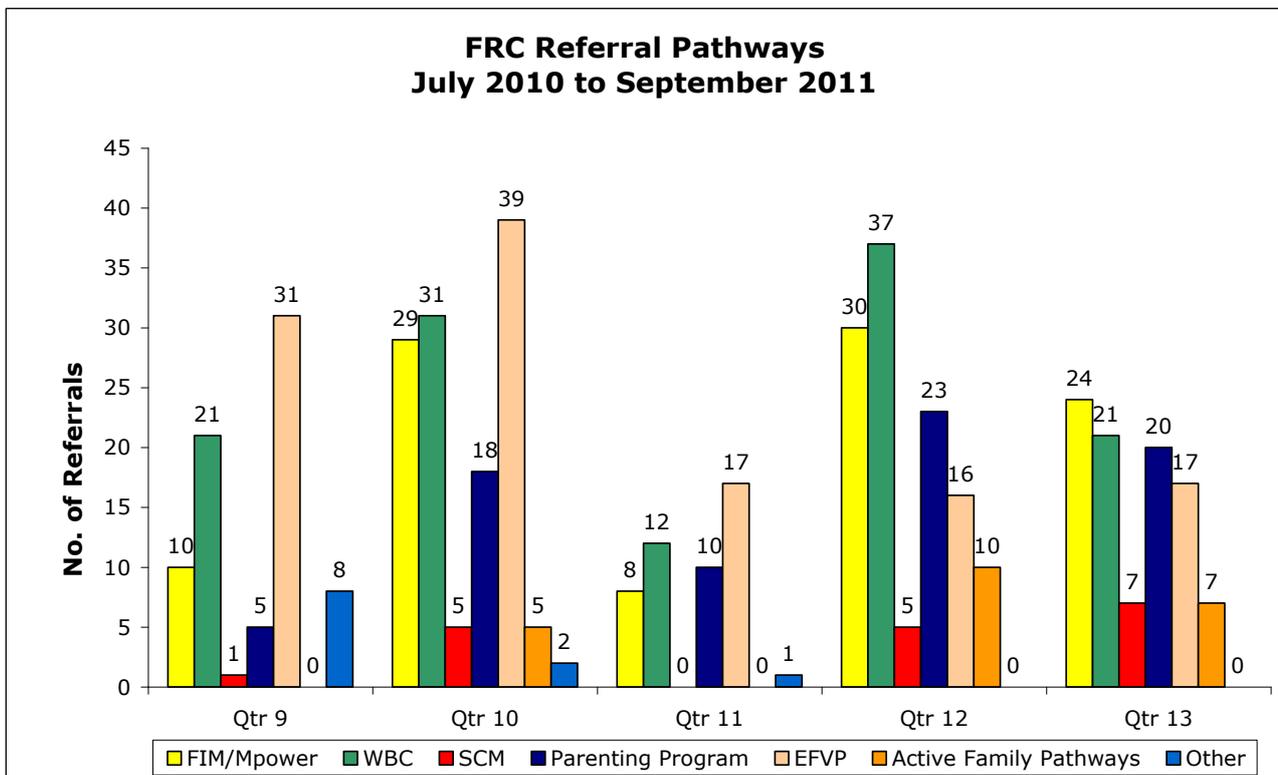


Graph 4: Conferences by community and quarter, 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

Referrals

The Commissioners made 96 referrals relating to 48 clients during quarter 13. Since commencement the Commission has referred 620 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 50.5 percent of clients on 12 month service referral plans over the past three and a quarter years.

Referrals to service providers decreased from 121 in quarter 12 to 96 in quarter 13. While Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased in referrals by six, eleven and one referral respectively, Aurukun referrals decreased by 43 from quarter 12 to quarter 13. The majority of the decrease at Aurukun was in referrals to MPower and the Wellbeing Centre (WBC), decreasing by 12 and 18 respectively.



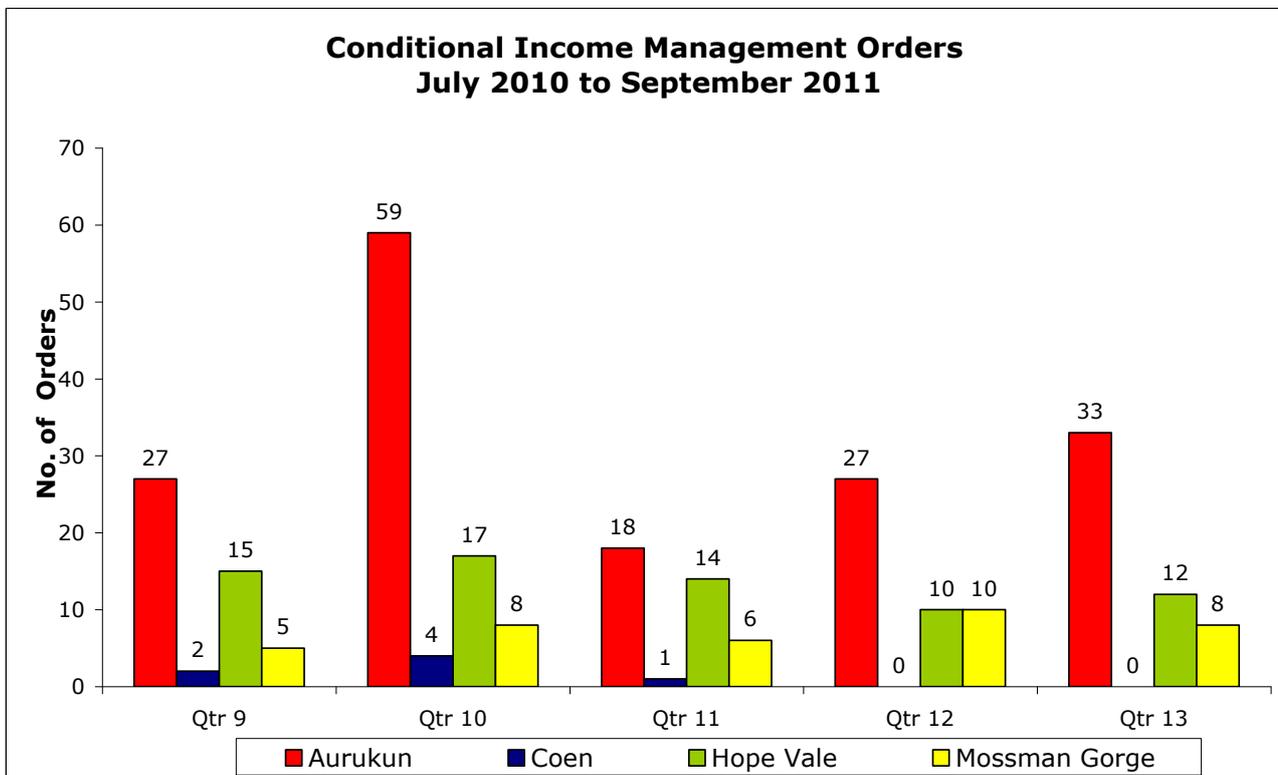
Graph 5: Referral Pathways 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

Conditional Income Management

Fifty-three Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter 13, an increase of six from quarter 12. Since the commencement of the Commission 597 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 391 clients. During the quarter increases were experienced in Aurukun and Hope Vale of six and two respectively whilst Mossman Gorge experienced a decrease of two orders and Coen remained stable with no CIM orders issued for quarter 12 or 13.

Commissioners report that many clients have been given numerous opportunities to attend conference or take action to have CIM orders amended (such as attend service providers) and have refused. As at 30 September 2011, 31.8 percent of the Commission's clients have been subject to a CIM order over the past three and quarter years.

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, 40 VIM agreements have been processed relating to 37 clients. By requesting to be placed on VIM, clients are demonstrating their willingness to take responsibility for their financial situation beyond the immediate present and are considering their future financial obligations.



Graph 6: Conditional Income Management 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

Case Management

As at 30 September 2011, 186 clients were being case managed, a slight increase from 184 in quarter 12. Over the last three quarters the number of clients being case managed has fallen by 12 across the communities with the number of clients being case managed in Aurukun reducing by two and Coen and Hope Vale reducing by five each.

Active Family Pathways

As at 30 September 2011 the Commission was actively managing 16 clients under the Active Family Pathways framework. Since the commencement of Active Family Pathways in November 2010, the Commission has managed a total of 21 clients under the framework.

The Commission has assisted a number of AFP clients to achieve their stated goals during quarter 13. Clients have gained employment, enrolled in training courses, submitted successful boarding school applications for children in their care, had housing maintenance and repairs completed, accessed appropriate Centrelink entitlements and repaid debts and arrears owing due to the support provided through the AFP program.

Since the commencement of the AFP, five clients have reached the majority of their AFP goals and exited the framework to continue working on their goals with service providers and the support of the Commissioners. Overall clients in Aurukun, Coen and Mossman Gorge have accepted the offer of the AFP framework when proposed, whereas Hope Vale clients have been reluctant to accept the AFP offer. Through the AFP case plan, client engagement with service providers is reinvigorated by the AFP Support Officer providing an introduction and soft handover to the service provider staff. Most service providers have welcomed the process but challenges remain in convincing clients to attend appointments at set times frequently made weeks in advance to suit service providers.

The AFP framework has encountered a number of clients who are confused in regard to their welfare entitlements or how to contact agencies for simple and basic requests. Once clients are empowered with knowledge and the ability to act on information, real changes have occurred. In one instance,

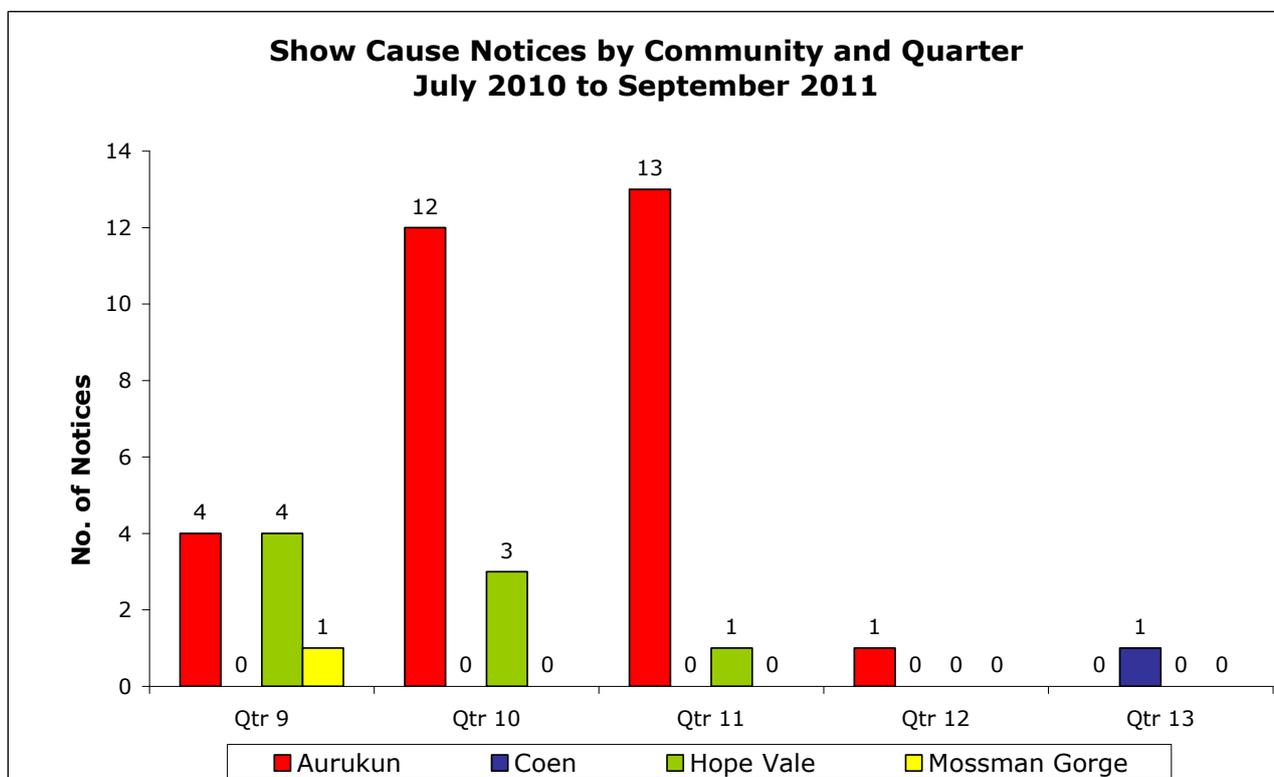
a client was made aware of the processes required to request housing maintenance and repairs. Until that point the client had accepted only cold water being available in the house and relied on a neighbour for hot showers. Although the client had successfully managed to ensure regular school attendance and clean uniforms for the children, the provision of hot water greatly improved the enthusiasm and morning routines for the children and family members. It is incumbent on Government agencies and other service providers to ensure community members are well educated in regard to their entitlements and how to seek solutions to manage their everyday lives.

Show Cause Notices

During quarter 13, one Show Cause hearing was held in Coen which resulted in the matter being rescheduled to October 2011 in order to more accurately gauge the client’s compliance.

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. If the service provider does not record missed appointment dates accurately, the lack of this information further inhibits show cause actions. The lack of clients being directed to attend Ending Family Violence (EFV) programs through official Reasonable Direction notices has limited the Commission initiating Show Cause proceedings for these clients ordered to attend. Further, where clients are only permitted to attend gender specific courses, the number of courses available becomes limited.

A significant number of clients with service provider referrals are on CIM orders and only in exceptional circumstances will the Commission initiate Show Cause proceedings on a client already the subject of a CIM order. The trend of low number of show cause conferences is expected to continue.



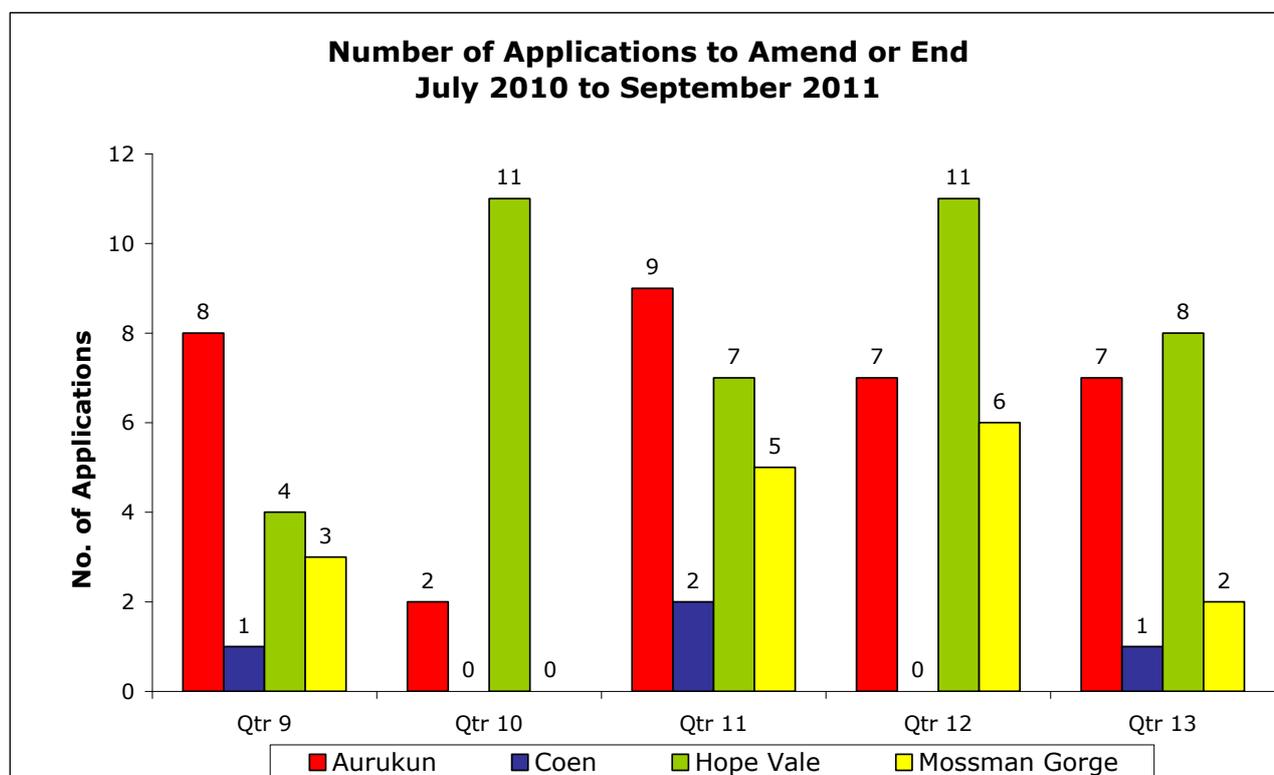
Graph 7: Show Cause Notices 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Eighteen Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received in quarter 13, a decrease from 24 in quarter 12 but equivalent to the same period in 2010. Outcomes of the 18 applications received are as follows:

- 10 Income Management orders and agreements revoked
- 3 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decision pending with conferences scheduled for October 2011
- 2 Applications dismissed and clients ordered to comply with case plan
- 1 Application dismissed
- 1 Application dismissed and client income management extended
- 1 Application dismissed and client income management extended and ordered to comply with case plan.

The Commission views the figures for applications to amend or end agreements or orders as an indication of client confidence in the Commission to provide a fair, just and equitable process should they wish to amend or end their agreements or orders.



Graph 8: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

2. Partners and Service Providers

Throughout the operation of the Commission, Commissioners and staff 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.

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, however, changes in staffing remain a challenge to the continuity of service delivery. During quarter 13 the Commission engaged with the following CYWR service providers:

Active Family Pathways Service Providers

Despite an increase from 14 to 16 clients in this quarter voluntarily participating in the AFP, the Commission is disappointed by service providers who have been unable to allocate their time and resources to this select group of clients. In most circumstances, the clients are introduced to the service providers via the AFP Support Officer as a soft handover. AFP Support Officers continue to accompany the client for further visits until the client advises they are comfortable to attend alone. The turnover of service provider staff and their reluctance to fully embrace the AFP concept has limited Commission clients taking up services.

During the quarter the AFP Support Officers worked with clients to address any barriers preventing normalisation of family life and to establish a firm base from which clients can resource solutions for the complex problems they face. All clients and families report overcrowding as a major impediment to enjoying their daily lives. Overcrowded housing results in a lack of privacy, sleep, hygiene and time to devote to priority needs. Finance and payment of household bills becomes confused and distorted within culture, obligation and hospitality expectations.

AFP clients and extended family are increasingly asking for direction and support in dealing with challenging children in their care, especially truant teenagers, aggressive and threatening young males and boarding school excluded students. The Commissioners have long supported the need for greater resources and commitment to children with mental health and behavioural issues. The destructive activities of drinking, smoking, sniffing and stealing are commencing at the age of 10 or 11 in the communities. The Commissioners report effective services such as Child Youth Mental Services are under-resourced and limited due to a lack of funds. Sporting organisations and clinics, such as AusKick, provide assistance and relief to parents and carers, but targeted, long term assistance is required for these young children, teenagers and their carers.

Ending Family Violence Program

The Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services), in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), commenced the delivery of 14 Ending Family Violence (EFV) programs scheduled from July to December. To facilitate the delivery of the programs, two QCS facilitators were seconded to RFDS for the period. The RFDS also engaged an administrative support officer to assist in the coordination of the program. The RFDS report success in the seamless coordination of logistics and a collaborative training approach between QCS trained facilitators, RFDS co-facilitators and local WBC Community Development Consultant staff. Challenges to client attendance have remained unchanged since

quarter 9. The Commission has highlighted the low number of clients completing the program (14 for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 September 2011). This figure is significantly less than in quarter 9 (23 graduates) when QCS were the sole providers of the program. Clients are referred for a period of 12 months to allow those clients to attend who are incarcerated within the referral period, out of community or simply recalcitrant.

Five EFV programs have been held this quarter, a decrease from six programs in quarter 9. The RFDS have advised that the cancellation and rescheduling of programs occurred due to logistics, staffing and sorry business. The Commission and QCS believe the gender specific exclusion format of the program is a limitation to graduation numbers. Gender specific exclusion is not a requirement under the QCS program methodology but RFDS advise it is a requirement under their funding arrangements. The Commission has also identified that late delivery of Reasonable Directions to clients to attend the program (delivered the day prior to the program being held) has presented an impediment to client attendance rates. A Reasonable Direction Notice instructs the client that they are directed to attend the program and advises the date, time and venue. The notice further states that failure to comply with the direction may result in the client being income managed. The Commission continues to work with QCS and RFDS management and staff to improve client outcomes and promote greater attendance and completion within the funding period of 16 May to 1 December 2011. The Commission hopes the collaborative model will achieve the same standard of success achieved in the previous funding model.

Within the provisions of the MOU and funding arrangements, a three day workshop entitled 'Choices Workshop' which focuses on binge drinking, cannabis use, traffic offending and illegal trading in alcohol and cannabis is currently being conducted by WBCs. Four workshops have been conducted in the quarter though RFDS is unable to provide the number of graduates due to confidentiality. The Commission encourages the RFDS to work with other service providers, agencies and community groups to improve attendance at the workshops.

MPower/Family Income Management

As at 1 July 2011 Cape York Partnerships (CYP) implemented MPower, an opportunity product based framework which evolved from CYP's original money management program, Family Income Management (FIM). Prior to MPower, Commission clients received basic financial assistance through FIM in developing budgets and savings plans. Clients referred by the Commission to MPower will continue to be provided with individual and family support through the money management components of MPower including the opportunity to participate in specialised coaching sessions and other opportunity products.

Throughout this quarter the Commission has facilitated processes with CYP to ensure clients referred to FIM prior to 1 July 2011 continue to receive service under the new MPower process and newly referred clients maintain the opportunity to develop budget and savings plans. With the highest number of referrals this quarter, the Commission looks forward to the consolidation of processes within the MPower framework to cater for those clients who require additional assistance or face significant challenges in completing basic budgeting and saving. MPower/FIM currently reports a 38 percent attendance rate of clients referred to them by the Commission over quarter 13.

Parenting Program

From July 2011, the transition of the Aurukun Parenting Program to the management of CYP has provided a consistency of servicing throughout the CYWR communities. The majority of clients are referred due to Child Safety Service and Department of Education and Training notices. The Commission remains selective in referrals, only referring the most urgent clients due to the program's resource limitations across the CYWR communities. The Commission has worked with

CYP throughout the quarter to assist with the transition of Aurukun clients from the previous service provider and with client allocation to ensure the effective use of limited resources and personnel. The Commission is encouraged by plans to restructure the Parenting Program to enhance the 'Baby College', and increase the social and cultural significance to clients and children of the 'Positive Kids' and 'Strong Families' programs. These programs will build on existing capabilities of parents to benefit the community as whole. The Parenting Program currently report a 47 percent attendance rate of clients referred to them by the Commission over quarter 13.

Student Case Management

The Commission continues to work closely with Student Case Managers (SCMs) in each community. Although formal case plan referrals are low, the SCMs engage with all families responsible for children who are absent from school and attend to absences immediately as they occur. The SCM relationship with the Commission, in attending conferences and providing detailed information, is essential for the Commissioners when addressing low school attendance and other unique issues and problems faced by community members. SCM currently report a 77 percent attendance rate of clients referred to them by the Commission over quarter 13.

Transition Support Services

Commissioners continued to seek the assistance of TSS by inviting them to attend conferences to engage with clients and provide updates on progress made in regard to school achievement. The Commission acknowledges the tireless work of TSS staff and their achievements attained to date. Thirty-five year 8 to 12 students have achieved a record for the past two years for the highest percentage of returns within set timeframes to boarding school out of all Cape York communities. An accomplishment of this nature is only gained as a result of consistent effort by students and their carers, as well as great networking skills of TSS and their solid understanding of these remote communities and cultures.

Wellbeing Centres

Throughout the CYWR operational period the WBCs have continued to face challenges in retention of suitably qualified staff. In quarter 13 this has remained a challenge with clients reporting that the lack of an appropriate clinician or the changing of a clinician due to operational requirements impacts on their commitment to continue engaging for treatment.

The Commission has continued working with the WBCs to encourage engagement with clients for the entire 12 months of the case plan. Clients with multiple and complex needs also require longer term engagement in community based initiatives, such as transitioning to Men's Groups. The Commission is therefore pleased that the WBCs report that previous clients are voluntarily opting to continue to seek assistance from them. This level of engagement is a core aim of the Commission and the CYWR trial.

The Commission continues to seek clarification around the WBC's ability to refer clients to Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATODs) and to provide programs at a level satisfactory to meet mandatory court requirements. The Commission looks forward to the WBCs expanding counselling services to incorporate long term treatment plans addressing high level needs including mental health, addictive gambling, substance abuse and addictions, child and youth dysfunction, behavioural management and domestic violence. The WBC currently report a 33 percent attendance rate of clients referred to them by the Commission over quarter 13.

3. Observations, Challenges and Future Direction

As the Commission enters into the last 15 months of operation it remains committed to developing the capacity of Local Commissioners to assist in the restoration of social norms and local Indigenous authority. The primary goal of the Commission is to progress beyond the initial identification and management of dysfunction to the empowerment of community members to personally resolve the dysfunction in their lives. To effect long term changes in behaviour, flexibility in the resourcing of solutions for remote communities is essential to meet individual community needs. Support services need to share information, intelligence and integrated planning initiatives to ensure a holistic service is provided to the mutual clients of each organisation. Although progress has been made in partnering reform, renewed efforts and innovation are required to build on the achievements to date and maintain the impetus of reform.

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:

- A successful and productive Commissioner workshop was held in Cairns in July. As the Commissioners move toward a fourth and final year of operations, key discussion points focused on achievements to date, their respective roles, outcomes for the future and an exit strategy for when the Commission ceases operations. Overwhelmingly the Commissioners wish to leave behind a legacy which provides a solid foundation for individual and social responsibility to flourish, building strong and vibrant communities into the future.
- Commissioners were honoured to host an afternoon with Commissioner Mick Gooda, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. Commissioner Gooda discussed the personal experiences of the Commissioners and the impacts and issues regarding respect and sustainable leadership in the communities. Commissioner Gooda introduced the concept of lateral violence and how harmful behaviour demonstrated by oppressed groups is a reflection of "rage and anger, fear and terror" that is inflicted internally in communities. The concept was discussed in regard to its relevance to each Commissioner and how lateral violence has impacted upon their standing in community and the wider Cape York environment.
- During the workshop in Cairns the Local Commissioners engaged with services and agencies that have significant links to the communities, assisting community members who require help and guidance during times of childbirth, illness and homelessness. The female Commissioners attended Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan and undertook a tour of the facility which provides accommodation and child maternal health to the women of Cape York and the Tablelands. Apunipima Cape York Health Council hosted the male Commissioners who discussed men's health, general community health issues and future health and wellbeing developments with the Board. The Commissioners also visited the temporary emergency accommodation of Red Cross, Douglas House, whilst the new centre is being constructed in Lake Street.
- Individual computer and information technology training was delivered to bolster skill levels and complement the ongoing development of the Commissioners.
- The Honourable Curtis Pitt MP, Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Jason O'Brien MP, Member for Cook and Dr Jeffrey Chan, Chief Practitioner Disability Services, Department of Communities, consulted Commissioners Garry Port and Peter Peter from Coen regarding the challenges of being a Commissioner and the aspirations of the Commissioners for the future of their community.

- As a plenary panellist, Commissioner Garry Port from Coen represented the Commission at the symposium on Indigenous Punishment and Healing, conducted by The Cairns Institute, James Cook University. Commissioner Port discussed the responsibility of Indigenous decision makers within the Justice system.
- Senior staff from the NSW Ombudsman's office travelled to Hope Vale, Aurukun and Mossman Gorge and met with Commissioners to seek first hand guidance regarding relationships with government and the community when dealing with sensitive child protection issues. General discussions were held in regard to the CYWR agenda and the successes it has achieved in improving school attendance and education outcomes.
- TAFE Diploma of Education, Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP) students explored with Aurukun Commissioners their role in promoting education and views on the Direct Instruction model of education currently implemented at the Cape York Australian Aboriginal Academy.
- Aurukun Commissioners hosted an information session with Jawun Emerging Leaders who were visiting the Cape on their regional experiential best practice study tour.
- In Cairns the Jawun Emerging Leaders received a briefing on the operation of the Commission by Coen Commissioner Garry Port and Registrar Tammy Sovenyhazi.
- Aurukun Commissioners attended the Aurukun Community Safety Meeting to discuss community concerns and challenges in providing a safe environment for all members of the community. The Queensland Police Service and other agencies will work towards implementing the recommendations and suggestions.
- The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2011 showcased local talent including Commissioner Loretta Spratt of Mossman Gorge and Commissioner Dorothy Pootchemunka of Aurukun.
- As a sign of increased awareness of the role of the Commissioners and in acknowledgement of their influence in community, the Time for Grandparents Program sought assistance from the Commissioners to increase awareness of the program in Mossman Gorge and encourage attendance at an organised camp at Lake Tinaroo in October.
- Finn Pratt, Secretary of FaHCSIA, Kevin Keeffe, State Manager of FaHCSIA and Andrew Hewitt, Director Regional Operations Centre, travelled to Mossman Gorge and met with Commissioner Loretta Spratt to discuss the role and future of the Commissioners, challenges and future directions for Mossman Gorge and the alcohol management concerns within the community.

Observations

- The Commission congratulates the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) for their proactive approach in facilitating personal community engagement to effect solutions to tenancy breaches. The development of a relationship with the general community has reaped rewards for the department in resolving arrears, the client in assisting with budgeting in a positive manner and has utilised the Commission as a last resort. Real engagement negates the necessity to utilise a third party (i.e. the Commission) to resolve community issues. Personal engagement of the nature demonstrated has led to significant changes for the client and the Department of Communities.
- Throughout the trial, the Aurukun WBC has struggled to engage with clients and gain acceptance in the community, however, the Aurukun Commissioners report that recent efforts of several WBC staff to circulate in community and engage on a personal level with community members outside of the WBC environment is being well received.
- During quarter 13 the Mossman Gorge WBC has supported community members in addressing their concerns regarding alcohol abuse (and the resultant negative impact on children) by

working with other service providers and health services. A Liquor Accord through Liquor Licensing is currently being investigated in which a set of core behaviours are determined as unacceptable. Such behaviours will attract a common ban period from licensed venues in the Mossman area. Proposed unacceptable behaviours incorporate attacks on premises/staff/personnel, destruction of property at the premises or in community, fighting and disorderly behaviour. A common ban would apply not only at the venue the incident occurred in but at all other licensed premises in Mossman town who are participating in the Accord. Discussions are also taking place in regard to re-implementing the cask wine ban dependent on the willingness of businesses in the surrounding district to partake in the ban. The Commission commends the Mossman Gorge community members for tackling deeply sensitive and difficult issues with a ground up approach working with Queensland Police Service, government agencies and businesses.

- The eagerly awaited fulltime school nurse has now commenced at the CYAAA campus in Aurukun. The school nurse ensures students' physical and emotional wellbeing and may refer to other community/health agencies should there be specific health concerns. The Commission looks forward to school nurses being engaged in the CYAAA campuses of Coen and Hope Vale.
- Child Safety Services have commenced information sessions within the communities to address community concerns regarding the manner in which Child Safety notices are required to be lodged with the department. The first session was held in Coen on 1 September 2011 to inform community members of policy changes and to build better relationships.
- The newly installed playground for Coen with activities and shade sails has created a safe space for families to enjoy. The community has expressed thanks and appreciation to the Cook Shire Council for installing the playground.
- In response to community concerns regarding bullying and teasing, members of the Mossman Queensland Police Service have taken the opportunity to ride the school bus to and from school, spending time with the students and discussing the impact of bullying.
- The establishment of an office in Mossman State School for the Student Case Manager has created a central point of contact for students and parents.
- Mossman Gorge community members are currently putting a ladies and men's team together for the All Blacks Football Carnival. The Commission encourages the community to pursue sponsorship opportunities.
- Cape York Super Sisters have received strong support in Hope Vale, with over 20 women engaging in activities which will lead to greater employment skills and opportunities.
- Hope Vale Government Champion, Director-General, Kelvin Anderson and Indigenous consultant, Grant Sarra, continue to develop a Juvenile Justice strategy with the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council and community.
- The Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Honourable Curtis Pitt MP, Member for Cook Jason O'Brien, Hope Vale Community Champion, Kelvin Anderson, Cook Shire Council Mayor Peter Scott and community members attended the official opening in early August of the Hope Vale Community Pool in time for the summer.
- A successful Rugby League Carnival was held in Aurukun on 30 July. Members of participating teams were from Kowanyama, Mapoon, Lockhart River, Aurukun, Coen, Napranum and Pormpuraaw with Kowanyama winning the competition. The Queensland Rugby League was very impressed with the outcome of the carnival and congratulated the community on its success. The newly appointed PCYC officer for Aurukun was instrumental in the success of the carnival and is also planning future carnivals for women and youth.

- Associate Secretary from the Department of Human Services, Ben Rimmer, sought consultation with Registrar, Tammy Sovenyhazi, and Principal Case Manager, Sharon Newcomb, on the achievements, challenges and operational practicalities of the implementation of income management and the decision making processes of the Commissioners.
- The Commissioners assisted representatives from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and Colmar Brunton on the evaluation principles of the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) and the Commission. Commissioners provided advice and feedback on engaging with community members and relevant bodies in regard to the gathering of qualitative information to inform the review process on the real level of change and acceptance of the CYWR.

Challenges

- During the quarter, the Commission worked with the Department of Education and Training (DET) to identify and resolve technical and data entry errors that affected the veracity of the student attendance notices received by the Commission. These issues impacted on workload management as the Commission was required to redirect resources to data quality and checking processes.
- Mossman Gorge, Aurukun and Hope Vale agencies and service providers have experienced a number of staffing changes in this quarter. The impact on community members of frequent changes in personnel affects continuity of services and case management progress.
- Centrelink annual payments and taxation returns contributed to large cash flows in the communities. Increased alcohol consumption, partying and gambling coincided with this occurrence resulting in a fall in school attendance. Despite the annual occurrence of bulk payments and resulting consequences, bulk payments from Government agencies continue. The Commission encourages the consideration of money management practices to limit large bulk payments in the CYWR communities.
- The closure and time taken to structurally repair the Aurukun Safe House affected family reunification services for approximately six weeks. Although the Safe House has been reopened, the community remains concerned as to the long term viability of the program.

Future Direction

- On 19 August 2011 the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Honourable Curtis Pitt MP, together with the Honourable Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs announced the extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial until 1 January 2013 following extensive consultations with local communities.
- Amendments to the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* to allow for the operations of the Commission to continue until the 1 January 2013 are due to be tabled in Queensland Parliament in quarter 14.
- Although the Commission has been extended for a further 12 months, due to the small nature of its operations, limited staffing complement and the unique skills set required, the risk of losing key staff continues to be of primary concern. The Commission remains committed to developing an exit strategy with key Government and CYWR officials whilst maintaining efficiencies in logistical, financial, human resource and information technology operations. The Commission must meet the challenge of operating in an environment of strict time constraints and in a change environment of shifting Government cycles of decision making and funding.

- Local Commissioners strongly support the re-establishment of homelands and outstations and view this as an appropriate legacy to the community.
- Local Commissioners have recommended the development of a transition plan in regard to their roles and a consideration by CYWR partners to assist them to transition into new positions which will remain as roles of authority, incorporating mentoring and decision making within their communities.
- The Commission will be increasing its focus on client and community outcomes as the final year of operations approaches. Commission clients have found it a challenge to commit to making improvements in their lives. This commitment has entailed personal sacrifices made under demanding circumstances. Maintaining a focus will be paramount to achieving the goals set for the Commission and its clients. As at 31 December 2012, Income Management Orders and Agreements will be in place, BasicsCards being utilised and case plans for attendance at support services current. Transitions for clients coming off case plans and income management will be required. The Commission is anxious that continuity for community clients is maintained and holistic support continues into the future. Without smooth transitions the successes achieved as at December 2012 will be undermined.

4. 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, managed by the Registrar, provides corporate and operational support to the Commissioner, the Local Commissioners and the Local Coordinators.

Financial

The total funding budget for the original period of this trial project was \$15.221M. This funding consisted 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 \$1.945M endorsed by the Family Responsibilities Board and projected and actual interest on our operating bank account of \$0.402M.

The Queensland Government has pledged \$1.6M for the extension of the Commission and the Commonwealth Government has pledged \$16.1M to the overall Cape York Welfare Reform trial. At the time of writing the amount that will be allocated to the Commission is being negotiated with the Commonwealth Government.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 September 2011 totalled \$0.179M. This income consisted of:
 - \$0.134M reimbursement of costs associated with the extra conference sittings held in Aurukun during November and December 2010. This was received from Queensland Government funding.
 - \$0.032M expenses recovered from the prior fiscal year.
 - \$0.008M received in interest.
 - \$0.005M received from sundry revenue.

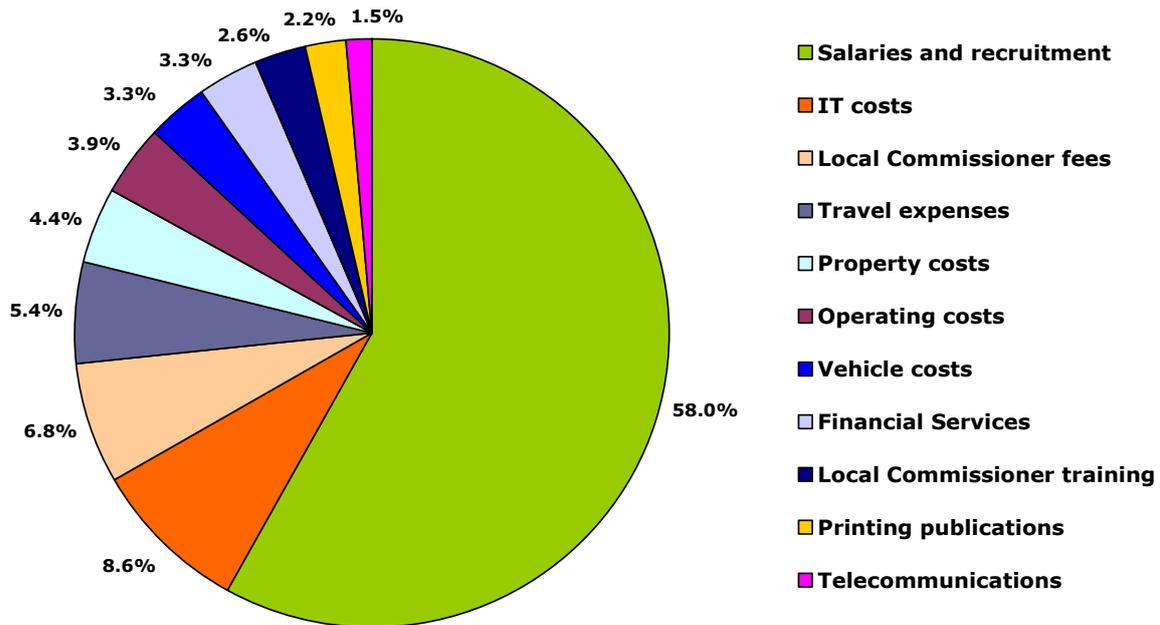
The balance of available funds in the bank, after expenses, as at 30 September 2011 is \$0.435M plus \$0.140M in debtors.

Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 September 2011 was \$1.041M (Table 1). This total represents 25.18 percent of the projected annual expenditure of \$4.135M as stated in the 2011-12 projected expenditure, disclosed on pages 41 to 48 of book 3 of the State Budget 2011-12 Service Delivery Statements.

Refer to Graph 1 below for disbursement of expenditure by category and percentage of total expenditure in quarter 13:

FRC Operating Costs by Category July 2011 to September 2011



Graph 9: Total FRC Operating costs 1 July 2011 to 30 September 2011

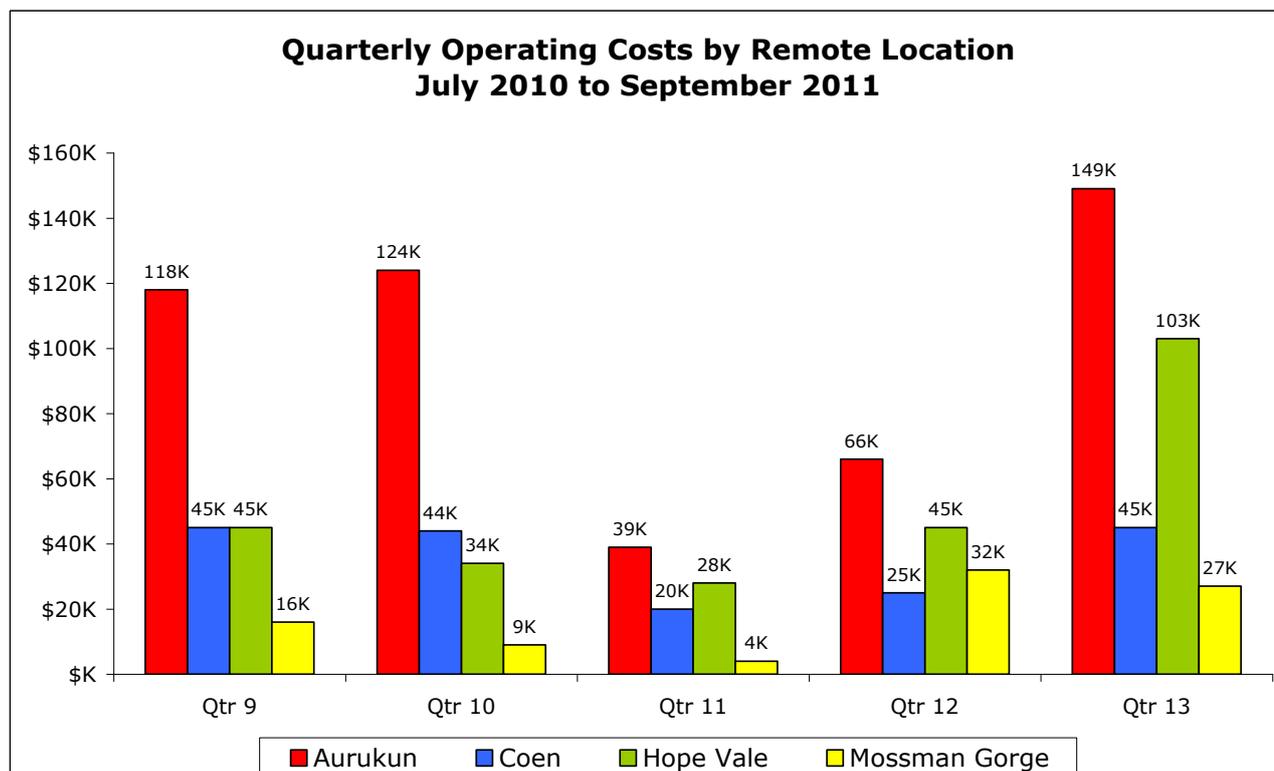
Expenditure variances from quarter 12 to quarter 13 are attributed to:

- **Salaries and recruitment** - increased due to:
 - annual awards increase
 - fringe benefits tax now paid per quarter
 - the Deputy Commissioner was engaged to conduct conferencing as required
- **Financial services** – this category was not previously itemised
- **Local Commissioner training** – this category was not previously itemised
- **Printing publications** – this is an annual expense for the production of the annual report
- **Consultants** – no consultancy services were engaged in quarter 13
- **Vehicle costs** - increased due to:
 - maintenance costs
 - the replacement of a vehicle
- **Local Commissioner fees** – the variance is only 1%
- **Telecommunications** – decreased due to diligent cost control efforts
- **Travel expenses** - decreased due to airfares for quarter 13 prepaid in June
- **External audit** - this expense is accounted for annually in June
- **Property costs** - decreased due to:
 - maintenance costs
 - quarter 12 contained end of year adjusting journals
- **IT costs** - decreased due to:
 - quarter 12 contained upgrade costs
 - quarter 12 contained adjustments to include invoices received late
 - quarter 12 included an adjustment for the annual cost of CRM software support
- **Depreciation and amortisation** – this book expense is accounted for annually in June
- **Operating costs** - decreased due to:
 - financial services are now itemised
 - Local Commissioner training is now itemised
 - quarter 12 included an adjustment for the annual cost of agency staff

1 July 2011 to 30 Sept 2011	Expenditure Qtr 12	Expenditure Qtr 13	Expenditure Variance Qtr 12 to Qtr 13
Salaries and recruitment	\$504,306.70	\$603,751.29	\$99,444.59
Financial services	\$0.00	\$34,501.46	\$34,501.46
Local Commissioner training	\$0.00	\$27,392.68	\$27,392.68
Printing publications	\$0.00	\$22,932.00	\$22,932.00
Consultants	-\$10,858.00	\$0.00	\$10,858.00
Vehicle costs	\$25,883.48	34,860.57	\$8,977.09
Local Commissioner fees	\$73,759.42	\$70,826.96	-\$2,932.46
Telecommunications	\$20,656.90	\$15,112.36	-\$5,544.54
Travel expenses	\$70,441.56	\$55,794.78	-\$14,646.78
External audit	\$35,015.45	\$0.00	-\$35,015.45
Property costs	\$92,986.69	\$45,371.28	-\$47,615.41
IT costs	\$258,096.58	\$89,412.87	-\$168,683.71
Depreciation and amortisation	\$168,978.37	\$0.00	-\$168,978.37
Operating costs	\$212,833.43	\$40,927.19	-\$171,906.24
Total expenditure	\$1,452,100.58	\$1,040,883.44	-\$411,217.14

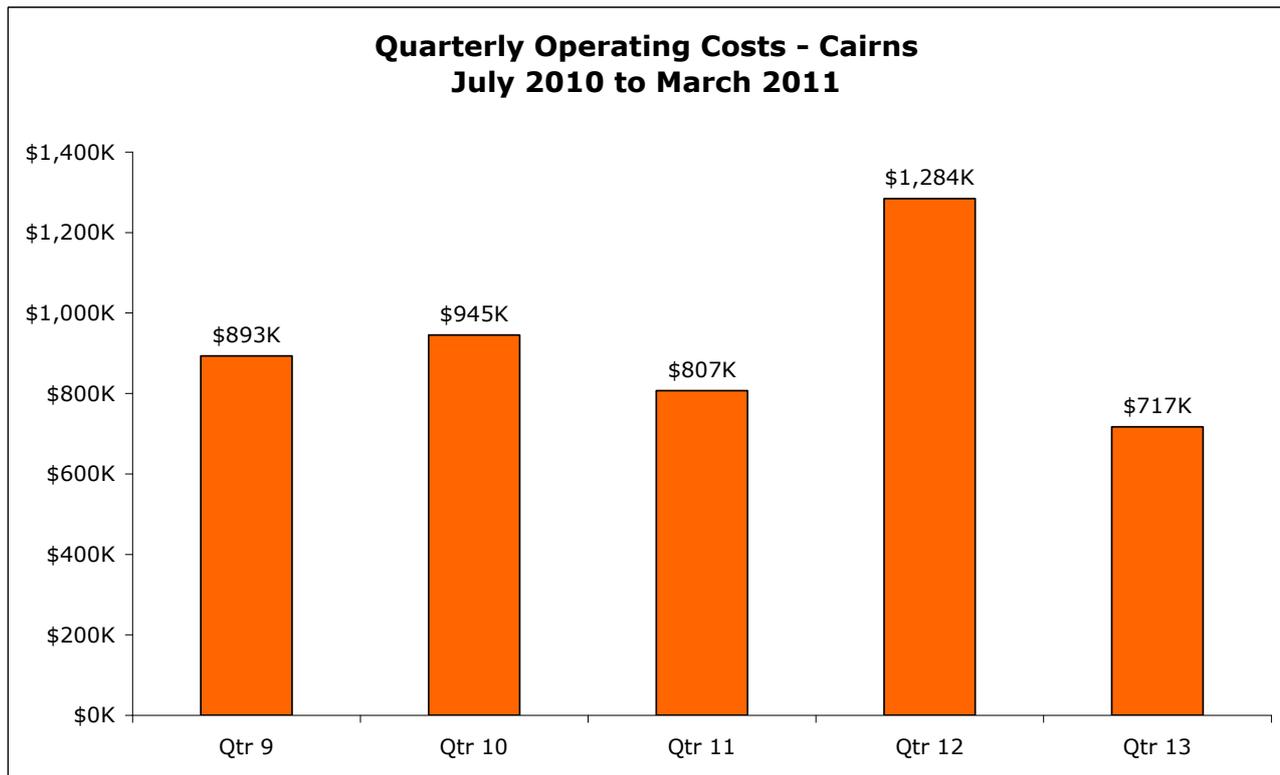
Table 2: Unaudited quarterly expenditure and variances for quarter 12 and quarter 13.

The regional operational expenditure is categorised below, in graph 2, by location and quarter. The costing to attain these figures has been changed, effective 1 July 2011. The decision to change the costing methodology was made to ensure that the total, rather than the limited costs, of each of the remote locations is shown. The converse effect of the change in the costing methodology is the decrease in the Cairns operating costs, as shown in graph 3. The transactions that are costed to the remote locations now include, but are not limited to Local Coordinators' salary costs, travel and accommodation, Local Commissioners' fees, Local Commissioners' training, communications, IT and external operating costs.



Graph 10: Operating costs by remote location 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011

The Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 13 is summarised in graph 3 and is compared to the previous four quarters. The decrease in expenditure for quarter 13 is due to the change in the costing methodology.



Graph 11: Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011

The Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 13 is detailed by cost centre in graph 4 which is comprised of four cost centres:

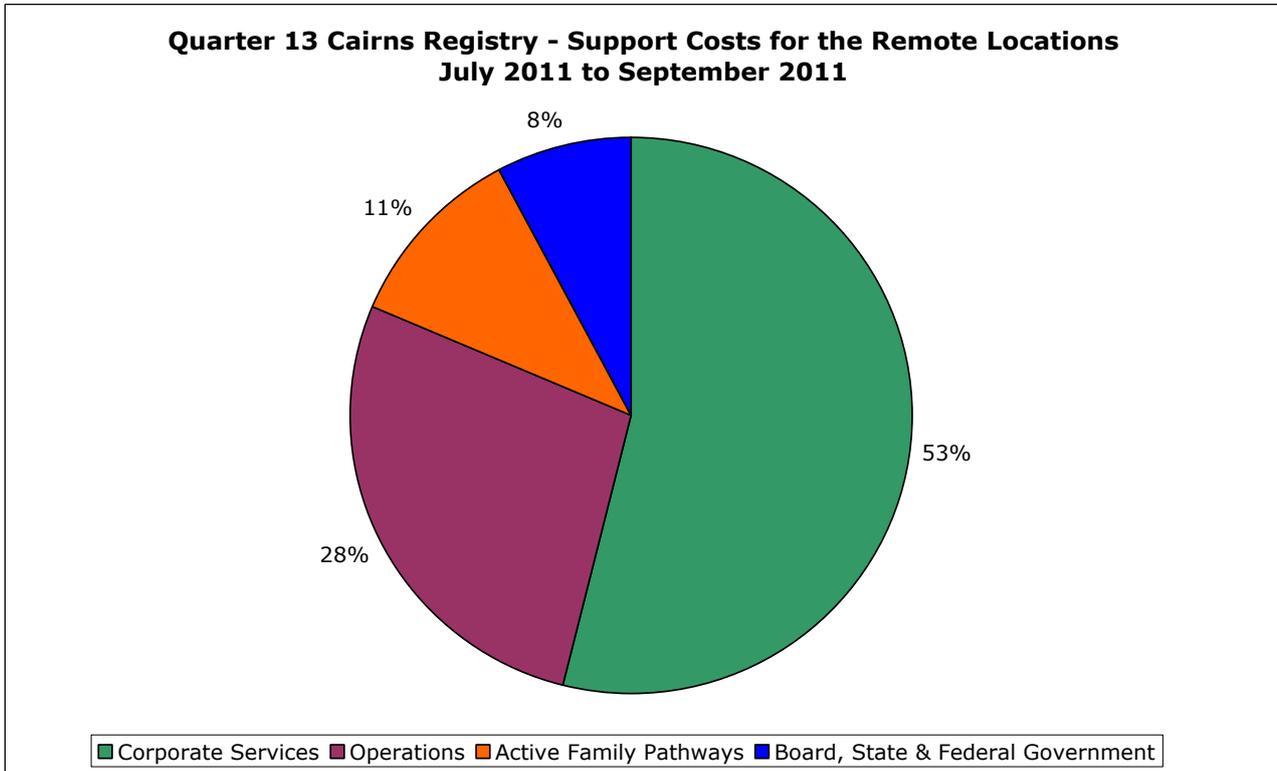
- **Corporate Services**

- 11 fulltime employees and one part-time employee, includes 30% costing of the Commissioner, the Registrar and the Executive Officer
- intake and processing of all notifications
- scheduling and organisation of conferences
- processing of all conference decisions
- overall management of the Commission
- accounting functions
- financial reporting
- policy creation and updates
- human resources
- maintenance of general IT matters and of the CRM database
- general operational management in relation to property and assets
- salary costs of the Registrar to attend FR Board and government meetings

- **Operating**

- four fulltime employees and one casual employee, includes 70% costing of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Principal Case Manager
- conferencing on site in the remote locations
- case management
- salary costs of the Commissioner to attend FR Board and government meetings

- **Active Family Pathways**
 - three employees
 - providing intensive assistance to identified persons
- **Board, State and Federal Government**
 - one employee
 - the preparation of the quarterly and annual reports
 - travel and accommodation to attend board meetings
 - attendance at government meetings
 - meeting government requirements



Graph 12: Quarterly Support Costs – Remote Locations July 2011 to September 2011

Context

The Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) 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, with bipartisan support 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.

Intake and Assessment

Agency notices are received from:

- 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 Notice 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 the tenant has breached their public housing tenancy agreement.

Once an agency notice is received, a determination is made as to 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 notice 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. Upon a determination that the matter is within jurisdiction, it is then referred to the Local Commissioners for a decision as to whether the client should be ordered to attend a conference and if other relevant persons should be invited or directed to attend the conference.

Service of Notice to Attend Conference

Following a determination to proceed to conference, the client is served with a 'Notice to Attend Conference' at which time the client is informed of the time, date and place of the conference, the purpose of the conference, what they can expect to occur and the ramifications if they fail to attend. The notice is served at least 7 days prior to the conference date. In the event that a client fails to attend as per the notice, the Commission re-schedules the conference and again notice is served 7 days prior to the re-scheduled conference.

Conference

At the conference Commissioners discuss with the client the matter/s subject of the agency notice and any related problems the client wishes to raise. Local Commissioners are Elders or respected community members who offer advice and direction to the client in an atmosphere which is entirely informal and confidential. Where the client's first language is not English, the conference is held in the local language of the client with Local Commissioners translating as required. Conferences are convened with a panel of either the Commissioner (or Deputy Commissioner) and two Local Commissioners, or in certain circumstances three Local Commissioners. All Commissioners have equal authority in the decision making process. The Commissioners must attempt to reach a unanimous decision. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached a majority decision is acceptable, however, the reasons as to why it was not unanimous must be documented. Decisions made at conference are made fairly and with the best interests of the client and their family in mind. At the conclusion of the conference Commissioners may decide that no action is necessary, reprimand the client, encourage the client to enter into a Family Responsibility Agreement (FRA), direct the client to relevant community support services or place the client on a Conditional Income Management order.

Referrals

During the conferencing process Commissioners may decide to refer the client to support services such as:

- 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
- MPower/FIM to assist with budgeting and meeting priority financial needs of individuals and families
- Student Case Managers (SCMs) to assist parents to ensure children attend school
- Ending Family Violence (EFV) program to assist the client in addressing violent behaviours or
- Other appropriate support services.

Conditional Income Management

A conference decision may include the issue of a notice to Centrelink of a Conditional Income Management (CIM) order. Due consideration is given firstly to the individual circumstances of the client and whether it may be more appropriate to take alternative action. Primarily CIM orders are issued to stabilise a client's circumstances, particularly where children or other vulnerable people are concerned. CIM orders are also made where a client fails to attend two scheduled conferences, is not complying with their agreement or order, or the Commission is continuing to receive additional notices in relation to their behaviour. CIM orders are issued for a defined period (normally 12 months) with the Commissioners determining whether 60 or 75 percent of fortnightly welfare payments are managed.

Centrelink enacts the notice and meets with the client to discuss their priority needs and financial obligations such as rent and bills and allocates the remainder of funds to a BasicsCard for the purchase of food and other consumables. The client receives the remaining funds (25 or 40 percent) as discretionary spending. CIM orders are reviewed at the six and nine month point of the order. Some clients request extensions of the CIM order or a decrease of the percentage managed from 75 to 60 percent to ensure stability of their finances is maintained. Clients may also voluntarily enter into a voluntary income management (VIM) arrangement to assist them in managing their budgets and meeting the costs of everyday essentials.

Case Management

Clients who enter into an agreement, or who are ordered to attend community support services are case managed by the Commission. Service providers are required to submit a monthly progress report by the fifth day of each month, advising if the client has attended and engaged with the provider and the progress they are making towards achieving their goals. The Commission collaborates with service providers to maintain consistent reporting criteria, encourages each service provider to engage in a quality assurance process in regard to the quality of information provided in the monthly progress reports, and conducts information sessions and updates in the communities. Service providers are encouraged to attend conference proceedings in each CYWR community and discuss with the Commissioners the decision making processes.

Each agreement or order is monitored by the Commission for the period of the agreement/order. As a result of the progress reports received from service providers, clients are assessed to determine if they are fulfilling their obligations under the agreement or order. Additional information is sought from agencies and service providers which is used, together with local knowledge, to decide upon the best course of action for the client.

It should be noted that the number of clients case managed includes those who are incarcerated, out of community, in hospital and on probation orders. Their circumstances are monitored to ensure that where change occurs, such as release from prison, they are supported on their return to the community.

Active Family Pathways

In November 2010 the Commission identified the need for a strategy to appropriately address the complex problems faced by some of its clients. The Active Family Pathways (AFP) case coordination framework was developed and agreed upon by stakeholders. AFP is offered to select individuals and families requiring assistance and support to navigate services and agencies to 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 AFP relies heavily on the support and active participation of service providers in each of the communities.

The Commission anticipates that a key outcome of the AFP will be increased school attendance and clients addressing significant issues within their lives. It acknowledges, however, that issues such as addiction and violence are personal challenges which require the sourcing of long term solutions to effect permanent change.

Show Cause Notices

Where a client does not comply with their agreement or order, Show Cause proceedings may be initiated and the client ordered to attend before the Commission to explain reasons for non-compliance and if necessary an order for CIM may be made. 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 agreements or orders. Each Show Cause is therefore assessed on a case by case basis. This process is essential to ensure that clients are treated in a fair and just manner.

Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Clients may submit an Application to Amend or End their Agreement or Order where their circumstances may have changed. Commissioners view the hearing of the applications as an opportunity to engage with clients. For some clients this may be their first conference attendance as the CIM order may have been invoked due to their non-attendance at two previous conferences. The client is encouraged to provide evidence as to why the application should be heard and each application is considered on its own merit. When CIM orders are revoked clients are encouraged to continue to address any remaining challenges and to exercise personal responsibility in their lives.

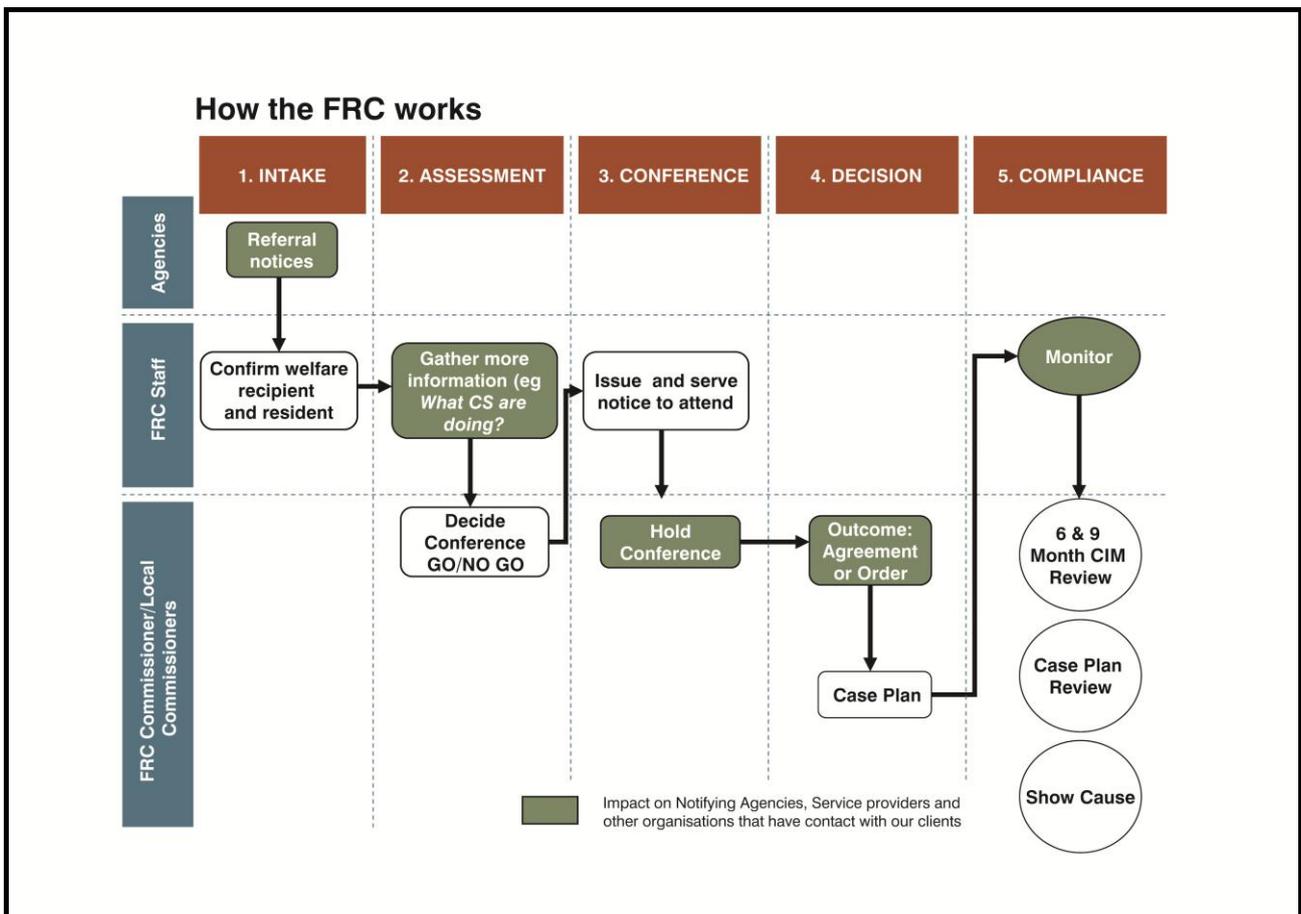


Table 3: Commission processes.

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	44	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	46	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	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	12, 13	14	15
18 JULY	RC					Training Week 20 Estimates 22 Cairns Show Day Holiday
25 JULY	RC	25	26, 27, 28			
1 AUGUST	RC			2, 3	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	10	7, 11
14 NOVEMBER	DRG		15, 16, 17			14
21 NOVEMBER	DRG			22, 23	24	25 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

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.

MPower/Family Income Management (FIM):

MPower is a voluntary, confidential and free money management program that supports Indigenous individuals and families to meet their basic needs and plan for the future. MPower provides clients with access to emergency transactional support and training in specially designed money management tools to improve money management capabilities. MPower planning helps clients with budgeting and goal setting and ongoing coaching sessions that support clients meet their commitments and achieve their plans. MPower also operates an iBank kiosk facility that offers independent or assisted access to telephone and internet banking.

MPower is open to all families in the Welfare Reform communities and operates from the Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge Opportunity Hubs. MPower incorporates the Family Income Management program which has been operating in a number of Cape York communities since 2001.

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, Mossman Gorge and Aurukun.

Student Case Management Framework (SCMF):

The Student Case Management Framework (SCMF) was developed by Cape York Partnerships to support student attendance. The SCMF uses Professor Herbert C Kelman's behavioural change model which identifies three stages leading to behavioural change: compliance, identification, and internalisation. SCMF 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 SCMF, Student Case Managers (SCMs) 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. SCMs also refer parents to support services like MPower or support services as required. Such quick response reduces the incidence of parents being called before the Commission on student attendance-related issues.

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

Transitional Support Services (TSS)

Transition Support Services (TSS) supports students and their families from remote Indigenous communities in transitioning into secondary boarding schools by providing assistance with applying for ABSTUDY and scholarships, travel arrangements, information on appropriate schools and school applications, whilst also building relationships and assisting the children to maintain contact with their culture and community.

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.

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 2009³.

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 2009⁴.



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 2009⁵.

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 2009⁶.

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

³ Adults 17 and over provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP figures.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.