

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. 14

October 2011 to December 2011



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

Executive Summary

During quarter 14, 851 agency notices were received which were within the Commission's jurisdiction, an increase of 162 from last quarter. There were 458 conferences held for the same period, representing an increase of 42 from last quarter which resulted in nine Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) being entered into, 71 orders made to attend community support services and 67 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders issued. When compared to last quarter this represents a decrease of six FRA's, and an increase of 34 orders to attend community support services and 14 orders for CIM. 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, 42 VIM agreements have been processed, demonstrating that community members have become proactive in controlling their finances.

The Commission case managed 180 clients during the quarter. The Commissioners made 159 referrals relating to 76 clients, an increase of 63 referrals from last quarter.

The Active Family Pathways (AFP) program has continued through the quarter with clients exiting the program at the cessation of the 12 month case plans. The Commission is currently reviewing the framework of the program to structure various levels of assistance to meet individual client needs.

Further activity during the quarter consisted of six Show Cause conferences held, an increase of five from last quarter and 19 Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received, an increase of one from the previous quarter.

Coen school attendance increased by 1.0 percentage point from term 4, 2010 (87.6 percent) to term 4, 2011 (88.6 percent). Despite a decrease in school attendance for Aurukun from term 4, 2010 to term 4, 2011, Aurukun continues to show a significant increase in school attendance since welfare reform began in 2008. Since term 4 2008 Aurukun's attendance has increased 17.9 percentage points.

On 4 November 2011 amendments to the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* were passed by the Queensland Parliament. These amendments officially sanction the extension of the Commission until 1 January 2013.

With the recent inclusion of the preparatory year as a compulsory year of education, the Commission will need to consider the impact of this extra year of schooling upon its administrative and data reporting functions. It is likely the school attendance notices may increase with the necessity to report on the preparatory year which will impact on quantitative statistical comparisons from the commencement of the Commission to 2012.

Local Commissioners continue to play a vital role in the welfare reform process. Local Commissioners have worked proactively toward increasing school attendance, attending the end of year school awards ceremony and presenting awards on behalf of the Commission. Awards were presented for outstanding school attendance and for academic achievement. Nineteen conferences were also conducted independently by Local Commissioners who continue to expand upon their leadership capacity whilst driving Commission processes. The sustainability of the welfare reform agenda will be consolidated through the commitment of these dedicated individuals.

The Commission looks forward to continuing its existing partnerships in 2012 and commits to building upon past achievements in order to remain an integral part of welfare reform.

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Abbreviations

AFP	Active Family Pathways
ATODs	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs
BBN	Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy
CYP	Cape York Partnerships
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DET	Department of Education and Training
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
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
HOI	Health Outcomes International
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIITF	National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Task Force
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
QIFVLS	Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RIS	Regional Intake 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 31 December 2011.

1. Activities and Trends

Notices

In quarter 14 the Commission received **1256 agency notices**¹. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 851 notices (68 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 405 notices (32 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Within jurisdiction notices comprised of:

- 358 Magistrates Courts notices
- 443 School Attendance notices
- 37 Child Safety notices
- 13 Housing Tenancy notices

Of the 405 notices not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 334 Magistrates Court notices, 61 School Attendance notices, 8 Child Safety notices and 2 Housing Tenancy notices.

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

- **Aurukun's 492** notices constitute **57.8 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:

- 206 Magistrates Court notices
- 273 School Attendance notices
- 6 Child Safety notices
- 7 Housing Tenancy notices

54 Magistrates Court notices, 30 School Attendance notices and 2 Housing Tenancy notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Coen's 49** notices constitute **5.8 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 37 Magistrates Court notices
- 3 School Attendance notices
- 9 Child Safety notices

12 Magistrates Court notices, 4 School Attendance notices and 2 Child Safety notices 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 234** notices constitute **27.5 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:
 - 65 Magistrates Court notices
 - 150 School Attendance notices
 - 19 Child Safety notices

53 Magistrates Court notices, 27 School Attendance notices and 6 Child Safety notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Mossman Gorge's 76** notices constitute **8.9 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:
 - 50 Magistrates Court notices
 - 17 School Attendance notices
 - 3 Child Safety notices
 - 6 Housing Tenancy notices

215 Magistrates Court notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

Since its commencement the Commission has received 9154 agency notices within its jurisdiction. Total notices increased from 977 in quarter 13 to 1256 in quarter 14. Of those notices in jurisdiction Magistrates Court, School Attendance and Housing Tenancy notices increased whilst Child Safety notices decreased.

Magistrates Court notices increased this quarter to 358 from the 211 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun increased by 125 notices with Coen and Mossman Gorge also increasing by 23 notices and 21 notices respectively and Hope Vale decreasing by 22 notices.

School Attendance notices increased from 426 in quarter 13 to 443 in quarter 14. Aurukun and Hope Vale experienced an increase of 17 notices and 13 notices respectively whilst Coen and Mossman Gorge experienced a decrease of five notices and eight notices 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.

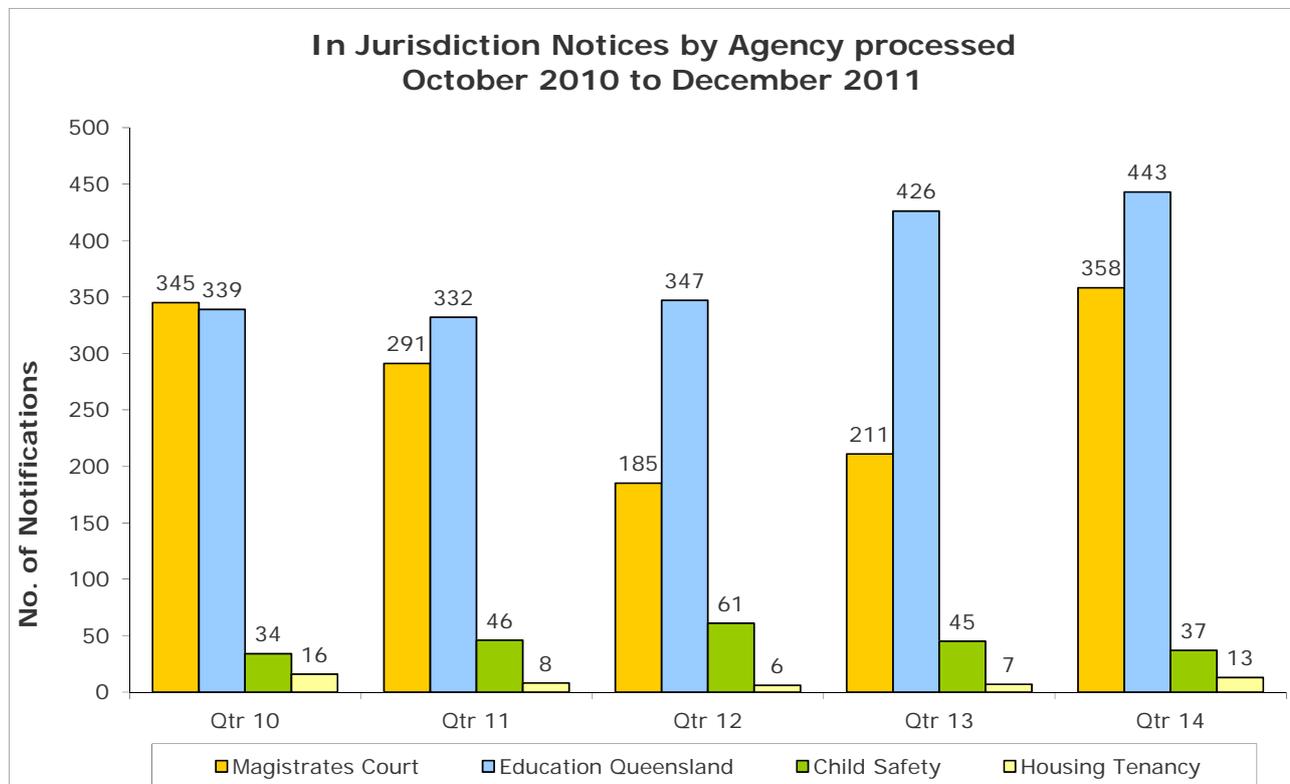
	2008	2009	2010	2011	Difference 2008 to 2011
School/Community	Term 4 (%)				
Hopevale State School	81.5	84.1	80.6	77.5	-4.0
Mossman Gorge Community	78.7	79.5	77.7	72.1	-6.6
Western Cape College - Aurukun	43.5	61.6	64.8	61.4	17.9
Western Cape College - Aurukun - Primary	50.9	66.8	72.7	66.1	15.2
Western Cape College - Aurukun - Secondary	21.2	36.1	38.5	33.3	12.1
Western Cape College - Coen	94.1	90.4	87.6	88.6	-5.5

Table 1: School Attendance Rate Summary for term 4 2008 to term 4 2011.

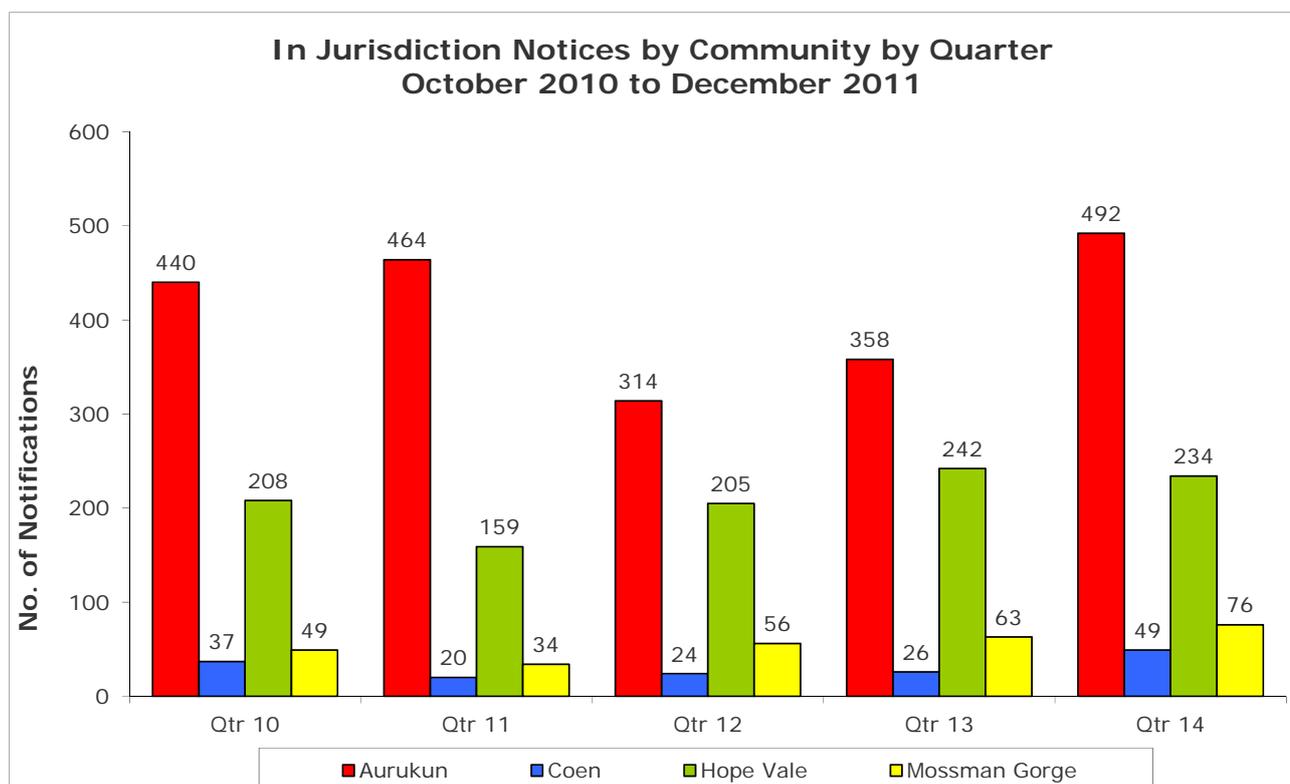
The Commission notes secondary school students are not currently case managed as part of the Student Case Management Framework (SCMF) but are included in the DET attendance statistics.

Child Safety notices decreased from 45 in quarter 13 to 37 in quarter 14. Aurukun decreased from 18 notices in quarter 13 to six notices in quarter 14 with Mossman Gorge also decreasing by two notices. Coen and Hope Vale increased by five notices and one notice respectively.

Housing Tenancy notices increased from seven in quarter 13 to 13 in quarter 14. Aurukun and Mossman Gorge recorded minor fluctuations with an increase of four notices and two notices respectively.

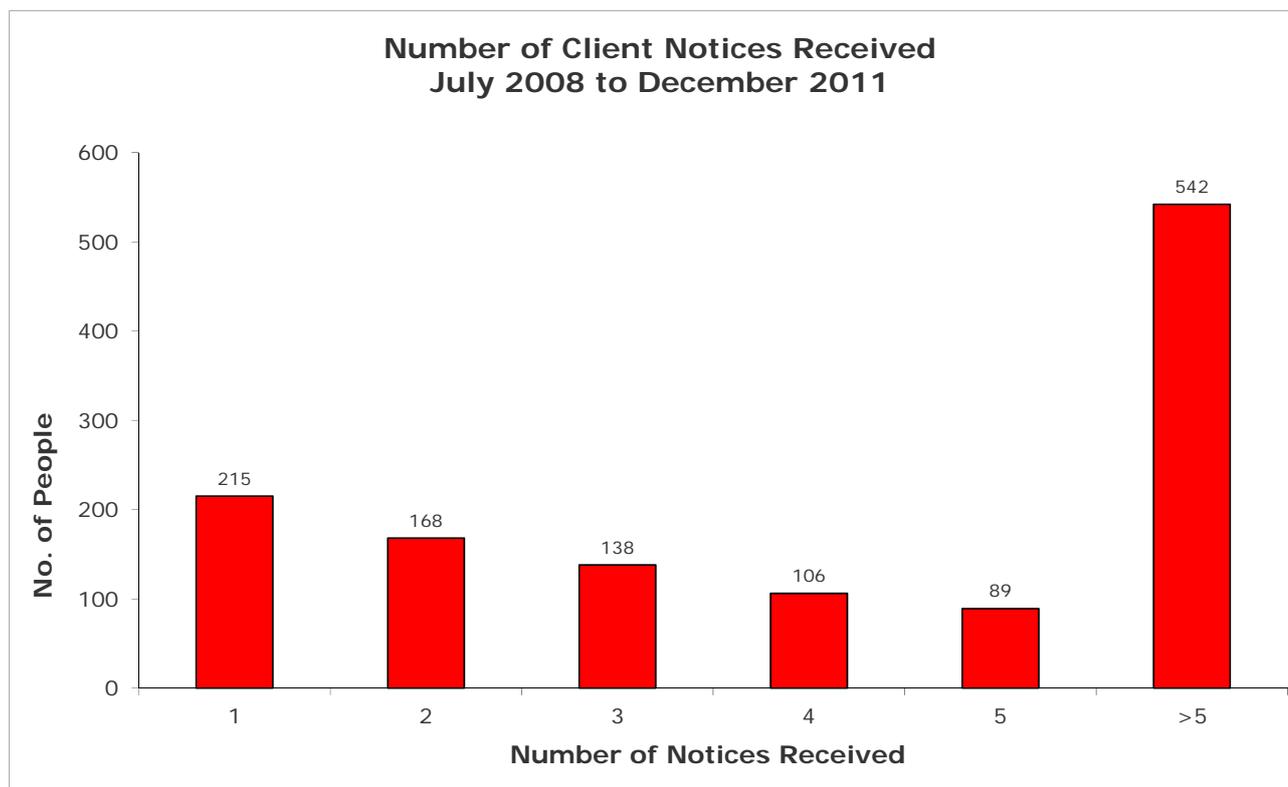


Graph 1: Notices by agency processed 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011.



Graph 2: Notices by community and quarter 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011.

Over the life of the Commission 82.9 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 43.1 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, 17.1 percent of clients have received only one notice.



Graph 3: Clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 31 December 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).

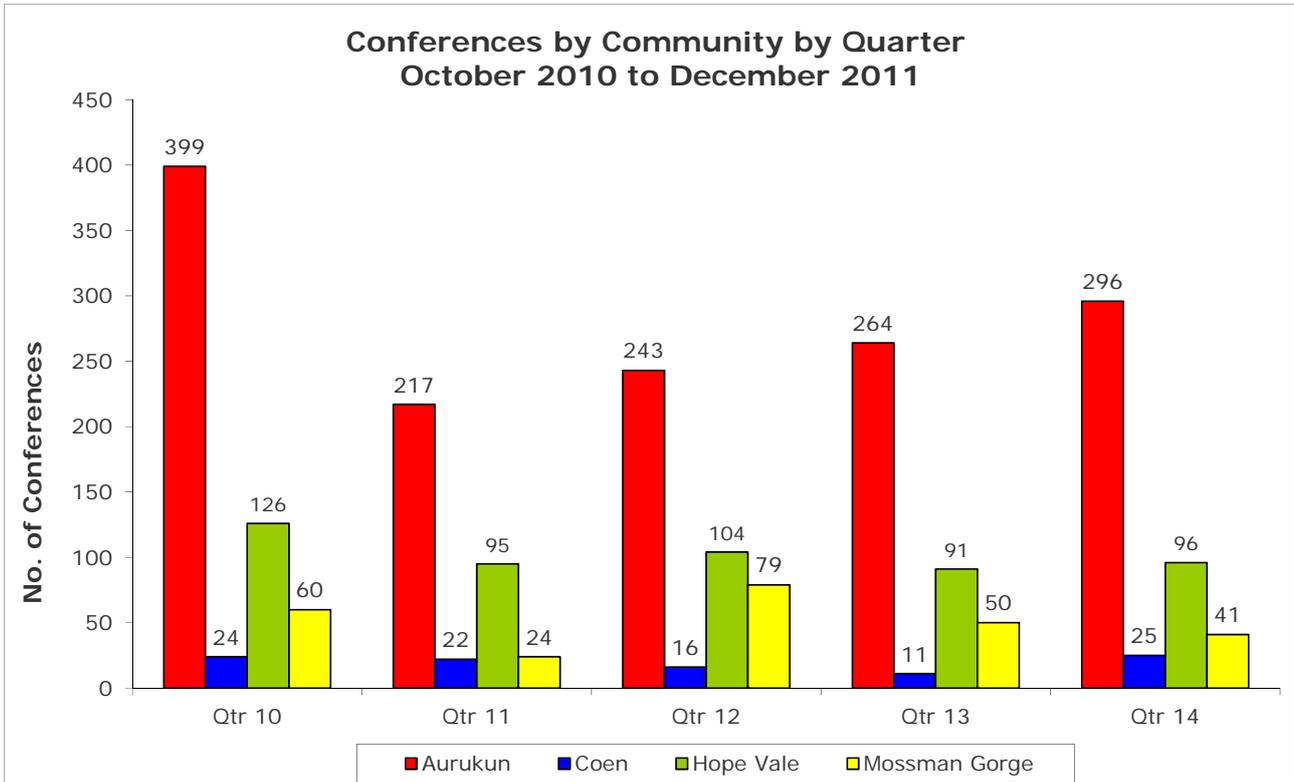
Conferences

458 conferences² were held across the four communities in quarter 14 resulting in nine Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 71 Orders made to attend community support services and 67 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders as well as no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Thirty-five new clients were conferenced during the quarter and 19 conferences were conducted independently by Local Commissioners as provided for under the Act. Details of conferencing activity in each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun - 296 conferences** were held in Aurukun in quarter 14.
- **Coen - 25 conferences** were held in Coen in quarter 14.
- **Hope Vale - 96 conferences** were held in Hope Vale in quarter 14.
- **Mossman Gorge - 41 conferences** were held in Mossman Gorge in quarter 14.

Conferences increased from 416 in quarter 13 to 458 in quarter 14 as a result of an additional six sitting days. The number of conferences, however, is lower than for the corresponding period in 2010 of 609. During the corresponding period in 2010 the Commission held six weeks of additional sittings in Aurukun in response to a request from the Family Responsibilities (FR) Board to address the issue of school attendance.

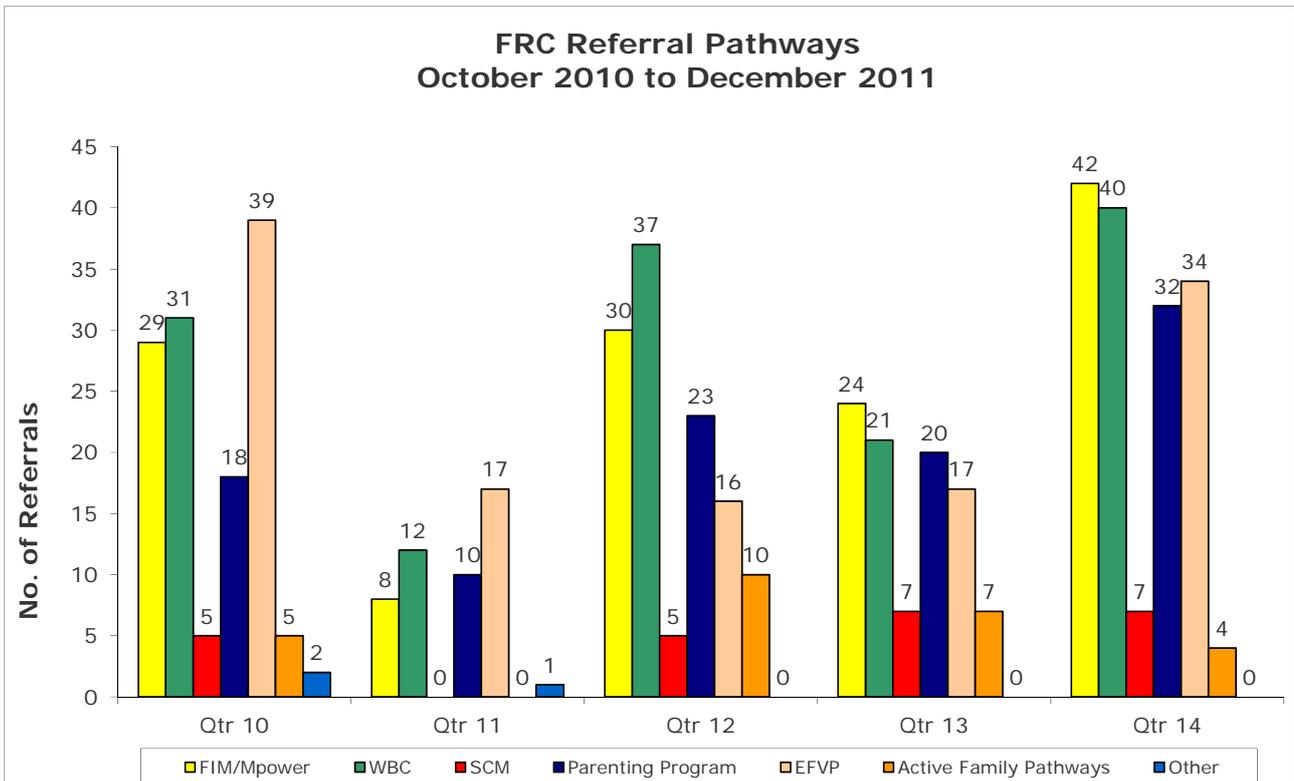
² The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.



Graph 4: Conferences by community and quarter, 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011.

Referrals

Referrals to service providers increased from 96 in quarter 13 to 159 in quarter 14, relating to 76 clients. Since commencement the Commission has referred 643 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 50.9 percent of clients on 12 month service referral plans. Referral trends in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun increased by 60; Coen and Mossman Gorge increased by one and 15 respectively; and Hope Vale decreased by 13.



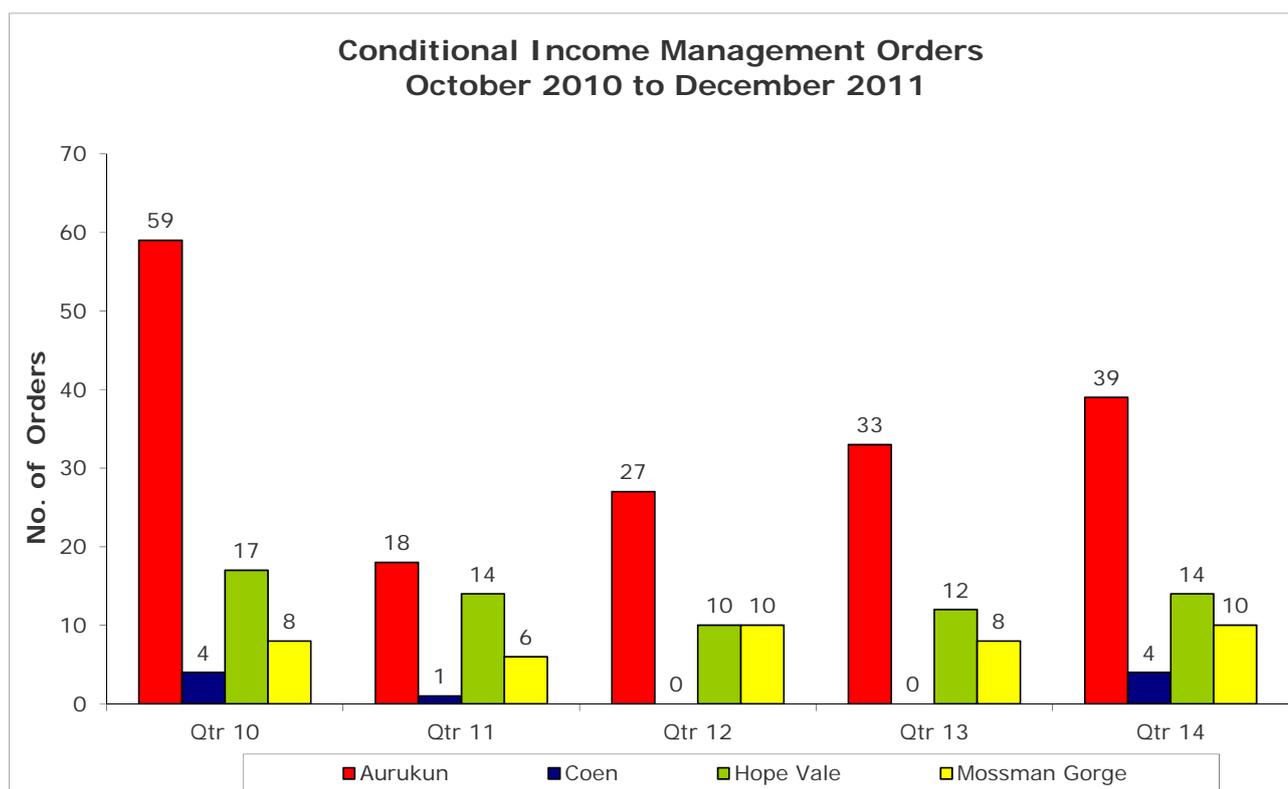
Graph 5: Referral Pathways 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011.

Conditional Income Management

Sixty-seven Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter 14, an increase of 14 from quarter 13. Since the commencement of the Commission 664 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 418 clients. During the quarter increases were experienced in all communities. Aurukun increased by six, Coen increased by four and both Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased by two orders for the quarter.

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 31 December 2011, 33.1 percent of the Commission's clients have been subject to a CIM order over the past three and half 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, 42 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 October 2010 to 31 December 2011.

Case Management

As at 31 December 2011, 180 clients were being case managed, a decrease from 186 in quarter 13. Over the last four quarters the number of clients being case managed has fallen by 18 across the communities with the number of clients being case managed in Aurukun and Hope Vale reducing by eight each, Coen reducing by six and Mossman Gorge increasing by four.

Active Family Pathways

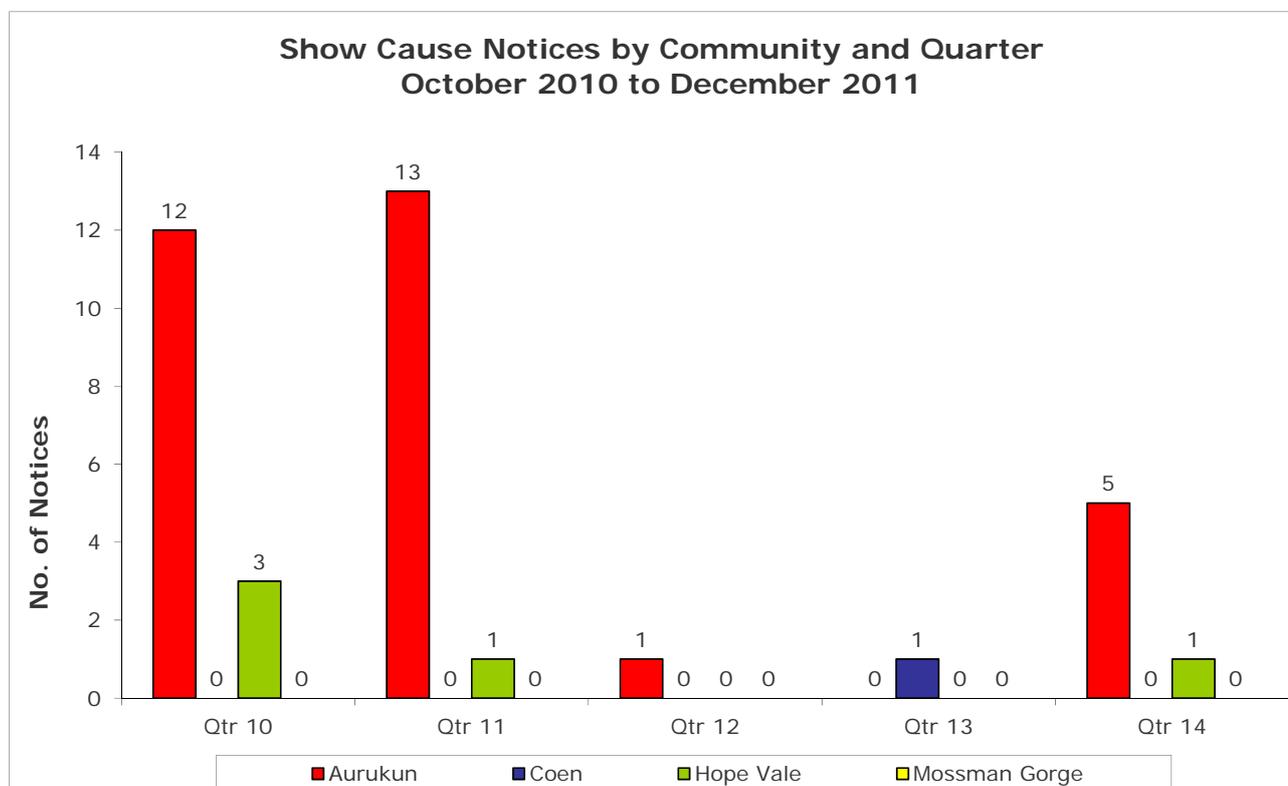
The Commission is currently conducting a review of the Active Family Pathways (AFP) framework. As part of this review all clients under the AFP framework have been assessed, resulting in a number of clients completing the AFP framework, creating vacancies to engage new clients in early 2012. Since the commencement of Active Family Pathways in November 2010, the Commission has managed a total of 24 clients under the framework.

The AFP framework continues to work with clients to identify and resolve issues regarding entitlements, eligibility and sustainable solutions to daily challenges. Once clients are empowered with knowledge and the ability to act on information, real changes have occurred. With the approaching 2012 school year, the AFP Officers, Commissioners and clients together with the assistance of Transition Support Services Officers, Centrelink (Abstudy) staff and community employed staff have been seeking proactive strategies to transition students into secondary education. This focus on secondary education will continue in 2012. 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. The Commission welcomes the support received by a number of agencies and encourages those unable to provide support to consider resourcing levels, staff training and commitment to the communities.

Show Cause Notices

During quarter 14, six Show Cause hearings were held. Five hearings were held in Aurukun and one in Hope Vale. These matters resulted in:

- 2 Clients Income Managed and ordered to comply with the new case plan
- 2 Clients rescheduled until the next quarter and order to comply with the case plan
- 1 Client ordered to comply with the new case plan
- 1 Client Income Managed



Graph 7: Show Cause Notices 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011.

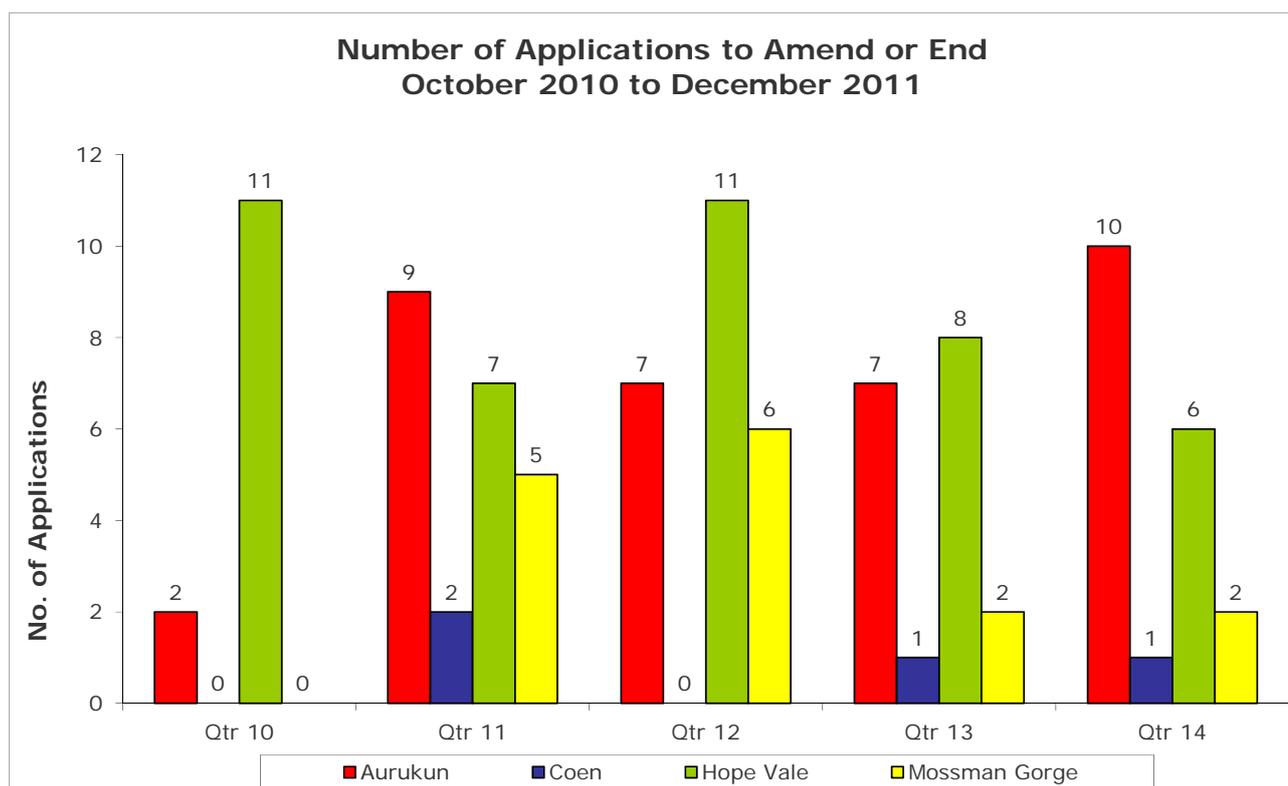
The Commission cannot show cause clients who have been unable to engage with a referred service provider due to the inability of the service provider to provide services to our clients. If the service provider does not record missed appointment dates accurately, the lack of this information further inhibits show cause actions. 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.

Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Nineteen applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received in quarter 14, an increase of one from quarter 13. Outcomes of the 19 applications received are as follows:

- 6 Income Management orders and agreements revoked
- 6 Applications dismissed
- 3 Applications rescheduled until February 2012
- 3 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decisions pending
- 1 Application dismissed and client 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 October 2010 to 31 December 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. During quarter 14 the Commission engaged with the following CYWR service providers:

Active Family Pathways Service Providers

During the quarter, the Commission and AFP Support Officers reviewed the status of AFP clients and the ability of service providers to assist the Commission and clients in achieving client and case plan goals. The Commission recognises that the operational capacity of many services providers limits their ability to assist the client within required timeframes and prior to the cessation of the Commission.

AFP Officers have conducted exit interviews with a number of clients who have completed AFP case plans. The Commission is currently reviewing the AFP processes of selection, case management and goal achievement in order to place less reliance on service providers and offer greater assistance to clients from Local Commissioners and the AFP Officer to achieve their core goals. Core goals incorporate improving school attendance, adopting healthy lifestyles and other goals specific to the client's needs.

The Commissioners continue to emphasise 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 Police Citizens Youth Clubs, provide assistance and relief to parents and carers, however targeted, long term assistance is required for these young children, teenagers and their carers. The Commission encourages a collaborative approach between all levels of government to address the specific needs of youth in the communities.

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 1 December 2011. 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. Due to ongoing postponement of programs, the MOU was extended to 9 December 2011 to deliver a program in Hope Vale. 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 resulting in the delivery of 10 programs and 34 clients completing the program during the MOU period. The RFDS have advised that the cancellation

and rescheduling of programs occurred due to logistical and staffing difficulties 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, however, RFDS advise it is a requirement under their funding arrangements. The Commission encourages the State and Commonwealth Government to continue with the provision of the EFV program in the CYWR communities as 59 clients were outstanding to complete the program as at 31 December 2011. The Commissioners report improvements in the behaviour of those clients who have attended. The Commissioners wish to continue referring clients to the program due to the successes achieved to date.

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 has been scheduled. RFDS advise two workshops have been conducted in the quarter, though RFDS report they are unable to provide the number of graduates due to confidentiality.

The Commission looks forward to confirmation in regard to the continuation of the program either by QCS or under the combined QCS/RFDS format.

MPower/Family Income Management

MPower is an opportunity based framework for money management which evolved from CYP's original money management program, Family Income Management (FIM). The Commission continues to work with MPower to encourage client attendance. Clients are coached in financial matters utilising computer technology. Many clients feel challenged with the technology and are limited in their ability to access or utilise electronic media. Increased engagement by MPower may be required to encourage clients to continue participating in the electronic format. Attendance is vital for those clients currently referred and income managed in order to establish budgets and plan for the future. When the Commission ceases on 31 December 2012 income management orders will also cease and the Commission is eager that those clients requiring assistance receive the benefit of their MPower referrals.

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. Unfortunately staffing issues in Aurukun have limited client engagement to only a few high priority clients. 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 assisted CYP 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 and awaits notice this has occurred with the new funding arrangements.

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. In quarter 14 the Commissioners and SCMs worked

together closely in the assessment and presentation of the school attendance awards to students with excellent school attendance for the entire year.

Transition Support Services

Throughout quarter 14 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. This quarter, 36 successful applications to 11 boarding schools were made by Aurukun families, seven successful applications were made by Coen families and six successful applications were made by Hope Vale families. Success with these applications was achieved as a result of the readiness and enthusiasm of families to research schools, attend interviews and commit to the preparations required for boarding school. Part of this preparation also often includes students undertaking additional studies to meet intake requirements. TSS will continue to provide information sessions and support for students and their families including farewell barbeques early in 2012 which will be supported by the Local Commissioners. The Commission and TSS wish to congratulate the students and parents of successful 2011 year 12 boarding school graduates. Graduates were comprised of two students from Aurukun, two students from Coen and one student from Hope Vale. All graduates will move on to tertiary study or scheduled positions within the workforce in 2012.

Wellbeing Centres

Throughout the CYWR operational period the Wellbeing Centres have continued to face challenges in retention of suitably qualified staff. In quarter 14 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 Aurukun Wellbeing Centre has experienced significant staff attrition during the quarter.

The Commission has continued working with the Wellbeing Centres to encourage engagement with clients for the entire 12 months of the case plan. Clients with multiple and complex needs require longer term engagement in community based initiatives, such as transitioning to Men's Groups.

The Commission continues to seek clarification around the Wellbeing Centres 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 Wellbeing Centres 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.

3. Observations, Challenges and Future Direction

With the recent twelve month extension, the Commission is committed to developing the capacity of Local Commissioners to assist in the restoration of social norms and local Indigenous authority. The primary goal of welfare reform is to progress beyond the initial identification and management of dysfunction and passive welfare 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:

- The Commission welcomed new Hope Vale Local Commissioners Ivan Deemal and Erica Deeral and Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners Karen Gibson and Karen Shuan. The Commission recognises the commitment and wisdom brought by the new Commissioners and looks forward to their contribution in 2012. The Commission would also like to thank outgoing Deputy Commissioner Andrew James Brooks and all Local Commissioners for the dedication with which they have performed their duties as Commissioners and appreciates their contribution to the leadership of their communities and the work of welfare reform.
- Mossman Gorge Commissioners met with the Honourable Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs during a tour of the Mossman Gorge Gateway project in October. Discussions were centred on the accomplishments of the Commissioners, the objectives still to be achieved and the strengths of the Mossman Gorge community.
- The Opposition Leader the Honourable Tony Abbott MP and his daughter spent four days in Hope Vale during October. Mr Abbott spent time with Commissioners Hart and Gibson and their families during the building of their new family home. During this time he spoke to both Commissioners acquiring an overview on how the CYWR trial was progressing in their community and their roles as Commissioners.
- Whilst acting as Queensland Premier, the Honourable Andrew Fraser MP and Jason O'Brien, MP member for Cook, met with Aurukun Commissioners and community members to announce more than \$685,000 in Queensland Government funding to continue special education, language and cultural programs at the campuses of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA). The Commissioners received acknowledgement and recognition for their contribution to improving educational outcomes and social change.
- The Queensland Minister for Education and Industrial Relations, the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, visited Aurukun and Coen along with the member for Cook, Jason O'Brien MP, and the Deputy Director-General for Education Queensland, Lyn McKenzie. Whilst in Aurukun the Minister met with the Aurukun Commissioners to discuss the improvements in school attendance achieved through the implementation of Commission processes, and how the improvements in attendance have assisted the progress of Indigenous education.
- Paul Hoolihan MP ALP State Member for Kepple and Peter Dowling MP LNP State Member for Redlands accompanied Commissioner Glasgow whilst conducting conferences in Aurukun and

Coen during October. The Commissioners in each community hosted the dignitaries and provided them with an opportunity to observe the conferencing process and the process of engaging with clients. Visits were also conducted with service providers and classes were observed in progress at the CYAAA.

- Jennifer Albrecht Intelligence Analyst for the National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Task Force (NIITF) of the Australian Crime Commission met with the Aurukun Commissioners to discuss the nature and extent of violence and child abuse in their community. These discussions will provide input into the identification of good practice in the prevention, detection and responses to violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities.
- The Aurukun community hosted members of the Jawun Cape York Executive Leadership group. Aurukun Commissioners presented an overview of the Commission and challenges and rewards experienced by the Commissioners over the last three and half years.
- The Aurukun Commissioners and Aurukun Local Coordinator translated, provided pictures and formulated a Wik Munkan version of the 'Weed it Out – Not our Culture' booklet which is utilised by the Queensland Police Service for drug education and prevention. The booklet was formally launched in November 2011 at the Aurukun Town Square.
- The Commissioners in respective communities, assisted representatives from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and survey company Colmar Brunton to prepare a survey questionnaire seeking information in regard to changes in behaviour, norms and attitudes in the reform communities.
- Commissioner Glasgow together with Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale Commissioners attended school award ceremonies in their communities. The Commissioners enjoyed the school performances with a central theme promoting the understanding and appreciation of all cultures through learning and experience. The Commissioners presented awards to a boy and girl from each year level who achieved the highest attendance for the year and the most overall scholastically improved student for the year.
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS) has acknowledged the assistance of the Commissioners in providing advice and support to the victims of violence and their families within the conferencing processes and as trusted leaders in their communities.

Observations

- The announcement of the establishment of a banana plantation at Hope Vale is a promising and positive step towards economic development which will provide an opportunity to improve employment opportunities and the economic health of Hope Vale.
- The Congress of Clans which represents 12 traditional owner groups who hold native title over the land of Hope Vale, have been granted 100,000 hectares of freehold title land under the State's Aboriginal Land Act together with an ex-gratia payment of \$6.5 million in unpaid royalties from the Cape Flattery silica mine. Queensland Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts, the Honourable Rachel Nolan MP handed over the Hope Vale Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) in December, formally recognising Indigenous ownership of the land under the State's tenure system. Commissioners Hart and Cobus featured in broadcasts by ABC and WIN news covering the official proceedings.
- Delays in the completion of student accommodation for those attending the Weipa Campus of the Western Cape College have impacted upon students who have enrolled in the College for the 2012 year. Students are now seeking alternative options for secondary education.
- The CYAAA advises that during the quarter, Aurukun experienced a significant increase in families affected by feuding and family problems which has contributed to school absences,

however, the commencement of the school nurse in Aurukun has assisted in decreasing the number of absences attributed to illness. The Hope Vale CYAAA campus experienced fewer student absences this term due to illness but greater school absence resulting from family problems and long term family feuds in the community. Hope Vale CYAAA campus has commenced utilising alternative behavioural management strategies to keep the students in the school rather than sending them home when behaviour prevents the students participating in classroom activities.

- Community members advise the implementation of the Far North Queensland Regional Intake Service (RIS) process of reporting child safety concerns remains a challenge as privacy, access to phones and lack of face to face contact reduce the desire to report suspected issues to Child Safety Services. Of those issues reported to the central processing site, community members advise of doubts in the furthering of investigations due to the lack of engagement the RIS has with the community. The Commission awaits advice in regard to the re-allocation of funding for the four Child Safety Officer positions (formally dedicated specifically to the Commission).

Challenges

- School attendance notices continue to be received for carers of students who no longer attend a welfare reform community school. The Commission has sought clarification in regard to the reporting rules, changes to the functionality of the reporting system and timeframes necessary to implement the changes required. This remains a challenge to the quality of data provided to the Commission and further advice has been requested from DET.
- As from 2012 the compulsory years of education are to include the preparatory year (the year prior to year one). The Commission will need to consider the impact of this extra year of schooling upon its administrative and statistical trend reporting as it is likely the school attendance notices may increase with the extra year of schooling.
- The Mossman Gorge Wellbeing Centre closed for a period of time due to community discord in quarter 14. The Ending Family Violence (EFV) program scheduled for 22 to 24 of November 2011 jointly facilitated by Wellbeing Centre staff was also cancelled. The Wellbeing Centre has since reopened, however staff advise there are still safety issues to be considered.

Future Direction

- Amendments to the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* provide for the operations of the Commission to continue a further 12 months to 1 January 2013. The amendments were passed by the Queensland Parliament on 4 November 2011.
- During the quarter the Commission farewelled Registrar Tammy Sovenyhazi. Registrar Sovenyhazi was a founding and pivotal member of the Executive Management Team and assisted in establishing, developing and coordinating its operations since July 2008. The Commission extends its gratitude to her and her family and wishes them the best for the future. The Commission welcomes Rob White, previously Regional Director, Far North Queensland, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, to the position of Registrar.
- The evaluation of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial is underway, with preparation for a survey of social change together with final analysis of the outcomes and impact of the trial planned for the four communities in February and March 2012.
- The election of a new Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc (BBN) Board is expected to reinvigorate the governance of Mossman Gorge through local leadership. In quarter two of 2012, the world-class eco-tourism visitor centre will open to the public. This centre, staffed by community

members will promote Mossman Gorge and provide future economic development, prosperity and leadership to the community.

- The outcome of upcoming elections for both local and State Government may impact the operations and future direction of the Commission. Local Government Council elections are due to be conducted across the state in March 2012, including the communities of Aurukun and Hope Vale.
- The Department of Health and Ageing has engaged Health Outcomes International (HOI) to develop an evaluation framework and plan for an independent evaluation of the Wellbeing Centres in the four Cape York communities, with stage one expected to be completed by March 2012. Stage two of the evaluation 'The implementation and conduct of the outcome evaluation' is expected to be completed by June 2014.

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.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011 totalled \$1.656M. This income consisted of:
 - \$1.645M funding for operating costs received from the Queensland Government.
 - \$0.01M received in interest.
 - \$0.001M received from sundry revenue.

The balance of available funds in the bank as at 31 December 2011 is \$1.066M.

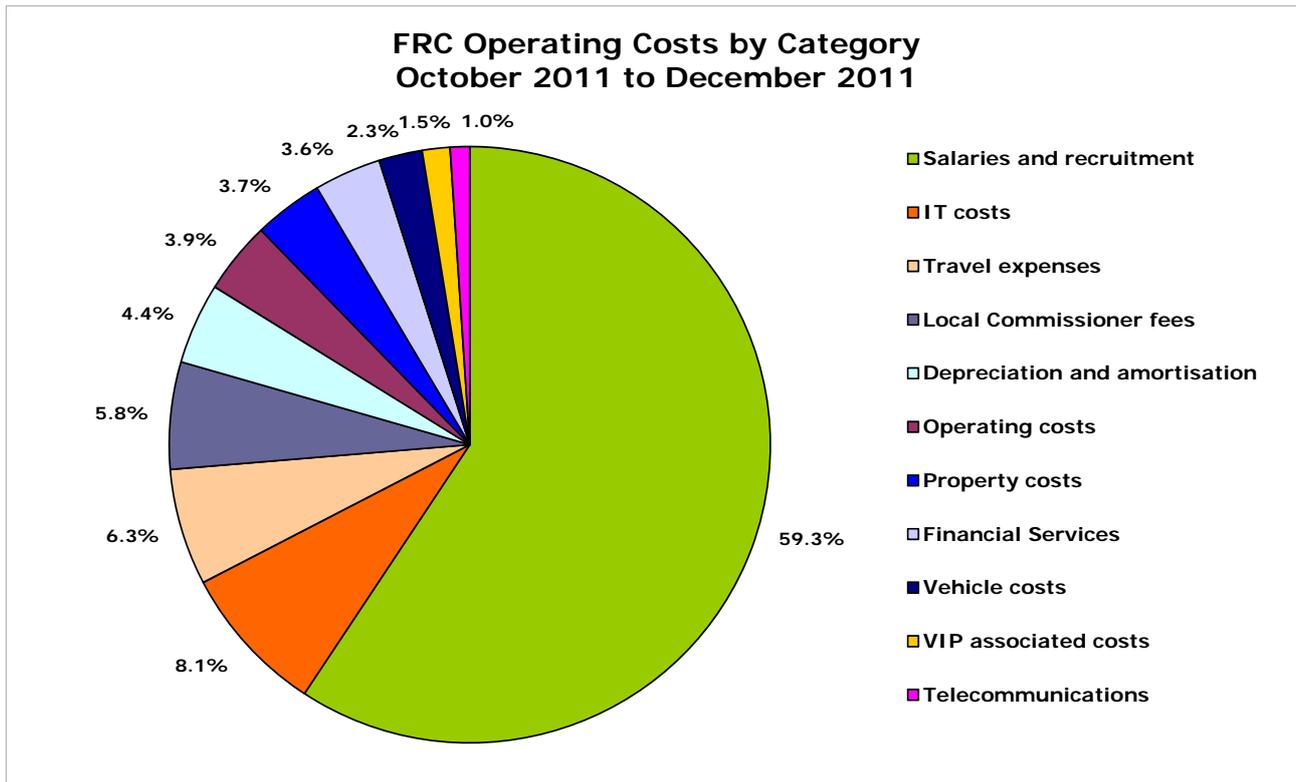
Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011 was \$1.059M (Table 2). This total represents 26 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.

1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011	Expenditure Qtr 14	1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011	Expenditure Qtr 14
Salaries and recruitment	\$627,400.55	Property costs	\$39,605.11
IT costs	\$85,608.69	Financial services	\$38,200.48
Travel expenses	\$66,852.84	Vehicle costs	\$24,764.28
Local Commissioner fees	\$61,542.65	VIP associated costs	\$15,746.88
Depreciation and amortisation	\$46,447.51	Telecommunications	\$11,084.44
Operating costs	\$41,302.33	Total	\$1,058,555.76

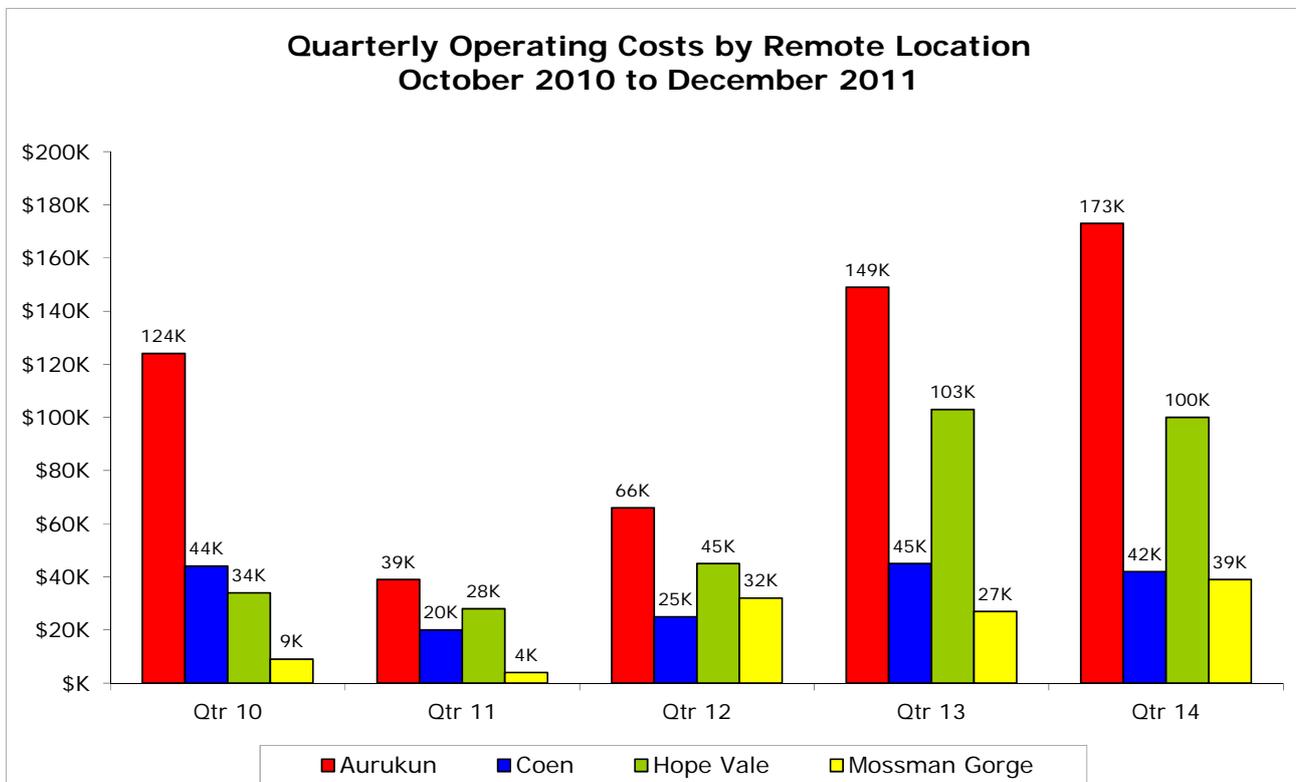
Table 2: Unaudited expenditure in quarter 14.

Refer to graph 9 below for disbursement of expenditure by category and percentage of total expenditure in quarter 14:



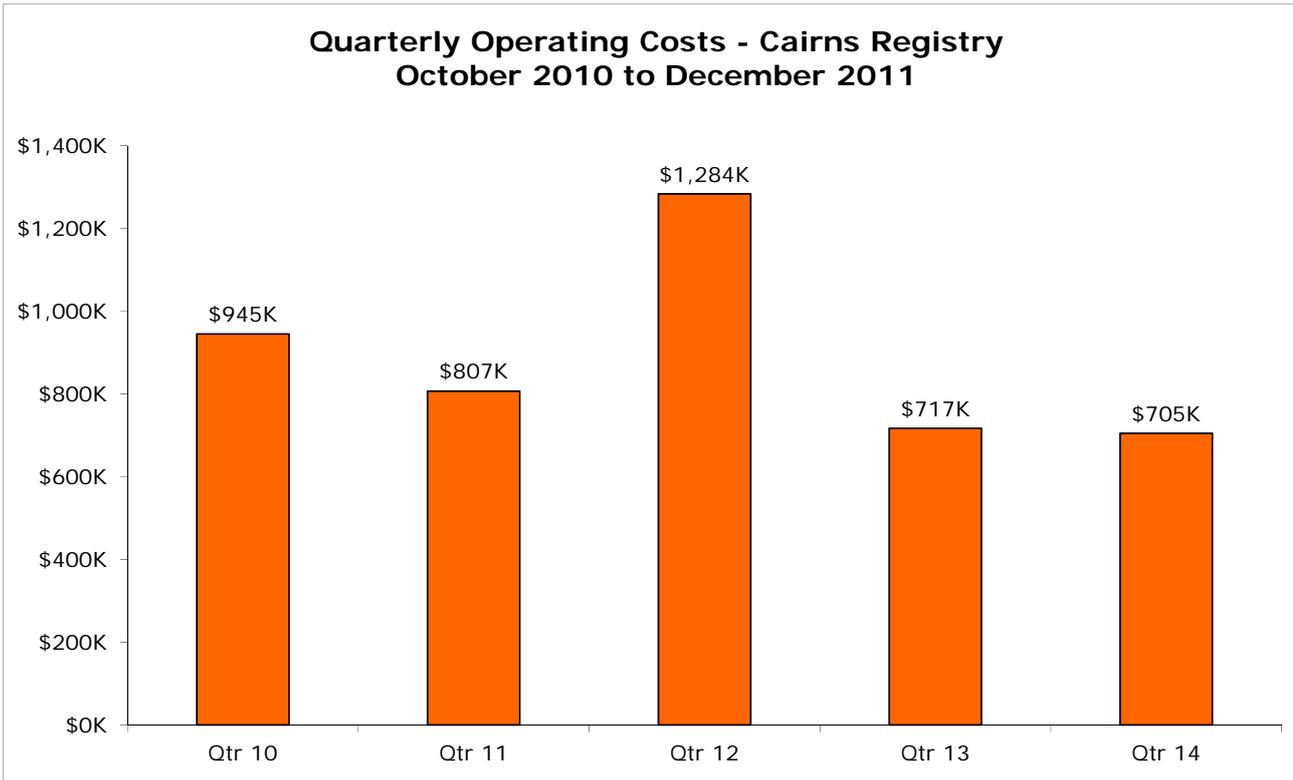
Graph 9: Total FRC Operating costs 1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011

The regional operational expenditure is categorised below, in graph 10, by location and quarter.



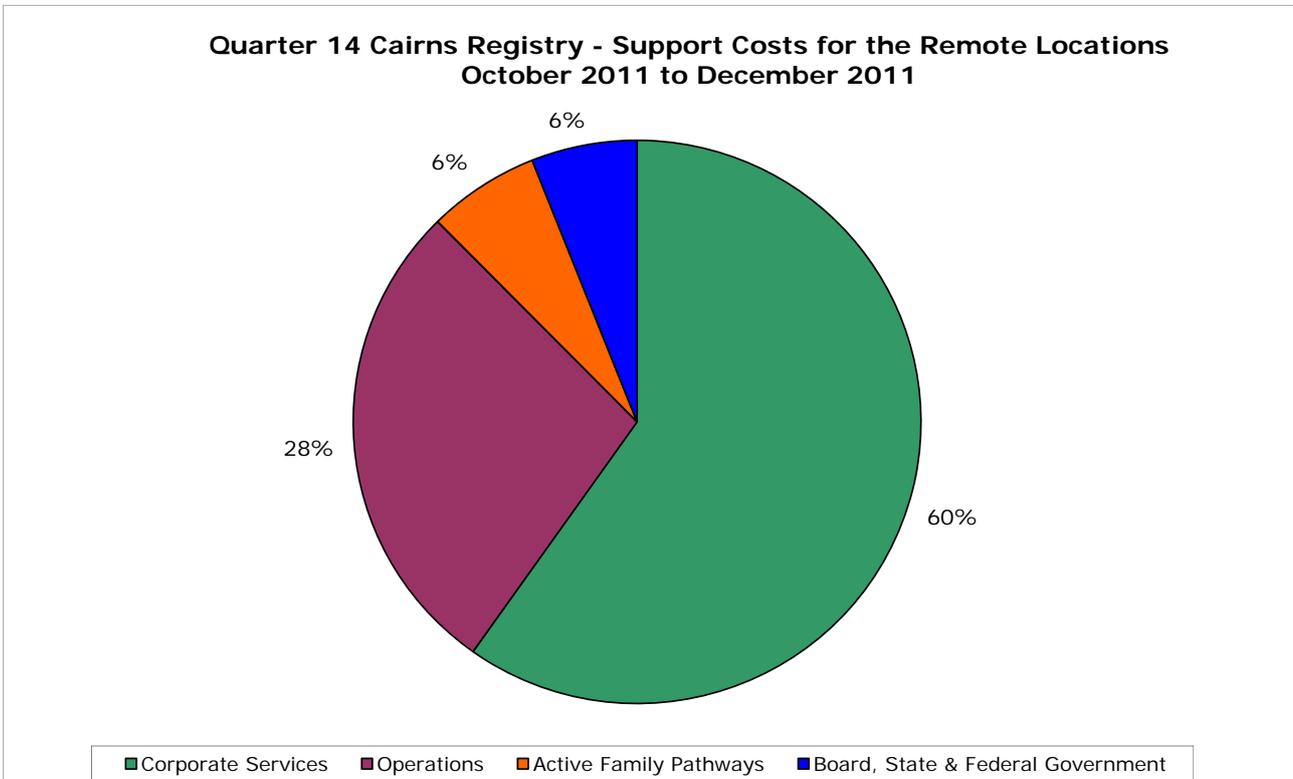
Graph 10: Operating costs by remote location 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011

The Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 14 is summarised in graph 11 and is compared to the previous four quarters.



Graph 11: Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 October 2010 to 31 December 2011

The Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 14 is detailed by the four cost centres in graph 12:



Graph 12: Quarterly Support Costs – Remote Locations October 2011 to December 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 Department of Justice and Attorney-General (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 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.

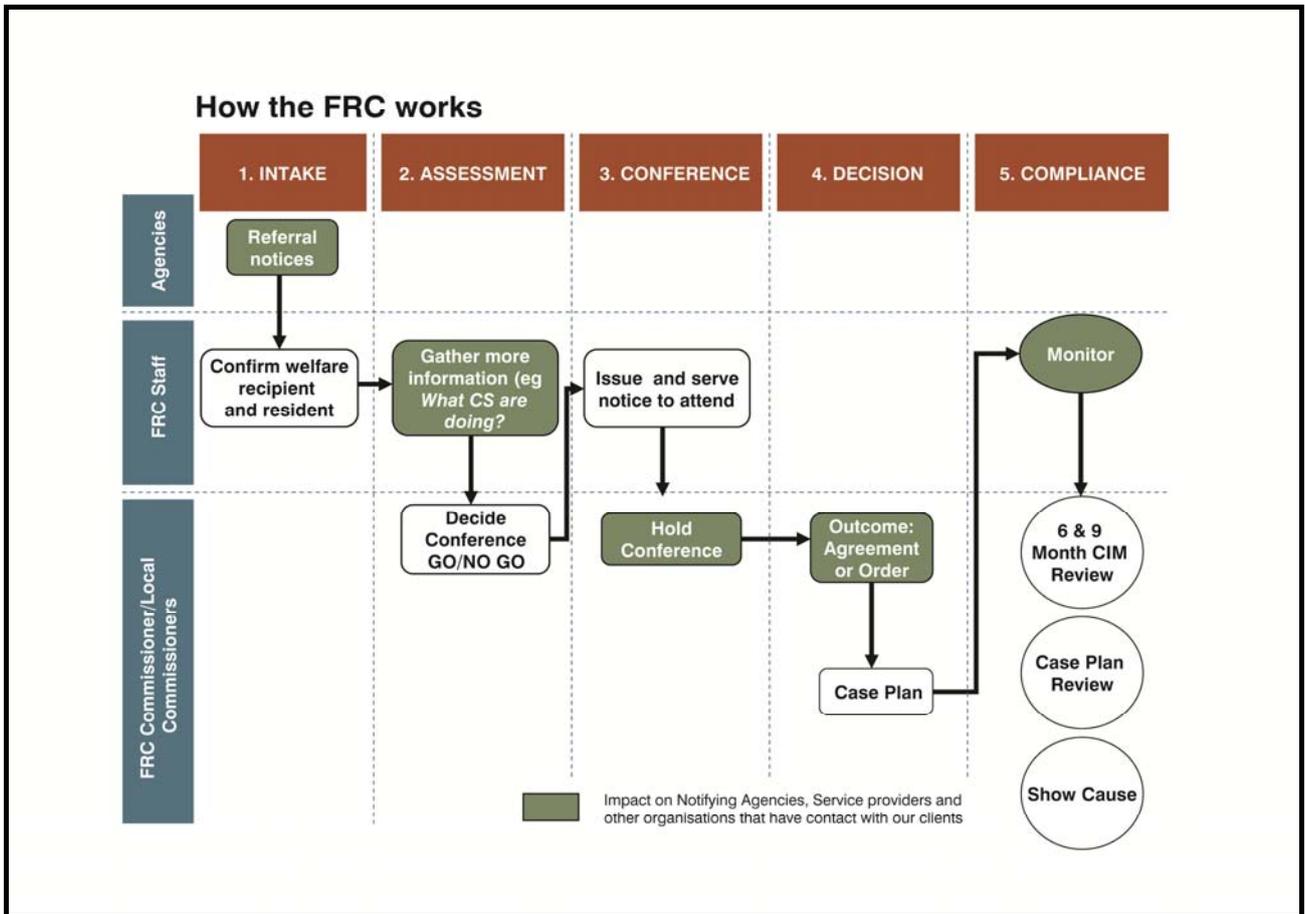


Table 3: Commission processes.

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.

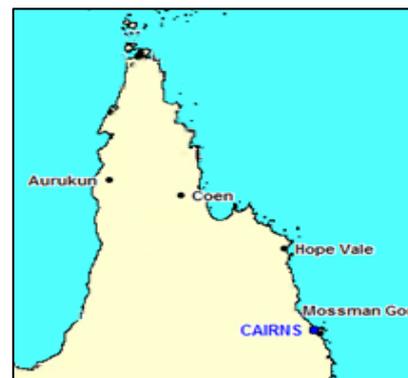
The Cape York Welfare Reform communities are:

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.