

Family Responsibilities Commission

*Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and
The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

Quarterly Report

No. 15

January 2012 to March 2012



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

Executive Summary

During quarter 15, 804 agency notices were received which were within the Commission's jurisdiction, a decrease of 47 from last quarter. There were 343 conferences held for the same period, representing a decrease of 115 from last quarter. Two Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) were entered into, 43 orders were made to attend community support services and 47 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were issued. When compared to last quarter this represents a decrease of 7 FRA's, 28 orders to attend community support services and 20 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, 43 VIM agreements have been processed, indicating that community members have become proactive in controlling their finances.

The Commission case managed 191 clients during the quarter. The Commissioners made 95 referrals relating to 45 clients, a decrease of 64 referrals from last quarter.

The Commission has reviewed the Active Family Pathways (AFP) framework and will now be offering to assist clients at three levels, intensive case management through client conferencing, voluntary case management for identified goals, and specific case management to achieve a point in time outcome. The Commission currently has one fulltime Active Family Pathways Support Officer and the Local Coordinators are adjusting workloads to allocate time to assist with the AFP framework.

Further activity during the quarter consisted of 5 Show Cause conferences held, a decrease of 1 from last quarter and 22 Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received, an increase of 3 from the previous quarter.

School attendance for Term 1 2012 has shown a slight decrease from Term 1 2011. Despite the decrease, attendance figures for Hope Vale, Aurukun, and Coen remain within their previous percentile range and are above Term 1 2008 attendance by 4.0, 24.8 and 0.2 percentage points respectively.

During this quarter the Commission supported Health Outcomes International with preparatory work in relation to the evaluation of the Wellbeing Centres in the welfare communities. Local Commissioners and Commission staff provided valuable feedback and information to inform the evaluation. The Commission will continue to support its stakeholders in their endeavours to improve service delivery to the welfare reform communities.

Decreases in agency notices, conferences, referrals, orders for Income Management and Show Cause conferences were evident during this quarter along with an increase in VIM agreements and an increase in the numbers of clients being case managed. The Commission anticipates the evidence reflects some of the positive effects that the Commission has had in the communities since its inception in 2008. In addition, the Local Commissioners continue to grow in terms of providing community leadership, whilst expanding on their personal development and confidence. Local Commissioners continued to conduct conferences without the assistance of Commissioner Glasgow. These conferences resulted in outcomes of no further action, warnings to clients regarding negative behaviours which required addressing, rescheduling of conferences pending further information or client actions to be undertaken and referral to the Wellbeing Centre, Parenting Program and Ending Family Violence (EFV) program.

The Commission will continue to work towards cementing strong relationships with its key stakeholders and looks forward to supporting the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) initiative to create a better life for the individuals and families living in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

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Abbreviations

AFL	Australian Football League
AFP	Active Family Pathways
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYP	Cape York Partnerships
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DET	Department of Education and Training
DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
EFV	Ending Family Violence
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
FIM	Family Income Management
FR Board	Family Responsibilities Board
HACC	Home and Community Care
IKC	Indigenous Knowledge Centre
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
SBS	Special Broadcasting 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 March 2012.

1. Activities and Trends

Notices

In quarter 15 the Commission received **1,197 agency notices**¹. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 804 notices (67 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 393 notices (33 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Within jurisdiction notices comprised of:

310	Magistrates Courts notices
445	School Attendance notices
43	Child Safety notices
6	Housing Tenancy notices

Of the 393 notices not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 338 Magistrates Court notices, 47 School Attendance notices and 8 Child Safety notices.

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

- **Aurukun's 423** notices constitute **52.6 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:

111	Magistrates Court notices
296	School Attendance notices
14	Child Safety notices
2	Housing Tenancy notices

Nineteen Magistrates Court notices, 31 School Attendance notices and 1 Child Safety notice were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Coen's 40** notices constitute **5.0 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

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

Two School Attendance 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 276** notices constitute **34.3 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

130	Magistrates Court notices
124	School Attendance notices
22	Child Safety notices

Twelve Magistrates Court notices, 14 School Attendance notices and 7 Child Safety notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Mossman Gorge's 65** notices constitute **8.1 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

44	Magistrates Court notices
20	School Attendance notices
1	Child Safety notice

Three hundred and seven Magistrates Court notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

Since its commencement the Commission has received 9,958 agency notices within its jurisdiction. Total notices decreased from 1256 in quarter 14 to 1197 in quarter 15. Of those notices in jurisdiction, School Attendance and Child Safety notices increased whilst Magistrates Court and Housing Tenancy notices decreased.

Magistrates Court notices decreased this quarter to 310 from the 358 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun decreased by 95 notices, Coen decreased by 12 notices and Mossman Gorge decreased by 6 notices. Hope Vale increased by 65 notices.

School Attendance notices increased from 443 in quarter 14 to 445 in quarter 15. Aurukun notices increased by 23, Coen increased by 2 and Mossman Gorge increased by 3. Hope Vale experienced a decrease of 26 notices 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.

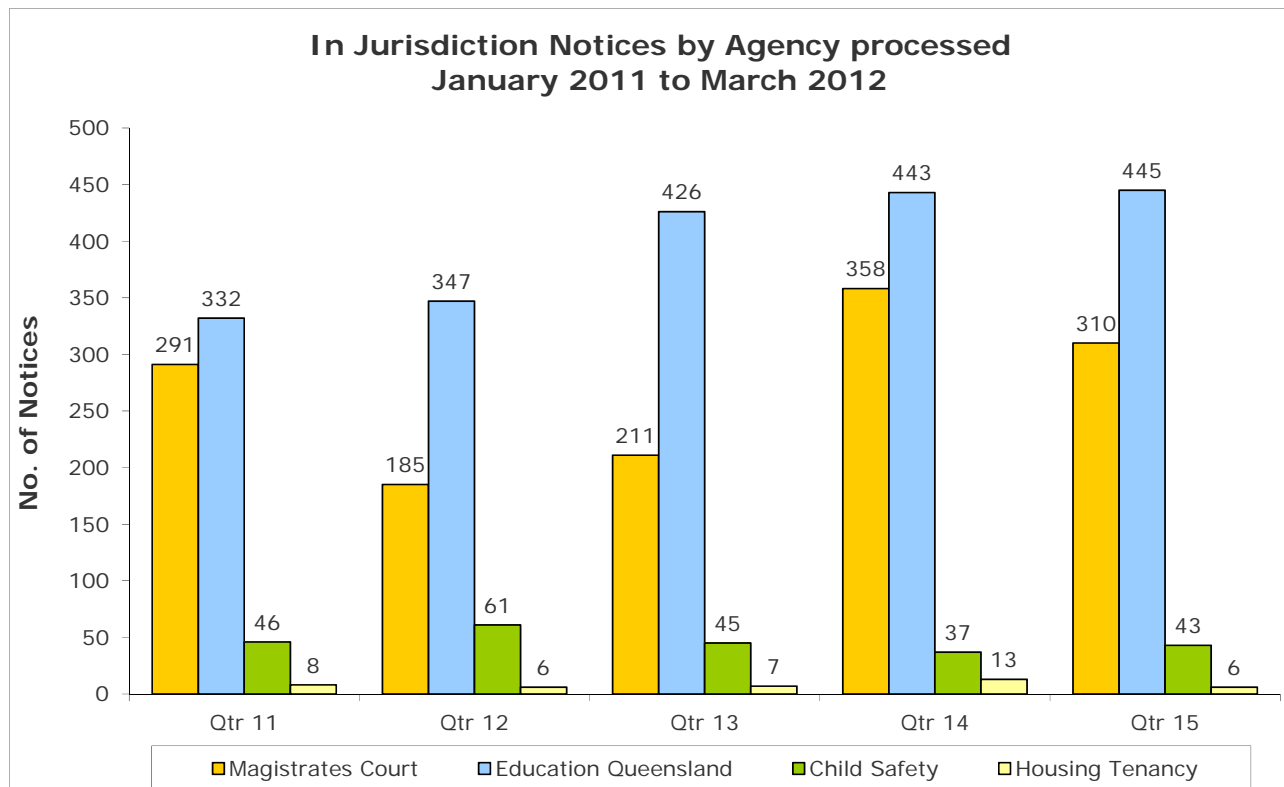
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Difference 2008 to 2012
School/Community	Term 1 (%)	Term 1 (%)	Term 1 (%)	Term 1 (%)	Term 1 (%)	Term 1 (%)
Hopevale State School	80.6	88.2	87.3	89.9	84.6	4.0
Mossman Gorge Community	N/A	80.1	84.2	74.3	68.9	N/A
Western Cape College - Aurukun	46.1	56.1	65.9	73.7	70.9	24.8
Western Cape College - Aurukun - Primary	50.2	60.8	71.3	75.4	71.7	21.5
Western Cape College - Aurukun - Secondary	35.5	39.4	45.1	56.2	25.3	-10.2
Western Cape College - Coen	91.3	95.3	94.9	93.5	91.5	0.2

Table 1: School Attendance Rate Summary for term 1 2008 to term 1 2012.

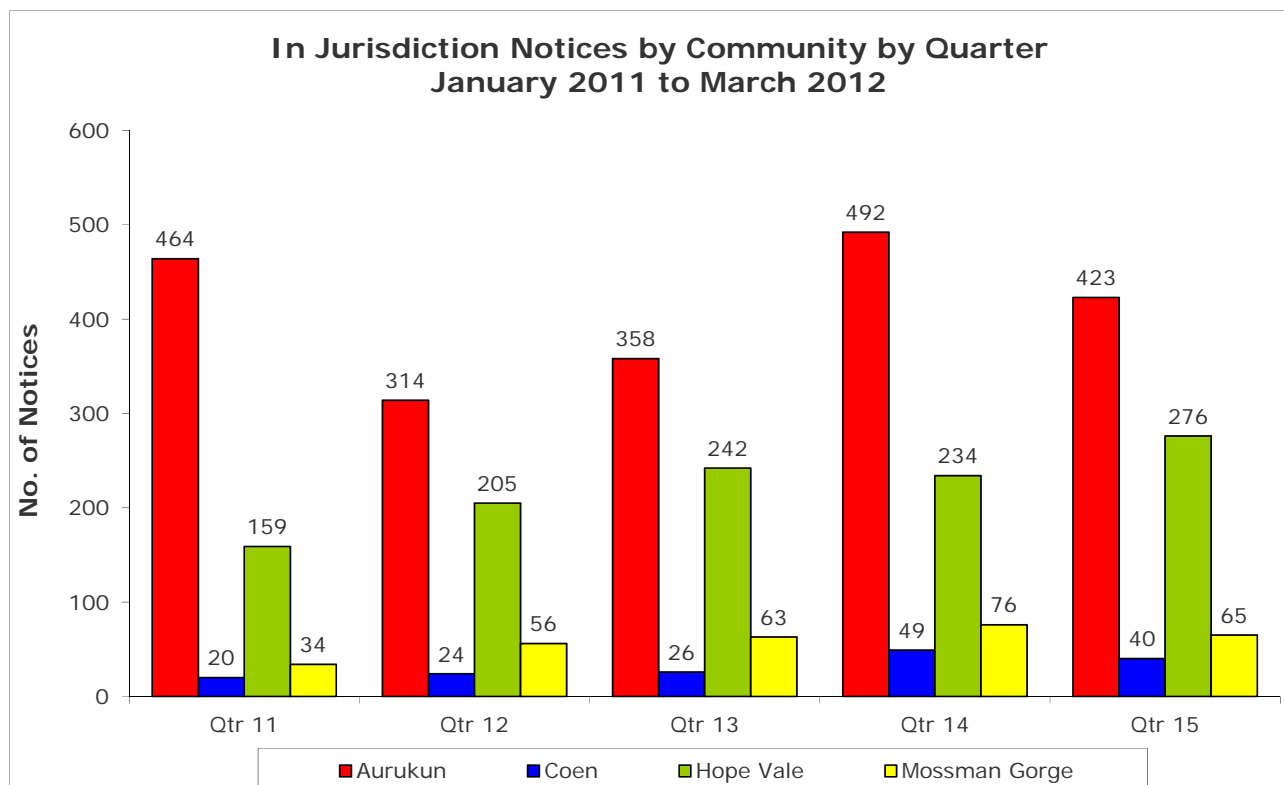
The Commission notes secondary school students are not currently case managed as part of the Student Case Management Framework (SCMF) but are included in the DET attendance statistics.

Child Safety notices increased from 37 in quarter 14 to 43 in quarter 15. Aurukun increased by 8 notices from 6 notices in quarter 14 to 14 notices in quarter 15 with Hope Vale also increasing by 3 notices. Coen and Mossman Gorge decreased by 3 notices and 2 notices respectively.

Housing Tenancy notices decreased from 13 in quarter 14 to 6 in quarter 15. Aurukun and Mossman Gorge recorded a decrease of 5 notices and 6 notices respectively, Coen recorded an increase of 4 notices, whilst no notices were received for Hope Vale.

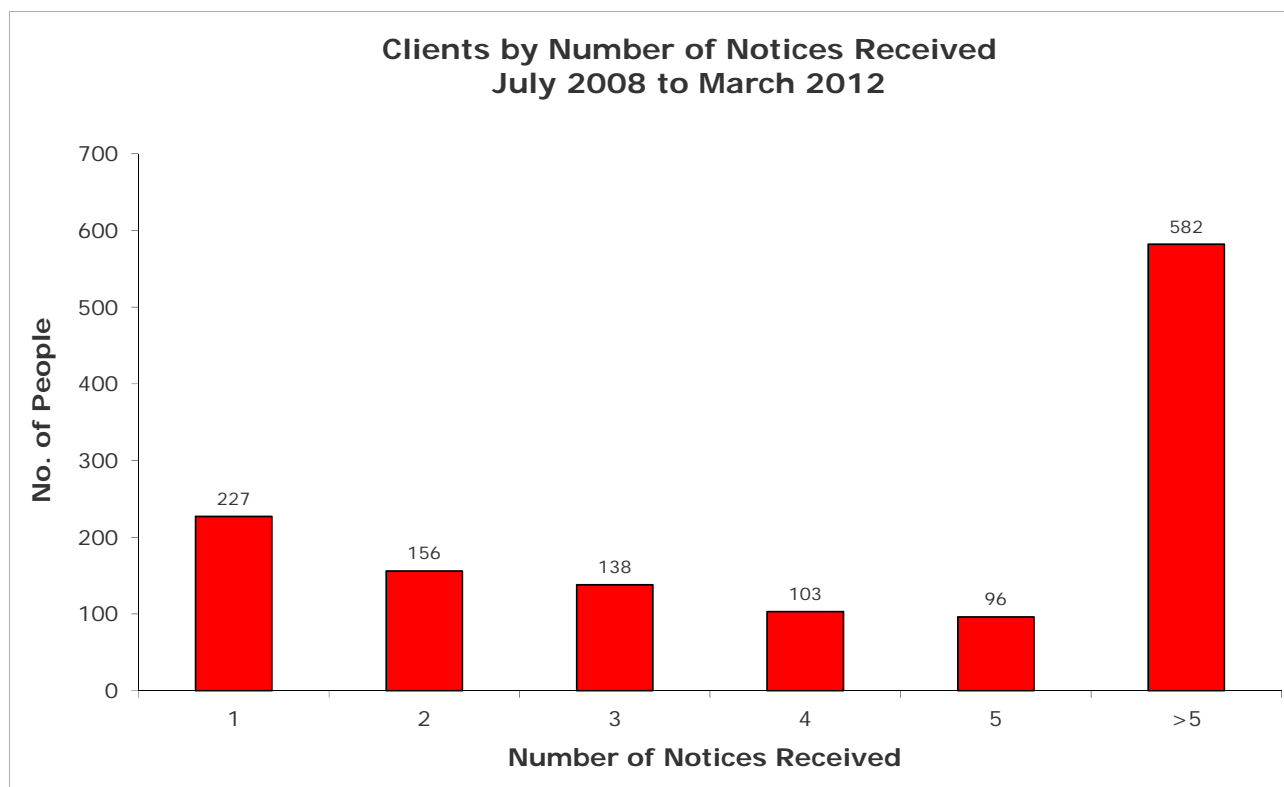


Graph 1: Notices by agency processed 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.



Graph 2: Notices by community and quarter 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Over the life of the Commission 82.6 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 44.7 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, 17.4 percent of clients have received only one notice.



Graph 3: Clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2012.

(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).

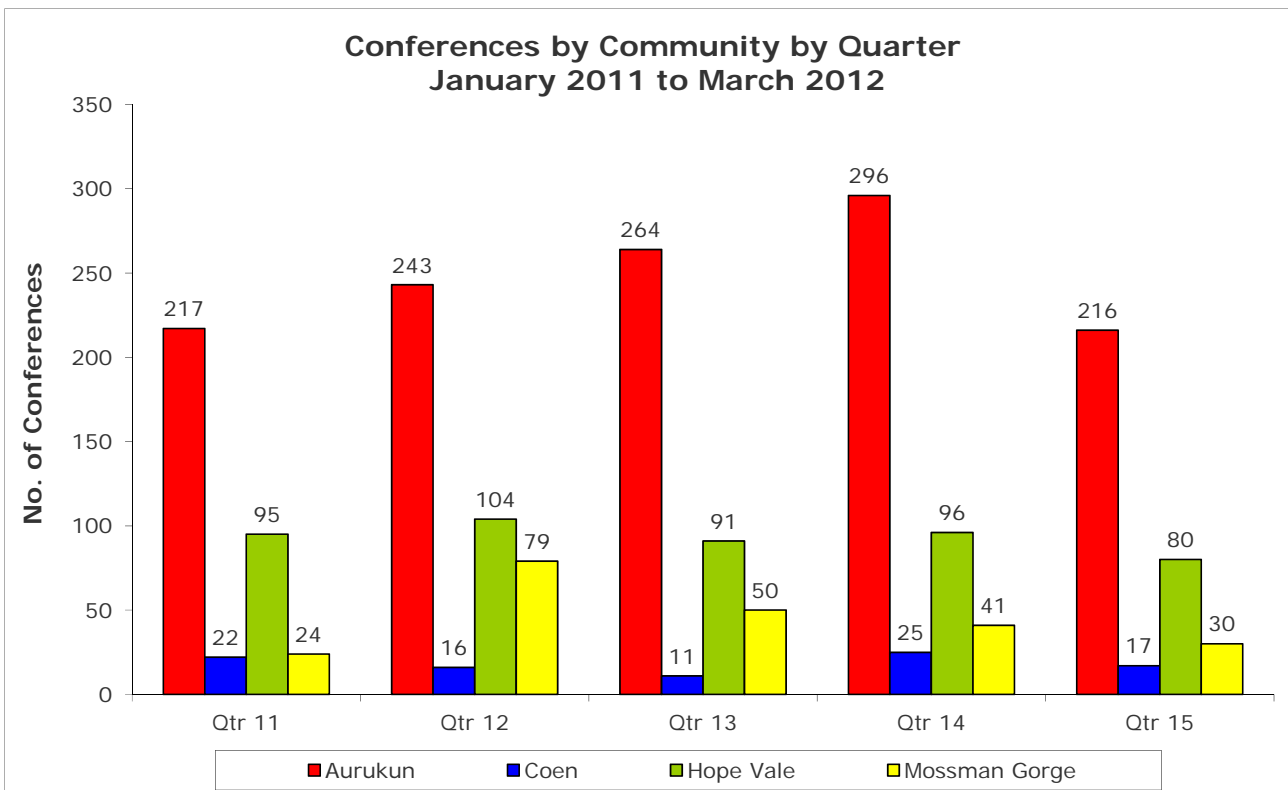
Conferences

Three hundred and forty-three conferences² were held across the four communities in quarter 15 resulting in 2 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 43 Orders made to attend community support services and 47 CIM orders as well as no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Forty-one 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 for quarter 15 are as follows:

- 216 conferences were held in Aurukun
- 17 conferences were held in Coen
- 80 conferences were held in Hope Vale
- 30 conferences were held in Mossman Gorge.

Conferences decreased from 458 in quarter 14 to 343 in quarter 15. The figure of 343 conferences is also a decrease of 15 conferences from the corresponding period in 2011.

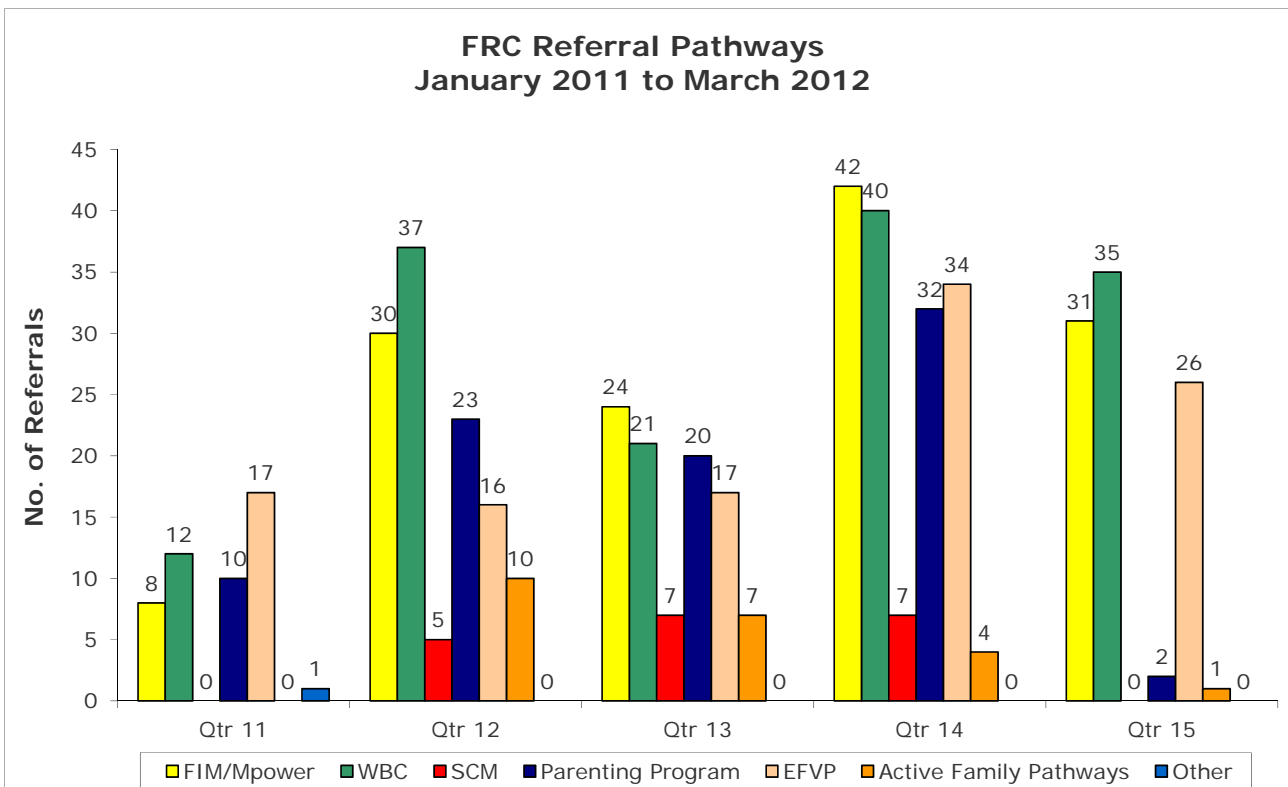
² The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.



Graph 4: Conferences by community and quarter 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Referrals

Referrals to service providers decreased from 159 in quarter 14 to 95 in quarter 15, relating to 45 clients. Since commencement the Commission has referred 658 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 50.5 percent of clients on 12 month service referral plans. Referrals in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun decreased by 41; Coen decreased by 9; Mossman Gorge decreased by 23; and Hope Vale increased by 9.



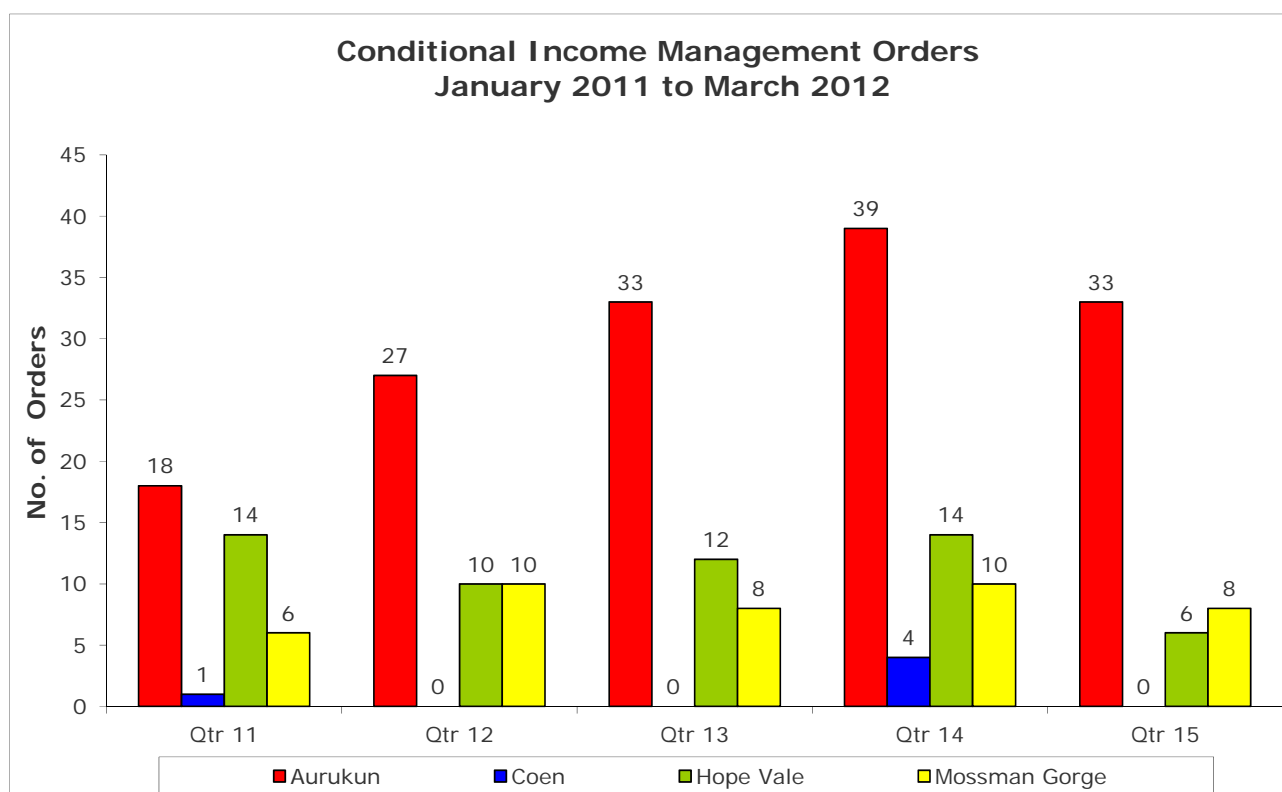
Graph 5: Referral Pathways 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Conditional Income Management

Forty-seven CIM orders were made in quarter 15, a decrease of 20 from quarter 14. Since the commencement of the Commission 711 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 435 clients. During the quarter a decrease was experienced in all communities. Aurukun decreased by 6, Coen decreased by 4, Hope Vale decreased by 8 and Mossman Gorge decreased by 2 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 March 2012, 33.4 percent of the Commission's clients have been subject to a CIM order over the past three and three-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 VIM agreements 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 saving for special occasions such as Christmas. Since commencement, 43 VIM agreements have been processed relating to 39 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 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Case Management

As at 31 March 2012, 191 clients were being case managed, an increase from 180 in quarter 14. Since the last quarter the number of clients being case managed in Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge has increased by 10, 2 and 3 while Coen has decreased by 4.

Active Family Pathways

The Commission has reviewed the AFP framework with the Commissioners and established three levels of case management assistance. The Commission will continue to offer intensive case management in which the client attends conference, discusses with the Commissioners the concerns which brought them before the Commission, establishes a number of goals with the AFP Support Officer and works to achieve these goals. The second level of assistance is a voluntary agreement where the client agrees to the case management of a specific goal or issue and the client and the AFP Support Officer work intensively toward achieving that goal. The third level of assistance focuses on assisting the client to achieve a result that is immediate and meets a pressing need.

As a result of the review, it was acknowledged that the Local Coordinators were performing case management for clients within their daily roles in the community which was not being formally recorded. The Local Coordinators have made significant contributions to the management of the AFP clients in the past and have assisted many other community members. The reviewed model more accurately captures this case management work of the Local Coordinators and Local Commissioners. The Registry is currently assessing work practices to provide Local Coordinators with greater time to engage with clients in each community.

A primary focus of the AFP framework will be assisting clients, community members and agencies to ensure optimal school attendance at both local and boarding schools. A significant number of high achieving and dedicated students attend local schools early in the week but attendance wanes later in the week. Similarly, diligent boarding school students often fail to return to boarding school after holidays or breaks away. Working with agencies, schools and the Local Commissioners, the AFP framework will seek to liaise with these students and families to establish sustainable solutions.

The AFP framework recognises that the Commission has a limited term and the priority is to assist those clients who are willing to accept assistance in order to prolong, where possible, positive changes in behaviour once the Commission has ceased.

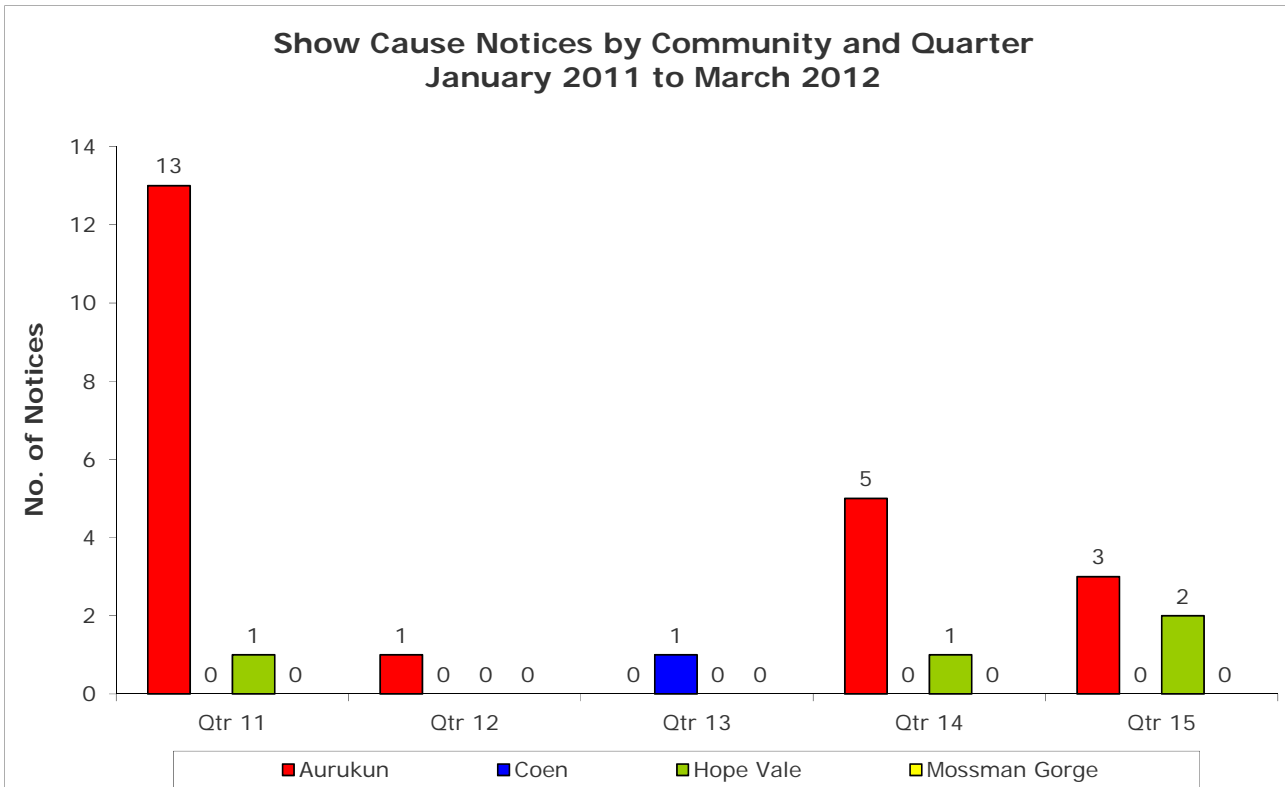
A total of 40 clients have benefited from the AFP framework since its commencement in November 2010.

Show Cause Notices

During quarter 15, 5 Show Cause hearings were held. Three hearings were held in Aurukun and 2 in Hope Vale. These matters resulted in:

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

Show Cause Notices by Community and Quarter January 2011 to March 2012



Graph 7: Show Cause Notices 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.

The Commission cannot show cause a client who has been unable to engage with a referred service provider due to the inability of the service provider to provide services to that client. Service providers report to the Commission on attendance, engagement and progression via Monthly Progress Reports. These reports often do not particularise the attempts to engage with the client, nor do they specify the length of engagement and missed appointment dates. Without this specific information it is difficult to justify show cause actions. Monthly Progress Reports detail staff resourcing issues and a failure to engage clients, however, no future engagement strategies are specified.

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.

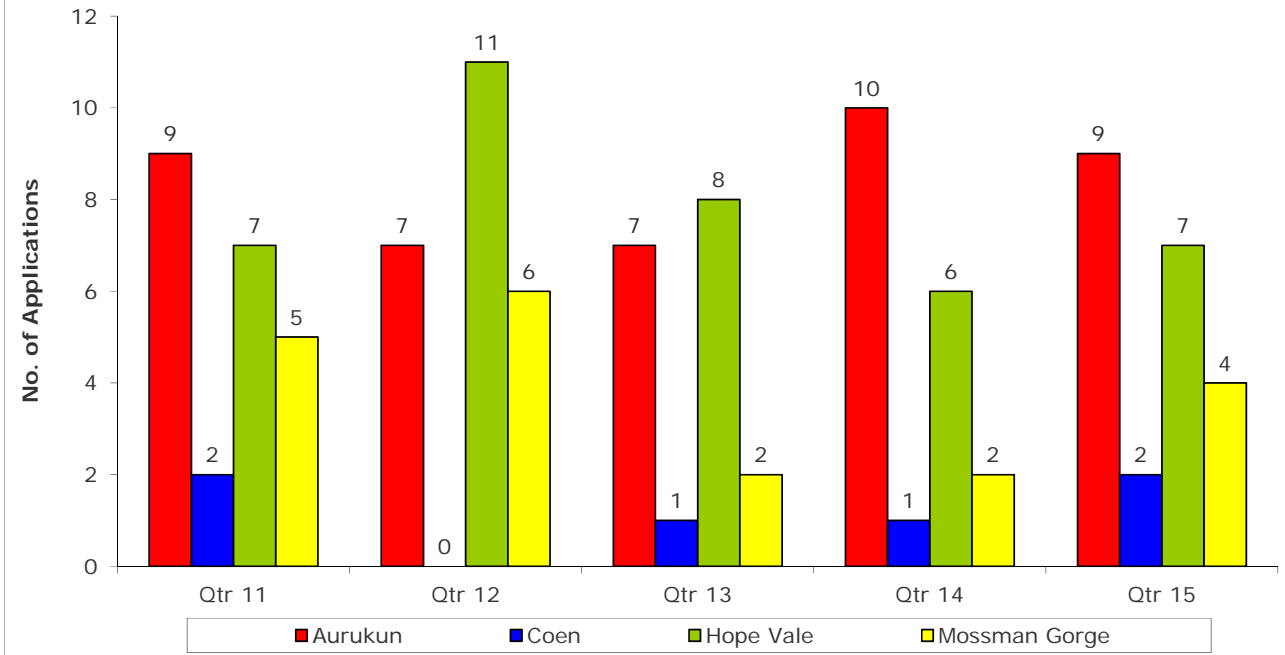
Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Twenty-two applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were received in quarter 15, an increase of 3 from quarter 14. Outcomes of the 22 applications received are as follows:

- 14 Income Management agreements and orders revoked
- 3 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decisions pending
- 2 Applications dismissed
- 2 Applications rescheduled until April 2012
- 1 Income Management order percentage reduced.

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.

Number of Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order January 2011 to March 2012



Graph 8: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012.

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 seeking to achieve 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 continues to provide encouragement and assistance to service providers to address high staff turnover in order to ensure appropriately qualified staff are present to meet the needs of community members. The Commission considers it vital that in its last nine months of operation service provider staffing is stabilised wherever possible to obtain the best possible outcomes for clients. During quarter 15 the Commission engaged with the following CYWR service providers:

Active Family Pathways Service Providers

As the AFP framework now offers clients three levels of engagement, the role of service providers and agencies contributing to case management remains fundamental in achieving client outcomes. The Local Commissioners have indicated a preference to focus on clients who have shown some positive behavioural changes rather than on those with multiple complex needs requiring highly specialised medical and psycho-social long term management. With nine months of operational time remaining, the Commissioners have emphasised the need to provide clients with a stable foundation for personal development in the coming years. AFP officers will continue to work with service providers and agencies to secure client engagement.

The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) continues to achieve results through the department's case management approach, assisting the AFP officers to resolve a number of complex client issues. The Local Commissioners are hopeful initiatives such as the Circle of Security Parenting Program by the Child Youth Mental Health Service are resourced sufficiently to enable a prolonged presence in communities. The Commission encourages a collaborative approach between all levels of government to address the specific needs of youth in the communities.

Ending Family Violence (EFV) Program

The delivery of the Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services) EFV programs, specifically funded and facilitated for the Commission, did not occur in quarter 15. Despite attempts to establish the program within the quarter, a delay was experienced in the release of funds which also impacted upon recruitment of program staff. Queensland Corrective Services advise they are ready to deliver the program with arrangements for recruitment and course scheduling in place.

During quarter 15 the Commission referred 26 clients to the EFV program bringing the total number of clients referred to a total of 70. The Commission remains hopeful the program will commence early in quarter 16 to ensure clients and community members receive the benefits of this program.

MPower/Family Income Management (FIM)

MPower is an opportunity based framework for money management which evolved from Cape York Partnership's (CYP) original money management program, FIM. Through MPower clients are coached in financial matters utilising computer technology. The Commission continues to work with MPower to encourage client attendance. MPower currently issues a number of letters with appointment times inviting clients to attend the service. The Commission encourages MPower to

investigate further strategies to improve attendance and engagement in the framework. When the Commission ceases on 31 December 2012 income management orders will also cease. Local Commissioners have expressed concerns that many clients will require MPower services, however, they report that if the client does not have an effective relationship with MPower staff, further engagement may fail.

Parenting Program

CYP launched It Takes a Village to Raise a Child parenting program utilising the Triple P parenting methodology in the four CYWR communities between 28 February and 2 March 2012 with the assistance of entertainer Mark Bin Bakar aka Mary G. Separate performances were scheduled for adults and school students to ensure children did not miss school to attend the performance. The Parenting Program commenced Positive Kids and Strong Families in February and advises Baby College will commence in April coinciding with the second term of school.

During the quarter, lack of staffing resources and training of new staff impacted significantly on the provision of services to clients. The program reported no operations in Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge due to a lack of staff in January; limited servicing in Mossman Gorge in February due to new staff attending training; and ongoing training of new staff limiting community engagement. A recruitment drive has seen the engagement of 4 Indigenous Parenting Consultants, 3 non-Indigenous Parenting Consultants and 12 community based women under the Home Craft Crew support as casual employees. The Commissioners are encouraged by the remodelling of the Parenting Program and look forward to CYP building upon the recent launch with targeted engagement strategies for community members and clients.

Student Case Management (SCM)

Student Case Managers (SCMs) continue to assist parents and carers to address school attendance by engaging with each family unit on a case by case basis. Presently the SCMs are compiling data to ascertain which students are attending school early in the week, but are absent consistently on a Thursday and/or Friday. The Commissioners have agreed to assist the SCMs to discuss with families and students the reasons for consistent non-attendance on these days. It is acknowledged that many of the communities consider Friday a low priority work day with service providers departing community on a Thursday and services and businesses offering limited services and/or experiencing low staff attendance. This results in many community members viewing Friday as a non-work day and places a low priority on school attendance in the family unit. The Commissioners intend to commence this work with SCMs in quarter 16.

Transition Support Services (TSS)

With the commencement of the school year, TSS, ABSTUDY and local support staff supported by the Local Commissioners worked with families to ensure students returned or commenced at boarding schools throughout the CYWR communities. TSS assisted 115 CYWR students to apply or transfer to boarding schools for the start of 2012. Significantly 36 Year 8 students were supported to apply and transition to boarding schools with many requiring two flights and transport to attend schools. Despite considerable preparation and time spent with families and students prior to commencing and whilst attending boarding school, 23 students are currently excluded or on longer-term suspension. TSS continues to work actively to re-engage these students, assist in addressing the behaviours causing the exclusion and negotiate re-entry to the school, or enrolment at a new school. When possible the Local Commissioners and local TSS staff work together with families to address exclusion issues and develop a family approach to returning the students to boarding school.

Wellbeing Centres (WBC)

Royal Flying Doctors Services (RFDS) advise the operational and clinical management of the Wellbeing Centres has been critically reviewed and currently a new management team is being implemented. Accompanying the changes has been a review of clinical qualifications and credentials including an assessment of individual service delivery appropriate to experience and qualifications. Despite efforts by the Commission to commence monthly meetings (as agreed) with the RFDS Wellbeing Centres management to discuss operational practices and client management for the remaining nine months of the Commission, no meetings were held during the quarter.

During quarter 15, the Wellbeing Centres experienced significant staff turnover with the Aurukun operational team leader, female senior counsellor and male senior counsellor all ceasing employment. The Hope Vale operational and clinical team leader also departed the WBC. The Commission has been advised that all positions will shortly be filled and that services are fully operational as at the time of this report. The Hope Vale Commissioners consider the departure of the Hope Vale team leader to be a loss of some significance to the community and acknowledge his contribution and professionalism whilst in the role. The Commission encourages the RFDS to engage with Local Commissioners and staff upon the induction of new staff and the training of existing staff. For those staff entering a CYWR community, understanding the FRC Act and the role of the Local Commissioners is essential.

3. Observations, Challenges and Future Direction

The Commission is committed to developing the capacity of the 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. Progress has been made in partnering reform, and the Commission continues to seek engagement with service providers to renew and tailor efforts to ensure the impetus of the reform process is maintained.

Commissioners

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

- The Aurukun Commissioners will feature in a televised segment on the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in the coming months. The segment will highlight the Family Responsibilities Commission and current CYWR trial evaluation. In compiling the segment journalist, Stefan Armbrust, conducted interviews with the Aurukun Commissioners and various community members including the Mayor and school principal. The Commissioners provided insight into the achievements and challenges of the Commission over the past four years.
- Coen Commissioner Garry Port was welcomed by the Aurukun Commissioners to observe one day of conferences in March. Commissioner Port engaged with service providers and health professionals during his visit and discussed with the Aurukun Commissioners community and Cape York issues.
- The Aurukun and Hope Vale Commissioners worked collaboratively with Transition Support Services, ABSTUDY, DET and families to assist new and returning students to meet transport arrangements to their respective boarding school.
- Aurukun Commissioners Poonkamelya, Woolla, and Pootchemunka completed the three day Mental Health First Aid course in Aurukun during the quarter. The Mossman Gorge Commissioners completed the course last year, whilst Hope Vale Commissioners are scheduled to attend the course during the next quarter.
- To assist in the induction of new Child Safety Services team members to the Cooktown region, the Hope Vale Commissioners provided an overview of the role of the Commission in Hope Vale and the role they play as Commissioners in assisting families and children to address adverse parenting practices and thereby prevent the escalation of family issues. Their participation in the induction process assisted in establishing relationships with the new Child Safety Service officers.
- Health Outcomes International sought the views of the Commissioners during consultation sessions for the formulation of the Department of Health and Ageing review of the RFDS WBCs. The consultants met with the Commissioners and various bodies in each community, posed a number of questions around the evaluation parameters and sought input from the Commissioners as to best practice when engaging with community members and discussing sensitive personal matters regarding the WBC.
- In response to feedback received on the CYWR extension the Cape York Welfare Reform partnership in collaboration with the Commission has published a Questions and Answers

factsheet addressing frequently asked questions relating to the CYWR trial and the Commission. The Coen Newsletter featured a selection from the factsheet in the March/April 2012 edition accompanied with a photo of the Coen Commissioners.

Observations

- The Commission welcomes the engagement of 10 community police by the Aurukun Shire Council. The community police aim to ensure 24 hour rotating shifts and are supported under Aurukun by-laws. With the active participation of community members in law enforcement early results indicate success with quieter nights in Aurukun.
- During the 2012 January school holidays Child and Family Support along with Australian Football League (AFL) Cape York and Northern Pride Rugby League visited children in Coen. The Northern Pride hosted some fun footy clinics as part of the Kids Living Safer Lives Wet Season Program. The program targets youth in remote communities to reduce boredom.
- The Commission looks forward to the completion of the new gym complex at the rear of the Coen Opportunity Hub which will provide updated sporting and social opportunities for members of the community.
- Home and Community Care (HACC) services will benefit from the new Coen Community Services Centre. The centre is a permanent, purpose-built facility to service approximately 40 disabled and elderly Coen residents and assist them to live independently. The new centre is being funded through joint State-Commonwealth funding and is part of the broader investment to upgrade HACC facilities in communities across Cape York.
- The Hope Vale Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT), although awarded to the Congress of Clans in December 2011, remains in caretaker mode.
- The Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) advised service providers during the quarter that a translation text is now available for the Hope Vale languages. The translations can be found on the IKC website along with audio pronunciations.
- Reducing alcohol related harm and a case management approach is the focus of the new ban referral model in place in Mossman. The aim of the Mossman Liquor Accord self-exclusion program is to provide the Community Justice Group and the patron/client with an additional tool to assist in the management of individual alcohol abuse and misuse for those clients on orders.
- A Mossman Gorge Fun Run was well supported on Sunday 26 February. The Deadly Fun Run is an initiative of the Indigenous Marathon Project that encourages a healthy lifestyle in communities around the country.
- Mossman State School has commenced a Foundation Instruction class (DEADLY class). The Foundation Instruction class is a literacy and numeracy program conducted for students in years 4 to 7 who are performing below school expectations. This is an intensive intervention year for these students to allow for an improvement in capability and to achieve year level expectations.
- Griffith University Youth Forensic Service have commenced an in-depth research project on the 'Prevention of Youth Sexual Violence and Abuse in Aurukun and Manoora'. The aim of this project is to develop a better understanding of youth sexual violence and abuse with a view to initiating community specific prevention strategies. The Aurukun Commissioners will meet regularly with the forensic psychologists conducting the research and provide advice and assistance with community protocols and engagement strategies over the next nine months.
- Stages 2 and 3 of the Cape York Welfare Reform Evaluation have commenced with the successful tender awarded to the Social Policy Research Centre University of New South Wales.

Evaluation data collection has commenced which includes a social change survey. Analysis of the survey and other data will be undertaken to assess changing social norms and the rebuilding of indigenous authority in participating communities.

Challenges

- The Commission is considering strategies to plan for the closure of the Commission as at 31 December 2012. Strategies must be initiated and information obtained to determine what authority the executive will act under to wind up the Commission, what funding will be required to effect the closure, what staffing complement will be required up to and after 31 December 2012, plant and equipment liquidation, how files and electronic data will be archived and what reporting obligations will be likely other than the quarter 18 and half-yearly report up to 31 December 2012.
- The Commission actively seeks to ensure a smooth transition for clients on case plans and Income Management orders as at the closure. Considerations will need to encompass what arrangements will be made for clients on BasicsCards, whether VIM will continue, whether handovers will be scheduled with service providers for those clients exiting the Commission framework, how the government envisages the Commission processing notices in the last quarter of operations and whether it is feasible to have a staged phasing out of orders and case plans as opposed to a strict cut-off date. It is anticipated the Queensland Government will be assisting the Commission with these transition arrangements.
- Under the Social Security (Administrative) Act income management regime, Centrelink provides the communities with significant assistance with access to social workers and engagement with the community. If the communities were to lose the resourcing of these current services when Income Management is ended, it is envisaged an impact on service provision will result. Additionally, a number of community members have sought out the Local Commissioners to assist them with navigating the requirements of other agencies. Community education will be needed to prepare the communities for the loss of this support service.

Future Direction

- The Commission will be magnifying its focus on client and community outcomes in its final year of operation. Commission clients have encountered challenges when committing to making long term 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. Of overriding concern will be the transition for clients coming off case plans and income management. The Commission is anxious that continuity for community clients is maintained and holistic support continues into the future. Without a smooth transition the successes achieved as at December 2012 will be undermined. The Commission has sought direction from the Director-General, Department of Communities, to prepare the phase down of operations in the final quarter (October to December 2012).
- Local Commissioners require direction regarding their future roles once the Commission ceases. The Commissioners are regarded as a pivotal component of the community and are primary authority figures. Although most of the Commissioners work fulltime, they wish to continue to provide guidance and mentoring in the areas of parenting, youth development, cultural education and the development of outstations.
- The Commission recognises CYWR service providers will cease to receive clients from the Commission after 2012. The Commission encourages service providers to promote engagement strategies for the retention of existing Commission clients.

4. Business Operations

Operational

In meeting obligations under Part 3 of the Act, the Registry commenced operations 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 extension period of this trial project is \$3.6M. This funding consists of a Commonwealth Government grant of \$1M and \$2.6M allocated by the Queensland Government and administered by the Department of Communities. The projected interest on our operating account is \$.04M.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012 totalled \$1.644M. This income consisted of:
 - \$1.633M 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 March 2012 is \$2M.

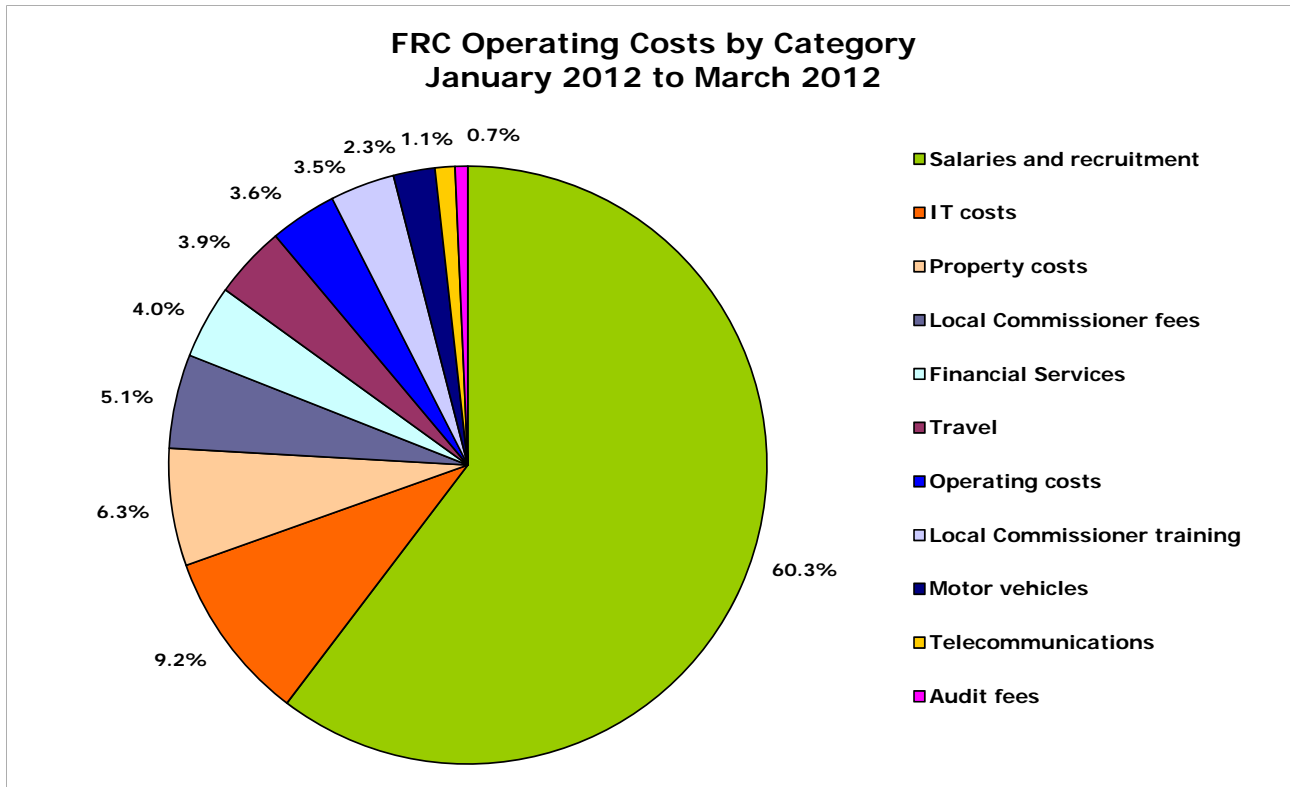
Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012 was \$0.866M (Table 2). This total represents 21 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 January 2012 to 31 March 2012	Expenditure Qtr 15	1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012	Expenditure Qtr 15
Salaries and recruitment	\$522,793.61	Operating costs	\$31,401.51
IT costs	\$79,844.39	Local Commissioner training	\$30,186.20
Property costs	\$55,002.74	Vehicle costs	\$19,498.72
Local Commissioner fees	\$44,052.58	Telecommunications	\$9,281.11
Financial services	\$34,534.81	Audit fees	\$5,900.00
Travel costs	\$33,979.82	Total	\$866,475.49

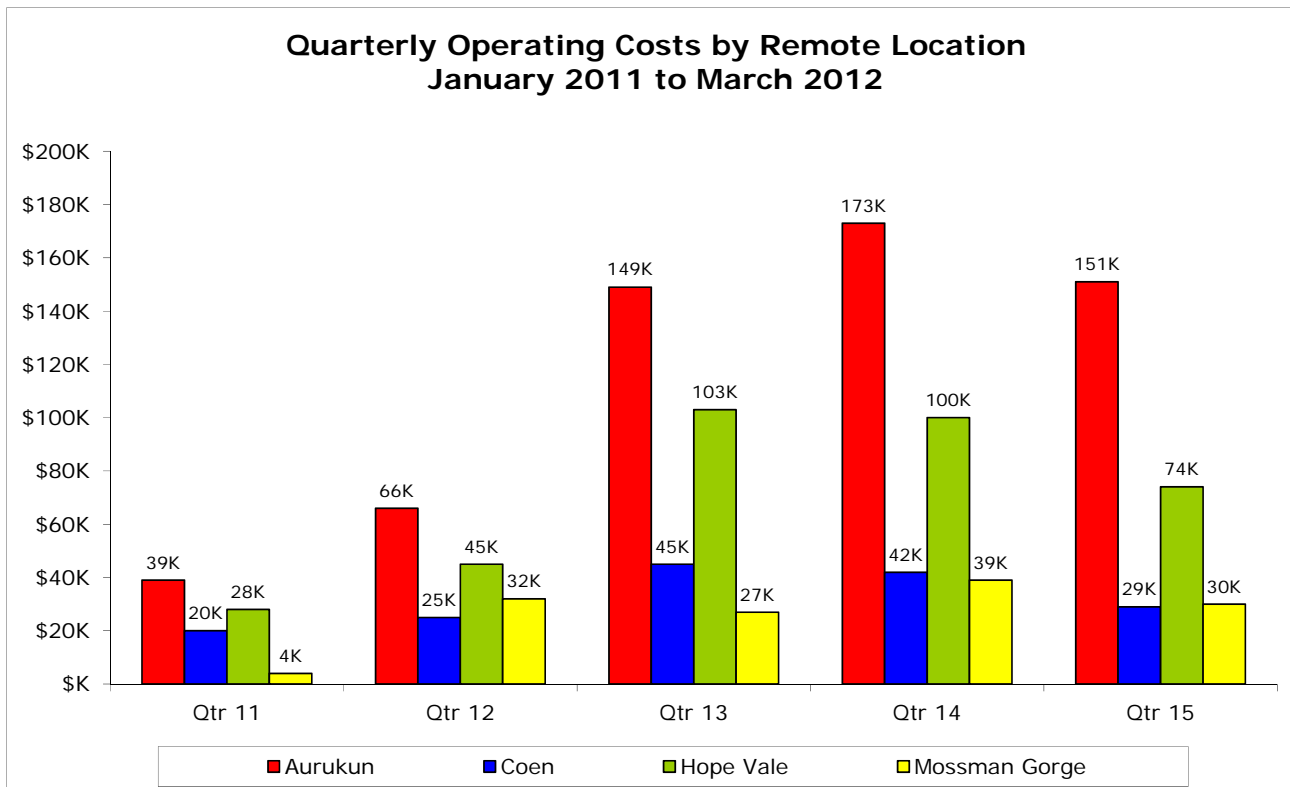
Table 2: Unaudited expenditure in quarter 15.

Quarter 15 disbursement of expenditure by category and percentage of total expenditure:



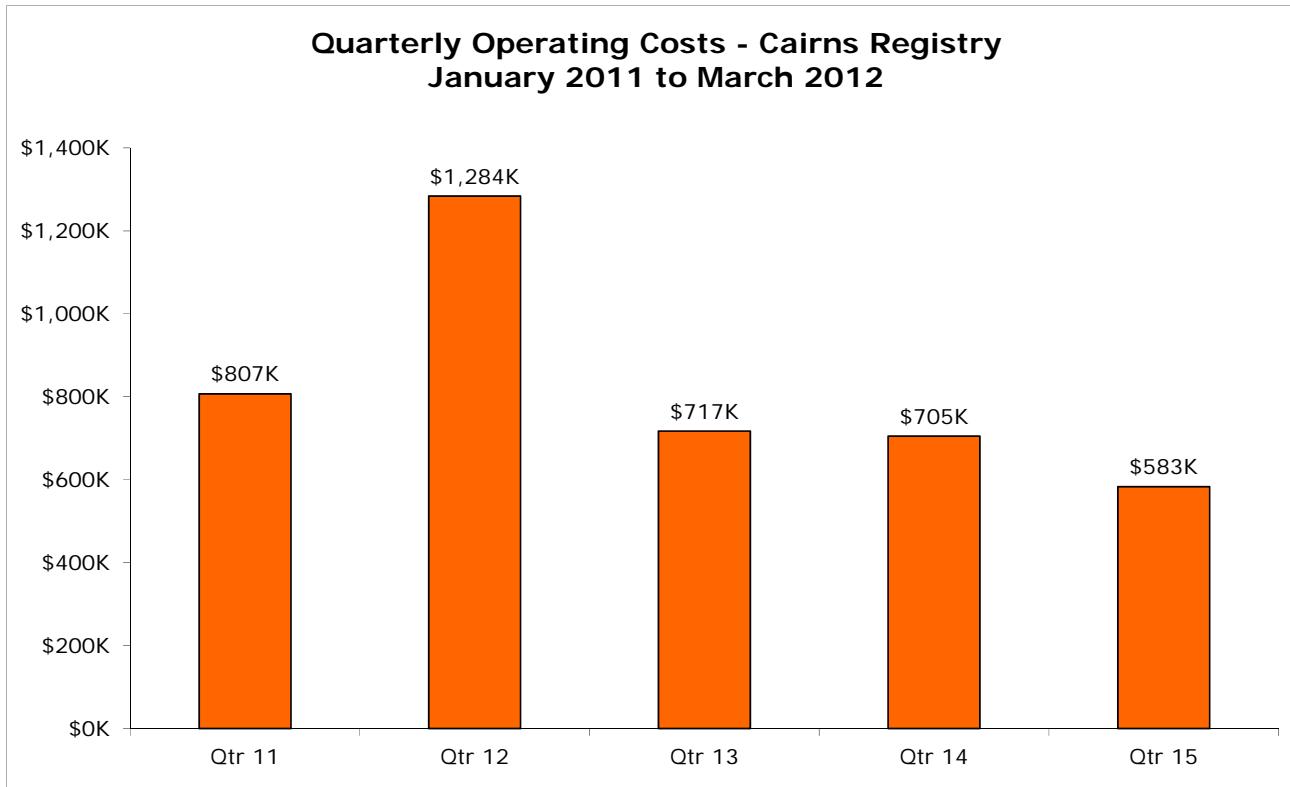
Graph 9: Total FRC Operating costs 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012

Regional operational expenditure by location and quarter.



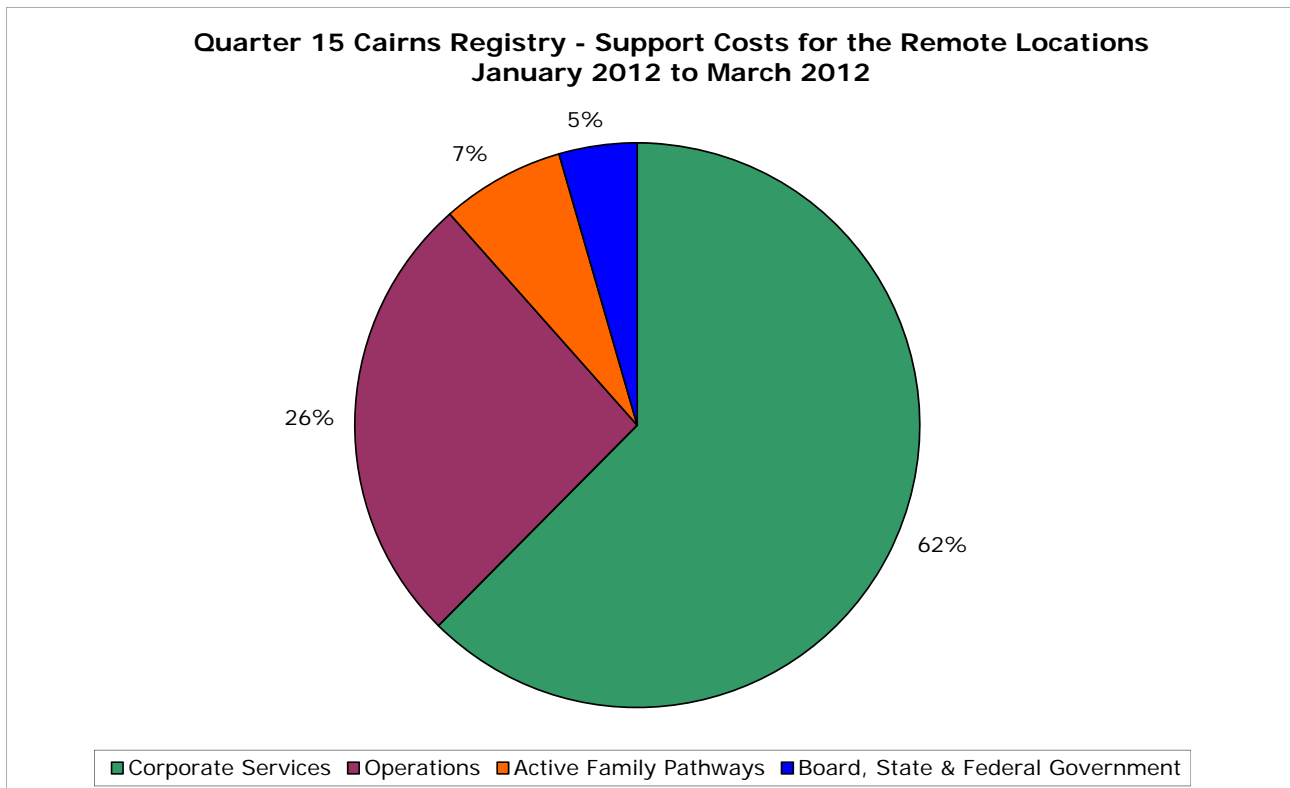
Graph 10: Operating costs by remote location 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012

Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 15 compared to the previous four quarters.



Graph 11: Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2012

Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 15 by the four cost centres:



Graph 12: Quarterly Support Costs – Remote Locations 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2012

Context

The 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 an FRA, direct the client to relevant community support services or place the client on a CIM order.

Referrals

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

- 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
- SCMs to assist parents to ensure children attend school
- 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 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 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 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.

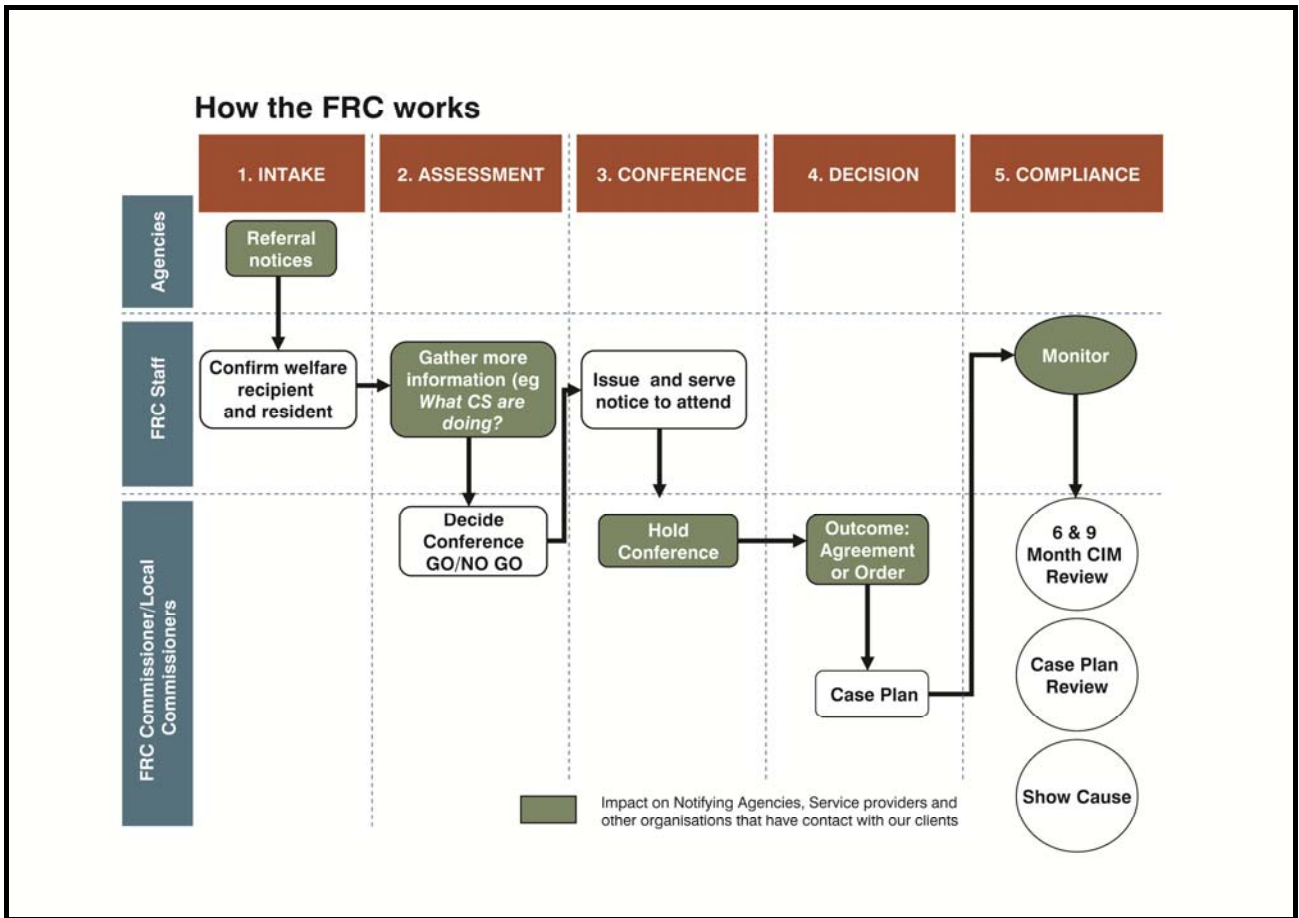


Table 3: Commission processes.



SITTING CALENDAR 2012 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

1 January 2012 to 3 August 2012

APPENDIX B



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



SITTING CALENDAR 2012

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION



1 January 2012 to 3 August 2012

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
2 JULY	DRG					Office week NAIDOC Week
9 JULY	DRG		10, 11, 12			9, 13
16 JULY	DRG			17, 18	19	20 Cairns Show Day 16
23 JULY	DRG	23	24, 25, 26			27
30 JULY	DRG			31, 1		30, 2, 3

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 Jon Grayson 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 (EFV) Program:

The EFV program is a culturally specific program designed for Indigenous offenders to help address aspects of their criminogenic behaviour relating to family violence.

The EFV program 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.

The EFV program 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
- developing a 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 assists clients with budgeting and goal setting and offers ongoing coaching sessions that supports clients to 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 FIM 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. 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 program is currently operating a program titled It Takes a Village to Raise a Child which has three distinct elements: Baby College, Positive Kids and Strong Families. Baby College is an eight week course aimed at expecting parents and parents with babies and toddlers. Positive Kids is a ten week course which targets parents with children aged 0-12 years and 12–16 years. Strong Families is a nine week course which targets parents who are referred or at risk. It Takes a Village to Raise a Child recognises the different stages of parenting and the principle that raising a child requires the commitment of parents and the entire community. The program utilises the Triple P methodology, an internationally recognised method of parenting and family support developed at the University of Queensland. It Takes a Village to Raise a Child is currently operating in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

Student Case Management Framework (SCMF):

The SCMF was developed by CYP 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, 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 late arrival and to develop strategies to avoid recurrences. 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)

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 RFDS and are the primary referral agency for the Commission. The WBCs 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.

Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR)

CYWR is 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.

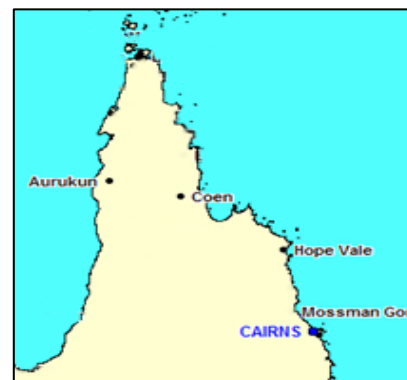
The CYWR communities are:

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.