

# Family Responsibilities Commission

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

## Quarterly Report

**No. 24**

**April 2014 to June 2014**



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

## Executive Summary

During quarter 24, 808 within jurisdiction agency notices were received by the Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission), a decrease of 51 from last quarter. There were 442 conferences held for the same period, representing an increase of 1 from last quarter. Three Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) were entered into, 20 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 1 FRA, 47 orders to attend community support services and 36 CIM orders.

Since the commencement of the Commission 95 Voluntary Income Management (VIM) agreements have been processed (an increase of six from last quarter). Community members continue to express their desire to enter into VIM agreements in order to assist with budgeting and ensure funds remain available for purchases.

The Commission case managed 219 clients during the quarter. The Commissioners made 34 referrals relating to 22 clients (a decrease of 90 referrals from last quarter). Further activity during the quarter consisted of 25 Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders (a decrease of 3 from the previous quarter) and 15 Show Cause conferences (an increase of 5 from last quarter).

The Commission continued to enhance the professional development of Local Commissioners and staff during its annual 'Development Week' held in May. Local Commissioners travelled to Cairns and joined Commission staff for four days of workshops, presentations and onsite visits to various organisations which provide services relevant to the work of the Commission. Presentations were provided by various government agencies including: the Queensland Departments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, Communities Child Safety and Disability Services, Housing and Public Works and Justice and Attorney-General; and the Australian Government Departments of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Human Services. Information sessions were also conducted by representatives from the Queensland Police Service, Community-based Health Promotion and Prevention Studies, Remote Youth Justice Service Centre, Mental Health Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Service, Cape York Hospital and Health Service, Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service. His Honour Magistrate Black also addressed the delegates, and Fiona Jose, Chief Executive Officer of the Institute informed those present on the Empowering Communities project.

Local Commissioners and some staff also attended the Red Cross centre, Mookai Rosie Bi-Bayan, and Djarragun Enterprises where they discussed the support available for CYWR community members. The Hope Vale Local Commissioners then hosted Commission staff and Local Commissioners on a day trip to Hope Vale where they were welcomed into the community and able to view first-hand the positive effects welfare reform has had for Hope Vale. Participation in the consultations and workshops allowed the delegates to address common issues, review strategies and source solutions for their communities.

On 14 May 2014 the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) visited Mossman Gorge where he met with Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners Karen Gibson, Karen Shuan and Loretta Spratt, and Local Coordinator Sandra Rye. The Governor-General showed a genuine interest in the Commission and the work of its Local Commissioners.

On 3 June 2014 the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, The Honourable Tim Nicholls, and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier, The Honourable Glen Elmes announced the extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial and Family Responsibilities Commission until December 2015.

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### **Abbreviations**

CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DATSIMA	Department of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment
EFV	Ending Family Violence
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
VIM	Voluntary Income Management

### **Also:**

Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)  
*Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the Act)  
Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry)  
Family Responsibilities Board (the Board)

# Family Responsibilities Commission Cape York Welfare Reforms

Report to 30 June 2014.

## 1. Activities and Trends

### Notices

In quarter 24 the Commission received **1,006 agency notices**<sup>1</sup>. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 808 notices (80 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 198 notices (20 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Within jurisdiction notices comprised of:

248	Magistrates Court notices
477	School Attendance notices
21	School Enrolment notices
48	Child Safety and Welfare notices
14	Housing Tenancy notices

Of the 198 notices not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 155 Magistrates Court notices, 33 School Attendance notices, 6 School Enrolment notices and 4 Child Safety and Welfare notices.

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

- **Aurukun's 429** notices constitute **53.1 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction across the four CYWR trial communities:

151	Magistrates Court notices
239	School Attendance notices
13	School Enrolment notices
22	Child Safety and Welfare notices
4	Housing Tenancy notices

Thirty-four Magistrates Court notices, 9 School Attendance notices and 2 School Enrolment notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Coen's 23** notices constitute **2.8 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

3	Magistrates Court notices
16	School Attendance notices
2	School Enrolment notice
2	Child Safety and Welfare notices
0	Housing Tenancy notice

One Magistrates Court notice, 7 School Attendance notices and 2 School Enrolment notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> Counting rules are that an agency notice is counted on the basis of number of 'clients' on the notice. For example a child safety and welfare notice relating to two parents is counted as two notices.

- **Hope Vale's 310** notices constitute **38.4 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

83	Magistrates Court notices
196	School Attendance notices
4	School Enrolment notice
22	Child Safety and Welfare notices
5	Housing Tenancy notice

Twenty-five Magistrates Court notices, 12 School Attendance notices, 2 School Enrolment notices and 4 Child Safety and Welfare notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Mossman Gorge's 46** notices constitute **5.7 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

11	Magistrates Court notices
26	School Attendance notices
2	School Enrolment notices
2	Child Safety and Welfare notices
5	Housing Tenancy notices

Ninety-five Magistrates Court notices and 5 School Attendance notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

Since its commencement the Commission has received 17,417 agency notices within its jurisdiction. Total notices decreased from 1,083 in quarter 23 to 1,006 in quarter 24. Of those notices in jurisdiction School Attendance and School Enrolment notices increased, whilst Magistrates Court, Child Safety and Welfare and Housing Tenancy notices decreased.

Magistrates Court notices decreased this quarter to 248 from 324 received in the previous quarter. All four communities experienced a decrease in notices this quarter. Aurukun decreased by 22 notices, Coen decreased by 13 notices, Hope Vale decreased by 22 notices and Mossman Gorge decreased by 19 notices.

School Attendance notices increased from 444 in quarter 23 to 477 in quarter 24. Aurukun and Mossman Gorge decreased by 20 notices and 1 notice respectively, whilst Coen and Hope Vale experienced an increase of 12 and 42 notices respectively.

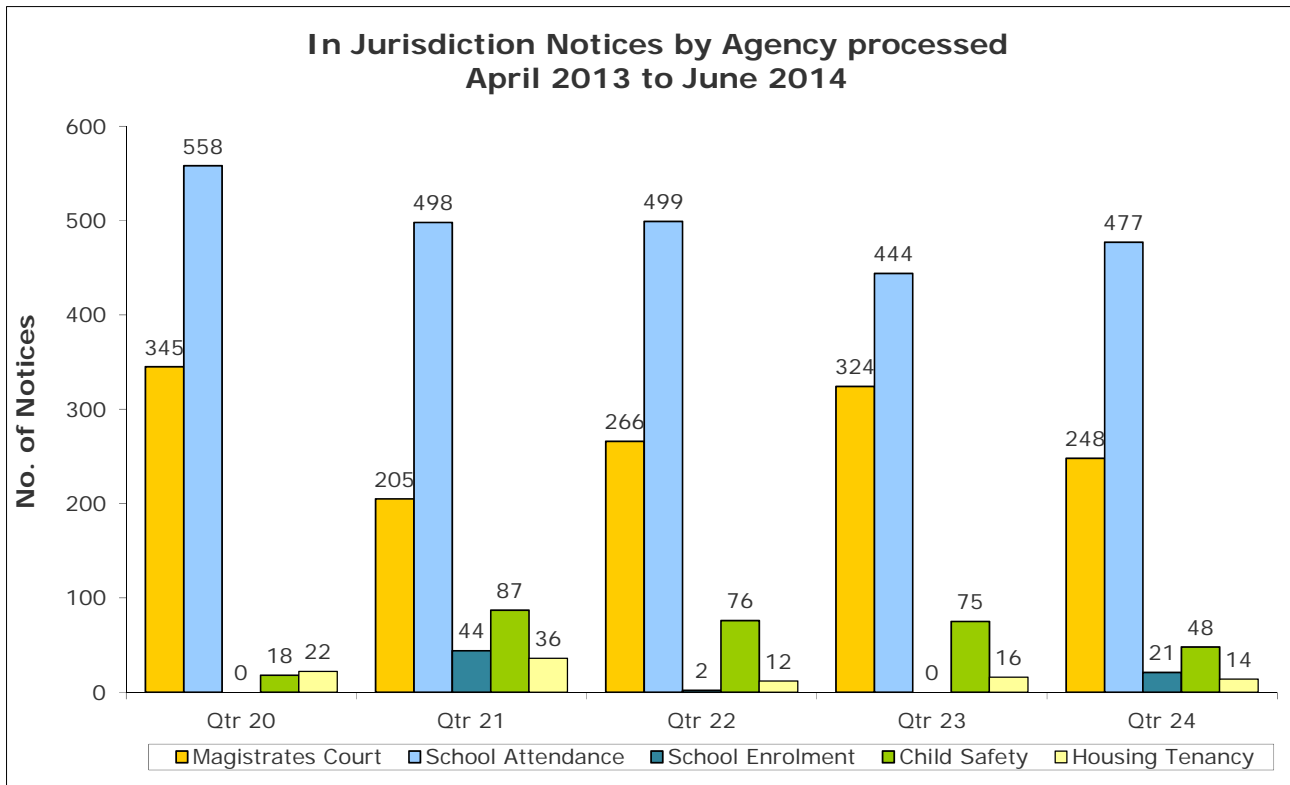
School Enrolment notices increased from 0 in quarter 23 to 21 in quarter 24. All four communities experienced an increase in notices this quarter. Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased by 13, 2, 4 and 2 notices respectively.

Child Safety and Welfare notices decreased from 75 in quarter 23 to 48 in quarter 24. Three out of four communities experienced a decrease in notices this quarter. Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge decreased by 3, 22 and 6 notices respectively, while Aurukun increased by 4 notices.

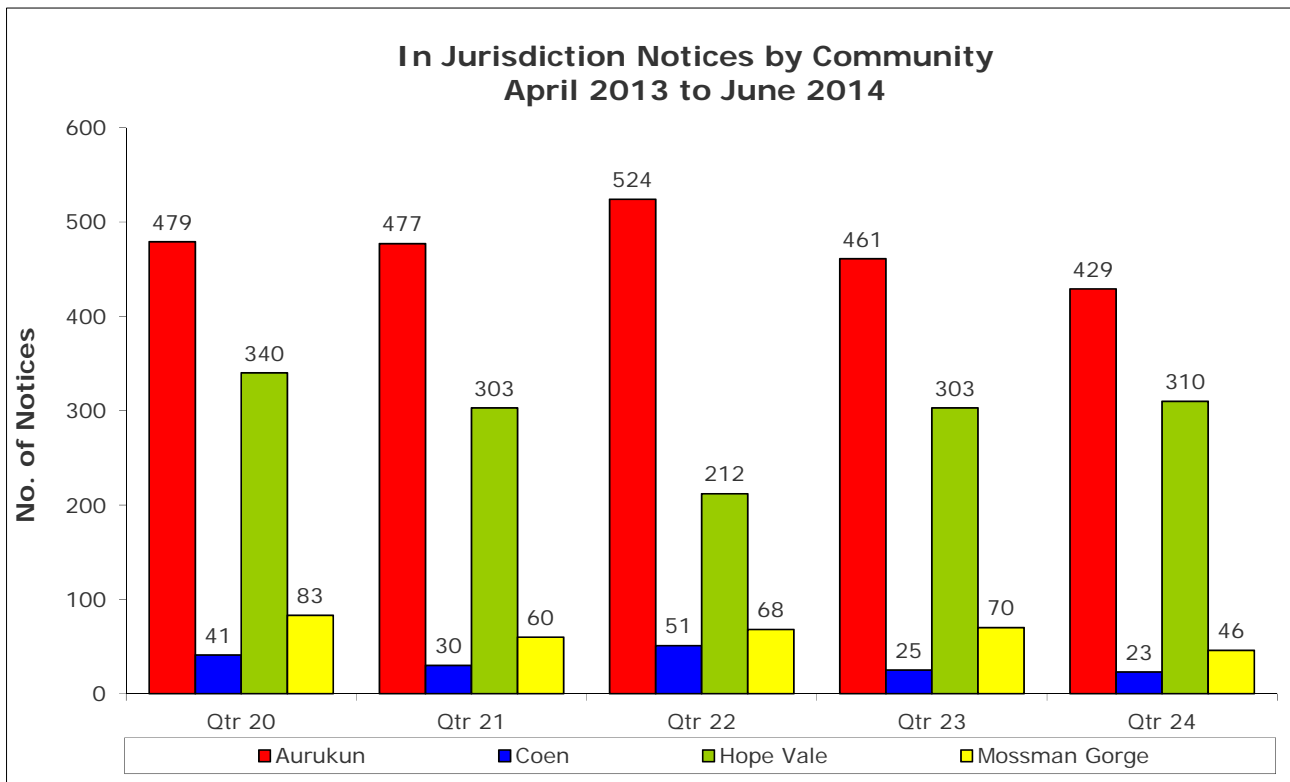
Housing Tenancy notices decreased to 14 from 16 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun decreased by 7 notices and Hope Vale increased by 5 notices, while Coen and Mossman Gorge remained unchanged.

The Commission receives school attendance data from the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). The release of relevant data relating to quarter 24 was not available at the

time of writing this report, however, the available data provided by DETE is published on the Commission's web page at <http://www.frcq.org.au> when available.

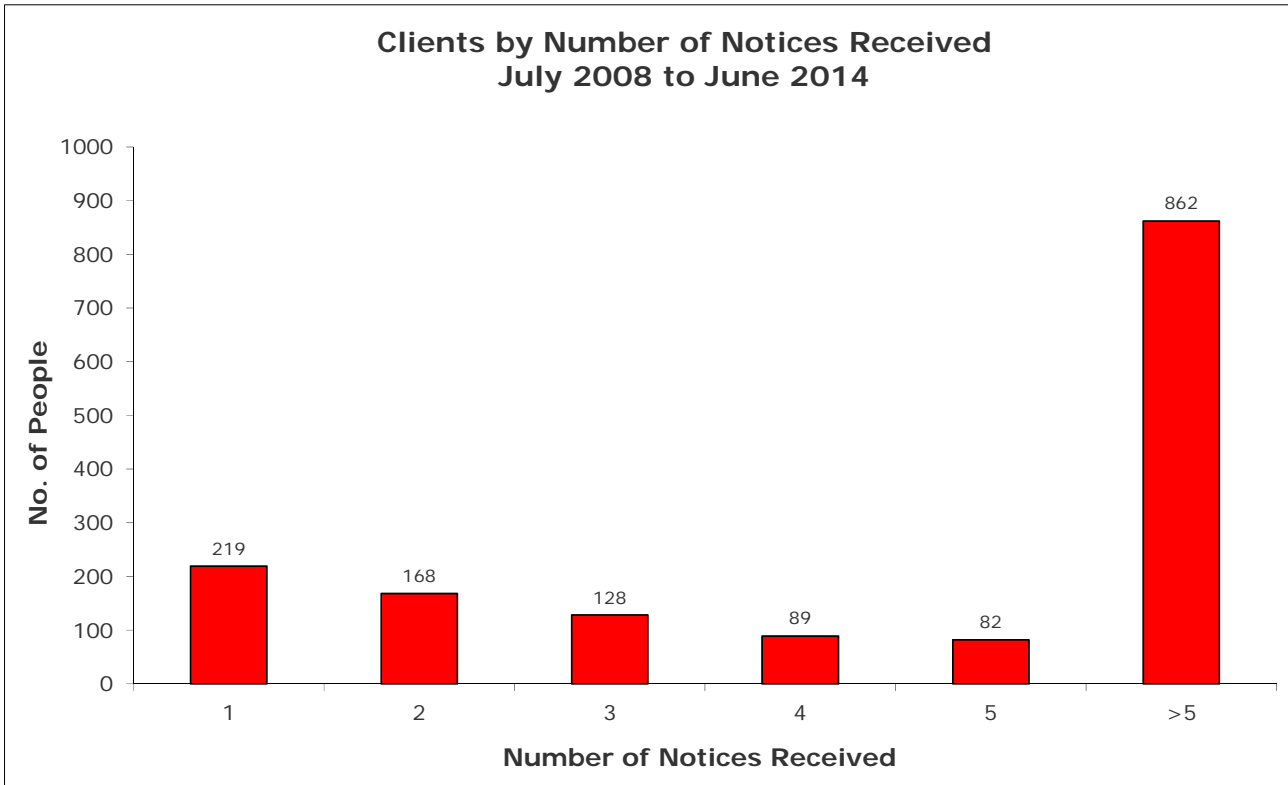


**Graph 1:** In jurisdiction notices by type and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.



**Graph 2:** In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

Since commencement in July 2008, 85.9 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 55.7 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. Conversely, 14.1 percent of clients have received only one notice.



**Graph 3:** FRC clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2014.

**(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**

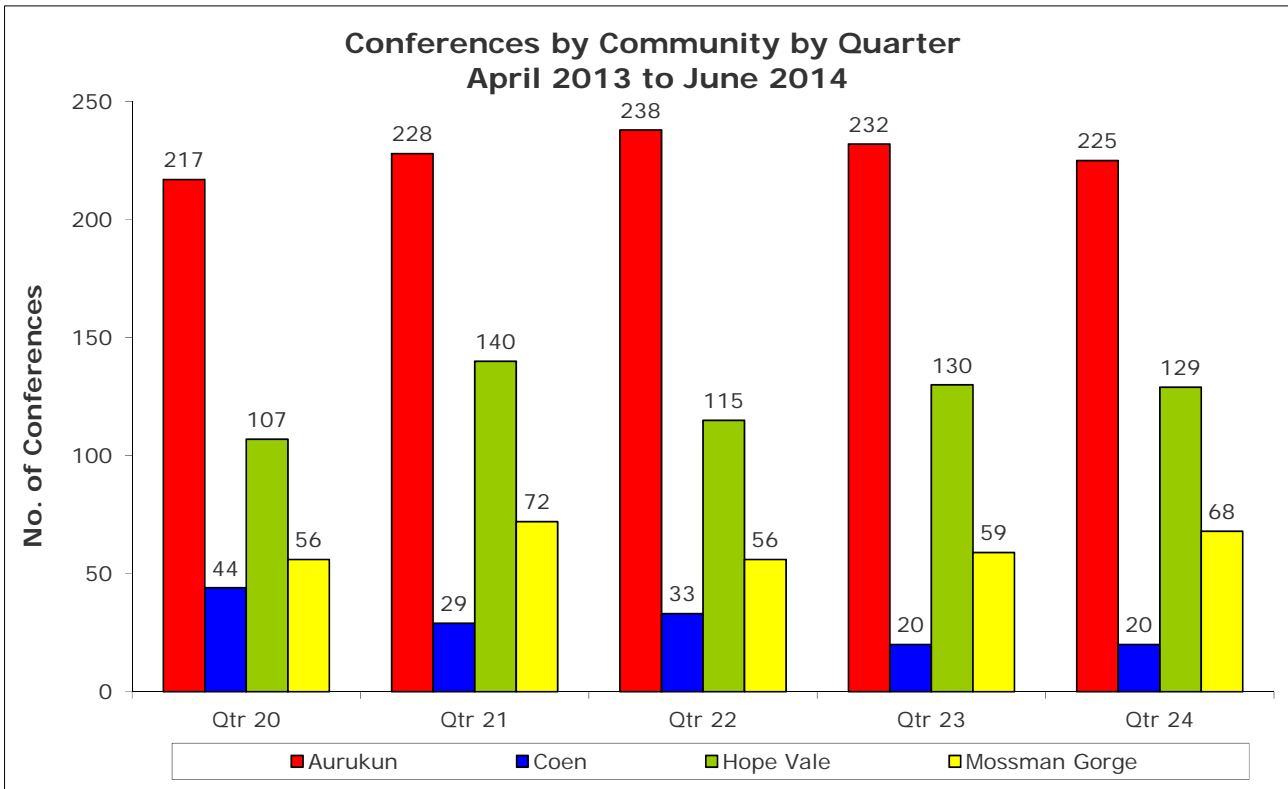
Four hundred and forty-two conferences<sup>2</sup> were held across the four communities in quarter 24 resulting in 3 FRA's being entered into, 20 orders made to attend community support services and 47 CIM orders as well as no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Nineteen new clients were conferenced during the quarter. Details of conferencing activity in each community for quarter 24 are as follows:

- 225 conferences were held in Aurukun
- 20 conferences were held in Coen
- 129 conferences were held in Hope Vale
- 68 conferences were held in Mossman Gorge.

Conferences increased from 441 in quarter 23 to 442 in quarter 24.

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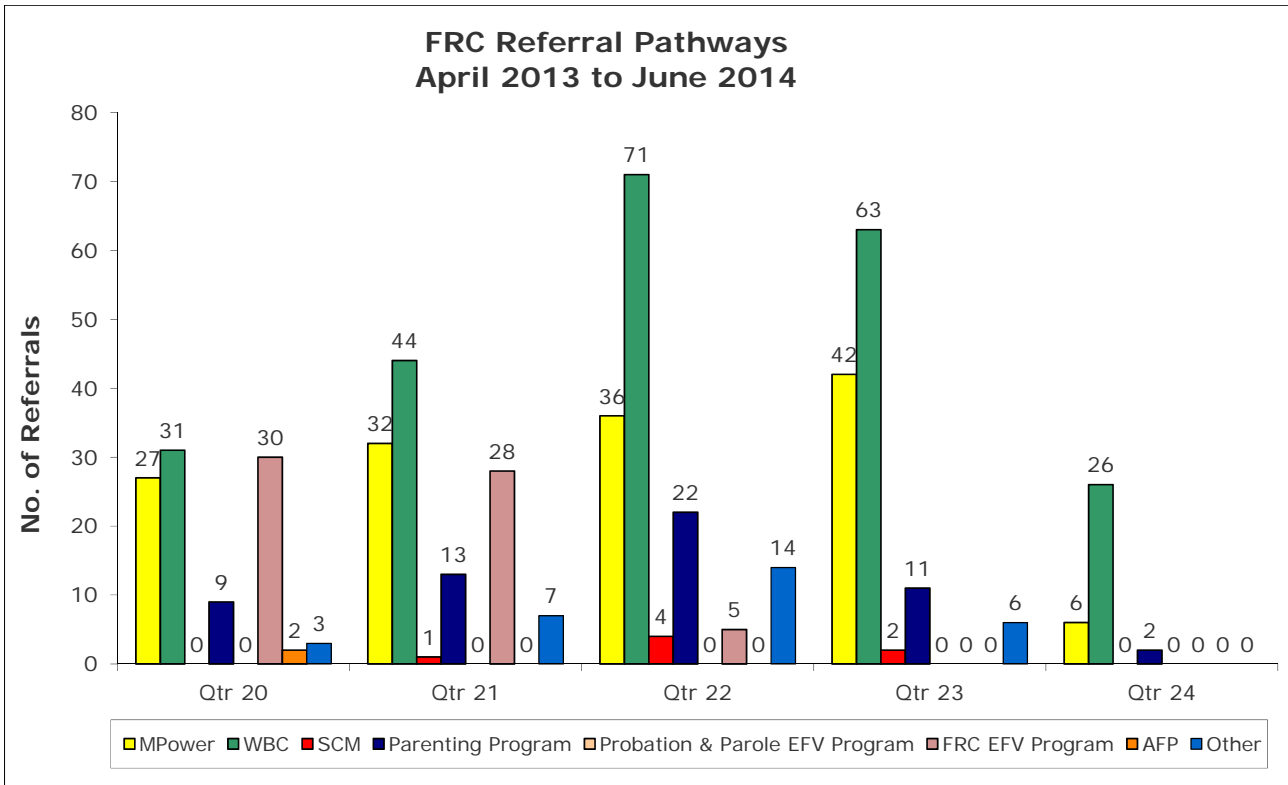
<sup>2</sup> The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.



**Graph 4:** Conferences by community and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

### Referrals

Referrals to service providers decreased from 124 in quarter 23 to 34 in quarter 24, relating to 22 clients. Since commencement the Commission has referred 825 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 52.7 percent of clients on 12 month service referral plans. Referrals in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun decreased by 78; Coen decreased by 4; Hope Vale increased by 7; and Mossman Gorge decreased by 15.



**Graph 5:** Referral pathways by referral type and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> EFVP referrals converted to FRC from Probation and Parole for the period 1 March 2013 to 31 December 2013.

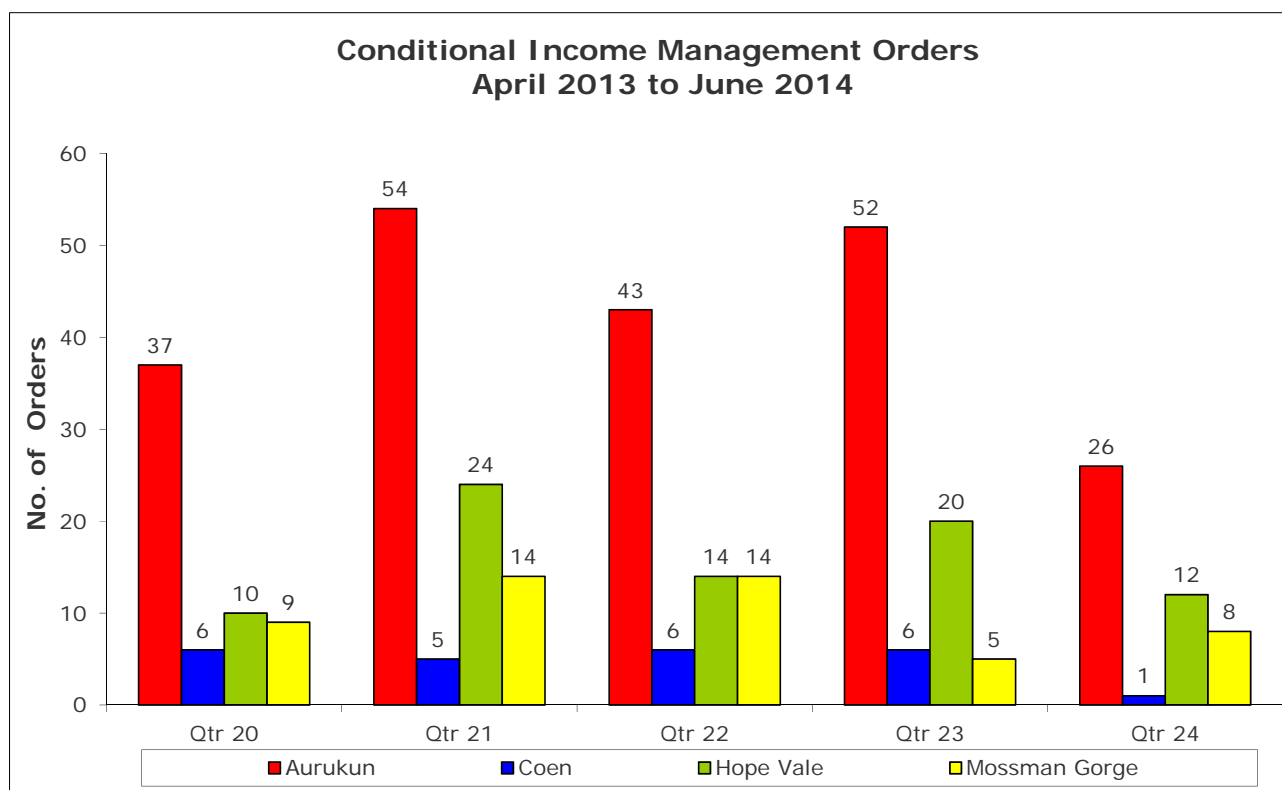


## Conditional Income Management

Forty-seven CIM orders were made in quarter 24, a decrease of 36 from quarter 23. Since the commencement of the Commission 1,370 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 632 clients. During the quarter Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale decreased by 26, 5 and 8 CIM orders respectively. Mossman Gorge increased by 3.

As at 30 June 2014, 40.4 percent of the Commission's clients have been subject to a CIM order over the past six years. As at 30 June 2014 there were 212 clients subject to a CIM order which equates to 13.5 percent of clients on a CIM order at a point in time. Commissioners continue to negotiate with clients to achieve desirable outcomes or to demonstrate motivation and commitment to make appropriate life choices. Demonstrated positive steps toward taking responsibility provide the Commissioners with sufficient reason to consider revoking CIM orders when requested by the client.

Since the commencement of the Commission in 2008, 95 VIM agreements have been processed relating to 77 clients. Those clients that request a VIM agreement use income management as a savings and budget tool, often for a specified period and to deter family members from accessing their income.



**Graph 6:** Conditional Income Management orders by community and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

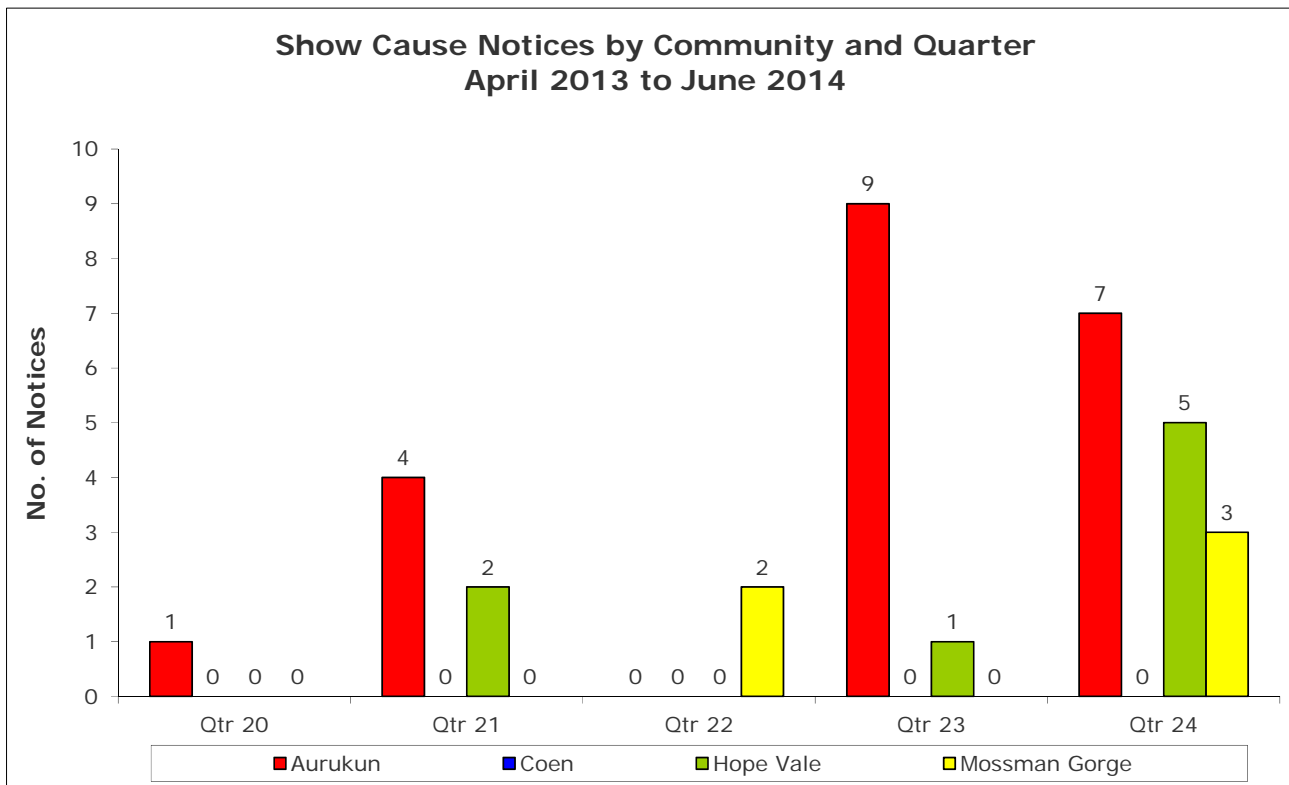
## Case Management

As at 30 June 2014, 219 clients were being case managed, a decrease from 245 in quarter 24. Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge decreased by 14, 4 and 8 respectively whilst Coen remained unchanged.

## Show Cause Notices

During quarter 24, 15 Show Cause hearing was held, an increase of 5 from quarter 23. This matter resulted in:

- 3 Clients' previous CIM Orders revoked and Conditionally Income Managed at 90 percent
- 2 Clients Conditionally Income Managed at 75 percent
- 1 Client's previous VIM agreement revoked, Conditionally Income Managed at 60 percent and ordered to comply with case plan
- 1 Client's case plan revoked and ordered to comply with new case plan
- 1 Client's CIM order revoked
- 1 Client's case plan revoked
- 3 No further action
- 3 Show Cause Notices pending client completing actions directed by the Commission.



**Graph 7:** Show Cause Notices by community and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

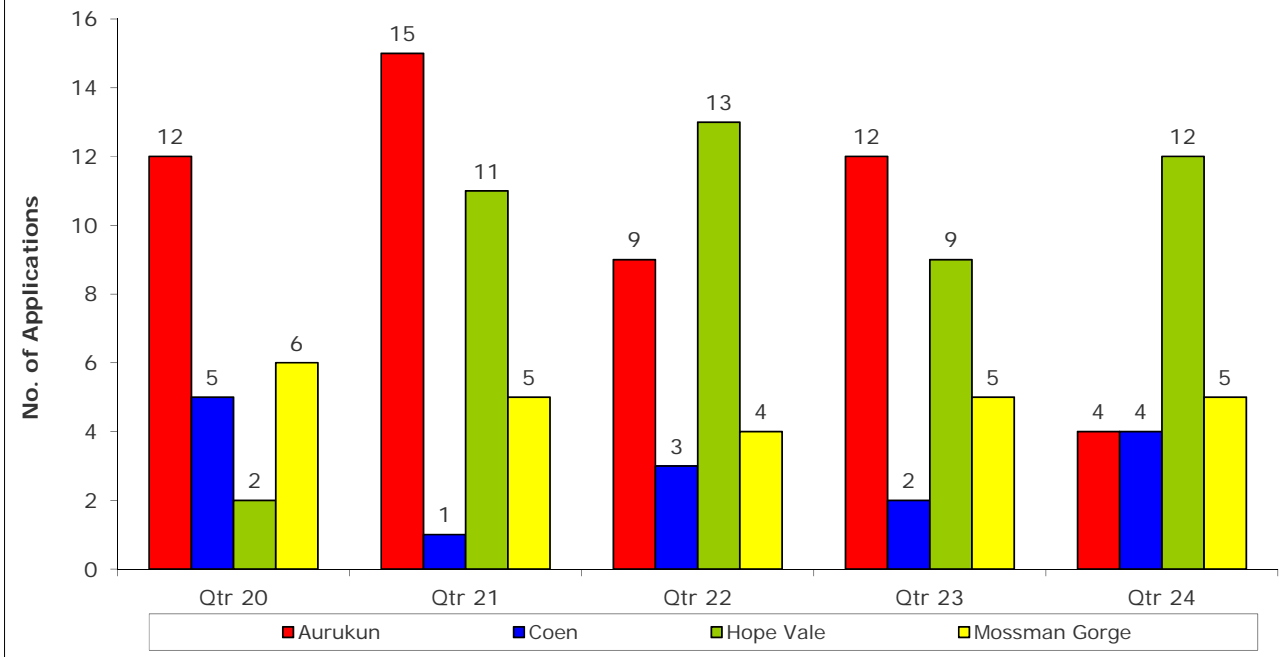
## Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Twenty-five Applications to Amend or End a Family Responsibilities Agreement or Order were received in quarter 24, a decrease of 3 from quarter 23. Outcomes of the 25 applications received are as follows:

- 9 applications granted and Income Management agreements and orders revoked
- 6 applications dismissed
- 1 application rescheduled for next quarter
- 9 applications received at the end of the quarter, decision pending

The Commission continues to encourage clients to participate in the Amend or End process. Commissioners report increasing client confidence to question decisions and the reasons behind decisions, both for decisions delivered by the Commission and decisions delivered by external agencies and bodies.

### Number of Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order April 2013 to June 2014



**Graph 8:** Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order by community and quarter 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

## 2. Future Direction and Challenges

### Future Direction

Government policy, State and Federal, is to improve school attendance in Indigenous communities as a priority in 2014. Historically the Commission has prioritised school attendance in conferencing in each community. For primary school students, reporting and case managing their attendance is achieved through schools which are located within each community. Case managing high school students, however, presents complex challenges due to the forced mobility of many of these students. Not only are they required to leave a community which in the majority of cases is vastly foreign to the communities where they are expected to board, but they also leave family and peer groups. The result of this forced mobility impacts upon continuity of support for these students and families, the result of which is often disengagement from the education process. A number of high school aged children are also returned to communities on Youth Justice orders, and the Local Commissioners have stated that engaging these students in a school option is vital to ensuring their further development.

Local Commissioners have requested that new initiatives be implemented to encourage high school aged children living in community to re-engage in high school and/or enrol in boarding school, and have identified the need for community leaders to take lead roles in coordinating a community based approach. Meanwhile, the Commission will continue to work with and strengthen multi-agency case management of high school students to provide pathways to a promising future.

### 3. Financial Operations

#### Governance

Part 12 of the Act 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. The meeting may be held by using any technology available which will allow for efficient and effective communication, however, the Board members must meet in person at least once a year. A quorum for the Board is comprised of two members. The Board's membership consists of:

- Mr James Purtill                      Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and Multicultural Affairs
- Mr Noel Pearson                      Director, Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
- Ms Liza Carroll                        Associate Secretary – Indigenous Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

#### Operational

In meeting obligations under Part 3 of the Act, the Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (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 trial 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 2013-14 fiscal year is \$3.149 million, \$1.5 million from the Australian Government and \$1.649 million from the Queensland Government.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014 totalled \$118,046. This income consisted of:
  - \$100,000 Australian Government, funding for operations
  - \$5,878 interest received
  - \$12,168 received in sundry revenue.

The balance of available funds in the bank as at 30 June 2014 is \$980,078.

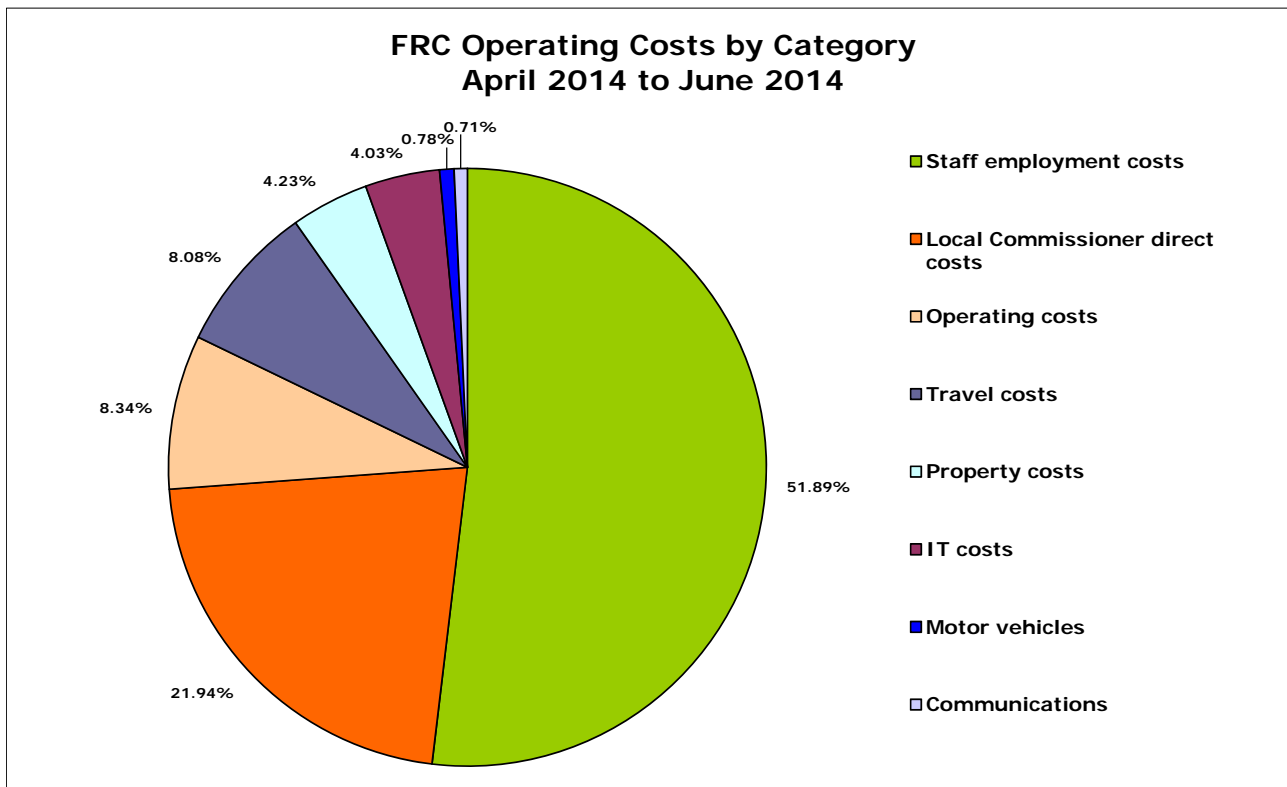
Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014 was \$1,288,356. This total represents 33 percent of the projected annual expenditure of \$3.926 million as stated in the 2013-14 projected expenditure and disclosed in the Queensland State Budget 2013-14 Service Delivery Statements.

1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014	Expenditure Qtr 24	1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014	Expenditure Qtr 24
Staff employment costs	\$668,491	Property costs	\$54,529
Local Commissioner direct costs	\$282,722	IT costs	\$51,979
Operating costs	\$107,413	Motor vehicles	\$10,093
Travel costs	\$104,038	Communications	\$9,091
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,288,356</b>

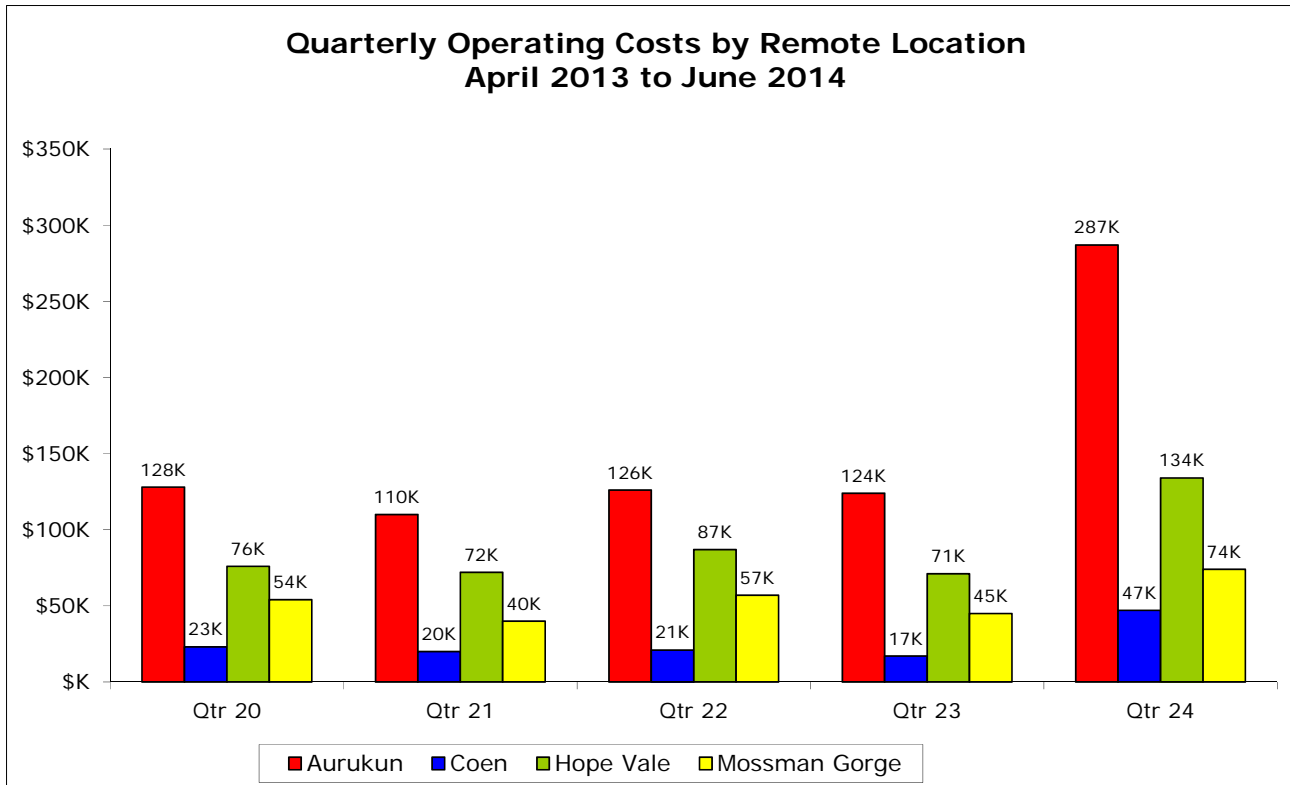
Table 1: Unaudited expenditure in quarter 24.

Quarter 24 disbursement of expenditure by category and percentage of total expenditure.



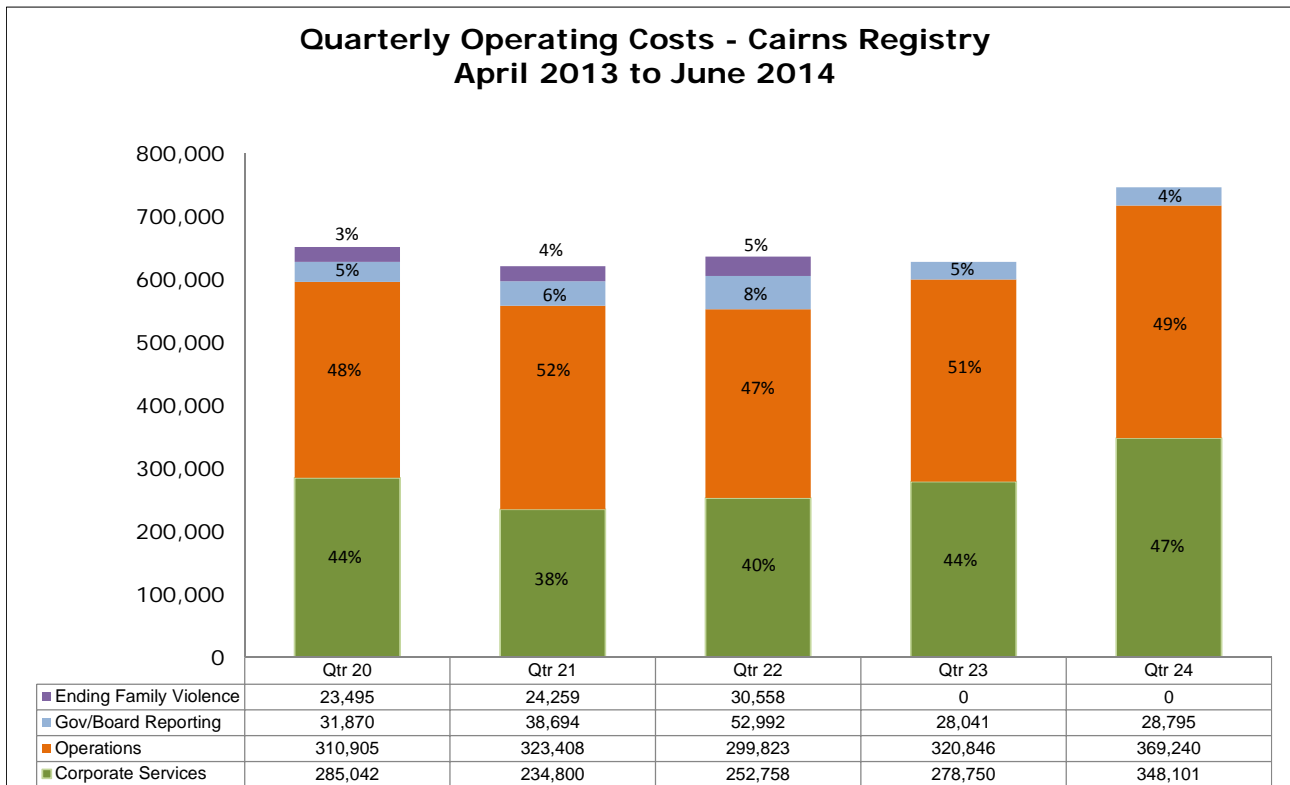
Graph 9: FRC operating costs 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014.

Regional operational expenditure by location and quarter.



**Graph 10:** Operating costs by remote location 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 24 compared to the previous four quarters.



**Graph 11:** Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014.

**APPENDIX A**



**SITTING CALENDAR 2014  
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION  
1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014**



Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Other
30 December			Public Holiday			30, 31 Office closed for Xmas 1 New Year's Day
6 January						Cooktown Circuit
13 January						
20 January						21 ASC Meeting Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
27 January	Public Holiday	28	29	30		27 Australia Day
3 February		4 4	5			Cooktown Circuit
10 February	10	11	12	13		
17 February		18 18	19			18 FR Board Meeting, 18 ASC Meeting Aurukun Cape B Circuit
24 February		25	26	27		
3 March		4 4	5			Cooktown Circuit
10 March		11	12	13		Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
17 March		18 18	19			18 ASC Meeting
24 March	24	25	26	27		
31 March		1 1	2			Cooktown Circuit
7 April						
14 April					Public Holiday	15 ASC Meeting, 18 Good Friday Aurukun Cape B Circuit
21 April	Public Holiday	22	23	24	Public Holiday	21 Easter Monday, 25 ANZAC Day
28 April		29 29	30			
5 May						Commissioner Week Cooktown Circuit
12 May	12	13	14	15		
19 May		20 20	21			20 ASC Meeting, 20 FR Board Meeting Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
26 May		27	28	29		
2 June		3 3	4			Cooktown Circuit



**SITTING CALENDAR 2014**  
**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION**  
**1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014**

Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Other
9 June	Public Holiday	10	11	12		9 Queen's Birthday
16 June		17 17	18			17 ASC Meeting Aurukun Cape B Circuit
23 June	23	24	25	26		
30 June						Cooktown Circuit
7 July						
14 July		15	16	17	Public Holiday	15 – 17 Estimates, 15 ASC Meeting 18 Cairns Show Day Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
21 July		22 22	23			21 Mossman Show
28 July		29	30	31		
4 August	Public Holiday	5 5	6			5 FR Board Meeting 4 Aurukun Day Cooktown Circuit
11 August	11	12	13	14		
18 August		19 19	20			19 ASC Meeting Aurukun Cape B Circuit
25 August		26	27	28		
1 September		2 2	3			Cooktown Circuit
8 September	8	9	10	11		
15 September		16 16	17			16 ASC Meeting Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
22 September						
29 September						
6 October	Public Holiday	7 7	8			6 Labour Day Cooktown Circuit
13 October	13	14	15	16		Aurukun Cape B Circuit
20 October		21 21	22			21 ASC Meeting
27 October		28	29	30		
3 November		4 4	5			4 FR Board Meeting Cooktown Circuit
10 November	10	11	12	13		

**SITTING CALENDAR 2014**  
**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION**  
**1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014**

Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Other
17 November		18 18	19			18 ASC Meeting Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
24 November		25	26	27		
1 December		2 2	3			Cooktown Circuit
8 December	8	9	10	11		Aurukun Cape B Circuit
15 December						
22 December				Public Holiday	Public Holiday	25 Christmas Day 26 Boxing Day
29 December				Public Holiday		29, 30, 31 Office closed for Xmas, 1 New Year's Day

**LEGEND**

	Office Days
	Public Holidays
	Aurukun Sitting
	Coen Sitting
	Hope Vale Sitting
	Mossman Gorge Sitting
ASC	Aurukun Shire Council Meeting
⊖	Cancelled Conference

OFFICE	CONTACT NAME	Phone	Mobile	Facsimile
Cairns - Registrar	Mr Rob White	4057 3871	0407 768 705	4041 0974
Cairns – Executive Officer (Management)	Mr Mitchell Holmes	4057 3875	0429 495 353	4041 0974
Cairns – Client Manager	Ms Amy Barden	4057 3874	0419 647 948	4041 0974
Aurukun Local Coordinator	Ms Dellis Gledhill	4060 6185	0428 985 106	4060 6094
Coen Local Coordinator	Ms Amy Barden	4060 1037	0419 647 948	4041 0974
Hope Vale Local Coordinator	Mr Ray Lennox	4060 9153	0408 482 026	4060 9137
Mossman Gorge Local Coordinator	Ms Sandi Rye	4098 1908	0417 798 392	4098 3594