

# Family Responsibilities Commission

*Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and  
the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Partnerships*

## Quarterly Report

**No. 6**

**October - December 2009**



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

## Executive Summary

The Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) commenced operation on 1 July 2008 and is now into its second year of operation. The focus of the first year of operation was the comprehensive establishment of the Commission which included sourcing and fitting out offices, recruitment of staff and the commencement of regular conferencing schedules in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

In its second year of operation the Commission will focus on consolidating administrative procedures that support the operations of the Commission's conferencing processes. Further to this a more streamlined case management model will be adopted as the Commission evolves due to the increase in client case load.

Local Commissioners continue to develop as important authority figures in their respective communities and their ability to make decisions regarding particular courses of action their fellow community members can make to bring about changes to their lives is critical to the success of the Commission. The Local Commissioners continue to receive recognition for their efforts by regularly being called upon to give advice to government and non-government agencies as highlighted in this report.

In the second year of operation the Commission will concentrate its efforts on further developing the skills of Local Commissioners. Local Commissioners have identified the desire to undertake training in areas such as mediation, advocacy and computer literacy. A comprehensive training schedule has been developed in this quarter and will be carried out in the first half of 2010.

From quarter one to quarter six the number of notifications received has increased by 85 percent reflecting the consolidation of the Commission's operational workload. Tenancy Breach notifications still remain low across the four communities, partly because the tenancy management arrangements in Aurukun were finalised in the first month of this quarter.

School attendance statistics for Aurukun continue to show significant improvement with an 18.1 percentage point increase in term 4, 2009 as compared against term 4, 2008. Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge experienced respectable increases of 2.6 and 0.8 percentage points respectively, while Coen showed a decrease of 3.7 percentage points against the same periods. The Commission would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the Department of Education and Training and Attendance Case Managers (Cape York Partnerships) to engage with parents and school aged children to ensure attendance.

In quarter six the number of Child Safety notifications received increased reflecting the resolution of staff shortages experienced by Child Safety Services. The Commission has been advised that recruitment of three of the four dedicated staff for the Welfare Reform communities has been finalised. Issues previously reported relating to the provision of Child Safety Plans have now been resolved and the Commission wishes to acknowledge the significant efforts of Child Safety Services staff to resolve these issues and consult and liaise with the relevant communities.

The Commission has been unable to issue the anticipated number of Show Cause notices due to a lack of improvement in the level and quality of services to the Commission's clients as previously reported. This is an area that requires significant improvement if the CYWR program is to achieve its anticipated outcomes. For 2010, a critical focus of the Commission will involve working with relevant funding providers and management staff of community support services to highlight and resolves these issues.

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## **Abbreviations:**

ACMs	Attendance Case Managers
ACMF	Attendance Case Management Framework
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
FIM	Family Income Management
GECCO	Government Engagement Coordination Officer
IT	Information Technology
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)  
*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 31 December 2009*

### 1. Context

Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) envisions a process of moving people from passive welfare dependence to engagement in the real economy. This includes increasing individual responsibility through engagement in labour markets (i.e. real jobs) and private property (i.e. 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 (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 or house.

A key plank of CYWR was the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission). The *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the Act) was passed in the Queensland Parliament on 13 March 2008 and sets out the statutory obligations of the relevant Queensland departments to notify the Commission where a parent/carer is not meeting the pre-determined obligations. For example:

- The Department of Education and Training must submit a School Attendance Notice to the Commission if a child is absent for three full, or part, days of a school term without reasonable excuse, or where a child of compulsory school age is not enrolled to attend school.
- The Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) must submit a Child Safety Notification where the Chief Executive becomes aware of an allegation of harm or risk to a child.
- The Magistrates Court must submit a Court Offence Notice if a person is convicted of an offence.
- The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services), or the provider of public housing, must submit a Tenancy Breach Notice if they believe that the tenant has breached their public housing tenancy agreement.

The Commission receives agency notifications from the departments mentioned above. Once received, a process is followed where it is determined if the person is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Upon determination of jurisdiction, the matter is then referred to the Local Commissioners for a decision about whether to order the person to attend a conference.

A conference proceeds where the client may be encouraged to enter into a Family Responsibility Agreement (FRA), or an order is made to refer the person to community support services. The matter is then case managed by the Commission for the period of the order/agreement. Where a person does not comply, Show Cause proceedings are initiated and the client is ordered to attend before the Commission to explain reasons for non-compliance and if necessary an order for Conditional Income Management (CIM) may be made.

## 2. Partners / Service Providers

The Commission has been in operation for a period of 18 months and during that time key relationships have been developed between the Commission staff, their partner agencies and service providers in the four CYWR communities. A number of agencies finalised recruitment of senior staffing positions working within the CYWR project at the end of 2009. The Commission acknowledges the commitment and achievement of the individuals who completed their tenure and is actively working to establish relationships with new staff early in their assignments to ensure continuity of service delivery, focus and achievement of goals.

As a result of attendance at a conference, clients may either enter into agreements or be directed to attend relevant community support services such as Wellbeing Centres (WBCs) to address alcohol and/or drug misuse, gambling, parenting or social health related issues, Family Income Management (FIM) to assist with budgeting and meeting priority needs of individuals and families or school Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) to ensure children attend school.

Where a client enters into an agreement or a direction is made, as mentioned above, a case plan is developed. The case plan may include a number of referrals to community support services. Service providers are required to report in writing to the Commission by the fifth day of each month, to advise if the client has engaged with the provider and the progress they are making in their case plans.

As a result of the progress reports received, a client's case is assessed to establish whether they are meeting their obligations under the agreement or order. Additional information is sought from partner agencies, service providers and local knowledge is gathered. Where appropriate, recommendations for Show Cause proceedings or case reviews are initiated. Increasingly, the complexity of client obligations requires greater information sharing and cooperation between the Commission, service providers and associated agencies to ensure clients can realistically meet the requirements of their case plan.

A total of 155 referrals to community support services were made in quarter six, 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009 relating to 95 individuals. Service providers are relied upon to capture the attendance, engagement and progress of clients to assist the Commission in extending further case plan options, personal responsibility actions and, if necessary, CIM.

As at 31 December 2009, 517 clients were being case managed and required monthly progress reports to be submitted by service providers. Service providers have advised capacity issues have impacted on intake, assessment and program delivery in each CYWR community, this has also impacted on reporting to the Commission. The WBC has provided feedback that maximum capacity levels have been reached due to the FRC referred clients and the high numbers of voluntary (self) referrals made by community members. The Commission is seeking to broaden case management referrals to other agencies and service delivery providers to decrease the WBC workload. In early 2010 the Commission will review existing case managed clients to establish the most appropriate service providers and agencies to ensure all clients have access to services.

FIM and ACM have experienced staffing and resource issues which have impacted on the quality of service delivery to the clients and reporting to the Commission. Hope Vale FIM continues to experience lack of community confidence, partly attributed to the use of the "General Ledger" system of income allocation. The Commission is encouraged by plans to review staffing and resources and resolutions for 2010 to address the impediments of this past year.

The Commission acknowledges the commitment of the staff of Child Safety Services to address previously reported limitations on information sharing and obtaining client case plans. Child Safety Services have reviewed their operational policies and made amendments that now enable a more comprehensive sharing of information that allows the Commission to better case manage clients. Child Safety Services and Department of Communities representatives conducted workshops in November and December in the four CYWR communities meeting with the Local Commissioners to discuss all aspects of Child Safety policies and develop a higher level of understanding to assist with keeping children in community when possible.

Child Safety Services staff and the Commissioners identified the lack of accredited Child Safety carers and suitable housing arrangements for carer families as the greatest barrier to ensuring security and safety of children in their communities. They also agreed that a lack of understanding of Child Safety processes (including statutory obligations) by community members and other service providers further impeded their work. Child Safety Services has undertaken to work with Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian to visit communities in 2010 to recruit long term and short term carers and to provide joint information sessions. Commissioners (together with Recognised Entities) have undertaken to provide information to community members regarding Child Safety operations and encourage community members to enlist as approved carers.

The Commission continues to identify gaps in service delivery, coordination and cooperation between government agencies, service providers and non-government organisations in each of the communities. Clients continue to advise Commissioners at conferences reasons why they are unable to meet case plan requirements or the Commissioners identify secondary referrals are required, only to find the service not functioning adequately or beyond the access of the community member. As reported in previous quarterly reports, this continues to hamper effective case management of clients. The Commissioner and Registrar continue to meet with managers of relevant service providers to advise of issues and attempt to devise solutions. This will be a particular focus of the Commission in early 2010 to ensure that clients begin to receive the services they need to begin addressing the issues affecting their lives.

At the direction of the Premier, Minister Boyle (Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) and Minister Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) all service providers, government agencies (State and Federal) and non-government organisations were required to attend the Hope Vale Service Providers Workshop on 1 December 2009. Organisations and agencies were required to provide an outline of strategic and operational plans and duty statements for all employees working in the community. A number of organisations and agencies did not provide the documents required. A comprehensive report compiled by the Commission is expected to be delivered to the Premier by mid-February 2010. The workshop was jointly organised by the Local Program Office and the Commission, but it is envisaged the workshops to be held in the three other CYWR communities will be led by the Local Program Office. It was intended that as a result of the workshop a service map and 2010 calendar of services and visits would be collated by the Government Engagement Coordination Officer (GECO), but lack of information provision has prevented comprehensive documents being provided. The structure of the workshop and documents will be provided to the other communities to assist in their respective workshops.

Protocols for engagement of Commissioners when visiting community and attendance at conference (primarily for service providers) will be released in early 2010. Service providers have been invited to attend the Cairns Registry in January 2010 to provide updates on program delivery and direction for 2010 and encouraged to attend each community to advise Local Commissioners of community

services. To date Centrelink has provided briefings to the Commissioners and FIM staff regarding the requirements for clients on aged pension or carers payment wishing to uptake Voluntary Income Management (VIM). The Commission will continue to work with service providers and notifying agencies throughout the life of trial to ensure best practice in the delivery of services to clients of the Commission.

### 3. Business Operations

#### Operational

In meeting obligations under Part 3 of the Act, the Registry commenced operation on 1 July 2008 with a central Registry office established in Cairns and local Registry offices operating in each of the four CYWR communities.

The Registry is managed by the Registrar, with a further ten Cairns based administrative staff who provide corporate and operational support to the Commissioner and Local Commissioners. Additional staff have been engaged temporarily to provide further administrative assistance, as required. Staffing levels have increased due to the outcomes of an internal review of the Commission's operations conducted in conjunction with a Job Evaluation Matrix analysis by our human resource service provider, the Corporate Administration Agency, of staff positions within the Cairns Registry. The Commission also has Local Coordinators residing in each of the four CYWR communities.

Staff development and training remains a strong focus for the Commission. In this quarter a training needs analysis exercise was completed by staff with a view to developing a comprehensive staff training calendar for 2010.

The Commission's Cairns Registry relocated to a larger office within the same building in November 2009 resulting in additional costs associated with office rental and the relocation of information technology infrastructure and telecommunications.

Work continues on the development of a new Client Relationship Management database. It is expected that the new database will be fully implemented and operational in quarter seven.

Many of the Commission's policies and procedures were constructed prior to its commencement. Commission staff have now had sufficient time to determine whether those policies and procedures were practical given lessons learned. As a result a comprehensive review of the Commission's policies and procedures manual was conducted in this quarter and substantial amendments were required. The amended procedures manual and policies are expected to be released in quarter seven.

In December, Local Commissioners were invited to attend a meeting in Cairns with the Honourable Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). The Commissioners discussed with Minister Macklin their journey since the inception of the Commission and how it had affected their lives and those of their families and community members. The Commissioners were acknowledged and thanked by Minister Macklin, on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, for their significant efforts to date.

In December Commissioner Glasgow and the Registrar were invited by the Central Land Council and Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Northern Territory to visit Alice Springs to present at both a public forum and an invitation only workshop on the implementation of the Commission and the outcomes experienced so far, including lessons learned. The public forum was well attended by approximately 100 people from various organisations where a robust discussion was held after the presentation. At the closed workshop, attended by government and non-government organisations from Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia, discussions were held and questions were posed relating to our model and how it might work in the Northern Territory context. As a result an invitation was issued by Commissioner Glasgow for Elders of the Northern Territory clans to visit Cape York and see the Commission's work first hand.



## Financial

The budgeted inflow of funds for the 2009-10 Financial Year consist of \$1.0M from a Commonwealth Government grant of \$3.5M and \$2.5M from \$9.4M allocated under administered funding through the Department of Communities by the Queensland Government until the expiry of the Act on 1 January 2012. These funds will be supplemented by interest on the Commissions investments and its operational bank account.

Since its inception, the Commission has faced continual challenges in managing its budget to effectively service these remote locations. There continues to be challenges associated with staff and office accommodation, transport, information technology, communications and logistics.

### Income:

- The income received by the Commission for the period 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009 totalled \$2.501M. This includes Queensland Government funding of \$1.285M for the half year to 31 December 2009, Australian Government funding of \$0.5M for the half year to 31 December 2009, carried forward surplus funds from 2007-08 and 2008-09 of \$0.665M, \$0.046M in interest and \$0.004M in cost recoveries. A further \$0.114M in funding is also due in quarter seven from the CYWR Service Procurement Fund to offset the annual 2009-10 salary and on-costs for the Principal Case Manager's position.
- In quarter seven, the Commission expects to receive a further \$1.399M in operating funding through the Department of Communities and will allocate \$0.5M of Australian Government funds for the period to 30 June 2010.

### Expenditure:

- The estimated expenditure for the period 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009 was \$0.872M (Table 1).
- This compares to estimated expenditure for the period 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009 which totalled \$2.127M, which included a one off grant contribution for the construction of staff/visitor accommodation to the Aurukun Shire Council of \$0.570M. This grant expense is not expected to be incurred again during the life of the Commission.
- The balance of funds available for operating expenditure by the Commission for the period to 31 December 2009 is approximately \$0.374M.

Salaries and recruitment costs (53 percent), operating costs (12.8 percent), Local Commissioner fees (8.8 percent), airfares and accommodation (8.2 percent) and Information Technology (IT) costs (7.5 percent) represent 90.3 percent of total expenditure in the quarter. This reflects ongoing staffing, increased operating costs, increased demand for Local Commissioners consultation, travel and IT development. Expenditure variances from quarter five to quarter six are attributed to:

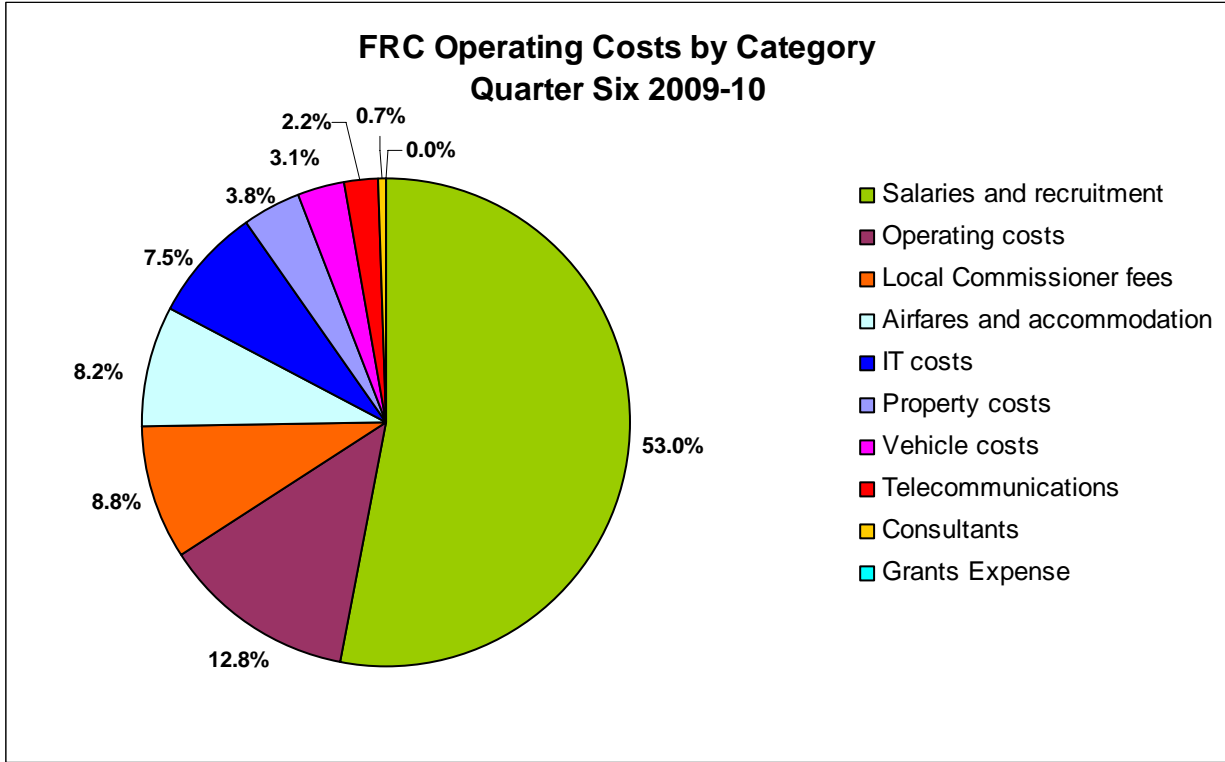
- Accrued Expenses paid by the Commission in quarter five which relate to the 2008-09 financial year totalled \$397K.
- Salaries and recruitment - Salaries and on-costs increased by \$95.5K due to additional staffing. Staff training also increased by \$4.5K and this was offset by a reduction in recruitment costs of \$38K resulting in an overall variance of \$62K. The Commission sought recovery of \$114K for the twelve months salary and on-costs of the Principal Case Manager's position from the Service Procurement fund through the Department of Communities. The recovery was invoiced in January 2010 and receipted from the Department of Communities in February 2010.

- Operating Costs – Increases in expenditure of \$91.5K in quarter six compared to quarter five is comprised of \$39.5K for 2008-09 Audit Fees, \$19K for 2008-09 Annual Report Publication costs, \$19K for Sundry Operating Costs, \$10K for IT fees and \$4.5K for professional fees for lease negotiations for the new offices of the Commission. \$10K for IT fees was incorrectly posted in August 2009.
- Local Commissioner Fees – increase of \$32.5K reflects increased consultations by Local Commissioners. Separate invoices have been issued to Child Safety for \$6K and FaHCSIA for \$9K to recover these costs.
- Airfares and Accommodation – Staff related travel and accommodation increased by \$37.5K relating to attendance at conference in Alice Springs and travel and accommodation associated with Local Commissioners meeting with Minister Macklin in December 2009. Non-staff (consultants) related travel increased by \$0.5K.
- IT Costs – decreased by \$28.5K due to delays in invoicing by the Commissions IT service provider the Corporate Administration Agency CYDN and CITEC for services. Further variances are expected in quarter seven.
- Property Costs – increased by \$6.5K due to the relocation of the Commission's Cairns Registry and the Commission incurring dual rentals for a short period of time during the relocation.
- Vehicle Costs – increased by \$10.5K due to increased operating costs and repairs of damage, tyre replacement and maintenance of vehicles.
- Telecommunications – increased \$7K due to increased staffing levels and the transfer of the server and telecommunications resulting from the relocation of the Cairns Registry.
- Consultants – decreased \$17K due to delays in the development of the Commission's client database.
- Grants Expense – decreased by \$586K due to one off expenditure incurred in September 2009. The Commission anticipates no further grant expenditure in 2009-10.

<b>Expenditure 1 July 2009 to 31 Dec 2009</b>	<b>Total Expenditure Qtr 5</b>	<b>Total Expenditure Qtr 6</b>	<b>Total Expenditure to end Qtr 6</b>	<b>Total Expenditure Variance Qtr 5 to Qtr6</b>
Salaries and recruitment	400,063.11	462,250.45	862,313.56	62,187.34
Operating costs	20,203.44	111,814.31	132,017.75	91,610.87
Local Commissioner fees	43,735.00	76,389.00	120,124.00	32,654.00
Airfares and accommodation	33,657.05	71,379.84	105,036.89	37,722.79
IT costs	93,723.49	65,085.27	158,808.76	-28,638.22
Property costs	26,407.57	33,054.40	59,461.97	6,646.83
Vehicle costs	16,627.05	27,374.46	44,001.51	10,747.41
Telecommunications	11,885.84	18,776.02	30,661.86	6,890.18
Consultants	22,922.28	5,775.00	28,697.28	-17,147.28
Grants Expense	585,995.07	0.00	585,995.07	-585,995.07
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,255,219.90</b>	<b>\$871,898.75</b>	<b>\$2,127,118.65</b>	<b>-383,321.15</b>

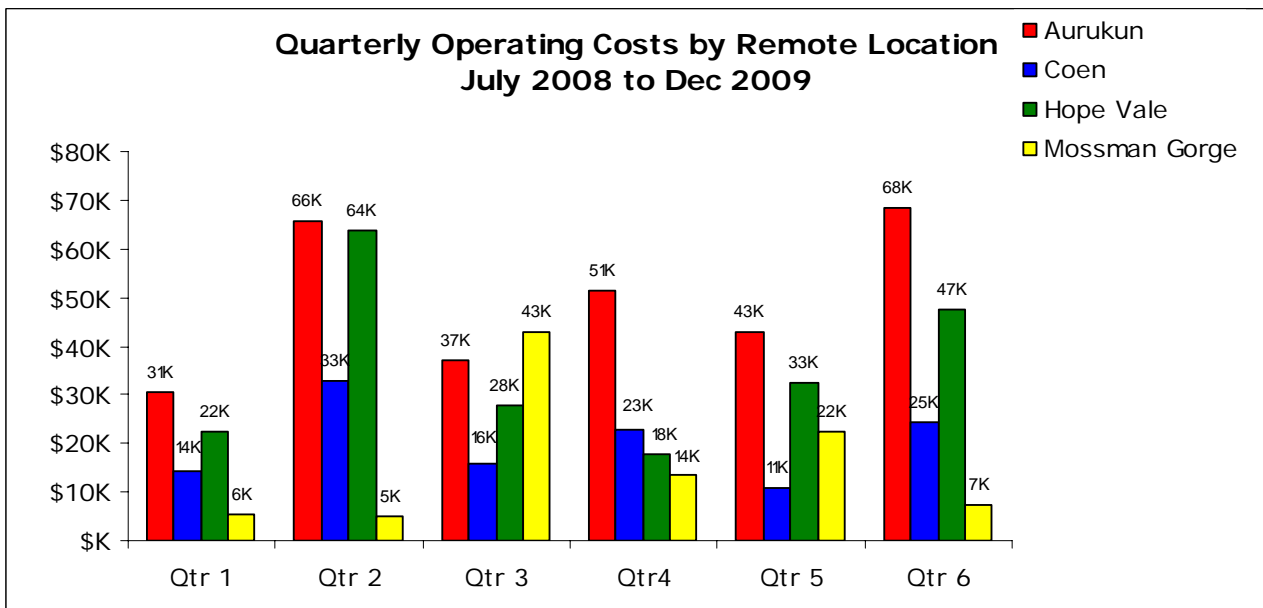
**Table 1:** Unaudited YTD expenditure including variations between Qtr5 and Qtr6

The Commission's total quarter six 2009-10 operating costs by categories and by percentage of total expenditure is represented in the graph below:



**Graph 1:** Total FRC Operating costs 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009

Regional operational expenditure is categorised below by location per quarter. These figures exclude Local Coordinator's salary costs, which are incorporated in the Commission's global operating costs. These figures include Local Commissioner's fees for quarter six, totalling \$76.39K. This also reflects the involvement of Local Commissioners in important consultations conducted in December 2009 on service delivery with Child Safety and with the Commonwealth Government.



**Graph 2:** Operating costs by remote location 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

(Note: The increased costs for Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale in quarter two reflect the provisioning of these remote offices with office equipment, furniture and vehicles. In quarter three, the Mossman Gorge office refurbishment costs are recorded. The operational costs attributed to the Aurukun and Hope Vale offices reflect the higher number of conferences held in these

communities when compared with number of conferences held in Coen and Mossman Gorge). An error was corrected in the formula for the calculation of Remote Location costs in quarter five. This correction has altered the previously published figures in this graph for quarter five.

Cairns office operational costs (below) in quarter five reflects the inclusion of \$0.570M in grant funds for remote staff accommodation in Aurukun provided to the Aurukun Shire Council under a Deed of Grant Funding agreement between the Australian Government and the State of Queensland acting through the Department of Public Works. These funds were committed under a joint Memorandum of Understanding between the Queensland Department of Public Works, the Department of Communities and the Commission. The spike in expenses in quarter two is due to the settlement of accrued expenses transferred from the previous financial year. The quarter three expenditure includes accrued IT acquisitions and ongoing IT service costs for the period from July 2008 to February 2009. Much of this expenditure relates to costs incurred by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in establishing the Commission.



**Graph 3:** Quarterly operating costs, Cairns 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

## 4. Activities / Achievements

### Intake and Assessment Phase

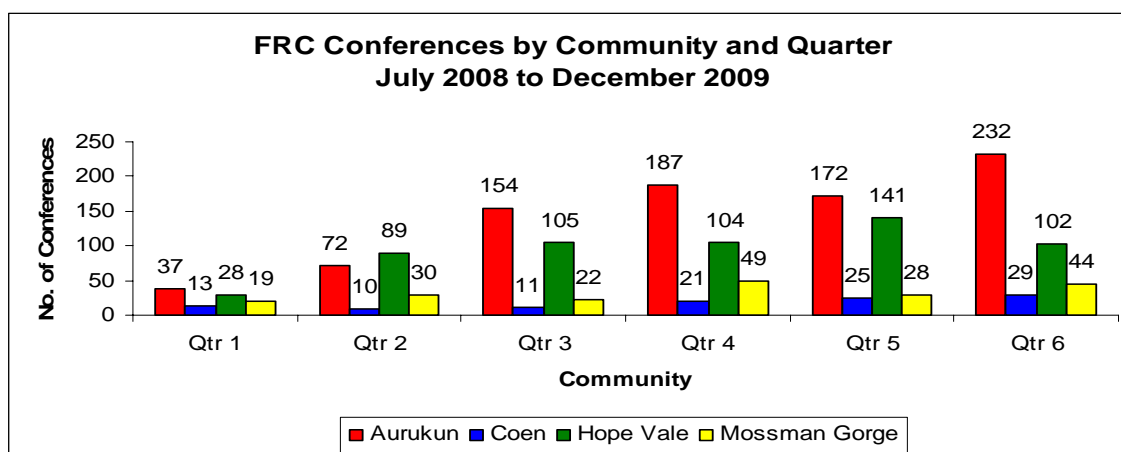
The Commission became operational on 1 July 2008 and commenced conferencing on 12 August 2008. In quarter six the Commission received 1184 agency notifications, some of which related to more than one person. Of that figure 782 notifications (66 percent) were within Commission's jurisdiction and 402 notifications (34 percent) received were outside the Commission's jurisdiction and therefore could not be dealt with.

During the intake phase notifications are assessed to establish whether the person/s notified are within the jurisdiction of the Commission in accordance with the Act. Section 49 of the Act provides that the Commission can deal with an agency notification relating to a community member. Section 7 of the Act defines a community member as being a person who is a welfare recipient and who also lives in one of the four CYWR communities or has lived there for a period of three months.

### Conferences

The objective of the Commission, as set out in the Act, is primarily to conduct conferences with community members and to encourage clients (individuals and families) to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour whilst promoting the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in the CYWR communities.

In quarter six a total of 407 conferences were held which resulted in 43 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into and 50 directions made to attend community support services. Other outcomes included no further action, rescheduling, scheduling to return for review with compliance and the assignment of personal responsibility actions.



Graph 4: FRC Conferences by community and quarter 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

## Case Management

As at 31 December 2009, 517 clients were being case managed. Service providers, WBC, FIM, ACM and Parenting Program advise the level of service provided is directly impacted by the level of resourcing and staffing available in each CYWR community. Clients facing significant barriers such as addiction, cycle of violence and homelessness may lack the capacity to comply with all aspects of a case plan and these personal details may not be revealed in the first contact with the Commission. This may require referral to more than one service provider or the client attending conference on a different matter and having a case plan reviewed to reflect the complexity of issues faced by the client. The Commission recognises that the availability and capacity of services is preventing some clients being able to comply with their case plans. As a result the Commission is seeking to increase the Commission's resources to allow the Commission to engender a more individualistic and intense model of case management.

Referral Type	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	TOTAL
FIM	15	38	61	27	49	41	231
WBC	27	51	132	66	87	80	443
ACM	7	6	24	55	22	22	136
Parenting Program	8	3	4	1	2	7	25
Other	17	31	24	19	15	5	111
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>946</b>

Table 2: Referral services by quarter as at 31 December 2009

Although the primary focus of conferences is to discuss the notifications relating to the client, rarely is this the sole outcome of a conference as clients often require specialised assistance in navigating the multiple commitments of agencies such as obtaining birth certificates and payment of fines. Due to issues and limitations in individual communities, Commissioners and Local Coordinators have experienced an increase in clients seeking assistance to contact agencies such as Centrelink Remote Servicing, Queensland Corrective Services, Magistrates Courts, State Penalties Enforcement Registry and Child Safety Services.

Show Cause recommendations continue to be assessed on a case by case basis by the Commissioners, primarily due to the fact the assessment draws upon the service providers monthly progress reports and requested summary reports at the initial investigation stage. The quality of reports requires the Commissioners and Local Coordinators to draw on local knowledge and investigations to guarantee a holistic assessment of compliance with the case plan and overarching Welfare Reform objectives.

It should be noted that of the 517 clients case managed, this includes clients on voluntary case management plans, and Child Safety Services plans. It also includes clients who are incarcerated, out of community, in hospital and on probation orders. In these circumstances not all clients are investigated for Show Cause proceedings but are monitored pending changes to their situation.

During quarter six, 41 Show Cause hearings were held in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale (see Table 3). These matters resulted in:

- 13 Clients CIM at the rate of 75 percent for 12 months
- 1 Client CIM at the rate of 60 percent for 12 months
- 3 Clients CIM at the rate of 75 percent for 12 months and placed on an order to comply with a Case Plan
- 3 Clients given orders to comply with Case Plans
- 8 No Further Actions

- 13 Clients scheduled or rescheduled for 2010

The Commission encountered a number of clients coming to the end of their 12 months case plan in quarter six. Many of these clients had not engaged with service providers over the entire 12 month period which resulted in Show Cause hearings being held. The Commissioners discussed with the clients why they had not engaged and any limitations or barriers presented by service providers. Over half the clients were either given a further opportunity to engage or no further action was taken with the Show Cause hearing.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 5</b>	<b>Qtr 6</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Aurukun</b>	0	0	2	9	9	28	<b>48</b>
<b>Coen</b>	0	0	1	6	0	0	<b>7</b>
<b>Hope Vale</b>	0	0	0	3	1	13	<b>17</b>
<b>Mossman Gorge</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>72</b>

**Table 3:** Show Cause Notice by quarter as at 31 December 2009

The Commission has experienced a significant decrease in Applications to Amend or End an Agreement or Order in quarter six from 22 to six. In the last quarter it was identified that a number of clients filed applications so they could access extra funds for special occasions such as local shows and other special events. These applications were dismissed and instead clients were referred to Centrelink to re-examine their budget allocations, and vary where necessary, as part of the budgeting education that occurs within the income management regime. Centrelink community outreach has improved client understanding and Commissioners report, in general, an acceptance of the CIM regime. The Commission anticipates the number of applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders to rise in the next quarter due to the large number of clients placed on CIM orders in quarter six, especially the month of December and the cyclical nature of post Christmas cash flow shortages.

During quarter six, a total of six applications to Amend or End a FRA or Order were received (see Table 4). The matters received resulted in:

- 4 CIM orders revoked
- 1 Client failed to appear and the application was dismissed
- 1 CIM order reinforced until the client has completed their Case Plan.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 5</b>	<b>Qtr 6</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Aurukun</b>	0	0	2	7	8	0	<b>17</b>
<b>Coen</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Hope Vale</b>	0	0	5	2	9	6	<b>22</b>
<b>Mossman Gorge</b>	0	0	1	3	5	0	<b>9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>

**Table 4:** Applications to Amend or End Family Responsibilities Agreements or Orders as at 31 December 2009.

## Conditional Income Management

Seventy six Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter six with a total of 206 CIM orders made to 31 December 2009 (see Tables 5 and 6). CIM orders are made where the client has either failed to attend two scheduled conferences, or where a client is not complying with case plan requirements and/or the Commission is continuing to receive additional notifications relating to those clients. Since the Commission commenced operations, 71 percent of clients have received multiple notifications. The Commissioners report that many of these clients have been given many opportunities to engage in case plans and have refused which has resulted in the increase in CIM orders.

The Commission acknowledges that client's situations can change during the trial. This is reflected in the CIM orders that are unable to be enacted due to the client not currently receiving income support payments. These clients may be working or choosing not to receive income support payments. The order remains current for 12 months and will be enacted if the client claims payments that are subject to income management jurisdiction during this period. The Commission also experiences a continual number of clients awaiting exit from CDEP and transition to income support payments. Community members in CYWR under CDEP are subject to removal from the program under a recommendation from the Commission and subsequent decision from FaHCSIA to exit the client from CDEP.

For those clients subject to CIM, the Commissioners review their progress at the six and 10 month point of their order and discuss future options. Some clients continue to advise of their desire to remain on CIM for an extended period under a new case plan and/or decrease the percentage managed from 75 to 60 percent.

Local Coordinators and Commissioners report continued enquires by Commission clients and community members to apply for Voluntary Income Management (VIM). Most enquiries indicate VIM is a feasible antidote to family and social pressure to hand over cash for non-essential items and contraband. There are currently two clients/community members who have successfully applied for VIM and a further five applications waiting processing.

VIM is now available to community members on an Aged Pension and Carers Payment (Category R under the *Social Security Administration Act 1999*). The Australian Government has extended the provision of VIM for Category R community members that operates in Western Australia to include communities participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform trial. In these circumstances community members are referred directly to Centrelink by Commission or FIM staff. The Commission is not in a position to comment on the number of community members on category R payments undertaking the VIM option.

<b>Conditional Income Management (CIM) Individuals</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Currently CIM	98
Currently with Centrelink to be CIM	29
CIM period expired	17
Currently waiting on client to be removed from CDEP	5
CIM Order revoked	17
Currently not receiving any benefits and not subject to CIM	37
Currently in prison and not being CIM	3
<b>TOTAL CIM ORDERS</b>	<b>206</b>

Table 5: Conditional Income Management Orders as at 31 December 2009



Community	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	TOTAL
Aurukun	0	6	10	19	18	37	90
Coen	1	0	0	0	1	11	13
Hope Vale	0	7	18	8	13	21	67
Mossman Gorge	1	11	4	4	9	7	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>206</b>

Table 6: Quarterly Conditionally Income Managed clients as at 31 December 2009

## Notifications

For the period 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009, the Commission received a total of **1184** agency notifications<sup>1</sup> of which 782, or 66 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Of the 782 notifications that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, this comprised of:

- 420 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 290 School Attendance notifications
- 61 Child Safety notifications
- 11 Housing Tenancy notifications

Of the 402, or 34 percent, not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 368 Magistrates Courts notifications, 20 School Attendance notifications and 14 Child Safety notifications.

Details for each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun's 446** notifications comprise **57 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:
  - 225 Magistrates Courts notifications
  - 205 School Attendance notifications
  - 16 Child Safety notifications

59 Magistrates Courts notifications, 9 School Attendance notifications and 10 Child Safety notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**232 conferences** have been held in Aurukun this quarter.<sup>2</sup>

- **Coen's 79** notifications comprise **10 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:
  - 54 Magistrates Courts notifications
  - 10 Child Safety notifications
  - 9 School Attendance notifications
  - 6 Housing Tenancy notifications

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

**29 Conferences** have been held in Coen this quarter.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Counting rules are that an agency notification is counted on the basis of number of "clients" on the notification, for example: a child safety notification relating to two parents is counted as two notifications.

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

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- **Hope Vale's 214** notifications comprise **27 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
  - 120 Magistrates Courts notifications
  - 66 School Attendance notifications
  - 27 Child Safety notifications
  - 1 Housing Tenancy notification

103 Magistrates Courts notifications and 8 School Attendance notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**102 conferences** have been held in Hope Vale this quarter.<sup>4</sup>

- **Mossman Gorge's 43** notifications comprise **6 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
  - 21 Magistrates Courts notifications
  - 10 School Attendance notifications
  - 8 Child Safety notifications
  - 4 Housing Tenancy notifications

168 Magistrates Courts notifications, 2 Child Safety and 1 School Attendance notification were processed as not within jurisdiction.

**44 Conferences** have been held in Mossman Gorge this quarter.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

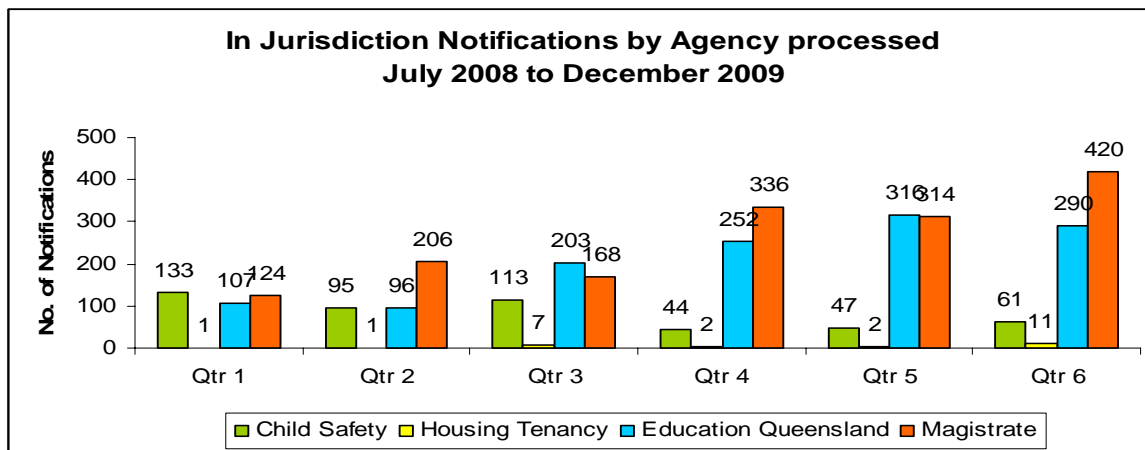
## 5. Data Summary and Trends

In quarter six total notifications increased from 1113 to 1184 predominately due to an increase in Magistrates Courts notifications in quarter six of 420 from 314 received in quarter five. School Attendance notifications remained relatively constant from last quarter across communities with exception of Mossman Gorge which experienced a drop in notifications.

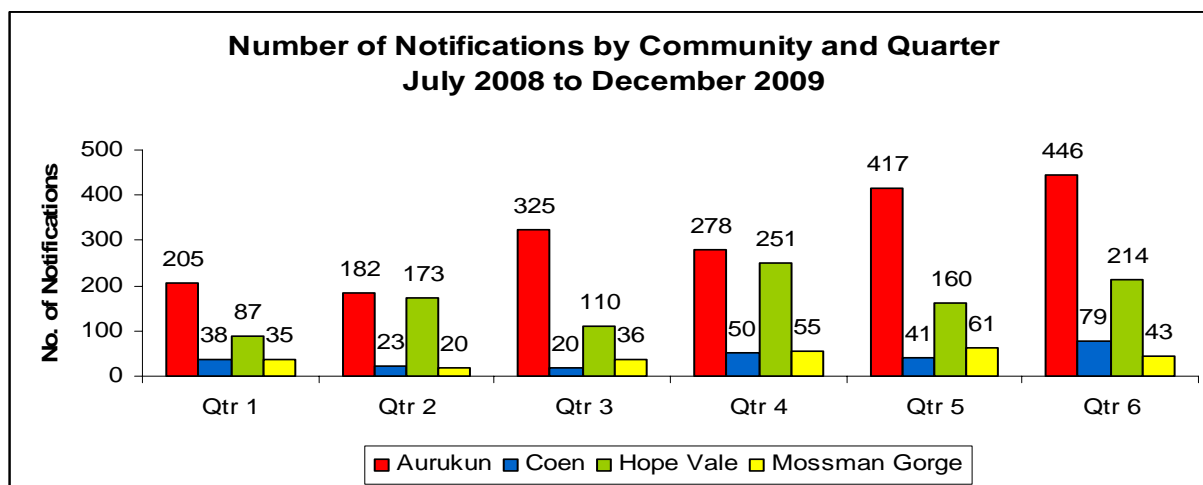
In Aurukun school attendance decreased from 66 percent in term 3, 2009 to 61.6 percent in term 4. However, attendance improved at the end of term 4, 2009 when compared against the end of term 4, 2008 (18.1 percentage points). Increases in attendance were recorded in Hope Vale (7.5 percentage points) and Mossman Gorge (1.5 percentage points) reflecting improved attendance from term 3, 2009 which was impacted by significant number of swine flu cases and non-attendance due to the Cairns Show. Caution should be used when examining the percentage changes in attendance for both Mossman Gorge and Coen communities. As both these communities have relatively small numbers of students a small numerical change can result in a large percentage difference in the overall attendance figures. In Term 4, 2009 Mossman Gorge community had 32 students enrolled at Mossman State School or Mossman State High School, while Coen had 40 students enrolled at Coen State School. Submission of notifications from schools outside the CYWR communities, both independent and government schools, remains low. Over the next six months the Commission will work actively to engage the school administrations but the complexity of boarding school arrangements limits the accessibility of information.

Child Safety notifications overall have increased from 47 in quarter five to 61 in this quarter. The increase in notifications is due to improved resourcing and staffing availability in Hope Vale (from 7 notifications to 27) and Mossman Gorge (from nil notifications to 8). A number of Child Safety notifications were not subject to conference due to the length of time from the notification to Child Safety and the changes of circumstances regarding these children. Child Safety advises Aurukun is still experiencing a backlog in workload and are expecting the situation to be rectified with the recruitment of the new FRC positions, the engagement of the recognised entity and an extension of support services.

Magistrates Courts notifications increased significantly from 314 in quarter five to 420 in quarter six with Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale all increasing in notifications. This continues to reflect the ability of the police to allocate resources to drug, alcohol and motor vehicle offences in the communities. The coming wet season is expected to assist police in isolating access roads to those communities where Alcohol Management Plans are in place, hence notifications are expected to increase. Commissioners advise the majority of clients appear for non-violent issues but there is increasing community reporting of violence, hence more people being charged for these offences. Coen Magistrate Court notifications increased from 12 in quarter five to 54 in quarter six. Commissioners report many offences related to public nuisance and liquor offences for only a small number of clients.



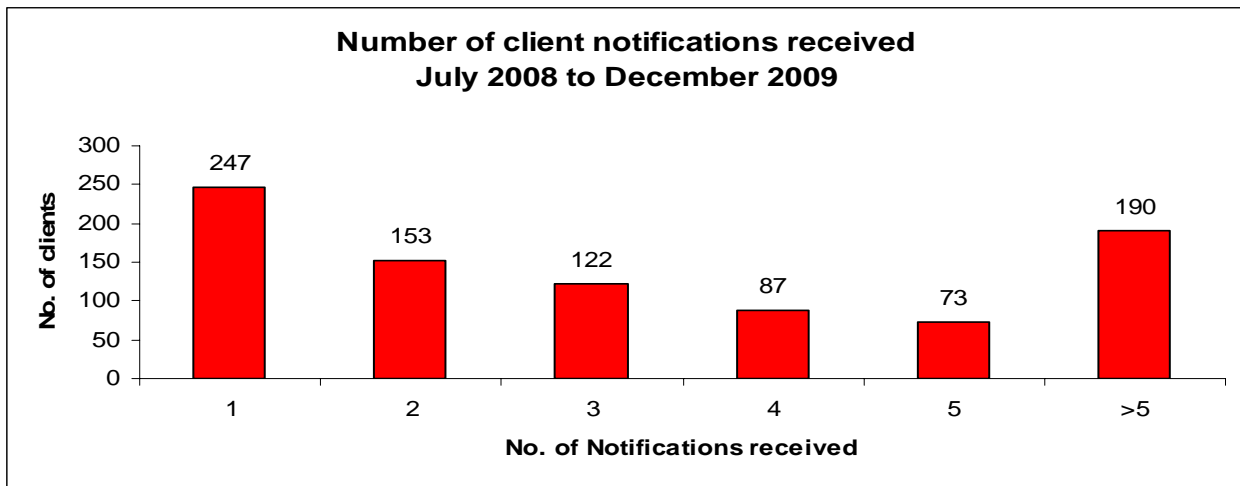
**Graph 5:** Notices by agency processed 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009



**Graph 6:** Notifications by community and quarter 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

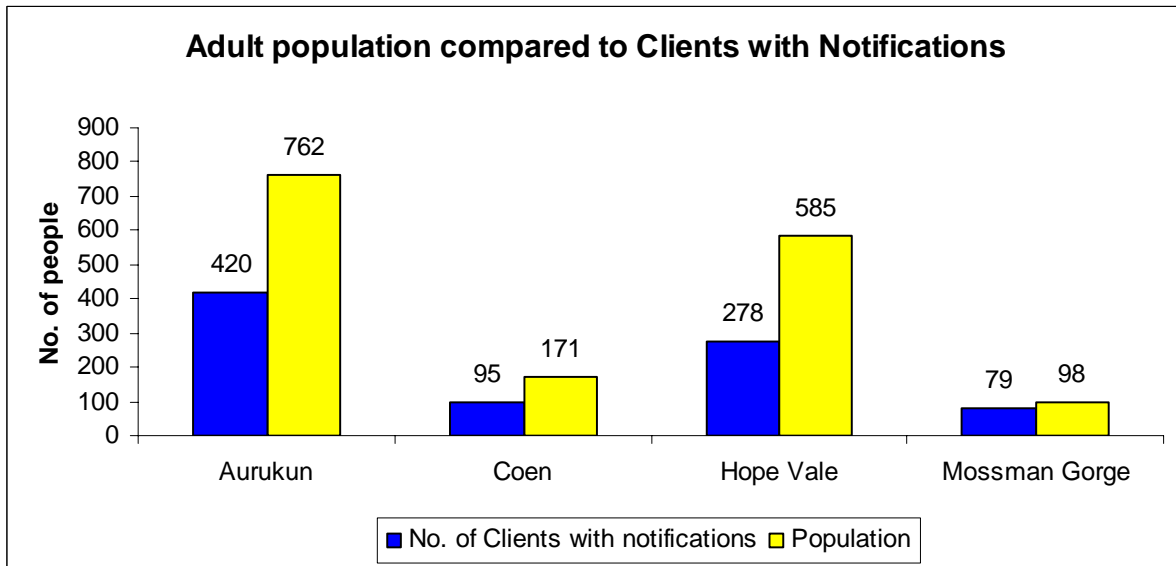
The Commission held 407 conferences across the four communities in quarter six increasing from 366 conferences held in quarter five. Aurukun and Mossman Gorge conference numbers increased reflecting notification increases. The decrease in Hope Vale conference numbers is attributed to the increased attendance rates of clients at the first notification of conference sittings which resulted in fewer conferences being rescheduled to another date. In addition a number of clients were unable to attend in the month of December due to mourning periods and holidays which has resulted in some conferences being rescheduled to 2010. Sadly, Coen experienced the passing of a number of community members which delayed conference sittings and resulted in rescheduling of clients. The Commission was able to convene many of these clients at the conference sittings held in late November and early December resulting in conference numbers slightly increasing from last quarter.

Twenty two percent of clients have received more than five notifications since 1 July 2008. In many instances this illustrates multiple child absences for the one family or multiple Magistrates Courts notifications relating to one incident. As the Commission continues to see repeat clients, the number of orders to place clients on income management have increased, as reflected in this quarter's statistics (see Graph 10). To date 28 percent of clients have received only one notification.



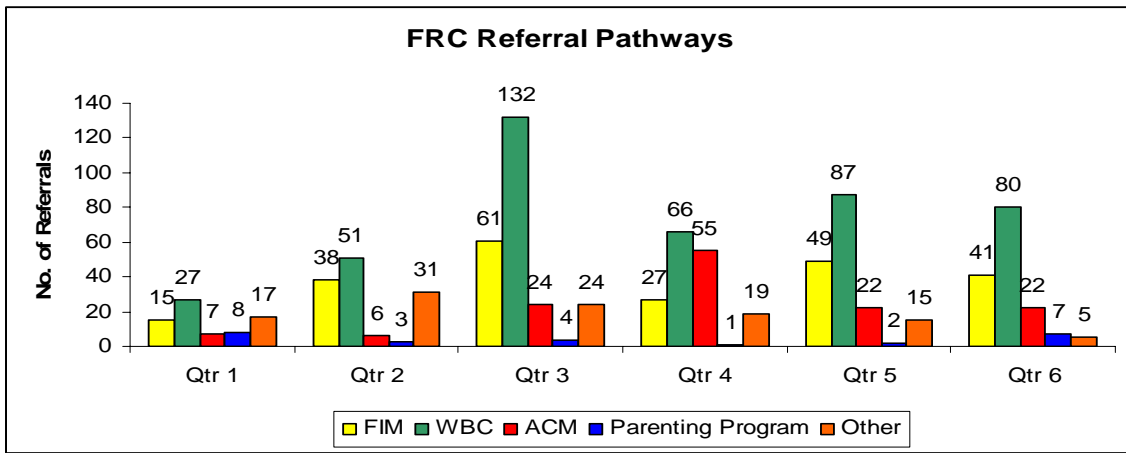
**Graph 7:** Clients by number of notifications 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

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



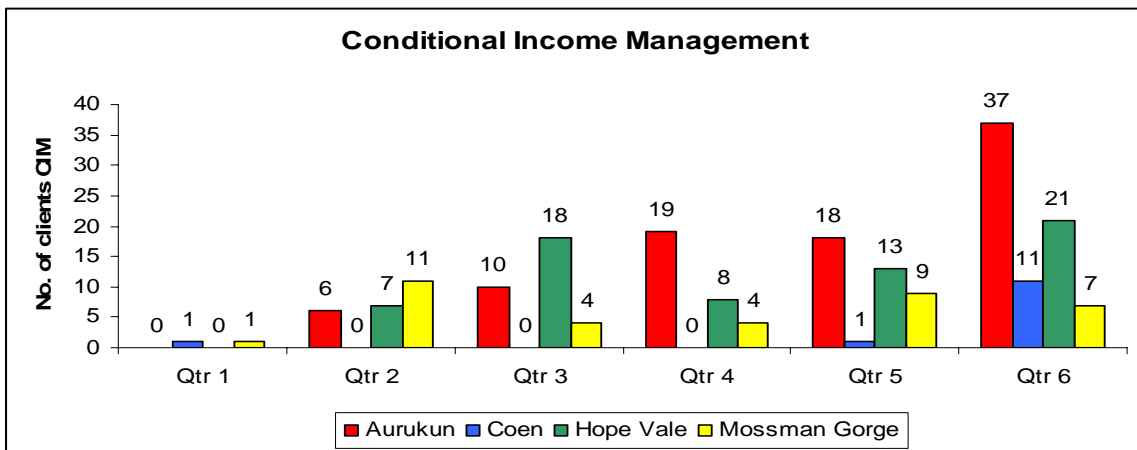
**Graph 8:** Number of clients who have received notifications up until 31 December 2009 in comparison to population figures of adults (17 years and over) provided from ABS preliminary 2008 ERP Figures. These figures include clients who have received more than one notification.

Referrals to services providers decreased from 175 in quarter five to 155 in quarter six as the Commissioners became aware of the capacity limitations of service providers. As referrals decreased the number of clients placed on CIM orders increased (see Graph 10). The Commissioners are eagerly awaiting the commencement of new service providers such as the Parenting Programs soon to be available in Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge and the increased capacity of the Parenting Program in Aurukun to enable them to order a broader range of assistance to clients. The Commission continues to receive negative feedback about FIM in Hope Vale and clients in Aurukun continue to report difficulties opening Bendigo Bank accounts relating to their FIM referrals.



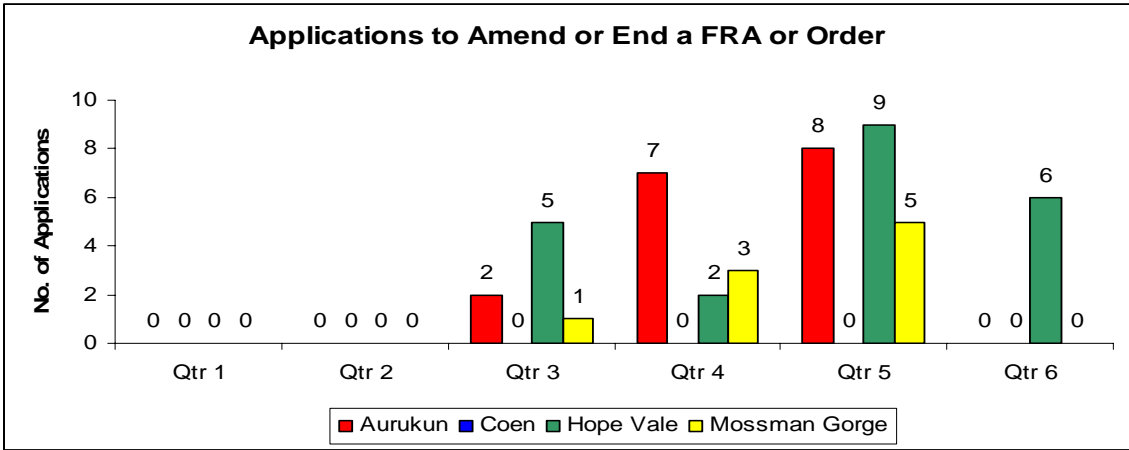
**Graph 9:** Referral Pathways 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

Client intake continues to grow as does the number of orders made for Conditional Income Management. A contributing factor is continuing non-attendance of clients in Mossman Gorge as well as on-going service limitations. Commissioners continue to report that clients request that Conditional Income Management be included as a condition of their Family Responsibilities Agreement and Case Plan. In general, CIM is increasing in acceptance in the communities.



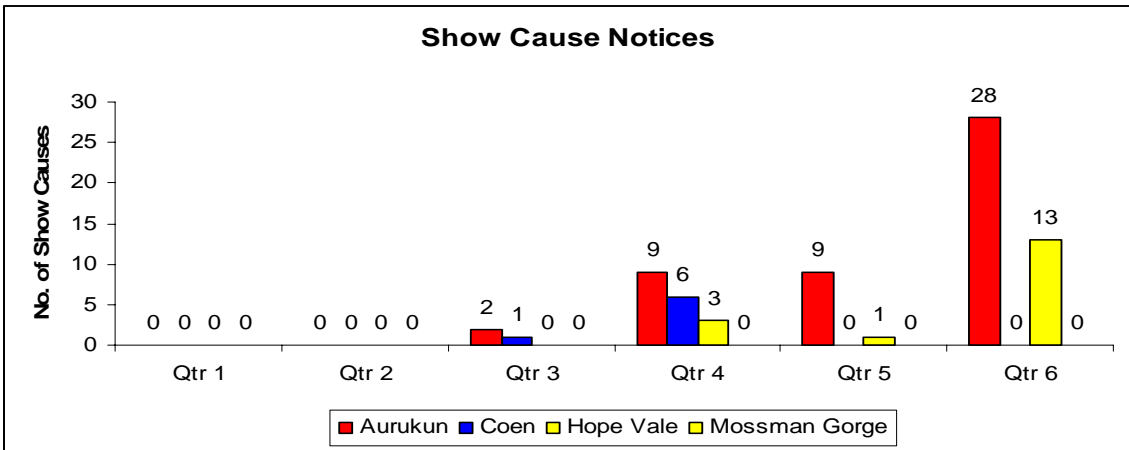
**Graph 10:** Conditional Income Management 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009.

The decrease in applications to Amend or End an Agreement or Order and subsequent increase in clients on income management orders may indicate an acceptance by clients of the income management regime. Centrelink, FaHCSIA and the Commission have provided significant levels of information and assistance to clients on income management orders and transition client payments to Basics Cards which may contribute to declining applications to Amend or End.



Graph 11: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

The Commission increased Show Cause investigations and brought clients to conference to discuss service provider reports and subsequent lack of attendance and engagement. Some clients indicated a willingness to attend and were provided a timeframe of two weeks to engage with the service providers stipulated in their case plan. These clients were then scheduled to return to conference and update Commissioners of attendance which was immediately confirmed with the provider. Those clients who did not attend either the service provider or conference were subsequently placed on a CIM order with a case plan. The Commission recognises the value of obtaining information at the local level from service providers and agencies, hence is currently developing strategies to resource greater case management by the Commission and information gathering in community to develop more comprehensive and holistic client assessments.



Graph 12: Show Cause Notices 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2009

## 6. Observations / Future Direction

### Observations

The Commission remains committed to regular and consistent client conferencing and developing the Local Commissioners to aid in the restoration of social norms and local Indigenous authority in the Welfare Reform communities. The ever increasing recognition of the Local Commissioners has been reflected in this quarter by an invitation to attend a private meeting with the Honourable Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in December and received the thanks and appreciation from the Minister on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. The Honourable Desley Boyle, Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships continues to support the Commissioners in public forums.

In this quarter the Local Commissioners continued their participation with agencies to raise awareness of and resolve issues affecting their community including:

- A submission to Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) regarding the pending application for licence for Three Rivers Tavern, Aurukun.
- Acknowledging and congratulating those students with exemplary school attendance in all CYWR communities.
- Agreed collaborative working relations with Child Safety Services to assist with the most appropriate support for the safety and welfare of children of concern.
- Providing assistance and mediation support to families in Aurukun to ensure the welfare of children.
- Aurukun and Hope Vale Commissioners working with Housing and Homelessness Services, Council and community members to facilitate fair, appropriate and reasonable transition to rental agreements.
- Coen Commissioners initiated mediation to resolve issues between community members.

### Challenges

- Due to other commitments some of the Local Commissioners are not in a position to take up this responsibility. The Commission is currently awaiting approval for a number of applications received for new Commissioners to be appointed. Appropriate appointments are expected to be approved by the Governor in Council in early 2010.
- Release of amendments to School Attendance Guidelines has been delayed preventing liaison with school administrations in both state and private schools. Amended guidelines are expected to be released in quarter seven.
- Significant changes to key staff in each community in the new year (school principals, police, health and wellbeing centre staff) will affect the initial operation of the Commission as these new staff need to familiarise themselves with their roles and the necessary interactions with Commission staff. Commission staff will endeavour to provide information to these staff to make their transitions periods easier.
- The delays in implementation of the new Client Relationship Management system continue to impact significantly on resources and robust case management.
- Recruitment of administration positions finalised in the last quarter has been difficult to operationalise due to heavy conferencing workload however is expected to be fully settled in January 2010.
- Service providers providing programs available in 2010 including components and durations to Commissioners in each community.



- Notifications from Housing and Homelessness Services remain low due to tenancy arrangements only being finalised in Aurukun in the first part of this quarter. Once this process is settled, this may result in increases in this type of notification and subsequently will affect the Commissions workload and conferencing processes.
- An analysis of the intake of notifications has identified that while case management is increasing, as expected, we are yet to see a decrease in the number of notifications received. The Commission continues to meet significant reporting obligations (both statutory and other) despite the difficulties due to the small size of the organisation.
- Child Safety Services advise that they have filled three of the four FRC positions that have been funded to July 2010. Work is currently being undertaken to convert one position from being identified to specified to broaden the scope of recruitment. Short term funding for Child Safety positions has not proved helpful in staff retention and consistent service provision.

### **Future Direction**

- Induction and training of new Commissioners to be conducted as soon as they are appointed by the Governor in Council.
- Delivery of the FRC implementation report by KPMG is expected before the end of quarter seven. Once received, the Commission will consider any recommendations made and impact on the Commission's operations.
- The implementation of the Cape York Australian Aboriginal Academy in Aurukun and Coen is scheduled to commence at the start of the 2010 school year. It is not expected that this will affect the Commission's operations as the notification process will remain the same
- The Commission will engage an administration officer in Aurukun and Hope Vale to assist the Local Coordinators with increased workloads.
- The Commission will distribute protocols for engagement with Commissioners and attending at conferences in early 2010.
- In the coming months the Commission will continue to invite Welfare Reform service providers to:
  - meet with Commission staff to gain understanding of the administrative and statutory obligations the Commission must abide by to ensure compliance with the Act; and
  - present information sessions on operations, client services and future directions to Commissioners and staff in Cairns.



**SITTING CALENDAR**  
**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION**  
 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009



WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon/Tues	AURUKUN Wed/Thurs or Tues/Wed/Thurs	MOSSMAN GORGE Mon	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	OFFICE CAIRNS
5 JANUARY	DRG	-	-	-	-	All week
12 JANUARY	DRG	-	-	-	-	All week
19 JANUARY	DRG	-	-	-	-	All week
26 JANUARY	DRG	-	27,28,29	-	-	26,30
2 FEBRUARY	DRG	-	-	2	3,4	5,6
9 FEBRUARY	DRG	9,10	11,12	-	-	13
16 FEBRUARY	DRG	-	-	16	17,18	19,20
23 FEBRUARY	DRG	-	24,25,26	-	-	23,27
2 MARCH	DRG	-	-	2	3,4	5,6
9 MARCH	DRG	9,10	11,12	-	-	13
16 MARCH	DRG	-	-	16	17,18	19,20
23 MARCH	DRG	-	24,25,26	-	-	23,27
30 MARCH	DRG	-	-	30 March	31 March and 1 April	30 March and 3 April
6 APRIL	DRG	6,7	8,9	-	-	
13 APRIL	DRG	-	-	-	-	Training Week
20 APRIL	DRG	-	21,22,23	20	-	23,24
27 APRIL	DRG	-	-	-	28,29	1 May
4 MAY	DRG	-	-	-	6	4,5
11 MAY	DRG	11	12,13	-	-	14,15
18 MAY	DRG	-	-	18	19,20	21,22
25 MAY	DRG	-	27,28	-	-	<b>25 Board Bne</b>
1 JUNE	WC	-	-	1	2,3	4,5
8 JUNE	WC	-	9,10,11	-	-	8,12
15 JUNE	WC	-	-	15	16,17	18,19
22 JUNE	WC	22,23	23,24,25	-	-	26
29 JUNE	WC	-	-	29	30 <sup>th</sup> & 1 July	2,3



# SITTING CALENDAR FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION



1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon/Tues	AURUKUN Wed/Thurs or Tues/Wed/Thurs	MOSSMAN GORGE Mon	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	OFFICE CAIRNS
6 JULY	WC	-	-	-	-	<b>Training week</b>
13 JULY	DRG	-		-	14,15	13,16
20 JULY	DRG	-	-	-	-	<b>Estimate Bne</b>
27 JULY	DRG	27,28	28,29, 30	-	-	31
3 AUGUST	DRG	-	-	3	4,5	6,7
10 AUGUST	DRG	-	-	-	-	<b>All Week</b>
17 AUGUST	DRG	-	-	Thurs 20	18,19	<b>17 Brisbane Board, 21</b>
24 AUGUST	DRG	24,25	26,27	-	-	28
31 AUGUST	DRG	-	-	31 August	1,2 Sept	3,4 Sept
7 SEPTEMBER	DRG	-	7, 8, 9, 10	-	-	11
14 SEPTEMBER	DRG	-	-	Thurs 17	15,16	17,18
21 SEPTEMBER	DRG	21,22	23,24	-	-	25
28 SEPTEMBER	DRG	-	-	-	-	<b>Training Week</b>
5 OCTOBER	DRG	-	-	Thurs 8	6,7	5, 9
12 OCTOBER	DRG	-	13,14,15	-	-	16
19 OCTOBER	DRG	-	-	Thurs 22	20,21	19,23
26 OCTOBER	DRG	26	27,28,29	-	-	30
2 NOVEMBER	DRG	-	-	Thurs 5	3,4	2, 6
9 NOVEMBER	DRG	-	10,11,12	-	-	<b>13 BNE - SDC</b>
16 NOVEMBER	DRG	-	-	-	17,18	<b>16 Brisbane Board, 20</b>
23 NOVEMBER	DRG	23	24,25,26	-	-	27
30 NOVEMBER	DRG	-	-	Mon 30 Nov	1,2 Dec	3,4 Alice Springs
7 DECEMBER	DRG	7	8,9,10	-	-	11
14 DECEMBER	DRG	-	-	Thurs 17	15,16	14,18
21 DECEMBER	DRG	-	-	-	-	<b>All Week</b>

## 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 Ken Smith                      Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Mr Noel Pearson                Director, Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
- Dr Jeff Harmer                    Secretary, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

## Glossary of Terms

### Wellbeing Centre (WBC):

These centres are currently operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and are the primary referral agency for the Commission. The Wellbeing Centres provide:

- a holistic, systemic and community-based approach to treating drug and alcohol addiction and related mental health co-morbidities, including family violence and gambling;
- clinical assessments, formal and informal counselling, support for individuals and their families, and support for community-driven activities that build community capacity;
- support for restoring social norms and empowering individuals to take responsibility for making positive choices about their health and wellbeing.

Each WBC is staffed with clinical counsellors and one or more community support workers. Staff are also supported by part-time medical practitioners, mental health nurses and psychiatrists, team leaders and a service development manager.

New buildings have been completed to support the WBC in each community. Services are fully operational at the time of the report.

### Family Income Management (FIM):

Family Income Management (FIM) is a voluntary, confidential and free service that is specifically designed to meet the particular needs of Indigenous individuals and families, and provide them with the education, information and ongoing support needed to manage their own money.

FIM provides support and assistance including referrals and access to financial institutions, products and services. It also provides general information, education and ongoing support to individuals and families about improving the outcomes for children.

FIM operates in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge and has been operating in a number of Cape York communities since 2001.

### Attendance Case Management Framework (ACMF):

The Attendance Case Management Framework (ACMF) was developed by the Every Child is Special Unit to support student attendance. The ACMF uses Professor Herbert C Kelman's behavioural change model which identifies three stages leading to behavioural change: compliance, identification, and internalisation. ACMF works with students, parents, schools and the broader community to set the expectation of 100 percent attendance and to build and sustain it as a "social norm".

Under the ACMF, Attendance Case Managers (ACMs) aim to follow up every absence, on the day, to work with families to resolve the reason behind a child's unexplained absence or lateness and to develop strategies to avoid reoccurrences. ACMs also refer parents to support services like FIM or alcohol addiction support as required. Such quick response reduces the incidence of parents being called before the Commission on student attendance-related issues.

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

## 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.

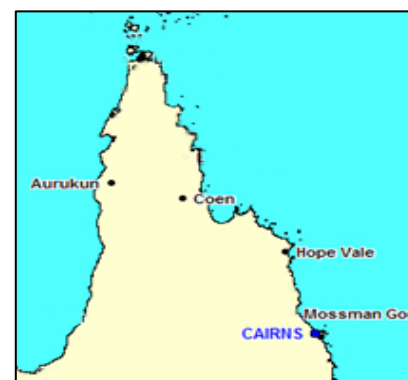
The Cape York Welfare Reform communities are:

### 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 1196 people at 30 June 2008.

### 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 246 people at 30 June 2008.



### 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 826 people at 30 June 2008.

### 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 143 people at 30 June 2008.

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

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

### Role of the Commission:

Any person who is a welfare recipient living in one of the four CYWR communities and has not met pre-determined obligations can be referred to the Commission. A person is a welfare recipient if the person, or their partner, receives certain welfare payments including; Newstart, Parenting Payments, Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, age and service pensions or carer payments. A person is also a 'welfare recipient' if he/she is participating in CDEP.

The Commission receives agency notifications from a range of government departments, authorities and the Magistrates Courts if:

- the person's child is absent from school three times in a school term, without reasonable excuse,
- the person has a child of school age who is not enrolled in school without lawful excuse,
- the person is the subject of a child safety report,
- the person is convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court,

- the person breaches his or her tenancy agreement – for example, by using the premises for an illegal purpose, causes a nuisance or fails to remedy rent arrears.

**What does the Commission do?**

When the Commission receives a referral after assessing if the person is within the Commission’s jurisdiction, Local Commissioners will determine if the person is required to attend a conference. Conferences are held in an informal setting and the matters that lead to the submission of the agency notification are discussed to ensure the best outcome for the client. The client is encouraged to come to an agreement with the Commission about an appropriate response to the issue that has led to their referral. If the client is unwilling to agree on a course of action, the Commission may order a certain course of action.

**The Commission may:**

- decide that no action is necessary
- reprimand the person
- recommend that the person attend an appropriate community support service
- direct the person to attend an appropriate community support service under a case plan for not more than a year
- order that the person’s income be managed by Centrelink for a period of between three to 12 months

**Family Responsibilities Commission Processes:**

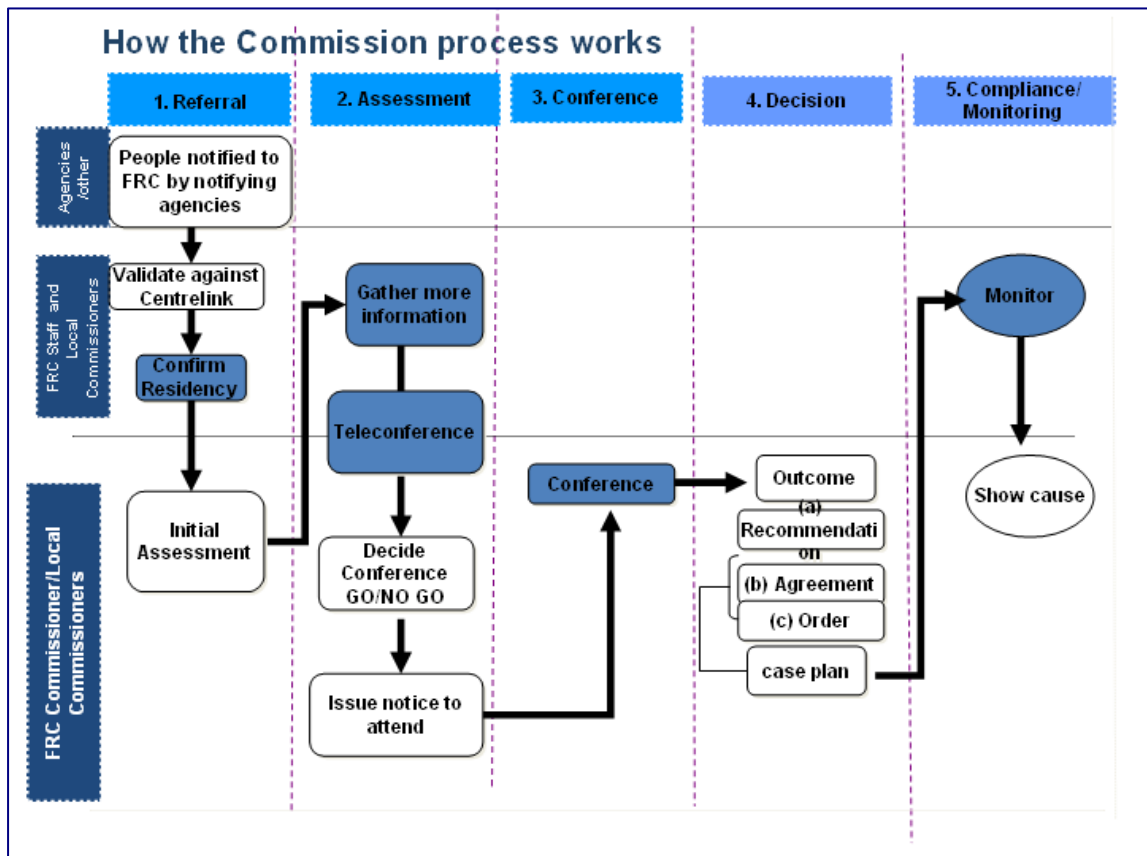


Table 7: Commission processes