

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. 7

January 2010 to March 2010



*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 continues to focus on consolidating administrative procedures that support the operations of the Commission's conferencing processes. Further to this a more streamlined case management model is in the development phase with deployment expected in quarter eight.

Local Commissioners continue to develop as important authority figures in their respective communities and their ability to make decisions affecting the direction and action their fellow community members take 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.

The Commissioner has continued to develop and deliver a comprehensive training program for Local Commissioners that will see them gain qualifications and skills in areas such as Justice of the Peace (both Qualified and Magistrates Court) and mediation. The training and skill development of Local Commissioners will continue throughout the life of the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) trial.

School attendance statistics for Aurukun continues to show improvement with a 9.8 percentage point increase in term 1, 2010 as compared against term 1, 2009. Mossman Gorge experienced a respectable increase of 4.1 percentage points with both Coen and Hope Vale remaining stable as compared against term 1, 2009. Improvements achieved thus far are a credit to the dedicated staff of both the Department of Education and Training and Attendance Case Managers (Cape York Partnerships). The Commission continues to acknowledge their efforts, particularly in light of the implementation of the Cape York Australian Aboriginal Academies in Aurukun and Coen in term 1, 2010. It is always difficult for children, parents and staff to cope with and manage significant change and all parties are to be congratulated for the on-going increases in school attendance experienced since July 2008.

The Commission continues to maintain strong relationships with Child Safety Services and is encouraged by the positive interactions between Child Safety officers, Local Commissioners and clients demonstrating a commitment to working together for the benefit of children. Commissioners have been encouraged by the dedication of Child Safety officers, Queensland Health and other providers in proactive measures to support families and children experiencing failure to thrive warning signs. Although there are no quantitative results, there is a community approach to the welfare of these children.

Due to scheduling and holidays, fewer conferences were held this quarter (333 as compared to 407 for the previous quarter), yet momentum in case reviews which resulted in 786 notifications within jurisdiction compared with 782 in last quarter was maintained with the Commission currently case managing 582 clients. The Commission acknowledges the dedication of the Registry staff supporting the Commissioners especially during the trial and implementation of the new database and holiday period.

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Abbreviations:

ACMs	Attendance Case Managers
ACMF	Attendance Case Management Framework
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CIM	Conditional Income Management
CITEC	Centre for Information Technology and Electronic Communication
CYDN	Cape York Digital Network
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
FIM	Family Income Management
FR BOARD	Family Responsibilities Board
GECO	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

Cape York Welfare Reforms

Report to 31 March 2010

1. Context

Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) envisages a process of moving people from passive welfare dependence to engagement in the real economy. The process of this transition includes ensuring that children attend school and receive proper education, increasing individual responsibility through engagement in labour markets (i.e. real jobs), increasing responsible tenancy and/or home ownership and limiting the role of governments (federal, state and local) in people's lives to align with that provided by governments in mainstream Australia.

Welfare Reform is also about social development. The loss of traditional cultural values and practices has adversely impacted on the social development of Cape York communities (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 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 which determines 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.

When a conference is convened the client may be encouraged to enter into a Family Responsibility Agreement (FRA), or an order may be 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 appear 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 twenty-one months at the time of this report. A number of agencies and service providers experienced a turnover of both senior and community staff over the Christmas break and this has resulted in new and enthusiastic staff, but unfortunately has also resulted in a loss of corporate knowledge and agreed practices. The Commission continues to support service providers and the process of change by providing training, briefings, procedures and assistance whenever requested and operationally possible.

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; social health related issues; Parenting Programs to assist in good parenting practices; 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. The complexity of client obligations requires comprehensive information sharing and cooperation between the Commission, service providers and associated agencies to ensure clients can realistically meet the requirements of their case plan.

A total of 170 referrals to community support services were made in quarter seven (1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010) relating to 99 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 March 2010, 582 clients were being case managed and required monthly progress reports to be submitted by service providers. In quarter six service providers advised capacity issues have impacted on intake, assessment and program delivery in each CYWR community. The Commission is continuing to review client case plans to establish the most appropriate service providers and agencies to ensure all clients have access to services. The Commission is close to releasing refined reporting regarding the Monthly Progress Reports as a monthly upload of data from the community support services to the Commission. This refined reporting will significantly reduce the workload currently required of service providers and it is hoped the reduction in this resource-intensive task will allow the service providers to improve the quality of the reports to include assessments, program details and a progress continuum.

The Commission, in partnership with Queensland Corrective Services (Probation and Parole), will offer the Ending Family Violence Program in the CYWR communities for both Commission and Corrections clients. As the course provides education and self-awareness around many aspects of violence, repeat offending and associated triggers, it is intended to reduce the impact of high client

numbers referred to the Wellbeing Centres in Aurukun and Hope Vale. The Commission has worked with Wellbeing staff in Hope Vale to support short term case plan referrals to alcohol and drug diversion courses titled 'Strong Spirit, Strong Mind' (Wawu Buathan) facilitated by locally engaged staff. It incorporates local historical knowledge mixed with the latest indigenous specific interventions. The program has the ultimate goal of addressing the implications of trans-generational trauma on behaviour, particularly drug and alcohol use. The use of group programs and clients taking up the option of this short program will reduce the number of clients requiring one-on-one services from the Wellbeing Centre, however, each client will continue to be assessed to determine if there is a need for additional one-on-one counselling. Whilst this option is considered a trial it is hoped with the provision of informative brochures for the community, information sharing sessions and day and night sessions being available, individuals will self-refer and other agencies will be encouraged to consider this program as a client option.

FIM and ACM inducted a number of new staff both in community and central administration and moved some staff between communities. Similar to Wellbeing Centres, this injection of enthusiasm has stimulated administrative outputs but also highlighted the need for foundation and procedural documentation and service delivery standards. Clients report FIM has increased efforts to engage them and other community members, which is reflected in increasing client engagement in Aurukun. ACM staff are working closely with Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy leadership to ensure attendance rates remain stable during the change in curriculum and teaching. Although some staff gaps remain, both ACM and FIM report recent reviews leading to strategic initiatives that will provide program enhancements and extended servicing and partnerships.

Child Safety Services continue to support the Commission and work with the Commissioners at conferences (upon the issue of Notice to Attend) to develop plans, strategies and goals with families to assist in strengthening support and providing a safe environment for children. Child Safety Client Service Officers have a greater understanding of the role of the Commission, legislatively and socially, to assist in addressing family dysfunction and seek cultural, social and local advice from the Commissioners. The Commissioners advise they now have the opportunity to clearly and openly convey to parents the seriousness of child safety matters and the consequences of not addressing the underlying issues with the support of the Child Safety Officer in the conferencing process.

To further assist and continue its commitment to the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, Child Safety Services has now allocated funding for four positions until the conclusion of the trial on 1 January 2012. Child Safety Services and the Commission are in the process of finalising streamlined operational guidelines to include client conference outcomes (when relevant to Child Safety) and future conference timetables regarding Child Safety notifications. The Commission and Child Safety have also entered into a cost-sharing arrangement with regard to use of the Commissions vehicle in Coen, thereby reducing costs for both agencies.

Child Safety Services, in partnership with the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian, will hold a foster care recruitment forum in May 2010. The Commission will provide support and community assistance to the team and encourage community members to attend the forum.

The Commission continues to monitor and identify gaps in service delivery, coordination and cooperation between government agencies, service providers and non-government organisations in each of the communities. Where gaps are identified the Commission liaises with the relevant agencies in an effort to develop solutions that meet the needs of its clients.

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 eleven Cairns based administrative staff who provide corporate and operational support to the Commissioner and Local Commissioners. Additional temporary staff have been engaged to provide further administrative assistance, as required, mainly to assist with the data migration to the new client database. 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. A recruitment process for four additional positions endorsed by the FRC Board at its January 2010 meeting will be conducted during the April to June 2010 quarter.

Work is nearing completion on the implementation of a new Client Relationship Management database. The new database became operational in quarter seven and work continues to finalise deployment of all aspects of the database, such as case management and reporting capabilities.

Many of the Commission's policies and procedures were constructed prior to its commencement. As a result a comprehensive review of the Commission's policies and procedures manual was conducted in quarter six and substantial amendments were required. The release of the amended procedures manual has been delayed due to the on-going deployment of the new database system. These changes to procedures were also reflected in the Commission's new relational client database as the new database solution was built by our software developer. Other Commission policies were released in quarter seven.

Financial

The total budgeted funding inflows for this trial project are \$14.603M. In the 2009-10 Financial Year this funding consisted of \$1.0M allocated from surplus funds from a Commonwealth Government grant of \$3.5M received in 2007-08, \$2.5M from \$9.4M allocated under administered funding through the Department of Communities by the Queensland Government, and supplementary funding of \$0.452M from \$1.327M endorsed by the FR Board for additional staffing and Commissioner training until the expiry of the Act on 1 January 2012. These funds will be supplemented by interest on the Commission's investments and its operational bank account.

Since its inception, the Commission has managed its budget effectively in servicing its remote locations. The challenges associated with staff and office accommodation, transport, information technology, communications and logistics have largely been addressed efficiently.

Income:

- The income received by the Commission for the period 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010 totalled \$4.414M. This income includes Queensland Government funding of \$2.57M for the full financial year to 30 June 2010, Australian Government funding of \$1.0M for the full financial year to 30 June 2010 as part of surplus from \$3.5M Australian Government funding received in 2007-08, \$0.114M in funding received 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, carried forward surplus funds from 2007-08 and 2008-09 of \$0.665M, \$0.061M in interest and \$0.004M in cost recoveries.

- In quarter eight, the Commission expects to receive a further \$0.338M in operating funding, as endorsed by the FR Board through the Department of Communities, for Local Commissioner training and additional staff.

Expenditure:

- The estimated expenditure for the period 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010 was \$0.814M (Table 1). This amount of quarterly expenditure is in line with our budgeted expenditure forecasts for 2009-10.

In referring to Graph 1 Salaries and recruitment costs (55.3 percent), operating costs (14.6 percent), Information Technology (IT) costs (8.8 percent), property costs (6.4 percent), consultancy costs (4.8 percent), vehicles costs (3.5 Percent) and Local Commissioner fees (2.5 percent), airfare and accommodation costs (2.7 percent) all represent 98.6 percent of total expenditure in quarter seven. This reflects ongoing staffing, increased operating costs, ongoing IT service fees and IT development, travel and vehicle maintenance and running costs. Expenditure variances from quarter six to quarter seven are attributed to:

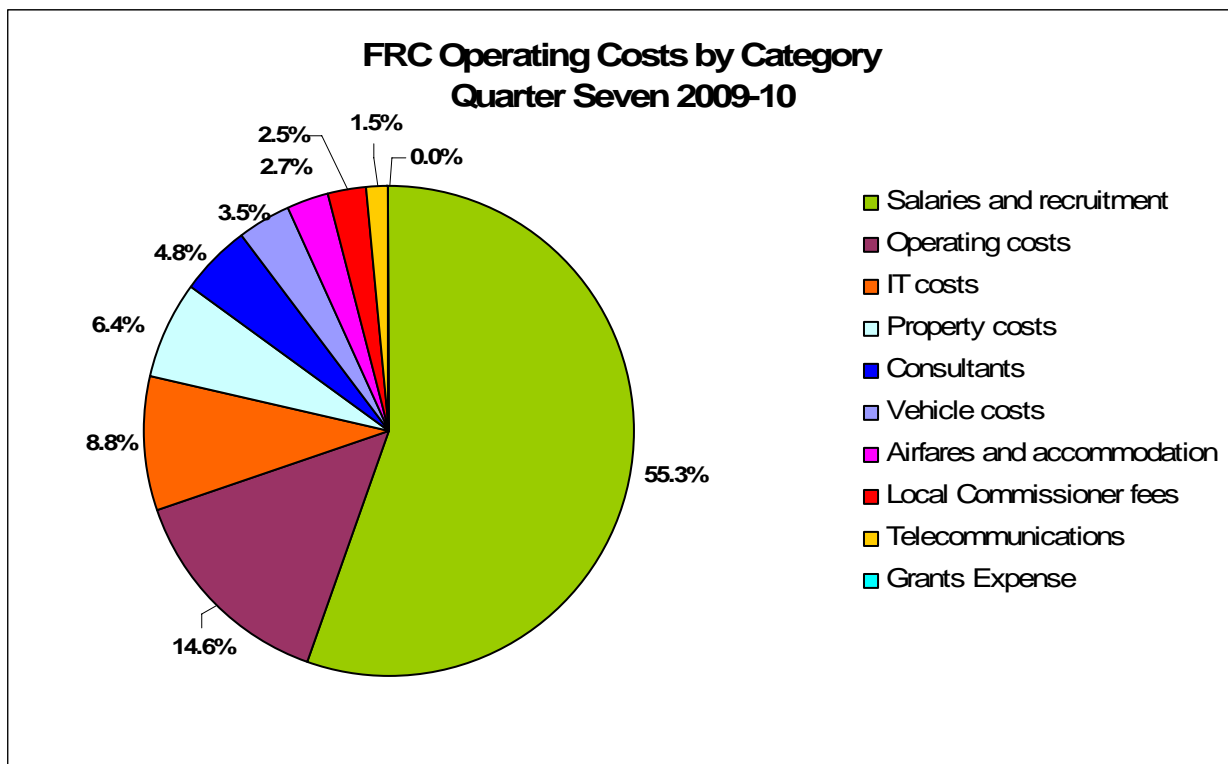
- Salaries and Recruitment - Salaries and on-costs decreased by \$12.5K due to reduced staff leave expenses. The Commission recovered \$114K for the twelve months salary and on-costs of the Principal Case Manager's position from the Service Procurement fund through the Department of Communities.
- Operating Costs – Increases in expenditure of \$6.8K in quarter seven compared to quarter six is comprised of \$25.3K for uncapitalised Refurbishment Fees, offset by a \$6.5K cost recovery from Department of Communities for 2008-09 Annual Report Publication costs, and reduced expenditure of \$12K across other operational expenses in quarter seven due to the January school holiday period.
- Local Commissioner Fees – decrease of \$55.8K reflects decreased Commission conferencing due to the January school holiday period.
- Airfares and Accommodation – Staff related travel and accommodation decreased by \$49.8K relating to decreased Commission travel to undertake conferencing in communities during the school holiday period.
- IT Costs – increased by \$6.4K due to delayed invoicing by the Commission's IT service provider the Corporate Administration Agency, CYDN and CITEC for services. Further variances are expected in quarter eight.
- Property Costs – increased by \$19K due to increased office rentals as a result of the relocation of the Commission's Cairns Registry. Further variances are anticipated in quarter eight as Hope Vale rental costs are invoiced by the Department of Health and Aurukun office rentals are invoiced by the Aurukun Shire Council.
- Vehicle Costs – increased minimally by \$1K due to increased operating costs and repairs of damage, tyre replacement and maintenance of vehicles.
- Telecommunications – decreased \$6.7K due to the payment of fees in the previous quarter for the transfer of the server and telecommunications equipment as a result of the relocation of the Cairns Registry in quarter six.
- Consultants – increased \$33.5K due to uncapitalised costs associated with the development of the Commission's client database. These costs will be capitalised in quarter eight

Preliminary discussions with the Queensland Audit Office on Commission's 2009-10 audit and the preparation of the 2009-10 Financial Statements have identified a requirement to correct the Commission's prior financial reporting of the \$3.5M Australian Government grant funding received in 2007-08. To amend this omission, the Commission's 2009-10 financial statements will consist of three columns to correctly disclose these changes in the accounting of these funds.

Expenditure 1 July 2009 to 31 Mar 2010	Total Expenditure Qtr6	Total Expenditure Qtr7	Total Expenditure Variance Qtr 6 to Qtr 7
Salaries and recruitment	462,250.45	449,656.25	-12,594.20
Operating costs	111,814.31	118,644.08	6,829.77
Local Commissioner fees	76,389.00	20,566.81	-55,822.19
Airfares and accommodation	71,379.84	21,621.31	-49,758.53
IT costs	65,085.27	71,440.81	6,355.54
Property costs	33,054.40	52,029.73	18,975.33
Vehicle costs	27,374.46	28,288.62	914.16
Telecommunications	18,776.02	12,041.59	-6,734.43
Consultants	5,775.00	39,276.60	33,501.60
Grants xxpense	0	0.00	0.00
Total expenditure	\$871,898.75	\$813,565.80	-\$58,332.95

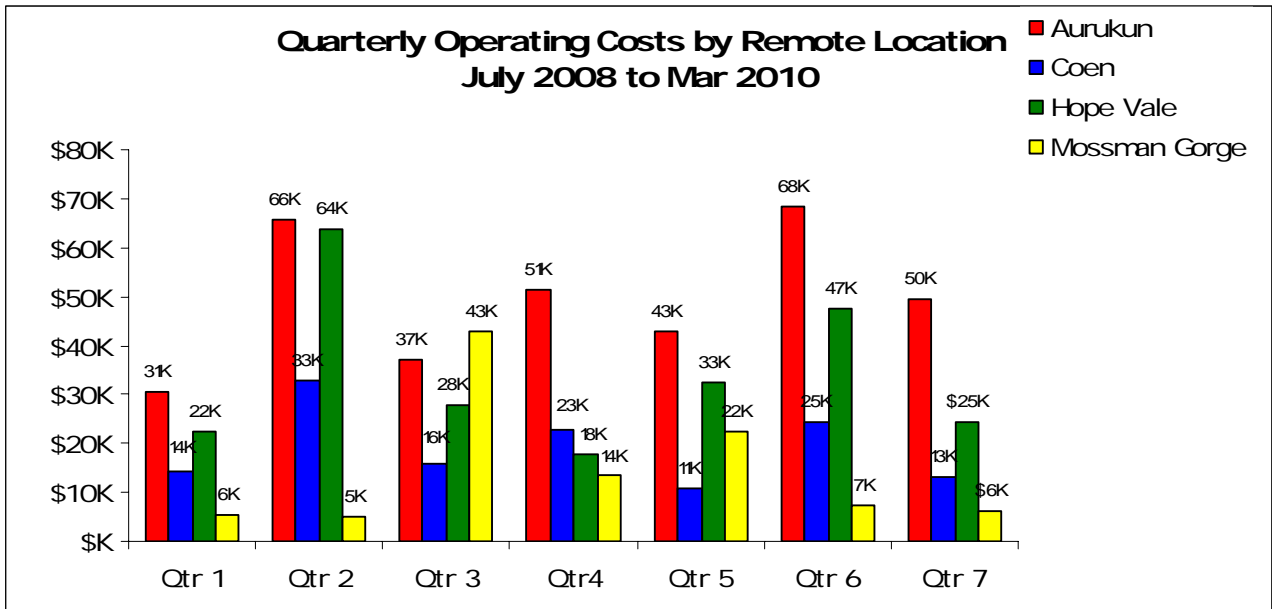
Table 1: Unaudited YTD expenditure including variations between Quarter 6 and Quarter 7

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



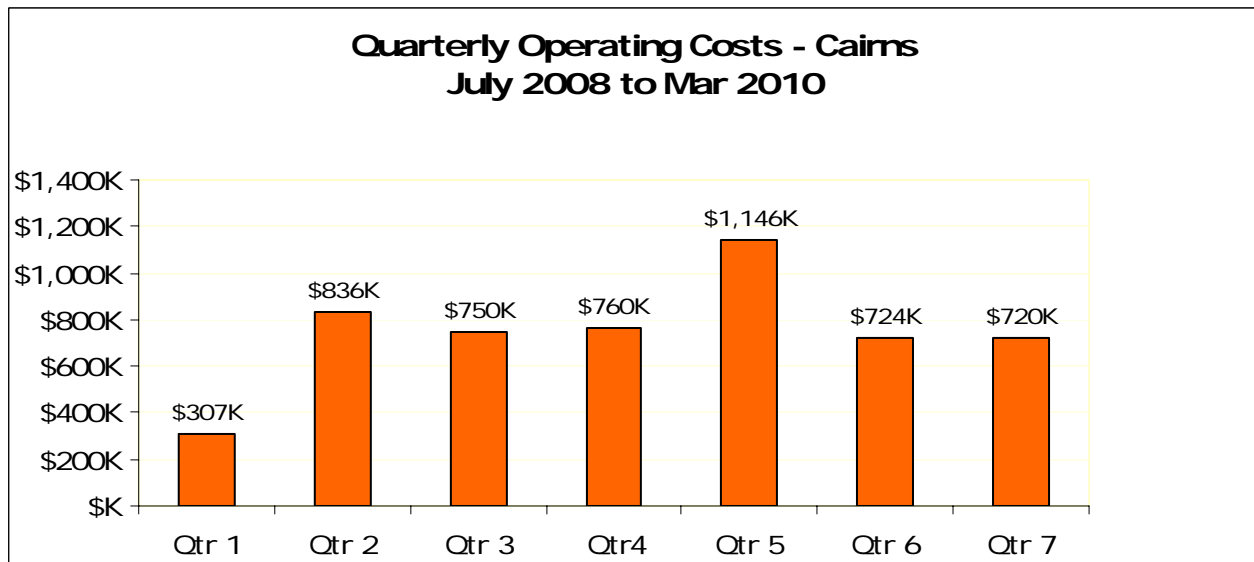
Graph 1: Total FRC Operating costs 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010

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 seven, totalling \$20.57K.



Graph 2: Operating costs by remote location 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

Cairns office operational costs (below) in quarter seven are comparable to previous levels of quarterly expenditure incurred during the life of the FRC project.



Graph 3: Quarterly operating costs, Cairns 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

4. Activities / Achievements

Intake and Assessment Phase

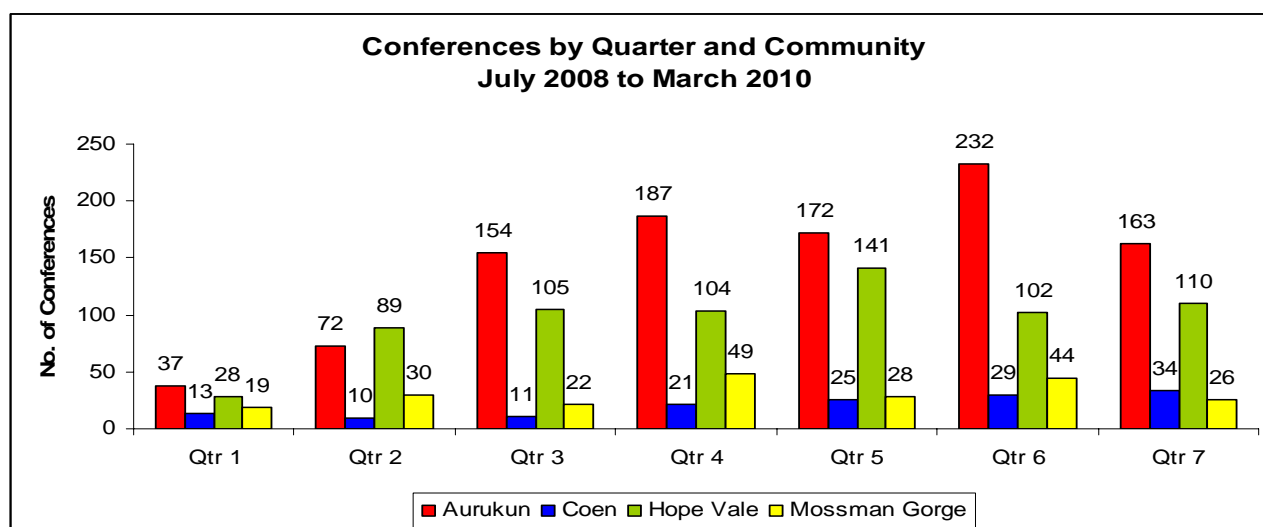
The Commission became operational on 1 July 2008 and commenced conferencing on 12 August 2008. In quarter seven the Commission received 1,077 agency notifications, some of which related to more than one person. Of that figure 786 notifications (73 percent) were within Commission's jurisdiction and 291 notifications (27 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 seven a total of 333 conferences were held which resulted in 45 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 65 directions made to attend community support services and 47 Conditional Income Management orders made. Other outcomes included no further action, rescheduling, scheduling to return for review with compliance and the assignment of personal responsibility actions. The Commission did not convene conferences in community for the month of January due to the school holidays over this period. The Registry used this time to work with IT consultants and prepare for implementation of the tailor made database. The new database commenced on 3 March 2010, resulting in statistical recording in two datasets that have been combined to provide the data in this quarterly report. The Commission advises that although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data in this report, a complete analysis of statistics will be carried out and any variances encountered will be reported at that time.



Graph 4: FRC Conferences by community and quarter 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

Case Management

As at 31 March 2010, 582 clients were being case managed. 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. At the 22 February 2010 FR Board meeting funding was approved for an additional Business Support Officer. The position will be recruited in quarter eight. The Commission is in the process of developing a more streamlined case management framework that will see more intense liaison with service providers in each of the communities. This new model of case management will encourage greater information sharing and the gaining of local knowledge around client needs and outcomes. The Commission will work with Commissioners, Local Coordinators and service providers to gain holistic assessments of clients and the challenges they encounter to meet plan requirements.

Referral Type	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	TOTAL
FIM	15	38	61	27	49	41	22	231
WBC	27	51	132	66	87	80	93	443
ACM	7	6	24	55	22	22	10	136
Parenting Program*	8	3	4	1	2	7	2	25
Other	17	31	24	19	15	5	43	111
TOTAL	74	129	245	168	175	155	170	1116

Table 2: Referral services by quarter as at 31 March 2010

* Aurukun

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. Commissioners and Local Coordinators continue to experience 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 because the assessment draws upon the service providers' monthly progress reports and requested summary reports at the initial investigation stage. Although improving, the quality of reports still require 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 the number of clients case managed (582) 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 seven, 13 Show Cause hearings were held in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale (see Table 3). These matters resulted in:

- 1 client ordered to comply with their Case Plan
- 7 No Further Actions
- 5 Clients adjourned in order to give the client time to comply with their case plan

Given the length of case plans previously made, the Commission continued to work with clients whose case plans were ending. A number of clients were given the opportunity to engage with service providers in the next few months and scheduled for review of the Show Cause Notice as the client presented a number of reasons for non-compliance with their case plans. Over half of those clients show caused had either engaged with service providers since the commencement of the Show Cause Notice or their circumstances had changed since the case plan was initiated (such as remote working opportunities). Pursuant to section 82 of the Act clients must be given at least 28 days notice of the show cause hearing. Therefore, the six week break from conferencing in December 2009 and January 2010, coupled with 28 days notification impacted on the ability of the Commission to bring clients to conference for Show Cause assessments in this quarter.

Community	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	TOTAL
Aurukun	0	0	2	9	9	28	9	57
Coen	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	7
Hope Vale	0	0	0	3	1	13	4	21
Mossman Gorge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	3	18	10	41	13	85

Table 3: Show Cause Notice by quarter as at 31 March 2010

As anticipated, the Commission experienced an increase in the number of applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received in this quarter due to the large number of clients placed on CIM orders in quarter six. The month of December and the cyclical nature of post Christmas cash flow shortages contributed to much of the increase. The Commission received thirteen applications and considered each application on merit. Clients continued to provide similar reasons in their submissions such as being unable to meet their obligations due to working outside of the community.

Of the thirteen applications received, they resulted in:

- 4 CIM orders revoked
- 2 Client failed to appear and the application was dismissed
- 4 Applications rejected and the Case Plan re-enforced
- 2 New Case Plans developed
- 1 IM extension – 60% for 12 months

Community	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	TOTAL
Aurukun	0	0	2	7	8	0	4	21
Coen	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Hope Vale	0	0	5	2	9	6	7	29
Mossman Gorge	0	0	1	3	5	0	0	9
TOTAL	0	0	8	12	22	6	13	48

Table 4: Amend or End Applications Orders by quarter as at 31 March 2010

Conditional Income Management

Forty-Seven Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter seven with a total of 253 CIM orders made to 31 March 2010 (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, 73.2 percent of clients have received multiple notifications. The Commissioners report that many of these clients have been given numerous opportunities to engage in case plans, attend conference or take action to have CIM orders amended (such as attend service providers) and have refused which has resulted in the number of 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. Since commencement, 19 clients/community members have successfully applied for VIM. Three are currently not in receipt of Centrelink payments but have requested the VIM remain. Three clients have had their VIM revocation enacted.

Conditionally Income Management (CIM) individuals	Total
Currently CIM	137
Currently with Centrelink to be CIM	2
CIM period Expired	47
Currently waiting on client to be removed from CDEP	0
CIM Order revoked	33
Currently not receiving any benefits and not being CIM	33
Currently in prison and not being CIM	1
Total CIM Orders	253

Table 5: CIM Order Status's as at 31 March 2010

Community	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	TOTAL
Aurukun	0	6	10	19	18	37	21	11
Coen	1	0	0	0	1	11	10	23
Hope Vale	0	7	18	8	13	21	13	80
Mossman Gorge	1	11	4	4	9	7	3	39
TOTAL	2	24	32	31	41	76	47	253

Table 6: Quarterly Conditionally Income Managed clients as at 31 March 2010

Notifications

For the period 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010, the Commission received a total of **1,077** agency notifications¹ of which 786, or 73 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Of the 786 notifications that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, they comprised:

- 380 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 268 School Attendance notifications
- 98 Child Safety notifications
- 40 Housing Tenancy notifications

Of the 291, or 27 percent, not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 250 Magistrates Courts notifications, 18 School Attendance notifications, 11 Child Safety notifications and 12 Housing Tenancy notifications.

Details for each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun's 494** notifications comprise **63 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:
 - 244 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 196 School Attendance notifications
 - 54 Child Safety notifications

81 Magistrates Courts notifications, 7 School Attendance notifications and 7 Child Safety notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

163 conferences have been held in Aurukun this quarter.²

- **Coen's 37** notifications comprise **5 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:
 - 26 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 7 Child Safety notifications
 - 4 School Attendance notifications

4 School Attendance notifications and 4 Magistrate Courts notifications processed as not within jurisdiction.

¹ 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.

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

34 Conferences have been held in Coen this quarter. ³

- **Hope Vale's 220** notifications comprise **28 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
 - 92 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 60 School Attendance notifications
 - 39 Housing Tenancy notifications
 - 29 Child Safety notifications

11 Magistrates Courts notifications, 12 Housing Tenancy notifications, 7 School Attendance notifications and 4 Child Safety Notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

110 conferences have been held in Hope Vale this quarter. ⁴

- **Mossman Gorge's 35** notifications comprise **4 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
 - 18 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 8 School Attendance notifications
 - 8 Child Safety notifications
 - 1 Housing Tenancy notifications

154 Magistrates Courts notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

26 Conferences have been held in Mossman Gorge this quarter. ⁵

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

5. Data Summary and Trends

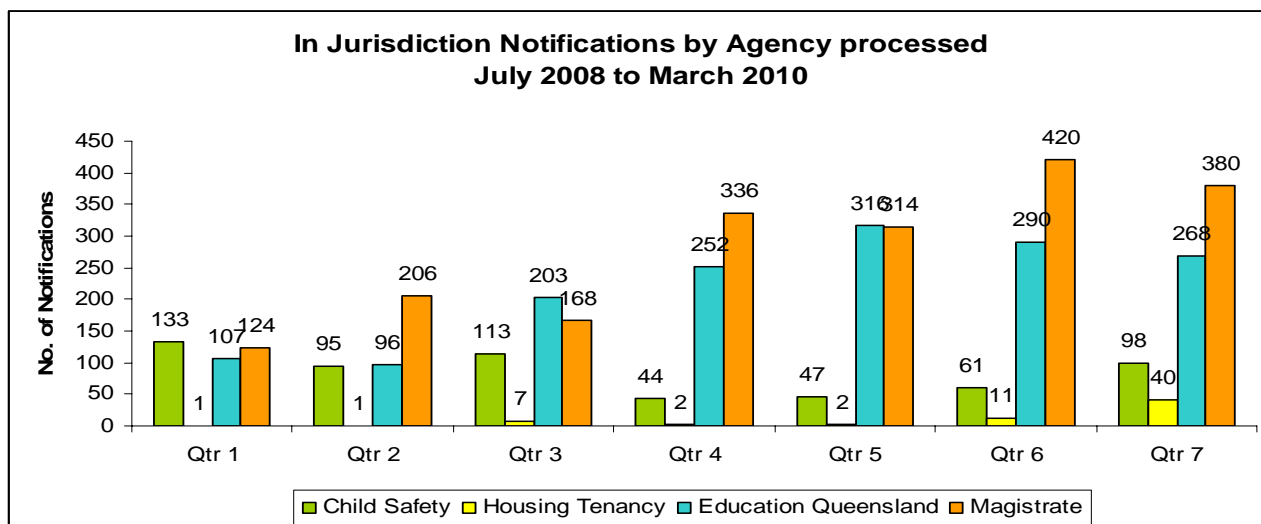
In quarter seven total notifications decreased from 1,184 in quarter six to 1,077 partly due to the school holidays resulting in a decrease in school attendance notifications. Also contributing to this decrease in notifications was a decrease in Magistrate Court notifications.

Conversely Child Safety notifications increased from the previous quarter largely due to the completion of the backlog of notifications by Child Safety Services. Housing notifications also increased for the period 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010 in Hope Vale. Assessment of this statistic indicates that this trend has been influenced by the consolidation of tenancy management services within the community and the transition to the Social Housing Rent Policy, which was introduced on 30 November 2009. It is expected that through a number of tenancy management initiatives, including family case conferencing, and the continuation of repayment plan options that housing notifications will be reduced over the coming months.

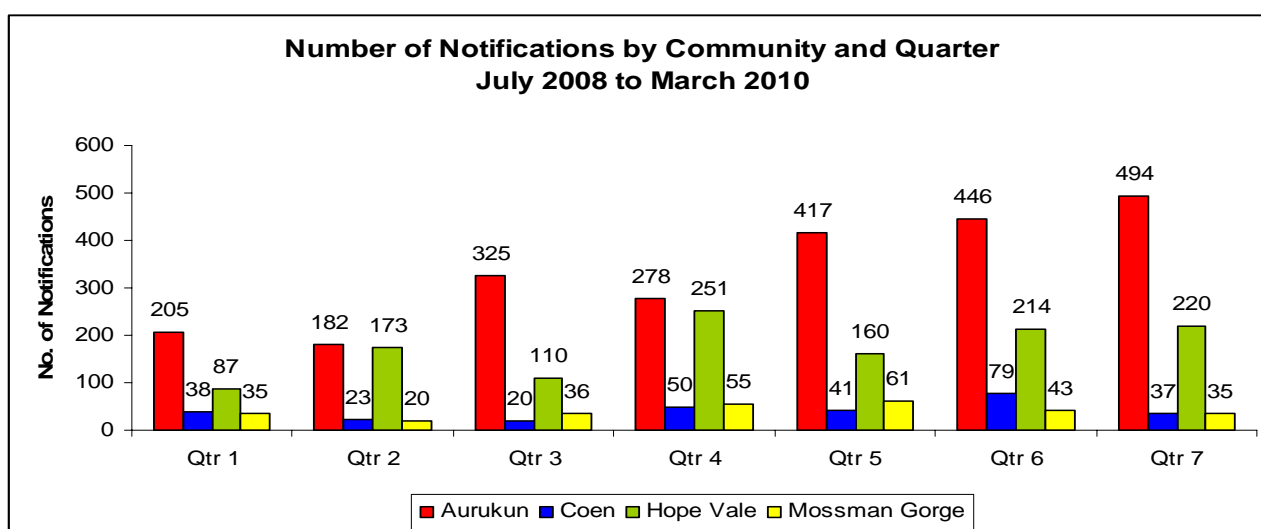
In Aurukun school attendance increased from 61.6 percentage points in term 4, 2009 to 65.9 percent in term 1, 2010. This is also an increase for Aurukun when compared to term 1, 2009 at 56.1 percent and 46.1 percent in term 1, 2008. Increases in attendance were recorded in Coen (4.5 percentage points) Hope Vale (3.2 percentage points) and Mossman Gorge (4.7 percentage points) reflecting improved attendance from term 4, 2009. 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. As at the end of term 1, 2010 attendance collection, 28 students were identified by Mossman State School and Mossman State High School, as living in Mossman Gorge Community. As at the February 2010 corporate data download, Western Cape College - Coen, had 49 full-time students enrolled. 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 administrators but the complexity of boarding school arrangements limits the accessibility of information.

Child Safety notifications overall have increased from 61 in quarter six to 98 in this quarter. The increase in notifications is due to improved resourcing and staffing availability in Aurukun (from 16 notifications to 54). A commitment was made to complete a number of outstanding cases. As a result 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 during that period.

Magistrates Courts notifications dropped from 420 in quarter six to 380 in quarter seven with all communities experiencing a drop in notifications received. This continues to reflect the ability of the police to allocate resources to drug, alcohol and motor vehicle offences in the communities. 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. Notably, Coen Magistrates Courts notifications decreased from 54 in quarter six to 26 in quarter seven.



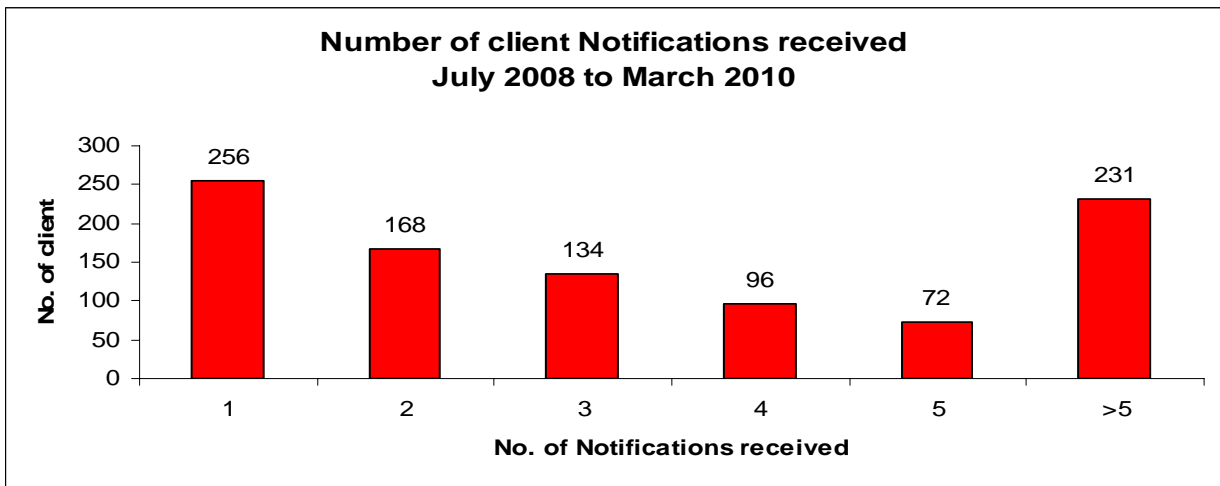
Graph 5: Notices by agency processed 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2009



Graph 6: Notifications by community and quarter 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

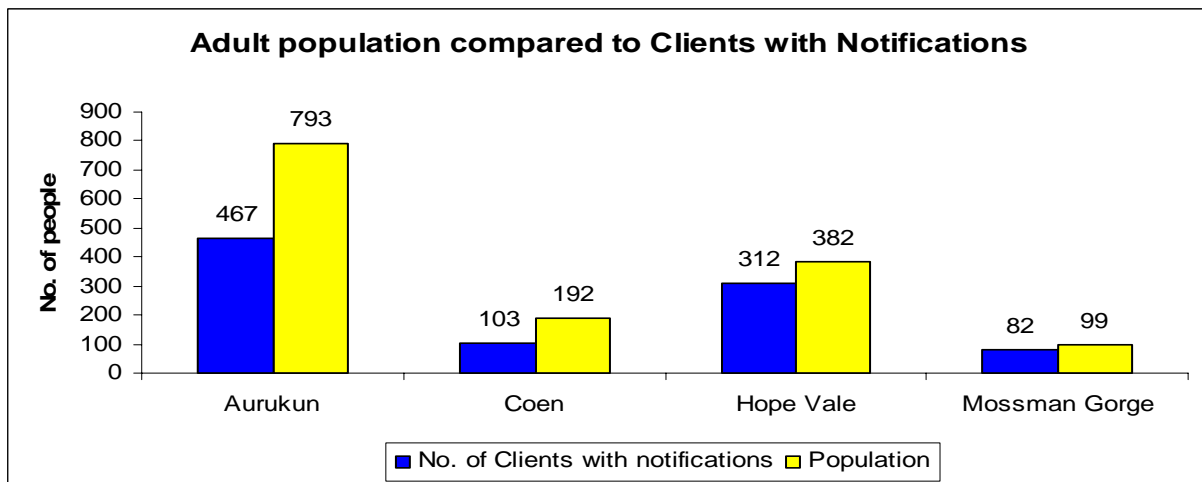
The Commission held 333 conferences across the four communities in quarter seven, a decrease from 407 conferences held in quarter six. The Commission commenced 2010 with a reduced sitting calendar to allow a recall and review week every fifth week in the calendar. As the Commission continues into its second year of operation it acknowledges the increasing need to spend greater time and resources in developing the Commissioners and instituting process improvements. This quarter also experienced no conferences for the month of the January due to the holidays and hence like quarter six, the conference numbers are less than quarters containing three months of sittings. The Commission was able to conference a number of clients who had been rescheduled last quarter in Coen due to the continuing periods of mourning, increasing conference numbers from 29 in quarter six to 34 in this quarter. The Commission acknowledged the passing of a respected elder and FRC Commissioner in Mossman Gorge and conferences were rescheduled resulting in a reduction in conferences from 44 to 26 for Mossman Gorge.

Twenty-four 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 27 percent of clients have received only one notification.



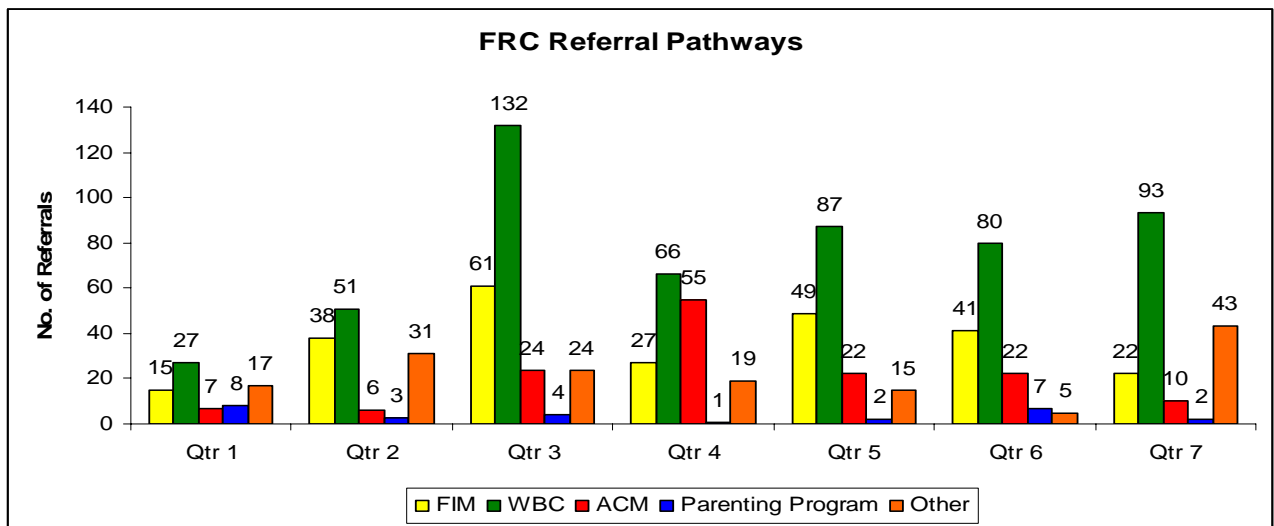
Graph 7: Clients by number of notifications 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

(**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. The total number of clients by notifications differs to due to the counting of Voluntary Income Managed clients and Voluntary Family Responsibility Agreement clients in Graph 8.)



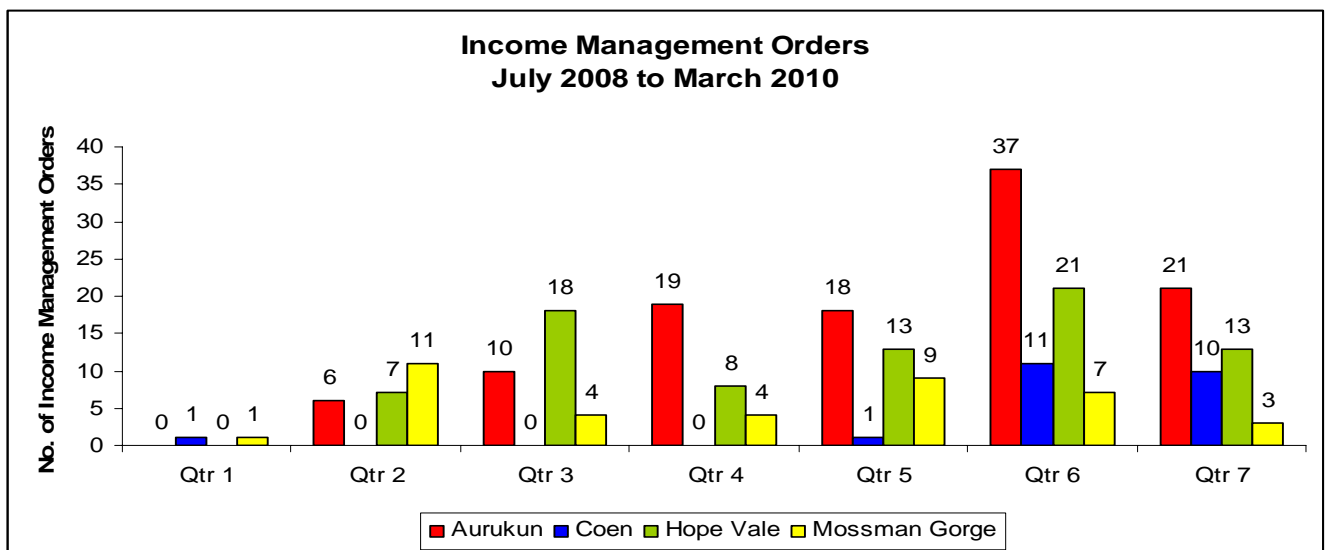
Graph 8: Number of clients who have received notifications up until 31 March 2010 in comparison to population figures of adults (17 years and over) provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP Figures. These figures include clients who have received more than one notification.

Although referrals to services providers increased from 155 in quarter six to 170 in quarter seven the referrals to FIM and ACM decreased. The increase in referrals to WBC included those specifically referred to the Strong Spirit, Strong Mind diversion program. The Commission referred a significant number of clients to the joint facilitated Queensland Corrective Services (Probation and Parole) and Commission, Ending Family Violence programs. The Commissioners continue to anticipate the commencement of new service providers such as the Parenting Programs soon to be available in Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. Aurukun Parenting Program advised of capacity issues due to changes in resourcing and a focus on failure to thrive families during the quarter, resulting in the small referral number to the service provider.



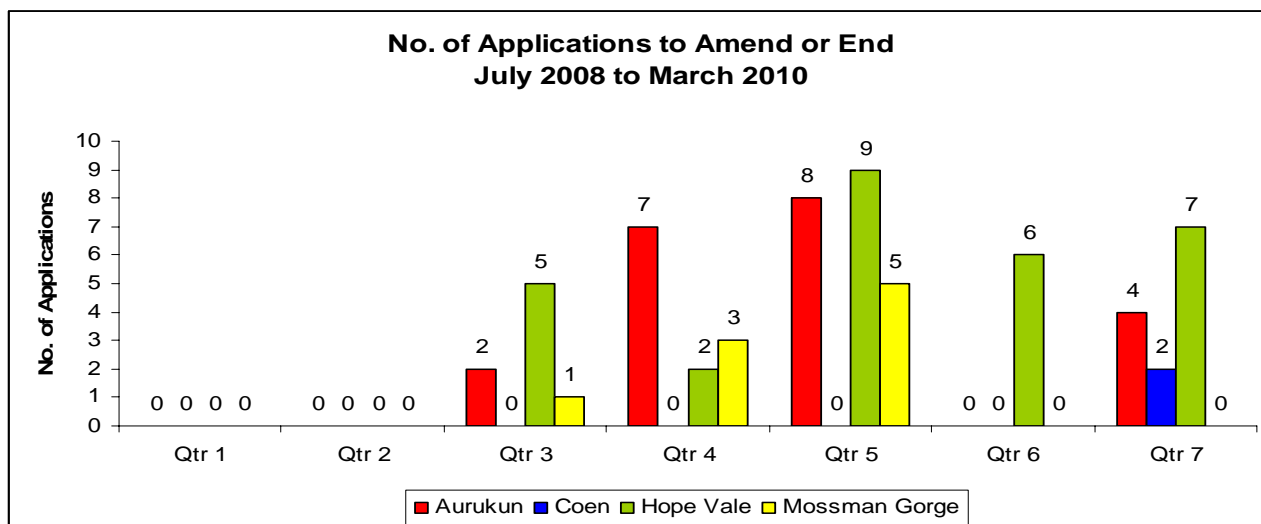
Graph 9: Referral Pathways 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

Conditional Income Management Orders decreased in quarter seven partially due to greater compliance by clients, but also due to the large number of repeat clients for new notifications. As the Commissioners deal with each client and situation individually, the decision to order Income Management does not have a direct causal effect such as non-attendance at service providers. Under section 71 of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*, the Commissioners must have regard to many factors within the client's life and the impact of the decision.



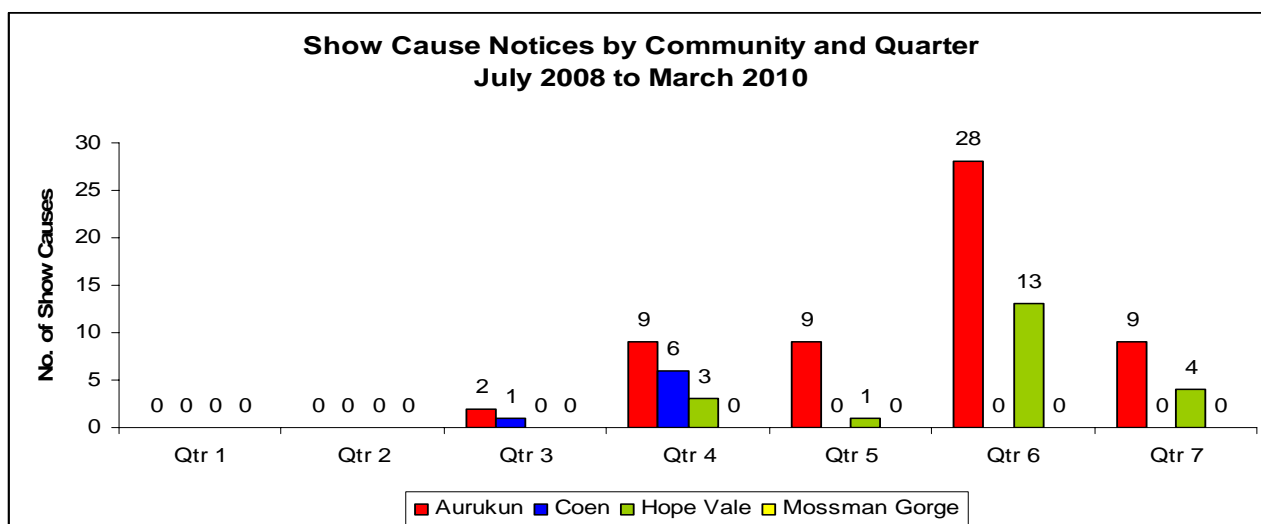
Graph 10: Conditional Income Management 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010.

As a result of the large number of Conditional Income Management Orders (76) in quarter six the Commission dealt with 13 Applications to Amend or End in this quarter, an increase from the six in quarter six. The Commissioners view the Amend or End Applications as an opportunity to engage with clients regarding their individual circumstances and in some cases this is the first conference attendance for the client.



Graph 11: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

The number of clients Show Caused decreased from 42 in quarter six to 13 in quarter seven for a variety of reasons. In January, the Commissioner and Registrar met with managers from all of the community support services and undertook to grant latitude to the providers to induct new staff, establish processes and procedures, and develop programs and initiatives. The Commission consistently encountered a significant backlog in Monthly Progress Reports which then arrived simultaneously from all providers covering many months. Additionally given the time of year, clients were absent from community attending to family business and holidays. In all, the assessment of clients over the November to February period of not meeting Case Plan requirements, whilst observing natural justice, was challenging for the Commission. Another impact over this period was the legislative requirement by the Commission to serve the client 28 days prior to the Show Cause notice conference date. As many clients were in and out community during the period and conferences did not convene in December 2009 and January 2010, a number of clients were not served within the timeframe to be conferenced in quarter seven. Of those clients conferenced many were given the opportunity to engage with service providers and return to the Commission at a later date for a finalisation of the Notice hearing.



Graph 12: Show Cause Notices 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2010

6. Observations / Future Direction

Observations

The Commission remains committed to regular and consistent client conferencing and also to developing the Local Commissioners to assist in the restoration of social norms and local Indigenous authority in the Welfare Reform communities.

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

- On 4 March, 2010, an additional six Local Commissioners were appointed, increasing the total number of Local Commissioners now appointed to 26.
- Invitation and attendance at ACOSS conference held in Canberra in December 2010.
- Invitation and attendance at ceremony to introduce the Preamble into Queensland Constitution.
- Commissioners working with Child Safety, Old Health, RFDS, Apunipima and Parenting Program to promote the health and wellbeing of a number of failure to thrive babies in the community. This has been through the formal process of conferencing, however, the Commissioners have also assisted personally in visiting the families where appropriate, and supporting the families.
- In Aurukun, Commissioners are actively working to engage with the school and increase school attendance through formal meetings with the Principal and ACM. Commissioners are also informally walking the streets in the morning to gather up the children for school and sitting in classrooms to encourage good behaviour of students.
- Continued development and training of all Local Commissioners.
- The establishment of 19 Dry Houses across the communities since 1 July 2009 when the Commission began its work.
- Supports the Commissioners in their activities to assist with the establishment and strengthening of the Women's Group and Men's Groups, which meet weekly.
- Commissioners and community members have completed the first stage of JP Training
- Direct referrals to Drug and Alcohol Diversion program with WBC.
- Direct referral to and co-facilitation with Queensland Corrective Services (Probation and Parole) of the Ending Family Violence Program.
- Commissioners supporting young people in the community through:
 - instigating mini expo at the Aurukun and Coen schools to prepare children and families for Boarding School (Centrelink, TSS etc);
 - organising traditional hunting and activities for youth such as fishing competitions;
 - working to support AFL AusKick through recommendations at conference and assisting with paperwork.
- On-going collaboration with Centrelink. Commissioners are gaining increased understanding of Centrelink payments and processes and actively encourage clients to ensure correct entitlements are received and documents lodged.
- Commissioners regularly meet with Child Safety representatives who attend individual conferences (when agreed).

Challenges

- The deployment of the Commission's new database is ongoing as new enhancements are added to expand reporting and case management capability. Until such time as this process is completed the extraction of accurate data is challenging.

- A new BasicsCard will be introduced by the Commonwealth Government on 1 July 2010. Centrelink is conducting community awareness sessions to ensure the CIM clients are not negatively impacted by the implementation of the new cards.
- There are a number of Hope Vale Housing notifications that have not been conferenced and remain in monitoring status.
- The Commission remains committed to training and developing its Commissioners and staff in anticipation of future service demands. Time, resourcing and funding constraints remain a concern
- 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. Funding for additional staff approved by the FR Board at its 22 February 2010 meeting will assist the Commission in meeting these obligations.

Future Direction

- Induction and training of new Commissioners has commenced and will continue into the next quarter.
- Further development and training opportunities for Local Commissioners will continue to be delivered.
- Delivery of the Review of the FRC implementation conducted by KPMG is imminent. Once received, the Commission will consider any recommendations made and potential implications for the Commission's operations.
- The Commission will engage an administration officer in Aurukun, Coen 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 2010.



SITTING CALENDAR
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION
 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010



WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN	AURUKUN	HOPE VALE	MOSSMAN GORGE	OFFICE CAIRNS
4 JANUARY	DRG					All week
11 JANUARY	DRG					All week
18 JANUARY	DRG					All week
25 JANUARY	DRG					All week
1 FEBRUARY	DRG		2, 3, 4			1, 5
8 FEBRUARY	DRG			9, 10	11	8, 12
15 FEBRUARY	DRG	15	16, 17, 18			19
22 FEBRUARY	DRG			23, 24	25	22 Board Meeting 26
1 MARCH	DRG					All week
8 MARCH	DRG	8	9, 10, 11			12
15 MARCH	DRG			16, 17	18	15, 19
22 MARCH	DRG	22	24, 25			23 26 Social Dev Com
29 MARCH	DRG			30, 31	29	1 Apr 2 Apr Good Friday
5 APRIL	DRG					All week
12 APRIL	DRG		13, 14, 15			12, 16
19 APRIL	DRG	19		20, 21	22	19, 23
26 APRIL	DRG		27, 28, 29			30 26 ANZAC Day
3 MAY	DRG			4, 5	6	7 3 May Day
10 MAY	DRG	10	11, 12, 13			14
17 MAY	DRG					17 Board Meeting 18, 19, 20, 21
24 MAY	DRG	24	25, 26, 27			28
31 MAY / 1 JUNE	DRG			1, 2	3	31, 4 Jun
7 JUNE	DRG		8, 9, 10			7, 11
14 JUNE	DRG			15, 16	17	18 14 Queens Birthday
21 JUNE	DRG	21	22, 23, 24			25
28 JUNE	DRG					All week

SITTING CALENDAR

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN	AURUKUN	HOPE VALE	MOSSMAN GORGE	OFFICE CAIRNS
5 JULY	DRG					NAIDOC
12 JULY	DRG			13, 14	12	15 16 Parliamentary Committee Brisbane
19 JULY	DRG					Estimates Hearing Brisbane 23 Cairns Show Day
26 JULY	DRG	26	27, 28, 29			30
2 AUGUST	DRG			3, 4	5	2, 6
9 AUGUST	DRG		10, 11, 12			9, 13
16 AUGUST	DRG					16 Board Meeting 17 18 19 20
23 AUGUST	DRG			24, 25	26	23, 27
30 AUGUST	DRG	30	31, 1, 2			3 Sept
6 SEPTEMBER	DRG			7, 8	9	6, 10
13 SEPTEMBER	DRG	13	14, 15, 16			17
20 SEPTEMBER	DRG					All week
27 SEPTEMBER	DRG					All week
4 OCTOBER	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8
11 OCTOBER	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			15
18 OCTOBER	DRG			19, 20	21	18, 22
25 OCTOBER	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 29
1 NOVEMBER	DRG					All week
8 NOVEMBER	DRG			9,10	11	8, 12
15 NOVEMBER	DRG	15	16, 17, 18			19
22 NOVEMBER	DRG			23,24	25	22 Board Meeting 26
29 NOVEMBER	DRG		30, 1, 2			29, 3 Dec
6 DECEMBER	DRG			7, 8	9	6, 10
13 DECEMBER	DRG	13	14, 15, 16			17
20 DECEMBER	DRG					All week
27 DECEMBER	DRG					Office closed for Holidays

Governance

Part 12 of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* provides for the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board).

The FR 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 FR Board must meet at least every three months and each member must be present at each meeting. The FR 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 are intended to 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 and 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:

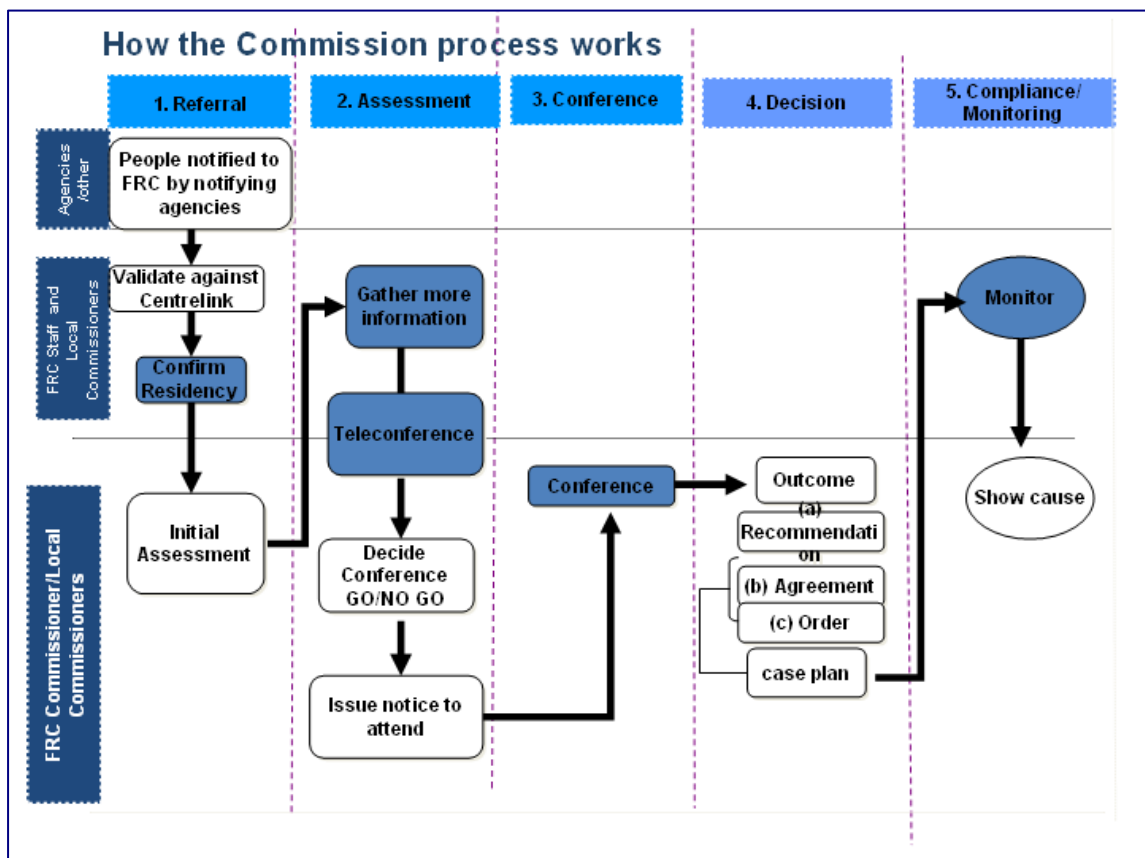


Table 7: Commission processes