

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. 9

July 2010 to September 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 in its third year of operation. The focus of the first year of operation was the establishment of the Commission inclusive of infrastructure and the commencement of regular conferencing schedules in each of the communities. In its second and third year of operation the Commission has focussed on the consolidation of administrative processes. In quarter nine a key priority of the Commission was to maintain an environment of continual professional development and learning for all staff and Local Commissioners and the formation and implementation of the Active Family Pathways Case Coordination framework (formerly the Intensive Case Management model).

Local Commissioners travelled to Cairns in July 2010 for a week of training, information sharing and personal development. Along with Deputy Commissioners Brooks and Curtin, the Local Commissioners invited service providers to supply updates on available and planned future services in each community. Local Commissioners met with Dr Jeff Harmer, Family Responsibilities Board member and Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), and discussed the progress of the Commission and their role in particular. Dr Harmer also enjoyed an informal BBQ with the all of the Commissioners, FRC staff and families. Local Commissioners received training in personal development, leadership capabilities and governance. As a result of the information sessions and training the Local Commissioners further discussed the need for an intensive case management model to ensure services are available to and accessed by the Commission's clients.

Local Commissioners met again in late September in Cairns to further develop the intensive case management model which was named the Active Family Pathways (AFP). Subsequent to these discussions the Commission received support from the Regional Leadership Group (a local leadership group comprising of representatives from the Australian and Queensland Governments as stakeholder organisations working in the CYWR communities) and support from the Remote Service Delivery Board of Management for the Active Family Pathways model. The AFP framework was discussed and an operational framework was developed with relevant CYWR government agencies and non-government stakeholders at a round table discussion held in late September. The AFP will now be implemented in the four communities in quarter ten commencing with a small number of clients and gradually expanding in numbers as the Commission, service providers and agencies resourcing capabilities allow.

Local Commissioners also received an overview of the recommendations proposed by KPMG Implementation Review of the Family Responsibilities Commission and sessions on Welfare Reform and theory of change. In each community Justice of the Peace (Qualified) and mediation training was provided to Local Commissioners and other community members including Elders, justice group members and parents. Conferencing schedules, official meetings and other Local Commissioner duties were consistently and professionally met whilst Local Commissioners managed work, family and personal commitments.

The Commission has continued conferencing in accordance with its sittings calendar in quarter nine with only minor changes made when required. Over the past quarter 336 conferences were held as compared with 436 in quarter eight. The decrease in the number of conferences held is due to the Commission sitting for fewer weeks in this quarter compared to the previous quarter to accommodate Commissioner training and Parliamentary obligations of the Commissioner. 726 agency notifications were received that were within the Commission's jurisdiction which was marginally less than quarter eight of 741.

The Commission continued to monitor and case manage clients, case managing 296 clients in quarter nine. This compares against the 496 clients that were being case managed in quarter eight. The

decrease in the number of clients case managed is attributed to a combination of the number of case plans concluded and fewer case plans being developed, together with non-compliant clients being subsequently placed on Conditional Income Management orders.

Decreases in school attendance were experienced in two of the four communities when comparing term 3 2010 against term 3, 2009. In Aurukun, school attendance decreased by 11.9 percentage points from term 3, 2010. Coen experienced a decrease of 3.9 percentage points, while Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge experienced an increase of 4.2 percentage points and 4.3 percentage points respectively from term 3, 2009 to term 3, 2010.

To combat the decrease in Aurukun the Commission will be holding conferences on a weekly basis from November until December 2010 with an emphasis on school attendance notifications. The Commission will work with parents, Education Queensland, Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy and school Attendance Case Managers to address the decline in school attendance. Local Commissioners report a number of parents have lapsed in ensuring school attendance of children who previously were attending daily, and other children are arriving late and being marked as absent. The Commission will continue to work with parents in all four communities to address personal and logistical issues impacting on school attendance.

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Abbreviations

ACMs	Attendance Case Managers
ACMF	Attendance Case Management Framework
AFP	Active Family Pathways
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
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
FIM	Family Income Management
FR Board	Family Responsibilities Board
IT	Information Technology
TSS	Transition Support Services
VIM	Voluntary Income Management
WBC	Wellbeing Centre
Also:	Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership (the Institute)
	Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)
	Mr David Glasgow, Family Responsibilities Commissioner (the Commissioner)
	<i>Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008</i> (the Act)
	Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry)
	Family Responsibilities Board (the Board)

Family Responsibilities Commission

Cape York Welfare Reforms

Report to 30 September 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 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 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 two and a quarter years at the time of this report and during this time has conducted a significant number of conferences with clients brought to the attention of the Commission through the submission of agency notifications. Staff of the Commission have developed strong working relationships with the agencies and community support service providers both in the communities and regionally and will continue to build upon those relationships throughout the life of the trial.

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 the Wellbeing Centres (WBCs) to address alcohol and/or drug misuse, gambling, parenting or 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. Although not all services are fully functional in the community the Commission is hopeful that providers will find the impetus to place services on the ground as soon as possible, as more than two years has elapsed since the commencement of the trial.

The Commission continues to support service providers and the process of change by providing training, briefings, procedures and assistance whenever requested and operationally possible. The Commission, under its mandate, 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 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 attended and 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 and service providers with local knowledge also gathered to provide a firm basis for decisions to be made relating to the best course of action for the client. 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 76 referrals to community support services were made in quarter nine relating to 48 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 orders. The Commission notes problems associated with clients actively engaging with service providers and continues to work with providers to develop stronger engagement strategies. The Commission continues to work with service providers to assist them in addressing issues and performance related matters.

As at 30 September 2010, 296 clients were being case managed by the Commission which required monthly progress reports to be submitted by service providers. This compares against the 496 clients that were being case managed in quarter eight. The decrease in the number of client's case

managed is attributed to client's case plans coming to an end and less clients having a case plan developed. As the Commission enters its third year of operation, some clients continue to reappear before the Commission including those who are non-compliant and resistant to case plans and personal responsibility. These clients have subsequently been placed on Conditional Income Management orders, contributing to the decrease in client case plan numbers.

The Commission has identified the need to assist those clients not progressing with service providers or within the expectations of the Commissioners to improve family lives through personal responsibility actions. To address this issue the Commission will be implementing the Active Family Pathways case coordination framework in November 2010. The AFP will be offered to selected individuals and families requiring assistance and support to navigate services and agencies and access the personal assistance they require. The model is collaboration between the Commissioners, Local Coordinators and Case Management team to target clients and assist in the restoration of clients taking primary responsibility for their families.

The Commission and the Department of Community Safety (Queensland Corrective Services) successfully continued delivery of the Ending Family Violence Program in three of the four welfare communities conducting a total of six programs. Three programs were held in Aurukun, two in Hope Vale and one in Mossman Gorge with Coen scheduled in quarter ten. Attendees have comprised both Commission clients on case plans and Probation and Parole clients. Queensland Corrective Services advised that all of the attendees completed the programs. The Commission will work with Probation and Parole to increase uptake of the programs to ensure the needs of our respective clients, their families and the communities are met. For quarter nine 31 clients were referred to the Ending Family Violence program with a total of 23 clients successfully completing the program (74 percent). To support the unique needs of female offenders, a women's only Ending Family Violence program was provided to five Aurukun female offenders in September. It is hoped that future refinement of female specific support services by Queensland Corrective Services will prove beneficial in delivering culturally appropriate programs that assist women in understanding the impact and cycle of violence on their lives.

Recruitment across all four Wellbeing Centres has been a priority given the lack of staffing preventing full service delivery, as advised by the Royal Flying Doctors Service in the previous quarter. Funding from the Department of Health and Ageing has enabled the Wellbeing Centre to recruit additional staff. The Aurukun Wellbeing Centre has advised it has filled eight positions with only one vacancy outstanding. One of these counsellors will commence living in the Aurukun community on a full time basis. The Commissioners and community members hope the presence of a permanent staff member in Aurukun will improve community acceptance of the Wellbeing Centre. The Wellbeing Centre in Hope Vale has advised there are currently only two vacant positions.

Cape York Partnerships have advised that school Attendance Case Management team is now fully staffed across the four communities and visits are being made to community members for unexplained school absences as well as school readiness. The Attendance Case Managers (ACM) in Aurukun are continuing weekly meetings with the Commission and discussing absences for the previous week. Family Income Management (FIM) has consolidated practices and procedures with greater centralisation and improved staff induction and training. Although staff turnover remains, limiting the establishment of community relationships, improvements in timeliness, service delivery and assistance to the Commission have been noted.

The Commission has been advised the long awaited Parenting Programs in Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge and Coen are now available. Some administrative issues remain though these are being worked through and are expected to be resolved by the next quarter. The Aurukun Parenting

Program continues to advise lack of resources limits the number and type of referrals to only very small and select numbers.

Commissioners have continued to engage with the parents of chronically truant children and seek assistance and services for the parents and children. Commissioners frequently remain frustrated, however, due to the lack of services with a child health and welfare focus. The Commission, Child Safety Services and Queensland Police are hopeful that sexual health education features strongly in school and community forums. The Commission remains supportive of the engagement of a school nurse in Aurukun and Coen and other health professionals working either permanently or on a regular visiting schedule to the CYWR communities. Each community reports difficulties in encouraging boarding school students to return to school, however, Aurukun Local Commissioners are pleased to report that after the tragic funeral of a young community member, 27 of the 29 students from boarding school were on the plane the next working day with the assistance of parents, Aurukun police and the Transition Support Officer. This shows a true dedication to education on the part of the parents and all those assisting in this area and is to be congratulated.

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 seventeen 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 to assist with the implementation of the new client database and client conferencing preparation.

The Commission's Client Relationship Management (CRM) database was widely used, tested and reviewed throughout this quarter. The new client record keeping system is functioning well, and some minor work will continue in the coming months to further enhance the capabilities of the database. The Commission is currently exploring available options to improve Information Technology (IT) user response times through revising the configuration of its IT network infrastructure.

Financial

The total budgeted funding inflows for this trial project are \$14.603M. This funding consists of a Commonwealth Government grant of \$3.5M received in 2007-08, \$9.374M allocated under administered funding through the Department of Communities by the Queensland Government, supplementary funding of \$1.327M endorsed by the FR Board for additional staffing and Commissioner training and projected and actual interest on our operating bank account of \$0.402M until the expiry of the Act on 1 January 2012.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2010 totalled \$1.592M. This income consisted of:
 - \$1.586M in funding received in the first half of the financial year to 31 December 2010 from Queensland Government funding;
 - \$0.060M in funding received in quarter nine from the CYWR Service Procurement Fund to offset the annual 2010-11 salary and on-costs for the Principal Case Manager's position;
 - \$0.192M received in quarter nine from the CYWR Service Procurement Fund for Local Commissioner training and additional staffing; and
 - \$0.014M received in interest.
- The balance of available funds after expenses as at 30 September 2010 is \$2.656M. The total includes funding released for the six months to 31 December 2010 and the 2009-10 surplus. Surplus funds for previous years were:
 - \$2.181M carried forward for the 2009-10 financial year
 - \$3.153M carried forward for the 2008-09 financial year and
 - \$3.777M carried forward for the 2007-08 financial year.

Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2010 was \$1.117M (Table 1). This total represents 26.1 percent of the projected annual expenditure of \$4.284M as stated in the 2010-11 projected expenditure, disclosed on page 3-53 of book 3 in the 2010-11 State Budget papers.

In referring to Graph 1, 94 percent of total expenditure in quarter nine is represented by the following:

salaries and recruitment costs	55.9 percent
information technology costs	8.2 percent
Local Commissioner fees	7.9 percent
property costs	6.4 percent
airfare and accommodation costs	6.0 percent
operating costs	5.4 percent
vehicles costs	4.2 percent

Expenditure variances from quarter eight to quarter nine are attributed to:

- **Salaries and recruitment** - salaries and on costs increased by \$48K due to the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner during Commissioner Glasgow's recreation leave and the extension of the engagement of temporary staff to assist the transition to the client database.
- **IT Costs** – decreased by \$81K due to delayed invoicing received and processed in quarter eight by the Commission's IT service provider the Corporate Administration Agency, CYDN and CITEC for services. These delays were not experienced in quarter nine.
- **Property costs** – increased by \$16K as a result of the payment of Aurukun office rental and service charges in advance, following the completion of negotiations with the Aurukun Shire Council on office rental figures and associated security and other service charges.
- **Airfares and accommodation** – staff related travel and accommodation decreased by \$81K due to the quarter eight expenses being inflated as a result of conference schedules requiring increased use of charter aircraft and the Commissioner attending Parliamentary Committee and Estimates, FR Board, and a national conference in Canberra. This result was further compounded by the late allocation of air travel costs and associated end of financial year accrued expense adjustments associated with the acquittal of corporate card transactions. Quarter nine figures better reflect a normal fiscal quarter's anticipated expenditure trend.
- **Operating costs** – increased by \$41K as a result of the printing costs associated with the Commission's 2009-10 Annual Report.
- **Vehicle costs** – increased by \$13K due to the replacement of a vehicle and charges associated with the early reassignment of an existing QFleet lease agreement.
- Telecommunications – decreased \$7K due to the reduced mobile phone charges in the quarter.
- **Depreciation and amortisation** - decreased by \$59K as a result of the capitalisation of office refurbishment and database development costs during quarter eight.
- **Consultants** – increased by \$65K due to corporate service charges for financial processing and human resources paid to the Corporate Administration Agency and further consultancy fees associated with the development of client statistical and management reports from the client database.

Commission staff worked closely with the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) on the Commission's 2009-10 audit assisting with the preparation of the 2009-10 Financial Statements. The QAO identified several corrections listed below to the Commission's financial reporting in 2007-08, 2008-09 and

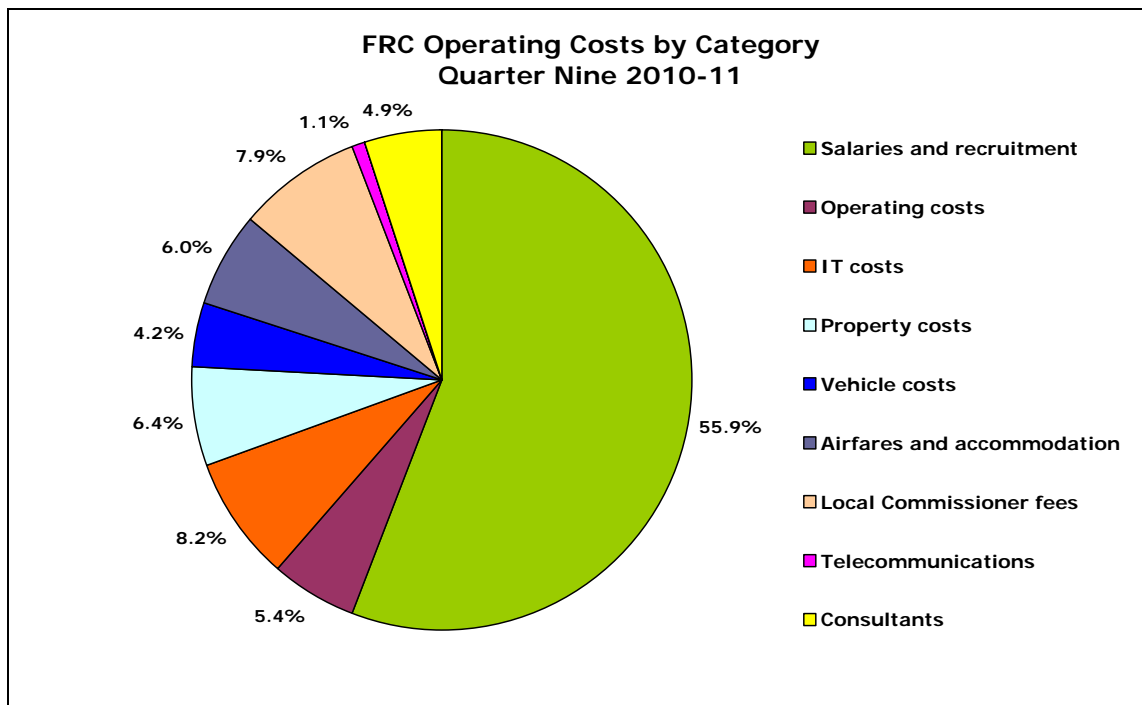
2009-10. To correct the reporting of these items, the Commissions 2009-10 financial statements will consist of three comparative columns to disclose these changes in the accounting of these items below:

1. A Commonwealth grant of \$3.5M received in the 2007-08 financial year was classified as a reciprocal grant and brought to account as unearned revenue in 2007-08. In 2008-09, \$1.0M of this was brought to account as revenue. The grant should have been initially classified as non-reciprocal and recognised as revenue in 2007-08. The result of this error is an understatement of income and the operating result of \$3.5M in 2007-08, and an overstatement of income and the operating result of \$1.0M in 2008-09. This also resulted in errors in the balance sheet, with current liabilities (unearned revenue) being overstated and equity understated by \$3.5M in 2007-08 and \$2.5M in 2008-09, respectively.
2. Funding of \$96K received in the 2008-09 financial year was offset to employee expenses in 2008-09. This funding should have been recognised as grant revenue in 2008-09. The result of this error is an understatement of income and an understatement of employee expenses in 2008-09. There was no impact on the operating result.
3. Intangibles work in progress in the 2008-09 financial year included scoping expenses of \$17K. These expenses should not have been capitalised. The result of this error is an understatement of expenses and overstatement of the operating result of \$17K, and an overstatement of intangibles work in progress in 2008-09.

Expenditure 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2010	Total Expenditure Qtr8	Total Expenditure Qtr9	Total Expenditure Variance Qtr8 to Qtr 9
Airfares and accommodation	148,311.93	66,851.21	-81,460.72
IT costs	172,595.32	92,004.99	-80,590.33
Consultants	-10,928.51	54,410.49	65,339.00
Depreciation and Amortisation	59,230.55	0.00	-59,230.55
Salaries and recruitment	576,660.95	624,448.88	47,787.93
Operating costs	19,340.80	60,106.37	40,765.57
Property costs	55,527.89	71,828.19	16,300.30
Vehicle costs	33,430.58	46,434.98	13,004.40
Telecommunications	19,615.79	12,209.88	-7,405.91
Local Commissioner fees	88,680.53	88,640.95	-39.58
Total expenditure	\$1,162,465.83	\$1,116,935.94	-\$45,529.89

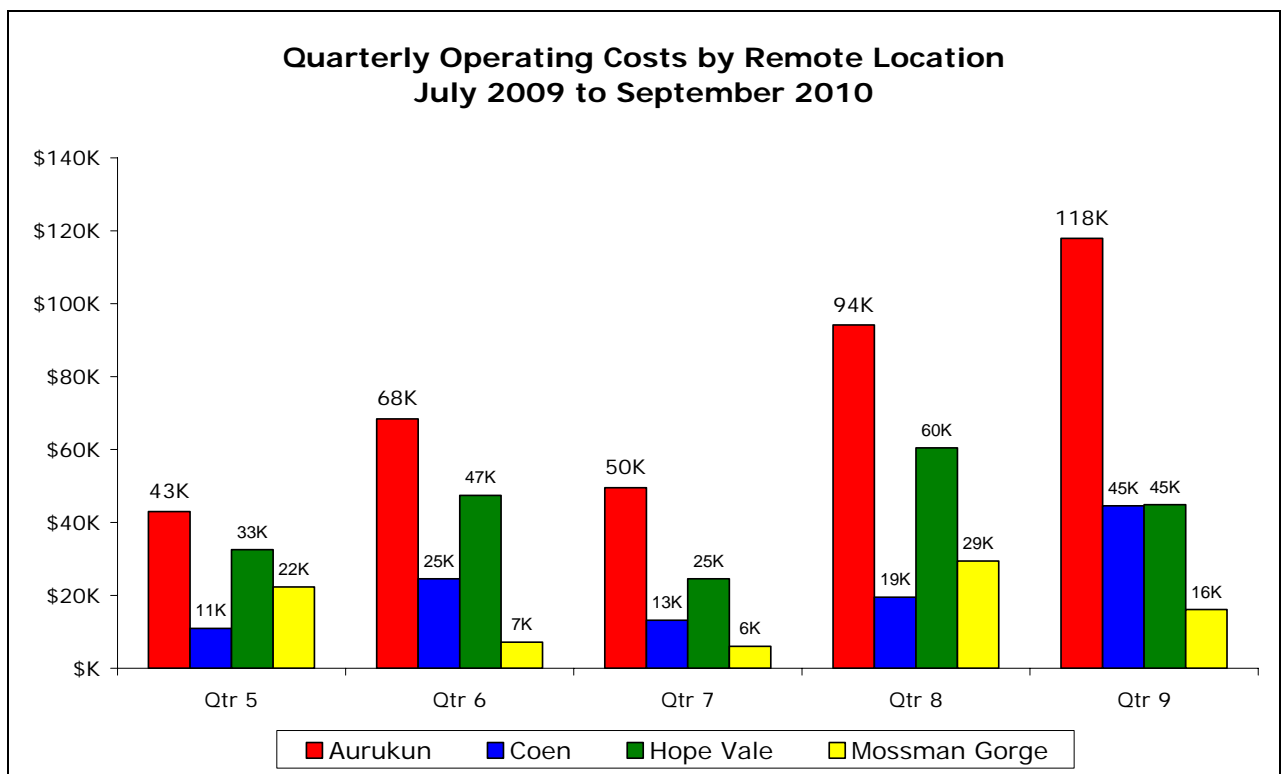
Table 1: Unaudited YTD expenditure including variations between quarter eight and quarter nine

The Commission's total quarter nine 2010-11 operating costs by categories and by percentage of total expenditure is represented in the graph below:



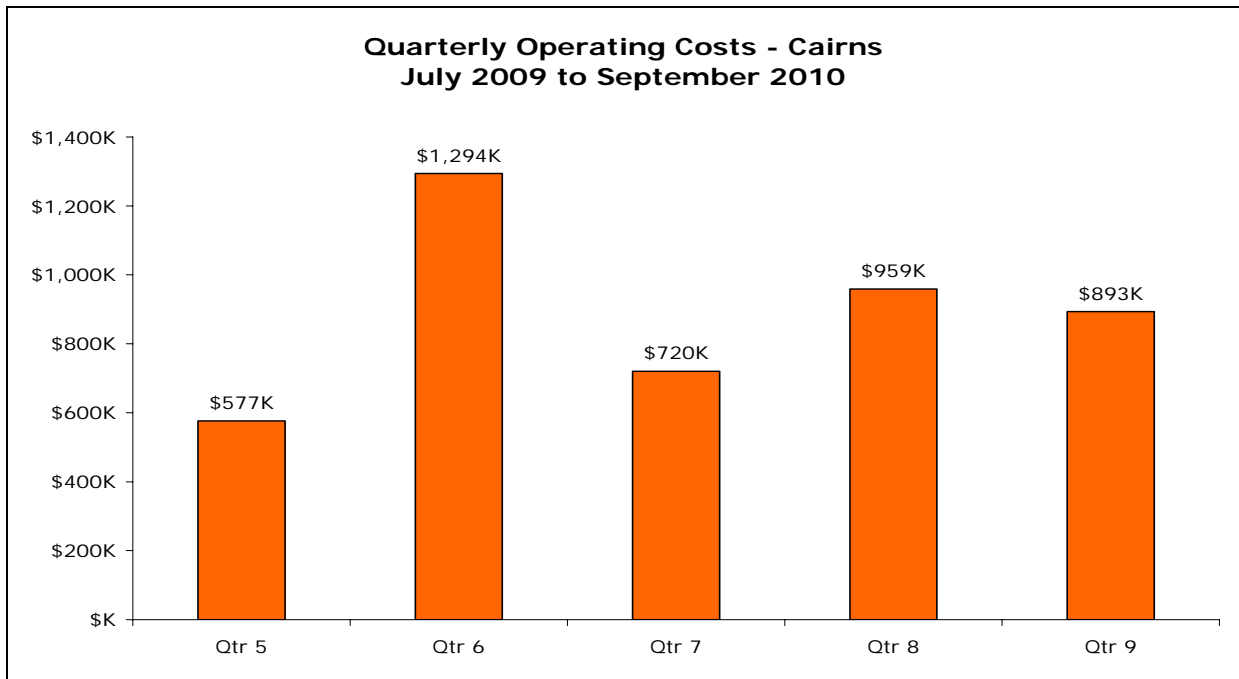
Graph 1: Total FRC Operating costs 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2010

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 the September 2010 quarter, totalling \$89K. Expenses in Coen were higher in quarter nine as a result of repairs and maintenance carried out on the staff accommodation in Coen and additional local engagement meetings held with Local Commissioners during this period. Aurukun costs consisted of higher expenditure on office rental costs, mediation training, local commissioner fees and motor vehicle operating costs.



Graph 2: Operating costs by remote location 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010

Cairns office operational costs (below) in quarter nine are compared to previous levels of quarterly expenditure incurred.



Graph 3: Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010

4. Activities / Achievements

Intake and Assessment Phase

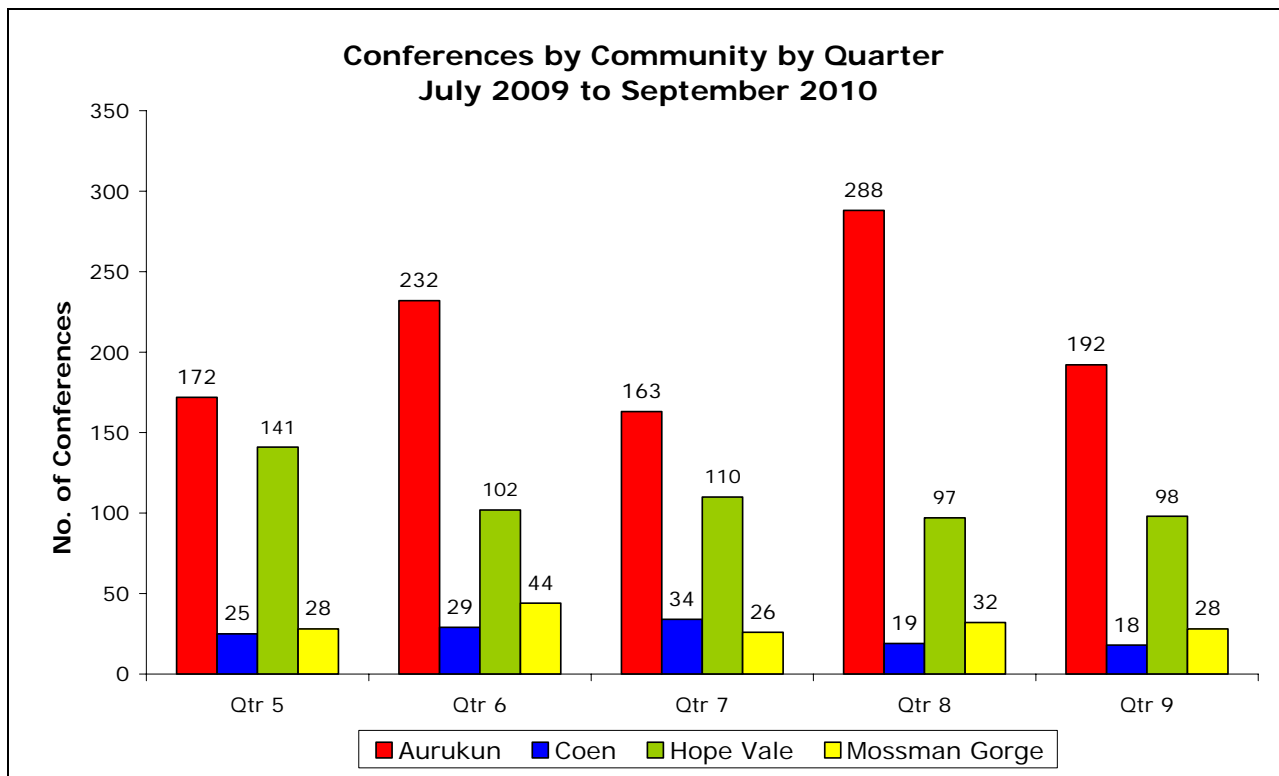
The Commission became operational on 1 July 2008 and commenced conferencing on 12 August 2008. In quarter nine the Commission received 975 agency notifications, some of which related to more than one person. Of that figure 726 notifications (74 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 249 notifications (26 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

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 since 1 July 2008.

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 nine a total of 336 conferences were held which resulted in 25 Family Responsibility Agreements being entered into, 49 directions made to attend community support services and 49 Conditional Income Management orders. Other outcomes included no further action, rescheduling, scheduling to return for review with compliance and the assignment of personal responsibility actions. The Commission was able to service all scheduled conferences in this quarter in all communities as per the calendar with the exception of one reduced sitting in Hope Vale and two reduced sittings in Mossman Gorge due to sorry business. Six weeks in quarter nine were dedicated to Local Commissioner and staff training and development, NAIDOC celebrations and Parliamentary obligations of the Commissioner. Aurukun conferences accounted for 57 percent of the total number of conferences held reflecting the high number of notifications attributed to Aurukun community at 63 percent of all notifications within jurisdiction.



Graph 4: Conferences by community and quarter 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010

Case Management

As at 30 September 2010, 296 clients were being case managed. Clients facing significant barriers such as addiction, repeat cycles 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 also preventing some clients being able to comply with their case plans.

The overall number of referrals to services providers decreased due to a number of factors:

- fewer clients identified issues that could be assisted through referral to service providers, hence personal responsibilities agreements increased;
- service providers had advised of limited services being available until late in the quarter and a number of clients had therefore unsuccessfully completed 12 months on a case plan to a service provider.

The Commissioners ordered a number of previously unsuccessful case plan clients to the Probation and Parole Ending Family Violence program reflecting an increase in referrals from the previous quarter.

Referral Type	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	TOTAL
FIM	49	41	22	21	10	143
WBC	87	80	93	25	21	306
ACM	22	22	10	5	1	60
Parenting Program	2	7	2	4	5	20
Probation and Parole	1	0	35	23	31	90
Other	14	5	8	5	8	40
TOTAL	175	155	170	83	76	659

Table 2: Referral services by quarter as at 30 September 2010

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 outstanding 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. In addressing continued school absences of high school children, the Commissioners have developed relationships with TSS, DET, Abstudy and parents in a consolidated effort to ensure children remain engaged in the education system.

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. The continuing turnover of service provider staff significantly impacts on the quality of reports, plus individual definitions of reporting criteria (attend, progress and engage) continue to result in inconsistent reports. The Registry and Local Commissioners continue to offer training and direction to service providers for the induction of new staff, provide feedback through audit and encourage staff to attend conference proceedings in each CYWR community and discuss with the Local Commissioners the decision making processes. The Commission has successfully implemented a highly simplified system of reporting through electronic upload of monthly progress reports which has aided in easing the reporting obligations and consistency of content. The Commission has extended reporting deadlines to service providers reporting excessive workloads and worked with service providers and their IT systems to improve their ability to meet reporting requirements. The Registry is working with service providers to improve line management control and establish responsibilities for reporting, encouraging each service provider to engage a quality assurance process before submission to the Commission.

It should be noted that the number of clients case managed (296) 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 nine, nine Show Cause hearings were held in Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge (see Table 3). These matters resulted in:

- 5 Orders for Income Management
- 1 Client Income Managed and ordered to comply with the new Case Plan
- 1 Client ordered to comply with new Case Plan
- 1 Client Adjourned
- 1 Client Rescheduled

With fewer clients subject to case plans, the number of clients available for Show Cause investigations decreased. Only in exceptional cases will the Commission initiate Show Cause proceedings on a client already Conditionally Income Managed (CIM). As many of the clients not attending service providers are already under CIM orders, the pool of clients for Show Cause investigations has decreased.

Community	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	TOTAL
Aurukun	9	28	9	15	4	65
Coen	0	0	0	2	0	2
Hope Vale	1	13	4	3	4	25
Mossman Gorge	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	10	41	13	20	9	93

Table 3: Show Cause Notices by quarter as at 30 September 2010

The sixteen applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received in quarter nine is approximately four percent of those clients income managed since the commencement of the Commission (370 as at 30 September 2010). The Commission encourages clients to lodge applications where their circumstances may have changed and which potentially warrants a change to their Agreement or Order. The Commissioners are encouraged to assist clients to provide evidence of why the application should be considered, such as clients seeking work opportunities and attending service providers. Each application is considered on its own merit and clients are encouraged to take on personal responsibility actions when CIM orders are revoked.

Outcomes of the 16 applications received are as follows:

- 7 Applications dismissed
- 4 CIM orders revoked
- 2 Rescheduled for a future date
- 1 CIM Order and Case Plan revoked
- 1 New Case Plan Developed
- 1 Application withdrawn

Community	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	TOTAL
Aurukun	8	0	4	6	8	26
Coen	0	0	2	1	1	4
Hope Vale	9	6	7	11	4	37
Mossman Gorge	5	0	0	4	3	12
TOTAL	22	6	13	22	16	79

Table 4: Amend or End Applications Order by quarter as at 30 September 2010

Conditional Income Management

Forty nine Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were made in quarter nine with a total of 281 CIM orders made from 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010 (see Table 5). Since the commencement of the Commission 370 CIM orders have been made. CIM orders are made in the following circumstances:

- the client has failed to attend two scheduled conferences; or
- the 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, 78 percent of clients have received multiple notifications. 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 made.

The Commission acknowledges that the situation of clients can change during the course of the case plan. 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. In addition community members in CYWR communities who are CDEP participants are subject to removal from the program under a recommendation from the Commission and subsequent decision from FaHCSIA.

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.

Commissioners advise that increasing numbers of clients are requesting CIM orders and to be placed on a BasicsCard as they view the income management as a means to stabilise the household and ensure bills are paid and children are fed. These clients ask that the Commission order the income management rather than request Voluntary Income Management (VIM) due to pressures from spouses and family members associated with power balances and domestic violence. Those clients who do request VIM, advise it is a feasible remedy to family and social pressure to hand over cash for non-essential items and contraband. Since commencement, 28 clients and community members have successfully applied for VIM.

Community	Qtr 5	Qtr 6	Qtr 7	Qtr 8	Qtr 9	TOTAL
Aurukun	18	37	21	46	27	149
Coen	1	11	10	2	2	26
Hope Vale	13	21	13	15	15	77
Mossman Gorge	9	7	3	5	5	29
TOTAL	41	76	47	68	49	281

Table 5: Quarterly Conditional Income Managed Orders as at 30 September 2010

Notifications

For the period 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2010 the Commission received a total of **975** agency notifications¹ of which 726, or 74 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Of the 726 notifications that were within the Commission's jurisdiction, they comprised of:

- 321 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 318 School Attendance notifications
- 86 Child Safety notifications
- 1 Housing Tenancy notifications

Of the 249, or 26 percent, not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 226 Magistrates Courts notifications, 19 School Attendance notifications and 4 Child Safety notifications.

Details for each community are as follows:

- **Aurukun's 458** notifications comprise **63 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction across the four CYWR communities:

- 229 School Attendance notifications
- 190 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 39 Child Safety notifications

27 Magistrates Courts notifications and 10 School Attendance notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

192 conferences have been held in Aurukun this quarter.²

- **Coen's 38** notifications comprise **5 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

- 16 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 11 School Attendance notifications
- 10 Child Safety notifications
- 1 Housing Tenancy notification

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

18 conferences have been held in Coen this quarter.³

- **Hope Vale's 172** notifications comprise **24 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:

- 76 Magistrates Courts notifications
- 65 School Attendance notifications
- 31 Child Safety notifications

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.

³ Ibid.

7 Magistrates Courts notifications, 7 School Attendance notifications and 3 Child Safety Notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

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

- **Mossman Gorge's 58** notifications comprise **8 percent** of the total notifications in jurisdiction:
 - 39 Magistrates Courts notifications
 - 13 School Attendance notifications
 - 6 Child Safety notifications

184 Magistrates Courts notifications were processed as not within jurisdiction.

28 conferences have been held in Mossman Gorge this quarter.⁵

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

5. Data Summary and Trends

In quarter nine total notifications decreased from 992 in quarter eight to 975 notifications⁵, of which 726, or 74 percent, were within the Commission's jurisdiction. Magistrates Court notifications increased significantly and Housing Tenancy notifications decreased. The Commission anticipated that quarter nine would show an increase in Magistrate Court notifications whilst the decrease in Housing Tenancy notifications was an unexpected consequence of agency processes. Child Safety Services notifications decreased in all communities.

Housing Tenancy notifications decreased this quarter to one which is in contrast to the 49 received in quarter eight. The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) has advised the decrease in the number of notifications was due to turnover of staff. This has subsequently been addressed and the Commission has since received further housing notifications for the following quarter. The Commission has continued to work with the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) to improve service delivery and achieve a consistent outcome to the reporting requirements of the Commission.

Decreases in school attendance were experienced in two of the four communities when comparing term 3, 2010 against term 3, 2009. In Aurukun school attendance decreased by 11.9 percentage points from term 3, 2010 (54.1percent) when compared against term 3, 2009 (66.0percent). Coen experienced a decrease of 3.9 percentage points, while Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge experienced an increase of 4.2 percentage and 4.3 percentage points respectively from term 3, 2009 to term 3, 2010. Caution should be used when examining the percentage changes in attendance for both Mossman Gorge and Coen communities. Both these communities have relatively small numbers of students and a small numerical change can result in a large percentage difference in the overall attendance figures. Changes with record keeping practices over time may impact on the ability to compare school attendance across years. The Commission notes, secondary school students are not currently case managed as part of the Attendance Case Management Framework (ACMF) but are included in the Education Queensland attendance statistics.

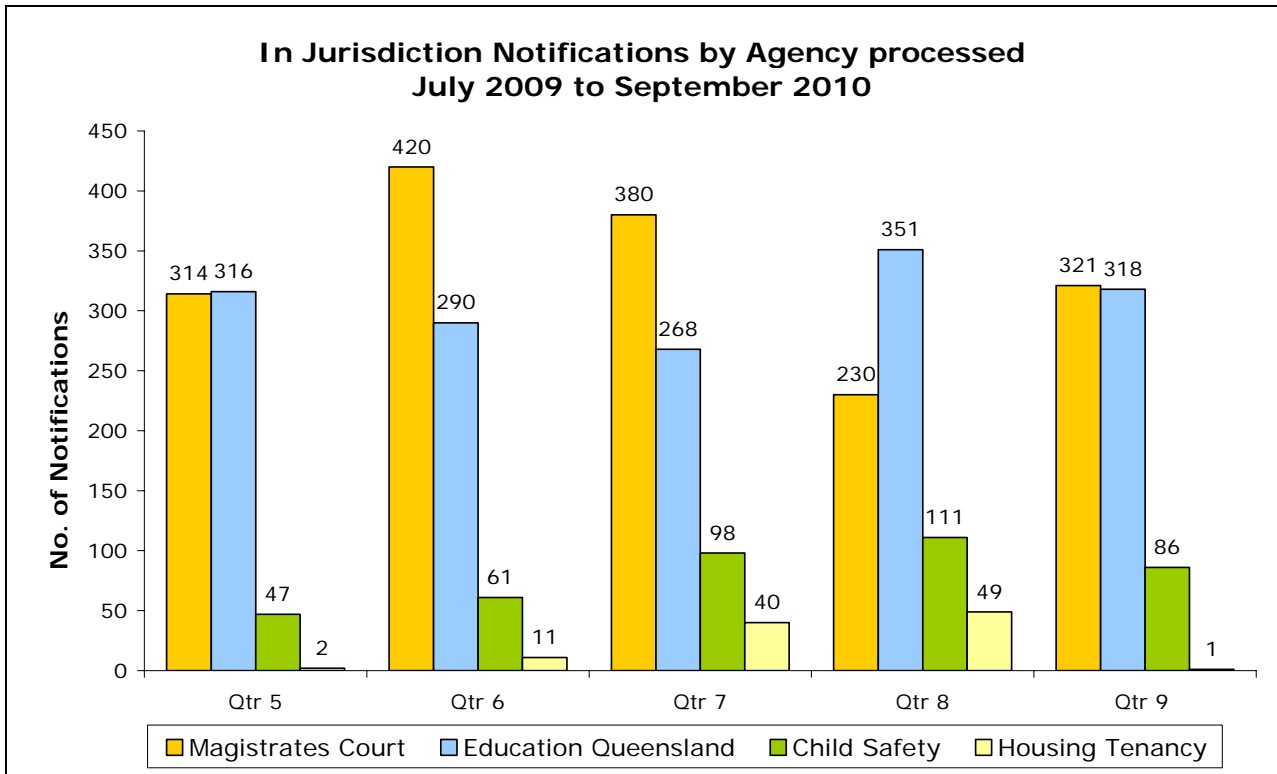
At the request of the Board the Commission has scheduled weekly sittings in Aurukun commencing in November until mid December which will focus on school attendance notifications to assist in addressing the decline in school attendance. The Commission will continue to emphasise to parents the importance of school attendance and prompt arrival times to prevent absentee and poor attendance records. School attendance notifications for Hope Vale would appear to have decreased in this quarter nine. The Commission did not receive school attendance notifications for Hope Vale State School for the later part of term three preventing the Commission addressing the poor attendance with the parents at the time of the occurrence. The Commission has since received the backlog of notifications that will be scheduled and collated in quarter ten.

Child Safety notifications decreased from 111 in quarter eight to 86 in quarter nine. This decrease applied across all communities. Both the Commission and the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) remain cautious in evaluating the data trend as many factors both environmental and operational can impact the notifications received. The Commission wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the Child Safety Services Team Leader for Hope Vale and the Child Safety FRC Officer for Aurukun who have since progressed on to new positions. Both officers worked closely with the Local Commissioners and developed relationships of mutual respect which ultimately assisted families to provide safe and protective homes for children in the respective communities. Child

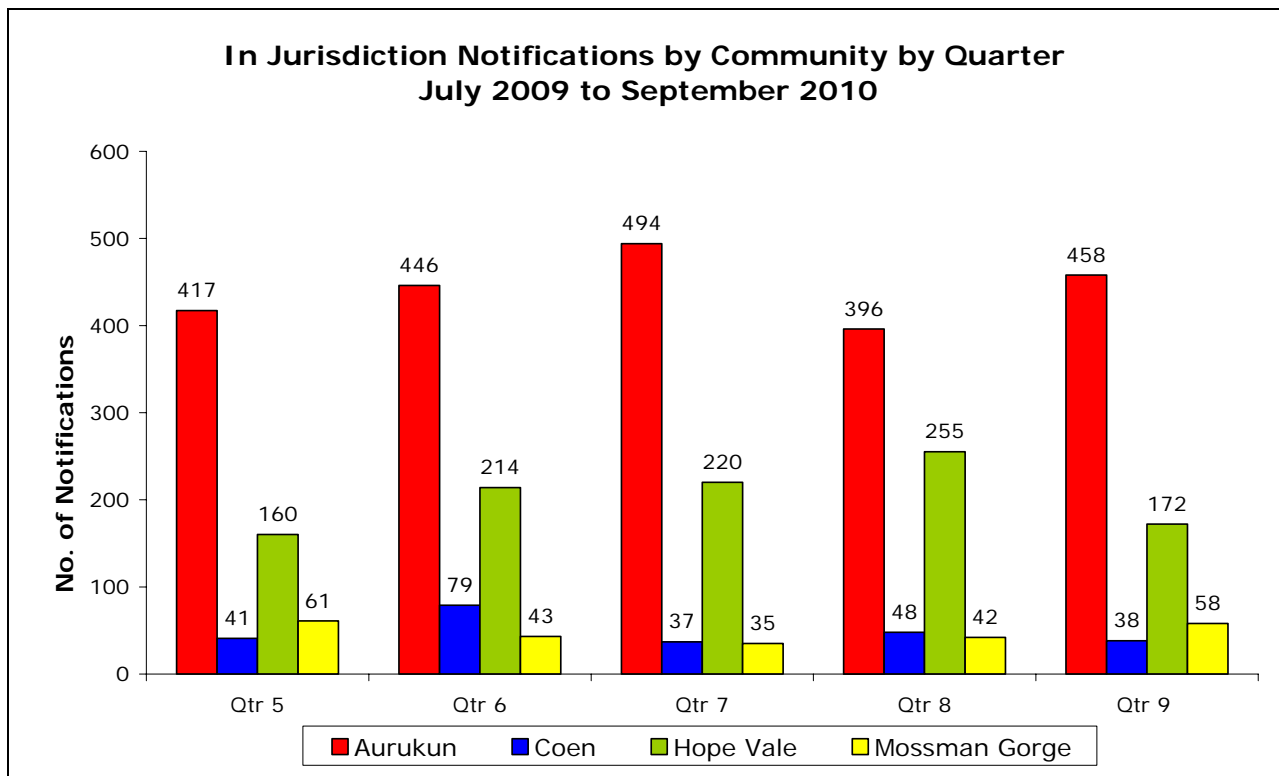
⁵ Counting rules are that an agency notification is counted on the basis of number of "clients" on the notification, for example: a child safety notification relating to two parents is counted as two notifications.

Safety officers have been increasingly accepted in community as a support to families and report growth in community engagement where community members are now providing unsolicited information, raising concerns for children and providing updates on families of significance to Child Safety Services. This improvement in relations has resulted in the community and family members taking on more responsibility for their own actions.

Magistrates Courts notifications increased this quarter to 321 from 230 reported in the previous quarter. The Registry reported in quarter eight that fewer court sittings had taken place and a delay in lodgement of notifications would lead to increased notifications in quarter nine. The increase in the number of notifications for Mossman Gorge is directly attributed to the increase in Magistrates Court sitting days particularly in September. In September the court sat for an average of six days as opposed to the past average of three days per month. The Commission notes the Queensland Police Service continue to initiate community engagement activities to reduce criminal activity and socially irresponsible behaviour such as working with truants, education programs, working with liquor outlets and promoting sporting activities.



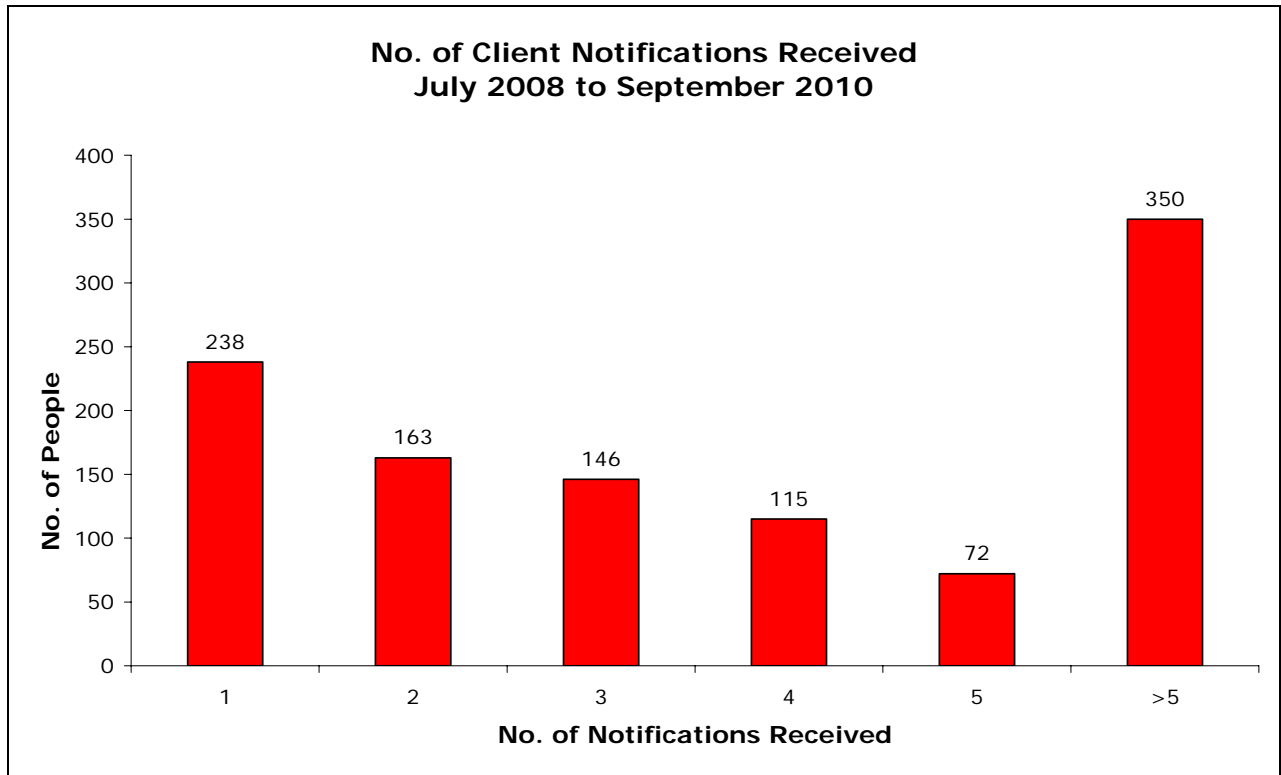
Graph 5: Notices by agency processed 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010



Graph 6: Notifications by community and quarter 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010

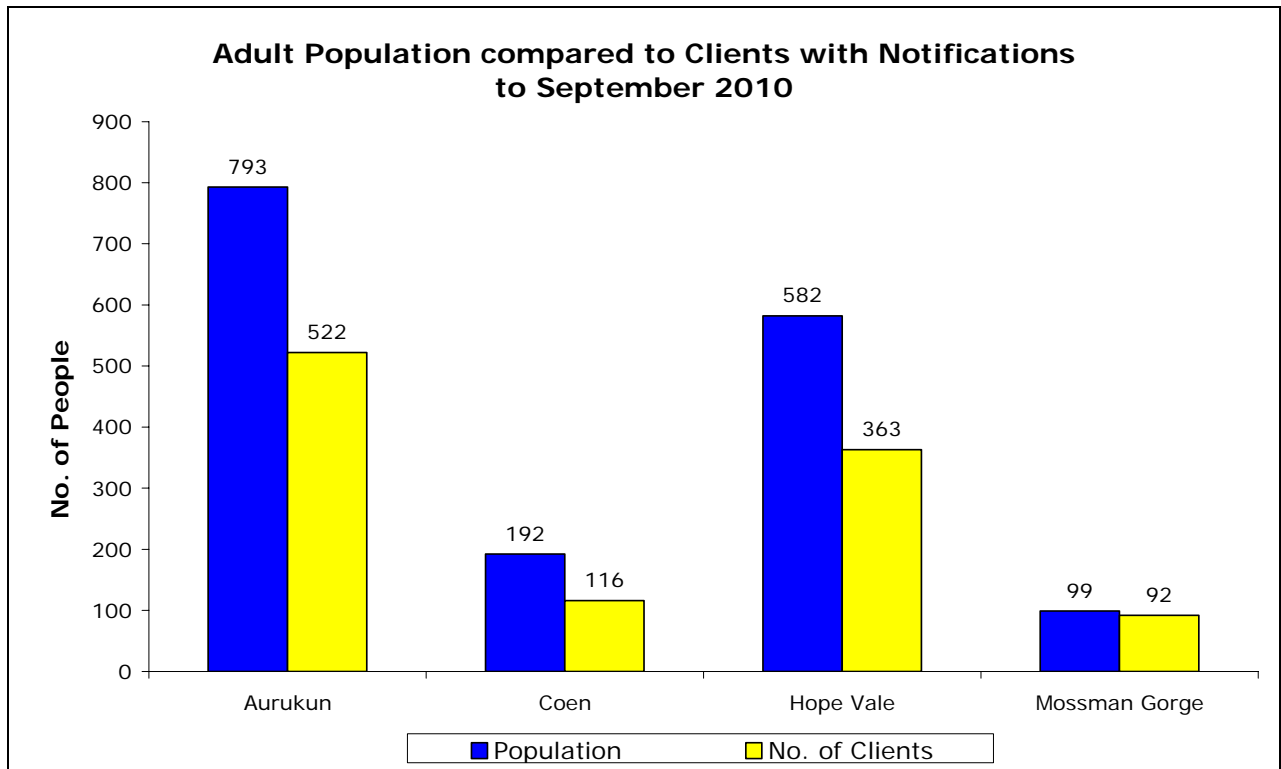
The Commission held 336 conferences across the four communities in quarter nine, a decrease from 436 conferences held in quarter eight.

Thirty-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 increases with Commissioners providing the client numerous opportunities to engage with service providers or take action to reduce notifications (such as children attending school regularly). To date 22 percent of clients have received only one notification.



Graph 7: Clients by number of notifications 1 July 2008 to 30 September 2010

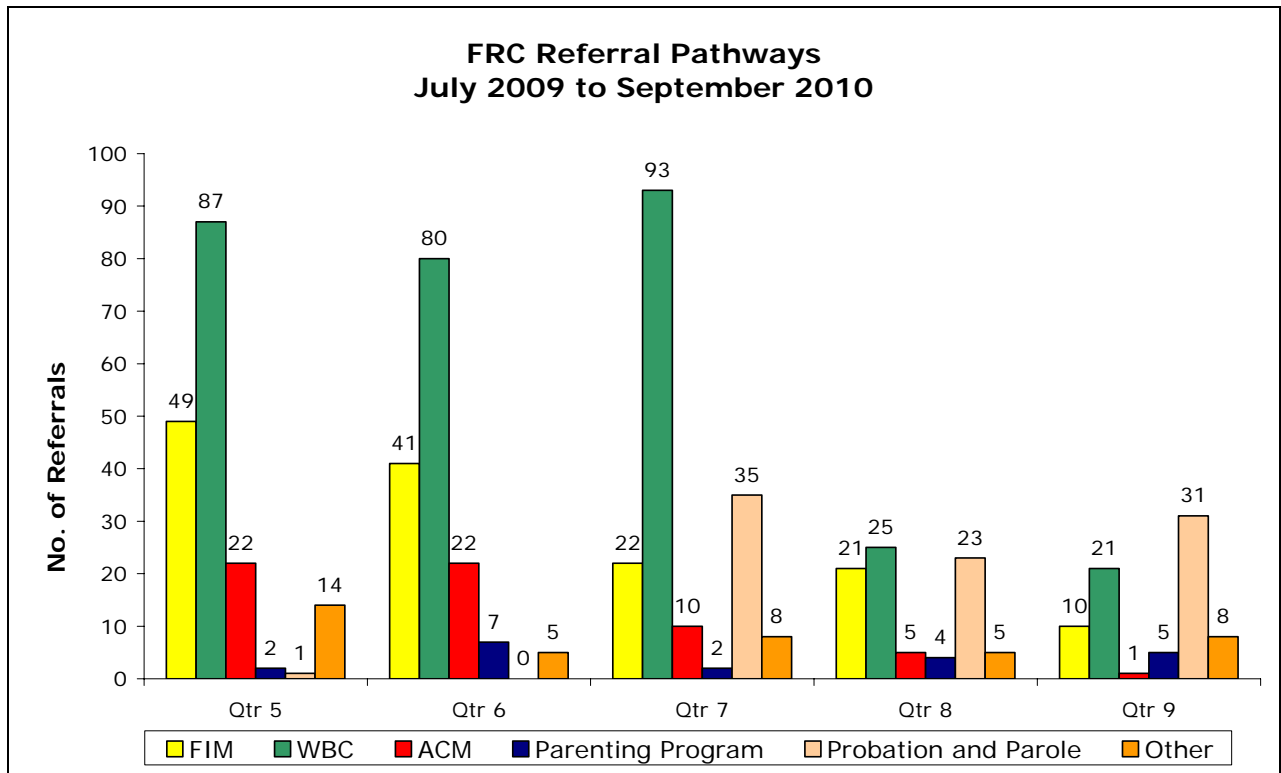
(Note: Counting rules stipulate that where multiple charges are received each charge is counted as an individual notification or each child's absence is counted as one notification for example if three children from the one family were absent, that is counted as three notifications).



Graph 8: Number of clients who have received notifications up until 30 September 2010 in comparison to population figures of adults (17 years and over) provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP Figures.

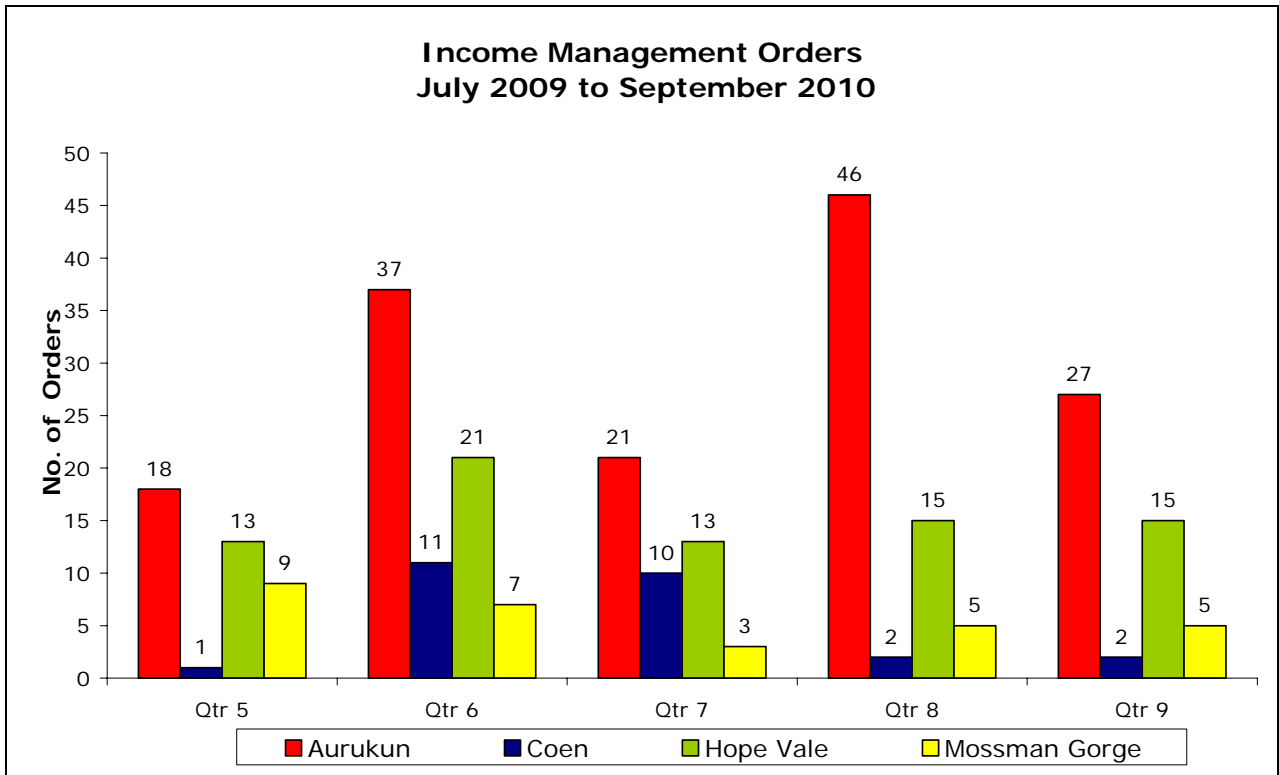
Referrals to service providers decreased from 83 in quarter eight to 76 in quarter nine. The Commission continued to refer clients to the jointly facilitated Ending Family Violence Program and

encouraged those already on Probation Orders to attend the program with 23 out of 31 clients (74 percent) successfully attending and completing the Ending Family Violence course in quarter nine.



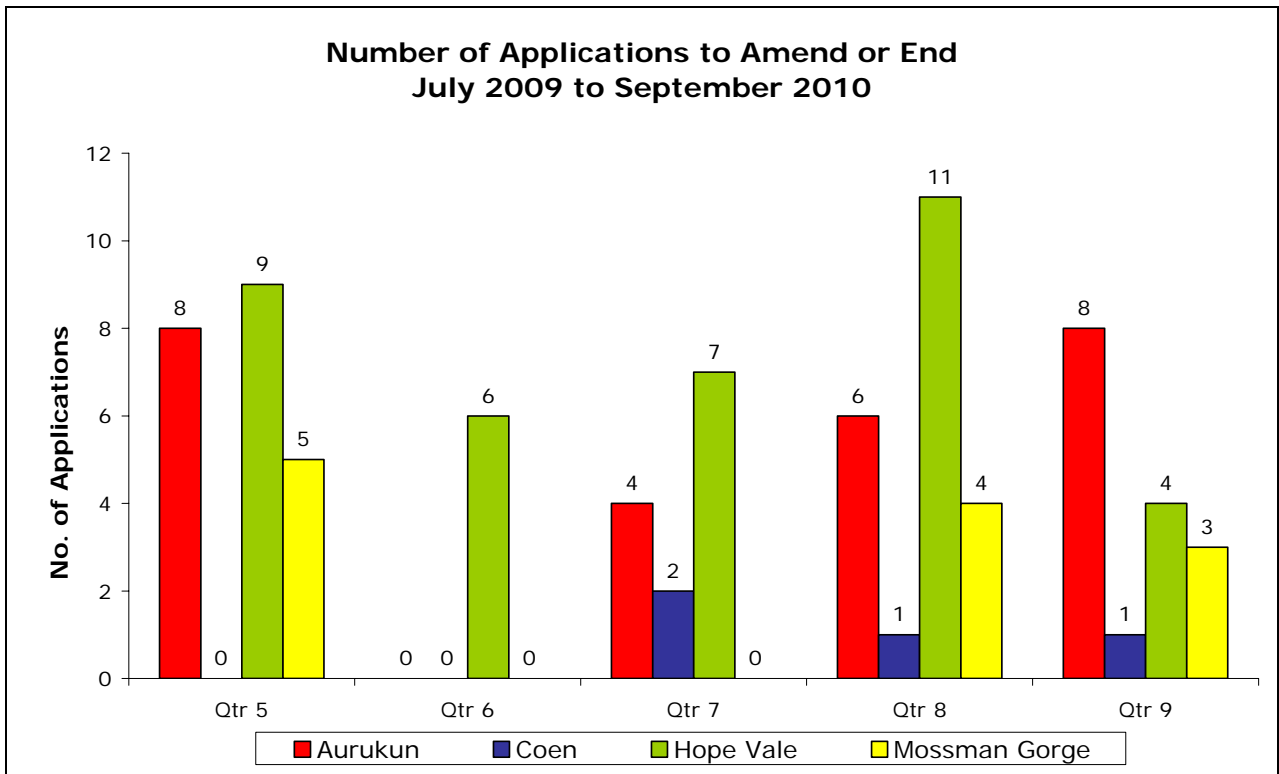
Graph 9: Referral Pathways 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010

CIM Orders decreased from 68 in quarter eight to 49 in quarter nine. Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge remained constant in the number of orders, whereas Aurukun decreased in the number of CIM orders made. As Commissioners deal with each client and situation individually, the decision to order Income Management is not an inevitable outcome of non-compliance 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.



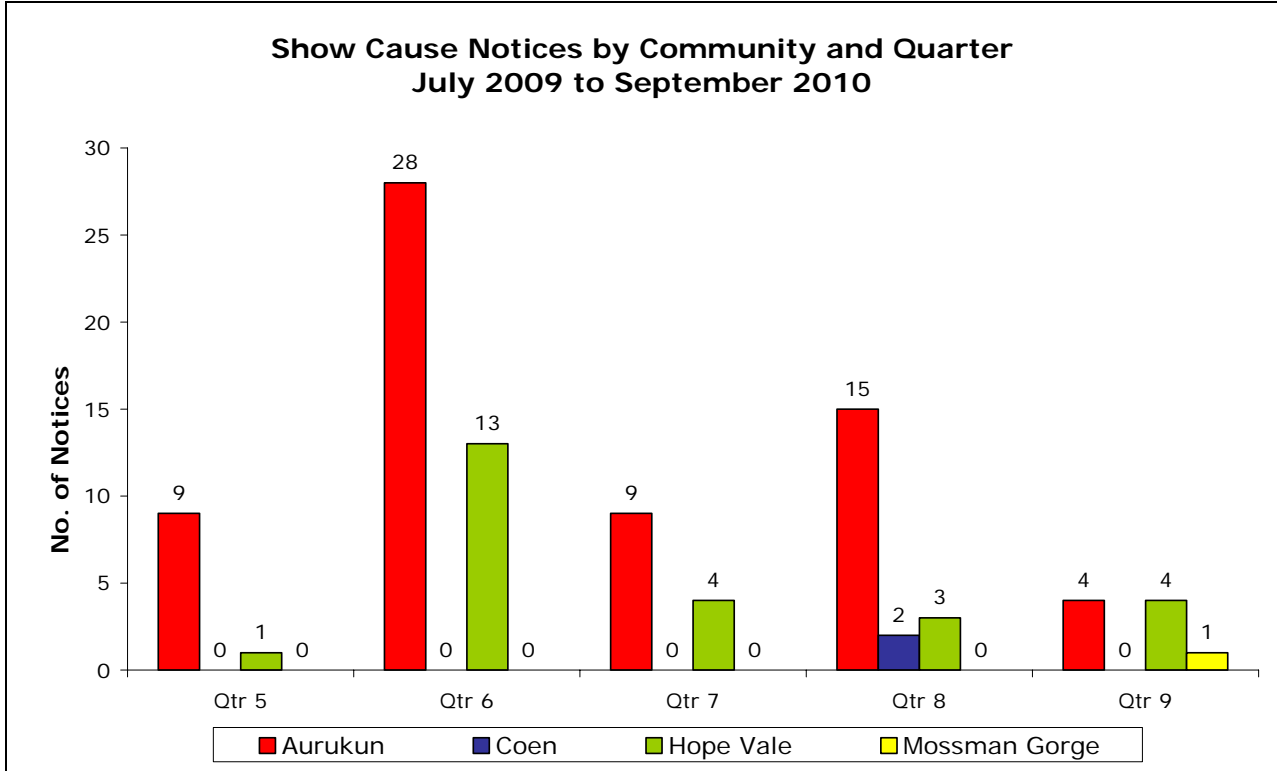
Graph 10: Conditional Income Management 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010.

Sixteen Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders were heard by Commissioners in quarter nine, a decrease from 22 in quarter eight. 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 as the CIM may have been ordered due to their non-attendance at two consecutive conferences.



Graph 11: Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2010

The Commission conducted nine Show Cause conferences in quarter nine, a decrease from 20 in quarter eight. The Commission is hopeful the recent introduction of Active Family Pathways and meetings with service providers will encourage enthusiasm and renewed vigour to engage clients to improve service provider attendance.



Graph 12: Show Cause Notices 1 July 2009 to 30 September 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 Commission staff and Local Commissioners continued their participation with agencies to raise awareness of and resolve issues affecting their respective communities including:

- Commissioners continued to work actively with school Principals and ACMs to develop strategies to encourage consistent school attendance.
- Commissioners referred clients to the Ending Family Violence Programs with six programs completed and 23 graduates in three of the four CYWR communities.
- Staffing issues at WBC began to be addressed toward the end of this quarter, however, gender and cultural diversity still remains an issue.
- The Jawun Group of Indigenous leaders from the Kimberley region visited the Commission in early September and met with Commissioners in Hope Vale and Coen.
- Community groups were formed such as the Yalbay Group in Mossman Gorge and Aurukun Women's Group to implement a cohesive approach to addressing community issues.
- The emphasis on training continued with Commission staff and Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners attending Mental Health First Aid training in Cairns.
- The Commission's new CRM database continues to enhance data reporting and case management capacity.
- A highlight for this quarter was an informal barbeque and team day attended by Commission staff, Commissioners and families.
- Community Engagement Guidelines were released for each of the FRC communities and subsequently uploaded on the Commission website.
- There continues to be a community focus on dry houses with 10 dry houses in Coen, 9 dry houses in Mossman Gorge and 4 dry houses in Hope Vale.
- Commissioner Woolla and the Registrar attended the Early Childhood Development Conference held in Darwin on 21-23 September to present on the Commission's work which was well received by the attendees. Commissioner Woolla also led a half day workshop and held round table discussions relating to the work of the Local Commissioners and how the roles had grown over the life of the Commission.

Challenges

- On the ground implementation of the AFP Case Coordination Framework and agency and service provider participation.
- Work required by service providers to deliver services that cater to families requiring support with children that exhibit behavioural and mental health issues that may contribute to poor school attendance.
- Incidences of fighting, stolen vehicles and damage to property in Aurukun.
- On-going delays in the creation of leadership body to replace CRAC is contributing to a loss of leadership and direction in Coen.
- Addressing social issues such as inhalants in Aurukun, Commissioners met with "Makin Tracks" representatives and other health professionals to gain knowledge and incorporate in Commission recommendations for personal responsibility actions.

Future Direction

- Increased conference sittings focusing on school attendance notifications to combat the decline in school attendance. Additional administrative staff are being engaged to support this increase in workload.
- Induction and training of new Local Commissioners has commenced and will continue into the next quarter.
- Amendments to the Act are due to be passed in the Queensland Parliament in quarter ten. This will require changes to Commission processes and additional training to Local Commissioners and Local Coordinators.
- The Commission received the final draft of the independent review of the Commission's implementation conducted by KPMG. The Commission acknowledges the recommendations and is working to implement the relevant recommendations as soon as the review is released publicly. A Lead Evaluator will be appointed by trial partners to prepare an outcomes report based on a series of progress reviews of discrete trial components.
- The Commission's 2009-10 Annual Report is currently before the Queensland Parliament and is expected to be tabled in quarter ten.

7. Appendices

APPENDIX A



SITTING CALENDAR – Version 3a
 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION
 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010



WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon/Tues	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	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 Mar	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
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			24 & 25 'Closing the Gap' Canberra

SITTING CALENDAR – Version 3a
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION
1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon/Tues	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
28 JUNE	DRG					All week
5 JULY	DRG					NAIDOC
12 JULY	DRG			13, 14	Mon-12	14 Hearing Brisbane 15
19 JULY	DRG					21 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	JB					16 Board Meeting 17 18 19 20
23 AUGUST	JB			24, 25	26	23, 27
30 AUGUST	JB	30	31, 1, 2			3
6 SEPTEMBER	JB			7, 8	9, 10	6
13 SEPTEMBER	JB	13	14, 15, 16			17
20 SEPTEMBER	JB					All week
27 SEPTEMBER	JB					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 Board Meeting 22
25 OCTOBER	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 29
1 NOVEMBER	DRG		2, 3, 4			All week
8 NOVEMBER	DRG		9, 10, 11	9, 10	11	8, 12 Social Dev Com
15 NOVEMBER	DRG	15	16, 17, 18			19
22 NOVEMBER	DRG		23, 24, 25	23, 24	25	22 Board Meeting 26
29 NOVEMBER	DRG		30, 1, 2			29 Nov, 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

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 Cape York Partnerships 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.

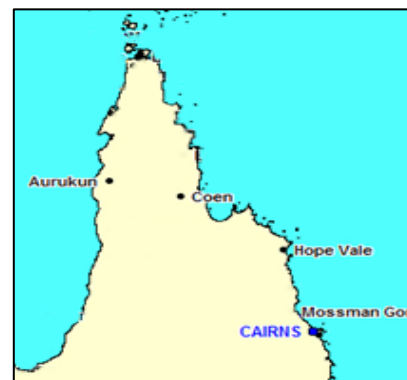
The Cape York Welfare Reform communities are:

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 adult population of 793 people as at 30 June 2009⁶.

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 adult population of about 192 people at 30 June 2009⁷.



Hope Vale

Hope Vale is situated on the Cape York Peninsula and is 46 kilometres northwest of Cooktown. The estimated resident adult population of Hope Vale was about 582 people at 30 June 2009⁸.

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 adult population of about 99 people at 30 June 2009⁹.

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 predetermined 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, Disability Support Pension and ABSTUDY. 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,

⁶ Adults 17 and over provided from ABS preliminary 30 June 2009 ERP figures.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid

- 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:

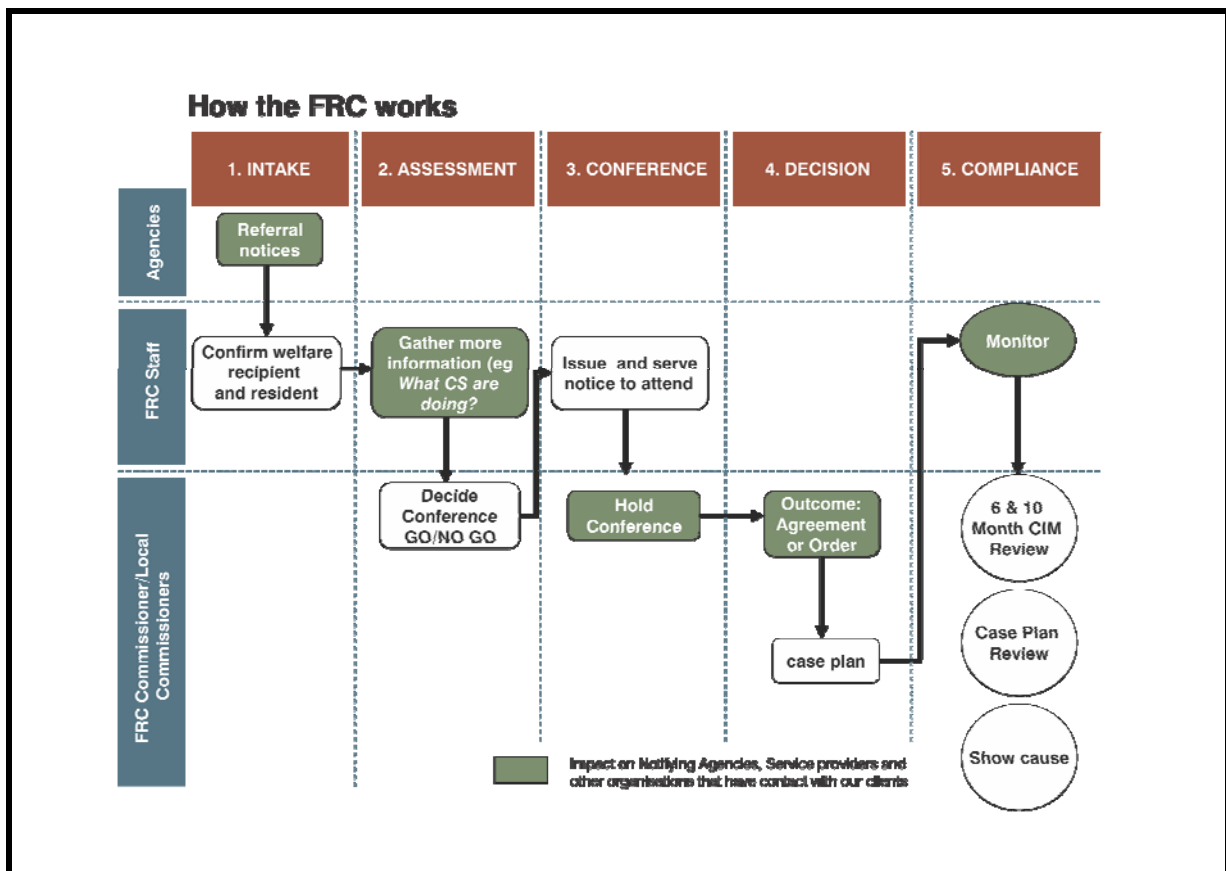


Table 6: Commission processes