



OUR PERFORMANCE — REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Small Steps

I am a visitor to community in my role as a Local Coordinator, relieving my counterpart. I see a lady who is raking up her garden, there are children frolicking in the dry leaves making her job twice as hard. She is lovingly cursing the children and 'gammon' chasing them away. I approach the gate and she informs me that the family has been advised to stay at home due to 'Swine Flu'. "Don't come too close I don't want to make you sick".

This lady is a client that was called to the Commission because her children were not regularly attending school. In the past there was drinking and some violence in the home and Child Safety Services would often call around. I ask if we can yarn about the Commission. The response is swift and enthusiastic;

"I went to the Commission and my partner came too. The Local Commissioners used strong words and the message was clear we must send our kids to school. I know now that I have to tell the school if my kids are not going. We agreed to go to the Wellbeing Centre and from talking to them everything is settling down. They told us that kids see everything and when they see violence this is no good. We agreed to go to FIM and they told us about putting money away for my kids school things (Student Education Trusts) and I am very thankful for that. The Commission gave me a good idea to spend money wisely and look after our kids if not I will get CIMed. I have learnt to budget through FIM and there are big changes for us. I see kids enjoying themselves and they are fed. It is better with no canteen it stopped me drinking and my defacto has stopped drinking. My defacto was violent but he has changed and now we are happy". The children move closer to where we are talking, there are three of them trying to cram into a pram that is sitting in yard. The lady gestures to the kids to go inside as she says, "Now days, the kids drive me nuts when they're not at school"

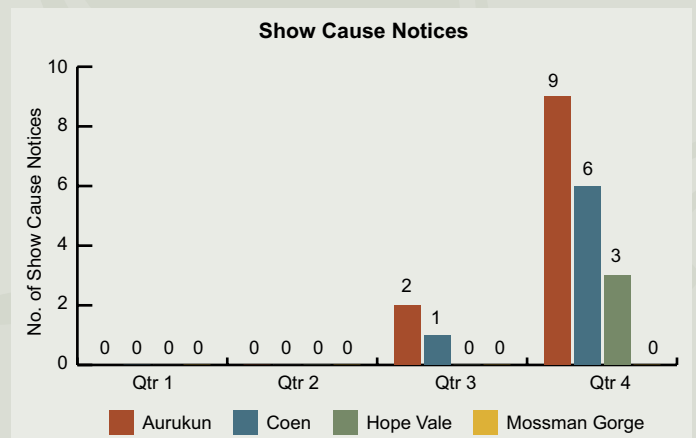
Show Cause Notices

The Commission has been limited in the ability to instigate Show Cause notice orders as the service providers have not been operating or have needed time to bring staff on line. This was particularly so during 2008. To ensure clients are afforded natural justice, Show Case notice investigations have been delayed awaiting improved capacity of service providers. Assessments of whether a Show Cause notice should be issued to a client are based on service provider's monthly progress reports, other referrals and personal responsibility compliance, local knowledge and client explanations to the Commissioners.

Within the Commission, the delay in engaging a dedicated Principal Case Manager has further impacted on the review of client Case Plans and the investigation of Show Causes.

This year, 21 Show Cause hearings have been completed in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale. These matters resulted in:

- Four clients' previous agreements being revoked and new agreement entered into
- Four clients received conditional income management orders (at a rate of 75% of Centrelink income for a period of 12 months) being made as the client failed to attend
- Five clients' Family Responsibility Agreement Case Plans were re-enforced
- One client's Show Cause Notice was dismissed
- Seven clients' conferences are still pending as they have been adjourned to July 2009.



Graph 14: Show Cause Notices July 2008 to 30 June 2009