

CLIENT PROFILE



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Sticking Together

When he first started coming to community we thought if we gave him a hard time and told him he was not welcome, he would go away and never come back. Most of them do. They fly in and fly out, tell us they are going to fix everything, that they have the best idea ever and then they stop coming. He didn't tell us he was going to fix anything. He told us we had to fix it ourselves with help from the Commissioners and the service providers.

We now know he is a man of his word and he has stuck by us. Commissioner Glasgow works with us to fix the problems, and he comes to us every fortnight. When he finds something not working he tries to get it sorted. He is not afraid of the Government or the service providers, and he is not afraid of the clients. I have heard the stories. He has been threatened by people with weapons, people trying to punch him and the dirty mouths throwing words at him, but he keeps coming back.

I first met him when my children did not go to school. They were finding school hard. They would get bored and they were also teased. I have boys and girls, big kids old enough for boarding school and little kids in primary school. Commissioner Glasgow sat with the Commissioners and pulled out papers about my children and school attendance and court appearances. With his big, strong voice he said my children were running around the community and missing out on school because of my drinking. Then he changed to a soft voice and asked if there were reasons why. The Local Commissioners helped me to explain the reasons. My partner and I don't look after the children when we drink, and are sometimes violent around them.

We had a visit from Child Safety Services because our children had bad teeth. This

came up at my next conference with the Commissioners. They all growled at me and said looking after teeth was very important. I went to the clinic and found out what to do. For the next few years it was back and forth with the Commission, the school, Transition Support Services and for my court appearances for grog. Just when I got one child attending school, another would drop out or refuse to attend. The little ones got bigger and thought they could do the same as the big ones and would disobey me. I kept drinking and bringing grog into the community. I got to know Commissioner Glasgow over this time. He has boys and girls, and he told me lots of stories about getting his kids to school. Even a man as powerful as him had some hard times with his children. I know sometimes he was disappointed in me, like the day I turned up really drunk to conference, but he always showed his concern and listened. He is like the Local Commissioners now. He is a wise man, but not a know it all.

I decided I was better when I did not have a man in the house, so I am single now. I have a Student Education Trusts account and my big boy is in boarding school in Townsville. My little ones are attending school and their attendance is around 90 percent when it was 20 percent in past years. I have asked to come off the BasicsCard because I am now a good parent. I thank Commissioner Glasgow and the Local Commissioners because they have stuck by me, and now I will stick by them and make sure my promises are kept. More people now know that the Commissioners are here to help the people. I heard on the news the Government think they are doing a good job because they are going to extend and give them more money. I would like to see other Government agencies and referral agencies work alongside the people in the community the way the FRC does.