

CLIENT PROFILE



MY STORY

A client of the FRC has shared her recent experience of being on the BasicsCard and how it has helped her and her family to prioritise school attendance.

I was first called to meet with the Commissioners in 2014. That seems like a long time ago now. I have two boys attending primary school. Because their attendance at school was not good I was placed on the BasicsCard in both 2016 and 2017. It wasn't really changing my behaviour. I did not feel I could control my boys, and I could not see why their attendance at school was so important – to me anyway. Eventually I began attending conference and speaking with the Local Commissioners. That was towards the end of 2018. It was my discussions with the Commissioners that started to make me think about schooling and whether I wanted my boys to have opportunities that I had never had. I started to think that maybe I was wrong.

So, my journey with the BasicsCard really commenced to change my life in early 2018. When I had not attended several conferences, I was placed on another Conditional Income Management order at 60 percent. The Commissioners then continued to meet with me and kept on saying my boys should be attending school regularly; that only attending school now and then would not benefit them for their future in any way, and boarding schools did not like to accept children unless their attendance was regular. They gave me some options for seeking additional support to get my boys to school.

In Term 1 of 2019, both of my boys only attended school less than half of the time. Once again my Conditional Income Management order was renewed. This has not been an easy journey for me, but with the encouragement and support of the Local Commissioners, and also the Local Coordinator, both the boys started to attend school more regularly. The Commissioners showed me on a pie chart that my children had improved their attendance to above 75 percent. For the first time I was seeing more green for attending school than red for not attending. My eldest boy even brought home awards for achieving 100 per cent school attendance for a number of weeks in Term 2. I was surprised and felt good that this improvement was not only acknowledged, but was celebrated. The Commissioners and school were happy for me, and happy for my boys. That made me happy as well.

My eldest son has represented the school at a number of athletics carnivals. He is a very good runner and enjoys the competition of carnivals. He first ran in the interschool carnival, and then because he has a natural talent, he was selected for the district finals. I am proud to say that he has now won a spot to compete at the State athletics carnival in Brisbane. A condition of entry in the State athletics carnival is good school attendance, and my son would not have achieved this great opportunity had he been excluded because of his attendance record.

I am happy my children are attending school more regularly, and they appear happier too. It is not so hard to go to school when there has not been a big gap in-between and you feel you can keep up with the rest of the students. I have also told the Commissioners that the BasicsCard has helped me to keep a good supply of food in the cupboard. This is important, especially for my son who is competing in carnivals. He is hungry all the time. I feel I owe the Commissioners so much for continuing to support me since 2014, and not walking away from my family. I feel proud to say that as a family we are winners now.