

# Family Responsibilities Commission

*Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and  
The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

## Quarterly Report

**No. 19**

**January 2013 to March 2013**



*Report prepared by the Family Responsibilities Commission under the leadership of  
Commissioner David Glasgow*

## Executive Summary

During quarter 19, 686 agency notices were received by the Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) which were within jurisdiction, a decrease of 179 from last quarter. There were 394 conferences held for the same period, representing a decrease of 23 from last quarter. Eight Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) were entered into, 35 orders were made to attend community support services and 58 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were issued. When compared to last quarter this represents a decrease of 1 FRA, an increase of 2 orders to attend community support services and a decrease of 29 orders for CIM.

Since the commencement of the Commission, 68 Voluntary Income Management (VIM) agreements have been processed. Community members continue to express their desire to enter into VIM agreements in order to assist with budgeting and ensure funds remain available for purchases.

The Commission case managed 167 clients during the quarter. The Commissioners made 65 referrals relating to 38 clients, a decrease of 4 referrals from last quarter. Further activity during the quarter consisted of 24 Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders received, an increase of 10 from the previous quarter. No Show Cause conferences were held during quarter 19.

The Commission commenced the facilitation and delivery of the Ending Family Violence (EFV) program in the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) communities in March 2013. The Commission acknowledges the provision of funding for the delivery of the program to December 2013 from Department of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs (DATSIMA) and the assistance provided by Probation and Parole, Department of Community Safety in training staff in the facilitation of the program. The Commission commenced programs in Aurukun and Hope Vale in quarter 19 with Coen and Mossman Gorge scheduled in the coming months. The Commission will continue to assist clients to address issues regarding violence, addiction and developing responsible behaviour through conferencing, the EFV program and case plan referrals.

The Commissioners continue to actively support the enrolment and school attendance of secondary students. Working alongside Transition Support Services, the Commissioners assist parents and students to maintain attendance at boarding school and to attend secondary education when offered in the community. Western Cape College Aurukun Campus commenced in Aurukun this quarter, offering flexible learning to those students disengaged from schooling and not meeting boarding school criteria. The Aurukun Campus is viewed as a transitional educational arrangement to provide students with the attributes and skills necessary for boarding school enrolment or attendance at Western Cape College Weipa Campus.

The independent evaluation of the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) trial was released on 28 March 2013 by the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin MP, on behalf of the CYWR partners. The evaluation reports progress in behavioural changes including school attendance and social responsibility allowing a foundation to be set toward rebuilding social norms in the communities. The Commissioners were identified as a successful feature of the trial as they have assisted to rebuild Indigenous authority, tackle antisocial behaviour and build leadership through listening, guiding and supporting community members. The evaluation proposes that the progress to date in fundamental behavioural shifts, if sustained and built upon, will yield significant longer term results. The Commission is encouraged by the results of the evaluation and recent announcements supporting further consideration of future CYWR initiatives from the Australian and Queensland Governments.

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### **Abbreviations**

CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DATSIMA	Department of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment
EFV	Ending Family Violence
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
VIM	Voluntary Income Management

### **Also:**

Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)  
*Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the Act)  
Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry)  
Family Responsibilities Board (the Board)

# Family Responsibilities Commission Cape York Welfare Reforms

Report to 31 March 2013.

## 1. Activities and Trends

### Notices

In quarter 19 the Commission received **1,036 agency notices**<sup>1</sup>. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 686 notices (66 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 350 notices (34 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Within jurisdiction notices comprised of:

226	Magistrates Court notices
363	School Attendance notices
44	Child Safety and Welfare notices
53	Housing Tenancy notices

Of the 350 notices not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 307 Magistrates Court notices, 36 School Attendance notices, 1 Child Safety and Welfare notice and 6 Housing Tenancy notices.

Details of notices within jurisdiction for each community are set out below:

- **Aurukun's 304** notices constitute **44.3 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction across the four CYWR trial communities:

71	Magistrates Court notices
212	School Attendance notices
12	Child Safety and Welfare notices
9	Housing Tenancy notices

Fifteen Magistrates Court notices and 16 School Attendance notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Coen's 63** notices constitute **9.2 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

6	Magistrates Court notices
20	School Attendance notices
4	Child Safety and Welfare notices
33	Housing Tenancy notices

Ten School Attendance notices and 5 Housing Tenancy notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> Counting rules are that an agency notice is counted on the basis of number of 'clients' on the notice. For example a child safety and welfare notice relating to two parents is counted as two notices.

- **Hope Vale's 267** notices constitute **38.9 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

112	Magistrates Court notices
123	School Attendance notices
25	Child Safety and Welfare notices
7	Housing Tenancy notices

Twenty-five Magistrates Court notices, 10 School Attendance notices and 1 Child Safety and Welfare notice were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Mossman Gorge's 52** notices constitute **7.6 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

37	Magistrates Court notices
8	School Attendance notices
3	Child Safety and Welfare notices
4	Housing Tenancy notices

Two hundred and sixty-seven Magistrates Court notices and 1 Housing Tenancy notice were processed as not within jurisdiction.

Since its commencement the Commission has received 13,082 agency notices within its jurisdiction. Total notices decreased from 1,223 in quarter 18 to 1,036 in quarter 19. Of those notices in jurisdiction, Magistrates Court, School Attendance and Child Safety notices decreased, whilst Housing Tenancy notices increased.

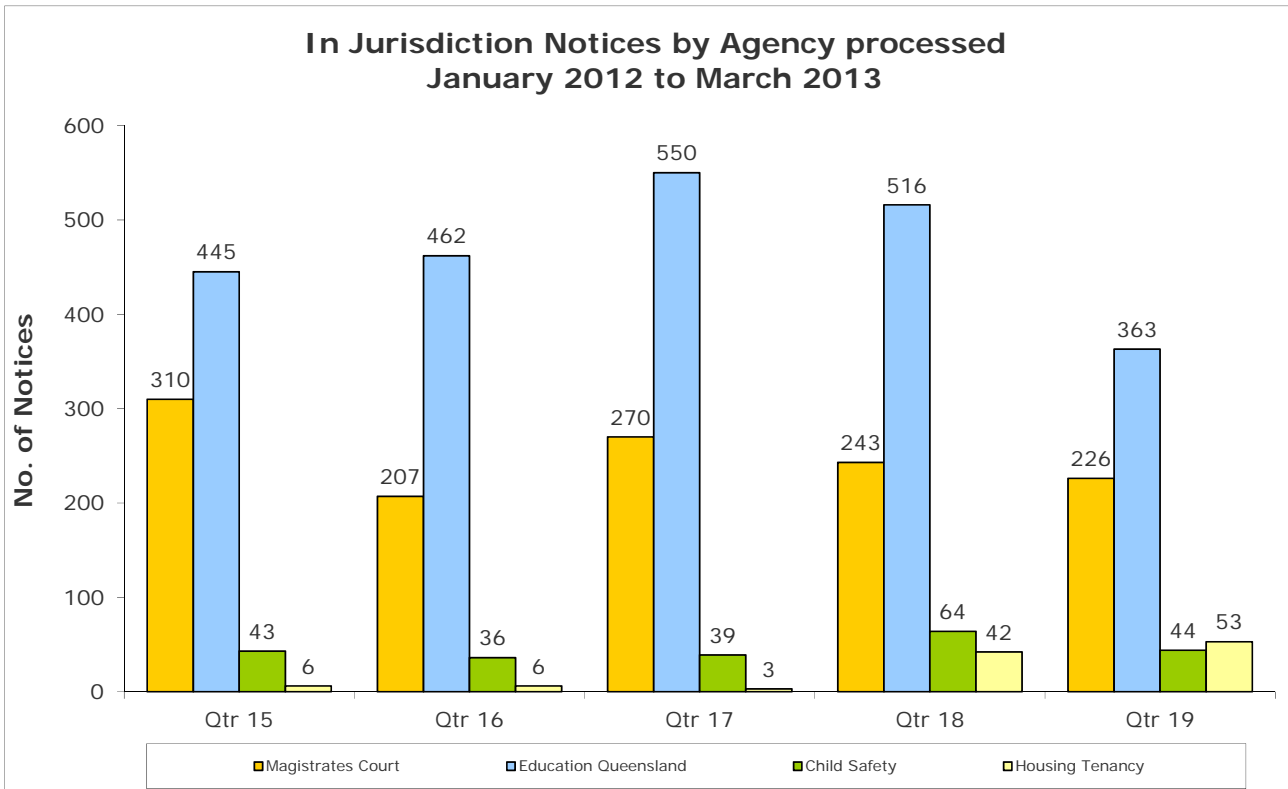
Magistrates Court notices decreased this quarter to 226 from the 243 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun decreased by 54 notices, Coen decreased by 2 notices and Mossman Gorge decreased by 15 notices. Hope Vale increased by 54 notices.

School Attendance notices decreased from 516 in quarter 18 to 363 in quarter 19. Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge communities experienced a decrease in notices for the quarter of 68, 7, 58 and 10 notices respectively.

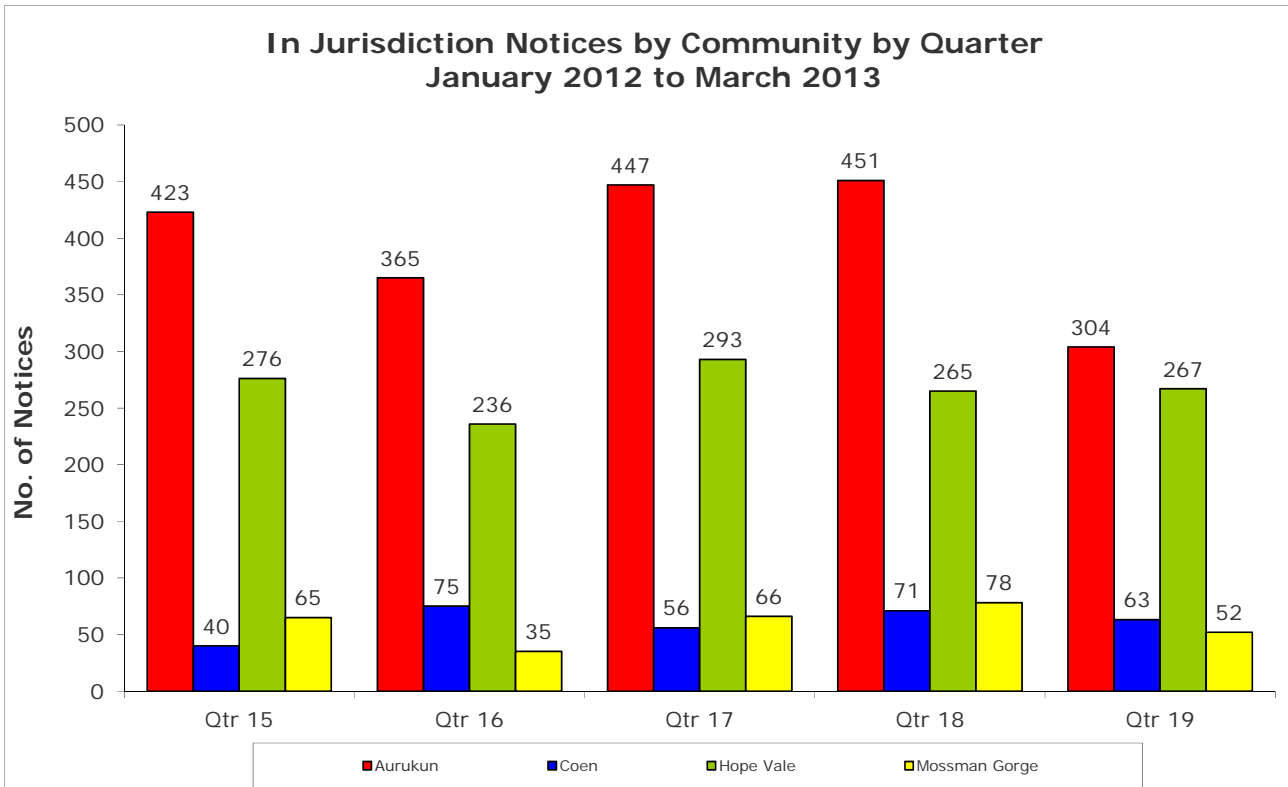
Child Safety and Welfare notices decreased from 64 in quarter 18 to 44 in quarter 19. Aurukun and Coen decreased by 14 notices and 6 notices respectively whilst Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge remained stable for the quarter.

Housing Tenancy notices increased to 53 from the 42 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun and Mossman Gorge notices decreased by 11 and 1 respectively, whilst Coen and Hope Vale notices increased by 17 and 6 respectively.

The Commission receives school attendance data from the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). The release of relevant data relating to quarter 19 was not available at the time of writing this report, however, the available data provided by DETE is published on the Commission's web page at <http://www.frcq.org.au> when available.

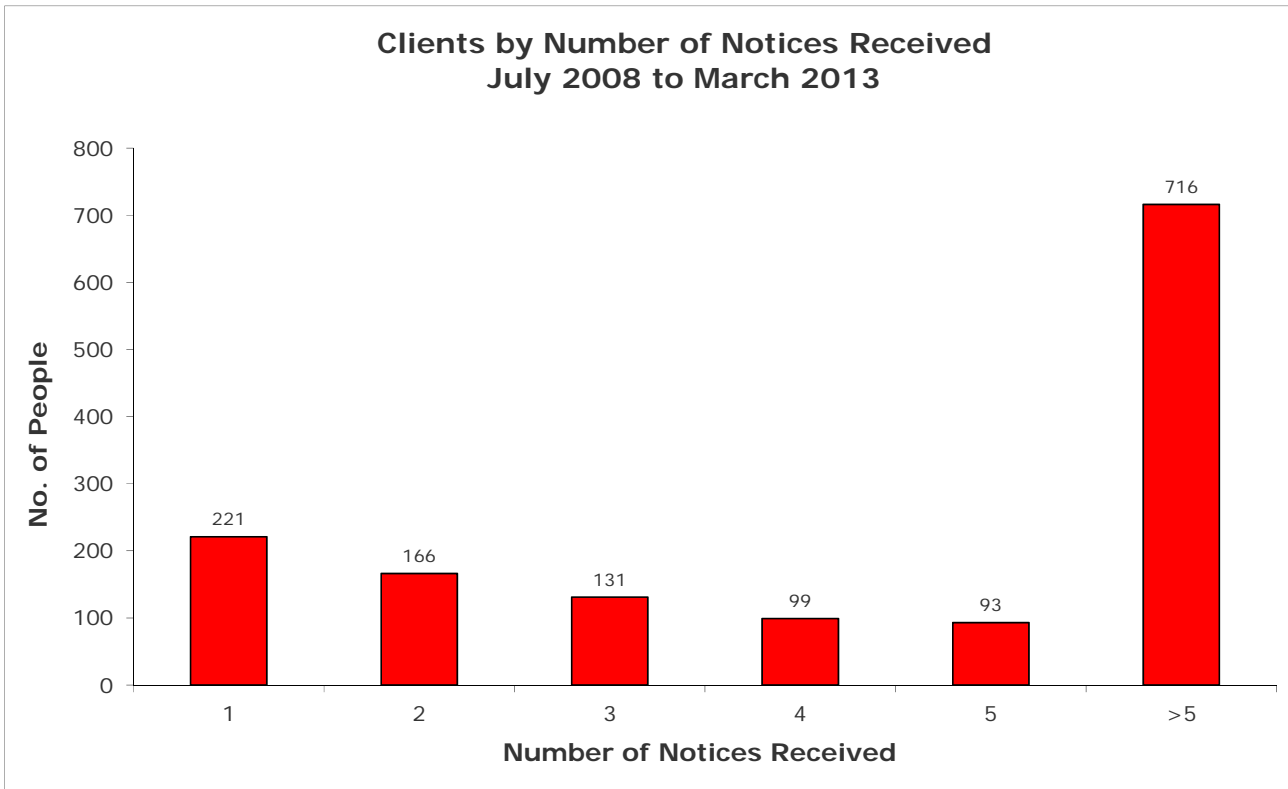


**Graph 1:** In jurisdiction notices by type and quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013.



**Graph 2:** In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013.

Since commencement in July 2008, 84.5 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 50.2 percent of clients receiving more than five notices. Frequently this illustrates multiple child school absences for the one family or multiple Magistrates Court notices relating to one incident. Conversely, 15.5 percent of clients have received only one notice.



**Graph 3:** FRC clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2013.

**(Note:** Counting rules stipulate that where multiple charges are received each charge is counted as an individual notice or each child’s absence is counted as one notice – i.e. if three children from the one family were absent, that was counted as three notices).

**Conferences**

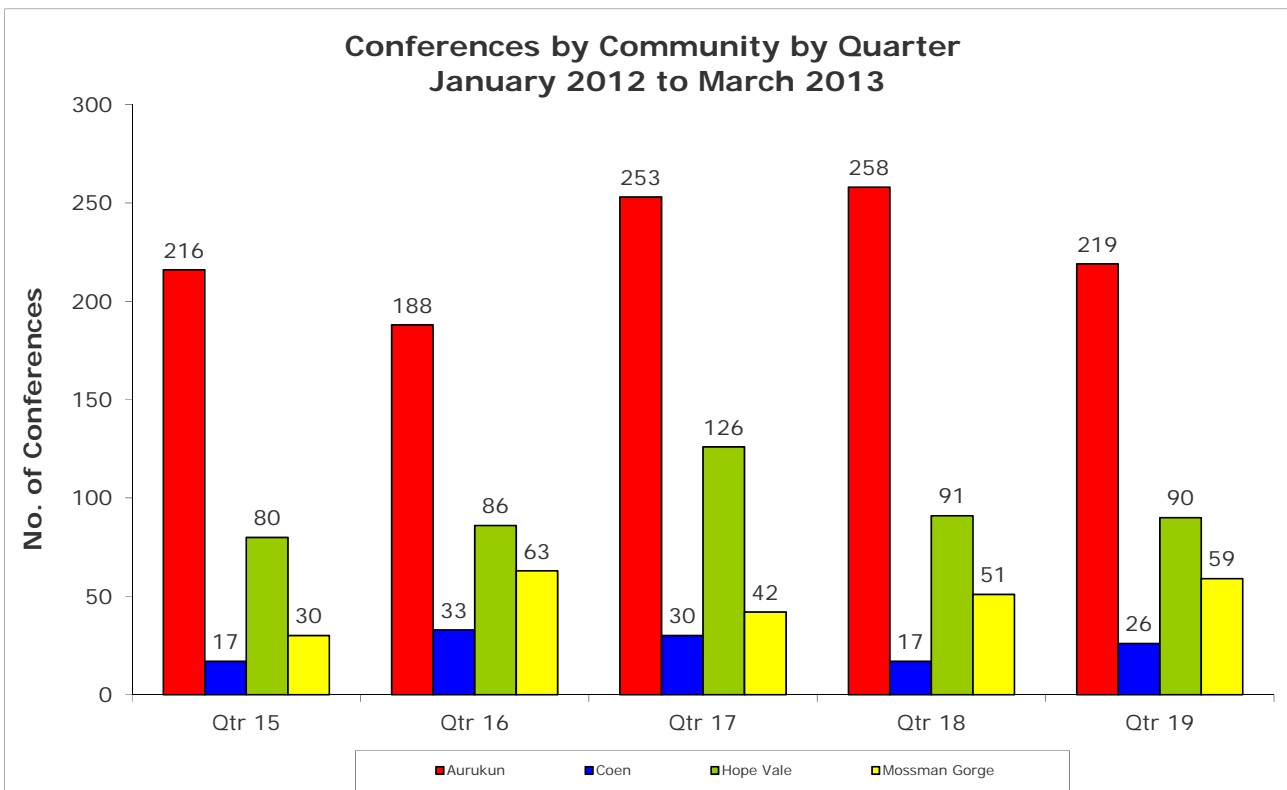
Three hundred and ninety four conferences<sup>2</sup> were held across the four communities in quarter 19 resulting in 8 FRA’s being entered into, 35 orders made to attend community support services and 58 CIM orders as well as no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Twenty-nine new clients were conferenced during the quarter. Details of conferencing activity in each community for quarter 19 are as follows:

- 219 conferences were held in Aurukun
- 26 conferences were held in Coen
- 90 conferences were held in Hope Vale
- 59 conferences were held in Mossman Gorge.

Conferences decreased from 417 in quarter 18 to 394 in quarter 19.

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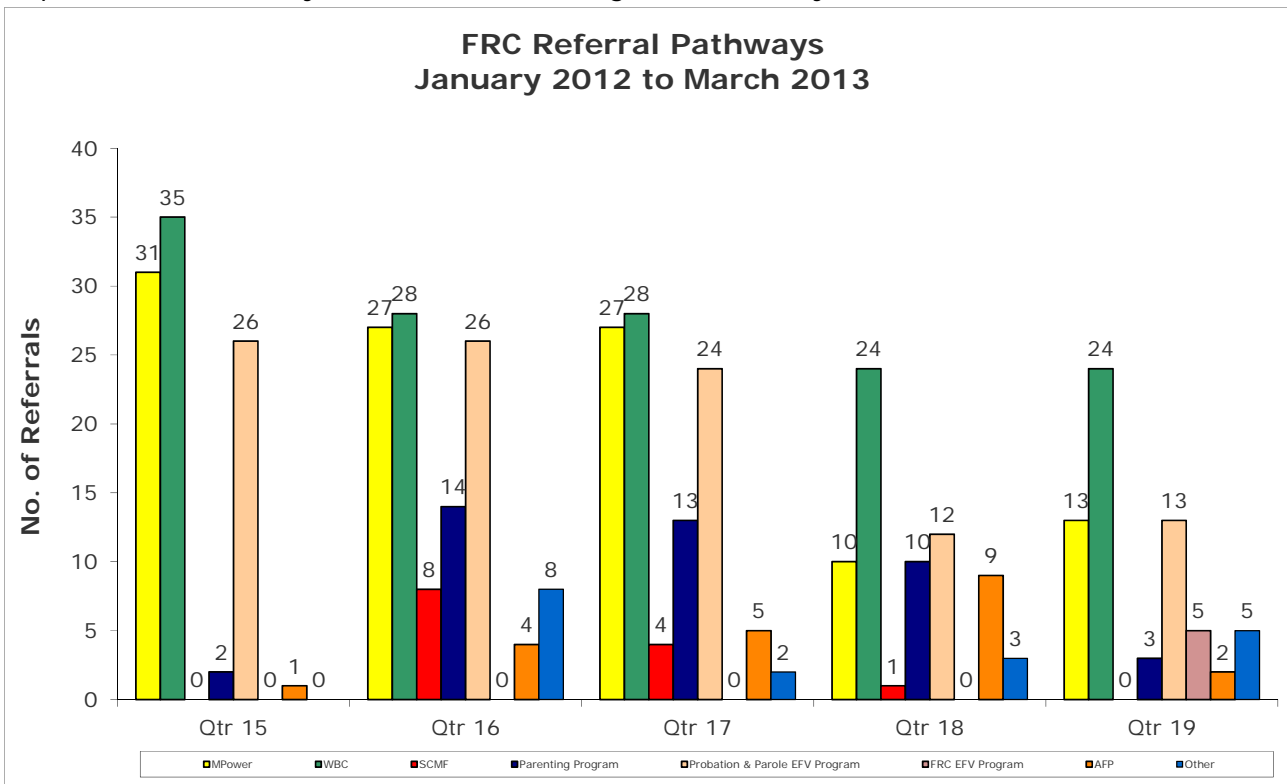
<sup>2</sup> The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.



**Graph 4:** Conferences by community and quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013.

### Referrals

Referrals to service providers decreased from 69 in quarter 18 to 65 in quarter 19, relating to 38 clients. Since commencement the Commission has referred 732 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 51.1 percent of clients on 12 month service referral plans. Referrals in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun increased by 7; Coen decreased by 3; Hope Vale increased by 3; and Mossman Gorge decreased by 11.



**Graph 5:** Referral Pathways by Referral Type and Quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> EFVP referrals converted to FRC from Probation and Parole on 1 March 2013.

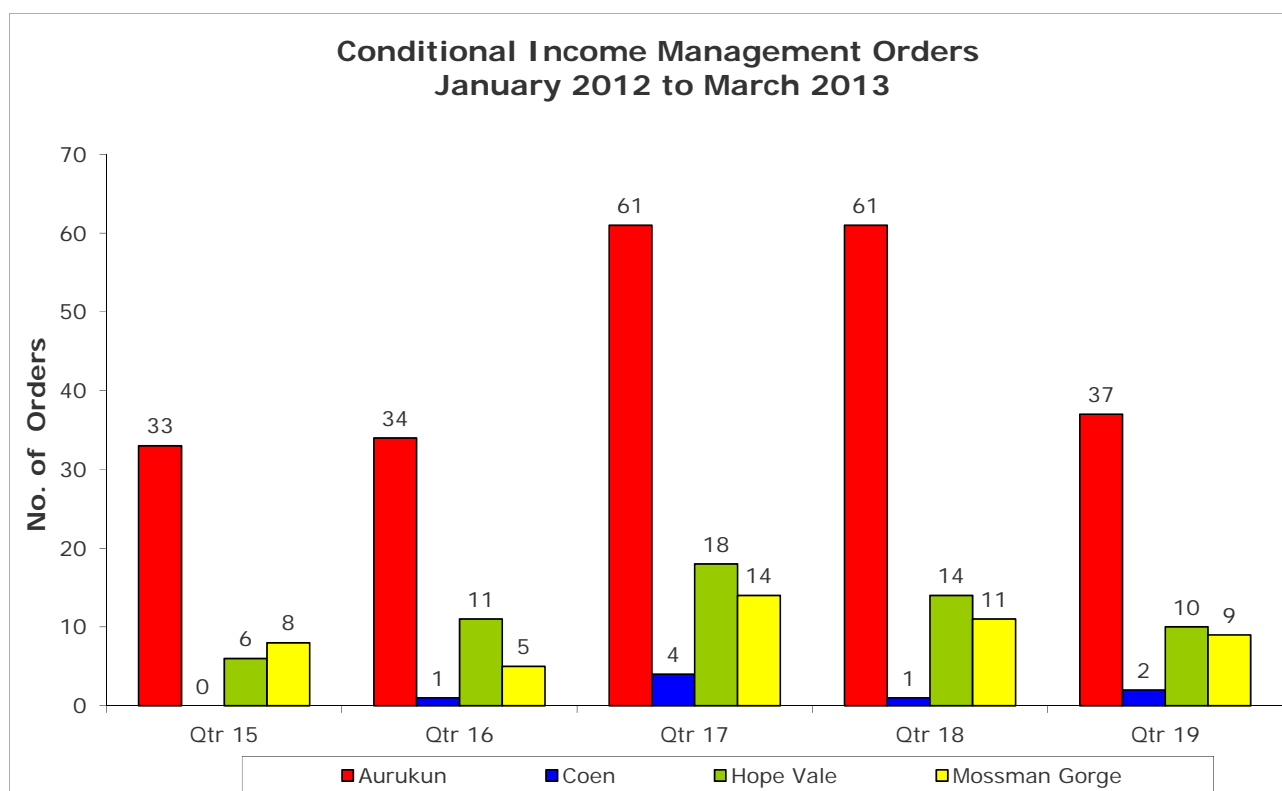


## Conditional Income Management

Fifty-eight CIM orders were made in quarter 19, a decrease of 29 from quarter 18. Since the commencement of the Commission 1,004 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 539 clients. During the quarter a decrease was experienced in three out of the four communities with Coen increasing by 1 CIM order. Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge decreased by 24, 4 and 2 CIM orders respectively.

As at 31 March 2013, 37.6 percent of the Commission's clients have been subject to a CIM order over the past four and three-quarter years. As at 31 March 2013 there were 228 clients subject to a CIM order which equates to 15.9 percent of clients and 13.7 percent of the CYWR trial population<sup>4</sup> on a CIM order at a point in time. Commissioners continue to negotiate with clients to achieve desirable outcomes or to demonstrate motivation and commitment to make appropriate life choices. Demonstrated positive steps toward taking responsibility provide the Commissioners with sufficient reason to consider revoking CIM orders when requested by the client.

Since the commencement of the Commission in 2008, 68 VIM agreements have been processed relating to 58 clients. Those clients that request a VIM agreement use income management as a savings and budget tool, often for a specified period and to deter family members from accessing their income.



**Graph 6:** Conditional Income Management orders by Community and Quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013.

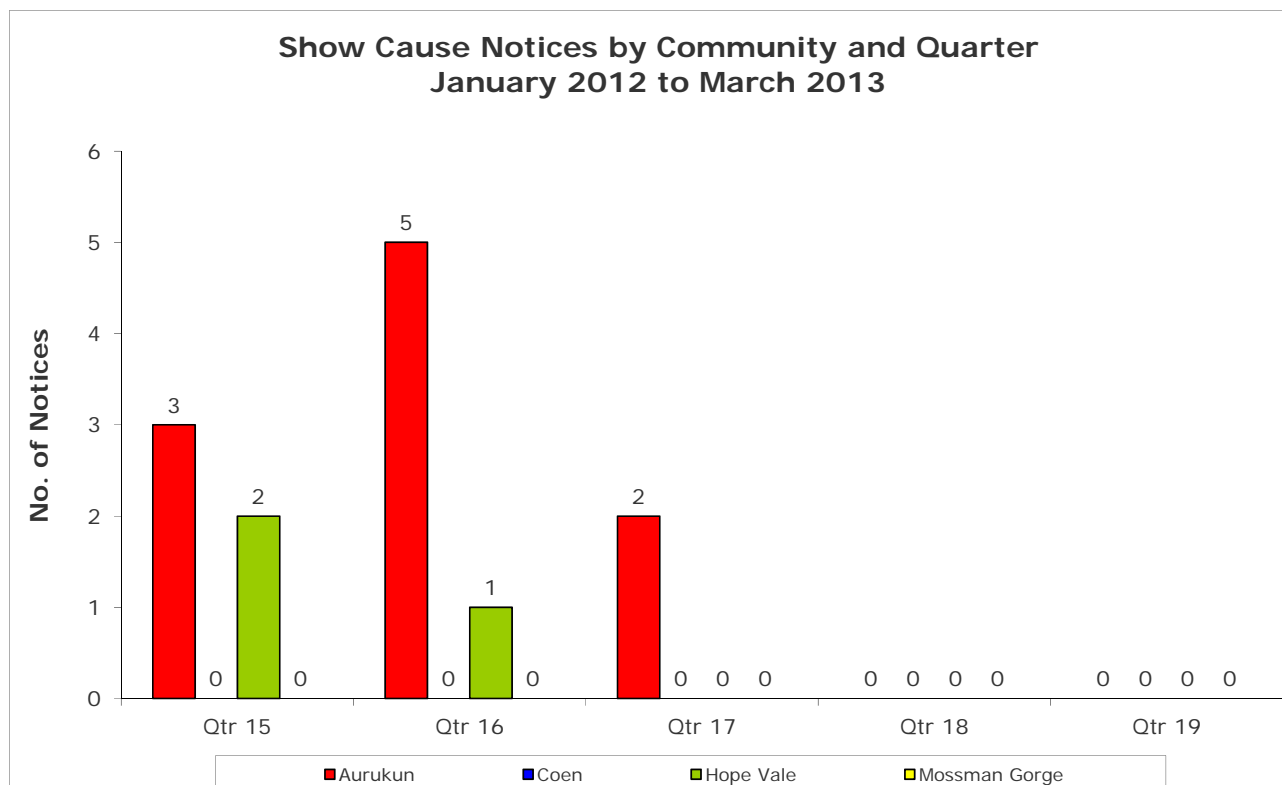
## Case Management

As at 31 March 2013, 167 clients were being case managed, a decrease from 182 in quarter 18. Since the last quarter the number of clients being case managed in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge has decreased by 5, 2, 4 and 4 respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Total ABS Estimated Resident Population as at 30 June 2010 for adults aged 17 years and over in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge is 1,669 as supplied by the Office of Economic Statistical Research.

## Show Cause Notices

During quarter 19, no Show Cause hearings were held.



**Graph 7:** Show Cause Notices by community and quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013.

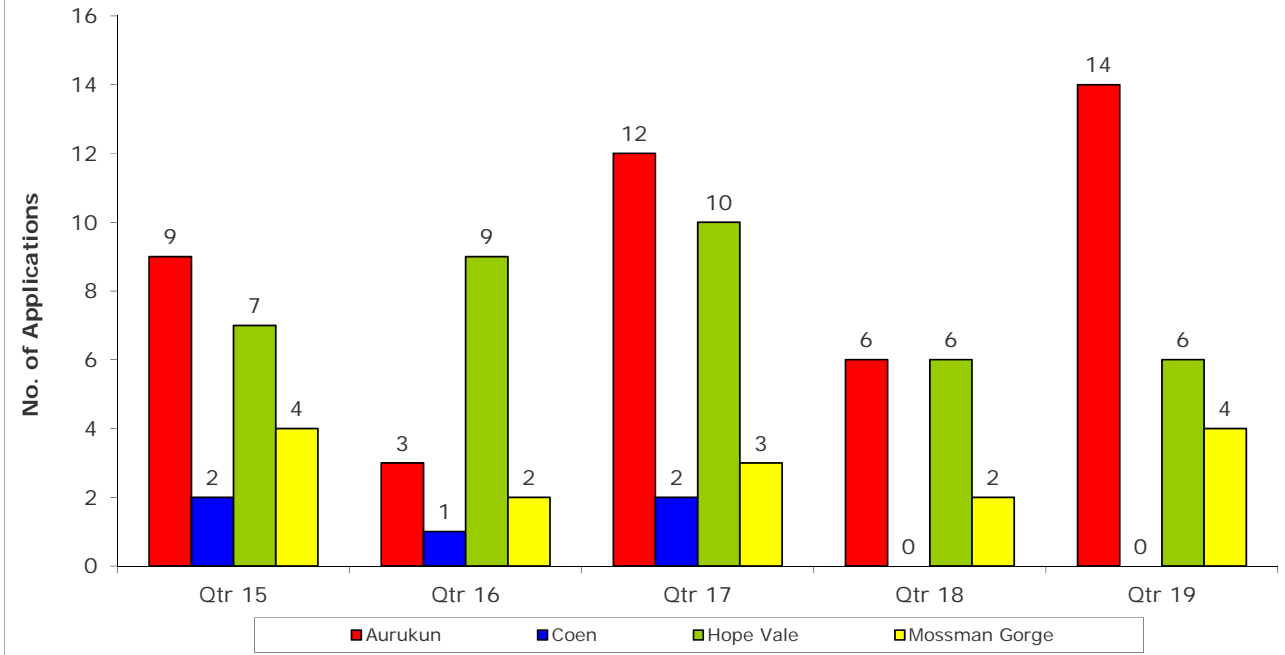
## Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Twenty-four Applications to Amend or End a Family Responsibilities Agreement or Order were received in quarter 19, an increase of 10 from quarter 18. Outcomes of the 24 applications received are as follows:

- 12 Applications granted and Income Management agreements and orders revoked
- 3 Applications dismissed
- 6 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decision pending
- 3 Applications rescheduled.

The Commission continues to encourage clients to participate in the Amend or End process. Commissioners report increasing client confidence to question decisions and the reasons behind decisions, both for decisions delivered by the Commission and decisions delivered by external agencies and bodies.

### Number of Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order January 2012 to March 2013



**Graph 8:** Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order by community and quarter 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013.

## 2. Future Direction and Challenges

### Future Direction

On 28 April 2013 the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin MP, released the independent evaluation of the CYWR trial and announced that the Australian Government was committed to continuing funding for the trial. Minister Macklin advised, "The Family Responsibilities Commission has been shown to have played a crucial role in increasing parental responsibility and restoring social norms in the communities". On the same day Queensland Premier Campbell Newman announced the Queensland Government would continue to support an extension of the trial. The Premier advised that whilst the Government was keen to see efficiencies in expenditure of the funding, consideration was being given to rolling out the trial to additional Indigenous communities in Cape York and the Torres Strait.

The Commission awaits further details pertaining to the extension of the CYWR trial and the future involvement of the Commission. The Commission continues to work with clients through conferencing and case plans to develop socially responsible behaviour and promote the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons. In May 2013, the Local Commissioners will meet in Cairns to discuss the future of the Commission and attend the formal launch of the history of the Commission by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, Mr Glenn Elmes. The history of the Commission is authored by Gordon Dean and titled 'Taking Responsibility: Queensland Family Responsibilities Commission'.

### 3. Financial Operations

#### Governance

Part 12 of the Act 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. The meeting may be held by using any technology available which will allow for efficient and effective communication, however, the Board members must meet in person at least once a year. A quorum for the Board is comprised of two members. The Board's membership consists of:

- Ms Debbie Best                      Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and Multicultural Affairs
- Mr Noel Pearson                    Director, Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
- Mr Finn Pratt                        Secretary, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

#### Operational

In meeting obligations under Part 3 of the Act, the Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry) commenced operations on 1 July 2008 with a central Registry office established in Cairns and local Registry offices operating in each of the four CYWR trial communities.

The Registry, managed by the Registrar, provides corporate and operational support to the Commissioner, the Local Commissioners and the Local Coordinators.

#### Financial

The total funding budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year is \$3.3 million, \$1.5 million from the Australian Government and \$1.8 million from the Queensland Government.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013 totalled \$895,667. This income consisted of:
  - \$800,000 funding received from Queensland State Government
  - \$16,343 interest received
  - \$73,835 GST refund from the Australian Taxation Office that is related to a prior year
  - \$5,489 received in sundry revenue.

The balance of available funds in the bank as at 31 March 2013 is \$935,496. The Commission was awarded the contract to deliver the Ending Family Violence Program in quarter 19 and revenue from the first claim will be received in quarter 20.

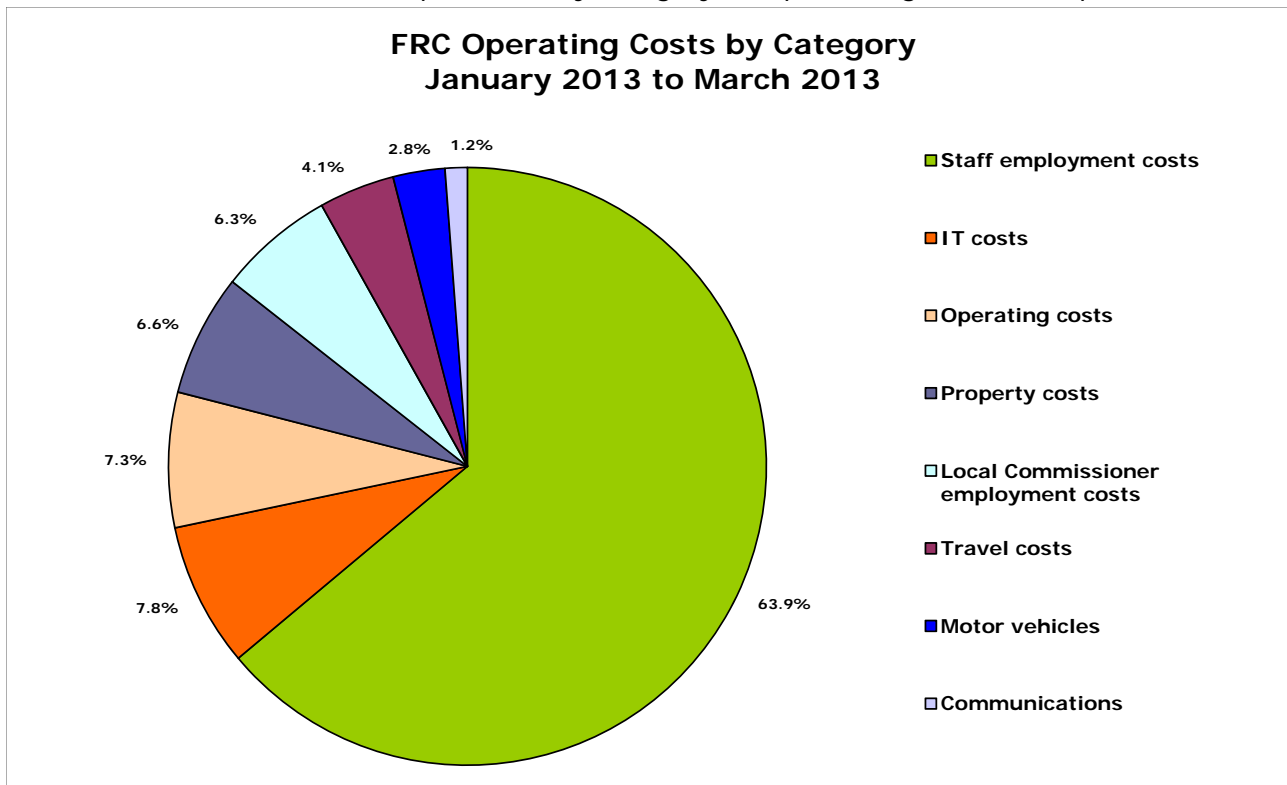
Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013 was \$837,477.17 (Table 1). This total represents 19 percent of the projected annual expenditure of \$4.135 million as stated in the 2012-13 projected expenditure and disclosed in the Queensland State Budget 2012-13 Service Delivery Statements.

1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013	Expenditure Qtr 19	1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013	Expenditure Qtr 19
Staff employment costs	\$534,279.28	Local Commissioner employment costs	\$52,849.70
IT costs	\$65,512.64	Travel costs	\$34,339.97
Operating costs	\$60,933.31	Motor vehicles	\$23,763.35
Property costs	\$55,463.71	Communications	\$10,335.21
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$837,477.17</b>

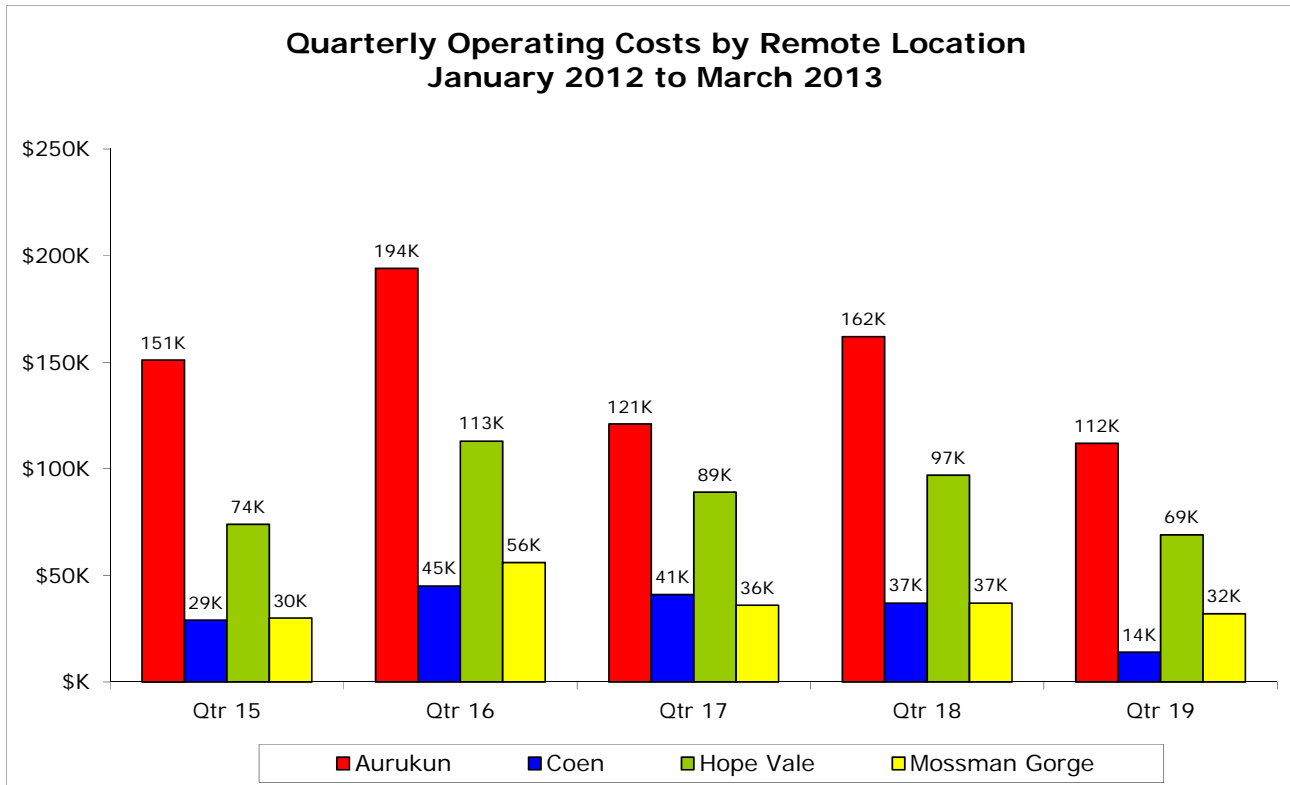
Table 1: Unaudited expenditure in quarter 19.

Quarter 19 disbursement of expenditure by category and percentage of total expenditure.



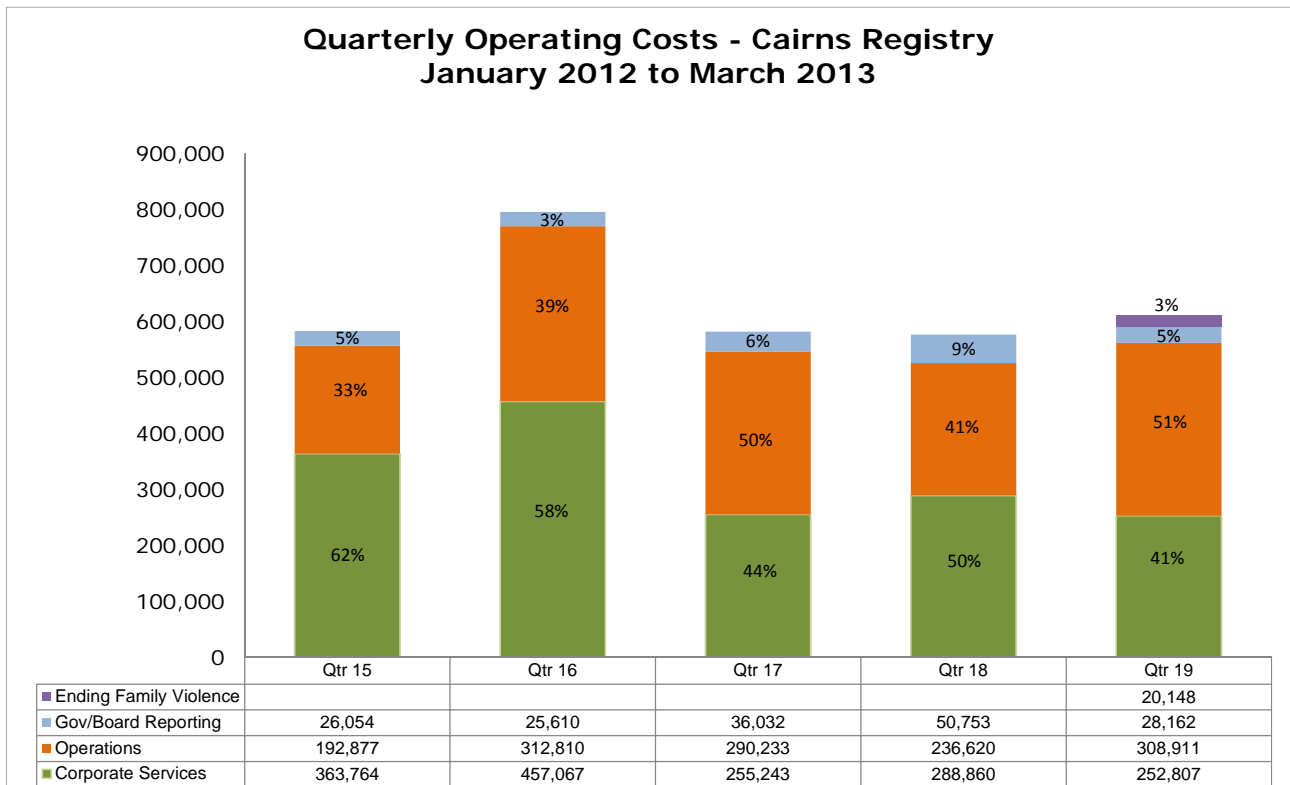
Graph 9: Total FRC Operating Costs 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013.

Regional operational expenditure by location and quarter.



**Graph 10:** Operating Costs by remote location 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013.

Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 19 compared to the previous four quarters.



**Graph 11:** Quarterly Operating Costs Cairns 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013.

APPENDIX A



**SITTING CALENDAR 2013**  
**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION**



1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
31 DECEMBER			Public Holiday			31 Office closed for Xmas, 1 New Year's Day, Office week
7 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
14 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
21 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
28 JANUARY	DRG	Public Holiday	29, 30, 31			28 Australia Day Public Holiday, 1 Feb
4 FEBRUARY	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8 4 FR Board Meeting
11 FEBRUARY	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			15
18 FEBRUARY	DRG			19, 20	21	18, 22
25 FEBRUARY	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 28 Feb, 1 March
4 MARCH	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8
11 MARCH	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			14, 15
18 MARCH	DRG			19, 20	21	18, 22
25 MARCH	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 28, 29 Good Friday
1 APRIL	DRG	Public Holiday				1 Easter Monday Office Week
8 APRIL	DRG					Office Week
15 APRIL	DRG			16, 17	18	15, 19
22 APRIL	DRG	22	23, 24		Public Holiday	25 ANZAC Day, 26
29 APRIL	DRG			30, 1		29 April, 2, 3 May
6 MAY	DRG					Commissioner Week 6 FR Board Meeting
13 MAY	DRG		14, 15, 16			13, 17
20 MAY	DRG			21, 22	23	20, 24
27 MAY	DRG	27	28, 29, 30			31
3 JUNE	DRG			4, 5	6	3, 7
10 JUNE	DRG	Public Holiday	11, 12, 13			10 Queen's Birthday 14
17 JUNE	DRG			18	19	17, 20, 21 Laura Dance Festival
24 JUNE	DRG					Office week





## SITTING CALENDAR 2013 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION



1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
1 JULY	DRG					Office week NAIDOC Week
8 JULY	DRG	8	9, 10, 11			12
15 JULY	DRG			16, 17	18	15, 19 Cairns Show Day
22 JULY	RC		23, 24, 25			22, 26
29 JULY	DRG			30, 31	1	29 July, 2 August
5 AUGUST	RC					Office Week 5 FR Board Meeting
12 AUGUST	DRG	12	13, 14, 15			16
19 AUGUST	DRG			20, 21	22	19, 23
26 AUGUST	DRG		27, 28, 29			26, 30
2 SEPTEMBER	DRG			3, 4	5	2, 6
9 SEPTEMBER	DRG	9	10, 11, 12			13
16 SEPTEMBER	DRG			17, 18	19	16, 20
23 SEPTEMBER	DRG					Office Week
30 SEPTEMBER						Office Week
7 OCTOBER	DRG	Public Holiday				7 Labour Day
14 OCTOBER	DRG					
21 OCTOBER	DRG					
28 OCTOBER	DRG					Commissioner Week
4 NOVEMBER	DRG					4 FR Board Meeting
11 NOVEMBER	DRG					
18 NOVEMBER	DRG					
25 NOVEMBER	DRG					
2 DECEMBER	DRG					
9 DECEMBER	DRG					
16 DECEMBER	DRG					Office Week
23 DECEMBER	DRG			Public Holiday	Public Holiday	25 Christmas Day, 26 Boxing Day, 27 Office closed for Xmas
30 DECEMBER	DRG			Public Holiday		30, 31 Office closed for Xmas, 1 New Year's Day