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Family Responsibilities Board

Part 12 of the FRC Act provides for the establishment of the FR Board. Under section 117 of the FRC Act, the FR Board has a mandate to: give advice and make recommendations to the Minister about the operation of the Commission; give advice and make recommendations to the Commissioner about the performance of the Commission's functions; and consider the reports submitted by the Commission. Section 118 of the FRC Act provides for the membership of the FR Board which is endorsed by the Queensland Governor in Council. The FR Board consists of one person nominated by the Minister (chairperson of the FR Board), one person nominated by the Australian Government and one person nominated by the Institute. Board members are appointed by the Governor in Council for the term stated in the member's instrument of appointment.

Section 123 of the FRC Act states that the FR Board must meet every six 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. A full description of the meetings of the FR Board can be found at page 105.

Composition of the Board

The FR Board members as at 30 June 2016 were:

Ms Clare O'Connor	Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships as the Chair
Ms Carolyn Edwards	First Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Mr Noel Pearson	Founder, Cape York Partnership as the Executive Chairman, representing Cape York Institute.

Executive Management Team

The Commission's EMT is comprised of the Commissioner, the Registrar, the Client Manager and the Accountant. The EMT plays a critical role in the corporate governance and service delivery of the Commission by:

- providing value-based leadership whilst being a role model for innovation, teamwork and problem solving
- demonstrating and incorporating high standards of integrity and ethical behaviour
- ensuring transparency and accountability through effective decision-making and communication with all employees and service providers
- providing a clear future direction for the Commission and
- providing leadership and direction on:
 - issues relating to the ongoing financial and non-financial operations of the Commission and the performance of its governance structure and
 - the operation, performance and reporting of the Commission with regard to its obligations under the FRC Act and other relevant legislation.

Due to the small size of the Commission, the role of the EMT also encompasses the corporate stewardship functions associated with the Commission's operational performance. In addition the EMT oversees the operations of finance, information management, human resources

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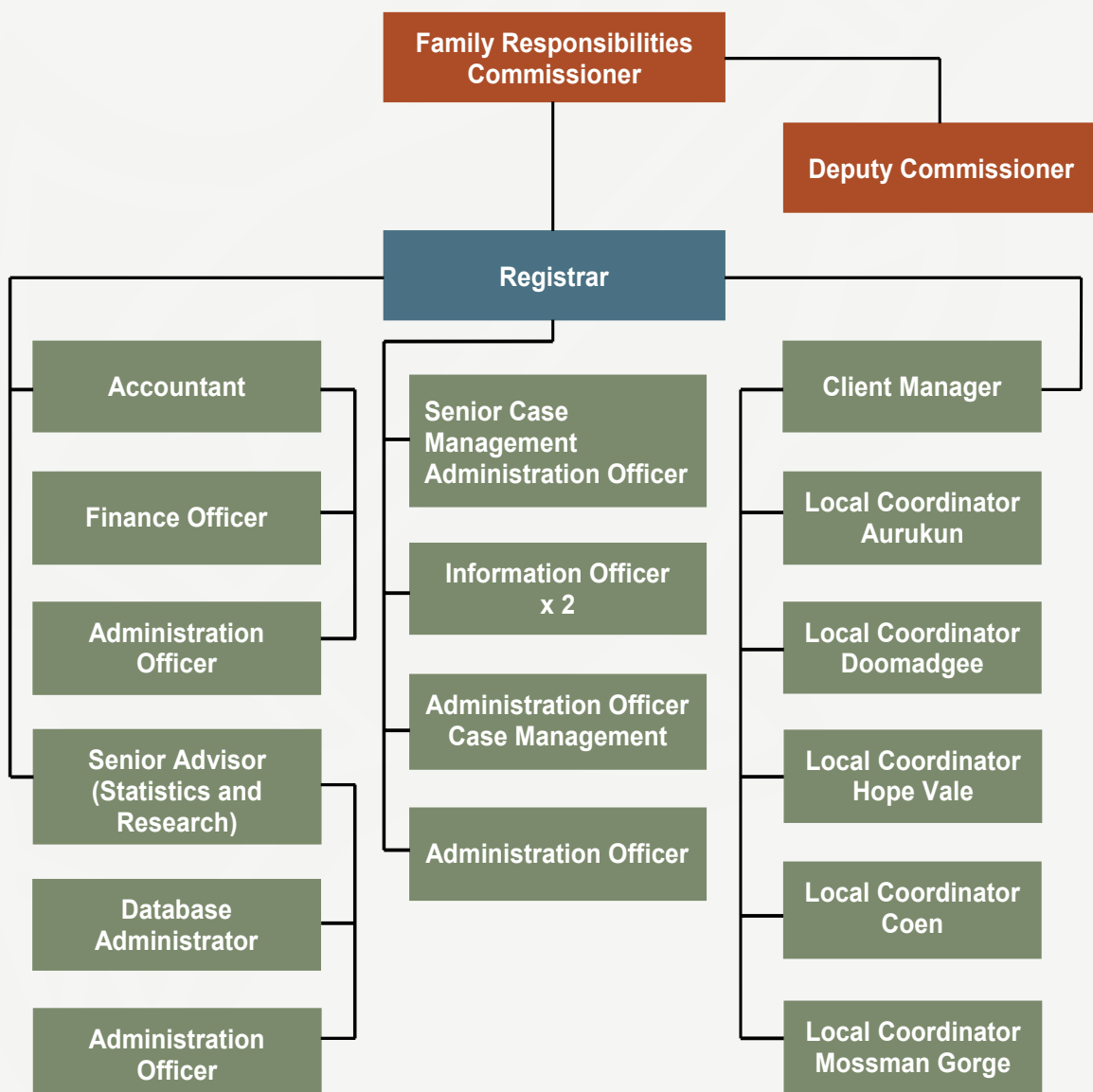


and planning, audit, risk management, systems review and workload and performance management. The EMT met on a regular basis throughout the 2015-16 year.

Corporate structure

The Commission's organisational structure includes a central registry office based in Cairns and a remote office in each of the welfare reform communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. Each of the Commission's remote community based offices has a Local Coordinator appointed to provide strategic, operational and administrative support to the Local Commissioners.

The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council under the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* until 1 January 2018.





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Planning

In May 2016 the Commission redrafted its strategic plan to more clearly define the strategic outcomes sought by the Commission, the strategic objectives which are specifically tied to these outcomes and the strategies it will employ to achieve its objectives. The strategic outcomes of improved community wellbeing and improved community responsibility set out what the Commission wishes to achieve. The strategic objectives relate to specific targets and processes by which the Commission seeks to achieve its outcomes. The Commission's direction is consistent with, and guided by, current whole-of-government priorities, including targets set by COAG under NIRA and other key financial, socio-economic and demographic challenges identified through research and consultation. The strategic plan is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure currency of performance measures and that objectives adequately reflect the Commission's vision and purpose. A copy of the 2016-2020 FRC Strategic Plan can be found on page 15.

Participation in external governance groups

In addition to the internal governance arrangements of the Commission, the Commissioner and other delegated employees participate regularly in interagency meetings and governance groups:

- Program Office Group
- FRC/Centrelink Working Group
- FRC/CYP Working Group
- Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge community safety and interagency meetings
- Aurukun Release Monitoring Group
- Doomadgee Education Taskforce meetings
- Regional Managers Coordination Network
- Mossman Gorge Youth Engagement Coordination meetings
- FNQ Regional Child and Family Committee
- FRC/RFDS monthly meetings
- FRC/DHPW bi-monthly meetings
- Hope Vale Events Committee meetings
- Hope Vale Sports and Recreation Group meetings.

Human resource management

At 30 June 2016 the Commission had an employee establishment of 18 full-time equivalent positions, including positions servicing the regional communities. Sixteen positions are based in the Cairns Registry office (including two part-time positions and one Local Coordinator servicing Coen and Mossman Gorge). Regional positions include one Local Coordinator based in Aurukun, one Local Coordinator based in Hope Vale and one Local Coordinator based in Doomadgee. The Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners are employed on a fee for service basis.

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Since the establishment of the Commission employee and job classification levels have altered from time to time as a result of operational reviews. During this financial year the Commission has experienced a permanent separation rate of 22 percent, and a permanent retention rate of 82 percent. The retention rate reflects the number of employees who were with the Commission as at 1 July 2015, and who are still employed as at 30 June 2016.

The Commission promotes policies and activities to support a healthy work-life balance. Flexible work arrangements are actively accessed and employees are provided the opportunity to work from home where appropriate, part-time work opportunities and hours of work arrangements including the opportunity for purchased leave. These flexible arrangements are also offered in order to assist in balancing work and carer roles where required.

To prevent the onset of desk-related neck, back, shoulder, elbow and wrist injuries, and to manage symptoms which may already exist, the Commission offers employees access to ergonomic specialist services. This year ergonomic training was conducted in the Cairns Registry by a professionally qualified occupational therapist on 15 June 2016. Individual assessments were provided for those employees who expressed a need for an ergonomic review of their work stations, and recommendations to improve the working environment have been complied with.

Recruitment, selection and retention of employees

The Commission conducts all recruitment and selection processes in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 1996* and relevant Public Service Commission policies and directives.

On 5 August 2014 the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014 was introduced into Parliament. The Bill proposed various amendments aimed at increasing efficiencies and expanding operations. One of these amendments was to omit section 152 from the FRC Act. Section 152 was the sunset clause which provided that the FRC Act would cease on a specified date. On 14 October 2014 the Bill was passed by the Queensland Parliament and the FRC Act was proclaimed on 28 November 2014.

Due to the FRC Act's previous sunset clause, since the commencement of operations the majority of staff have been employed as temporary public servants and recruited on 12 month contracts, extended each year subject to the extension of the FRC Act.

Subsequent to the removal of the sunset clause and to comply with the provisions of s149 of the *Public Service Act 2008* and Queensland Public Service Commission Directives 20/10 Temporary Employment and 6/14 Employees Requiring Placement, nine employees occupying ongoing and funded positions of over two years duration were transitioned to tenure after having cleared the employees requiring placement pool.

During the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid.



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Professional development

The Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners on a continual basis to ensure it actively works to restore local authority. Part of this professional development involves enhancing and expanding upon relationships with other Indigenous organisations, service providers, government departments and agencies. The Local Commissioners attended their annual development week in Cairns commencing on 3 May 2016 during which they met with senior staff from several organisations who provide social and government services to the welfare reform communities including CYP Empowered Communities, DCCSDS, QPS, DATSIP and GYFS. Local Commissioners were also addressed by Dr Ernest Hunter, a respected Australian medical practitioner who trained in adult, child and cross-cultural psychiatry in the United States before returning to work for many years in remote northern Australia. Dr Hunter discussed issues which have, in the past few decades, impacted significantly on Indigenous communities. Dr Hunter spoke of the burden of mental health problems resulting from alcohol abuse, exacerbated by the introduction of licensed canteens in many Aboriginal communities, and later by marijuana use and petrol sniffing. The resultant self-harm and suicide which has occurred across Indigenous communities has had devastating effects on the fabric of these communities and on family life, complicated by a loss of local authority and increased welfare dependency.

Specific training was provided for the Local Commissioners in resilience and self-care, with a particular focus on managing family pressures and requests for money. Commissioner Glasgow has, since the first sittings in 2016, provided training and guidance after scheduled conference sessions to the Local Commissioners on the domestic violence trigger in the four communities which currently have jurisdiction. During the Local Commissioner Development Week White Ribbon Australia provided domestic violence training for the Local Commissioners including:

- understanding men's violence against women
- the impact of men's violence against women
- causes of men's violence against women
- debunking myths about violence
- primary prevention
- managing disclosures and
- standing up against violence.

The Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service also provided training which included identifying and understanding common behaviours of perpetrators, and their effect on victims and communities as a whole.

Participation in the consultations and workshops allowed the participants to tackle common issues, review strategies and source solutions. A comprehensive summary of the development week can be found in this Annual Report entitled 'Local Commissioner Development Week'.

The broader focus of the Commission's professional development program for employees is on skills development, career enhancement, and supporting a culture of ongoing learning through participation in internal workshops, on the job training and courses conducted by specialist external training providers. All Commission employees have been registered for the online

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iLearning courses provided by DCCSDS. This online learning service provides training in Ethical Decision-Making, Harvard ManageMentor management and executive development online courses including webinars for team leaders, supervisors and managers on a range of topics, a mentoring program for senior officers and managers, finance and procurement fundamentals and an Emerging Leaders Program which provides confidence and skills to build and develop effective teams. These are but a few of the training opportunities offered. To facilitate employees' development, each employee together with their manager signs a Performance and Development Agreement. The agreement sets out identified learning activities, supports the development of competencies, professional skills and personal attributes, and is designed to identify and record knowledge and skills gaps together with learning objectives. The plans link in with the Commission's strategic objectives and are reviewed on a six monthly basis. During 2015-16 employee professional development, training, and workshops cost \$30,920 excluding travel costs. This investment provides a platform for the Commission to foster the development of new skills and to improve business processes within the Commission.

During 2015-16 the Commission organised a number of training programs and workshops to monitor, evaluate and continuously improve operations, internal administration and service delivery of the Commission. Training programs covered the key areas of:

- complaints management training
- management, leadership, supervisory and team building
- Cape York Leadership Program
- managing unreasonable conduct
- conflict resolution
- mediation skills
- domestic violence awareness training
- taxation and payroll
- advanced Microsoft and SQL server training
- Word Intermediate and Excel training
- first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation including defibrillation
- Cert IV in Work Health and Safety
- managing violent and potentially violent situations
- resilience and self-care
- fire warden and trial evacuation
- defensive driving
- 4WD training
- Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct and Ethical Decision-Making.



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The Commission is also committed to providing support to employees who undertake further education and to providing flexible work practices to enable employees to study whilst continuing to meet operational and client needs.

Under the Commission's Study and Research Assistance Scheme (SARAS) Policy financial assistance and leave arrangements are administered subject to Directive 9/13 Special Leave in an equitable manner, ensuring effective usage of learning and organisational development funds, and taking into consideration available resources. As at June 2016 there are four employees enrolled with various academic institutions for the current 2016 calendar year to study the following:

- Certificate IV in Accounting
- Certificate IV in Community Development
- Bachelor of Social Work
- Graduate Certificate in Business (Public Sector Management).

Through the provision of high quality and targeted professional development the Commission seeks to not only enhance the skills and competencies of its employees and Local Commissioners, but to also provide effective and efficient client service.

Information and communication technology

Coinciding with the establishment of the Commission in July 2008 a service level agreement was entered into with the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) for information and communication technology services. This agreement ensured the Commission complied with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, whilst providing a high level of security and support.

The Commission's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system plays a vital role in supporting employees both in the Cairns registry office and regional offices. The Commission, in conjunction with CAA, has policies and network protocols in place to ensure all employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding ethical information access, transference, usage and management. The Commission's information and communication technology systems capture and retain information, preserve the integrity of information and also provide a high level of security and confidentiality.

Since the inception of the Commission in 2008, substantial developments in the field of communications and computing have driven the need for the Commission to update and improve its systems and processes.

The Commission was advised by CAA in late 2014 that the current server used to run the CRM database, Windows 2003, would no longer be supported from 14 July 2015. Effectively that meant that there would no longer be technical assistance for troubleshooting, workloads and applications would become more expensive to operate, and compliance issues would gradually appear with software and hardware incompatibility. A major focus this year has therefore been an upgrade of the CRM database. Following the launch of the CRM Database Upgrade Project on 27 July 2015, the system was implemented into production on 22 January 2016. Some of the benefits to the Commission provided by the upgrade are: an extended life span; increased efficiency including global search and code optimization; assisted coding; new and more efficient form navigation; upgraded SQL server for more effective management of the database; calculated fields; and an improved level of security. Since the implementation of CRM 2015 the

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Commission's Database Administrator has enhanced the system to:

- provide a family profile in relation to income management clients
- streamline electronic forms to increase efficiencies in remote locations
- incorporate the new domestic violence trigger
- incorporate the Juvenile Justice trigger (Childrens Court)
- provide automatic report generation (snapshot reporting)
- incorporate enhancements to facilitate more efficient registry functions and
- effect improvements to the quality and content of the data.

CRM 2015 provides enhanced visual tools which enable more effective communication between Local Commissioners and clients during conference. The database now permits the Commission to gain insight into service effectiveness with the ability to track and analyse key metrics. The Commission will continue to use the database's enhanced capability to better map clients, improve reporting capability, and provide accurate data on outcomes.

In the 2016-17 financial year the Commission will consider the future benefit of creating portal access to the database for service providers. Portal access would allow those agencies submitting monthly progress reports to the Commission direct access the database to upload their data. Another consideration will be the future benefit of providing access to the CRM database through an Internet Explorer browser, rather than solely through the secure network. This would allow Local Coordinators and other staff to access the database on an iPad or other mobile device and provide timely information to clients and other stakeholders while in the field.

The Commission can report that no breaches of information security have occurred to date, and no records have been lost due to disaster or other occurrences.

The Commission complies with recordkeeping practices in accordance with section 141 of the FRC Act, the *Public Records Act 2002*, Information Standard 40, Recordkeeping and Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records, through the service level agreement with CAA. Approximately 90 percent of Commission records are held in digital format.

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 and Code of Conduct

All employees of the Commission, with the exception of the Family Responsibilities Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Local Commissioners are employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*.

Commission employees have completed their annual Code of Conduct training via the DCCSDS iLearning site. The training incorporates the four ethics principles together with their associated values of integrity and impartiality, promoting the public good, commitment to the system of government and accountability and transparency. The Local Coordinators for the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge have also facilitated training for each Local Commissioner. New employees are provided with Code of Conduct and ethics training upon induction, and refresher training is conducted annually for all Commission employees.

To further assist Commission employees with ethical decision-making and in understanding the Code of Conduct, the Commission has created a supplementary policy document titled



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'Workplace Policy'. This policy presents a broad framework for ethical behaviour, supports the Code and is consistent with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008*, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, the FRC Act and relevant Public Service Commission policies and directives. The Code of Conduct and Workplace Policy are both available in hard copy at all Commission premises and are located on our webpage for access to both the public and employees.

Alignment with the ethics principles is further achieved through the Commission's Strategic Plan which incorporates objectives based on enhancing and strengthening socially responsible standards of behaviour both within the Commission and in the five welfare reform communities. These objectives then form the basis for employee Performance and Development Agreements to link ethics priorities with service delivery.

Public sector values

The Commission continues to structure its operations in accordance with the objects and principles of the FRC Act and the Queensland Public Service Values of: Customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous and empower people. The Commission's Service Charter pledges the best service we can provide and to deliver outputs for the Queensland and Australian Governments that achieve the outcomes sought for the welfare reform communities. In doing so the Commission nurtures a spirit of inquiry and innovation. Our Local Commissioners are well acquainted with their community and the ancestry and family history of their community members. Decisions are made with an understanding of where each client comes from and what has influenced their behaviour. The exercise of their authority under the FRC Act is governed by this understanding. They are challenging the old norms in their communities every day, encouraging clients to cross the boundaries of their inappropriate social behaviours. To do so requires courage from the Local Commissioners and from Commission clients. The Local Commissioners are leading by example, trusting where their intuition demands consideration of the challenges faced by each individual and at times demanding action by imposing restrictions. With each decision they take a calculated risk on the strength and capacity of their community members, whilst empowering them to be responsible to themselves, their family and their community.

Risk management

The Commission's risk management framework establishes a mechanism to identify, assess and manage real or potential risks. The framework supports a positive risk minimisation and management culture within the Commission which focuses on strategic risks (risks which present as challenges to the Commission's strategic direction and vision), and operational risks (risks which present as challenges to the daily activities of the Commission in delivering its services). In applying the risk management principles the Commission has developed a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The framework of this plan incorporates five key elements – prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and review, and consists of a risk management and contingency plan, business impact analysis, incident response table and recovery plan. The plan states a shared legal responsibility and accountability between, and a commitment by, all employees to implement the BCP. Employees are individually responsible for contributing to the BCP and to the health and safety of others by reporting workplace injury, incidents, illness and hazards. Employees are also responsible for seeking to reduce the vulnerability of the Commission to internal and external events and influences that may impede achieving the goals of the Commission.

The Commission's BCP progresses from an integrated approach to managing all risks that impact on the achievement of the Commission's strategic and business objectives to reviewing and re-evaluating identified risks and reporting to the EMT regarding processes and recommendations.



External scrutiny

For the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 the Finance and Administration Committee had oversight responsibility for the Commission under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. The committee is responsible for examining Bills to consider policy, examining estimates, assessing the Commission's accounts in regard to integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management and assessing whether the Commission is performing its legislative functions and meeting its obligations as a statutory body. The committee is set to conduct estimates hearings in July 2016.

On 13 October 2015, the Hon. Curtis Pitt MP, Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships introduced the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2015 to Parliament. The Bill was subsequently referred to the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for consideration. On 6 November 2015 the Committee tabled its Report No 9 on the Bill. The report recommended the following amendments to the FRC Act be passed:

- include an additional domestic violence trigger for notices to the FRC in response to recommendations in the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland's report, 'Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic Violence in Queensland' (Recommendation 93)
- expand the scope for delegation of the FRC Commissioner's powers and responsibilities to a chairperson of the Commission, allowing Local Commissioners sitting in conference to make decisions relating to income management
- broaden the suitability requirements for the FRC Registrar to someone qualified to perform the functions of the Registrar
- remove redundant provisions and
- clarify the process for generating agency notices under the existing youth justice trigger.

Further, the Committee recommended that:

- the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships ensure that appropriate domestic and family violence specific support services are available for the Family Responsibilities Commission to refer community members following a conference
- the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the Family Responsibilities Commission monitor the number of agency notices received from the courts as a result of a community member being the subject of a protection order, and a community member being convicted for a breach of a protection order
- the Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relation, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships require the Family Responsibilities Commission to report, in its annual report, on the number of agency notices it receives in the following circumstances – when a court makes a protection order against a community member, and when a court convicts a community member of a breach of a protection order
- the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2015 be amended to identify clearly which functions the Commissioner may delegate to the chairperson of the Commission for a conference constituted under section 50A of the FRC Act



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The Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill was passed by Parliament with unanimous support on 1 December 2015 and received Royal Assent on 17 December 2015. In regard to the above recommendations the Commission reports monthly to DATSIP on all domestic violence notices. Monthly reports include information in regard to:

- which Magistrate courts are providing DV notices (breaches and orders)
- the number of conferences held in relation to DV notices (breaches and orders) per community
- the outcome actions taken in relation to conferences for DV notices (breaches and orders) per community and
- the number of referrals in relation to DV notices (breaches and orders) per community.

The Commission continues to implement process improvements and is currently reviewing its broader strategic workforce planning, work practices, systems and processes to create greater efficiencies.

Professional conduct

All employees of the Commission are required to adhere to the values of the Commission and undertake their duties with professionalism, respect for diversity and courtesy whilst utilising ethics in all decision-making. Employees are made aware of their ongoing responsibilities, duty of care and requirements under the core legislation governing the Commission as published through Commission policies, protocols and guidelines which are readily available to employees on the intranet. During the year the Commission has continued refining its strategies and processes to ensure its operations are effective and the strategic direction is maintained. The following policies and guidelines were revised to ensure efficiencies of process:

Policy	Revision Date
Employees Engaging in Other Employment	November 2015
Guidelines for Travelling and Hours of Work	November 2015
Hours of Work Arrangements	November 2015
Human Resource Delegation Guidelines	November 2015
Open Data Strategy	January 2016
Domestic Violence and the Workplace	January 2016
Intranet, Internet and Email Usage Policy	February 2016
Business Continuity Plan	June 2016
Financial Delegation Guidelines	June 2016



Commission policies are required to be read and understood as part of the Commission induction process and a register must be signed acknowledging an understanding of the policies. The Commission complies with the following legislative requirements in performing its functions:

- *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*
- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
- *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*
- *Public Records Act 2002*
- *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012.*

Publication of information on-line

For information regarding consultancies, international travel, corporate social responsibility including waste management and recycling policies, carbon emissions, reconciliation, right to information and information privacy, complaints management, corporate services and work health and safety refer to the Additional published information under Right to Information on the Commission's website at <http://www.frcq.org.au> and the Queensland Government Open Data website at <https://data.qld.gov.au>.

Publications by the Commission during 2015-16

1. Annual Report 2014-15
2. Quarterly Report 27 (January to March 2015)
3. Quarterly Report 28 (April to June 2015)
4. Quarterly Report 29 (July to September 2015)
5. Quarterly Report 30 (October to December 2015)
6. Quarterly Report 31 (January to March 2016)

All publications are available on the Family Responsibilities Commission's website:
<http://www.frcq.org.au>.