



LOCAL COMMISSIONERS' YEAR IN REVIEW

Doomadgee Local Commissioners' report

The Doomadgee Community is now very familiar with the FRC and its practices. We believe that conference attendance rates, whilst variable, reflect the fact that Doomadgee has welcomed the FRC and the support it provides to our community members. Voluntary unscheduled appearances at conference and partners of conferencing clients willingly joining conference to discuss issues of school attendance and the safety of children indicate further acceptance and understanding of the FRC model. We continue to work hard to maintain our professionalism in and out of our workplace to become role models for our community, and we continue to use our positivity and support in conferences to strengthen our relationships and further build the trust of our clients.

This financial year we have conducted 706 conferences with a range of clients, the main focus of which has been stressing the importance of education for children. Term 1 in 2016 saw the Doomadgee State School record its highest attendance figure (67.8 percent) since the FRC commenced operations in August 2014. This represents close to a 19 percent jump from term 4 in 2015, and an 8 percent increase from term 1 in 2015. Although our work has been hard and repetitive, at times dealing with the same clients, it is encouraging results like this that push us to work harder. We recognise that our work, along with the service providers in community and especially the school, has really encouraged our community to recognise schooling as a priority.

Paula Maguire, the principal at Doomadgee State School, has made a lot of positive changes within the school. She has introduced the Doomadgee values which are displayed around the community and at the school. These values include: looking after everything and everyone; showing respect; trying our best; and speaking kindly. These values are taught in the classrooms, and the community and children have responded very well. We would like to thank Paula and all the staff at the Doomadgee State School for their hard work and continued support of the FRC. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Student Attendance Officers (SAOs) who work day in and day out promoting the importance of education and encouraging school attendance. We see the SAOs as a vital tool in helping us improve school attendance. They are all local workers who have a strong connection to Doomadgee, and are passionate about seeing Doomadgee move forward and our children receiving an education.

We have had some exciting visitors to Doomadgee this year, with one in particular offering potential opportunities for the youth of the community. Matt Bowen from the North Queensland Cowboys visited Doomadgee to speak with the community about the new Cowboys House boarding facility opening in Townsville in 2017. Cowboys House have taken a great approach in inviting the community to learn about their facility and offering positions for the children of Doomadgee. We at the FRC see it as a very positive option for the youth of Doomadgee.

Around the community we have experienced continued support from all of our service providers. It is especially exciting for us to hear, on a daily basis, our local radio announcer, Sai Matainavora, promoting the school at Doomadgee, encouraging school attendance and speaking positively about the FRC. He speaks supportively of us as Commissioners helping everyone in our community. Our local government engagement officer, Tom Atu, and the DPMC have also been very vocal and supportive across the community and we appreciate this support.

The Doomadgee community is growing every day with the Doomadgee State School having 410 children on the roll as at term 1 2016. The large number of children, along with the increase in attendance, has put pressure on staff and facilities at the school with overcrowding in classrooms. The increase in population is also putting pressure on all other services including housing availability in the community. We will continue to work with the school and the Queensland Government on these issues. In our role as Local Commissioners we have also recognised a huge gap for our teenage children in the support they receive to transition from Doomadgee State School to boarding school. We see this transition as an important pathway for the young people of Doomadgee and aim to work towards having a program implemented to better support the children in their journey.

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Since the beginning of term 2, or April 2016, we have had the authority to income manage clients. We are taking the opportunity to use this new tool to re-engage clients and provide new strategies to improve their living conditions. At the time of writing this report we have issued 28 BasicsCards. Our clients recognise the importance of the card and how it can help with budgeting and ensuring that day-to-day family needs are met. We

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hope that in the coming months a lot more income management orders will be issued and that over time, this strategy will not only lift school attendance, but will result in improved health and wellbeing for our clients.

We have just returned from our annual training week in Cairns and have all grown immensely from the education provided during this trip. Most importantly, we have shared our ideas and learnt new ideas from the FRC Commissioners from other communities. We will use these new ideas to further improve Doomadgee as a community. We recognise that currently the lack of job opportunities in Doomadgee restricts our clients from employment and further educational opportunities. In the future we would like to see new developments such as tourism opportunities, including a local arts centre for our community members to show off their many talents.

We have only just begun to implement the BasicsCard and we recognise that the times ahead will be challenging, as it is a new concept that community members are not familiar with. As leaders of our community we believe strongly that it will benefit our community, even if not everyone agrees with it in the beginning. We are looking forward to further improving attendance at the school and are excited about the possibility of introducing further triggers onto our caseload, including domestic violence and the youth justice notifications. This will give us a larger range of clients to whom we can offer support, and in doing so we hope to make a greater impact on the community to help strengthen, grow and watch Doomadgee move forward in the coming years.

Doomadgee Commissioners Christopher Logan, David Gallagher, Elaine Cairns, Guy Douglas, Isabel Toby, Karen Jupiter, Kaylene O'Keefe and Eleanor Logan



Doomadgee Local Commissioners with Greg Anderson, Regional Director of DATSIP and Doomadgee Government Champion, Barry Broe