

# **Family Responsibilities Commission**

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

## **Quarterly Report**

**No. 46**

**October 2019 to December 2019**



*Report prepared by the Family Responsibilities Commission under the leadership of  
Commissioner Tammy Williams*

## Executive Summary

Quantified in the table below are the activities undertaken by the Commission during quarter 46 with comparisons shown to the previous quarter.

**Table 1:** Activity from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Qtr 45</b>	<b>Qtr 46</b>
Number of clients notified to the Commission	816	755
Number of clients scheduled for conference	444	467
Conferences scheduled	624	741
Conference attendance percentage	55.8%	58.0%
Conference non-attendance percentage with acceptable (reasonable) excuse	26.8%	21.2%
<b>Conference Outcomes</b>		
Family Responsibility Agreements entered into	0	0
Orders made to attend community support services	41	68
Referrals to service providers <sup>1</sup>	42	78
Conditional Income Management Orders (CIM) made	83	53
<b>Client Management</b>		
Clients case-managed	92	133
Number of clients placed on a case plan and CIM	11	13
Number of clients placed on a case plan without a CIM	30	52
Number of clients placed on a CIM order without a case plan	69	35
Applications to Amend or End received	17	15
Voluntary Income Management Agreements entered into	2	2

In this quarterly report we have amended the activity table (table 1 above) to reflect a more client-focussed data reporting table as opposed to the historical process-orientated table. This change is only part of a review of data reporting commenced in January 2020 which is aimed at more accurately documenting the Commission's work and the benefits afforded to FRC clients. It is clear from discussions with our stakeholders that the level of client intervention is of primary interest to readers of our quarterly and annual reports. Further amendments to our data reporting framework are planned to further define the level of client engagement and outcomes, and in the process, a review of our data dictionary will be undertaken.

As can be seen from the activity table above, this quarter has seen a significant increase in clients case-managed, orders made to attend community support services and referrals made to service providers. The number of clients placed on a case plan without a CIM clearly demonstrates that the Local Commissioners order income management as a last resort, and that income management is delivered with a highly targeted and flexible approach.

On 24 October 2019 the Governor in Council under the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* approved the appointment of five new Local Commissioners and the reappointment of 24 existing Local Commissioners to the Family Responsibilities Commission. These appointments/reappointments, effective from 1 November 2019 to 30 June 2020, included the following:

<sup>1</sup> A case plan can have multiple referrals e.g. a client may be referred to both the Wellbeing Centre and MPower under the same case plan.

- Edgar Kerindun, Vera Koomeeta, Doris Poonkamelya, Dorothy Pootchemunka, Ada Woolla and Keri Tamwoy as Aurukun Local Commissioners
- Elaine Liddy, Maureen Liddy, Alison Liddy, May Kepple and Garry Port as Coen Local Commissioners
- Elaine Cairns, Guy Douglas, Christopher Logan, Eleanor Logan, Kaylene O'Keefe, Isabel Toby and Dawn Aplin as Doomadgee Local Commissioners
- Erica Deeral, Victor Gibson, Doreen Hart, Cheryl Cannon, Selina Bowen, Robert Gibson and Priscilla Gibson as Hope Vale Local Commissioners and
- Karen Gibson, Karen Shuan, Loretta Spratt and George Ross-Kelly as Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners.

The appointment of Family Responsibilities Board members was also approved. The Board members are:

- Dr Chris Sarra, Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) as Chair
- Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, Cape York Partnership representing the Cape York Institute and
- Mr Ray Griggs, CEO of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) (taking over from Mr Troy Sloan, Group Manager, Employment, Environment and Evaluation Group).

The Commissioner and Registrar would like to express their gratitude to Mr Sloan for the dedication and professionalism he has shown as a Member of the FR Board in its oversight function of the Commission.

Mossman Gorge Commissioners Karen Gibson, Karen Shuan, Loretta Spratt and George Ross-Kelly welcomed DATSIP Deputy Director-General Kathy Parton to their conference day held on 12 November. They were pleased to share their insights into community issues which bring their clients to conference and were grateful for the interest shown by the Deputy Director-General in their work. They have expressed their willingness to welcome other State and Australian Government representatives to view what it means for them to be Local Commissioners.

On Monday 25 November 2019, by invitation, Commissioner Williams, Registrar Maxine McLeod and Executive Officer (Finance) Tracey Paterson appeared at a public briefing before the Queensland Parliament's Economic and Governance Committee in Brisbane. The purpose of the briefing was to assist the Committee with its oversight of the functions and performance of the Commission. At the briefing Commissioner Williams provided an opening statement advising of the functions, financial environment, and present and anticipated future challenges facing the Commission. She then addressed questions from the committee members in regard to the key operational focus and strategic plans for the FRC. The committee was particularly interested in the link between income management and referrals to service providers to initiate behavioural change. As the briefing was a proceeding of the Queensland Parliament it was subject to the standing rules and orders of the Parliament. The briefing was recorded and broadcast live on the Parliament's website.

The FR Board held its thirty-ninth meeting on 28 November 2019 in Brisbane. Papers presented for Board consideration included: Commissioner William's report to the Board on various issues including school attendance in each community; a report on the Commission's financial budget for the 2019-20 year; and the Commission's Quarterly Report 45 - presented and endorsed by the FR Board.

The Commission's annual School Awards ceremonies were conducted in December in each of the five communities. Prizes were awarded for attendance achievements and included certificates, medals and other incentives. Each year the Local Commissioners present the awards to provide positive recognition and support for those students (and their families) who regularly attend school, to provide an incentive for those students who wish to improve their school attendance and to reiterate the importance of education in achieving a dream, and better life for the future. A morning tea was held in both Hope Vale

and Aurukun with service providers and clients and hampers were awarded in Doomadgee and Mossman Gorge to celebrate the achievements of those parents/carers and children who recognise the importance of school attendance.

On 11 December 2019 the Commission was pleased to receive an executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Australian and Queensland Governments setting out an agreed basis of funding, administration and reporting arrangements for the operation of the Commission covering the period 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2021. The MOU delivers some certainty to the Local Commissioners going forward and demonstrates the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments' commitment to the Commission's continuing role in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

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### **Abbreviations**

CIM	Conditional Income Management
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DoE	Department of Education
DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
DV	Domestic Violence
DVB	Domestic Violence Breach
DVO	Domestic Violence Order
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
QPS	Queensland Police Service
VIM	Voluntary Income Management

### **Also:**

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

# Family Responsibilities Commission Welfare Reforms

Report to 31 December 2019.

## 1. Activities and Trends

### Notices

In quarter 46 the Commission received **2,072 agency notices**<sup>2</sup>. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 1,426 notices (69 percent) relating to 755 clients (303 male and 452 female) were within the Commission's jurisdiction, and 646 notices (31 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

**Table 2:** In jurisdiction notices by type and community 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Type of Notice	AU	CO	DM <sup>3</sup>	HV	MG	Total
Supreme Court notices	0	0	-	0	0	<b>0</b>
District Court notices	11	0	-	0	0	<b>11</b>
Magistrates Court notices	229	10	-	108	24	<b>371</b>
Domestic Violence Breach notices	20	3	-	6	2	<b>31</b>
Domestic Violence Order notices	29	6	-	16	9	<b>60</b>
School Attendance notices	329	33	369	125	21	<b>877</b>
School Enrolment notice	4	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
Child Safety and Welfare notices	27	2	22	13	0	<b>64</b>
Housing Tenancy notices	3	0	-	1	4	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1426</b>

**Further details of notices within jurisdiction for each community are set out below:**

- Aurukun received **652** notices relating to 314 clients (132 male and 182 female)
- Coen received **54** notices relating to 34 clients (14 male and 20 female)
- Doomadgee received **391** notices relating to 217 clients (58 male and 159 female)
- Hope Vale received **269** notices, relating to 153 clients (84 male and 69 female)
- Mossman Gorge received **60** notices relating to 37 clients (15 male and 22 female).

**Table 3:** Not within jurisdiction notices by type and community 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Type of Notice	AU	CO	DM <sup>3</sup>	HV	MG	Total
Supreme Court notices	0	0	-	0	0	<b>0</b>
District Court notices	0	0	-	0	0	<b>0</b>
Magistrates Court notices	145	0	-	132	159	<b>436</b>
Domestic Violence Breach notices	8	0	-	8	4	<b>20</b>
Domestic Violence Order notices	3	2	-	18	21	<b>44</b>
School Attendance notices	29	11	67	21	0	<b>128</b>
School Enrolment notice	0	0	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
Child Safety and Welfare notices	2	0	11	3	0	<b>16</b>
Housing Tenancy notices	0	0	-	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>646</b>

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</sup> Agency notices for the community of Doomadgee are presently received from the Department of Education and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women only.

Total within and not within jurisdiction notices decreased from 2,166 in quarter 45 to 2,072 in quarter 46. Of those notices within jurisdiction Magistrates Court and Domestic Violence Breach notices increased from quarter 45 to quarter 46. A breakdown of within jurisdiction notices is provided below. It should be noted when considering the data below that Doomadgee does not receive District Court, Magistrate Court, Domestic Violence (Breaches or Orders), or housing tenancy notices.

District Court notices decreased this quarter to 11 from 13 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun increased by 6 notices and Hope Vale decreased by 8 notices. Coen and Mossman Gorge remained unchanged with zero notices received for the quarter.

Magistrates Court notices increased this quarter to 371 from 266 received in the previous quarter. Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased by 43, 2, 59 and 1 notice respectively.

Domestic Violence Breach notices increased from 27 in quarter 45 to 31 in quarter 46. Aurukun and Mossman Gorge increased by 1 notice each, Coen increased by 2 notices, whilst Hope Vale remained unchanged with 6 notices for the quarter.

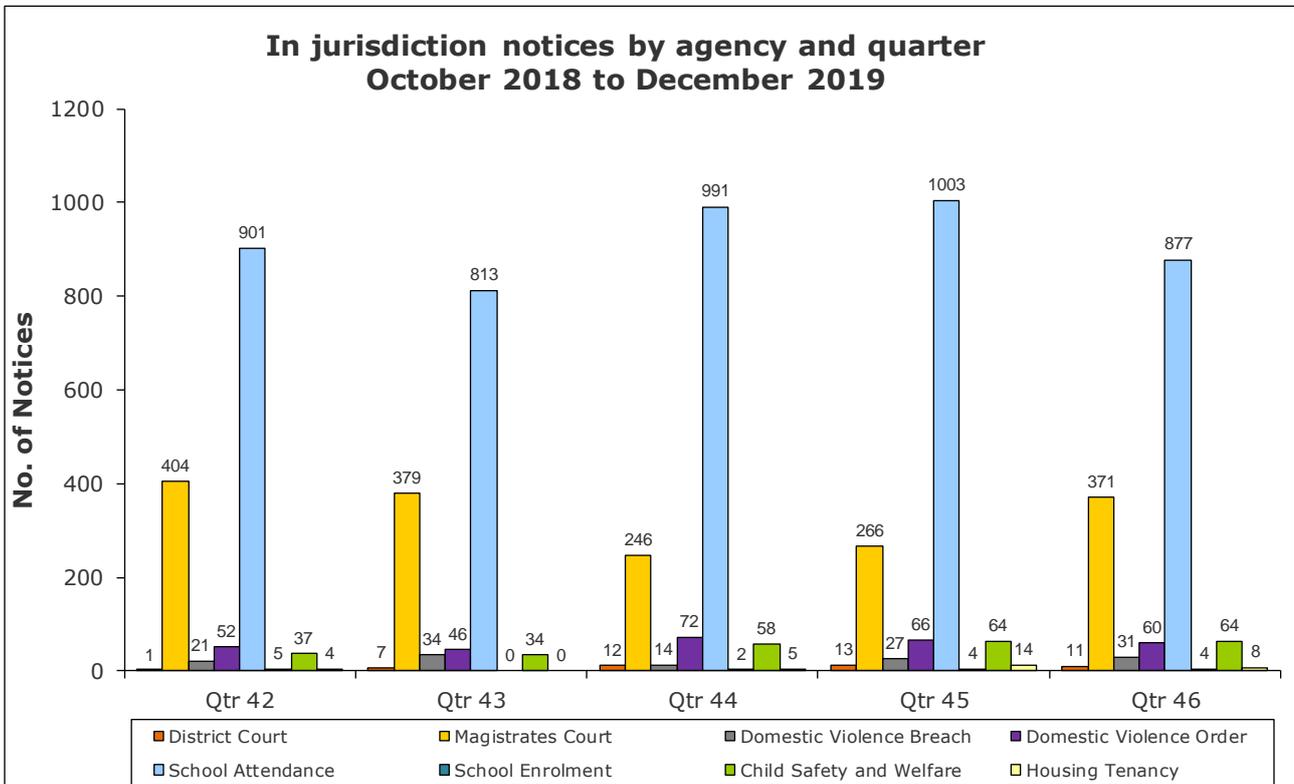
Domestic Violence Order notices decreased from 66 in quarter 45 to 60 in quarter 46. Aurukun decreased by 15 notices, whilst Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge increased by 5 notices, 3 notices and 1 notice respectively.

School Attendance notices decreased from 1003 in quarter 45 to 877 in quarter 46. All five communities experienced a decrease in notices this quarter. Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge decreased by 4, 18, 41, 53 and 10 notices respectively.

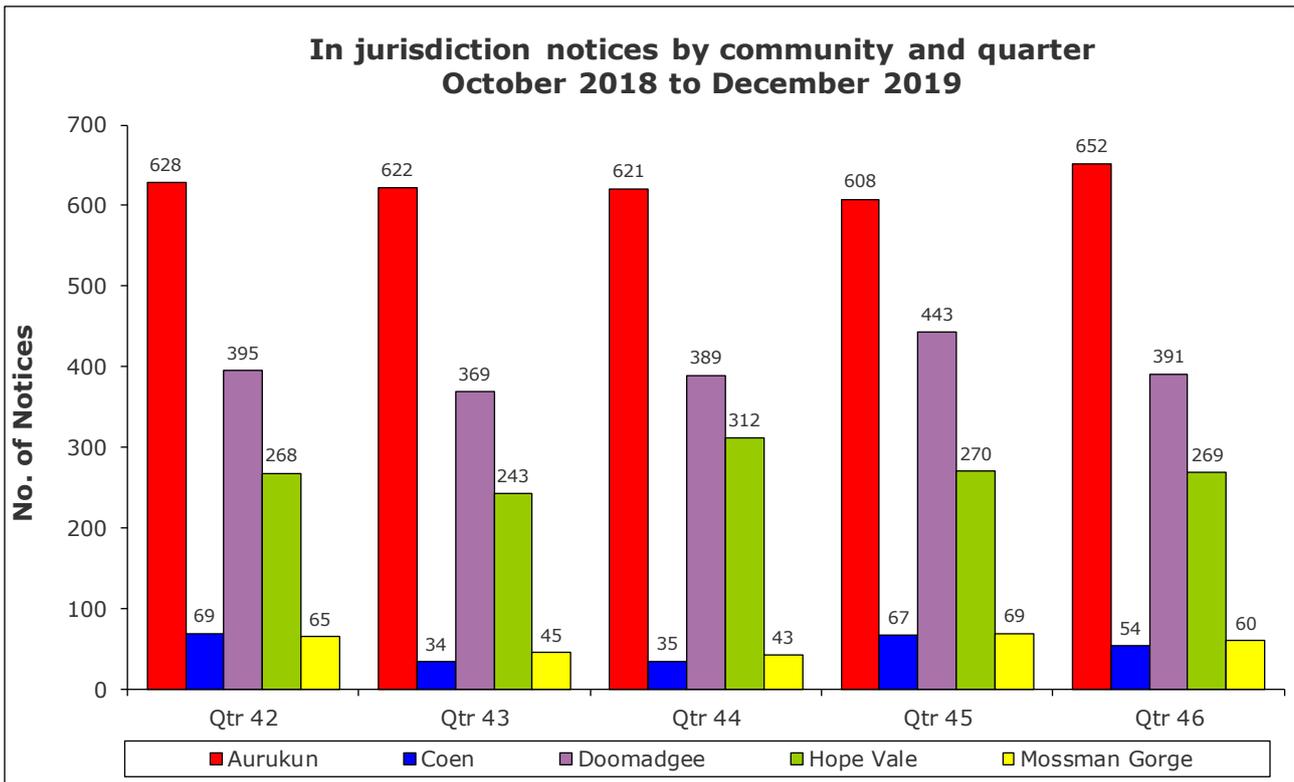
School Enrolment notices remained the same from quarter 45 to quarter 46 with 4 notices received. Aurukun increased by 4 notices, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge decreased by 2 notices each, whilst Coen and Doomadgee remained unchanged with 0 notices received for the quarter.

Child Safety and Welfare notices remained the same with 64 notices received in quarter 46. Doomadgee and Mossman Gorge decreased by 11 and 2 notices respectively, Aurukun and Hope Vale increased by 7 and 6 notices respectively and Coen remained unchanged with 2 notices received.

Housing Tenancy notices decreased from 14 in quarter 45 to 8 in quarter 46 with Coen and Hope Vale decreasing by 4 and 6 notices respectively and Aurukun and Mossman Gorge both increasing by 2 notices each.

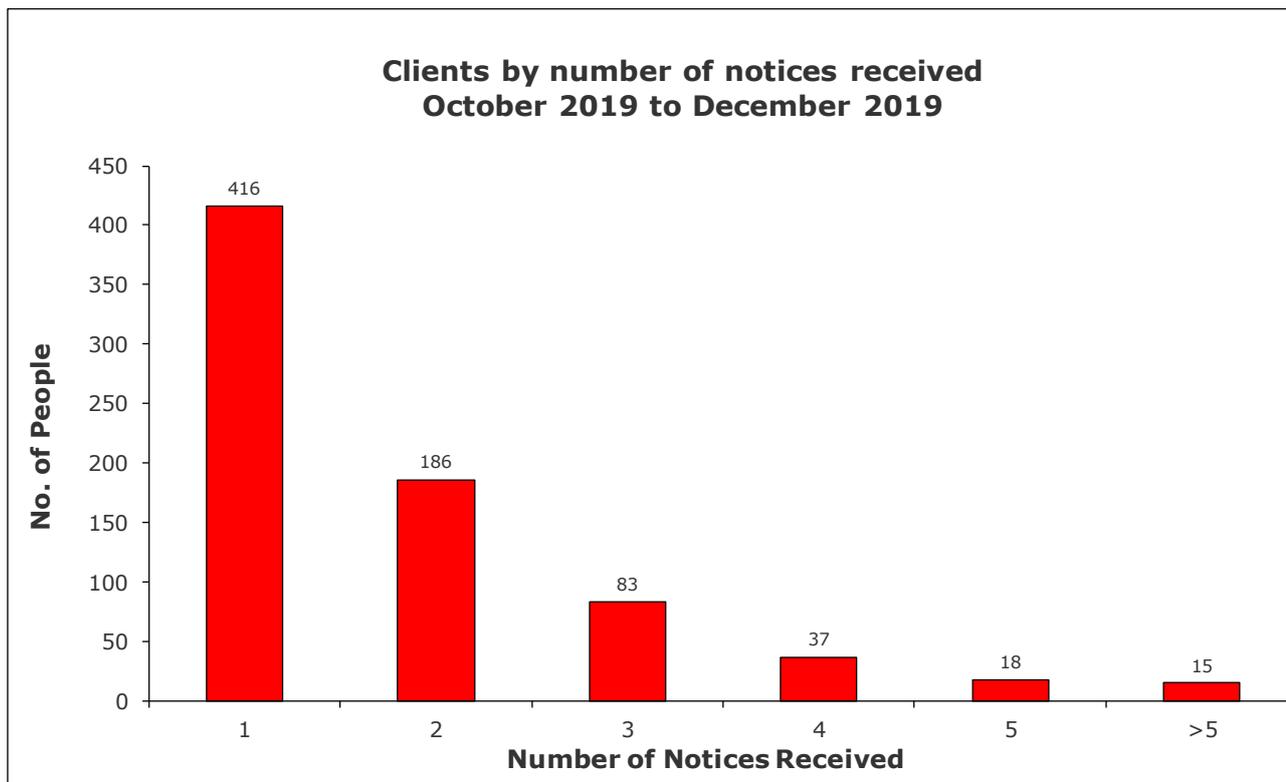


**Graph 1:** In jurisdiction notices by agency processed and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.



**Graph 2:** In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

For quarter 46 44.9 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 2.0 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, 55.1 percent of clients have received only one notice. Twenty-nine new clients were added to the Commission’s database during the quarter.



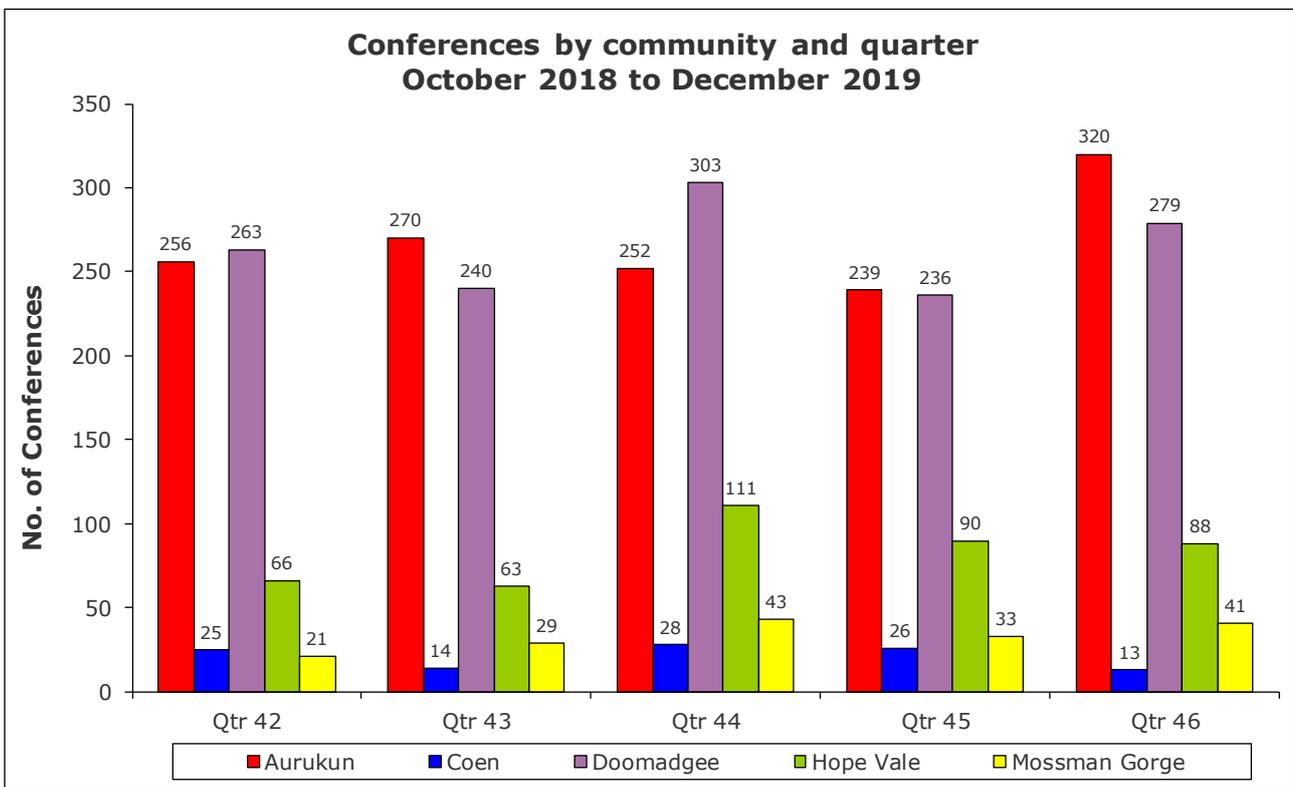
**Graph 3:** FRC clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2019.

**(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

A total of 741 conferences<sup>4</sup>, relating to 467 clients (180 male and 287 female), pertaining to all matters were held across the five communities in quarter 46, resulting in 0 FRA’s being entered into, 68 orders made to attend community support services and 53 CIM orders issued. When compared to last quarter, the number of FRA’s remained unchanged, there was an increase of 27 orders to attend community support services and a decrease of 30 CIM orders. Other outcomes as a result of conferencing during the quarter were decisions for no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Conferences increased from 624 in quarter 45 to 741 in quarter 46. The attendance at conference increased from 55.8% in quarter 45 to 58.0% in quarter 46.

<sup>4</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.



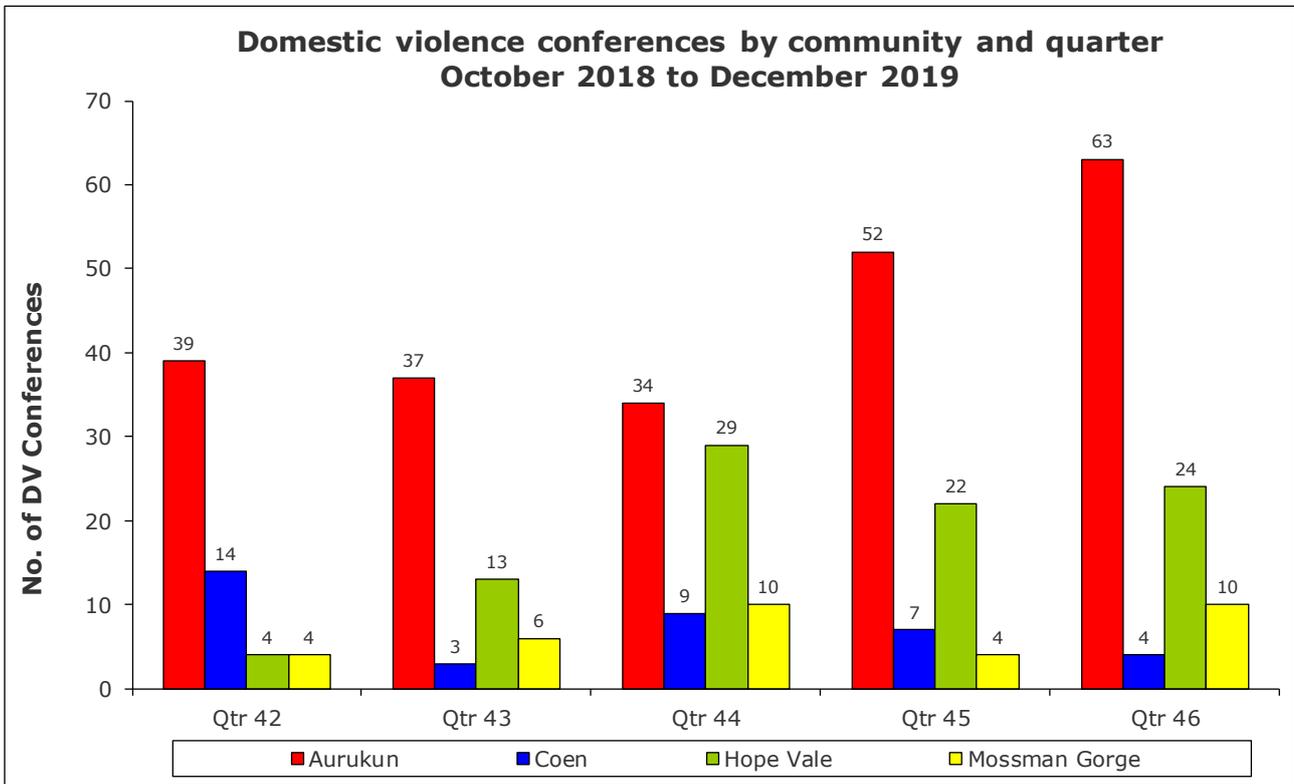
**Graph 4:** Conferences by community and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

#### Conferences for Domestic Violence related matters

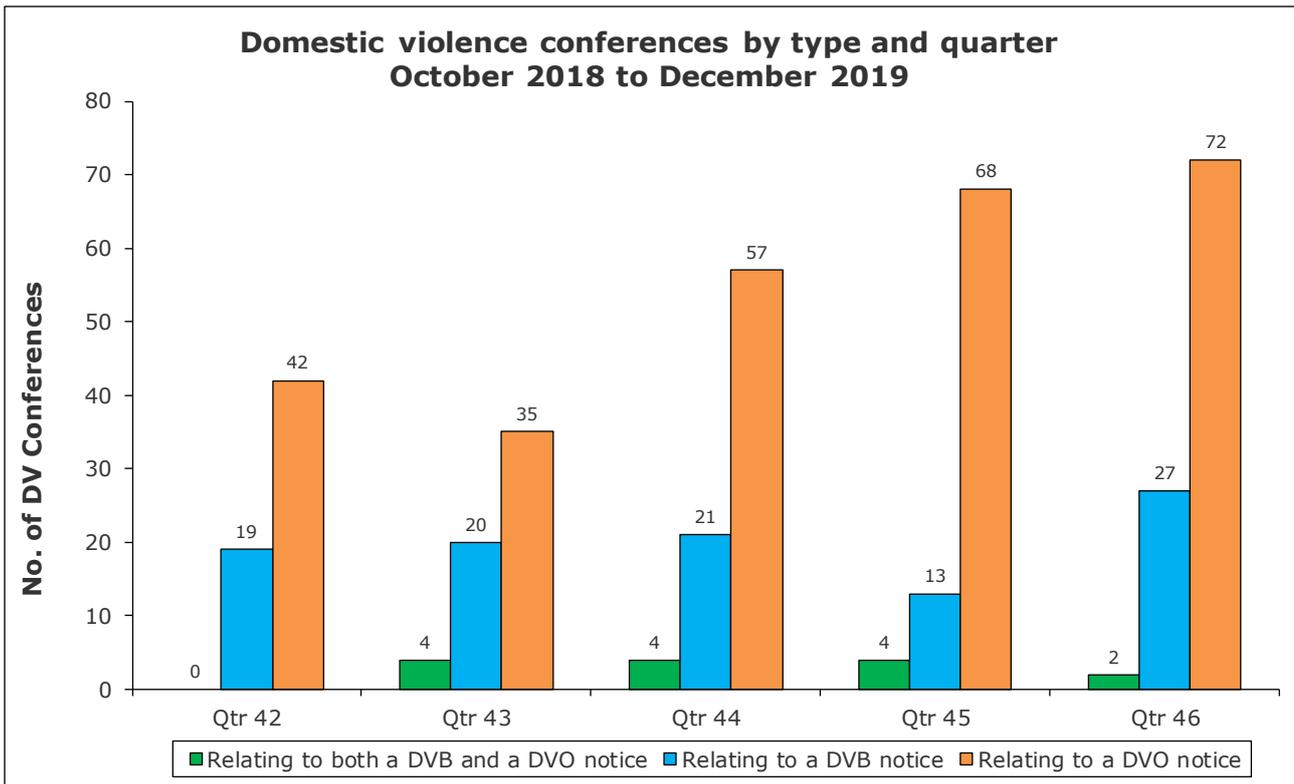
As a subset of the total number of conferences conducted for the quarter, 101 domestic violence conferences were conducted in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge in quarter 46, representing an increase of 16 from the previous quarter. Domestic violence conferences in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun increased by 11, Coen decreased by 3, Hope Vale increased by 2 and Mossman Gorge increased by 6.

**Table 4:** Number of conferences held in relation to domestic violence notices (breaches and orders) per community 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Number of Domestic Violence Conferences	AU	CO	HV	MG	Total
Relating to both a DVB and a DVO notice	0	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
Relating to a DVB notice	16	2	5	4	<b>27</b>
Relating to a DVO notice	47	2	17	6	<b>72</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>101</b>



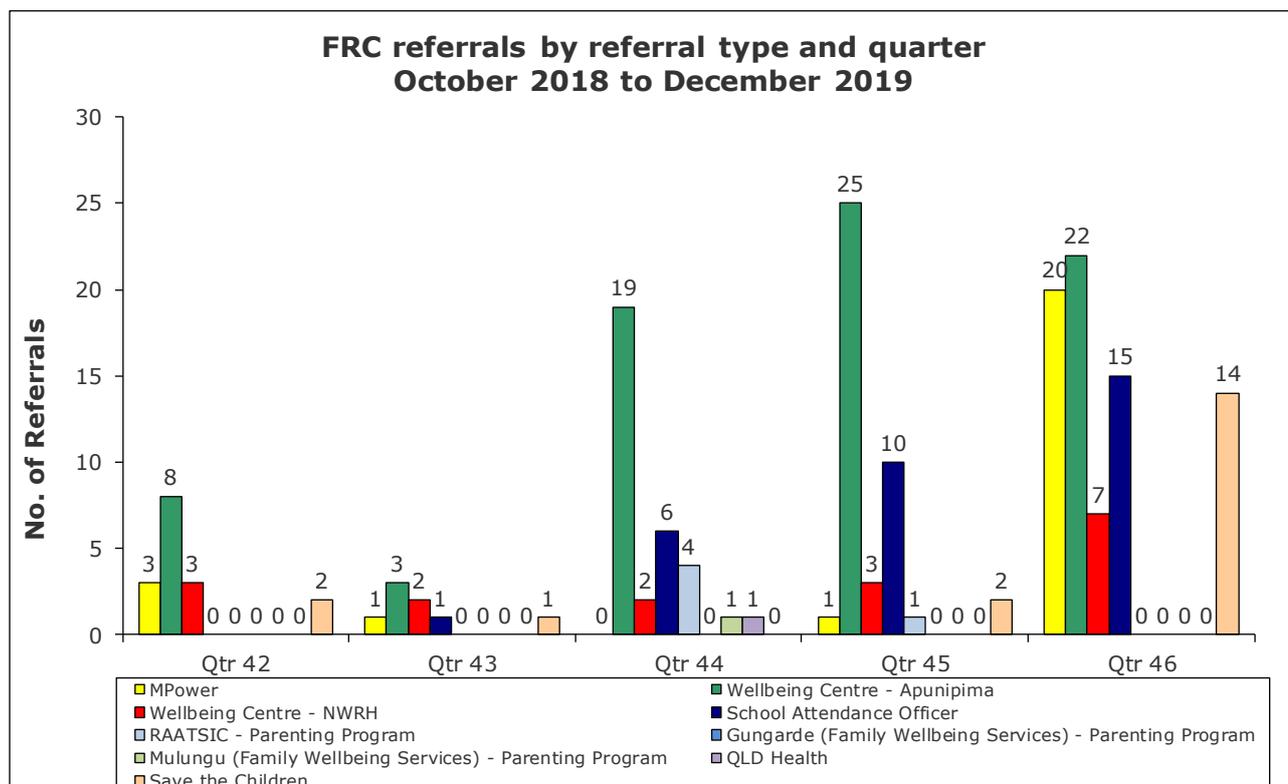
**Graph 5:** Domestic violence conferences by community and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.



**Graph 6:** Domestic violence conferences by type and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

## Referrals

The total number of referrals to service providers increased from 42 in quarter 45 to 78 in quarter 46, relating to 65 clients (23 male and 42 female). Referrals in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun increased by 18; Coen remained unchanged with 0 referrals; Doomadgee increased by 18; Hope Vale decreased by 4 and Mossman Gorge increased by 4.



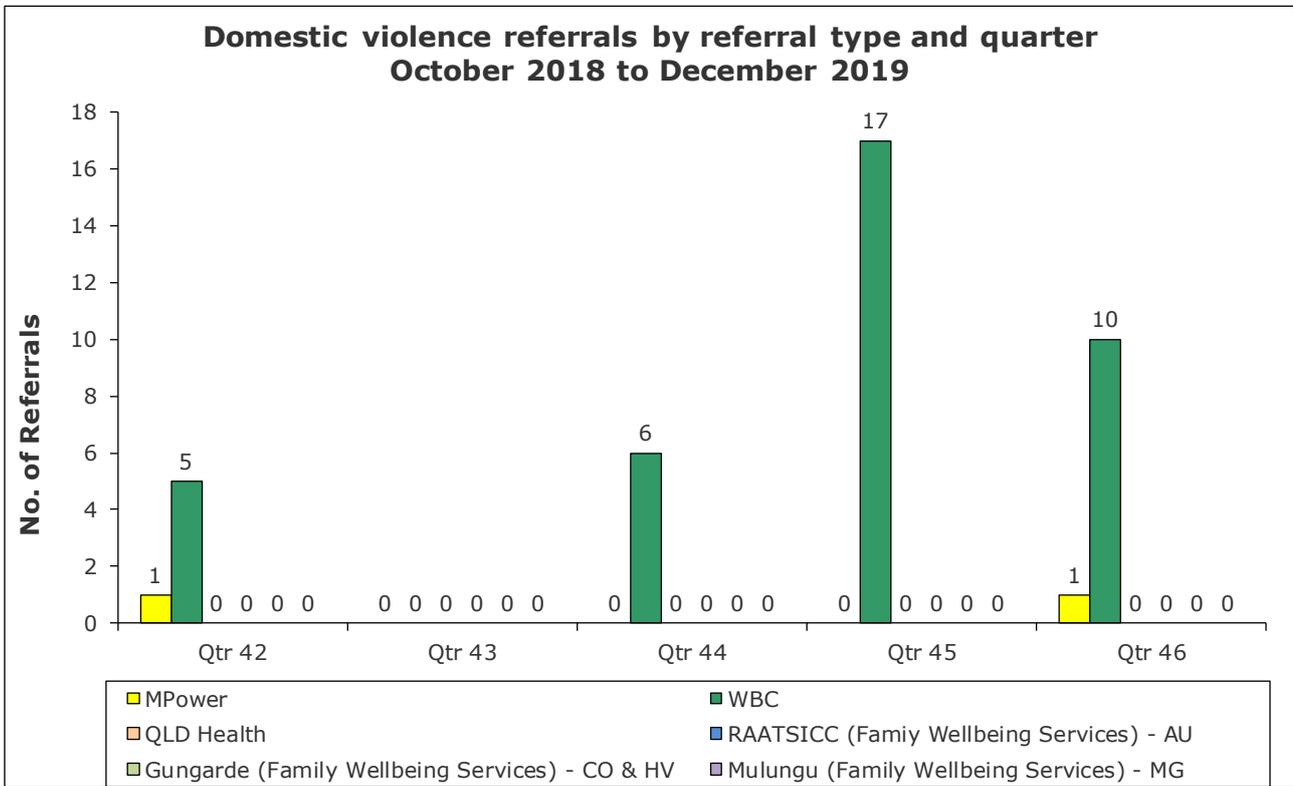
**Graph 7:** Referrals by referral type and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

## Referrals for Domestic Violence related matters

As a subset of the total number of referrals in the quarter, 11 referrals were made in relation to domestic violence conferences in quarter 46, representing a decrease of 6 from the previous quarter.

**Table 5:** Number of referrals in relation to domestic violence notices (breaches and orders) per community 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Notice Type	Community	Referral	Provider Total
<b>DVB</b>	Aurukun	Wellbeing Centre	2
	Mossman Gorge	Wellbeing Centre	1
	<b>DVB Total</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>DVO</b>	Aurukun	Wellbeing Centre	5
	Hope Vale	Wellbeing Centre	1
	Mossman Gorge	MPower	1
	Mossman Gorge	Wellbeing Centre	1
	<b>DVO Total</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>11</b>



**Graph 8:** Domestic violence referrals by referral type and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

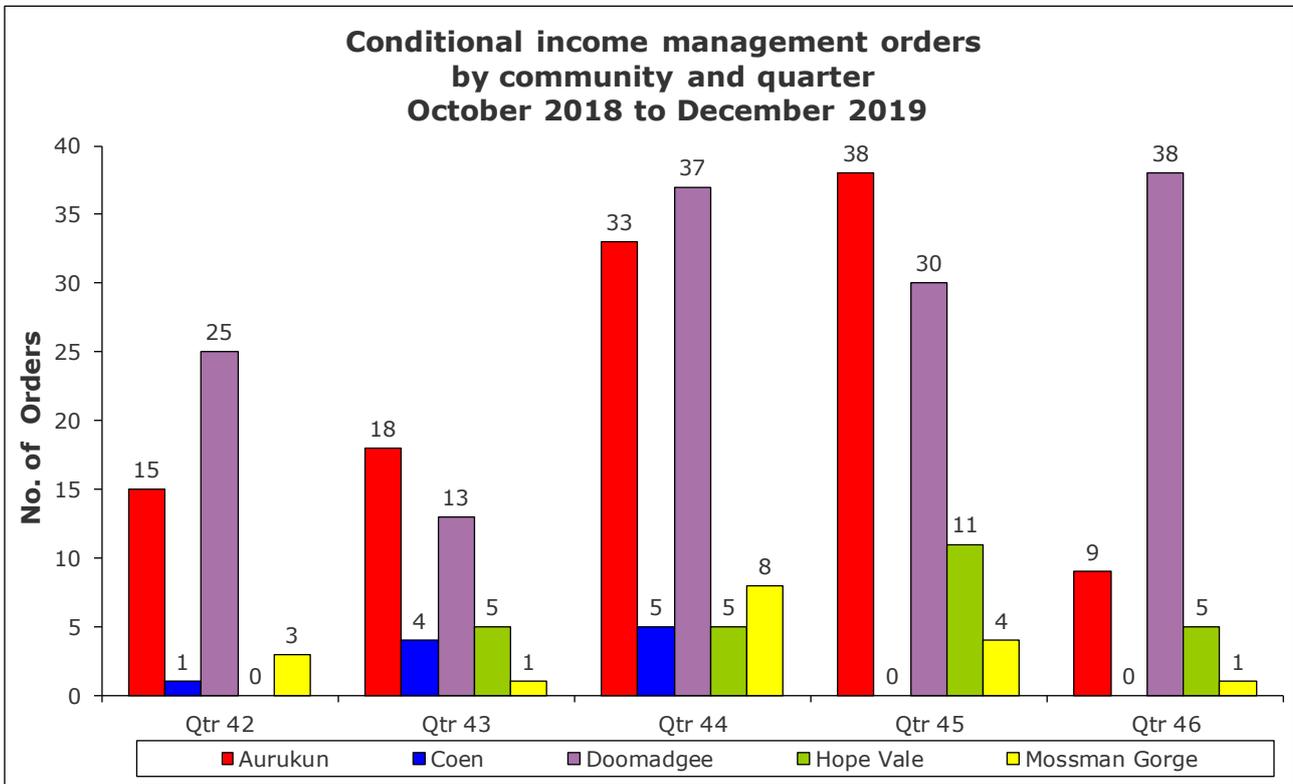
### Conditional Income Management

A total of 53 CIM orders relating to 48 clients (6 male and 42 female), were made in quarter 46, a decrease of 30 from quarter 45. Since the commencement of the Commission 2,724 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 932 clients (393 male and 539 female). Decreases were seen in Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge of 29, 6 and 3 CIM orders respectively. Doomadgee saw an increase of 8 notices whilst Coen remained unchanged with 0 orders for the quarter.

As at 31 December 2019 there were 160 clients subject to a current CIM order. 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 a CIM when requested by the client.

**Table 6:** Number of times a client has been placed on conditional income management per community  
1 July 2008 to 31 December 2019.

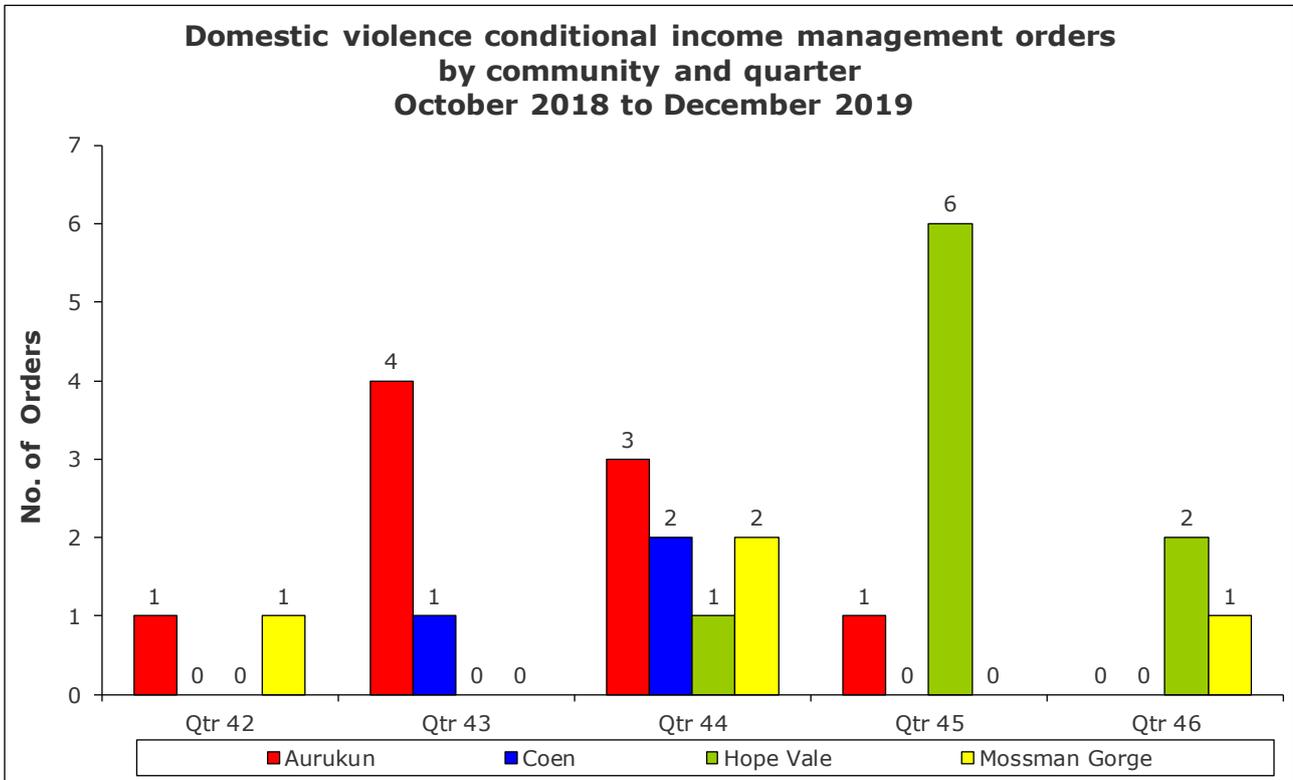
Number of CIMs	CIM'd only once	CIM'd 2-5 times	CIM'd 6-10 times	CIM'd 11+ times	Total
Aurukun	145	212	61	17	<b>435</b>
Coen	29	30	0	0	<b>59</b>
Doomadgee	41	78	10	0	<b>129</b>
Hope Vale	96	108	16	0	<b>220</b>
Mossman Gorge	33	34	20	2	<b>89</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>932</b>



**Graph 9:** Conditional income management orders by community and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

**Conditional Income Management for Domestic Violence related matters**

As a subset of the total number of CIMs in the quarter, 3 CIM orders inclusive of alterations were made in relation to domestic violence conferences in quarter 46, representing a decrease of 4 from the previous quarter.



**Graph 10:** Domestic violence conditional income management orders by community and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

### **Voluntary Income Management**

The Commission processed 2 VIM agreements this quarter and since the commencement of the Commission in 2008, 146 clients (54 male and 92 female) have had an active VIM agreement. 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.

### **Case Management**

As at 31 December 2019, 133 clients were being case-managed, an increase from 92 in quarter 45. Increases were seen in Aurukun, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge of 28, 14, 2 and 5 respectively whilst Coen decreased by 8.

The 68 orders to attend community support services and the 53 CIM orders issued related to 100 clients. Please note a client may be placed on a case plan at the beginning of the quarter to one service provider and then referred to another service provider later in the same quarter. Similarly, a client may be placed on a CIM order at 60%, 75% or 90% and then have their percentage of income management reduced or increased later in the quarter. A client may also be separately placed on a case plan and income management throughout the quarter.

13 clients (1 male and 12 female) were placed on a case plan and a CIM order during the quarter;  
and

52 clients of (22 male and 30 female) were placed on a case plan without a CIM; and

35 clients of (5 male and 30 female) were placed on a CIM order without a case plan.

### **Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders**

Fifteen applications (5 male and 10 female) to Amend or End an Agreement or Order were received in quarter 46, a decrease of 2 from quarter 45. Please note a client may apply to amend or end their agreement or order on multiple occasions throughout a quarter. Outcomes of the 15 applications received are as follows:

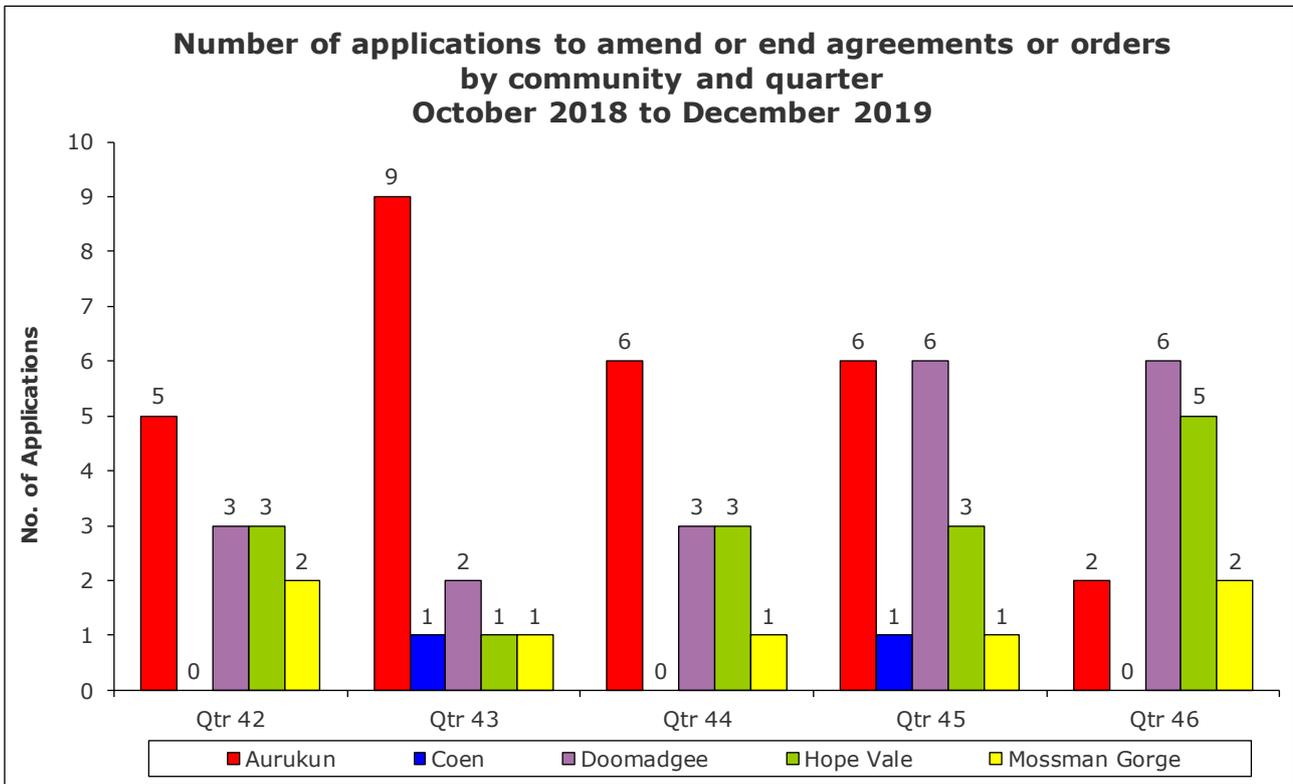
12 Applications granted and income management agreements and orders revoked

1 Application granted and CIM order and case plan revoked

1 Application refused

1 Application received at the end of the quarter, decision pending.

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.



**Graph 11:** Applications to amend or end agreements or orders by community and quarter 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

## 2. Future Direction and Challenges

### **Proposed transition from CYIM to the Cashless Debit Card (CDC)**

Following evidence presented in September (last quarter) by telelink to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, Legislation Committee, on the Inquiry into the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card Transition) Bill 2019, a written submission was lodged with the Committee on 18 October. The submission supported the views of the Commission and Local Commissioners in their fight against long-term welfare dependency and for self-determination in their communities. The submission addressed specific requests for information put forward by the Committee members. During the telelink hearing, the Committee sought further information about the costs of the FRC model. The Committee was advised that the structure of the Welfare Reforms is such that the FRC does not manage the provision of support services. Local Commissioners refer clients to existing external specialist support services, rather than the FRC providing those services itself. Support services are funded through a range of different agreements. Some are directly funded by the Queensland Government, by the Australian Government, and some services that are funded by the Queensland Government receive funding from the Australian Government for that purpose. Accordingly, the FRC does not have access to those funding amounts. The success of Welfare Reform is, however, dependent on access to quality and reliable support services. This has been a challenge, particularly in the setting of remote communities.

The Committee was advised that as an illustration of the potential impact of highly targeted use of income management, as at 27 September 2019, 141 children were in the care of 66 Aurukun clients then on a CIM order. It is difficult to quantify the impact this may have on the families involved, however, when considering the ability to use income management to incentivise improved school attendance, and that the number of children enrolled at the Aurukun State School was 248 in Term 2 2019, it is possible to see the potential to make a difference to the lives of a large number of vulnerable children.

Members of the Committee were left in no doubt that the FRC supports the transition from the BasicsCard to the Cashless Debit Card in FRC communities, and that whilst it was not the subject of the inquiry, suggested that the Committee may give consideration to the FRC model as a basis for a more nuanced, culturally appropriate mechanism for delivering income management in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. It is considered that the improved technology available through the CDC will improve access to goods for FRC's income-managed clients. The increase in the number of outlets where the card can be used will assist clients who often move between communities, and to regional centres for shopping and schooling for example. The ability to purchase goods online and more flexible options for paying bills online will also assist clients living in remote communities. Feedback received from community members indicates that the changed appearance of the card could reduce stigma associated with being income-managed. A full copy of the written submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs is accessible on the Commission's website at [www.frcq.org.au](http://www.frcq.org.au).

### **A more effective FRC**

With the two significant developments of the quarter being the reappointment of Local Commissioners/appointment of new Local Commissioners and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide for the operations of the Commission to 30 June 2021, the Commission now has an opportunity to make considerable impact in the communities it serves, and to grow significantly as an organisation.

A review of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (FRC Act), to identify possible legislative amendments to achieve better alignment with the broader policy reform objectives of the Australian

and Queensland Governments and Cape York Partnership (whilst preserving the integrity of the legislation and maintaining the underlying purpose of the FRC Act), and a review of the operations program with the aim of improving operational efficiencies, enhancing information sharing between the Commission and its partners, and achieving improved service delivery accountabilities to the Commission and its clients commenced this quarter. The review is based on two streams:

- recommended amendments to the FRC Act to improve efficiencies of operation and
- developing strategies to enhance existing approaches to service provider delivery and accountability that is client-focussed, enhances interaction between the FRC and service providers, supports better exchange of information, and improves accountability of service providers in their interactions with the Commission.

In undertaking this review, particular consideration has been given to the FRC Act, the Queensland Productivity Commission's Report on Service Delivery in Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, the Commission's submission to the Senate Standing Committee on the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management to Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2019, an internal framing document to support the consideration of possible legal products and proposals to enhance the FRC model, and the Commission's Annual Report 2018-19.

Stakeholder management has been identified as being the platform upon which our operational improvements will be built. The Commission will seek to formalise its relationships with stakeholders and service providers by way of a MOU to be drafted in 2020 and will improve conferencing processes and compliance through the drafting of practice directions, developing further efficiencies of process, setting KPIs and recalibrating data collection.

On 17 December 2019 the Executive Management Team and all staff participated in an FRC Operational Review Workshop which incorporated year to date reflections on key processes. Data was analysed across all communities from the timeliness of dealing with matters, to holding conferences and making decisions. The Commission closed its calendar year operations by celebrating our achievements to date with the commitment to reflect, plan and commit to action in 2020.

### **Training and policy development**

The *Human Rights Act 2019* came into effect on 1 January 2020. The Act is a framework for the Queensland public sector and places the human rights of individuals at the forefront of government and public sector service delivery. It ensures that all Queenslanders, especially the most vulnerable, have their human rights respected, protected and promoted. Principle aim of the Act is to ensure that respect for human rights is embedded in the culture of our public service and places individuals at the centre of decision-making and service delivery. It is therefore clear that as employees in a public entity, and as employers, we must consider the impact of our decisions and actions on the human rights of Queenslanders.

In December the Commission reviewed its External Complaints Management Policy to ensure that it is compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* and will continue reviewing all internal policies to ensure compliance. Commission employees have completed training through the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women iLearn site of a module titled *Public Entities and the Queensland Human Rights Act 2019*. Employees have been reminded that the Commission's mandate may have an impact on human rights (orders and income management) which is legislatively authorised, and only applied where it is considered reasonable and demonstrably justified by the Local Commissioners. One human right in particular – fair hearing – plays a major role in our conferencing processes. Further training to clarify how our *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* interacts with the *Human Rights Act 2019* will be scheduled with the Queensland Human Rights Commission in 2020.

With the appointment of five new Local Commissioners, this quarter saw a review of the Local Commissioner Handbook and the Local Commissioner Conference Guidelines. Both documents outline the functions and powers of the Local Commissioners, criteria for making decisions and most importantly, the duty to avoid a conflict or potential conflict of interest.

### 3. Governance

#### 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 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. The Board's membership consists of the following members:

- Dr Chris Sarra                      Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Chair)
- Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC      CEO, National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Mr Noel Pearson                Founder, Cape York Partnership representing the Cape York Institute.

#### 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 five welfare reform communities.

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

## 4. Financial Operations

### Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019 totalled \$2,372,062. This income consisted of:
  - \$409,000 Queensland Government funding
  - \$156,500 Queensland Government funding – Doomadgee
  - \$1,800,000\* Australian Government funding
  - \$4,092 interest received
  - \$2,470 received in sundry income.

The balance of available funds in the bank as at 31 December 2019 is \$941,609.

### Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019 was \$829,165.

*\* At the end quarter 46, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Queensland governments was finalised. The Memorandum covers the period 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2021. Upon finalisation of the Memorandum, funding for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 was accrued in the financial results. These funds were invoiced and received in January 2020.*

**Table 7:** Expenditure in quarter 46.

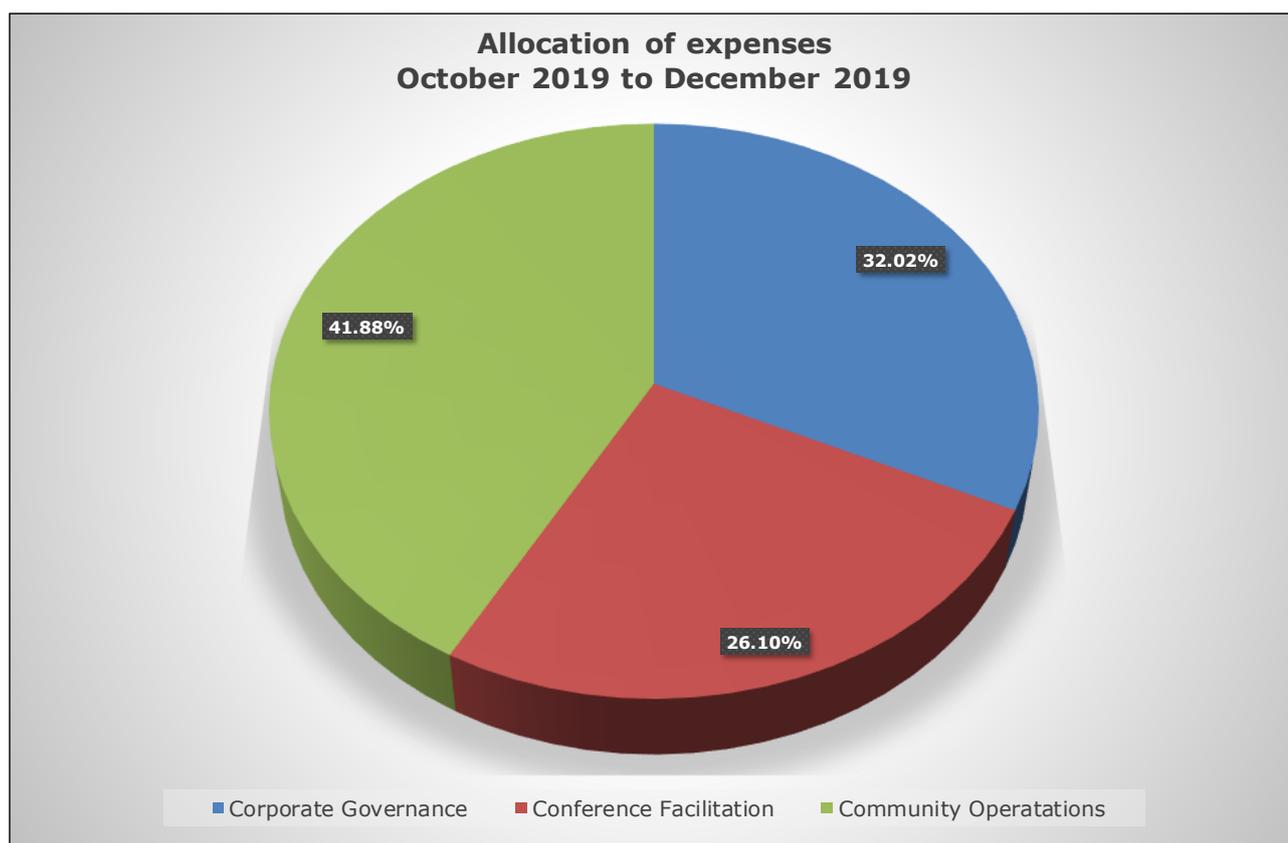
<b>1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019</b>	<b>Expenditure Qtr 46</b>	<b>1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019</b>	<b>Expenditure Qtr 46</b>
Employee salaries – FRC staff	\$374,959	Internet & IT	\$50,997
Employee salaries – Local Commissioners	\$112,550	Motor vehicle	\$9,705
Employee on costs – FRC staff	\$66,704	Property	\$54,236
Employee on costs – Local Commissioners	\$16,038	Travel	\$44,145
Other employment costs	\$4,666	General operating	\$76,968
Communications	\$3,547	Other expenses	\$14,650
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$829,165</b>

The core functions of the FRC can be summarised into three broad categories:

- **Corporate Governance:** including corporate governance, finance, statistical reporting, training and other administrative functions to ensure the effective and efficient operations of the Commission.
- **Community Operations:** including the operational costs in each of the five communities to conduct conferences, prepare and monitor case plans for clients for attendance at community support services and prepare and monitor income management orders.
- **Conference Facilitation:** including to facilitate the holding of conferences in the five communities, provide support to the Local Commissioners and Local Coordinators to hold conferences, assist with the on-going monitoring of case plans for clients through the provision of data and other information and process income management orders where considered necessary.

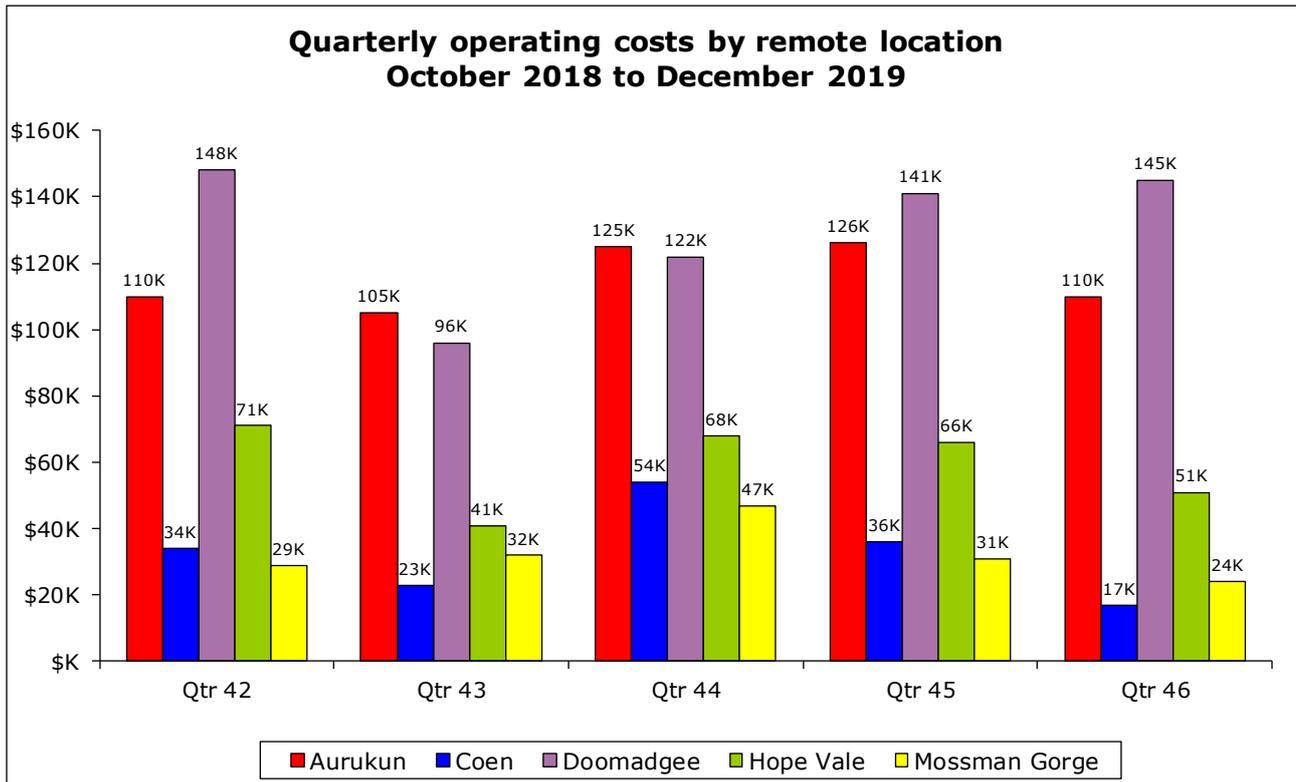
The functions of corporate governance and conference facilitation are conducted primarily in the Registry office in Cairns with frequent visits to community by staff. Community operations are conducted by Local Coordinators (with one of these living remotely in the larger community of Aurukun and twenty-nine Local Commissioners, resident in their respective communities, and are paid as sessional sitting Commission members for conferencing, serving notices, meetings and professional development.

The allocation of the FRC's costs in quarter 46 based on the above core functions is:



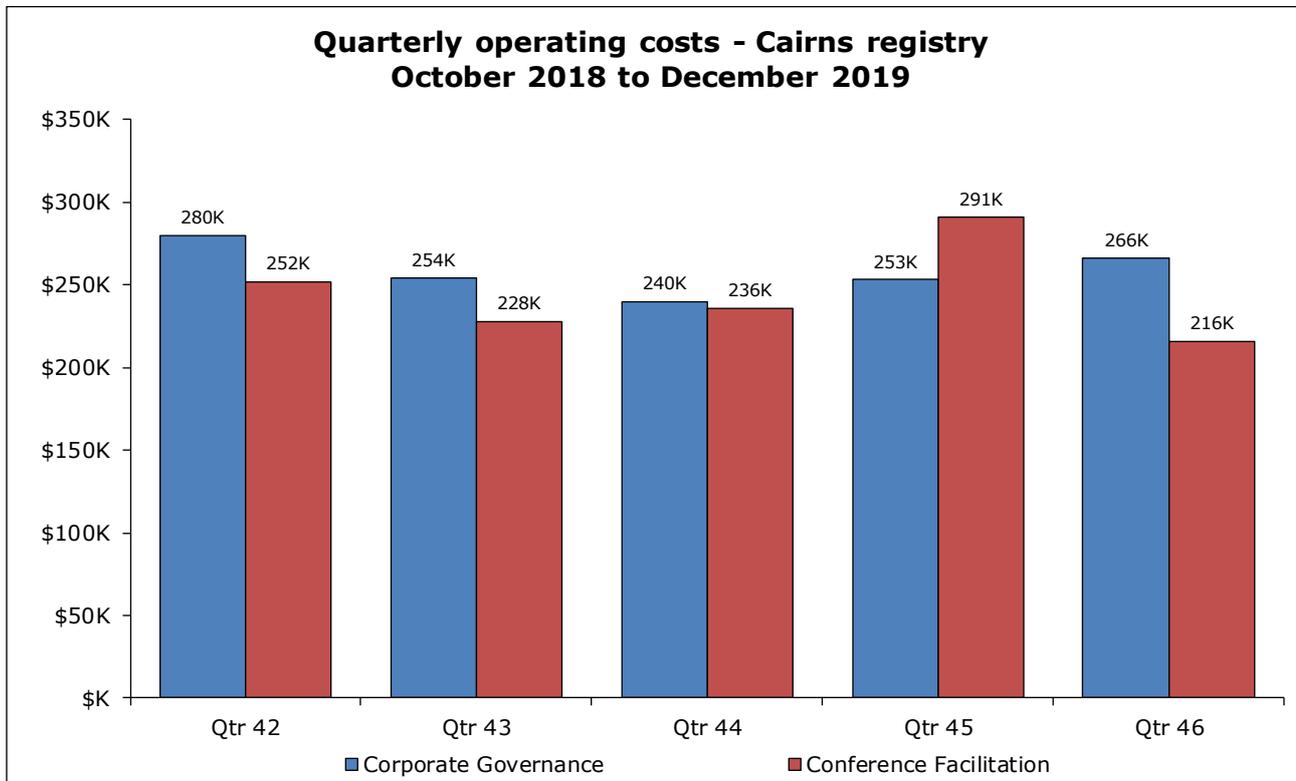
**Graph 12:** Allocation of expenses 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Regional operational expenditure by location and quarter.



**Graph 13:** Operating costs by remote location 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

Cairns expenditure for quarter 46 compared to the previous four quarters.



**Graph 15:** Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019.

**APPENDIX A**



**SITTINGS CALENDAR 2019  
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION  
1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019**



Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Other
1 July						Cooktown Circuit
8 July						Doomadgee – Gulf Circuit
15 July					Public Holiday	19 Cairns Show Day 16, 18 ASC Meeting in Cairns Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
22 July	Public Holiday	23	24	25 25	26	22 Mossman Show Day Estimates: Tuesday 23/7/2019 – Friday 26/7/2019
29 July		30 30	31	1		Estimates: Tuesday 30/7/2019 – Friday 1/8/2019
5 August		Public Holiday 6	7			6 Aurukun Day 9 Mount Isa Rodeo Day Cooktown Circuit
12 August		13	14	15		Aurukun Cape B Circuit Doomadgee – Gulf Circuit
19 August		20	21	22 22	Public Holiday	23 Doomadgee Day 20 ASC Meeting
26 August		27	28	29		
2 September		3	4	5		Cooktown Circuit Doomadgee – Gulf Circuit
9 September		10 10	11	12		Aurukun Cape B Circuit
16 September	16	17 17		19 19		17 ASC Meeting
23 September						
30 September						
7 October	Public Holiday	8	9	10		7 Queen's Birthday Cooktown Circuit Doomadgee – Gulf Circuit
14 October		15	16	17 17	18	17 ASC Meeting in Cairns Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit
21 October		22 22	23	24		
28 October		29	30	31 ½ day 31		
4 November		5	6	7		Cooktown Circuit
11 November		12 12		14 14		Aurukun Cape B & Coen Cape A Circuit Doomadgee – Gulf Circuit

**SITTINGS CALENDAR 2019  
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION  
1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019**

Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Other
18 November	18		20	21		19 ASC Meeting
25 November		26	27 27 ½ day	28		
2 December		3	4	5		CYAAA schools finish 6/12/2019 Cooktown Circuit
9 December		10 10	11	12		10 ASC Meeting Aurukun, Doomadgee and Mossman schools finish 13/12/19 Aurukun Cape Circuit Doomadgee – Gulf Circuit
16 December						
23 December			Public Holiday	Public Holiday		25 Christmas Day, 26 Boxing Day 27 Office closed for XMAS
30 December			Public Holiday			1 New Year's Day 30, 31 Office closed for XMAS

**LEGEND**

	Office Days
	Public Holidays
	Aurukun Sitting
	Coen Sitting
	Doomadgee Sitting
	Hope Vale Sitting
	Mossman Gorge Sitting
ASC	Aurukun Shire Council Meeting
∅	Cancelled Conference

OFFICE	CONTACT NAME	Phone	Mobile	Facsimile
Cairns – Commissioner	Ms Tammy Williams	4081 8413	0447 739 137	4041 0974
Cairns – Registrar	Ms Maxine McLeod	4081 8412	0409 461 624	4041 0974
Cairns – Executive Officer (Finance)	Ms Tracey Paterson	4081 8411	0429 495 353	4041 0974
Cairns – Client Manager (Tue, Wed, alternative Thurs)	Ms Camille Banks	4081 8410	0438 195 342	4041 0974
Cairns – Acting Client Manager (Mon, Fri, alternative Thurs)	Ms Anne Crampton	4081 8410	0419 647 948	4041 0974
Aurukun Local Coordinator	Mr Bryce Coxall	4060 6185	0428 985 106	4041 0974
Acting Coen Local Coordinator	Ms Josephine Pinder		0417 798 392	4041 0974
Doomadgee Local Coordinator	Mr Robbie Hazeldine	4745 8111	0418 666 204	4041 0974
Acting Hope Vale Local Coordinator (Wed/Thurs)	Mr Brenden Joinbee	4060 9153	0408 482 026	4041 0974
Acting Mossman Gorge Local Coordinator	Ms Josephine Pinder		0417 798 392	4041 0974