



FRC

FAMILY
RESPONSIBILITIES
COMMISSION

SERVICE CHARTER

REGISTRAR'S STATEMENT

We know you value good customer service. Our aim is to give you the best service we can. This Service Charter defines for you the standard of service you can expect from the Family Responsibilities Commission, what you need to know about your responsibilities and what to do if you are unhappy with the service you have received. It also tells you about how we monitor ourselves to measure whether we are meeting our commitments to you.

The Commission nurtures a spirit of inquiry and innovation. We will take up the challenge of sourcing unconventional and creative solutions to address the complex problems that confront our communities.

If you have any comments about this Service Charter, please email us by accessing our website at www.frcq.org.au, or contact the Cairns Registry (refer the Contacts and Information section on Page 7).

Maxine McLeod

**Registrar
Family Responsibilities Commission**

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ABOUT THE FAMILIES RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

The *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* established the Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) which commenced operating on 1 July 2008. The purpose of the Commission is to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour in those communities that have nominated as participants in the welfare reform initiatives, and to assist community members to resume and maintain primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and the individuals and families within their community.

The broad objectives of the welfare reform agenda are to:

- rebuild social norms and restore Indigenous authority
- address the welfare pedestal through changing incentives
- support engagement in the real economy
- move from welfare housing to home ownership
- enable children to make full use of their talents and creativity and to enjoy the best of both worlds.

The reforms are designed with a strong emphasis on partnership, capacity building, respect and use of local authority. Emphasis is also placed on the enhancement of services and appropriate service delivery mechanisms. A range of policy, program and service delivery reforms and practical on-the-ground initiatives have been implemented to help reduce welfare dependency, promote social responsibility, provide pathways to participation in the real economy, improve school attendance and enhance educational opportunities. These include:

- effective responses to alcohol and drug misuse, gambling, addictive behaviours and violence
- improved services to promote child, individual and family wellbeing including support services which assist expectant parents, encourage positive behaviour, optimise learning by improving school attendance, prepare students for secondary school and assist in maximising the transition to boarding school
- interventions which target employment assistance, sponsor individual enterprise, increase educational opportunities and encourage private home ownership
- increased investment in community capacity building through social capital building programs and Opportunity Hubs that provide a central location for products to assist the community, social and civic activities as well as service co-location
- money management services to promote financial literacy and capability, build assets and establish educational savings trusts to enable the continuing education of children and
- income management of individuals where appropriate to assist them to manage their finances and in some instances to encourage compliance with case plans aimed at improving social responsibility.

The primary purpose of the reforms is to encourage and empower individuals and families to assume responsibility for ensuring acceptable social standards.

The core objectives of the Family Responsibilities Commission (as an independent statutory authority assisting in the rebuilding of communities) are focused on safeguarding and restoring:

- child safety (safeguarding the future generation)
- school attendance (safeguarding education)
- lawful behaviour (safeguarding the community)
- responsible tenancy (restoring social accountability)

Our **values** are:

Safety	<i>We value the right of everyone to live in safe communities</i>
Respect	<i>We believe that respect for oneself builds the foundation for wellbeing</i>
Ownership	<i>We are committed to encouraging communities to take ownership of their present and future</i>
Innovation	<i>We actively seek and encourage creative ideas to build the potential for lasting change</i>
Empowerment	<i>We are committed to empowering people to take the initiative to reform their communities and build their own direction and future</i>
Diversity	<i>We are passionate about respecting the diversity and cultural richness of the communities</i>

The Commission focuses on early intervention and the outcomes sought are clearly aligned with the goals of the wider criminal justice system - goals aimed at reducing drug addiction, violence, crime and child neglect in Indigenous communities. The Commission's approach is socially orientated with conferencing, case management monitoring, and support for the community in nurturing, protecting and educating the future generation. The Commission's methodology is aimed at being proactive, collaborative and supportive of the welfare reform communities in breaking the cycle of apathy and passive welfare.

Primary to our support function is the strengthening of collaborative cross-agency and Government partnerships.

OUR CLIENTS AND OUR STAKEHOLDERS

The Commission will work with its clients and stakeholders to deliver outputs for the State and Australian governments that achieve the outcomes sought for the participating communities.

Our clients are defined as welfare recipients who have lived in a welfare reform community area for at least three months or whose usual place of residence is, or was since 1 July 2008, in a welfare reform community area.

Our stakeholders are defined as any person or organisation we provide a service to or for, or who maintains an interests in, or may be affected by Commission actions, objectives and policies.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

1. You can expect us to make it easy for you to use our services.

We will do this by:

- making it easy and convenient to contact us both in Cairns and in the participating communities;
- making information available to you, both oral and written, in concise language;
- providing an interpreter for our clients when necessary;
- informing and explaining to our clients, service providers and stakeholders decisions that impact upon them.

2. You can expect us to explain your options to you.

We will do this by:

- giving you complete information that is accurate and consistent;
- explaining what you need to know, and what you need to do;
- correcting any mistakes openly, honestly and in a timely manner;
- responding courteously and promptly to any complaint in regard to service;
- providing timely, clearly formulated options for matters under consideration.

3. You can expect us to respect your rights.

We will do this by:

- respecting your right to seek a review or appeal;
- respecting your lawful right to access your personal information;
- respecting your right to privacy in regard to your personal information;
- giving you complete information that is accurate and consistent;
- not using our public position improperly to influence others, or for personal benefit;
- disclosing misconduct, fraud or corruption wherever we believe it to have occurred.

4. You can expect us to treat you with respect and courtesy.

We will do this by:

- showing respect to our colleagues and clients and treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves;
- endeavouring at all times to work cooperatively with other Government and non-Government agencies and organisations;

- consistently striving at all times to provide each client with a fair and equitable level of service and support to meet their individual needs regardless of who they are, where they come from, or what their personal life's journey has been;
- working in partnership with other services to ensure that fair, equitable, transparent and impartial services are provided;
- behaving with honesty and integrity;
- having trained, professional staff who will uphold the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service, the Commission's Workplace Policy and the Statement of Objectives for the Community published by the Queensland Government.

5. You can expect us to make it easy for you to do business with us.

We will do this by:

- ensuring that our organisation strives to produce outcomes for our clients in developing solutions to their issues;
- ensuring wherever possible, our decision-making processes are based on all the evidence available to us;
- striving to operate at all times to the highest level of professional standards in all of our dealings with clients and stakeholders;
- paying attention to community ideas and suggestions for service improvement;
- striving to implement Government policy in a manner that fosters positive relationships with our stakeholders and clients;
- seeking innovative approaches to develop partnerships with other levels of Government and organisations outside Government to deliver the solutions we agree upon.

HOW WE MEASURE, MONITOR AND REPORT ON OUR PERFORMANCE

We will measure and monitor against our service values and standards by:

- recording and acting on your feedback and complaints to improve our service;
- providing ongoing training to our Local Commissioners and staff;
- ensuring performance and development plans are in place to increase efficiencies;
- delivering high quality conferencing and referral processes which are achieved in a timely manner;
- engaging with stakeholders and service providers to monitor and where necessary improve efficiencies of processes;
- working to increase community, Australian and State Government confidence in the capacity and capability of our Local Commissioners;
- using conference outcomes to drive systemic change;
- capturing community views to inform on the effectiveness of welfare reform;
- regularly reviewing the terms and effectiveness of this charter;
- maintaining and analysing statistics on the communities in regard to the number of:
 - agency notifications received
 - conference notices issued
 - clients on Commission orders
 - clients on voluntary income management
 - clients on conditional income management (CIM)
 - school-aged children attending school

- conferences conducted independently by Local Commissioners
- CIM clients who have had CIM orders reduced or revoked
- conferences attended by clients
- reporting on our client service performance in our Annual Report.

In order to ensure the Charter continues to meet the purpose for which it is intended, we want to hear from you should you feel we have not met our commitment to you or our commitment to the Public Service generally.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

You can assist us to provide a high standard of service by:

- providing us with timely, necessary and accurate information;
- treating our employees with courtesy and respect;
- attending scheduled appointments in a timely manner;
- abiding by agreements/undertakings/obligations whether voluntary or legally imposed in a responsive and positive manner;
- advising us of a change in your circumstances which may affect a Commission decision;
- reading, or having read to you any information we may send or give to you;
- advising us should you not have a clear understanding of any obligations you may or will have to the Commission;

YOUR FEEDBACK AND MAKING A COMPLAINT

The Family Responsibilities Commission has External and Employee Complaints Management Policies in place which provide a framework for the management of complaints. The policies aim to identify and eliminate causes of complaints and improve service and organisational performance. All Commission employees are familiar with the complaints handling process.

The procedure for dealing with operational complaints is as follows:

1. when a complaint is received (and is not able to be resolved immediately) by the Commission, the matter will be referred to the Commission's Complaints Contact Officer who will then:
 - receive the complaint and record the complaint in a Complaints Management Register;
 - provide the complainant with a Complaint Form and explain the complaints process;
 - acknowledge the complaint in writing within fourteen (14) days;
 - liaise with the Commissioner and other relevant parties in regard to the investigation and resolve the complaint if possible within thirty (30) days;
 - provide the complainant with a written decision within seven (7) days from the decision being made (including reasons and external review and appeal rights);
 - if the Commission is at fault we will provide a solution to prevent it happening again.

A person aggrieved by a decision of the Complaints Contact Officer in regard to an operational complaint may seek a review of the decision by the Family Responsibilities Commission Commissioner within twenty-eight (28) days of the Complaints Contact Officer's decision being advised.

If you are dissatisfied with this review, you may wish to contact the Queensland Ombudsman. The Queensland Ombudsman contact details are located in the Contacts and Information section of this charter.

Conference-related complaints are complaints about actions or attitudes of the Commission or Family Responsibilities Commissioners, including for example, a decision to hold a conference, conflict of interest relating to Commissioners, actions at a conference and conference outcomes.

Conference-related complaints will be considered by the Commissioner. There is no right to further *internal* review of the Commissioner's decision in relation to the complaint, however, you may refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

The Commission will capture and analyse information in relation to its complaints management and complaints history in order to identify complaint trends and any possible systemic issues that need to be addressed. Additionally the analysis of complaints information will be utilised to assess the effectiveness of staff performance, training and commitment to complaints handling. Corrective measures will be initiated if required.

We welcome general feedback (whether compliments, complaints or suggestions) which can either be emailed to us through our website, mailed to us at our mailing address, or simply phoned through to us (refer Contact and Information Details following).

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

<i>Cairns Registry</i>	<i>Cairns Commonwealth Centre Level 3, 107 Lake Street, Cairns Queensland 4870. Ph: 4081 8400</i>
<i>Aurukun Office</i>	<i>Community Justice Group Building Wuungkam Street, Aurukun, Queensland 4892. Ph: 4060 6185 or 0428 985 106</i>
<i>Coen Office</i>	<i>CRAC Building 7 Taylor Street, Coen, Queensland 4892 Ph: 0417 798 392</i>
<i>Doomadgee</i>	<i>The Community Justice Building 15 Sharpe Street, Doomadgee, Queensland Ph: 4745 8111 or 0418 666 204</i>

Hope Vale Office	Office 1, Hope Vale Business Centre, 3 Muni Street, Hope Vale 4895 Ph: 4060 9153 or 0408 482 026
Mossman Gorge	Lunde Street, Mossman Gorge, 4873 Ph: 0417 798 392

(Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday)

You can write to us at PO Box 5438, Cairns Queensland 4870 or email the Registrar on maxine.mcleod@frcq.org.au.

You can obtain a copy of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* by contacting the Cairns Registry or online at <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au> or <http://www.frcq.org.au>.

Our website is <http://www.frcq.org.au>

Queensland Ombudsman

Office location

Level 18, 53 Albert Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Postal Address

GPO Box 3314
Brisbane QLD 4001

Ph 07 3005 7000

Ph Toll Free (outside Brisbane) 1800 068 908

Fax 07 3005 7067

Email ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Web www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au