

COMMISSIONER GLASGOW'S MESSAGE



From the Commissioner

The Commission's fifth Annual Report recording its activities for the financial year ending 30 June 2013 is submitted on behalf of my Commissioner colleagues and our valued staff. The report is delivered with the satisfaction that the Commission has been evaluated and acknowledged to have carried out its responsibilities effectively and successfully.

The Cape York Welfare Reform Evaluation Report 2012 (the Evaluation) was presented to the Queensland and Australian Governments and made public in March 2013. The report noted:

"An aspect of the trial's implementation that is worth highlighting is the Family Responsibilities Commission. As the pivotal new institution in the welfare reform framework, the FRC'S effective implementation was crucial to the trial's overall success.

Evaluation activities have confirmed that the FRC continues to function effectively and is a successful element of the trial, particularly in relation to the conferencing undertaken by Local Commissioners."

The Commissioners have, over the past year, continued building on our successes and have worked determinedly and proactively in the areas where improvements have come slowly. They have been patient but firm with people who have resisted change for the better, and have been consistent in their endeavours to assist in the support for, and restoration of, socially responsible standards of behaviour. The leadership shown by each of the Local Commissioners is an outstanding example of the rebuilding and restoration of local Indigenous authority as acknowledged by the evaluators.

Commissioners' advice and opinions continue to be actively sought by Governments and service providers. They are regularly consulted by officers of State and Australian Departments for their views and advice, and have taken on mentoring roles encouraging others in community to restore Indigenous authority.

As observed by the reviewers, the strength of the Commission and its success is attributable to the leadership and determination of our Local Commissioners who are committed to improving the lives and opportunities available to every child.

The Academy and Services

The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) has proved an outstanding success and is accepted as a permanent fixture in the communities. Its dedicated teachers continue improving the quality and effectiveness of education to each child in their care.

Notwithstanding the budget constraints and challenges over the past year, I report that all of the Governments services in the communities have performed with commitment and energy. The dedication of these men and women, who continue to provide each community with a good and rising level of care and service, is remarkable. I acknowledge in particular, the work and efforts of the members of the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

The Cape York Welfare Reform Evaluation Report

The Evaluation, prepared at a cost of \$1.7 million, sought to answer key strategic questions in regard to changes in social norms and behaviours in the communities. I note with pride that amongst its conclusions it determined that:

- The FRC has strengthened Indigenous authority through the FRC Commissioners providing leadership in their communities. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence from the Evaluation



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attests that the FRC Commissioners are recognised as moral guardians or guides.

- A significant impact of the FRC Commissioners is the listening, guiding and supportive role they fulfil which reflects the FRC model being built on a traditional, restorative justice model to improve outcomes for Indigenous populations, rather than what some have classified as a punitive model of income management.
- The FRC Commissioners are perceived by the community as bringing about positive behavioural change through demonstrating strong leadership. They have influenced their fellow community members to view Indigenous leadership as not only achievable, but a positive step toward increasing civic participation and resolving common problems.

The reader is encouraged to access the full report at: http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/03_2013/cywr_evaluation_report_v1.2.docx

Commission staff

The ongoing heavy workload of our valued representatives in the communities has continued with the enthusiastic support and commitment of our small Cairns based staff. I thank Registrar Rob White and our executive team for their valued leadership and commitment to maintaining the high standards we have set for ourselves.

The Commission's future

On 28 March 2013 both the Honourable Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the Queensland Premier Campbell Newman announced the proposed extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial and the Commission to 31 December 2014. Subsequently, in budget announcements released on 3 May 2013 and 4 June 2013 respectively, the Australian and Queensland Governments confirmed funding for the extension. We look forward to continuing and expanding our work with the Indigenous communities of Queensland.

David Glasgow
Family Responsibilities Commissioner



Local Commissioners from Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge with Commissioner Glasgow and Registrar Rob White at the Local Commissioner Development Week May 2013