



LOCAL COMMISSIONERS' YEAR IN REVIEW

Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners' Report

"We are working as one. We are Murugkal."

The road to where we are now as Local Commissioners for Mossman Gorge has been long and bumpy with many surprises along the way, however, we now feel as though we are on the home stretch. The Mossman Gorge people are starting to make changes for themselves and for the benefit of the entire community. We feel that this change has come from the push to restore social responsibility within our community.

We know that in the past we have been hard judges of our own successes. This year we are able to see our progress in a more positive light. We have come together to develop a small but dedicated and passionate Commission in Mossman Gorge, with just the three of us ladies. The community has shown their support for us by their conference attendance, and their respect for us by seeking guidance on matters of responsibility. Throughout our conferencing this year we have focused on a number of issues including integration into high school for our year 7 students, re-establishing dry house rules, employment for our young people, saving for the future and restoring authority to our Elders.

The Mossman Gateway Centre has supported our focus of increased employment for our people, and we have ensured that the promotion of employment at the Centre for our people has been a priority. Our children from Mossman Gorge have also experienced a lot of change in the last 12 months with the coming and going of Direct Instruction, and the transition of six children from primary school to high school. We have seen an increase in the support offered by the Cape York Partnerships (CYP) Opportunity Hub with their new central location in the community. We now see clients and other community members utilising their services more frequently.

As Local Commissioners we continue to support our Elders, many of whom continue to benefit from voluntary income management and remain on BasicsCards to assist in their health and wellbeing. We also recognise that although Mossman Gorge has taken many small steps forward this year, we are not without our negatives. We still have a couple of households within Mossman Gorge that like to party and disobey the rules. Importantly, the community now has the confidence to come together and communicate to these households that it's not acceptable behaviour, rather than deferring to outside controls as we did in the past.

Our attendance at the annual Local Commissioner Development Week in Cairns assisted us to gain even further knowledge. This year we learned of further services that can support us in our communities. We were presented information from the Weed It Out project, the Queensland Police Service, Doctor Ernest Hunter and Associate Professor Alan Clough. We were hosted at Gindaja Treatment and Healing Indigenous Corporation, a centre for drug and alcohol rehabilitation in Yarrabah. The variety and depth of information we received during the week has provided us with the knowledge now to go back to our communities and educate and assist our people. We have developed plans which we will now put into action.

Within the last year we have grown and developed the ability to understand what one is good at, and what one is comfortable in addressing. Due to this in-depth understanding of each other's capabilities we are now able to draw on each other's strengths when required, and we understand our weaknesses also. This growth in our relationship has also strengthened the community's perception of us. We believe that they now have an understanding that we are confidently and responsibly guiding our community.

All of the service providers in Mossman Gorge have team leaders to provide advice and guidance to their staff. We are like team leaders for our people, providing them with advice and guidance to restore social responsibility.

Mossman Gorge Commissioners Loretta Spratt, Karen Gibson and Karen Shuan