

# COMMISSIONER GLASGOW'S MESSAGE



## From the Commissioner

What follows is an account and record of the Family Responsibilities Commission's activities in the CYWR communities, and its financial operations over the past 12 months to June 30, 2014. Including those matters required in the annual report of a Statutory Authority, this report has been designed to allow the reader to be part of, and an observer to, some of the activities of the children and families in the four communities. We report on many aspects of their lives: the good, the improvements in the past year, as well as the discouragements and challenges which remain.

It is not the intention to put the lives of these people on display, but to respond to the interest of many who wish to hear of the progress of the unique opportunity given local community people. The opportunity is to assist with the improvement of Indigenous authority, to provide a means for its genuine exercise, and to encourage individuals and families to accept change for the better by adopting acceptable community norms of social and personal behaviour.

## Acknowledgement of the role of public servants in community

During six interesting years as Commissioner, I have observed many public servants who have spent a significant part of their lives in these communities, and who have shown outstanding dedication and commitment to their professions in the areas of health, education, police services and public administration. Few have been acknowledged publically for the important role each has played in the major improvements in the lives of community members. They are many. Hopefully they will understand by my comments here, I am acknowledging their personal commitment and outstanding service.

## Commission staff

Our operations could not continue, uninterrupted as they have been over the past twelve months, without the dedicated commitment of our Local Coordinators, two of whom live and work in the communities. I acknowledge their dedication and resourcefulness - Dellis Gledhill, Local Coordinator based in Aurukun, Amy Barden, Local Coordinator for Coen, Sandi Rye, Local Coordinator for Mossman Gorge and Raymond Lennox, Local Coordinator based in Hope Vale.

Registrar Rob White and his dedicated small Cairns staff work to ensure that the high standard we set when we commenced in 2008 is maintained and we continue to find efficiencies in our service delivery.

Deputy Commissioner Curtin has taken on a greater role in the past six months with conferencing in Hope Vale. I thank him for his valued services.

## Service providers

As in past years, staff retention continued to be of major concern in the delivery of services by most providers.

Members of the Health and Community Services Committee visited Aurukun at the invitation of Local Commissioners and, with the permission and consent of the parties involved took the opportunity to observe conferences, visited government services and service providers, as well as attended at the school and observed classes in progress. They, along with others who have had the opportunity to visit the Academy schools in Coen, Aurukun and Hope Vale have observed the marked improvement in the quality of learning of the children. The Commissioners acknowledge and applaud the commitment of the teaching staff in the schools, and the inspirational and innovative leadership of Noel Pearson in the education and protection of the communities' children.



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## The Commission's future

The Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) continues to structure its operations in accordance with the objects and principles of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the Act) and the Queensland Public Service values of: customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous and empower people. The Commission's Service Charter pledges the best service we can provide and to deliver outputs for the Queensland and State Governments that achieve the outcomes sought for the CYWR communities. In doing so the Commission nurtures a spirit of inquiry and innovation. Our Local Commissioners are well acquainted with their community and the ancestry and family history of their community members. Decisions are made with an understanding of where each client comes from and what has influenced their behaviour. The exercise of their authority under the Act is governed by this understanding. They are challenging the old norms in their communities every day, encouraging clients to cross the boundaries of their inappropriate social behaviours. To do so requires courage from the Local Commissioners and from Commission clients.

The Local Commissioners are leading by example, trusting where their intuition demands consideration of the challenges faced by each individual, and at times demanding action by imposing restrictions. With each decision they take a calculated risk on the strength and capacity of their community members, whilst empowering them to be responsible to themselves, their family and their community.

In June the Honourable Glen Elmes MP, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier announced the extension of the Commission until 1 January 2016. The Commission looks forward to accepting and working through the challenges ahead.

**David Glasgow**  
**Family Responsibilities Commissioner**



*Local Commissioners from Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge with Commissioner Glasgow, Deputy Commissioner Curtin and Registrar Rob White at the Local Commissioner Development Week May 2014*