

# ANNUAL REPORT

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ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

The annual report of the Family Responsibilities Commission summarises the Commission and its financial and corporate performance for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

Only limited copies of this annual report will be available in hard copy. To obtain a copy please contact:

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*The Commission recognises we are visitors to the country we travel across and work in and that many of our Local Commissioners are Traditional Owners and Elders of their communities. The Commission acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Teachers of these lands; to those of the past whose unseen hands guide the actions and decisions of the Commissioners today; to those of the present working for their communities setting the example for the next generation; and to those of the future, the Elders not yet born who will inherit the legacy of our efforts.*



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2 September 2020

The Honourable Craig Crawford MP  
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships  
PO Box 15457  
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Minister Crawford

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2019-2020 and financial statements for the Family Responsibilities Commission.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government Agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements can be found at page 102 of this annual report.

Yours sincerely

Tammy Williams  
Commissioner  
Family Responsibilities Commission

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## **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION**

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# Service charter statement

*The Family Responsibilities Commission knows that you value good customer service. Our aim is to give you the best service we can. We will work with the Australian and Queensland Governments, stakeholders and clients to deliver the outcomes sought by the welfare reform communities. In doing so, we will nurture a spirit of inquiry and innovation, and will embrace the challenge of sourcing unconventional and creative solutions to address the complex problems that confront our communities.*

# Preamble Noel Pearson



*Now in its twelfth year the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) remains a stand-out example of Indigenous empowerment and capability building in Australia. This targeted model of income management provides our families with access to support services that help them build capabilities and take responsibility for their lives and their children's lives.*

*At the heart of this model is a genuine and robust belief in the capacity of people to improve their lives when provided with support and the steady guidance of their local Elders, acting as Local Commissioners of the FRC.*

*Although not well understood, the FRC is one of the best models of early intervention in the country – providing people with early and rapid referral to support services so they have a real opportunity to take positive action to address problems before formal intervention by government.*

*For this reason, it is encouraging to see that this year the FRC has increased early referrals to support services by almost 400 per cent. This change allows Local Commissioners to use client conferences to apply a more holistic approach, using support services in conjunction with income management to encourage our community members who need support.*

*The beneficial impact of this early intervention on our Indigenous children cannot be overstated and should continue to be supported and recognised by all stakeholders.*

*The FRC is also a powerful example of local Indigenous empowerment. This year, Local Commissioners held over 90 percent of conferences alone, applying their skills and knowledge of their own people to effect behavioural change in hundreds of community members. I commend them all for their resolute commitment and energy, which has been unwavering in the face of COVID-19.*

*My great hope for the coming year is that the Australian and State Governments continue to recognise the enormous value of the FRC and commit to providing the breadth and quantity of support services that our clients and their children need to build a life that they have reason to value. Together, we can build a brighter future for existing FRC communities and all others that wish to use this model to build local capability and empowerment.*

*Finally, I want to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to Commissioner Tammy Williams and all our Local Commissioners for their tremendous service to our people. You are an exemplar of kindness, commitment and justice and this year's successes are owed to you.*

*Noel Pearson*



# Commissioner Williams' Message

***In 2019-20 the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) had an intensive focus on its frontline operations to enable a better response to the emerging trends and the evolving needs of the communities it serves.***

I am pleased to present the Family Responsibilities Commission's Annual Report for 2019-20. My appointment as Commissioner took effect on 2 September 2019 upon the retirement of the FRC's inaugural Commissioner, David Glasgow. I acknowledge his tremendous contribution to the FRC and to those working within it who have benefited from his guidance, direction and friendship.

On 12 December 2019 the FRC welcomed an executed Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Queensland Governments confirming funding for the operation of the Commission until 30 June 2021. The certainty provided to the FRC through this funding commitment has afforded the Commission an opportunity to reset its course to better meet the significant and complex needs of its clients.

The implementation of business and operational strategies and a realignment of the organisation structure has led to improved efficiencies and client outcomes. New practice directions and guidelines were developed to enhance Local Commissioners' conferencing techniques. The focus remains on early intervention to support positive changes in client behaviour. Local Commissioners are making appropriate use of referral pathways, utilising community support services available in each community and strengthening clients' resilience to face the challenges they experience.

Client referrals to support services for the financial year have increased by 396.3 percent from the previous reporting period. This result is indicative of the increased capability of Local Commissioners to conference clients with complex behaviours and apply a more holistic approach, using support services in conjunction with income management to encourage improved social behaviour.

Local Commissioners continue to use Conditional Income Management (CIM) as a decision of last resort. The 2019-20 reporting period has seen a growing number of clients placed on a case plan and referred to a support service concurrent with a CIM. This clearly demonstrates income management is delivered within a highly targeted and flexible approach nuanced to the client's circumstances. In this way, CIM is utilised as a tool to support people and children at risk, promote socially responsible choices, and as an incentive to meet individual and community obligations.

The Commission met several large challenges this year commencing with major unrest in Aurukun in January 2020, followed by the declared COVID-19 pandemic. A full report of each, together with the FRC's response can be found on pages 45 to 46. The primary aim of the FRC's response in both cases was to ensure continued engagement with and support for FRC clients. As an organisation we have learnt the value of agility in meeting these challenges and have utilised the lessons learnt in forward planning.

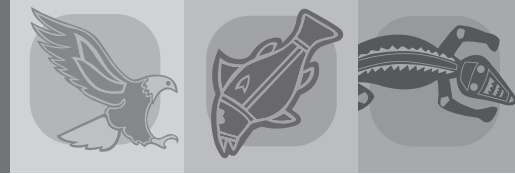
I would like to especially thank Registrar Maxine McLeod, Executive Officer (Finance) Tracey Paterson and Senior Advisor (Statistics and Research) Michelle Synott for their stellar efforts in the development and publication of this annual report.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank the hardworking staff of the FRC and Local Commissioners for their commitment and dedication.

**Tammy Williams**  
**Family Responsibilities Commissioner**



# About the FRC



***The FRC is a key mechanism to support welfare reform community members and their families to restore socially responsible standards of behaviour and establish local authority.***

Cape York Welfare Reform is a partnership between the Cape York Institute, the Queensland Government and the Australian Government. It is an initiative to support a positive change in social norms and community behaviours in response to chronic levels of passive welfare, social dysfunction and economic exclusion within the welfare reform communities. The reforms are designed to initiate early intervention in order to address issues and behaviours before they escalate with a strong emphasis on partnership, capacity building, respect and the use of local authority.

A key feature of the welfare reforms was the creation of the FRC, an independent statutory authority established by the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (FRC Act). The Queensland Parliament passed the FRC Act on 13 March 2008 with bipartisan support. The Commission commenced operations on 1 July 2008.

The FRC's registry and principal place of business is located in Cairns and services the five welfare reform communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

## **Jurisdiction, powers and functions of the Commission**

The FRC operates within a legal framework to assist clients and their families living in welfare reform communities to address complex antisocial behaviours. The FRC Act sets out the statutory obligations of relevant Queensland Government departments to notify the Commission when a community member is not meeting pre-determined obligations. The FRC can intervene when it receives notification (an agency notice) in the following circumstances:

- a child of the person is either not enrolled at school, or not meeting designated school attendance requirements
- there is an intake involving the person by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women in relation to alleged harm or risk of harm
- the person, as a tenant, is in breach of a social housing tenancy agreement
- a court convicts the person of an offence or makes a domestic violence protection order against the person.

The FRC applies a locally based and culturally relevant conference-style process delivered by a panel of Elders and respected community leaders, appointed as Local Commissioners, which is overseen by a legally qualified Commissioner. The purpose of a conference is to provide a forum for the community member, and others who may have something useful to contribute, to discuss with the FRC why and how the person has come to be the subject of an agency notice. Conferences are held in a manner which facilitates early intervention, encourages community members to take responsibility for their actions and take active steps to address inappropriate behaviour before it escalates and requires serious remedial action.



# About the FRC

The FRC Act is to be administered in such a way that the wellbeing and best interests of children are paramount and the interests, rights and wellbeing of other vulnerable people living in the community are promoted. The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are to be observed, and the Commission must conduct its processes quickly and with as little formality as is consistent with the fair and proper consideration of the issues before it.

After assessing the community member's circumstances including the relevance of any contributing factors which caused the notifying behaviour, the FRC will attempt to enter into an agreement with the person to attend community support services or give Centrelink a notice for the partial management of a person's welfare payment for a period of no more than 12 months. If an agreement cannot be reached with the person, the FRC can decide to: give the person a reprimand; recommend or direct that the person attends community support services to help address their behaviours through case management; and/or give Centrelink a notice for the partial management of a person's welfare payment for a period of no more than 12 months.

The FRC Act provides a process to enable a person to request an amendment or termination of the Commission's decision before it is due to expire and further provides an avenue to appeal a decision in the Magistrates Court. The legislation also sets out the circumstances and process where there has been non-compliance with a case plan.

## Legislative scheme

The FRC operates within a legislative framework comprising of:

- *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 (FRC Act)*
- *Family Responsibilities Commission Regulation 2014*
- *Child Protection Act 1999*
- *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*
- *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 (Cwlth)*
- *Youth Justice Act 1992.*

## Organisational structure

The FRC as a legal decision-making entity is made up of two distinct components to perform the different statutory functions of the organisation:

- administration of the Commission is undertaken by the registry based in Cairns (further details about the activities of the registry during the reporting period are set out in pages 13 to 18)

# About the FRC

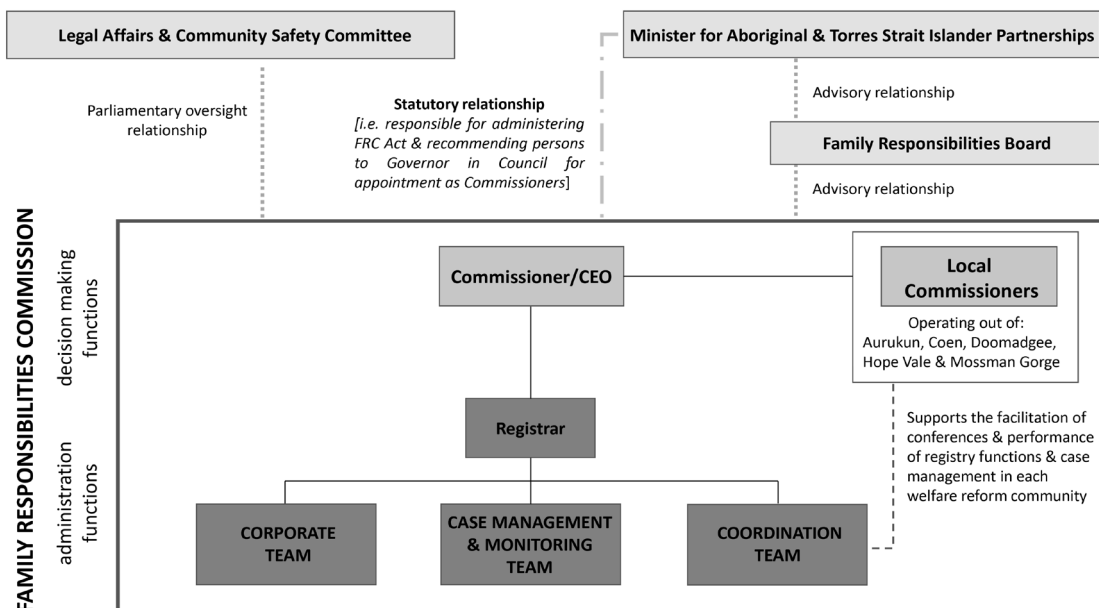


- the decision-making aspect of the Commission primarily occurs within the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge (details about the FRC’s operations and Local Commissioners’ activities in each community are set out in pages 32 to 41).

The FRC is an independent statutory authority and is not subject to direction by the Minister. The independence of the Commission was considered to be of importance by Parliament when passing the Family Responsibilities Commission Bill 2008. The Bill confirmed the authority of Commission members, including the Commissioner, Registrar and Local Commissioners to make decisions and administer the FRC Act within a robust legal framework (noting that Local Commissioners are limited to decisions made in conference).

The principle of Indigenous local authority is a cornerstone of the FRC model and a primary example of self-determination. As at 30 June 2020 all members of the Commission’s decision-making arm are Aboriginal – comprising of 29 Local Commissioners and now for the first time in the FRC’s 12-year history, the Commissioner, arising from the appointment in September 2019 of Tammy Williams.

An innovative feature of the FRC is the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board). The FR Board’s functions are provided for in the FRC Act and it has a membership of three, reflecting the tripartite partnership between the Australian and Queensland Governments and community through the Cape York Institute. Although it has an advisory function only, the FR Board can play an important role, for example, identifying actions the Australian or Queensland Governments could take to help improve the operations of the FRC within the welfare reform communities. Further details about the FR Board can be found on pages 50 and 51.





# About the FRC

## Our vision

Our vision is to support vibrant welfare reform communities that are responsible, healthy, safe and sustainable.

## Our values

Our core values provide the framework for our decisions, actions and behaviours, and underpin our commitment to human rights. Working to our values requires us to meet the highest standards of corporate behaviour:

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

## Strategic objectives

Our strategic objectives for 2018-22 are to:

- support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform communities
- help people in welfare reform communities to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities and the individuals and families of their communities
- create a capable, agile and innovative organisation and
- know our clients, communities and build partnerships.

The Strategic Plan 2018-22 can be found in the appendices (Appendix A). Our performance against the Strategic Plan 2018-22 is addressed throughout this report.



## The registry is responsible for the administration of the Commission.

### Operations

During the 2019-20 fiscal year the Commission received 7,348 notices of which 4,941 were within the Commission’s jurisdiction. The occurrence of COVID-19 and required social distancing and lockdowns affected the operations of many government departments. One of the results of the pandemic for the Commission was a decrease in notices received from the 2018-19 year. The majority of notices received this financial year were for school attendance, followed by Magistrate Court, child safety and welfare and then domestic violence offences. Information regarding our performance during the year is located in the Review of non-financial performance commencing on page 19 and the Review of financial performance commencing on page 30.

#### At a glance – the 2019-20 year

<b>7,348</b> Agency notices assessed	<b>4,941</b> Agency notices deemed within FRC’s jurisdiction	<b>1,217</b> Community members deemed the subject of agency notices
<b>2,228</b> Conferences held	<b>811</b> Community members prioritised for conference	<b>0</b> Appeals of FRC decisions

### An operational review to provide a priority focus

On 17 December 2019 an internal FRC Operational Review Workshop was held. It included year-to-date reflections on key processes and the analysis of data across all communities incorporating the timeliness of dealing with matters, holding conferences and making decisions. Following this, FRC Commissioner Tammy Williams commenced the new year by leading a Strategic Planning Workshop on 21 January 2020. The event was attended by registry staff and Local Commissioners Vera Koomeeta from Aurukun, Elaine Liddy from Coen, Doreen Hart from Hope Vale and Loretta Spratt from Mossman Gorge. Unfortunately, Chris Logan the Local Commissioner representative from Doomadgee advised of his inability to attend the workshop and alternative arrangements for a replacement were unable to be made at short notice.

Specific dashboard data for each community was presented to the Local Commissioners. Honest conversations were held to identify and agree on what successes had been achieved, and conversely what changes were needed to improve efficiencies, how to implement solutions, setting and tracking performance against targets and being accountable for results achieved. Training was conducted covering new practice directions and conferencing techniques to improve on early intervention, and making quality decisions to support changes in behaviour. Each Local Registry Coordinator then met with their Local Commissioner representative to establish community action plans for the 2020 year.



# FRC registry

## Re-alignment of organisation structure to improve efficiencies and outcomes

Business and operational strategies this year have focussed on maximising results for FRC clients by internally strengthening the FRC model to achieve accountability and continued relevance in a changing policy environment. The administrative functions of the registry had traditionally been split into two teams: corporate and operations. As part of our re-alignment the operations team has been split into two further distinct workgroups to provide for an integrated and coordinated client-centered case management structure:

- **Coordination team** – facilitates the holding of quality conferencing for clients where early intervention decisions are made by Commissioners to support positive behaviour change through a network of referral pathways to support services. The Coordination team is comprised of Local Registry Coordinators responsible for overseeing the Commission's operations in each community and maintaining local and regional level partnerships with service providers. The Coordination team also briefs the FRC Commissioner and Registrar on systemic socio-economic issues impacting on the wellbeing of clients and their families and the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour. Where necessary these de-identified matters are reported in the Commission's quarterly reports, or provided to the FR Board in out of session papers and correspondence for its consideration and appropriate action. Instances where issues were elevated to FR Board members include those matters set out in the performance highlights commencing on page 21. During the 2019-20 period the Coordination team facilitated 2,228 conferences across the five welfare reform communities.
- **Case Management and Monitoring team** – manages the holistic case monitoring of client progress towards achieving case plan goals and monitors income management orders for the duration of their Family Responsibilities Agreement (FRA) or decision by order following conference. The team makes ongoing assessments in consultation with Local Registry Coordinators and Commissioners as to whether further interventions are required. The Case Management and Monitoring team is also responsible for the initial processing of information received from notifying agencies during the intake phase of the Commission's administrative processes. A determination is made whether the person/s named in the notice and their alleged conduct falls within the Commission's jurisdiction. During the 2019-20 reporting period the Case Management and Monitoring team assessed 7,348 agency notices and deemed 67.2 percent (4,941) were within jurisdiction. A further intake assessment is made by the team under the direction of the FRC Commissioner for the prioritisation of clients where circumstances requires a mandated intervention (the listing for conference) by the Commission. Throughout the year 811 community members were prioritised for conference.

## Administrative workforce

The FRC's administrative workforce consists of:

- the FRC Commissioner (appointed by the Governor in Council for a specified term) who as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring the efficient discharge of the Commission's business, appropriate training for registry staff and Local Commissioners, the preparation of corporate documents and achieving the objects of the FRC Act as specified in section 22 of the FRC Act

# FRC registry

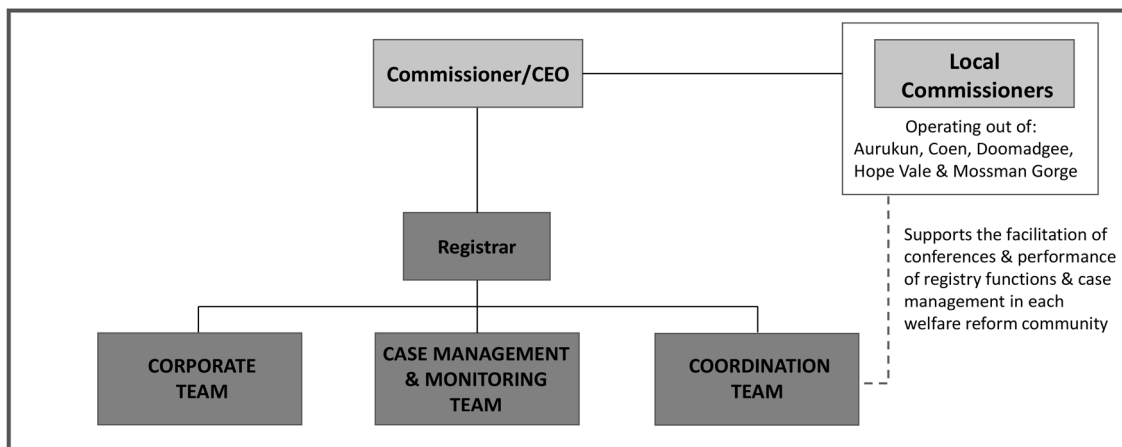


- the Registrar who is responsible for managing the registry and the administrative affairs of the Commission and whose functions, powers and delegation are specified in sections 35 to 37 of the FRC Act
- the Executive Officer (Finance) who is responsible for providing financial, and strategic/ corporate advice and support to the Commission's operations across Cairns and the communities and
- 15 positions across the three teams of Case Management and Monitoring, Coordination and Corporate, including four Local Registry Coordinators appointed under section 38 of the FRC Act to support the efficient and effective operation of the Commission in each of the welfare reform communities.

Further details in regard to the Commission's workforce profile can be located in the Governance section of this report. Biographies of Commissioners and the Registrar can be found in the appendices (Appendix B).

## FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

Key positions and workgroups



## Client-focused data reporting

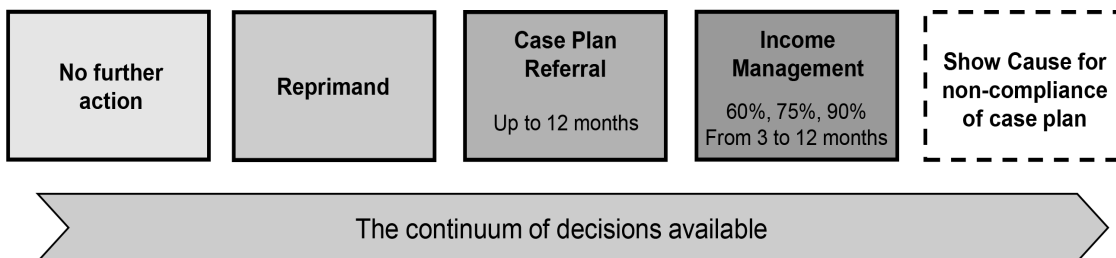
This year the FRC committed to report our activity in a manner to reflect a more client-focused data reporting framework as opposed to the historical process-orientated data we have reported since 2008. This change forms part of a broader internal review of data reporting which commenced in January 2020 aimed at more accurately documenting the Commission's work and the benefits afforded to FRC clients. Feedback from our stakeholders indicates the level of client intervention provided by the FRC is of primary interest to readers of our quarterly and annual reports. Continuing amendments to our data reporting framework are planned to further define the level of client engagement and outcomes.



# FRC registry

## FRC decisions have an increased focus on capacity-building

Decisions can be made by agreement or order of the Commission. Community members can also voluntarily request referrals or income management. A continuum of possible decisions made at conference follows.



Section 5 of the FRC Act is clear in stipulating that matters should be dealt with in a manner that facilitates early intervention, delivers timely decisions, supports the change of behaviour sought, supports the exercise of local authority and makes use of community support services. The primary goal of the Commissioners is to enter into an agreement with the community member in the first instance. Clients may seek to amend or end a decision by demonstrating their circumstances have changed and children/vulnerable persons would not be detrimentally impacted by the alteration to the decision.

Activity for this reporting period has resulted in a significant increase in clients case-managed, up from 73 clients case-managed at the end of 2018-19 to 286 clients at the end of 2019-20. This growth resulted from an increase in agreements and orders made to attend community support services as shown in the following table, noting a client can have one or more agreements or orders. Further information in regard to conference activity and outcomes during the reporting period can be found in the Review of non-financial performance section commencing on page 19.

Conference outcomes for the financial year	2018-19	2019-20
Agreements to attend community support services	8	23
Orders made to attend community support services	70	302

## Referral pathways for clients and case management have grown significantly

Commissioners are guided by the FRC Act, sections 4 and 5, to encourage community members to engage in socially responsible ways, and in doing so, make appropriate use of community support services. The Commissioners use the referral pathways available in each community to strengthen the client's resilience to face the challenges they experience, and to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable people through broad-based counselling and education.

During the conferencing process Commissioners may decide to refer the client to support services such as:

- Wellbeing Centres (WBCs) to address alcohol and/or drug misuse, gambling, domestic violence or social health related issues



# FRC registry



- Parenting programs to assist in implementing good parenting practices
- MPower, a money management program, to assist with budgeting and meeting priority financial needs
- School Attendance Officers to assist parents to ensure children attend school or
- other appropriate support services.

As demonstrated in the table below the Commissioners have increased the referrals (nearly five-fold) from the previous financial year.

Number of referrals	2018-19	2019-20
Referrals to service providers <sup>1</sup>	81	402

The increase of referrals in 2019-20 can be attributed to:

- the operational certainty provided to the Commission through a further funding commitment to June 2021 from the Australian and Queensland Governments which has encouraged stakeholders (including service providers) to invest in their engagement and referral activities with the Commission
- the availability of relevant service providers in each community and their renewed willingness to receive FRC client referrals and
- the increased confidence and growing capability of Local Commissioners to use a suite of techniques when conferencing clients with complex behaviours.

Where a client has multiple or complex issues to address, Commissioners may refer the client to more than one support service. Referrals to support services may be made on the basis of an FRA, where a client agrees to attend a support service and the client and Commissioners agree on the action to be taken together. Alternatively, Commissioners may make a decision to direct a client to attend a support service or services. Progress reports are received from service providers and clients are assessed to determine if they are fulfilling their obligations under the agreement or order. Together with local knowledge, additional information may be sought from agencies and service providers where appropriate to provide the best support possible for the client. The Commission is aided in this capacity by Part 8 of the FRC Act which outlines sophisticated provisions about information exchange between the FRC and relevant entities. Service providers and other persons who can make a useful contribution to the conferencing process are encouraged to attend conference proceedings and discuss the decision-making processes with the Commissioners.

## Income management continues to be ‘an order of last resort’

At conference, a decision may be made to issue a client with a CIM order. Due consideration is given firstly to the individual circumstances of the client and whether alternative action is more appropriate. CIM orders are considered as a last resort, with Commissioners endeavouring to enter into an FRA with the client agreeing to income management in the first instance.

1. 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.



# FRC registry

The Commissioners utilise CIM as a tool to support people and children at risk, promote socially responsible choices, and as an incentive to meet individual and community obligations by drawing together a network of support services to focus on the individual's skills gaps (social and economic). CIMs are issued for a defined period (no longer than 12 months) with the Commissioners determining whether 60, 75 or 90 percent of fortnightly welfare payments are managed. Clients may apply to the Commission to have their CIM amended or ended. Commissioners consider each application to ascertain whether the client has made sufficient progress to justify an amend or end decision.

A community member may also enter into a Voluntary Income Management (VIM) agreement to assist them to manage their budget and meet the costs of everyday essentials. The Commissioners consider the number of VIM agreements entered into as indicative of a willingness of community members to take responsibility, to look after family members, and as a general improvement in community social norms. VIM agreements are a useful tool to assist elderly community members (who have not otherwise been referred to the FRC) to ensure their welfare payments are expended on their own needs.

As demonstrated in the table following, the growing number of clients placed on a case plan without a CIM during this reporting period clearly demonstrates that income management is delivered with a highly targeted and flexible approach nuanced to the client's circumstances.

Clients placed on case plans and CIMs for the financial year <sup>2</sup>	2018-19	2019-20
Number of clients placed on a case plan and CIM	36	112
Number of clients placed on a case plan without a CIM	37	174
Number of clients placed on a CIM without a case plan	140	53

## Applications to amend or end agreements or orders

Applications to amend or end an agreement or order are considered an important means of ensuring that FRC decisions remain applicable to the changing needs and circumstances of clients. This mechanism affords clients an opportunity to apply to the Commission to amend or end their agreement or original order by providing their reasons for making the application. Commissioners view the hearing of the applications as an opportunity to engage with clients. Each application is considered by the Commissioners on its own merit whilst observing the principles of natural justice. A decision on the application is made pursuant to section 99 or section 109 of the FRC Act and may include either agreeing or refusing to amend or end an agreement or order, or if the Commissioners deem the application frivolous or vexatious, dismissing the application. The opportunity afforded in hearing these applications is utilised by the Commissioners to encourage clients to continue to address any remaining challenges and to exercise personal responsibility in their lives.

Amend or end applications received for the financial year	2018-19	2019-20
Applications to amend or end received	56	62

2. During conference the 23 agreements and 302 orders to attend community support services and the 219 CIM orders relate to 339 unique clients.

# Review of non-financial performance



## Policy context – Government objectives and initiatives

Our activities support the welfare reforms and Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities published by the Queensland Government. The Commission contributes specifically to the following government priorities:



### CREATE JOBS IN A STRONG ECONOMY

by assisting clients to access support services to achieve the confidence and capability needed to obtain employment, creating purpose and allowing families to fully participate in society, and by initiating a continuous improvement strategy for our organisational capability



### GIVE ALL OUR CHILDREN A GREAT START

by supporting expectant mothers and young families in welfare reform communities to access maternal and child health, early childhood education and care services, and to understand the importance of the early years to the long-term health and wellbeing of their children



### KEEP QUEENSLANDERS HEALTHY

by working with service providers to support the delivery of effective responses to alcohol and drug misuse, mental illness and violence for our clients in the welfare reform communities and developing self-care and resilience in Local Commissioners



### KEEP COMMUNITIES SAFE

by influencing the wider acceptance of socially responsible standards of behaviour, promoting Indigenous local authority and nurturing a spirit of inquiry and innovation in order to address the complex problems facing the welfare reform communities



### BE A RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

by providing effective and efficient client services for families, strengthening collaborative cross-agency partnerships to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authorities, improving access to relevant service provision in the communities and working to increase school enrolment and attendance

Our activities specifically support the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) which is the department responsible for promoting and monitoring the government's progress in Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage. There are seven strategic areas for action established under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement for driving reform which the Commission addresses through its conferencing processes and participation in collaborative cross-agency partnerships:

- Early childhood – improving child and maternal health care, supporting good parenting and strengthening childhood education and care through early intervention
- Schooling – supporting the improvement of literacy and numeracy levels and year 12 or equivalent attainment of children in our communities by providing guidance, encouragement and information to families on the requirement for children to attend school
- Health – linking clients to support services to address their health needs
- Economic participation – enabling clients to challenge complex behaviours presenting barriers to economic participation
- Safe communities – addressing the problem of violence, alcohol, criminal and anti-social behaviours



# Review of non-financial performance

- Governance and leadership – enhancing government policies and systems to improve engagement mechanisms, developing and supporting community capacity and leadership and supporting the development of leadership for women and young people
- Land and culture – promoting and affirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The Commission delivers services to five communities, all of which are culturally unique and some of which are geographically remote. Each community is different, however, each can be characterised by the entrenched disadvantage of Indigenous community members. High rates of welfare dependency and multi-generational poverty have resulted in communities with high numbers of individuals and families with complex needs.

Our challenge is to work collaboratively with partner agencies, as part of a linked service system to engage, empower and enable individuals, families and the wider community to make positive and lasting change. In meeting this challenge the Commission acknowledges and complements several Queensland Government strategies and reforms such as:

- the 'Moving Ahead Strategy', a whole-of-government strategy to improve Indigenous economic participation
- the 'Our Way Strategy', initiated to address the over-representation of Indigenous children in Queensland's child protection system
- the 'Changing Tracks' action plan to build upon existing initiatives to ensure Indigenous children grow up in a safe and nurturing environment
- the 'Tracks to Treaty' commitment aimed at rebuilding the relationship between the Queensland Government and Indigenous peoples structured upon mutual respect, recognition and acknowledging a shared history and the right to self-determination
- the 'Local Thriving Communities' reform – reframing and reforming how the Queensland Government works with Indigenous communities to deliver better outcomes
- the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy, providing a whole-of-government framework to increase procurement with Indigenous businesses to grow and develop a diverse and sustainable Indigenous business sector and improve employment outcomes and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Commission interacts with the above strategies and reforms through local decision-making by referring individuals to public services, assisting community members to gain benefits from available opportunities and improving student transitions to education. Over 70 percent of the Commission's annual budget (refer page 31) is allocated to community operations and conference facilitation, supporting the Moving Ahead Strategy, Queensland's Indigenous Procurement Policy and local and regional economies.

The Commission has adopted a strategic plan which clearly defines the strategic outcomes sought by the Commission together with objectives and strategies it will employ to achieve its objectives. The Commission's strategic plan is consistent with and guided by current whole-of-government priorities. The strategic plan is reviewed on an annual basis and can be found at Appendix A.

# Review of non-financial performance



## Performance highlights

The following report details our performance for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

The 2019-20 year has been a period of intense growth and development. Having gained some certainty surrounding the immediate future of the Commission with the appointment of Commissioner Tammy Williams as the new FRC Commissioner in September 2019, the reappointment of Local Commissioners until 30 June 2020, and the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in December 2019 committing funding for the operations of the Commission until 30 June 2021, the Local Commissioners and registry staff have redoubled their efforts to support FRC clients and their communities.

A number of strategic and operational changes were implemented which have enabled the Commission to improve operational performance in a number of areas. A quarterly process of internal audit, review and the setting of performance measures has been developed and introduced as a vital tool to provide insight into operational effectiveness, identify risks and maintain accountability as we strive to improve outcomes for Commission clients. Data collection and analysis provided the Commission as a whole, and individual communities, with information on their performance across several key metrics including conferencing and outcomes. The information has been instrumental in allowing Local Commissioners to identify priorities for their communities, training and development requirements and in assisting registry staff and Local Registry Coordinators to better understand how to support Commissioners and clients.

Another new operational strategy was the development of community action plans. Local Registry Coordinators and Local Commissioners have used data dashboards provided by the registry, along with their own knowledge and local priorities, to develop comprehensive strategies to enhance the impact of conferencing and to better support clients through an increased emphasis on referrals to support services. A significant part of the community action plans included a stocktake of stakeholders and service providers in each community. This has been invaluable in identifying service gaps, possible new service providers and in the context of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, having a good understanding of which services were available to clients.

In line with a new focus on timely decision making, in January 2020 new practice directions addressing the use of rescheduled and adjourned conferences were issued. Local Commissioners quickly adopted the new processes which operationalise a more targeted conference timetable. The change has resulted in matters being determined in a timely manner, and lessened the number of times clients are being conferenced in regard to the same issue.

Shortly before the end of the 2019-20 financial year, new practice directions and guidelines for the use of FRAs and show cause conferences were developed. The FRC anticipates data showing the effects of these new practice directions on conference outcomes to be available over the next two quarters.

The registry's standard practice of cross-training employees across a variety of roles proved beneficial as staff resources were stretched to meet the challenge of operating in the COVID-19 environment and during the Aurukun 'crisis'. The workload redistribution provided training opportunities for employees to upskill and evidenced the Commission's commitment to ensuring an agile, high performing and innovative workforce capable of delivering flexible, effective and efficient services, even during times of crisis.



# Review of non-financial performance

In June 2020 the Commission was informed by reports from Aurukun that the increase to certain welfare payments coupled with restricted activity and movements due to COVID-19 had resulted in a notable increase in gambling. Of greater concern was information received that children were also attending and engaging in gambling circles, in some cases with adult encouragement, and in others, conducting their own gambling activities with significant sums of money in the 'pot'. Further information was received that the gambling was impacting school attendance and that some children who did turn up to class were struggling with having had very little sleep. Commissioner Williams wrote to the FR Board informing them of the concerns raised. Dr Chris Sarra (Director General of DATSIP and Chair of the FR Board) responded and advised of a working group convened to address the issue and acknowledged the limited ability for the Commission to act due to the disconnect between gambling and the agency notices received by the Commission.

A further significant community issue arose during the reporting period in Doomadgee following the lifting of restrictions on the sale of normal unleaded petrol at the Doomadgee Roadhouse. An increased number of Child Concern Reports relating to petrol sniffing have been received by the Commission in the second half of the financial year. A review of the reports is being undertaken with a view to dedicating a full three-day conference sitting to address the problem.

A key performance indicator supporting the FRC Act's object of restoring local authority is the proportion of conferences that are held with Local Commissioners sitting alone. This fiscal year 94.3 percent of conferences were held with three Local Commissioners presiding. Commissioner Williams performed a significant support role, travelling extensively to FRC communities (prior to imposed COVID-19 travel restrictions) to support and guide the Local Commissioners in their decision-making and in adapting to new processes and priorities.

Whilst the travel restrictions may have provided a barrier to service delivery in some communities, it also provided an opportunity for some providers to catch up on outstanding reports to the Commission on the progress of clients on FRC case plan referrals. Unfortunately, due to the limitations on services available, information on engagement and progress was scant and this lack of reporting has risked the effectiveness of case plan referrals and early intervention support for clients during this period. The Commission looks forward to receiving more detailed reporting from referral partners when the delivery of support services returns to normal.

## **School attendance**

School attendance across the communities was significantly affected this year by the impact of COVID-19. From Term 2 the State Government determined that the physical attendance of staff at school should be minimised and transitioned from the traditional model of schooling to remote learning with a modified curriculum, supplemented where feasible by on-line learning. Teachers and required staff attended school campuses, along with vulnerable students and the children of essential workers. Many families experienced significant personal and social stress during the pandemic and elected not to send their children to school.

Aurukun school attendance was also significantly affected by community unrest which occurred in January 2020, with many families displaced from Aurukun. Approximately 25 percent of the school population was no longer resident in Aurukun, but still present on the roll and reported as absent. A large workload was handled by a range of agencies led by DATSIP to encourage displaced children to be enrolled in local schools, and FRC clients were conferenced in regard to school attendance and enrolment notices received from the Department of Education.

# Review of non-financial performance



Student attendance was also affected in Doomadgee and Hope Vale by community unrest, the annual wet season and sorry business. The deficit in school attendance requires a whole of community response. The value that a community places on education as an essential part of childhood development is crucial in determining the level of student attendance, and the approach to education is affected by community cultural norms. For Department of Education published statistical data refer to <https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/state-school-attendance-rate>.

## Additional activity data

The following table provides additional activity information not mentioned previously, or without a comparison to the previous financial year.

**Table 1: Additional activity data for the financial year.**

Activity for the financial year	2018-19	2019-20
Total number of notices received by the Commission <sup>1</sup>	8,031	7,348
Number of within jurisdiction notices received	5,670	4,941
Number of not within jurisdiction notices received	2,361	2,407
Number of clients notified to the Commission from within jurisdiction notices	1,300	1,217
Number of clients served to attend conference	914	811
Conferences conducted	2,682	2,228
Conference attendance percentage	60.6%	59.2%
Conference non-attendance percentage with acceptable (reasonable) excuse <sup>2</sup>	27.6%	21.7%
Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders	233	219
Voluntary Income Management (VIM) agreements	20	20
<b>Information as at the last day of the financial year</b>		
Number of clients subject to a current CIM	140	134
Number of clients currently on a VIM	14	17

1. Agency notices are counted on the basis of the number of persons named on the notice. For example a Child Safety and Welfare notice relating to two parents is counted as two notices and if three children from one family have an unexplained absence on one day, it is counted as three individual notices.
2. Calculated by dividing all conferences with an explained reason for non-attendance by the number of conferences where the client did not attend conference.



# Review of non-financial performance

**Table 2: FRC client population by gender and age 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Information for the financial year	Female count	Male count	Female average age	Male average age
Clients who received a notice during the financial year <sup>3</sup>	686	531	36	37
Clients who conferenced during the financial year <sup>4</sup>	477	334	36	36
Clients referred during the financial year <sup>5</sup>	181	105	36	35
Clients placed on CIM during the financial year <sup>6</sup>	132	33	36	36
Clients placed on VIM during the financial year <sup>7</sup>	8	10	36	57

## Performance statement

Following are the performance measures used by the Commission to identify workload and operating results.

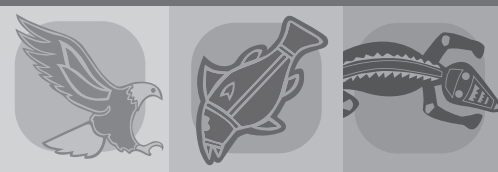
**Table 3: Performance measures 2018-19 and 2019-20.**

Performance measures	2018-19 actual result	2019-20 actual result
Percentage of conferences conducted independently by Local Commissioners	96.9%	94.3%
Percentage of CIM clients who have had CIM orders revoked or reduced	34.3%	28.3%
Percentage of conferences attended	60.6%	59.2%

3. Average age of a client who received a notice for the financial year is calculated at the date of the first notice received for the client during the financial year.
4. Average age of a conferenced client for the financial year is calculated at the date of the first conference held for the client during the financial year.
5. Average age of a referred client for the financial year is calculated at the first conference date held where the client was placed on a case plan during the financial year.
6. Average age of a CIM'd client for the financial year is calculated at the first conference date held where the client was placed on a CIM for the financial year.
7. Average age of a VIM'd client for the financial year is calculated at the start date of the agreement where the client was placed on a VIM for the financial year.



# Review of non-financial performance



Performance measures were generally maintained despite the COVID-19 impact during the reporting period. The variance in conferences conducted independently is largely due to Commissioner Williams sitting in conference to assist Local Commissioners in performing their functions under new practice directions and amended guidelines for conferencing. Commissioner Williams was also required to sit as the FRC Commissioner with two Aurukun Commissioners residing in Cairns to conference displaced Aurukun community members in both Cairns and Coen.

Although the Commission offered telephone conferencing to community members during the pandemic, a slight drop in conference attendance was still experienced.

## Notices within jurisdiction

From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, the Commission received a total of 7,348 agency notices of which 4,941 relating to 1,217 clients were in jurisdiction, comprising:

**Table 4: In jurisdiction notices by type and community 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Type of notice	AU	CO	DM <sup>8</sup>	HV	MG	Total
Supreme Court	0	0	-	0	0	<b>0</b>
District Court	39	0	-	8	0	<b>47</b>
Magistrates Court	532	31	-	224	110	<b>897</b>
Domestic Violence Breach	44	9	-	20	5	<b>78</b>
Domestic Violence Order	93	10	-	43	27	<b>173</b>
School Attendance	1,144	123	1,560	505	84	<b>3,416</b>
School Enrolment	21	0	0	5	2	<b>28</b>
Child Safety and Welfare	75	14	135	37	15	<b>276</b>
Housing Tenancy	7	5	-	8	6	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,955</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>1,695</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>4,941</b>

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

- Aurukun received 1,955 notices relating to 472 clients (240 female and 232 male)
- Coen received 192 notices relating to 70 clients (42 female and 28 male)
- Doomadgee received 1,695 notices relating to 315 clients (227 female and 88 male)
- Hope Vale received 850 notices relating to 280 clients (139 female and 141 male)
- Mossman Gorge received 249 notices relating to 80 clients (38 female and 42 male).

8. 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



# Review of non-financial performance

**Table 5: In jurisdiction notices by type and quarter 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Type of notice	Qtr 45	Qtr 46	Qtr 47	Qtr 48	Total
Supreme Court	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
District Court	13	11	13	10	<b>47</b>
Magistrates Court	266	371	252	8	<b>897</b>
Domestic Violence Breach	27	31	15	5	<b>78</b>
Domestic Violence Order	66	60	41	6	<b>173</b>
School Attendance	1,003	877	808	728	<b>3,416</b>
School Enrolment	4	4	20	0	<b>28</b>
Child Safety and Welfare	64	64	68	80	<b>276</b>
Housing Tenancy	14	8	4	0	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>1,426</b>	<b>1,221</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>4,941</b>

**Table 6: In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Number of notices	Qtr 45	Qtr 46	Qtr 47	Qtr 48	Total
Aurukun	608	652	460	235	<b>1,955</b>
Coen	67	54	37	34	<b>192</b>
Doomadgee	443	391	467	394	<b>1,695</b>
Hope Vale	270	269	172	139	<b>850</b>
Mossman Gorge	69	60	85	35	<b>249</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>1,426</b>	<b>1,221</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>4,941</b>

## Notices overview

Of particular note in the above table is the drop in Magistrates Court notices. This drop is a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General ceased court sittings during quarter 48 leading to a 96.8 percent decrease in notices. Decreases are likewise reflected in Domestic Violence Orders and Breaches.

Similarly, following an Australian Government directive that penalty action for breaches of tenancy agreements were not to be actioned during the COVID-19 pandemic period, nil housing tenancy notices were received by the Commission in quarter 48.

# Review of non-financial performance



From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, 74.7 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 23.2 percent of clients receiving more than five notices. Conversely, 25.3 percent of clients have received only one notice. This is suggestive of the complexity of behaviours experienced by a significant proportion of our clients.

**Table 7: FRC clients by number of notices  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Number of notices received	Number of clients
1	308
2	213
3	173
4	153
5	88
>5	282
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,217</b>

## Conferences

From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, a total of 2,228 conferences were held relating to 811 clients with 59.2 percent of conferences attended.

**Table 8: Conferences by community and quarter  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Conferences	Qtr 45	Qtr 46	Qtr 47	Qtr 48
Aurukun	239	320	215	163
Coen	26	13	12	34
Doomadgee	236	279	106	129
Hope Vale	90	88	59	71
Mossman Gorge	33	41	32	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>439</b>

Of those conferences not attended, 21.7 percent were for explained (acceptable) reasons. Conferences during the financial year resulted in 23 agreements to attend community support services, 302 orders made to attend community support services and 219 CIM orders issued.

## Referrals

Referrals to service providers are an integral part of achieving the Commission's strategic outcomes of improved community wellbeing and responsibility. During this reporting period 402 referrals inclusive of orders and agreements to attend support services for 286 clients were made to service providers.

The number of referrals is comprised of 120 referrals in the first half of the financial year and 282 referrals in the second half of the financial year. The number of referrals for the financial year represents a 396.3 percent increase from the previous reporting period of 81 referrals. This result is indicative of the review of operations, continuity of funding, engagement with service provider partners and the increased capability of the Commissioners to conference clients with complex behaviours.

**Table 9: FRC referral pathways by referral type and quarter  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Referral type	Qtr 45	Qtr 46	Qtr 47	Qtr 48
MPower	1	20	62	39
WBC - Apunipima	25	22	59	24
WBC - NWRH	3	7	4	1
School Attendance Officer	10	15	32	35
RAATSIC (FWS) - Parenting Program	1	0	4	1
Gungarde (FWS) - Parenting Program	0	0	1	2
Mulungu (FWS) - Parenting Program	0	0	2	2
QLD Health	0	0	3	0
Save the Children	2	14	11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>104</b>



# Review of non-financial performance

The number of clients placed on a case plan concurrent with a CIM increased from 36 in 2018-19 to 112 in 2019-20 whilst the number placed on a CIM order without a case plan dropped from 140 to 53. These changes are indicative of the shifting views of Local Commissioners to practice a more holistic approach, using support services in conjunction with income management to stabilise family circumstances and encourage improved social behaviour.

## Case management monitoring

As at 30 June 2020, 286 clients were being case-managed through active case plans pertaining to referrals. The number of clients case-managed on a current case plan serves as the clearest indicator of the renewed approach of Local Commissioners to assist in building safe, caring and connected communities.

As noted, the Commission has not been receiving client progress reports from some key support services. Whilst it is acknowledged that service providers have competing priorities with respect to their reporting obligations, the lack of information about client progress available to Commissioners impedes the effectiveness of case plan referrals.

## Conditional income management

**Table 10: Conditional income management orders by community and quarter**  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

CIM orders	Qtr 45	Qtr 46	Qtr 47	Qtr 48
Aurukun	38	9	22	35
Coen	0	0	2	4
Doomadgee	30	38	2	9
Hope Vale	11	5	6	0
Mossman Gorge	4	1	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>51</b>

In this reporting period 219 CIM orders were issued to 165 clients. As at 30 June 2020 there were 134 clients subject to a current CIM. CIM remains a flexible tool used by Commissioners to improve the welfare of children by encouraging families to ensure basic household needs are met and to encourage consistency in school attendance.

## Voluntary income management

The Commission processed 20 VIM agreements for 18 clients during this reporting period and since the commencement of the Commission in 2008, 151 clients (95 female and 56 male) have had an active VIM agreement. As at 30 June 2020 there were 17 clients on a current VIM. VIM provides a practical option for all welfare reform community members to help manage their finances. The Commission has renewed its focus on raising awareness about VIMs within communities.

## Show cause notices

From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, no show cause hearings were held.

Show cause notices are intended as a conferencing tool to address non-compliance with a requirement under a case plan to attend a community support service. In the past there has been a tendency to use the 90 percent income management rate in place of the show cause process. The proposed actions for a show cause notice given to a person include imposing a CIM order, increasing the proportion of the person's welfare payments to be income-managed, or increasing the period for which the person is subject to income management. A review of practices and procedures under the Commission's new leadership has resulted in the reimplementation of a show cause process. The renewed approach which will be progressively rolled out over the next two quarters makes greater use of changing the proportion of welfare payments subject to income management and the period for which income management will apply to address non-compliance.

# Review of non-financial performance



## Amend or end applications

The FRC Act allows clients to apply to amend or end a Commission agreement or order. The Commission views applications to amend or end agreements or orders as an indicator of client confidence in the Commission's ability to provide a fair, just and equitable process.

Whether the outcome was successful depends on what the client requested. This year 58.1 percent of applications were granted. Thirty-six applications resulted in the revocation of income management agreements and orders.

Applications to amend or end voluntary income management are heard in the conference setting, unless the client indicates to the Commission the request requires urgent attention. If so, the application may be considered and a decision made outside of a scheduled conference date.

From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, a total of 62 applications (46 female and 16 male) to amend or end an agreement or order were received. The applications resulted in 36 applications being granted, 5 applications resulted in a revised order or agreement, 19 applications were refused, 1 application was withdrawn by the client and 1 application was received at the end of the financial year with the decision pending.

**Table 11: Applications to amend or end agreements or orders by community and quarter 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

Number of applications	Qtr 45	Qtr 46	Qtr 47	Qtr 48
Aurukun	6	2	15	6
Coen	1	0	0	0
Doomadgee	6	6	1	1
Hope Vale	3	5	2	3
Mossman Gorge	1	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>

## Granted applications:

- 31 income management agreements and orders revoked
  - 1 CIM order and case plan revoked
  - 1 CIM order revoked and client given a reprimand
  - 2 CIM orders revoked and clients advised to comply with their case plans
    - 1 CIM order at 90 percent revoked and client placed on a new CIM order at 75 percent for a period of 12 months

## Applications with a revised order or agreement:

- 1 CIM order at 90 percent revoked and client placed on a new CIM order at 60 percent for a period of 12 months
- 1 CIM order at 75 percent revoked and client placed on a new CIM order at 60 percent for a period of 12 months
- 2 CIM orders at 75 percent revoked and clients placed on a new CIM order at 60 percent for a period of 12 months and clients placed on a new case plan
  - 1 CIM order at 75 percent revoked and client placed on a new CIM order at 90 percent for a period of 12 months.

## Withdrawn applications:

- 1 application withdrawn by the client.

## Refused applications:

- 15 applications refused
  - 4 applications refused and clients given a reprimand.

## Pending applications:

- 1 application was received at the end of the financial year with decisions pending.



# Review of financial performance

## Financial summary

The FRC is a statutory body under the *Family Responsibilities Act 2008* and for the purposes of the:

- *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*.

This summary provides an overview of the FRC's financial performance for 2019-20 and a comparison to 2018-19. A comprehensive set of 2019-20 financial statements covering all aspects of the Commission's activities commences on page 61.

## Our performance

The operating result for 2019-20 was a surplus of \$1.464M. This included an amount of \$900K received from the Australian Government upon execution of a MOU with the Queensland Government. The funds received related to the period 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019.

**Table 1: Summary of financial performance.**

Summary statement	30 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2019
	\$000	\$000
Income	4,991	3,334
Less: expenses	3,527	3,517
Operating surplus/(deficit)	1,464	(183)

## Income

The decrease in State Government funding is due to reduced funding on the expiry of the appointment term of the Deputy Commissioner in December 2018 and no new appointment made during this financial year. The increase in Australian Government funding of \$900K is in relation to the receipt of a back payment for the period 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019 received upon execution of the current MOU with the Queensland Government. Other revenue decreased this year and is primarily interest received. The decrease as compared

to the prior year is due to a reduction in interest rates resulting in lower interest received and \$15K of the prior year's revenue being due to the recoupment of FY18 expenditure.

**Table 2: Summary of income by type.**

Income by type	30 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2019
	\$000	\$000
State Government funding	2,262	2,370
Australian Government funding	2,700	900
Other revenue	29	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,991</b>	<b>3,334</b>

## Expenses

**Table 3: Summary of expenses by type.**

Expenses by type	30 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2019
	\$000	\$000
Employee expenses	2,454	2,586
Supplies and services	1,011	877
Depreciation and amortisation	17	14
Finance/borrowing costs	2	-
Other expenses	43	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,527</b>	<b>3,517</b>

Employee expenses decreased due to cancellations in scheduled conferencing in some communities due to COVID-19, staff vacancies carried and the Deputy Commissioner role being vacant for the full year.

The increase in supplies and services is due primarily to the engagement on a contract basis of the former Commissioner for a period of 5 weeks to undertake training and handover to the new Commissioner as well as the engagement of a consultant to assist with various operational reviews and governance projects. These costs were offset by a reduction in travel costs due to COVID-19.

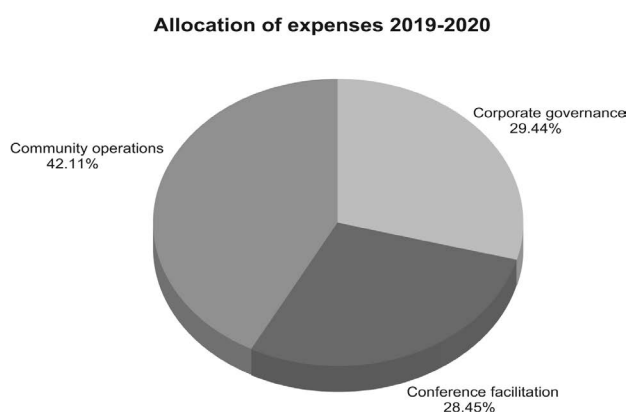
# Review of financial performance



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 Registry 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 allocation of the FRC's costs in 2019-20 based on the above core functions was:



**Graph 1: Allocation of expenses  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.**

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 Registry Coordinators and twenty-nine Local Commissioners, resident in their respective communities. The Local Commissioners are paid as sessional sitting

Commission members for conferencing, serving notices, meetings and professional development.

The largest allocation of FRC expenses is in relation to community operations conducted in our five communities broken down as follows:

**Table 4: Summary of expense by community.**

Community operations expenses by community	30 Jun 2020
	\$000
Aurukun	513
Coen	98
Doomadgee	541
Hope Vale	224
Mossman Gorge	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,484</b>

## Our position

Total assets at 30 June 2020 consisted of current assets of cash, prepayments and receivables in addition to non-current plant and equipment and right-of-use assets.

Total liabilities as at 30 June 2020 consisted of payables, accrued employee benefits and lease liabilities.

**Table 5: Statement of financial position.**

Statement of financial position	30 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2019
	\$000	\$000
Total assets	3,205	1,763
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>334</b>
Net assets	2,893	1,429
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>2,893</b>	<b>1,429</b>



# Community operations

***FRC operations in Aurukun were undertaken by Local Commissioners Edgar Kerindun, Doris Poonkamelya, Ada Woolla, Dorothy Pootchemunka, Vera Koomeeta and Keri Tamwoy, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Bryce Coxall. A report of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## **Aurukun Commissioners' report**

This year has been very eventful for us. The commencement of Tammy Williams as our new Commissioner on 2 September 2019, replacing David Glasgow who retired after 11 years with the Commission, brought us hope for the future of the FRC. To further strengthen our hopes, on 24 October 2019 the Governor in Council under the FRC Act approved the appointment of five new Local Commissioners and the reappointment of all currently serving Local Commissioners to 30 June 2020. Further, we were extremely excited to hear that on 12 December 2019 the Commission received an executed Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Queensland Governments, thereby promising a future for the FRC to 30 June 2021. The appointments and agreement have delivered some certainty for us going forward. Working with the wider FRC team we look forward to using this time to show that we are still an effective and essential service for our community.

Commissioner Williams has brought a new range of ideas and a new perspective to our operations and she has fitted into the team like she has been here from the beginning. Her support and mentoring have already had a big influence on all of us and we are excited to learn and grow with Commissioner Williams into the future.

This year we set several goals to strive for. We hope achieving our goals will result in improved support for our clients. Our main focus has been on improving the relationships with our service providers and increasing the number of referrals to these support services. The relationship and communication with the Wellbeing Centre, Cape York Partnership and the school has never been stronger. We are thrilled to see these services actively reaching out to us around our clients and providing all the support they can.

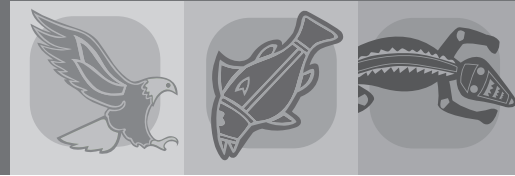
In 2018-19 many factors, including some uncertainty of the FRC's future, meant very few referrals for our clients to support services. The low number of referrals is not a reflection that our clients do not need support. We know that many of our clients need extensive support from our referral pathways. That is why we have reviewed our approach and focus. We made 182 referrals in 2019-20 and we intend to continue using local support services going forward and working collaboratively with them for the benefit of our community members.

Another focus and target we have set is to increase our client attendance at conference. We have been conferencing many of the same clients for years so we knew that this would be a struggle, however, our client attendance is improving and we strongly believe this reflects that our clients are benefiting from our work. We will continue to support them to the best of our ability.

The Aurukun community, as a whole, finished off the 2019 calendar year quite strongly and was heading in the right direction, but the new year was met with some of our biggest challenges. Extreme community unrest in early January, which resulted in the murder of a young man, led to a mass exodus of community members out of Aurukun. Hundreds of people left Aurukun in fear of their safety and possible retaliation from opposing families. Aurukun families travelled to Weipa, Napranum, Coen, Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama, Cairns and as far south as Townsville.



# Community operations



During this time, we were extremely thankful for DATSIP's work developing a team of staff to help support the families that had left Aurukun. We continued to stay in contact with all our clients even though they were not in community. We held FRC conferencing for Aurukun clients in Cairns and Coen and conducted teleconferencing with other displaced community members. This was very challenging at times, but we committed to not letting our clients go unsupported just because they were not residing in Aurukun. We are pleased to see that a lot of the displaced families are slowly returning to Aurukun as this is their home and where they should be. We hope to assist the community to overcome this setback. It brought hardship to many families who were caught up in the unrest, and it has made all of Aurukun look for a solution going forward. We would not like to see this situation occur again.

And just when we thought things were returning to normal, our resilience was tested with the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, although the community was put into lockdown because of the extreme vulnerability of many of our community members to this virus, we continued our operations while complying with all the social distancing and cleansing guidelines. It is a huge relief to us that Cape York is still COVID-19 free. Due to all the travel restrictions we have been conferencing with Commissioner Williams joining us by phone when needed. We take our responsibility to maintain a professional and efficient workplace very seriously, and owe much to our Local Registry Coordinator, Bryce Coxall, who with his family remained with us in Aurukun throughout the COVID-19 crisis to assist us in continuing our services to the community of Aurukun. We have seen the difficulties faced by our other communities having to serve notices and conference without the assistance of their Local Registry Coordinator, and we feel very lucky indeed to have such a committed colleague and friend.

In March we had our Local Government elections for the Aurukun Shire Council and a number of us who have served as Councillors in the past decided not to run for Council again. We felt it was time to get some new voices and fresh ideas in council seats. Luckily for us there was one exception – we were very pleased to see our youngest Aurukun Commissioner, Keri Tamwoy, elected as Mayor. We know Commissioner Keri Tamwoy will do great things leading our community into the future. One of her first decisions, in keeping with her commitment as a Local Commissioner, was to keep the school at Aurukun open during the pandemic for the sake of our children, most of whom are unable to continue schooling at home.

Unfortunately, with many displaced community members and COVID-19, our school attendance figures will be lower than ever in 2020, but with the Aurukun State School remaining open and those committed parents and children able to attend, we at least have seen some semblance of normal, everyday life. We would like to thank the Department of Education for their uninterrupted service during the pandemic and their continued support for the children and families of Aurukun.

We have faith that things will get easier going forward, and with the new Council appointed and new Mayor leading our community, we are expecting some great things to come for Aurukun. We are excited that with the leadership and direction of Commissioner Williams we will continue to grow and improve our service and support for the families of Aurukun.



# Community operations

***FRC operations in Coen were undertaken by Local Commissioners May Kepple, Garry Port, Elaine Liddy, Alison Liddy and Maureen Liddy, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Sandra Rye (assisted by Acting Local Registry Coordinator Josephine Pinder). A report of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## **Coen Commissioners' report**

We have been FRC Local Commissioners since 2008. We would like to say that during our time as Local Commissioners for Coen, our vision has not altered. Children are our future leaders and we are driven to make certain the children of Coen are given the best possible opportunity to choose their path. Last year we talked about building on the progress achieved from previous years. We firmly believe this is happening. The work of a Local Commissioner is challenging. It takes dedication to continue year after year. Not all clients are happy with the decisions made during conference, but we must not lose sight of our vision for the future.

We continue to maintain our focus on a sustainable future for our people. With support from our Local Registry Coordinator, we have continued to work in collaboration with the school principal and staff of the Coen Campus of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) to assist with any difficult attendance matters. Open communication is critical in ensuring there is no misunderstanding between school staff, community members, parents, students and our partners. Our leadership has in the past supported these important steps and we commit to continuing to do so in the future.

An issue that has been raised year after year remains – when parents/carers take their children out of school to attend medical appointments or work training commitments outside of the community. This creates several pressures for those concerned: for parents who are often concerned about being served a notice to appear before the Commission due to an unreasonable student absence; pressure on the student to complete missed work; and pressure for teachers to ensure the student remains at level and catches up on any missed school work. In addition, this type of absence can have a significant effect on the overall school attendance percentage, particularly if the family leaving community has several children. We have raised this matter with the school and have been advised the school team are currently workshopping some potential solutions to be considered with the aim of incorporating a new process by 2021.

The school attendance in Coen dropped from 88.6 percent recorded in Term 2 2019 to 81.7 percent in Term 3 2019. Although this percentage was a little lower than usual, there is a decline trend between Term 2 and Term 3 across the board. We put this down to families leaving community to shop, attend the local show, stock up for Christmas and prepare for the onset of the wet season. Coen school attendance, however, generally remains in the 80 to 90 percent range.

In early January there was an influx into community of approximately 200 displaced Aurukun people who fled their community following the murder of a 37-year-old male. These Aurukun people fled the town in fear of their own lives after several houses were burnt to the ground and further acts of revenge were threatened. Many Aurukun people dispersed to Lockhart River, Kowanyama, Weipa, Laura and Cairns after spending a few weeks in Coen, but some families remained.

The police found there was a rise in public nuisance cases due to high levels of intoxication and worked with the Exchange Hotel where a ban on take-away alcohol was initiated to reduce alcohol consumption. We worked in a very successful collaboration with Aurukun Commissioners to conference Aurukun clients in Coen who had existing notices or were the subject of new notices received by the Commission. Commissioner May Kepple and our FRC Local Registry Coordinator gratefully utilised the services of the Coen Police to serve notices to attend conference to identified

# Community operations



Aurukun people still residing in Coen. It was the presence and respect of family member and Local Commissioner May Kepple that produced such a positive result in the serving of Aurukun community members, and the excellent conference attendance achieved.

The Commission's heightened response during these weeks enabled support for Coen residents and stakeholders by ensuring that the people of Aurukun were connected to Aurukun Local Commissioners and were reminded of their responsibilities. The collaboration with Aurukun Local Commissioners during the conference process encouraged Aurukun people to engage in socially responsible behaviour, highlighting the expected behaviours in Coen and the detrimental effect unsocial behaviour can have on community children.

The challenges continued in mid-March when the COVID-19 pandemic caused a change in how we go about our daily activities. The initial announcement of community lockdown caused a wave of fear and anxiety across the community and we suggested the upcoming conference be postponed until the community prepared and processed what was occurring. Once the COVID-19 safe practices were introduced, we continued business as usual with no fly-in/fly-out support staff. All support was managed remotely through the Cairns registry office, and although we were forced to incorporate some new administrative duties, our focus was on the task. This is where we feel our leadership roles assisted us to ensure our people, especially our children, continued to be supported.

The pandemic has highlighted the lack of resources for specialised support that we stated in last year's report. We mentioned some relief through the Justice Group programs for members affected by domestic violence, however, such support is limited. There continues to be a need for specialised local drug and alcohol services that can follow the journey of healing and stop the band-aid approach. The influx of Aurukun people during the unrest also highlighted again the desperate need for housing in Coen. As research suggests, lack of housing comes with many complexities such as overcrowding and homelessness, emotional stress for families, and domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence then has a domino effect on children's emotional state and children start missing school. Getting to the core of what is really happening and providing the resources for genuine healing for families is necessary.

Coen interagency meetings have been, and continue to be, a hub of cooperation and partnership where stakeholders are given a platform to coordinate and share information such as urgent matters of health and wellbeing, services being delivered, gaps in service delivery, and resources available or required. These meetings have been crucial during the uncertainty 2020 has brought and gave all government and non-government organisations a space to share critical information about emergency directives.

The beginning of 2020 also brought positive outcomes. We started a new incentive program for FRC individuals and families where we present gift hampers in recognition of the client's improved efforts toward a positive outcome. The gift hampers are presented to two individuals or families each quarter and has been a great success.

During the year we have conducted many conferences. We feel we have given our all to each matter that comes before us, prioritising the protection of children foremost, and advising parents of the importance of education for the future of Coen. Although we have faced many challenges, we believe our work is impacting the community for the better and hope it will continue to benefit future generations.



# Community operations

***FRC operations in Doomadgee were undertaken by Local Commissioners Christopher Logan, Eleanor Logan, Elaine Cairns, Kaylene O'Keefe, Guy Douglas, Isabel Toby and Dawn Aplin, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Robert Hazeldine and by Acting Local Registry Coordinator Brenden Joinbee. A report of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## **Doomadgee Commissioners' report**

The past 12 months has been another eventful time for Doomadgee, especially the second half of the year. The emergence of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the community in general. Doomadgee has been in lockdown since March this year and the community is beginning to feel the effects of isolation. The COVID-19 pandemic along with community unrest early in 2020 have impacted school attendance greatly, with primary school attendance at 50.8 percent for Term 1 of 2020 before decreasing to 33.3 percent for Term 2. Unfortunately, sorry business has once again had a profound effect on school attendance.

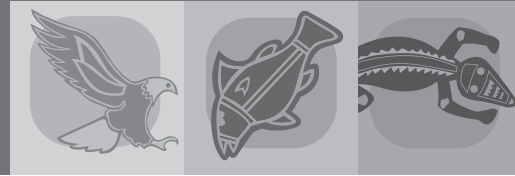
We, as Doomadgee Local Commissioners, have not forgotten the importance of the work we do in community, and we decided to continue to conference our clients during the COVID-19 lockdown. We have accepted the challenge in front of us as we believe that even though the current situation is far from ideal, the FRC needs to continue providing assistance and support to our community and our people. Conferences are important because they allow us to communicate with our people and to work with them to find the best solution to address the issues they are experiencing. We are beginning to see a shift in people's attitudes towards the FRC and towards us as Local Commissioners. Many clients are now attending conference willingly to participate and interact with us and discuss issues they are experiencing. Clients are more willing to approach us in community to ask for assistance and we have also had clients discuss the positive impacts income management has had on their lives.

During conference we continue to reinforce the importance of school attendance to our clients, especially those clients with children who are of boarding school age. We do not wish to see our children miss the opportunity of going to boarding school and obtaining an education. In saying that, we also stress the importance of a proper start to education for families of young children. We want all children to gain a quality education and to become successful; that is our dream. At the end of each term we arrange the delivery of a household hamper to two families whose children have good school attendance, or who have made significant changes to help improve their children's attendance.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, we have seen an influx of money into the community which has ultimately led to an increased number of parties, drinking and gambling in the community. These issues have been exacerbated by the fact that the community has been locked down and isolated since March, leading to heightened tensions.

We have also seen an increase in the number of cases of petrol sniffing in community. There have been several transient children come into the community from outside Doomadgee, bringing this anti-social behaviour with them. This is an issue that has only emerged recently, and we want to work with service providers in community to help eradicate the problem as quickly as possible. Doomadgee has a newly elected council which we are eager to work with to help combat this issue. We believe that all the services in the community need to work together toward a solution to this horrific problem. Save the Children have been conducting day trips out

# Community operations



to country to try and assist at-risk children, removing them from influences that could lead to petrol sniffing. We are also extremely happy to hear that Save the Children have begun planning for future camps to be conducted once COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

The appointment of Commissioner Williams to the position of FRC Commissioner has been a breath of fresh air. Commissioner Williams' enthusiasm, drive and commitment to the position has really energised us to continue the work we do in community. Through her encouragement we have realised that we are capable of so much more. Since Commissioner Williams' appointment our confidence has increased dramatically, and we are more motivated than ever to assist our community and our people. The training and support Commissioner has given us shows that she is passionate about our work, and it is something we are extremely grateful for. Working with Commissioner Williams, we have set several goals that we aim to achieve, including increasing our conference attendance rate and the number of referrals to service providers. Without the support and guidance of Commissioner Williams, we would not have the confidence to set and achieve these goals.

We have been serving clients with notices to attend conference by ourselves due to the lock-down measures implemented by the Government. Our Acting Local Registry Coordinator who normally assists us with the serving of notices and other administrative duties related to our work as FRC Local Commissioners has not been able to travel to Doomadgee due to the restrictions in place. This has meant that for us to continue our commitment to Doomadgee, we have had to take on many of the administrative duties in his absence. We have also had to conduct conferences without our Acting Local Registry Coordinator present in Doomadgee. He has continued to assist via telephone during conferencing, noting our decisions and providing information and support as required. We have taken this opportunity to step up and take responsibility to provide the support that is going to best suit the community and our people. Although there have been some minor issues with conferencing remotely, the work we do is too important not to continue. Commissioner Williams and the Cairns registry have provided us with an extraordinary amount of support during this time and we would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Commissioner Williams and the registry staff.

We have expressed to Commissioner Williams our wish to receive additional triggers, allowing us to address matters involving the Magistrate Court, domestic violence and notices for housing violations. We would also like to have access to a Children's Court trigger, so we can work with our young people and their families. We feel that our ability to offer clients a more holistic response is extremely limited due to only receiving education and child safety notices.

We are happy to announce that Commissioner Isabel Toby has returned to the FRC after a short time away, and we would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest FRC Local Commissioner for Doomadgee, Dawn Aplin. Commissioner Aplin's appointment will help strengthen our team and provide additional knowledge and experience to assist us in conferencing and engaging with clients. We look forward to continuing our work as FRC Local Commissioners in the future, and with the assistance of Commissioner Williams, have big plans to better help our community and people.



# Community operations

***FRC operations in Hope Vale were undertaken by Local Commissioners Victor Gibson, Priscilla Gibson, Doreen Hart, Erica Deeral, Cheryl Cannon, Selina Bowen and Robert Gibson, supported by Acting Local Registry Coordinator Brenden Joinbee and Acting Local Registry Coordinator Josephine Pinder. A report of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## **Hope Vale Commissioners' report**

Our first Hope Vale Commissioners' report presented in 2009 was a short report. We stated that the year had been a challenge, we had seen some improvements, income management was good for some and contested by others, and that we were proud of the work we had done. We have dealt with many complexities and challenges since that time and now here we are, writing our year in review report for the 2019-20 year. We feel very proud that we still sit here, working with our community members to increase our local authority and self-determination. We continue to face much of what we faced in 2009, though the complexity and detail of each challenge changes from year to year. We remain proud of the work we have done, and our commitment remains strong for the future.

The past year has seen our Hope Vale Campus of CYAAA make some very good headway in improving school attendance. Term 4 2019 saw school attendance reach 87.9 percent. Term 1 2020 then reached 88.6 percent. Though we have yet to reach 90 percent or greater as a term average, we look forward to the school achieving that in the near future.

It appears clear that the strategies implemented during the year by Principal Glenn White have worked well to promote student attendance. These strategies include morning pickups which are offered by the school and a walk to school program conducted every second Friday where teachers accompany children to school.

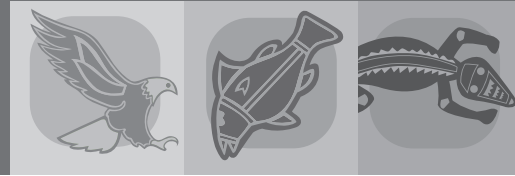
School initiatives which we believe add value are:

- The Adopt-a-Cop program which is building positive relationships between the police and students, school staff, parents, carers, and community members.
- Year 5 Retreat Day which brings children and parents together to partake in organised activities such as team building, discussions on preparation for secondary school, completing scholarship applications, Cape York Partnership (CYP) Leadership Program, setting up student education trust accounts and partaking in the WBC – cultural identity program.
- The incorporation of culture into the school curriculum by teaching the Guugu-Yimidhirr language. The children are taught respect for their clan groups and Elders, which allows them to self-reflect and honour their unique history. Teaching culture in this manner gives the children a way to link the past and the present with meaning through language.
- The CYAAA Behaviour Coach has introduced a handbook 'Face and Creed of School' as a tool to teach behaviour prevention and intervention, providing a vision and set of beliefs to guide the students and school staff in their actions and commitment to learning.

Unfortunately, in March 2020 COVID-19 forced the world into lockdown, and none more so than our Indigenous communities. We learnt a new term – 'social distancing'. During this period Hope Vale saw the arrival of a new police Officer-In-Charge, Amit Singh, who has already demonstrated a strong desire to work with the community and stakeholders to improve behaviours and build a stronger, safer environment.

Whilst many schools around the country were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hope Vale Campus of CYAAA and the Cooktown State High School reopened for Term 2. The schools are

# Community operations



striving to keep things as normal as possible, offering face to face classes for vulnerable students. We have enjoyed a renewed relationship with the Cooktown State High School, and we are working with the school alongside parents to provide focused support for identified students in need. One of the upsides of the COVID-19 period was that our community students were honoured this year by becoming TV stars for a day, appearing on ABC television singing the 'Coronavirus Song'.

At the end of March concerns were raised when the first of the COVID-19 increased welfare payments (stimulus money) commenced and the community saw a spike in the amount of alcohol being brought into the community. The increase in alcohol consumption has led to an increase in domestic violence incidents. Charges have been laid by police, but offenders will not appear in court until court sittings resume in the future. Excess alcohol consumption has also contributed to noise complaints and disruptive behaviour at party houses in the community despite the social distancing requirements of the Government.

We have committed to continue operating and aiding our community members during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that it is crucial community members are assisted whilst trying to deal with their continuing challenges in isolation. We perceived that there was a risk to future scheduling of conferences should the current COVID-19 situation worsen and prioritised clients based on child safety and domestic family violence risks which may worsen. Priority has also been given to clients with amend or end applications and voluntary income management clients whose agreements were due to expire in the next three months. Of course, whilst continuing to provide a service to the community, we are practising social distancing and offering every client an opportunity to conference by telephone. This has proven very successful for us with improved overall attendance at conference.

Service providers and many other organisations have been affected by the same complexities as we have in attempting to operate in the COVID-19 environment. The Apunipima Wellbeing Centre continued to provide counselling sessions both face to face and via telephone. COVID-19 has interrupted the delivery of the existing programs such as the Men's and Youth's Groups on country camps, as well as the introduction of a non-residential rehabilitation program to be conducted in community. The CYP O-Hub continued to operate and provide support to community members during this very difficult time. The O-Hub is focusing on providing financial literacy now that there is an increase of money coming into the community, and the Hope Vale Centrelink office has continued to operate during the lockdown period as well.

Pama Futures, a CYP reform agenda incorporating social, economic and cultural development for the people of Cape York commenced the 'Mayi Market', an online food market which has become a big hit in Hope Vale. The Mayi Market offers a choice of family-friendly and healthy boxes of fresh food and produce from local farmers at Cairns prices. This online market has provided our community members with more options for making healthy food choices.

This year we were glad to welcome two new Local Commissioners to our ranks, Robert Gibson and Priscilla Gibson. They bring complementary skills to our work and we feel very fortunate to have such a diverse range of talent within our group.

We are looking forward to next year, under the guidance of FRC Commissioner Williams who has brought us a renewed sense of motivation and purpose. Together with Commissioner Williams, and our Acting Local Registry Coordinator Josephine Pinder, it is time to take the next step in our journey.



# Community operations

***FRC operations in Mossman Gorge were undertaken by Local Commissioners Karen Shuan, Loretta Spratt, Karen Gibson and George Ross-Kelly, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Sandra Rye (assisted by Acting Local Registry Coordinator Josephine Pinder). A report of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## **Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners' report**

The year has passed like the wind in a cyclone. We have paused to look back over a year of change, a year that has seen some unusual occurrences which have prompted us to consider new and innovative ways to tackle the existing social problems in Mossman Gorge. It is important for us to sustain the momentum we have gained since 2008 to face new and existing challenges. We are committed to creating a positive future for generations to come. We have a heavy responsibility to the members of our community as Local Commissioners, to support the rebuilding of socially acceptable behaviours and to keep our children safe, allowing them to grow and blossom in a supportive nurturing environment. This is by no means an easy task we face each year, but we know we can lean on one another to share some of the burden when life gets a bit tough, and to keep our motivation going.

A long-awaited valuable addition to our team has been the appointment of a new male Mossman Gorge Commissioner, George Ross-Kelly. Commissioner Ross-Kelly brings with him a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the Mossman Gorge community. We know George will bring some balance to our team. His contribution as a male Commissioner to support our men with 'Men's Business' will be greatly valued.

The annual FRC School Awards joined in with a new tradition for Mossman Gorge; we were invited to participate and present the school attendance awards at the 2019 Christmas Fair which was held at the Mossman Gorge Centre. The event had great community attendance. We handed out prizes and certificates to students who had improvements in school attendance and/or had demonstrated a good attitude toward education. An award was presented to the highest attender along with a \$250 deposit into their Student Education Trust Fund account. Mossman State School Principal, Randal Smith, and Deputy Principal, Sharon Case have consistently shown their ongoing dedication to the families of Mossman Gorge by attending the awards each year. This year they presented academic and attendance awards encouraging students to attend school every day, expanding opportunities for their future. The event continued into the afternoon and community members enjoyed the live entertainment and barbeque prepared by the hospitality team. Children were entertained by a jumping castle, a visit from the fire brigade with their popular fire truck on display and when the heat got too much, swimming down the rapids.

One of the revised strategies we have used to encourage better school attendance is acknowledging the efforts of the parent/carer to form new habits and teach their children the importance of education. We want the community to see that we are here to support them to get past the difficult times. Each quarter we deliver a gift hamper to two families in recognition of their efforts toward improved attendance.

English is a second language for many of our Elders and there is a need for the younger generation to learn the Kuku Yalanji language and traditional culture which can be taught by the Elders of this community. Language is a barrier for some of the Elders and ideally if our local service providers learnt some basic terms of the language it would be helpful to communicate and understand the issues which affect them. We do not see the consistency that is required to



# Community operations



address their social and emotional needs. There is a gap in the delivery of programs to occupy young people in our community, and the health and wellbeing of the Elders is also being impacted by a lack of local activities and stimulation. We are pleased now that the Mossman State School has incorporated the Kuku Yalanji language into their learning program. Teachers at the school have reported a noticeable reduction in break-ins at the school and improvements in behaviour which resulted in only one suspension during 2019.

Although the 2020 school year commenced in a similar vein to previous years, the end of Term 1 and beginning of Term 2 were compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic created a wave of anxiety through community and many parents were reluctant to send their children to school. The community worked with Mossman State School and set up a Learning Hub in the old Training Centre. Parents were thankful for the Learning Hub, however, attendance did not prove to be consistent and once restrictions eased and schools opened, the idea was abandoned.

Each year we look forward to the Local Commissioner Development Week. This year we participated in a Local Commissioner Planning Week instead which was held in September 2019. It proved an excellent opportunity to share information, workshop new ideas and enhance our leadership skills. Mostly, it was a time to connect with our brother and sister Commissioners from other communities. We heard their stories and they heard ours. We understood the challenges that each of us face regardless of our separate communities, and we went home feeling strengthened, refreshed, confident and ready to tackle the next challenge.

In September 2019 Commissioner Williams met with DATSIP Deputy Director-General Kathy Parton, who agreed to visit Mossman Gorge and observe an FRC conference being conducted. Deputy Director-General Kathy Parton held true to her word and took up the opportunity to observe a Mossman Gorge conference in action. We appreciate visitors who take an interest and acknowledge the unique way we lead our community to address unsocial behaviours.

As reported in our last year's annual report, Mossman Gorge has been undergoing a protracted period of major civil works. One of the changes that has occurred during and after the major works has been the transfer of housing properties from Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation (BBNAC) Housing to the Department of Housing and Public Works. Home Assist and occupational therapist assessment services were made available for residents with mobility issues. To improve living standards for Mossman Gorge residents it is essential that culture is understood, and all future initiatives are planned with a community voice ensuring their beliefs and traditions are considered and incorporated.

It has been a year of change. We have seen improved community housing, new connections, welcomed a new Commissioner to the FRC family and said goodbye to those leaving. We have drawn on our knowledge of the past and we are building on new strategies for the future with a new-found motivation. We look forward to another year and improved social changes for our people.

In a final word, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Local Commissioner Karen Gibson who has decided to step down from her role as a Local Commissioner to focus on her passion and talent for art. Commissioner Gibson has given many years of dedication to the Mossman Gorge community and to FRC clients and staff. We will miss her valuable knowledge, strong leadership skills and gentle approach. No-one is more deserving of being happy and reaching their dreams. We wish Karen the best of luck in her future endeavours.



# Significant events and achievements

## Significant events

***The past fiscal year has seen quite a few significant events which, together with significant challenges experienced and reported separately in this Annual Report, have had an impact upon the internal operations and future outlook of the FRC.***

### Appointment of FRC Commissioner

The Commission was pleased to announce the appointment of Tammy Williams as its new Commissioner to build on the legacy left by David Glasgow who retired after 11 years as CEO and inaugural Commissioner. Commissioner Williams commenced on 2 September 2019 and her appointment was made effective until 30 June 2020 pending further negotiations between the Queensland and Australian Governments and policy work into the future direction of the FRC. Commissioner Williams is the first Aboriginal and female Commissioner to be appointed as CEO of the FRC. The former Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Jackie Trad MP, stated: *“Ms Williams’ appointment as Commissioner provides strong leadership for the Welfare Reform communities serviced by the FRC. Ms Williams has the energy, vision and ability to communicate across local, corporate and government levels and offers a strategic and fresh leadership approach.”* We are pleased to advise that on 2 July 2020 Commissioner Williams was reappointed as CEO for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

David Glasgow’s significant contribution as the Commission’s CEO is well known. He led the Commission since its inception in 2008 and is now celebrating the end of an exceptional career that has achieved many goals. He has given the Commission and those working within it direction, guidance and inspiration. He will be greatly missed by the Commission, its strategic partners, service providers and many community members in the welfare reform communities.

### Reappointment of Local Commissioners

On 24 October 2019 the Governor in Council under the FRC Act approved the appointment of five new Local Commissioners and the reappointment of 24 existing Local Commissioners to the FRC for the period 1 November 2019 to 30 June 2020. The five new Local Commissioners included two Commissioners for Hope Vale, Robert Gibson and Priscilla Gibson, two Commissioners for Doomadgee, Dawn Aplin and Isabel Toby, and one Commissioner for Mossman Gorge, George Ross-Kelly. The appointment of these additional Local Commissioners provides the Commission with diversity of expertise, gender and cultural authority. From 1 July 2020 all Local Commissioners were reappointed until 30 June 2021.

### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

On 12 December 2019 the Commission was pleased to receive an executed 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 Australian and Queensland Governments’ commitment to the Commission’s continuing role in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale

# Significant events and achievements



and Mossman Gorge. The delivery of the MOU has provided the Commission with stability and certainty going forward which has also assisted to re-establish the Commission's relationship with service provider partners and partner agencies.

## Tabling of 2018-19 Annual Report

The Commission is pleased to report the 2018-19 Annual Report was tabled by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to Parliament on 20 March 2020. This represents the last annual report delivered by former FRC Commissioner David Glasgow who commenced as the inaugural FRC Commissioner in 2008.

## Proposed transition from Cape York Income Management (CYIM) to the Cashless Debit Card

On 23 September 2019, following an invitation received to present evidence to the 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, Commission officers gave evidence to the Committee by tele-link. The Committee's consideration related in principal to the future of CYIM (administered through a BasicsCard) and the transition of income management participants in FRC communities onto the Cashless Debit Card.

Commissioner Williams informed those present of the highly targeted approach to CYIM as exercised by the Local Commissioners which is clearly supportive of local authority and decision-making. Separate written submissions were provided to the Committee to support the views of the Commission and Local Commissioners in their fight against long-term welfare dependency and for self-determination in their communities. In the Local Commissioners' submission, they stated – *“Our model puts power in our hands through the FRC, so as respected local leaders we can intervene where people are not meeting their basic responsibilities to their children and our community. We bring people to the FRC for conferencing, and we have power to intervene with care, support and love – sometimes with tough love, which is when income management is an important tool for us. Our model is not a blanket approach”*.

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.

## Local Commissioner Development and Planning Week

The Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners as required under sections 22 and 35 of the FRC Act – Commissioner and Registrar's functions. A Local Commissioner Planning Week was conducted from 23 to 26 September 2019. Local Commissioners from each community travelled to Cairns and presented to the delegates community reports incorporating their desire for strengthening relationships, setting strategic priorities, meeting challenges and developing a vision for the future. A review of



# Significant events and achievements

operations was conducted by the Client Manager, Camille Banks, during which statistics were presented and analysed, FRC objectives were reassessed and goals refreshed. An I-Assist Indigenous Suicide Awareness Program and Consultation was conducted which expanded upon the LivingWorks Australia safeTALK workshop conducted at the Local Commissioner Development Week held in June 2019. The planning week also provided the opportunity to officially transition from the leadership of Commissioner David Glasgow to newly appointed Commissioner Tammy Williams.

## Achievements

### Student achievement

Each year the Local Commissioners present school awards to provide positive recognition and support for those students (and their families) who regularly attend school, to encourage better attendance, and to reiterate the importance of education in establishing a successful life for the future. The Commission's annual School Awards presentations were conducted in December in each of the five communities. Prizes were awarded for attendance achievements and included certificates, medals, and other incentives.

### Client achievement

As part of the review of operational strategies, the Commission implemented a Client Incentive Program, an initiative which provides the Local Commissioners the opportunity to acknowledge and reward two FRC clients from each community who have demonstrated significant improvement in behaviour and/or attitude each quarter. The program is aimed at creating and fostering a sense of value for clients in achieving the goals set by, and for them, and boosting their commitment to achieving those goals.

Local Commissioners reported the client's delight at receiving the gift, as well as their own pleasure and pride in being able to deliver the incentive. The program appears to have been a success in reinforcing the positive relationship between clients, the Commission and changed behaviour. Celebratory morning teas were also hosted in Hope Vale and Aurukun with service providers and clients to recognise and encourage client progress and build on relationships through increased communication.

# Challenges and outlook



***The Commission's operational agility was tested commencing from January 2020 with both the 'Aurukun crisis' and the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.***

## **Aurukun response project**

Following a murder in Aurukun on 1 January 2020 major community unrest occurred which was of such significance that a large portion of the community fled, fearing for their lives, to other centres including Coen and Cairns. The Commission worked through complex legal issues and logistics to present a coordinated response to this crisis and identified the need for an elevated FRC presence in both Aurukun and Coen. Anne Crampton was appointed as the temporary fulltime 'special lead' from the Cairns registry. Her role as the Senior Community Coordinator was to coordinate the Aurukun/Coen/Cairns response and to work in conjunction with both the Coen and Aurukun Local Registry Coordinators and the Queensland and Australian Governments.

The FRC's presence in Coen was increased in response to the anticipated elevated needs of the displaced Aurukun clients. Additional conferences were held for Aurukun clients resident in Coen and Cairns to support them in ensuring children were enrolled in and attending school, counselling was provided for mental health needs, practical solutions were sourced in relation to displacement and possible homelessness, and income management agreements/orders were reviewed to promote financial security. Allowances were also made during this difficult period to use technology to conduct conferences over the phone as permitted under section 56 of the FRC Act.

The FRC's response to the troubled situation in Aurukun was initiated to ensure the Commission could continue to fulfil its mandate of restoring social responsibility whilst upholding local leadership in a time of crisis. The Commission identified that a targeted response and increased presence in community was vital to source support systems for displaced FRC clients and send the clear message that not being present in community did not remove FRC clients from obligations of socially responsible behaviour, particularly in relation to the care of children.

Whilst the primary aim of the crisis response project was to ensure continued engagement with and support for FRC clients, an unexpected positive outcome was a change in the perception of the FRC from a punitive measure to an agency for support. The FRC's response to the Aurukun crisis was efficient and targeted. It demonstrated the Commission's commitment to maintaining relevance to community members. Aurukun clients in Cairns and Coen were keen to engage with the Commissioners, and respect for their leadership was apparent in the higher rate of attendance at conference with 8.6 percent more conferences attended than those who conferenced in Aurukun.

Conducting conference outside of Aurukun demonstrated the Commission's commitment to providing support for clients in challenging circumstances, a situation which inadvertently served as a forerunner for continuing to function as an essential service during the subsequent crisis brought about by the outbreak of COVID-19. Aurukun Local Commissioners throughout this period demonstrated great strength and resilience, setting aside family and community conflicts to work as a united team in conference to support the needs of our clients.



# Challenges and Outlook

## COVID-19 pandemic response

The declared COVID-19 pandemic further challenged operations as indeed it has for the rest of Australia. The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed to have reached Australia in January 2020 and on March 11 COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation.

In balancing the Commission's business continuity with community vulnerabilities, the Executive Management Team (EMT) adopted a Preparedness and Alert Framework and decided unanimously to suspend all non-essential travel to the FRC communities. The decision was not made lightly. Several factors were taken into consideration such as the vulnerability of children whose parents had received trigger notices, balanced against the need to ensure the ongoing safety of staff, Local Commissioners and community members. The limited remote community access to acute health care in critical situations was of major concern.

During this period, the Commission was (and remains today) concerned to continue meeting its obligations as an essential service. This concern was heightened with the increase of welfare payments within community and the potential increase in domestic and family violence, ongoing concerns of child safety and the general additional pressures placed on families who had restricted movement between households in the communities.

In ceasing travel to the communities, the EMT determined it was particularly important that conferencing continue whilst the communities were COVID-19 free by maximising the Commission's locally based resources. This modified approach to the FRC's operations also included the utilisation of remote technology linking Local Commissioners sitting in conference with the FRC Commissioner and members of the Cairns based registry team. Local Commissioners were asked to play a greater administrative role on behalf of the Cairns registry. Their strict sessional conferencing duties were voluntarily extended to undertake some of the Local Registry Coordinator's functions in community, along with the support of clients outside the conferencing environment (including liaising with support services). This arrangement has provided an opportunity to build the capabilities of the Local Commissioners, whilst also providing remuneration during this difficult time. Throughout this period, the registry team continued to work closely with Local Commissioners to support them in this new working environment. The Commission identified priority clients who required assistance based on child safety and domestic family violence risks and priority was given to clients with amend or end applications and voluntary income management clients whose agreements were due to expire. Bearing in mind the prescriptive nature of the FRC Act in regard to the number of Commissioners required to make decisions, and the need to reduce physical contact, clients were encouraged to use teleconference in the first instance, where appropriate.

A key strategy to assist in managing the COVID-19 operational challenge was the temporary appointment of a Community Coordinator (COVID-19 Response) position. The role of this position was performed by Local Registry Coordinator Sandra Rye, and was primarily to: manage, coordinate and monitor conferencing capability in the FRC communities; initiate and maintain client case management links with service providers; coordinate the support of Local Commissioners during conferencing; and provide advice to the EMT on strategic implementation options and risks. The Commission can report that from 17 March to 30 June 2020, 535 conferences were conducted across the five communities with 127 referrals made to service providers to support FRC client needs.

The FRC's COVID-19 response has been necessary and proportionate. We have, and will, continue to ensure that our response is consistent with government protocols in relation to the pandemic whilst maintaining the objects of the FRC Act in providing support to FRC communities.

# Challenges and outlook



## Staffing

The Commission works in dynamic and remote environments with community members who have multifaceted needs. The Local Commissioners and Local Registry Coordinators are required to perform tasks which often stretch their resources and their resilience. The resourcing levels across the communities continues to remain a priority for the Commission to ensure their health and safety, and to bolster their agility in delivering services for the community.

This year has seen events which have required the EMT to actively review its work health and safety arrangements and obligations in the Cairns registry and across the communities. The continued safety of our personnel working remotely, and our resourcing levels to mitigate the potential COVID-19 impact and community unrest experienced has required the appointment of 'special leads' from our existing establishment and the redistribution of duties and responsibilities across our organisation.

A review of the FRC's conferencing and case management model commenced this year to better reflect the intent of the FRC Act and to provide evidence of value in terms of social responsibility and organisational level benefits to community members. The work is compatible with the broader efforts of the Queensland Government to address a range of issues related to providing access to services and supports for those most in need. To enable our renewed focus, we have re-aligned our registry structure to create two frontline workgroups: Coordination, and Case Management and Monitoring (refer page 14). It is forecast that our re-aligned operations will increase current workloads and necessitate growth in our establishment.

The Commission's internal review has seen a significant increase in referrals to service providers and clients case-managed, and has resulted in Commissioner Williams travelling extensively, supported on an intermittent consultancy basis by Rod Curtin to assist with the increased workload. The FRC has had a Deputy Commissioner since 2010, however, from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2020 no Deputy Commissioner was appointed. The FRC Commissioner role is essential to the functioning of the FRC. The operational model of employing one FRC Commissioner and no Deputy Commissioner for this reporting period has been risky, and coupled with existing workload, not sustainable. It is anticipated that the appointment of a part-time Deputy Commissioner commencing in the next financial year will assist the FRC's frontline operational focus and enable it to better respond to emerging trends and the evolving needs of the communities it serves. In the interests of business continuity and succession planning an ongoing appointed position of Deputy Commissioner is considered critical.

As stated in our Review of financial performance (page 31), the largest allocation of FRC expenses is in relation to community operations conducted in our five communities. Travel is a major component of this expenditure. The Commission's extensive travel and accommodation needs are ably managed internally by Monica Vella who performs the dual role of Finance Officer and Travel Officer. This is a specialised area of operations owing to limited travel and accommodation options, the high cost of travelling to remote centres and the need to plan logistically for unforeseen events. Owing to the size of the FRC's FTE establishment, many employees perform various functions outside of their substantive roles to ensure continuity and efficiency of operations.



# Challenges and Outlook

## Legislative and operational reviews

The Commission has been afforded opportunities throughout the year to provide advice to government and Parliamentary stakeholders about matters relevant to the broader administration and objects of the FRC Act. The provision of this advice was carefully considered and sculpted from internal review work commenced in late 2019 (detailed below) aimed at improving efficiencies of operation and service provider delivery and accountability.

An internal legislative review was undertaken by the Commissioner and members of the EMT with external advice sought from former FRC Deputy Commissioner and Barrister, Rod Curtin. The review considered 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 was 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.

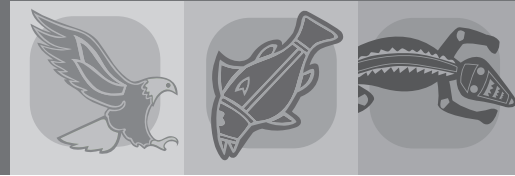
Findings from the internal review have been shared with staff and Local Commissioners throughout the year and has formed the basis of the structural and procedural changes implemented by Commissioner Williams and EMT to the Commission's operations. Details about these changes and outcomes are summarised in the FRC registry section (page 13).

A review of the FRC Act was later initiated by members of the FR Board and Commission, resulting in a small officer level working group being formed – the 'Legislative Review Working Group' (LRWG). The Commission's advice to this working group was derived from the findings of its own complementary internal review. The LRWG functioned collaboratively throughout the 2019-20 reporting period identifying possible legislative amendments to achieve better alignment with the broader policy reform objectives of the Australian and Queensland Governments and CYP (whilst preserving the integrity of the legislation and underlying purpose of the FRC Act). Work of the LRWG remains ongoing with a view to progressing proposed legislative amendments to the FR Board for endorsement following in principle agreement.

In March 2020 the Department of Justice and Attorney-General coordinated a whole of government omnibus Bill to respond to the COVID-19 health emergency. Proposed amendments were sought from each department for inclusion in the COVID-19 Emergency Response Bill 2020 which had a clear nexus and rationale to assist in dealing with the declared public health emergency. The Commission was pleased to accept an invitation from DATSIP to make a submission outlining relevant legislative issues, proposed resolutions, risks and other policy considerations with respect to the operation of the FRC Act and the proposed Bill. The Bill was passed in Parliament on 22 April 2020 with some proposed amendments to be made under regulation.



# Challenges and outlook



## **Financial considerations**

Although COVID-19 presented operational challenges for the Commission, it also highlighted some opportunities. The Commission continued functioning as an essential service, and the restrictions on travel to our communities highlighted the need to source alternative communication strategies. One such strategy is to establish video conferencing capability in each community to assist with continuity of conferencing and support for the Local Commissioners. This capability would deliver greater flexibility generally for conferencing operations and may deliver cost savings in travel. The second challenge/opportunity that arose is in relation to service provider reporting. Without the ability to meet face to face with service providers for case plan updates, we identified the need to enhance our reporting portal to allow more frequent and enhanced remote reporting. These projects will be scoped and costed later in the year due to the current government freeze on expenditure for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) projects.



# Governance

## External governance

The FRC, as an independent statutory authority, falls under the umbrella of DATSIP, whose Director-General is the Chair of the Family Responsibilities Board. The FRC Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner (if appointed) and Local Commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council under recommendation by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The Minister and FR Board have advisory relationships to the FRC Commissioner.



## Ministerial portfolio

For the period 1 July 2019 to 20 May 2020 the Minister responsible for administering the FRC Act was the Honourable Jackie Trad, the then Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. On 21 May 2020 the Honourable Craig Crawford MP was sworn in as Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and assumed responsibility for the FRC Act's administration.

## Family Responsibilities Board

Part 12 of the FRC Act provides for the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board). Under section 117 of the FRC Act, the FR Board has a mandate to: give advice and make recommendations to the State Minister about the operation of the Commission; if asked by the Commissioner, give advice and make recommendations to the Commission about the performance of its functions; and consider the reports submitted by the Commission.

The FR Board consists of one person nominated by the State Minister (chairperson of the FR Board), one person nominated by the Australian Government and one person nominated by the Cape York Institute. FR Board members are appointed by the Governor in Council for the term stated in the member's instrument of appointment.

# Governance



The FR Board members as at 30 June 2020 were:

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

The FRC Act requires the FR Board to meet every six months. The meeting may be held by using any technology available which will allow for efficient and effective communication. The FR Board members must meet in person at least once a year. A quorum for the FR Board is comprised of two members. Meetings during the reporting period are reflected below.

Date of FR Board meeting	Venue	Attendees
28 November 2019	Room 41.01 1 William Street, Brisbane	Dr Chris Sarra (Chair), Director-General DATSIP; Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC, Chief Executive Officer, NIAA; and Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, Cape York Institute.
5 May 2020	Teleconference	Dr Chris Sarra (Chair), Director-General DATSIP; Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC, Chief Executive Officer, NIAA; and Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, Cape York Institute.

## Executive management

The Commission's EMT is comprised of the Commissioner, the Registrar, the Client Manager and the Executive Officer (Finance). The EMT plays a critical role in the corporate governance and service delivery of the Commission by:



- providing value-based leadership whilst being a role model for innovation, teamwork and problem solving
- demonstrating and incorporating high standards of integrity and ethical behaviour
- ensuring transparency and accountability through effective decision-making and communication with employees and service providers
- providing a clear future direction for the Commission and
- providing leadership and direction on:
  - issues relating to the ongoing financial and non-financial operations of the Commission and the performance of its governance structure and
  - the operation, performance and reporting of the Commission with regard to its obligations under the FRC Act and other relevant legislation.



# Governance

Due to the small size of the Commission, the role of the EMT also encompasses the corporate stewardship functions associated with the Commission's operational performance. In addition, the EMT oversees the operations of finance, information management, human resources and planning, audit, risk management, systems review and workload and performance management. The EMT met on a regular basis throughout the 2019-20 year.

## Queensland public service values

<b>Customers first</b>	<b>Be courageous</b>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know your customers</li> <li>• Deliver what matters</li> <li>• Make decisions with empathy</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own your actions, successes and mistakes</li> <li>• Take calculated risks</li> <li>• Act with transparency</li> </ul>
<b>Ideas into action</b>	<b>Empower people</b>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge the norm and suggest solutions</li> <li>• Encourage and embrace new ideas</li> <li>• Work across boundaries</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead, empower and trust</li> <li>• Play to everyone's strengths</li> <li>• Develop yourself and those around you</li> </ul>
<b>Unleash potential</b>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect greatness</li> <li>• Lead and set clear expectations</li> <li>• Seek, provide and act on feedback</li> </ul>	

The Commission has structured its operations in accordance with the objects and principles of the FRC Act and the Queensland Public Service Values: 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 pledges to work with the Australian and Queensland Governments, stakeholders and clients to deliver outcomes for the welfare reform communities. In doing so the Commission nurtures a spirit of inquiry and innovation. Our Local Commissioners and registry staff know their customers and value the cultural needs and family connectedness of community members. Decisions are made with an understanding of where each client comes from and what has influenced their behaviour. The exercise of authority under the FRC Act is governed by this empathy. The Commissioners are challenging the negative social 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 registry staff and from Commission clients.



## Public sector ethics and Code of Conduct

Excepting the Family Responsibilities Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and the Local Commissioners, staff of the Commission are employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*. Employees are made aware of their ongoing responsibilities, duty of care and requirements under the core legislation governing the Commission as published through Commission policies, protocols and guidelines which are readily available to employees on the intranet. Online fraud and corruption and Code of Conduct training is included in induction processes for new employees and is completed by all employees on an annual basis. To further assist Commission employees with ethical decision-making and in understanding the Code of Conduct, the Commission has a supplementary policy document titled Workplace Policy. This policy presents a broad framework for ethical behaviour, supports the Code and is consistent with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008*, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, the FRC Act and relevant Public Service Commission (PSC) policies and directives. The Code of Conduct and Workplace Policy are both available in hard copy at all Commission premises.

The Local Registry Coordinators for the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge will facilitate Code of Conduct training for the Local Commissioners upon their reappointment in July 2020. Aside from the fundamental principles of the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct which are strictly adhered to, the principles of natural justice, conflict of interest and confidentiality are established and strongly reinforced with Local Commissioners through the Local Commissioners' Handbook and the Local Commissioners' Conference Guidelines.

Alignment with the ethics principles is further achieved through the Commission's Strategic Plan which incorporates objectives based on enhancing and strengthening socially responsible standards of behaviour both within the registry and in the five welfare reform communities.

## Human Rights

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 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 those we serve.

The Commission is committed to building a culture that respects and promotes human rights. To build upon this commitment, all employees have completed the online 'Public Entities and the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*' course through the iLearn program provided by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. In-house training to be delivered by the Queensland Human Rights Commission was scheduled for April 2020, however, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has now delayed this training until the 2020-21 financial year. Training in regard to the legislative requirements of the *Human Rights Act 2019* will be conducted on an annual basis for all employees and included as mandatory induction training. Local Commissioners will also receive human rights training incorporated in their annual Local Commissioner Development Week.

The Commission has reviewed its complaints management policies to incorporate the need to identify and deal appropriately with a human rights complaint in a transparent process. The Commission has adopted the 'receive/assess/consider/resolve/respond/learn/report'



# Governance

methodology to handle human rights complaints. The policy states that the Commission will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and will properly consider human rights when making decisions in regard to complaints. The Commission received no human rights complaints during the reporting period.

## Risk management

The Commission's risk management framework establishes a mechanism to identify, assess and manage real or potential risks. The framework supports a positive risk minimisation and management culture which focuses on:

- strategic risks – risks which present as challenges to the Commission's strategic direction and vision, and
- operational risks – risks which present as challenges to the daily activities of the Commission in delivering its services.

In applying the risk management principles, the Commission has a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The framework of this plan incorporates five key elements: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and review. The plan states a shared legal responsibility and accountability between, and a commitment by, all employees to implement the BCP. Employees are individually responsible for contributing to the BCP and to the health and safety of others by reporting workplace injury, incidents, illness and hazards. Employees are also responsible for seeking to reduce the vulnerability of the Commission to internal and external events and influences that may impede achieving the goals of the Commission. The BCP commences with an integrated approach to managing all risks that may impact strategic and business objectives and moves to reviewing and re-evaluating identified risks and reporting to the EMT.

## Internal audit

The Commission is a small organisation, and as such a separate audit committee has not been established. Additionally, a specific internal audit function is not required unless directed by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Responsibility for audit functions is included as part of the role of the EMT in the corporate governance and service delivery of the Commission.

The Executive Officer (Finance) is responsible for performing internal audits to ensure efficiency and economy of systems and to identify financial, operational and business continuity risks. Audit results are reported to the Commissioner and Registrar to determine whether remedial actions are required and to establish compliance with statutory requirements and best practice.

Throughout the reporting period, the EMT requested periodic audits of the Commission's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for quality assurance purposes. These audits were undertaken to assist in maintaining the integrity of our underlying data used for operational and statistical reporting purposes, as well as to ensure continuous improvement in delivering flexible, effective and efficient services.

The results of internal audits undertaken during the reporting period did not identify any significant deficiencies in internal control processes nor any operational or financial risks of a systemic nature that required external remedial action.



## External scrutiny

For the period 1 July 2019 to 20 May 2020 the Economics and Governance Committee had oversight responsibility for the Commission under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. Effective from 21 May 2020 oversight responsibility for the Commission transitioned to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee following amendments to Schedule 6 of the Standing Orders to reflect changes in ministerial portfolio arrangements – the appointment of the Honourable Craig Crawford MP as the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The committee is responsible for examining Bills, considering policy, examining estimates, assessing the Commission's accounts in regard to integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management and assessing whether the Commission is performing its legislative functions and meeting its obligations as a statutory body.

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.

The Commission is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments. As such the Commission is also subject to review from Federal bodies. During the reporting period Commission officers gave evidence to the 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. Full details of the submission can be found in the Significant events and achievements section of this report.

## Information systems and records governance

The Commission has a service level agreement with the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) for information and communication technology services. This agreement ensures that the Commission complies with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, whilst providing a high level of security and support.

The Commission's ICT system plays a vital role in supporting employees in the Cairns registry and regional offices. The Commission, in conjunction with CAA, has policies and network protocols in place to ensure all employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding ethical information access, transference, usage and management. These systems capture and retain information, preserve the integrity of information and provide a high level of security and confidentiality.

This year substantial time was allocated to ensuring continuity of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most staff were required to work remotely during the second half of this financial year. Information security and access were paramount and carefully considered in escalating the capability of Commission employees to transition to working from home.



# Governance

Various projects were undertaken by our ICT Administrator, Jeffrey Dela Cruz, during the reporting period comprising changes to our ICT systems as detailed below:

- To further refine the operations, particularly in the case management environment, a data reporting review commenced. Developments were customised and applied to the database structure in the CRM system to reflect quality outcomes.
- The registry desktop system was replaced and upgraded which included configuring the system in line with the Queensland Government's Information Security Policy. The policy seeks to ensure all agencies apply a consistent, risk-based approach to the implementation of information security to maintain confidentiality, integrity and availability. The Commission is still in the process of implementing the Information Security Management System and it is expected to conclude the project in the 2020-21 financial year.
- Microsoft Teams has been implemented for more collaborative communication between staff members and stakeholders during COVID-19. This tool allows the Commission to share, meet and collaborate in real-time via desktop application, moderately functional web-based application, or mobile application. The Queensland Government released a Collaboration Platform Policy in May 2020 to advise and provide guidance in the use of Microsoft Teams as the primary platform for intra and interdepartmental collaboration.

The Commission will continually aim to implement innovative and technology driven solutions to work more efficiently whilst complying with best practice principles. A priority of the Commission is to increase its ability to work in a more sustainable paper free environment. The finance section of the registry successfully transitioned to a paperless environment in January 2019, markedly increasing efficiencies in time management, and streamlining accounts payable and payroll processes.

The Commission can report that no breaches of information security have occurred to date, and no records have been lost due to disaster or other occurrences.

The Commission complies with recordkeeping practices in accordance with section 141 of the FRC Act, the *Public Records Act 2002* and sections 7, 22 and 23 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. Approximately 90 percent of Commission records are held in digital format.

As the Commission has been dependent upon funding commitments from the Queensland and Australian Governments on an annual basis, only those records which are identified as falling within section 141 of the FRC Act are destroyed. All other public records have been retained. No records have yet been transferred to the Queensland State Archives.





## Workforce profile

At 30 June 2020 the Commission had an employee establishment of 19 positions occupied by 18 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members, including positions servicing the regional communities. Regional positions include Local Registry Coordinators based in Aurukun and Doomadgee. The Commission employs 29 Indigenous Local Commissioners who are employed on a fee for service basis under the remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland Government Bodies. The figures below are based solely on the public servant workforce profile of the Commission.

Workforce profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Of the 18 FTEs, 12 are permanent staff, 5 are temporary staff and 1 is on a set contract term (FRC Commissioner's tenure is set by the Governor in Council)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 11 percent of our workforce is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 78 percent of our workforce are women</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 11 percent of our workforce reside in remote communities</li></ul>

Since the establishment of the Commission employee and job classification levels have altered from time to time as a result of operational reviews. During this financial year the Commission has experienced a permanent separation rate of zero percent.

The Commission conducts all recruitment and selection processes in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008* and relevant PSC policies and directives. New employees are welcomed through the Commission's online induction process which provides information in regard to the Commission and links to all human resource policies. Each is mentored by a staff member to assist them to become familiar with the Commission and what is expected of them in their role.

During the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid.

## Performance management

To facilitate employee development, each employee together with their manager signs a Performance and Development Agreement which is linked to the Commission's strategic objectives. The agreement sets out identified learning activities, supports the development of competencies, professional skills and personal attributes, and is designed to identify and record knowledge and skills gaps together with learning objectives.



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## Flexible working arrangements and wellbeing

The Commission promotes policies and activities to support a healthy work-life balance. Flexible work arrangements are actively accessed, and employees are provided the opportunity to work from home where appropriate. Part-time or job share work opportunities exist, and hours of work arrangements including the opportunity for purchased leave are available. These flexible arrangements are also offered in order to assist in balancing work and carer roles where required. Employees are also encouraged to use their annual leave.

To prevent the onset of desk-related neck, back, shoulder, elbow and wrist injuries, and to manage symptoms which may already exist, the Commission offers employees access to ergonomic specialist services.

Employees across the public service contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic response in a range of different ways. Commission employees contributed to this effort by continuing to deliver essential services. Financial support was provided to staff in relation to obtaining the flu vaccine and a risk profile was conducted with each staff member to assist logistics and timeliness for their working from home transition. The Commission implemented the working from home transition by optimising flexible and remote working arrangements. The working from home transition proved a seamless process with the assistance of our ICT Administrator and the purchase of additional ICT requirements. Communication was enhanced with Microsoft Teams and telephone and video conferencing. As the Queensland Government eased physical and business restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission progressively and safely began returning staff to the workplace. The Commission implemented measures to support physical distancing and enhanced hygiene including additional cleaning and limiting employee numbers in offices. All staff who are required to travel for work are issued with a 'travel safe pack' equipped with masks, gloves, tissues and hand sanitiser. As at 30 June 2020 approximately 30 percent of staff members were still working from home.

## Professional development

The Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners on an ongoing basis to ensure it actively works to restore local authority by:

- assisting the Local Commissioners to enhance and expand upon relationships with other Indigenous organisations, service providers, government departments and agencies
- assisting the Local Commissioners with the delivery of training modules on statutory interpretation and applying a decision-making framework consistent with the FRC Act
- conducting a planning week during which the Local Commissioners presented their community reports incorporating the setting of strategic priorities, analysis of unique challenges and the development of a vision for the future
- conducting a review of operations during which statistics were presented and analysed, FRC objectives were reassessed and goals refreshed
- delivering an I-Assist Indigenous Suicide Awareness Program and Consultation which expanded upon the LivingWorks Australia safeTALK workshop conducted at the Local Commissioner Development Week held in June 2019.

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The broader focus of the Commission's professional development program for employees is on:

- promoting skills development, career enhancement, and supporting a culture of ongoing learning through participation in internal workshops
- on-the-job training and courses conducted by specialist external training providers
- ongoing in-house training delivered by the Commissioner on statutory interpretation and application of the FRC Act to registry practices and procedures
- building a resilient workforce by providing online courses in Ethical Decision-Making, leadership and people management skills, Recognise, Respond, Refer – Domestic and Family Violence, Fraud and Corruption Control, Information Privacy, Conflict of Interest, Public entities and the *Human Rights Act 2019* and finance and procurement fundamentals
- promoting cultural capacity by providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training upon induction
- facilitating visits to welfare reform communities for new employees to increase their awareness of each unique community and enhance their understanding of the conferencing environment
- providing flexible work practices to enable employees to study whilst continuing to meet operational and client needs
- providing financial assistance and leave arrangements under the Commission's Study and Research Assistance Scheme.

During 2019-20 employee professional development, training, and workshops cost \$16,997 excluding travel costs. This investment provides a platform for the Commission to foster the development of new skills, monitor, evaluate and improve business processes and improve service delivery.

## Publication of information online

For information regarding right to information and information privacy refer to the Right to Information section on the Commission website. For Indigenous matters and complaints management, refer to the Additional Published Information under Right to Information on the Commission's website at <https://www.frcq.org.au>. For consultancies and overseas travel, refer to the Queensland Government Open Data website at <https://data.qld.gov.au>.

## Publications by the Commission during 2019-20

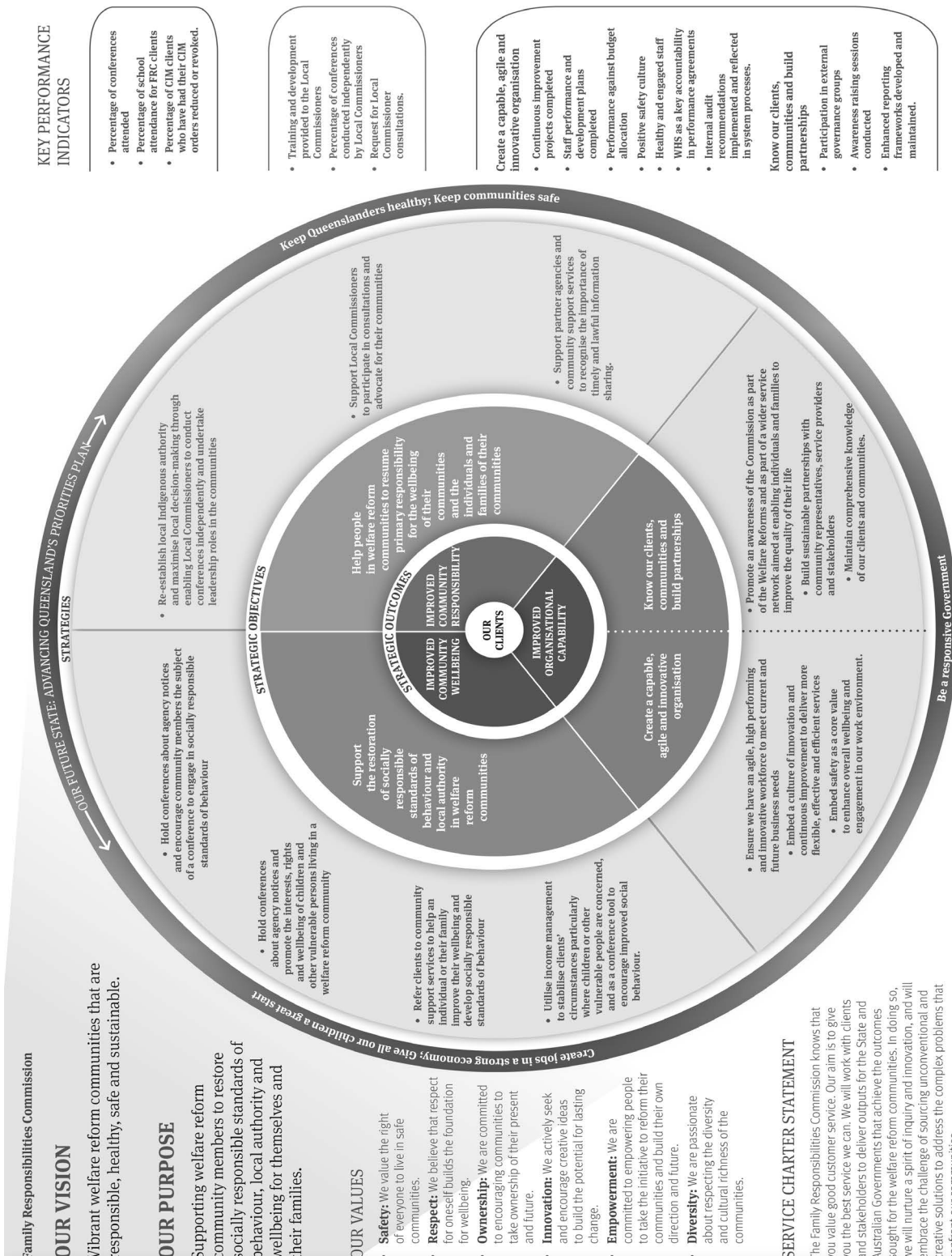
1. Annual Report 2018-2019
2. Quarterly Reports 44 - 47 (April 2019 to March 2020)

All publications are available on the Family Responsibilities Commission's website: <https://www.frcq.org.au>.

# Appendices



## Appendix A – Strategic Plan 2018-22





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## Appendix B – Biographies of Commissioners and the Registrar

### Family Responsibilities Commissioner

#### Commissioner Tammy Williams

The Family Responsibilities Commission is pleased to announce the appointment of Tammy Williams as its new Commissioner, replacing David Glasgow who retired from the Commission after 11 years as CEO. Commissioner Williams joined the FRC on 2 September 2019. Since her appointment she has been working hard to apply her own work culture and extensive business acumen on Commission operations. Commissioner Williams leads by using an adaptive and authentic leadership style drawn equally from both her professional and lived experiences as an Aboriginal woman.

Tammy Williams is a Murri woman from the Guwa people near Winton and the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples of central Queensland. She was awarded a law degree from the Queensland University of Technology in 2001, after which she was admitted as a Barrister in the Supreme Court of Queensland and High Court in Australia in 2002. She is a highly experienced professional who has worked successfully within and outside government. She has a great understanding of the Commission and welfare reform communities having acted as the Director-General for the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships in the past, and as such, a member of the FR Board.

#### Commissioner David Glasgow, AM (1 July 2008 – 1 September 2019)

David Glasgow is a Solicitor and a former Queensland Magistrate. He was appointed the FRC Commissioner on 25 May 2008 by then Premier Anna Bligh AC, and held this role until his retirement on 1 September 2019.

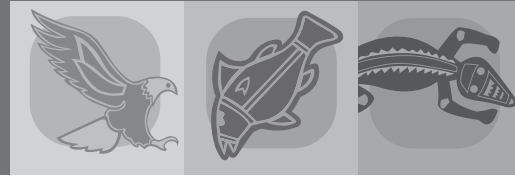
### Local Commissioners

#### Aurukun

**Commissioner Edgar KERINDUN OAM** (Sara Clan) was born and raised in Aurukun and is a traditional owner of the area. Commissioner Kerindun previously held the position of Engagement Officer at Queensland Health until his election as a Councillor for the Aurukun Shire Council in 2012. He held the position of Councillor for a further eight years during which time he was also appointed as the Deputy Mayor for the last four years until 2020. Aurukun Commissioner Kerindun decided not to stand as a candidate in the 2020 Local Government elections. On 26 January 2015 Aurukun Commissioner Kerindun was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his services to the community. He was one of the original Community Police Officers in Aurukun and continues to promote justice and rehabilitation for ex-offenders. Together with his partner, Aurukun Commissioner Doris Poonkamelya, they have in their care three children from their extended family. Commissioner Kerindun has a strong belief that if you show respect to everyone, everyone will have more respect for you.

**Commissioner Doris POONKAMELYA OAM** (Putch Clan) was born at the Kendall River Outstation and her family moved to Aurukun when she was a child. Commissioner Poonkamelya retired as a senior health worker from Queensland Health in 2009 where she worked for 29 years. On 26 January 2015 Aurukun Commissioner Poonkamelya was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community. From 2016 to 2020 Aurukun Commissioner Poonkamelya was a Councillor for the Aurukun Shire Council, deciding not to stand as a candidate in the 2020 Local Government elections. She is a founding member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group and is also deeply committed to education as the pathway

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to employment and a promising future for young people. As a carer for Child Safety Services, Commissioner Poonkamelya believes in ensuring a safe environment for children to grow and mature.

**Commissioner Ada Panawya WOOLLA OAM** (Winchanum Clan) was born and raised in Aurukun, leaving the community to attend boarding school and later Cairns Business College. From 2012 to 2020 Aurukun Commissioner Woolla held the position of Councillor in the Aurukun Shire Council, deciding not to stand as a candidate in the 2020 Local Government elections. Upon election to the position of Councillor for the Aurukun Shire Council in April 2012 she retired from her position as a Recognised Entity, where she worked to assist families and children in Aurukun.

In September 2014 Aurukun Commissioner Woolla was appointed to the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland. The Taskforce was established by the then Premier Campbell Newman and was chaired by the Honourable Quentin Bryce AD CVO, former Governor-General of Australia. On 26 January 2015 Aurukun Commissioner Woolla was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community.

In September 2018 she was appointed to the Queensland First Children and Families Board. The Board will oversee the implementation of *Our Way – A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017 – 2037 and Changing Tracks – An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017 – 2019*. Commissioner Woolla is also a foster and kinship carer, an office bearer in the church, a founding Member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group, a respected mediator and community Elder. Her support for the education and training of young people is well recognised and together with her husband, Dereck Walpo, she strives to improve opportunities for her community.

**Commissioner Dorothy POOTCHEMUNKA** (Winchanum / Aplach Clans) was born, raised and educated in Aurukun, and now has 10 children, 16 grandchildren and six great

grandchildren. Commissioner Pootchemunka's interests span the full spectrum of traditional activities including fishing, camping and the customary female craft of basket weaving using Pandanus and Cabbage Palm leaf. Her baskets are on display in national galleries in Australia and overseas. Aurukun Commissioner Pootchemunka is also a registered Wik interpreter and her expertise is utilised within the court system and also by the Department of Human Services. She views education as the key to employment and encourages all students to make the most of their education and training to enhance future job opportunities.

**Commissioner Vera KOOMEETA OAM** (Aplach Clan) was born in Aurukun and attended primary school in Aurukun. She continued her studies at PGC and Scots College in Warwick completing year 10, and then obtained a qualification in community teaching from Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Cairns. From 2012 to 2020 Aurukun Commissioner Koomeeta held the position of Councillor in the Aurukun Shire Council, deciding not to stand as a candidate in the 2020 Local Government elections.

On 26 January 2015 Aurukun Commissioner Koomeeta was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community. She is a Justice of the Peace (Magistrates Court) and a registered interpreter as well as a member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group. As the representative of her clan group she is involved in several committees and holds positions on a number of boards. Aurukun Commissioner Koomeeta's experience assists in her ability to make independent and informed decisions as a Local Commissioner. When not working, she can be found spending time with her three grandchildren, camping and fishing.

**Commissioner Keri TAMWOY** (Putch Clan) although born in Cairns has lived her entire life in Aurukun. Commissioner Tamwoy met her husband, Gerald Tamwoy, when they were 17 years old and they have raised their six children in Aurukun.

Commissioner Tamwoy is a qualified mediator and runs the mediation program in Aurukun which has been a huge success in bringing



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families together to resolve issues without resorting to violence.

Aurukun Commissioner Tamwoy has previously worked as the Office Manager for the Aak Puul Ngantam Ranger Program, and also as an Administration Officer in her husband's business. At the Local Government elections conducted on 28 March 2020 Aurukun Commissioner Tamwoy was elected Mayor of the Aurukun Shire Council. Along with her role as a mediator she is extremely committed to supporting the Wik people of Aurukun and empowering them to grow and improve their community into the future.

Commissioner Tamwoy enjoys fishing and camping when she can find the spare time, or just a quiet day at home watching movies with her three grandchildren.

## Coen

**Commissioner Garry Lloyd PORT OAM** (Lama Lama / Kuku Yalanji / Ayapathu Clans) is from a well-respected Coen family and son of Barry Port, the famous Aboriginal police tracker. Coen Commissioner Port is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified). In February 2018 Commissioner Port commenced full-time employment for the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council initially as a Council Maintenance Worker. He currently holds the position of Supervisor of Operations, Parks and Gardens at the Council. He is heavily involved with supporting young people and also volunteers his time to junior sports development, providing guidance for young boys. On 26 January 2015 Coen Commissioner Port was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his services to the community.

**Commissioner May Mary KEPPLÉ OAM** (Wik-Munkan Clan) is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified). Commissioner Kepple has had a variety of positions in retail and sales. She enjoys painting on canvas and previously managed the Wunthulpu Visitor Centre in Coen. As an accredited foster carer since 2007 she remains committed to the welfare of children, ensuring they receive opportunities for self-development and a bright future. From February 2014 to 2018 Commissioner Kepple worked with RAATSICC

(Cape York/Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care) as a Community Recognised Entity and Advisor. Coen Commissioner Kepple is currently working for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General as a Domestic Violence Engagement Officer. She is responsible for providing court support to the Justice Group Coordinator and clients, and networking with other stakeholders to advocate for clients in relation to referrals, programs and activities.

On 26 January 2015 Coen Commissioner Kepple was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community. Commissioner Kepple spends her weekends on country with her daughter and grandchildren passing on culture and the ways of the Elders.

**Commissioner Elaine Louise LIDDY OAM** (Lama Lama Clan) was born in Cairns. She is a fluent Umpithamu language speaker and has contributed to the dictionary of the Umpithamu language. Coen Commissioner Elaine Liddy has been pivotal in establishing the Lama Lama Rangers who live and work on the Lama Lama homelands of Port Stewart and is now a full-time Cultural Heritage Adviser Team Leader. She is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) and is a highly respected leader of the Lama Lama Clan. On 26 January 2015 Coen Commissioner Elaine Liddy was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community. Commissioner Elaine Liddy devotes her spare time to the care of her homelands, and to passing on tradition and culture to future generations.

**Commissioner Alison LIDDY** (Lama Lama Clan) commenced with the Commission on 14 May 2015. Coen Commissioner Alison Liddy was born in Cairns and completed most of her schooling in North Queensland. Furthering her educational qualifications, Commissioner Alison Liddy attained a Certificate III in Indigenous Community Service and Primary Health Care. She has held many positions over the years, working in administrative roles, as an Indigenous Health Worker with the Coen Primary Health

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Care Centre, Community Engagement Officer with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and Apunipima Cape York Health Council at the Coen Wellbeing Centre. Coen Commissioner Alison Liddy is currently employed as the Junior Ranger Coordinator and Administrator for the Yintjinnga Aboriginal Corporation and the Lama Lama Ranger Service. Working locally in Coen for many years and being involved in the community has enabled her to gain a broad understanding of the issues that affect those living in Coen. Her interest in becoming a Local Commissioner was inspired through her sister, Elaine Liddy, who has been a Coen Commissioner since the commencement of the Commission in 2008.

**Commissioner Maureen LIDDY** (Lama Lama Clan) also commenced with the Commission on 14 May 2015. Coen Commissioner Maureen Liddy has worked extensively with families and children across Cape York. Commissioner Maureen Liddy taught at a number of schools in the far north, including Bloomfield River State School where she became the Acting Principal. She was the Coen State School Principal for some five years and then was the Hope Vale State School Principal. For four years in Hope Vale she was seconded to the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Cape York Strategy Unit as part of the Government Champions program where she coordinated the Negotiation Tables throughout Cape York between the communities and their Government Champions. She resigned as the Principal of Hope Vale State School and took on the role of Transition Officer for the Department of Education, assisting in moving children from primary schools to secondary schooling, and even further education.

In 2010 Coen Commissioner Maureen Liddy resigned again from active teaching and took up an appointment with Cape York Partnership as a manager involved with the academy schools and teachers, helping them to become familiar with and proficient in direct instruction teaching. In 2013 she began working for the RFDS in Coen as a Community Development Officer and in 2015 moved to the position of Services Coordinator.

On 1 April 2017 Commissioner Maureen Liddy's position transitioned from the RFDS to the Apunipima Cape York Health Council as Team Leader.

In April 2019 Commissioner Maureen Liddy resigned from her position with Apunipima Cape York Health Council and commenced in the role of Community Partnership Engagement Manager with Good to Great Schools. On 26 January 2019 Coen Commissioner Maureen Liddy was awarded the Cook Shire Citizen of the Year in recognition of her work to improve the lives of Indigenous people in the Cook Shire.

She holds a Graduate Diploma in Education and is a member of the Coen Justice Group, the local Sports and Recreation Association, and the Advisory Committee to the Cook Shire Council. Commissioner Maureen Liddy's personal interests include spending time with her family, camping, fishing, reading, four-wheel driving and meeting people.

## Doomadgee

**Commissioner Christopher LOGAN** (Garrawa Ghuthaarn Clan) was born in Normanton and educated at Normanton State School to year 10 after which he moved to Doomadgee. Doomadgee Commissioner Christopher Logan is married to Eleanor Logan, herself a Local Commissioner, and together they have had three children of their own, raised another two from a young age, and provided foster care for many more. Commissioner Christopher Logan's working life has included employment as a stockman, carpenter, Community Police Officer, a storeman at the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council and work at the Doomadgee retail store. He was a Councillor from 1992 to 1994 with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council and the Deputy Mayor from 2008 to 2012. He has also driven trucks and has run the night patrol for the Doomadgee community. For many years Doomadgee Commissioner Christopher Logan was involved with the State Emergency Service and was second in charge. His strong belief in education and the importance of children attending school every day led in 2013 to his





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commencement in the initial role of School Attendance Supervisor at the Doomadgee State School, working directly alongside the Doomadgee State School Principal. He then went on to hold the position of Indigenous Education Leader at the Doomadgee State School until 2019. Commissioner Christopher Logan played rugby league for the Doomadgee Dragons from 1989 to 2007, captaining the side from 1989 to 1994, and was the club chairperson from 2008 to 2014. He loves to spend his weekends taking his grandchildren out bush, camping, hunting and fishing.

**Commissioner Elaine CAIRNS** (Waanyi Lardil Clan) moved to Doomadgee from Mornington Island in 1969. She completed her junior education at Doomadgee State School before moving to Malanda to complete years 9 and 10. A mother of six, grandmother to 17 and great grandmother to eight, Commissioner Cairns has firm ties to several clans within the community and derives great joy from her extended family. A strong Indigenous woman, Doomadgee Commissioner Cairns worked as a cleaner and receptionist at the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council, served as Deputy Mayor from 2004 to 2007, acted as Mayor for six months in 2007 and was a Councillor from 2012 to 2016. Previously Doomadgee Commissioner Cairns spent one and a-half years as a chef at the Doomadgee Hospital and nine and a-half years as a Centrelink agent before becoming a Councillor. She has also been involved with the Strong Women's Group (formerly known as the Indigenous Women's Forum) since 2004. In her capacity with the group she has travelled across Australia taking a stand against domestic violence towards Aboriginal women. Her view that strong Indigenous women can make a difference to the communities in which they live drives her ambition to contribute to building a better future for Doomadgee's children. Commissioner Cairns loves reading, gardening and spending time out bush, fishing and camping. As a hobby she also enjoys composing and writing poems and songs.

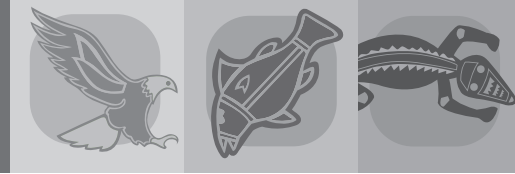
**Commissioner Karen JUPITER** (Gangalidda Clan) was born on Abingdon Downs Cattle Station and moved to Doomadgee where, apart

from a stint in boarding school, she has lived her whole life. After completing a course in Business Administration, Doomadgee Commissioner Jupiter worked at the Department of Communities and the Doomadgee Hospital. She has also worked as a receptionist, a teacher aide at the local school and a Centrelink agent. During the 1990s she spent seven years as a Family Support Worker at the Women's Shelter. From July 2009 to March 2013 Doomadgee Commissioner Jupiter worked at the day care centre also as a Family Support Worker, and in 2014 commenced as a School Attendance Officer at the Doomadgee State School until 2018. Commissioner Jupiter has four children of her own and has been a foster carer for five others. On a sad note Commissioner Jupiter transferred to Townsville in late 2018 for extended medical treatment and did not seek re-appointment as a Local Commissioner after 31 October 2019.

**Commissioner Kaylene O'KEEFE** grew up in Mount Isa before moving to her parents' home town of Doomadgee in 1990. Married to Dwayne O'Keefe since 2001, Commissioner O'Keefe is a mother to three daughters. Her past employment has included time working at the local store, in accounts at the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council and as a Family Support Worker with RAATSICC. Since 2018 Doomadgee Commissioner O'Keefe has been involved with the Strong Women's Group and has mentored Indigenous women. Commissioner O'Keefe hopes that her role as a Local Commissioner with the Family Responsibilities Commission will enable her to play a significant part in improving outcomes for Doomadgee families. Commissioner O'Keefe enjoys camping, fishing and spending time with her family, in particular her young grandson.

**Commissioner Eleanor LOGAN** (Waanyi / Gangalidda Clans) grew up in Doomadgee, before moving to Banyo College in Brisbane to complete year 11. Commissioner Eleanor Logan continued to further her education, gaining a Certificate III and a Diploma of Children's Services, and trained in the area of Aged Care Management. Recognising the need for a support network for young mothers in Doomadgee,

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Commissioner Eleanor Logan was instrumental in forming a playgroup for young mums. She was a Councillor with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council from 2008 to 2012. Married to fellow Doomadgee Commissioner Christopher Logan, she says family is her priority. She has fostered many children and is presently fostering two young boys. Doomadgee Commissioner Eleanor Logan is currently the Director of the Doomadgee Child Care Centre. When not working she enjoys camping, fishing and spending time with her 15 grandchildren.

**Commissioner Guy DOUGLAS** (Waanyi / Gangalidda Clans) has always lived in Doomadgee, apart from a year spent completing his education at Atherton State High School. He has worked as an Aboriginal Health Worker, Senior Community Worker, Police Liaison Officer and a Project Worker at Save the Children for the Doomadgee Deadly Homes Program. Doomadgee Commissioner Douglas is currently employed at Gidgee Healing as the Health Services Manager. In this role Commissioner Douglas provides education, support and referral to community members who are elderly and in need of assistance tidying up their homes and managing hygiene. Commissioner Douglas is married to Cecilia, is father to six children and they have one grandchild. Commissioner Douglas, along with his wife, has spent many years volunteering with young people in the community and as a leader of the local Brethren Church. When he is not busy coaching the local women's softball team, 'The Bushfires', he likes nothing better than to go back out on country to hunt, fish and camp. Doomadgee Commissioner Douglas is a firm believer that education must begin at home from a young age to form a strong foundation for the future.

**Commissioner Isabel TOBY** (Waanyi / Gangalidda Clans) was born in Doomadgee and has lived most of her life there. Married to Christopher Toby, Isabel has three sons, one daughter and three grandchildren. Having not had the opportunity to attend boarding school herself, Commissioner Toby is determined that her own children will not miss out and has sent

each of them to boarding school to further their education. Doomadgee Commissioner Toby has worked at Centrelink, the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council, Job Futures and as a teacher aide. She is currently employed as a Team Leader to Family Support Workers at Save the Children where she has worked for nine years. She enjoys helping her community to ensure a positive future for their children and families. Commissioner Toby commenced as a founding Local Commissioner for Doomadgee in August 2014 until 8 June 2017. She has since re-joined the Commission as a Local Commissioner on 1 November 2019.

**Commissioner Dawn APLIN** (Waanyi Clan) was born in Burketown. She moved to Doomadgee as a young child where she attended the Doomadgee State School until she completed year 7. She then moved to Malanda to attend the Malanda State High School to complete years 8 and 9. After she completed her schooling Commissioner Aplin moved back to Doomadgee and commenced working. Commissioner Aplin's work experience includes working for the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council as a Pay Clerk for 11 years and for the Community Development Employment Projects program as a Sign-up Officer. Since 2016 Commissioner Aplin has been working at Save the Children. Commissioner Dawn Aplin has five children, three boys and two girls, is a grandmother to 18 grandchildren and a great grandmother to two great-grandchildren. She enjoys fishing in her spare time as well as going out on country with her family to camp and hunt. Commissioner Aplin feels committed to helping young parents in the community and this is what inspired her to become a Local Commissioner.

On 24 October 2019, the Governor in Council under the FRC Act approved the appointment of Dawn Aplin as an FRC Local Commissioner. Coupled with her employment at Save the Children, Commissioner Aplin sees her work as a Local Commissioner as being extremely important in aiding and guiding young families in the community.



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## Hope Vale

**Commissioner Victor Patrick GIBSON OAM** (Binhthi / Bulcan Clans) worked as a Student Case Manager for Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) in Hope Vale for three years until his retirement. He is the organiser of the Young Leadership Forum, encouraging young people to become the leaders of tomorrow. He is an active member of the Hope Vale Men's Group again supporting the young and encouraging the role and merits of cultural and community activities. Commissioner Victor Gibson has devoted much of his working career to Hope Vale, assisting to build up his community. In doing so he has served as Deputy Mayor and Councillor.

On 26 January 2015 Hope Vale Commissioner Victor Gibson was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his services to his community. He remains a keen supporter of good governance with his particular concern of making sure there is a place for young people in leadership and governance roles.

**Commissioner Priscilla GIBSON (nee BOWEN)** a Guugu Yimithirr speaking woman has ancestral heritage to Daarrbra, Bagarmugu, and Birragumba from her grandfather George Bowen (Emerson) who was removed from his homeland (Proserpine area) to Cape Bedford Mission after the closure of Mari Yamba Lutheran Mission.

She has skills and qualifications in early childhood education, having established a centre in her hometown of Hope Vale, later acquiring the 'George Bowen Memorial Kindergarten', and assisting it to achieve accreditation under the Childcare and Kindergarten Association. Commissioner Gibson holds a Diploma in Nursing, Nutrition and Advanced Practice in Aboriginal Health, and a Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion, Counselling and Referral Skills. She has served on various boards as a Director, worked with the TAFE College in Cairns in the position of Program Manager for the Community Ranger Program, Local Coordinator for the FRC, Coordinator for the Well Being Centre and Senior Parenting Practitioner with Cape York Partnership. Commissioner Gibson and her husband Commissioner Victor Gibson

perform strong community engagement roles by providing opportunities for social gatherings through concerts, Yarning Circles, contributing to the Young Leaders Program and opening their door as foster carers for the community.

Commissioner Gibson states, "Culture and my family is important to me. It is the embodiment of my existence and that of my ancestors and descendants."

On 24 October 2019, the Governor in Council under the FRC Act approved the appointment of Priscilla Gibson as an FRC Local Commissioner.

**Commissioner Doreen HART OAM** (Binhthi / Bulcan Clans) currently holds the position of Team Leader/Service Provider with Apunipima Cape York Health Council. In 2015 she was selected as a Cape York representative for the 2015 Emerging Leaders Program hosted by Jawun, however health issues prevented her from completing the program. Her former roles include Engagement Officer for Cape York Empowered Communities Backbone Organisation, Community Development Officer with Living Change at the Wunan Foundation, Chief Executive Officer for the Apunipima Cape York Health Council and Housing Officer for the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council. She is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) and a member of the Thurrbill Community Justice Group. On 26 January 2015 Hope Vale Commissioner Hart was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community.

**Commissioner Cheryl Florence CANNON** is a strong, determined and motivated Indigenous woman from Hope Vale. Commissioner Cannon loves the precious time she spends with her family and pottering around home tending to her garden. She has had a career in education across Cape York, teaching and in leadership roles within a number of schools. After a brief retirement, Hope Vale Commissioner Cannon's commitment to education has her currently employed as an Attendance Officer at the Hope Vale Campus of CYAAA. Her role also involves engaging community people to be more active within the school community, in addition to providing support for school attendance and incorporating cultural aspects within the school.

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She joined the Commission as a Local Commissioner in Hope Vale in August 2014, and thoroughly enjoys the experience. As a Commissioner for Hope Vale, Cheryl's vision and values run parallel to that of the wider community and she is willing to set in motion responsibilities that bring about change for the positive future of Hope Vale.

**Commissioner Erica DEERAL** (Gamaay / Waymbuurr Clans) retired from her position of Administrative/Accounts Officer with the Hope Vale Campus of CYAAA in 2019. She enjoyed working at the school and seeing school attendance improve so that young children can obtain an education to better their futures. Prior to this Hope Vale Commissioner Deeral held administrative positions with the North Queensland Land Council and Cook Shire and Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Councils. She attended Hope Vale State School, Cairns West State School, Trinity Bay High School and the Cairns Business College. She is a traditional owner and a Director of the Hope Vale Congress Aboriginal Corporation. Commissioner Deeral is a mother to two sons and grandmother to four granddaughters and one grandson.

**Commissioner Selina BOWEN** is married to Ronald Bowen from the Thuupi / Dharrba Warra Clans of Hope Vale. Commissioner Bowen has two children and one adopted son from the many children that she and her husband cared for over the years while being kinship carers. Both of her sons graduated from Peace Lutheran College in 2013. Her daughter attended at the Coen Campus of CYAAA in 2015 and is currently at the Hope Vale Campus of CYAAA. Commissioner Bowen has lived in Hope Vale for the majority of her life, only leaving to complete her secondary schooling in Brisbane where she graduated from Hendra High in Nunda. After leaving school her former jobs have included being an Assistant Manager for the local food store, an agent for the Commonwealth Bank in Hope Vale, a Parenting Consultant where she delivered the Triple P program for Cape York Partnership and a Councillor from 2016 to 2020 with the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council.

Hope Vale Commissioner Bowen commenced with the Commission on 14 May 2015 and feels good parenting is vitally important and she would like other parents to also enjoy the close relationship and respect from their teenagers that she has with her children.

**Commissioner Robert GIBSON** (Bulgun Warra / Aba Yeerrkoya Clans) was born and raised in Brisbane and is one of six children. His family, though originally from Hope Vale, moved to Brisbane to access medical treatment for his eldest brother. Commissioner Gibson attended Zillmere North State School and in 1982 completed year 12 at Aspley State High School. He continued his tertiary studies at TAFE prior to attaining a boilermaker apprenticeship at the Royal Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Army Barracks.

In 1984 he was happy to return to his family's homeland of Hope Vale and secured employment as a Deckhand at Cape Flattery until 1991. Following his work at Cape Flattery Commissioner Gibson gained employment with the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council as a Debtor's Clerk/Administration Officer. In 1993 he was elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council. After completing a Certificate of Justice Studies, Community Policing at Innisfail's TAFE he was employed as a Police Liaison Officer in Mossman from 1996 to 1999, later transferring to Hope Vale.

Commissioner Gibson has been Director and Deputy Chair for both Alka Bawar Aboriginal Corporation (Bathurst Heads) and Kalpowar Aboriginal Land Trust. These positions included the sourcing of funding and planning for on country development. On 24 October 2019, the Governor in Council under the FRC Act approved the appointment of Robert Gibson as an FRC Local Commissioner.

Commissioner Gibson has been blessed with two daughters and one grandchild who live in the Cooktown and Hope Vale area. Fishing and camping have been a big part of his life and he has a new-found hobby of carpentry in constructing planter boxes.



# Appendices

## Mossman Gorge

**Commissioner Loretta SPRATT OAM** (Olkola / Lama Lama Clans) was born on Thursday Island but spent her infant years in Coen and Hope Vale. She remained in Hope Vale throughout her childhood until her late teens when she met Nathan McLean, a young man visiting from Mossman Gorge. Commissioner Spratt later moved to the Gorge where she resided for many years with Nathan before buying a house and moving to Mossman in February 2018. Mossman Gorge Commissioner Spratt has previously worked in the areas of sport and recreation. She has completed a Certificate III in Horticulture, discovering her true passion in life, and is currently employed by Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation (BBNAC) propagating and using native plants and trees in landscaping.

On 26 January 2015 Mossman Gorge Commissioner Spratt was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community. She has a keen interest in art and a love of reading and continues to learn new skills to complement her Local Commissioner role in the community. Mossman Gorge Commissioner Spratt continues to work closely with young people and the women of her community to promote strong, healthy and supportive families. On weekends she likes to spend time with her nieces and nephews fishing, enjoying the natural beauty of the Daintree area, reading and particularly gardening at home.

**Commissioner Karen GIBSON OAM** (Kuku Nyungul / Kuku Yalanji Clans) was born and raised in the Mossman area. She is an artist whose work has gained increasing recognition and exposure. As an artist Commissioner Karen Gibson also enjoys inspiring other artists to follow their dreams. Mossman Gorge Commissioner Karen Gibson previously held positions at Cape York Partnership Empowered Communities as a Community Engagement Officer and Regional Coordinator, where she was the Empowered Community Champion for the Mossman Gorge community. Mossman Gorge Commissioner Karen Gibson is on the Board of Directors for the

Cape York Girl Academy and previously held the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of BBNAC. Other positions held include Board Member for the Cape York Land Council, Director of Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours, Attendance Case Manager with Cape York Partnership and Local Coordinator for the Family Responsibilities Commission, Mossman Gorge.

On 26 January 2015 Mossman Gorge Commissioner Karen Gibson was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community.

On 30 June 2020 Mossman Gorge Commissioner Karen Gibson decided to step down from her role as a Local Commissioner to focus on her passion and talent for art.

**Commissioner Karen SHUAN** (Kuku Yalanji Clan) was born as a Kuku Yalanji woman. She is a traditional owner of the Mossman area and has resided in Mossman all of her life. After completing year 11 at Mossman State High School, she gained a Certificate III in Tourism and a Certificate III in Business. Mossman Gorge Commissioner Shuan became increasingly involved in Aboriginal culture and concerns and joined BBNAC. Positions she has held at BBNAC include Secretary, Director, Vice Chairperson and Tourism Guide. Commissioner Shuan is presently the Cultural Tour Guide at the Mossman Gorge Centre where she welcomes visitors to country and provides cultural information to the many tourists who visit the area, as well as providing support to other Indigenous staff at the centre. As a custodian of the Kuku Yalanji culture she is recognised as a cultural leader and a skilled and passionate teacher of traditional dance.

Today she leads the dance group for Mossman Gorge, Wabal Wabal Dance, in local performances which celebrate the culture of Cape York people through song and dance. The group has also performed in Cairns at professional engagements and at the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee week.

# Appendices



**Commissioner George ROSS-KELLY** (Kuku Nyungul / Kuku Yalanji Clans) was born and raised in Mossman where he attended Miallo State School and Mossman State School. He is the eldest of two children and is proud to be fluent in the Kuku Yalanji language which he has passed down to his children and grandchildren.

In the mid-1980s Commissioner George Ross-Kelly became a resident of the Mossman Gorge community during which time he was employed as a bus driver, providing transport for community residents to shop in Mossman and to go on country excursions which included camping and fishing trips. Further positions held included a role as Supervisor of the landscaping and gardening unit of BBNAC, and Team Leader in the Woodwork Unit of the Mossman Art Centre which afforded him the opportunity to indulge his hobbies of woodwork and using a lathe.

He returned to bus driving in 2004 when he commenced employment with Country Road Coachlines – a service running from Cairns to Cooktown. In 2006 he returned to working closer to home with FNQ Bus Lines which provided a school bus run for the Mossman Gorge and Newell Beach areas.

Mossman Gorge Commissioner Ross-Kelly joined the FRC as a Local Commissioner in November 2019. He finds his role with the FRC enriching as it enables him to use his skills and aptitude to communicate with community members, providing support and empathy. He is empowered by the opportunity to learn new skills.

His weekend activities include fishing at Newell Beach and Rocky Point and camping in the Daintree and Roseville/Cooktown areas with his family.

## **Registrar Maxine McLeod**

Maxine McLeod was appointed as the Registrar of the Family Responsibilities Commission on 22 January 2016, having acted as the Registrar/General Manager from 1 January 2015. Prior to this appointment Maxine was seconded to the Commission in November 2009 as the Registrar Support Officer. Upon the Commission migrating its human resource management and financial services

in-house in 2012, Maxine was appointed as the HR and Policy Manager. In this role Maxine led the development and application of human resource and strategic/operational policies and procedures. In the role of Registrar Maxine is responsible for managing the registry and the administrative affairs of the Commission. A significant focus of the role includes the development and implementation of appropriate strategies to support the strategic capability of the Commission, introducing and implementing reforms and overseeing the operations of the registry.

Prior to joining the Commission Maxine was employed by Department of Justice and Attorney General for a 17-year period, the last four years of which she spent as the Regional Operations Manager for the State Reporting Bureau.

Having been born and raised in Asia, Maxine has a keen interest in travel, enjoys cooking and is an avid reader and fisherwoman.

## **Community support staff**

### **Local Registry Coordinators**

A Local Registry Coordinator has been appointed for each of the welfare reform communities. The function of the Local Registry Coordinators is to support, at the local level, the operations of the Commission in the welfare reform community areas.

The Local Registry Coordinators are:

Aurukun:	Mr Bryce Coxall
Coen:	Ms Sandi Rye
Doomadgee:	Mr Robbie Hazeldine (on extended leave) with Mr Brenden Joinbee (Acting)
Hope Vale:	Ms Josephine Pinder (Acting)
Mossman Gorge:	Ms Josephine Pinder (Acting)



# Appendices

## APPENDIX C – SITTINGS CALENDAR

Family Responsibilities Commission 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019

WEEK COMMENCING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	OTHER
1 July						
8 July						
15 July					Public Holiday	19 Cairns Show Day
22 July		MG	DM	DM HV	DM	22 Mossman Show Day
29 July		AU CO	AU	AU		
5 August		DM HV	DM			6 Aurukun Day
12 August		AU	AU	AU		
19 August		MG	DM	DM HV		23 Doomadgee Day
26 August		AU	AU	AU		
2 September		HV	DM	DM		
9 September		AU CO	AU	AU		
16 September	DM	DM MG		DM HV		
23 September						
30 September						
7 October	Public Holiday	AU	AU	AU		7 Queens Birthday
14 October		MG	DM	DM HV	DM	
21 October		AU CO	AU	AU		
28 October		DM	DM	DM HV		
4 November		AU	AU	AU		
11 November		DM MG		DM HV		
18 November	AU		AU	AU		
25 November		DM	DM HV	DM HV		
2 December		AU	AU	AU		
9 December		DM MG	DM	DM		
16 December						
23 December			Public Holiday	Public Holiday		25 Christmas Day, 26 Boxing Day, 27 Office Closed for Xmas
30 December			Public Holiday			30, 31 Office closed for Xmas 1 New Year's Day

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## Family Responsibilities Commission 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020

WEEK COMMENCING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	OTHER
30 December			Public Holiday			1 New Year's Day
6 January						
13 January						
20 January						
27 January	Public Holiday	AU	AU	AU		27 Australia Day Public Holiday
3 February		DM	DM	DM		
10 February		AU AU in CO	AU	HV		
17 February		MG				
24 February		AU CO	AU	AU in CO HV		
2 March		DM MG	DM	AU in Cairns DM		
9 March		AU	AU	HV		
16 March		DM MG	DM	DM		
23 March		AU	AU	HV		
30 March						
6 April					Public Holiday	10 Good Friday
13 April	Public Holiday					13 Easter Monday
20 April		DM	DM	DM MG		
27 April		AU	AU	AU HV		
4 May	Public Holiday	CO	DM	DM		4 Labour Day
11 May		AU	AU	AU		
18 May		MG	DM			
25 May		CO		HV		
1 June		AU	AU	AU		3 Mabo Day - Doomadgee
8 June		MG		DM HV		
15 June		AU CO	AU	AU		
22 June		DM MG	DM	DM HV		
29 June						





# Appendices

## Appendix D – Compliance checklist

### Family Responsibilities Commission 2019-2020 annual report

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 7	Page 4
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table of contents</li> <li>Glossary</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 9.1	Page 5 Page 105
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public availability</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 9.2	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpreter service statement</li> </ul>	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copyright notice</li> </ul>	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 9.4	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information licensing</li> </ul>	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5	N/A
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introductory Information</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.1	Page 8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Machinery of Government changes</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.2, 31 and 32	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency role and main functions</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.2	Pages 9-12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating environment</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.3	Pages 13-18 and 32-49
Non-financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government’s objectives for the community</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.1	Pages 19
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other whole-of-government plans / specific initiatives</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.2	Pages 19-20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency objectives and performance indicators</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.3	Pages 21-29 and 89
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency service areas and service standards</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.4	Page 24
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of financial performance</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 12.1	Pages 30-31

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Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Governance – management and structure	• Organisational structure	ARRs – section 13.1	Pages 14-15 and 50-52
	• Executive management	ARRs – section 13.2	Pages 51-52
	• Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs – section 13.3	N/A
	• Public Sector Ethics	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4	Page 53
	• Human Rights	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5	Pages 53-54
	• Queensland public service values	ARRs – section 13.6	Page 52
Governance – risk management and accountability	• Risk management	ARRs – section 14.1	Page 54
	• Audit committee	ARRs – section 14.2	N/A
	• Internal audit	ARRs – section 14.3	Page 54
	• External scrutiny	ARRs – section 14.4	Page 55
	• Information systems and record keeping	ARRs – section 14.5	Pages 55-56
Governance – human resources	• Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 15.1	Pages 57-59
	• Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.04/18 <i>Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 15.2	Page 57
Open Data	• Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	Page 59
	• Consultancies	ARRs – section 33.1	<a href="https://data.qld.gov.au">https://data.qld.gov.au</a>
	• Overseas travel	ARRs – section 33.2	<a href="https://data.qld.gov.au">https://data.qld.gov.au</a>
	• Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 33.3	N/A
Financial statements	• Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	Page 23 of 26
	• Independent Auditor's Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	Pages 24-26 of 26



# Appendices

## Appendix E – Communities' resident population

### Aurukun

Aurukun is on the western coast of Cape York and is approximately 900 kilometres northwest of Cairns, and about 200 kilometres south of Weipa. The community had an estimated resident adult population of 950 people as at 30 June 2019<sup>1,2</sup>.

### Coen

The township of Coen is approximately halfway between Cairns and the tip of Cape York. It is not a discrete Aboriginal community and is part of Cook Shire. The township had an estimated resident adult population of 260 people as at 30 June 2019<sup>1,3</sup>.

### Doomadgee

Doomadgee lies alongside the Nicholson River, one of the permanent freshwater rivers that flow from the ranges behind Lawn Hill National Park in North West Queensland. Doomadgee is the first (or last) township on the Queensland section of the Savannah Way. It is 630 kilometres by road to Mt Isa and 1035 kilometres west of Cairns. The community had an estimated resident adult population of 829 people as at 30 June 2019<sup>1,2</sup>.

### Hope Vale

Hope Vale is situated on the Cape York Peninsula and is 46 kilometres northwest of Cooktown. The estimated resident adult population of Hope Vale was 735 people as at 30 June 2019<sup>1,2</sup>.

### Mossman Gorge

Mossman Gorge is a small Aboriginal community 75 kilometres north of Cairns, 4 kilometres from Mossman (the nearest town), and approximately 25 kilometres by road from Port Douglas. It is not a discrete Aboriginal community and is part of the Douglas Shire Council area. The community had an estimated resident population of 87 people as at 30 June 2019<sup>1,4</sup>.

1. Note: Australian Statistical Geography Standard 2016 boundaries used are local government areas for Aurukun, Doomadgee and Hope Vale, and statistical areas level 1 (SA1s) of 3139616 for Coen and 3116408 for Mossman Gorge.
2. Note: Adults 18 years and over provided by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO), Queensland Treasury, based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) unpublished preliminary Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data by age and sex at the Local Government Area level for 30 June 2019.
3. Note: Adults 18 years and over provided by QGSO, Queensland Treasury, based on the ABS unpublished preliminary ERP data by age and sex at the Statistical Area level 1 for 30 June 2019.
4. Note: Total population provided by QGSO, Queensland Treasury, not 18 years and older, due to the small size of the total population from the ABS unpublished preliminary ERP data at the Statistical Area level 1 for 30 June 2019.

# Glossary of terms



## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
AM	Member of the Order of Australia	FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
ARRs	Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government agencies	FTE	Full-time Equivalent
BBNAC	Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation	FWS	Family Wellbeing Services
BCP	Business Continuity Plan	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
CAA	Corporate Administration Agency	LRWG	Legislative Review Working Group
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CIM	Conditional Income Management	NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
CRM	Customer Relationship Management	OAM	Medal of the Order of Australia
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy	QGSO	Queensland Government Statistician's Office
CYIM	Cape York Income Management	QLD	Queensland
CYP	Cape York Partnership	RAATSICC	Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
EMT	Executive Management Team	TIS	Translating and Interpreting Service
ERP	Estimated Resident Population	VIM	Voluntary Income Management
FAA	<i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i>	WBC	Wellbeing Centre
FPMS	<i>Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019</i>		

Also:

Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board)

Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)

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

Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the registry)

Ms Tammy Williams, Family Responsibilities Commissioner (the Commissioner)



# Contact details

## Family Responsibilities Commission

### Cairns central registry

PO Box 5438, Cairns Qld 4870  
Level 3, 107 Lake Street, Cairns 4870  
Ph (07) 4081 8400  
Fax (07) 4041 0974  
[www.frcq.org.au](http://www.frcq.org.au)

### Aurukun

CJG Building, Wuungkam Street, Aurukun 4892  
Ph (07) 4060 6185  
Fax (07) 4041 0974

### Coen

Coen Hub, 7 Taylor Street, Coen 4892  
Ph 0417 798 392  
Fax (07) 4041 0974

### Doomadgee

Doomadgee Community Justice Centre, Office 4/15 Sharpe Street, Doomadgee 4830  
Ph (07) 4745 8111  
Fax (07) 4041 0974

### Hope Vale

Office 1, Hope Vale Business Service Centre, 3 Muni Street, Hope Vale 4895  
Ph (07) 4060 9153  
Fax (07) 4041 0974

### Mossman Gorge

Lot 152 Mossman Gorge Road, Mossman Gorge 4873  
Ph 0417 798 392  
Fax (07) 4041 0974

For more information on the communities and population compositions, view the Quarterly Reports at: <https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/programs-initiatives/family-responsibilities-commission> and <https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles>.





**FRC**

FAMILY  
RESPONSIBILITIES  
COMMISSION