



# Commissioner Williams' Message

***In 2020-21 the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) has worked hard to deliver the Commission's core business of quality decisions with increased client participation to enable individuals and their families to make positive and lasting change. I am happy to report that positive trends are emerging.***

I am pleased to present the Family Responsibilities Commission's Annual Report for 2020-21. In writing this report I note that as of 2 September 2021 I will have had the honour of being the custodian of the FRC Commissioner's role, and the privilege of working alongside FRC staff, Local Commissioners and our many valued stakeholders, for two years.

This year our focus has been to support those community members referred to the Commission by making decisions in agreement with clients to reflect their willingness to take responsibility and encouraging community members to voluntarily seek support. We have commenced formalising our relationships with our partners to reinforce clear legislative responsibilities and have sought to identify and report service gaps to our government partners, particularly in the areas of domestic violence and youth mental health counselling. The Local Commissioners have worked exceptionally hard this year to maintain the FRC's reputation as a trustworthy and independent decision-maker by exercising their considerable legislative powers in a way that promotes the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in their communities.

Significant achievements from utilising the above strategies include a 1,078 percent increase in agreements to attend support services, a 29 percent increase in referrals and a 370 percent increase in voluntary agreements for voluntary income management. These results are indicative of positive trends in change behaviour.

Challenges experienced this year include the Commission's executive management team continuing to manage in a 'going concern' fiscal environment which has led to a conservative approach being exercised in relation to expenditure generally and on significant projects. The Commission continues to propose the appointment of new Local Commissioners due to natural attrition which will, in the case of Mossman Gorge, prevent the Local Commissioners from being able to conference in their own right from 1 July 2021 without assistance from myself or the Deputy Commissioner. A full report regarding challenges and outlook can be found on pages 53 to 57.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect operations from time to time during this reporting period. The Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 (FRC's COVID-19 Regulation) commenced on 2 October 2020 which modifies the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* in so far as is necessary to enable the FRC to continue to hold conferences and make decisions during the COVID-19 emergency. Fifty-nine conferences were conducted under the new FRC COVID-19 Regulation and the Commission considers this legislation vital to its continuing operations in the current environment.

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 Deputy Commissioner Rodney Curtin and the hardworking staff of the FRC and Local Commissioners for their commitment and dedication, without which we would not have achieved the positive changes evident in this report.

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