

Ministerial portfolio

For the period 1 July 2022 to 17 May 2023 the Minister responsible for administering the FRC Act was the Honourable Craig Crawford MP, the then Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. On 18 May 2023 the Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP was sworn in as Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts and assumed responsibility for the FRC Act's administration.

External governance

The FRC, as an independent statutory authority, falls under the umbrella of DTATSIPCA. The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council under recommendation by the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts¹. The Minister and FR Board have advisory relationships to the Commissioner.



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.

1. In the diagram above the FRC has maintained the title for our Minister as the "Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships" as this was the title in 2022-23 until May 2023.



Governance

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.

The FR Board members as at 30 June 2023 were:

Mr Bob Gee	Director-General, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) as the Chair
Ms Jody Broun	CEO, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
Mr Noel Pearson	Founder, Cape York Partnership representing the Cape York Institute (CYI).

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.

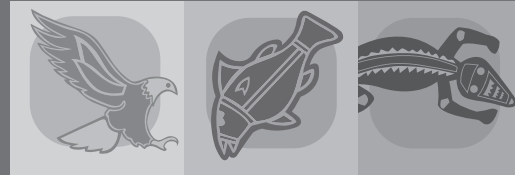
Date of FR Board meeting	Venue	Attendees
13 October 2022	1 William Street, Brisbane	Mr Bob Gee (Chair), Director-General DAF; Ms Jody Broun CEO, NIAA; Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, CYI.
28 March 2023	Level 8, 111 George St, Brisbane	Mr Bob Gee (Chair), Director-General DAF; Ms Jody Broun, CEO, NIAA; Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, CYI.

Executive management

The Commission's EMT is comprised of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, the Registrar, and the Executive Officer (Corporate). 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
- 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
 - the operation, performance and reporting of the Commission regarding 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 2022-23 year.

Queensland public service values

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

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 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.



Governance

Public sector ethics and Code of Conduct

Apart from the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and the Local Commissioners – who are appointed by Governor in Council – staff of the Commission were employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*, and effective from 1 March 2023, under the *Public Sector Act 2022*. 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, Conflict of Interest 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 Sector Act 2022*, 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 five FRC communities conduct Code of Conduct training for the Local Commissioners on an annual basis. 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. Confidentiality is specifically legislated by section 147 'Preservation of confidentiality' in the FRC Act which stipulates that a Commission member, FR Board member, member of staff or a person engaged by a support service must not record, disclose or use confidential information gained through involvement in the administration of the FRC Act unless for lawful purposes as defined in the section.

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. The Commission's Strategic Plan was reviewed during the last six months of this financial year in consultation with the EMT, registry staff and Local Commissioners. The Strategic Plan 2023-27 was published on the FRC website from 1 July 2023.

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 complete mandatory annual online training through iLearn, the Learning Management System for DTATSIPCA in regard to the legislative requirements of the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

The Commission's complaints management policies 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' methodology to handle human



rights complaints. The policy states 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 regarding 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
- 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 (Corporate) 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 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.



Governance

External scrutiny

The Queensland Parliament's Community Support and Services Committee has oversight responsibility for the FRC, as established by Schedule 6 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Queensland Legislative Assembly (Standing Orders).

Under the Standing Orders (SO194A), the committee's functions with respect to the FRC are to:

- monitor and review the FRC's performance of its functions
- report to the Assembly on any matter concerning the FRC, its functions or the performance of its functions that the committee considers should be drawn to the Assembly's attention
- examine each annual report tabled in the Assembly under the FRC Act and, if appropriate, comment on any aspect of the report
- report to the Assembly any changes to the functions, structures and procedures of the FRC that the committee considers desirable for the more effective operation of the FRC or of the FRC Act.

The committee does not have the power to reconsider a decision or finding of the FRC. The committee does not act as an appeal body in respect of decisions made by the FRC.

On 27 March 2023, by invitation, Commissioner Williams, Registrar Maxine McLeod and Executive Officer (Corporate) Tracey Paterson appeared at a Public Briefing of the Community Support and Services Committee of the Queensland State Parliament. 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 update on:

- the shared outcomes achieved with the support of our tripartite partnership and joint Australian and Queensland Government investment, highlighted in the Commission's Annual Report 2021-22 tabled in the Queensland Parliament on 13 March 2023
- the MoU for funding and the impact of successive short-term funding agreements on the Commission's operations
- the importance of operationalising the Childrens Court trigger in the FRC Act
- school attendance data
- the success of VIM.

Information systems and records governance

The Commission has a service level agreement with the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) for the provision of 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. All information security implementation complies with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's 'essential eight cyber security strategies' and the Queensland Government Information Security Policy (IS18:2018), where the focus is primarily on the prevention of unauthorised access, non-compliance, leakage, data disclosure and damage caused through malware or virus infiltrations.

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 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, ensure reliable availability, preserve the integrity of information, and provide a high level of security and confidentiality. Commission employees are required to complete annual online information security training in order to protect the integrity of our systems.

Recognising the growing need and complexity of ICT systems and support, the FRC has taken crucial steps to address these demands. As part of this strategic response an ICT Support Officer has been employed to enhance the capabilities of the ICT Administrator. This new addition is expected to provide ongoing support for daily operations, while also assisting with the execution of several large upcoming projects. The expanded ICT team is well-positioned to support the FRC's objectives and deliver exceptional results.

Various projects were undertaken by our ICT team during the reporting period.

- To address the challenges posed by key software systems nearing their end of life the ICT team has undertaken projects to bring these systems into compliance with current standards. These updates are being carefully managed to ensure that the daily operations of the FRC are not affected. Once completed, these updates will provide a compliant and robust system that supports the FRC's needs.
- In the remote communities of Aurukun, Doomadgee, and Hope Vale, the discontinuation of vital telecommunication infrastructure presented a significant challenge. The FRC's ICT team responded swiftly, implementing new telecommunications infrastructure that not only matched the capabilities of the previous systems but also exceeded them in terms of speed and reliability.

In response to the growing concern nationally in regard to data breaches, particularly given the sensitive nature of the data held by the Commission, a detailed Data Breach Response Plan has been drafted, approved and adopted by the EMT. The Data Breach Response Plan provides the Commission with clear direction on steps to undertake in the event of a data breach while simultaneously ensuring compliance with regulatory bodies such as the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

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 2023 the Commission had an employee establishment of 20 positions occupied by 19.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members.

Additionally, the Commission employs 37 Indigenous Local Commissioners on a fee for service basis under the *Remuneration Procedures for Part-Time Chairs and Members of Queensland*



Governance

Government Bodies. The Commission also employs a Deputy Commissioner who is engaged subject to a delegation from the Commissioner to perform her functions under section 24 of the FRC Act as needed. The Deputy Commissioner is paid at an hourly rate commensurate with that of a Magistrate under the *Judicial Remuneration Act 2007* and may act as the Commissioner (if appointed under section 25 of the FRC Act) if the Commissioner is not available to perform the Commissioner's functions, or there is a vacancy in the office of the Commissioner. The figures in the workforce profile table are based on the public servant workforce profile of the Commission, including the Commissioner as CEO, but excluding the Local Commissioners and Deputy Commissioner.

Gender

Gender	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Woman	16	80.00
Man	<5	20.00
Non-binary	0	0

Diversity target group data

Diversity groups	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Women	16	80.00
Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	<5	15.00
People with disability	0	0
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English ²	<5	5.00

2. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages or Australian South Sea Islander languages spoken at home.



Target group data for Women in Leadership Roles

	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Senior Officers (Classified and s122 equivalent combined)	<5	5.00
Senior Executive Service and Chief Executives (Classified and s122 equivalent combined)	<5	5.00

The Commission conducts all recruitment and selection processes in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008*, (effective from 1 March 2023) the new *Public Sector Act 2022* and relevant PSC policies and directives. New employees are welcomed through the Commission's online induction process which provides information regarding 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.

The Commission is committed to both maximising permanent employment as reflected in the *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2019* and relevant PSC directives, and maximising employment security as reflected in the whole of government Employment Security Policy.

During the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid during the period.

Performance management

To facilitate employee development, each manager is instructed to enter into a Performance and Development Agreement with the employees in their team. The Performance and Development Agreement is linked to the Commission's strategic objectives and forms part of a broad system of human resource management processes including induction and compulsory online training. 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.

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 to assist in balancing work and carer roles where required. Employees are encouraged to use their annual leave.



Governance

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.

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 an annual training week during which the Local Commissioners will receive professional training in occupational violence and aggression de-escalation techniques, a workshop on domestic and family violence and information from experts in understanding trauma informed approaches to deal effectively with traumatic events experienced by clients
- conducting round table discussions to set strategic priorities, analyse unique challenges and develop a vision for the future
- conducting a review of operations via individual community dashboards through which statistics are presented and analysed, key performance indicators are set and assessed, and goals refreshed.

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, Human Rights Act Public Entities Decision Making (online), Phishing – Information Security Awareness 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.



In line with the above strategies and practices, employees are offered backfill roles in higher duty positions where available in order to ensure continuity of work processes, mitigate downtime, minimise disruption to workflows and enhance employee retention. Backfilling and cross-training safeguards employee expertise and corporate knowledge, whilst maximising succession planning.

During 2022-23 employee professional development, training, and workshops cost \$18,437 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>. In 2022-23 the Commission did not incur any overseas travel expenditure. For consultancies, refer to the Queensland Government Open Data website at <https://data.qld.gov.au>.

Publications by the Commission during 2022-23

1. Annual Report 2021-2022
2. Quarterly Reports 56 - 58 (April 2022 to December 2022)

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