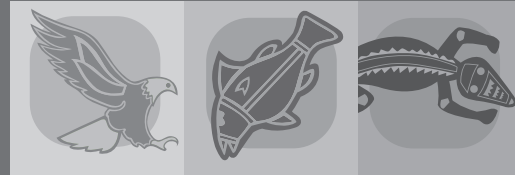


Community operations Doomadgee



FRC operations in Doomadgee were undertaken by Local Commissioners Christopher Logan, Eleanor Logan, Elaine Cairns, Kaylene O’Keefe, Guy Douglas, Isabel Toby, Dawn Aplin, Wendy Taylor, Virginia Collins and Leila Cairns supported by Local Registry Coordinator Brenden Joinbee. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.

Doomadgee Commissioners’ report

This year we have focused on building our relationship with the community by interacting with clients through increasing our engagement outside of the conference setting. Both the Elevated School Response (ESR) strategy and Client Engagement (CE) approach have allowed us to build positive relationships with community members and have reinforced to clients that we are here to help.

Significant achievements

- This year we achieved our highest conference attendance since the 2017-18 financial year recording the second highest conference attendance rate of 66.8%. We believe this reflects the community’s confidence in the job we do and shows an increased willingness to work with us.
- In 2023-24 we are pleased to announce that 29 clients have entered into voluntary agreements for voluntary case plans. A record high for our community. This is significant achievement for us as in previous financial years, namely 2020-21 and 2021-22 only 1 client entered into a voluntary case plan and no clients entered into a voluntary case plan in 2022-23.
- We believe the increase in voluntary agreements is linked to the trust we are building with community members and our new CE approach. This year we have undertaken 376 client engagement activities outside of conference.
- We also continue to achieve positive outcomes in conference. The number of family responsibility agreements entered into by clients during conference to attend support services has increased by 33% from 40 in 2022-23 to 53 in 2023-24. This increase corresponds with a decline in the number of orders made by the Commission to attend support services reducing from 92 in 2022-23 to 53 in 2023-24. This is a decrease of 42% which shows the readiness of our clients to engage with community services and receive support.

Challenges

School attendance

As the school has not had a functioning School Attendance Officer (SAO) team for most of the year the Local Commissioners have continued to work with families via the FRC’s ESR strategy. Unfortunately, the school has also not had access to the school bus to provide transport for students, due to repairs required for damage caused by the flooding experienced in Doomadgee.



Community operations Doomadgee

The Doomadgee State School principal announced early in Term 1 2024 that the position of Remote School Attendance Strategy Coordinator had been filled. The school is also in the process of recruiting Student Attendance Officers.

We have noticed that there seems to be a decrease in the quality of communication between the Doomadgee State School and FRC clients, and the FRC itself. The FRC remains committed to using strategies to improve communication and strengthen the relationship with the school. The FRC is working with the Department of Education to achieve these outcomes.

Community unrest

Unfortunately unrest in the community has led to fighting which has caused severe disruption. The fighting has had a significant impact on school attendance as the disturbances are keeping children awake at night.

Flooding

Doomadgee again faced significant flooding this year, although fortunately not to the levels experienced the previous year. Nonetheless, this led to supply issues with food having to be flown into community a couple of times per week for five months, which in turn lead to enormous price increases on food items. Fuel availability also became an issue with shortages also lasting up to five months and at one stage the community ran out of fuel completely. The Nicholson River level began to subside in May which again allowed food and fuel to be transported to the community via road.

Trigger notices

The FRC in Doomadgee only has access to School Attendance notices and School Enrolment notices from the Department of Education, and Child Safety and Welfare notices from the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services. Due to the limited types of notices, we receive, we believe that we are unable to fully assist our clients with issues they may be experiencing. We will continue to advocate to receive the full suite of trigger notices like our colleagues in the Cape York communities.

Other community matters

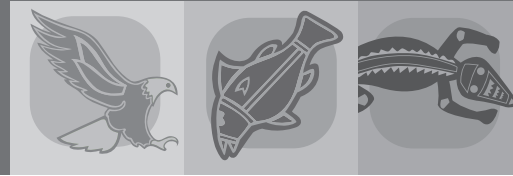
New Council

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council members and to thank the previous Council for their work. We look forward to continuing our strong working relationship with the new Council to help achieve great results for our community. We also congratulate our fellow Local Commissioner Elaine Cairns, who was elected as a Councillor.

Expectant mothers leaving community

Doomadgee like many remote communities, faces significant challenges in the provision of adequate healthcare services, particularly for expectant mothers. Due to limited facilities at the local hospital expectant mothers are required to travel to Mt Isa for the birth of their babies, often resulting in the relocation of entire families for weeks before the birth. This requirement not only imposes strain on families but also leads to detrimental effects on a child's education, with older children often missing school during this period.

Community operations Doomadgee



Sorry business

Sorry business has again had a significant impact on the community this year. A number of funerals had to be postponed due to the weather and family members being unable to attend due to the flooding and road closures. Circumstances such as these impact the ability of families to mourn their loved ones and prolongs the grieving process for the whole community. We still have a number of funerals yet to take place in the community: it is hoped that with better weather, these will be able to go ahead without incident.

The next 12 months

Our dedication to advocating for additional trigger notices will remain unwavering over the next 12 months. We firmly believe that having access to the same notices provided to other FRC communities would significantly enhance our capacity to support our clients. While obtaining these additional trigger notices is paramount, we equally recognise the importance of bolstering community service provision to meet the increasing needs of our community. Ensuring that our community receives adequate service provision is as crucial as acquiring the additional trigger notices. It's imperative that we address the increased demands within our community effectively and comprehensively.

We are committed to sustaining our ESR initiative for as long as it is required by our clients and the school, and whilst we have the capacity to do so. The program has fostered a greater collaboration with families to ensure children receive the full benefit of education. This proactive approach is instrumental in preparing for a brighter future.

The enthusiasm and cooperation from our clients is truly heartening, as evidenced by the number of smiling faces eager to embrace the educational journey. We feel our efforts have been valuable for the children of Doomadgee and it is imperative that we persist in providing them with the same opportunities available to children everywhere.