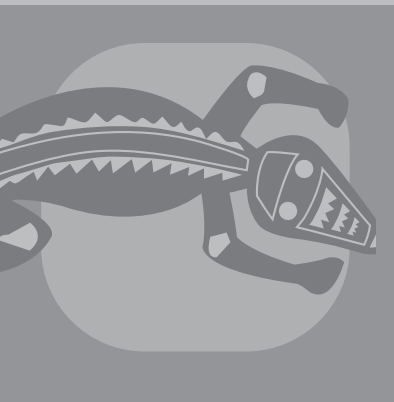


ANNUAL REPORT

24



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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 2023 to 30 June 2024.

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

Family Responsibilities Commission
PO Box 5438
Cairns QLD 4870
Ph: (07) 4081 8400
Fax: (07) 4041 0974

Alternatively, you can visit our website to access an electronic version of the annual report: www.frcq.org.au



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding the annual report, you can contact us on telephone (07) 4081 8400 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report with you.

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ISSN – 1837-4565

The Commission recognises we are visitors to the country we travel across and work in. We acknowledge that many of our Local Commissioners are Traditional Owners and Elders of their communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. 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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9 October 2024

The Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP
Minister for Treaty,
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships,
Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts
GPO Box 806
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Minister Enoch

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2023-24 including 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 134 of this report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tammy Williams', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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 efficient and effective engagement and support. Our aim is to provide the best service possible. We will partner with the Australian and Queensland Governments, stakeholders and clients to deliver outcomes that are responsive to the needs of the communities in which we work. 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 those we serve.

Preamble Noel Pearson



Self-determination for Indigenous people means having some control and autonomy over welfare conditions. In remote Australia especially, welfare payments have a big effect on our communities and our people. This will continue until job opportunities are available at scale for people to escape mass unemployment. There are simply too few job opportunities in remote communities, and we live in a country in which government prefers to pay people to be unemployed rather than provide job opportunities to meet demand.

The cycle of welfare dependency, poverty, and extreme disadvantage is well known. It is crucial our Elders have control over the application of welfare conditions. We cannot afford to have welfare conditions controlled by external agencies such as Centrelink and the bureaucracy in Canberra. That model has failed us. If Indigenous children are to have a chance to succeed like other Australian children born into greater advantage, our own people need to step in and take control themselves.

We have higher expectations of our people, our kin, and our children than remaining at the bottom of Australian society. Taking control of welfare conditions, empowers our Elders to help ensure people are meeting their basic responsibilities to community and kin—so parents are getting their kids to school, and providing homes and communities that are safe, for example.

In 2008 the Queensland and the Australian Governments changed the law, so our Elders and communities could take control of welfare conditions through the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC). This has been one of the most important acts of self-determination the country has ever seen. The FRC has now had 16 years of success—of Elders and FRC communities themselves taking power back from government and saying themselves what they expect of their community members and of each other.

The model provides hope for our children's futures. The FRC and its communities can be so proud of lives it has been instrumental in transforming. One of the earliest FRC clients has now had five children graduate from some of the best boarding schools in the State. She says this success for her children would not have happened without the intervention and support of the FRC.

This is how we Close the Gap. There has been a lot of talk from governments about the need for 'shared decision-making' under Closing the Gap but the FRC makes this talk real by giving Indigenous communities and Elders power and control over a key issue. This is what shared decision-making looks like.

I commend the important work of the FRC. I commend the FRC model to all seeking to take back control and who want to exercise our Indigenous right to self-determination.

Noel Pearson



Commissioner Williams' Message

The contents of this annual report paint a picture of evolution over the past 16 years since the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Commission. The pace of this change has been determined by our clients: resulting in the FRC 'moving at the speed of trust'.

Although the FRC's legislative parameters have remained relatively fixed, the Commission's decisions have evolved, and the way in which the FRC engages with its clients has also matured. The evolution of the Commission's operations has occurred because the needs and aspirations of our clients have changed. Any reader of our annual reports will see a profound contrast between the FRC's operational and performance outcomes over successive years.

As recent as 2017-18 the Commission's decisions and client outcomes reveal a clear concentration of decision-making in a conference setting, with limited capacity to support client behaviour change, or acceptance of personal responsibility through family responsibilities agreements or voluntary engagements. In that reporting year a high proportion of clients were dealt with at conference resulting in 233 conditional income managements orders for 179 clients, and 122 referrals made for 107 clients to community support services. It was also reported at the time, that interest by clients, or the opportunity for them to engage with the FRC in a voluntary capacity outside of a formal conference setting was minimal – with only 14 voluntary income management agreements and no voluntary case plans entered into.

The Commission's operating environment during that period, was further compounded by the uncertainty throughout the broader service delivery ecosystem, with the discontinuation of key programs, and/or under-resourcing of community support services in each of the welfare reform communities. This resulted in the FRC having limited options for client referrals.

It must be recognised that for much of its 16 years of operations the FRC has experienced high levels of uncertainty brought about by short term funding agreements and being the subject of government reviews and parliamentary inquiries. The perverse and negative impact of this uncertainty on the Commission, and its staff, Local Commissioners and most importantly, its clients cannot be understated.

Against this backdrop the Commission continued to remain steadfast to its legislative and policy objectives. The 2019-20 and 2020-21 annual reports document the FRC's intensive focus on reinvigorating its frontline operations and operational structure to better align with the needs of our clients, and their families, while continuing to ensure the FRC's relevance as a public sector entity in a changing policy landscape.

Slowly, but surely, the FRC's performance results and client outcomes indicate a positive response to many of these strategic operational changes. Last year's annual report acknowledged an increased willingness of clients to take steps towards personal accountability, especially through the uptake of voluntary agreements. The data for 2022-23 showed 170 voluntary agreements, inclusive of income management and case plans, were made with clients outside of conference. This financial year I am delighted to report, the total number of voluntary agreements has skyrocketed to a record high of 291. This is a dramatic increase from a total of 20 agreements voluntarily made by clients only a few years ago in 2019-20.

Commissioner William's Message



In August 2023, the FRC finally achieved a milestone which has eluded the Commission for much of its existence: funding 'certainty' albeit for another 3 years. The Australian and Queensland Governments have agreed to continue the Commission's funding so it can operate at full capacity until 30 June 2026. Incredibly this has provided the Commission with the longest period of tenure and funding security since 2011. This decision means the FRC can now upgrade its core infrastructure and continue to strengthen the capabilities of Local Commissioners and grow the capacity of registry staff.

There can be no doubt that the decision of both governments to continue to fund the FRC for a further three years, and the operational stability multi-year funding provides, has had a significant and consequential impact on client outcomes (which are documented throughout this report). For example, client demand for support services continues to grow, and is likely to do so, for the foreseeable future. In fact, the uptake of referrals by our clients this year is at a record high - with 662 referrals made for 454 clients to community support services. For these reasons the co-design and delivery of services must also evolve, like the Commission has had to do, at the pace of community members. This will require continued investment by both the Australian and Queensland governments in evidence-based services to support the continuum of behavioural change of community members, including economic empowerment, as originally intended in the Cape York Welfare Reform's program logic.

In closing it would be remiss of me not to recognise and pay tribute to the efforts of our registry staff, and Local Commissioners. Throughout the periods of change and uncertainty since its inception in 2008 – caused by external factors such as COVID-19 and alterations to government policies and priorities, has been the Commission's stable and enduring leadership of its community-based Local Commissioners. Appointed because of their cultural authority, relevant knowledge, and expertise, it is not surprising, that respected relationships have developed, over time, between Local Commissioners and staff, and many of our clients as they progress on their journey beyond personal responsibilities towards self-determination and agency. I speak on behalf of all my Commission colleagues when I say, it is a privilege to witness first-hand, the life changing and personal evolution of so many of our clients and their families.

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 (CYI), 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, Seniors and Disability Services in relation to alleged harm or risk of harm to a child
- 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 (DV) protection order against the person.

Commission processes to engage and support community members

Assessment - Once the Commission receives these notices, the FRC Act sets out various procedural requirements that must be met to ensure effective safeguards are in place to protect the human rights of community members. Limitations of those rights can only occur when it is lawfully permissible to do so and must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

The FRC makes a careful assessment of the information it receives to determine the most appropriate, and least intrusive option to engage with the community member to help them, and sometimes their family, to holistically address the underlying issues raised in the agency notices. In some circumstances it may be necessary to hold a conference with the community member to discuss these issues, or on other occasions the information received does not justify such an approach at that time.

About the FRC



Conferencing clients - If it is necessary to hold a conference the FRC applies a locally based and culturally relevant 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 by the justice, child protection, education or housing systems.

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 preserved. 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, referred to as conditional income management. 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 order conditional income management by giving 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.

Other client engagement approaches - The FRC Act also provides a process under which a community member may voluntarily seek help from the Commission, through a voluntary agreement for a referral under a Voluntary Case Plan (VCP) to attend a support service/s or to enter into a voluntary agreement for Voluntary Income Management (VIM). These clients are offered ongoing assistance and case management support as part of the FRC's Client Engagement (CE) approach.

The Commission's CE approach is an innovative way of working with clients outside of the formal processes of conference to encourage autonomy and decision-making for themselves and their families, and if needed, receive ongoing case management support to achieve their case plan goals. The aim of this approach is to build the confidence and capability of community members to progress along the continuum of help-seeking behaviours so they can assert self-determination over their own lives and resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community, and the individuals and families of the community.



About the FRC

Legislative scheme

The FRC operates within the following legislative framework:

- *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*
- *Family Responsibilities Commission Regulation 2014*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Child Protection Act 1999*
- *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*
- *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 (Cth)*
- *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 the FRC registry and decision-making functions section of this report)
- the decision-making and client engagement 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 the Community operations sections of this report).

The FRC is an independent statutory authority and is not subject to direction by the Minister. The independence of the Commission was considered 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).

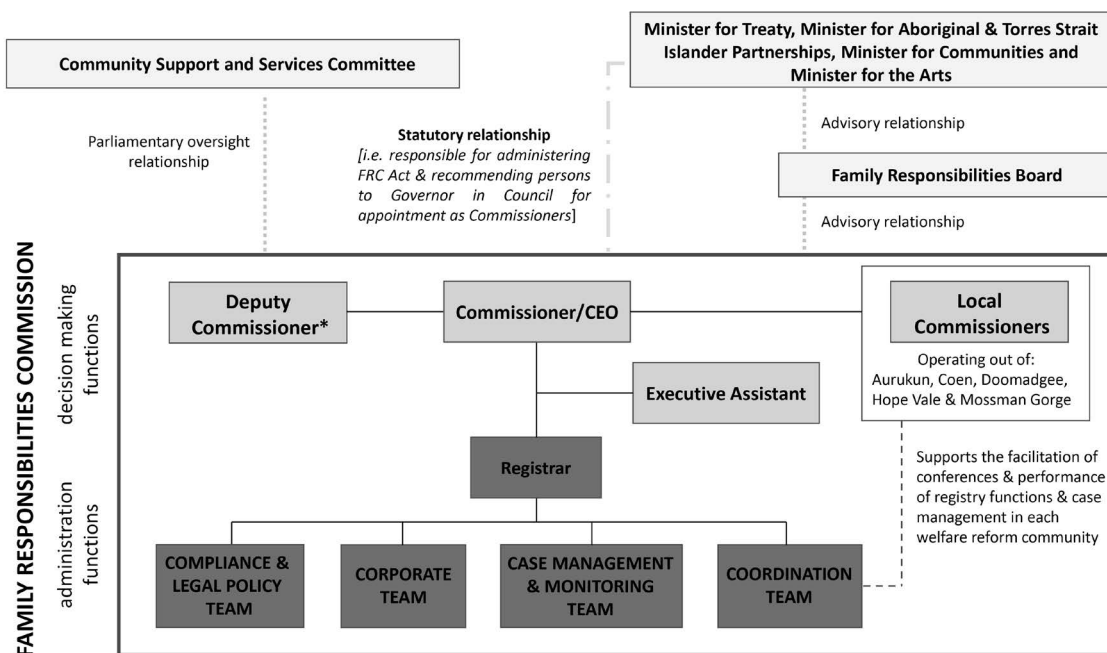
About the FRC



The principle of Indigenous local authority is a cornerstone of the FRC model and a primary example of self-determination.

As at 30 June 2024 all members of the Commission's decision-making arm are Aboriginal - comprising 36 Local Commissioners and the Commissioner, Tammy Williams, with the exception of Deputy Commissioner Rod Curtin whose powers as a decision-maker at conference are executed only upon delegation by the Commissioner.¹

An innovative feature of the FRC is the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board) whose functions are provided for in the FRC Act. The FR Board comprises a membership of three, reflecting the tripartite partnership between the Australian and Queensland Governments and community, through CYI. 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 78 and 79.



* Pursuant to section 24 of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*, the Commissioner may delegate functions to a Deputy Commissioner

1. Section 24 of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*.



About the FRC

Our vision

Vibrant welfare reform communities that are responsible, healthy, safe and sustainable, built on cultural respect, self-determination and empowerment for a future of opportunity.

Our purpose

Supporting welfare reform community members to restore socially responsible standards of behaviour, local authority and wellbeing for themselves and their families.

Our values

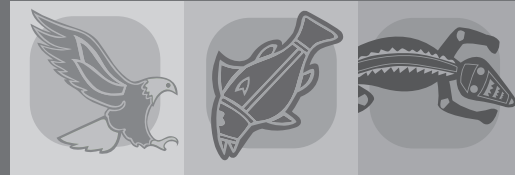
Our core values provide the framework for our decisions, actions and behaviours, and underpin our commitment to human rights. Working to our values requires us to meet the highest standards of corporate behaviour:

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

Our challenges

- Maintaining legitimacy and improving levels of engagement and personal responsibility without a clear authorising environment.
- Sustaining, renewing and broadening the pool of Local Commissioners.
- Supporting a stronger commitment from service provider partners for suitable, available and accountable services for clients.
- Strengthening resilience and wellbeing in staff and Local Commissioners to meet evolving challenges.
- Protecting our information assets.

About the FRC



Our opportunities

- Embedding the FRC as a partner in the co-design and decision-making of government.
- Expanding our impact to new communities and with new triggers targeting areas of need.
- Increasing voluntary engagement, particularly through increasing options for VIM.
- Harnessing the evolution of the Local Commissioners' role to increasingly support clients and communities outside of conference.
- Increasing recognition of the FRC's model of self-determination, through the FRC's local Indigenous-led decision-making, and the cultural capability of the registry.

Qld Government objectives for the community

The FRC partners with the Australian and Queensland Governments and FRC communities to help Close the Gap on life outcomes for our clients. The FRC supports the Queensland Government's objectives for the community:

- Good jobs:** Good, secure jobs in traditional and emerging industries
- Better services:** Deliver even better services right across Queensland
- Great lifestyle:** Protect and enhance our Queensland lifestyle as we grow

FRC strategic objectives

Our strategic objectives for 2023-2027 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, culturally safe, agile and innovative organisation
- improve engagement through co-design and partnerships.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2027 can be found in the appendices (Appendix A).

As part of a broader upgrade to its information communications technology infrastructure and records management system (see page 71 for details) the FRC is progressively developing its performance monitoring and reporting framework to better align with the Commission's strategic plan and objectives. The development of the FRC's reporting framework continues. Where possible our performance against the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is addressed throughout this report.



Our strategic objectives

Strategic objective one

Support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform communities.

Our achievements

This objective is achieved through the following strategies:

-
1. Continue to implement proactive and agile responses to changing community needs that reflect all functions of the FRC Act.
 2. Support Local Commissioners and FRC staff to have meaningful and effective engagement with FRC communities.
 3. Strengthen self-determination by investing in individual leadership and decision-making capability development for Local Commissioners.
 4. Support Local Commissioners to advocate for their communities.
 5. Support partner agencies to provide information in a timely way within the FRC Act framework.
-

Performance Indicator 1: Retention and development of Local Commissioners

Local Commissioner Development Week

A Local Commissioner Development Week was conducted during the week commencing 4 September 2023. Local Commissioners from each community travelled to Cairns to participate in a week-long schedule of training and development activities. More detailed information on the Local Commissioner Development week can be found in the Governance section of this report.

Local Commissioner training in community

During the reporting period Commissioner Williams and Deputy Commissioner Curtin delivered training content to Local Commissioners in small groups within their respective communities on topics relevant to their individual capabilities and requirements.

The training has developed the capability of the Local Commissioners to make decisions and preside over matters in conference without the need to seek assistance and guidance from the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner. This growth in local authority and self-determination is evidenced in the following table showing the rate of Commissioner assisted conferences decreasing over the last three years.

Commissioner assisted conferences	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percentage of three Local Commissioners sitting without the assistance/advice of the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner	16%	45%	72%

Our strategic objectives



Two new Coen Local Commissioners

The Commission welcomed two new Coen Local Commissioners, Ramana Walker and Naomi Hobson on 1 July 2023. Helenia Creek, Local Commissioner for Mossman Gorge, did not seek reappointment after the expiry of her term on 30 June 2023. The total complement of Local Commissioners across all five communities is now 36.

Performance Indicator 2: Proportion of conferences held with Local Commissioners sitting independently

In 2023-24, 88% of Commission decisions at conference throughout the period were made by three Local Commissioners sitting alone to constitute the panel.

Further details about Local Commissioner decision-making can be found on pages 32 to 35.

Performance Indicator 3: Rates of client participation in the decision-making process

The FRC continues to report high levels of client participation and personal agency in the Commission's processes. In 2023-24, 88% of clients who were served a notice to attend a conference participated in the FRC's decision-making process by attending at least once, with an overall conference attendance rate of 65.7% in 2023-24.

During the reporting period, of the total number of decisions at conference to attend a case plan, 74% were made by agreement with the client to attend the support service/s.

In 2023-24, of all voluntary agreements and final decisions at conference¹ 61% were made with some form of agreement with the client. This highlights clients' willingness to take personal responsibility for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families. More information about client participation in FRC's decision-making processes commences at page 35.

Performance Indicator 4: Judicious use of Conditional Income Management (CIM)

In 2023-24 there were a total of 54 CIMs relating to 54 clients. As at 30 June 2024 there were 13 FRC clients subject to a CIM, claiming Centrelink payments for 31 children, of which 16 were of school age.

The FRC uses CIM in a very limited and nuanced way. In the 2023-24 financial year only 10.6% of finalised conferenced clients were placed on a CIM.

This demonstrates the FRC's continued use of CIM is proportionate to the client's circumstances and that CIM is used to encourage personal responsibility, with terms and percentages of CIM orders and agreements adjusted according to the client's progress and circumstances. During the 2023-24 reporting period 37% of CIM orders and agreements quarantined 60 percent of a client's welfare payment, 41% quarantined 75 percent and 22% quarantined 90 percent. During the same period 83% were for a period of 6 months, with the remaining 17% for a duration of 3 months.

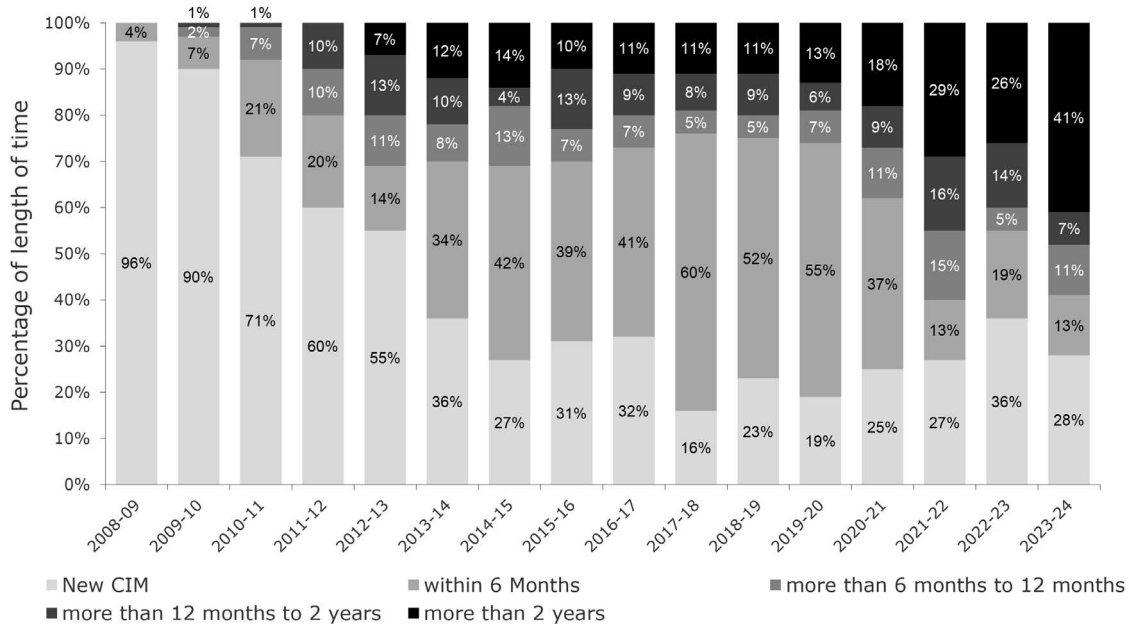
1. Excluding decisions on amend/end applications.



Our strategic objectives

The length of time between CIM orders by financial year is also showing a greater percentage in the “more than 2 year” category, meaning that more than 2 years has elapsed since a client has been placed on conditional income management. This figure increased from 26% in 2022-23 to 41% in 2023-24 suggesting that our clients are taking greater personal responsibility, and fewer CIM orders are required as a measure of last resort.

Length of Time Between CIM Orders by Financial Year



Graph 1: Length of time between CIM orders by financial year

More information about income management is set out in the FRC registry and decision-making functions section of this report. Further analysis of income management data can also be found in the Non-financial performance outcomes section commencing at page 49.

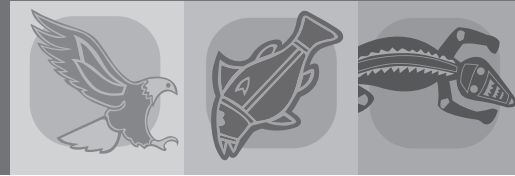
Performance Indicator 5: Number of successful appeals against FRC decisions

There have not been any appeals against any FRC decisions during the reporting year.

Performance Indicator 6: Helping to Close the Gap on disadvantage for our clients in Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge

The Commission continues to develop an appropriate assessment tool to best measure our contribution to Closing the Gap targets across the 4-year term of the Strategic Plan. The FRC hopes to report against this performance indicator in the future.

Our strategic objectives



Strategic objective two

Help people in welfare reform communities to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities and the individuals and families of their communities.

Our achievements

This objective is achieved through the following strategies:

-
1. Support individuals and families to change through effective client engagement, conferencing, case plan referrals and income management.
 2. Protect children and other vulnerable people including through compulsion and income management where necessary.
 3. Continue to explore incentive projects to increase families' capabilities and move towards pursuing opportunities.
 4. Engage families in recognising the importance of, and playing an active role in neonatal and early childhood development.
 5. Support evidence-based interventions for disengaged young people and employability skills training.
 6. Build mutual accountability and foster shared high expectations of service providers and community members.
-

Performance Indicator 1: Increased motivation of clients to change through personal responsibility

The types of client interactions evident during 2023-24 reinforce the Commission's belief that our clients are displaying a willingness to change and take personal responsibility for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families. Over the course of the financial year 65.5% of clients have at some point done one or more of the following: self-referred to the FRC for a VCP or a VIM; entered into a Family Responsibilities Agreement (FRA); successfully applied to end or amend their decision by order or agreement. As a subset of this, 33% of clients specifically entered into a voluntary agreement.



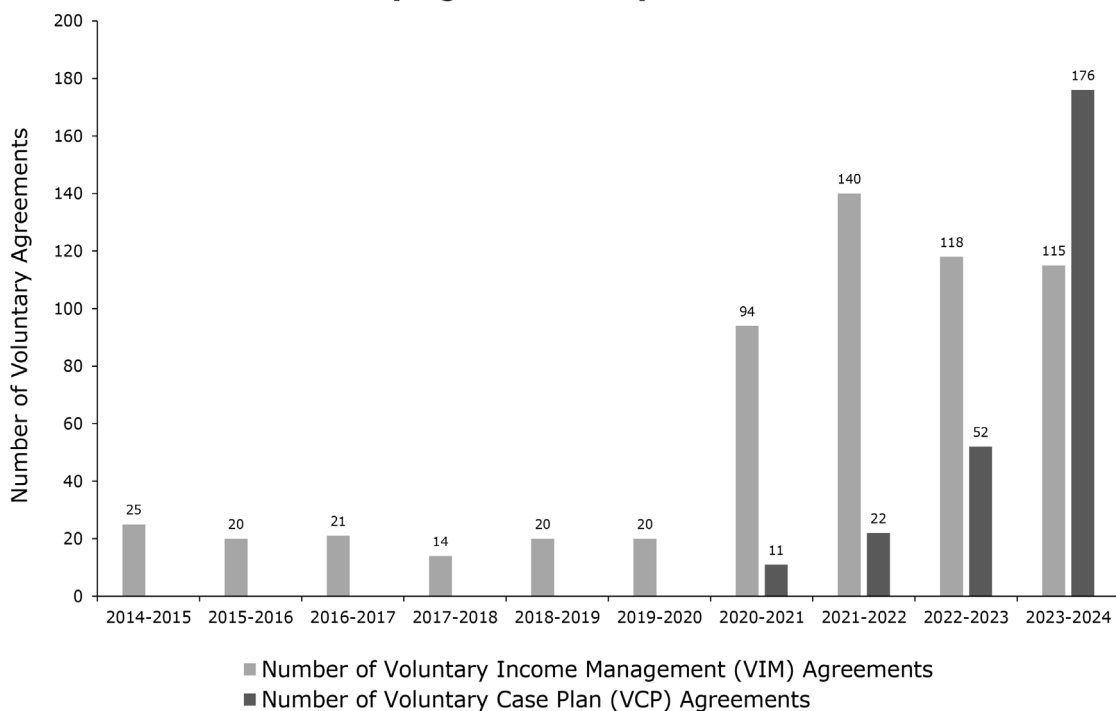
Our strategic objectives

Since the introduction of the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) on 17 March 2021 and the subsequent transition to the enhanced Income Management SmartCard on 6 March 2023, the Commission has seen that having a prior CIM order or agreement is not an impediment to a client requesting to enter into a subsequent voluntary agreement for VIM. In fact, evidence is suggestive of the contrary – that CIM can be a pathway to clients later voluntarily seeking a period of income management. From 17 March 2021 to 30 June 2024 more than half (55%) of VIM clients have had a prior CIM.

A similar trend can be seen regarding clients seeking case plan support. From 17 March 2021 to 30 June 2024 the Commission's data reveals that having a prior case plan made by the FRC on a conditional basis is not an impediment to a client entering into a subsequent voluntary agreement for a VCP. From 17 March 2021 to 30 June 2024, 71% of VCP clients have had a prior conditional case plan (CCP).

It is evident from the graph below that the Commission is seeing a continued overall increase in the number of voluntary interactions with clients over the last four financial years. Notably, there has been a 238% increase in VCP's from 2022-23 to 2023-24. Prior to 2020 and before the onset of COVID, no VCPs were entered into by clients.

Voluntary Agreements by Financial Year



Graph 2: Voluntary income management and voluntary case plan agreements by financial year since 2014-15

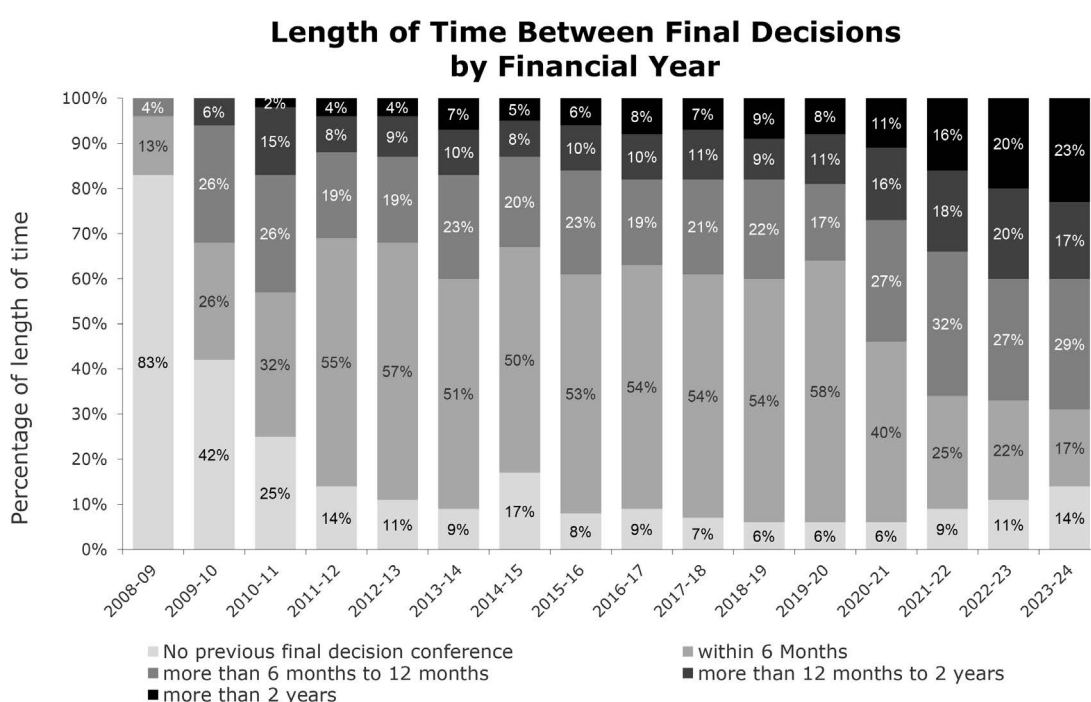
More information about voluntary agreements can be found in the FRC registry and decision-making section of this report. Further analysis of VIM data can be found at page 50 and is also discussed further in the context of another performance indicator.

Our strategic objectives



Performance Indicator 2: Increased periods of respite for clients from daily living pressures

The FRC's data in graph 3 tracks the length of time between final decisions made for clients at successive conferences. The increasing length of time between each conference decision may suggest personal responsibility is increasing. In 2023-24 the FRC identified a client cohort of 23% who had not been conferenced and been the subject of a final decision in the past two years. This is up from 20% in 2022-23.



Graph 3: Length of time between final decisions by financial year

Voluntary income management agreements

The increase in the number of VIMs in recent years when compared to earlier years (see graph 2) is consistent with a broader and well-established trend of an increased willingness of clients to take steps towards personal responsibility. VIM has proven to be a useful budgeting tool for clients, to ensure household needs and financial obligations are met, and in some cases, to achieve savings goals. Clients experiencing financial abuse in relationships with domestic violence and/or coercive control have also reported that entering into a VIM is a way to provide stability and protection for children and other vulnerable members of the household.

The FRC records the age group, reasons and circumstances of clients entering into voluntary agreements for income management. During 2023-24 the most frequent reason² chosen by clients to enter into a voluntary agreement for VIM was “to buy food” (95), followed by “to budget” (69), “to pay for bills” (65) and “to save for something I need” (57).

2. A client may choose one or more option to reflect their individual reasons in participating in voluntary income management.



Our strategic objectives

VIM Reason/s	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76-85	Total
I don't wish to provide this information	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
To budget	5	23	19	4	11	6	1	69
To buy food	8	24	24	9	14	13	3	95
To pay for bills (rent, electricity, fines)	6	16	18	5	10	8	2	65
To protect my payments	0	4	5	2	3	3	2	19
To save for something I need	6	19	12	4	9	5	2	57
To stop gambling	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	6
With general wellbeing	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	5
Total	27	89	83	24	48	37	10	318

During 2023-24 the highest circumstance³ chosen by clients to enter into a voluntary agreement for VIM was “I need support for myself” (95), followed by “I need help to support my family” (49), “I need help to support my children” (39) and “I like the SmartCard” (39).

VIM Circumstance/s	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76-85	Total
I don't wish to provide this information	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
I like the SmartCard	3	8	9	4	8	6	1	39
I need help to support my children	3	13	11	3	5	3	1	39
I need help to support my family	6	10	13	5	6	7	2	49
I need support for myself	7	26	23	9	14	13	3	95
Total	19	59	57	21	33	29	7	225

The 26-35-year-old age bracket scored the highest for the “I need support for myself” and “I need help to support my children” circumstances followed closely by the 36-45-year-old age bracket. The 36-45-year-old age bracket scored the highest for the “I need help to support my family” circumstance, indicative of the 26-35 and 36-45-year-old age groups having the highest number of members, including children, to feed in a household.

3. A client may choose one or more option to reflect their individual circumstances in participating in voluntary income management.

Our strategic objectives



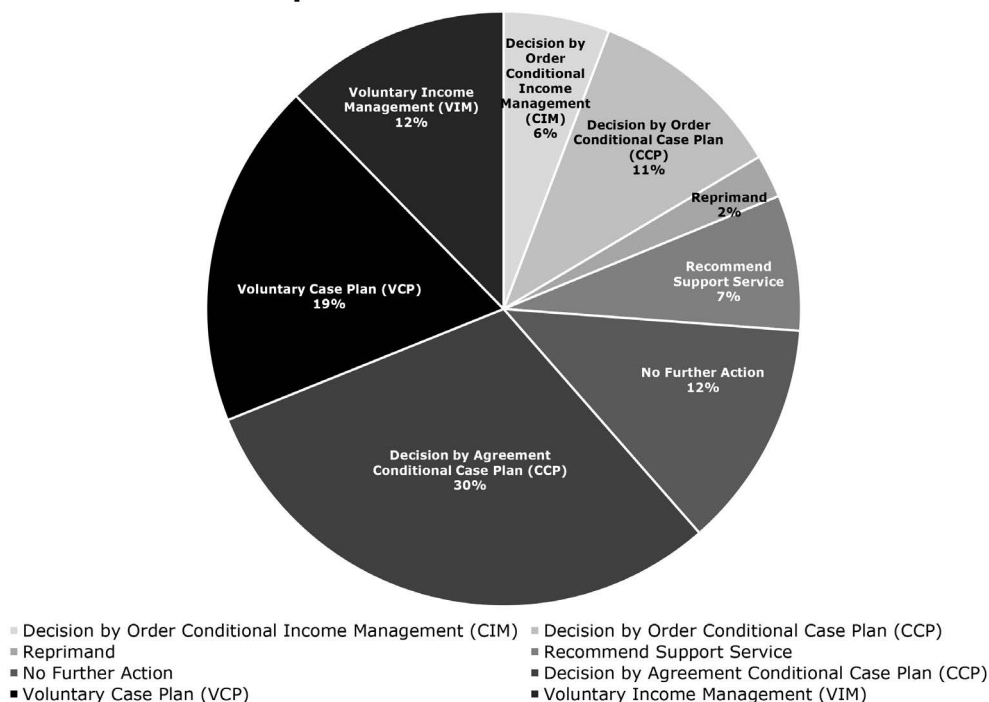
Performance Indicator 3: Strength of mandated interventions decreased

FRC decisions are proportionate to individual circumstances

The FRC model is nuanced and tailored to the needs of each client. Commission decisions are applied proportionate to individual circumstances, for a defined period of no more than 12 months, after which it expires.

Graph 4 below illustrates the range of all total final decisions made by the Commission (inclusive of decisions made at conference, and voluntary agreements). As a total of all final decisions made by the Commission during 2023-24, the majority of decisions (61%) were made with some form of agreement with the client (voluntary income management, voluntary case plan and decision by agreement for a conditional case plan). Conversely, a small proportion of decisions (17%) could be categorised as 'mandated interventions' and were made by the Commission resulting in a client being placed on conditional income management and/or ordered to attend a service provider under a referral from a case plan from a decision.⁴

Proportionate Decisions 2023-24



Graph 4: Proportionate decisions 2023-24

4. There were no decision by agreements for income management pursuant to section 68(2)(b) FRC Act 2008 made during 2023-24.



Our strategic objectives

The following table is further evidence of a trend over recent years of clients continuing to take steps towards greater personal responsibility by entering into agreements at conference, and the FRC being less likely to order, or mandate, the client's attendance at a community support service under a case plan.

Conference outcomes	2022-23	2023-24	% change
Agreements to attend community support services	265	284	+7%
Orders made to attend community support services	147	100	-32%

Performance Indicator 4: Increased client engagement with support services to build capacity

The FRC is working with our partner service providers in FRC communities to find better ways to work together so the needs of our clients are met, to overcome barriers to engagement, and to facilitate the progression of case plans. Some clients require urgent support with both the FRC and specialist providers on-hand, to help. Other clients, for example, are best supported through an initial 'light touch' approach to engagement by the FRC facilitating early interactions between clients and service providers, often in culturally safe places elsewhere in the community and not in a clinical setting. We have found this strategy is often the tentative first steps needed, to help clients form a trusting relationship with service providers, and lead to improved outcomes in line with their case plan goals.

For the last 6 months of the financial year the FRC has been recording and collating these interactions. This data reveals there have been 81 occasions where a partner service provider has joined with an FRC staff member or Local Commissioner as part of our CE approach.

More information relating to the Commission's CE approach can be found on pages 11, 26, 28, 30, 31, 71 and in each of the Community operations reports for Aurukun, Doomadgee, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. CE data is also a relevant consideration for other performance indicators listed over the next few pages.

Performance Indicator 5: Helping to Close the Gap on disadvantage for our clients in Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge

The Commission continues to develop an appropriate assessment tool to best measure our contribution to Closing the Gap targets across the 4-year term of the Strategic Plan. The FRC hopes to report against this performance indicator in the future.

Our strategic objectives



Strategic objective three

Create a capable, culturally safe, agile and innovative organisation.

Our achievements

This objective is achieved through the following strategies:

-
1. Ensure the FRC attracts and values an agile, diverse, inclusive and high performing workforce to meet current and future business needs.
 2. Embed a culture of innovation and continuous improvement to deliver more flexible, effective and efficient services.
 3. Embed safety, including cultural and psychological safety, as a core value to enhance overall wellbeing and engagement in our work environment.
 4. Leverage technology, data and information to enhance outcomes.
-

Performance Indicator 1: Proportion of budget spent on frontline services

For 2023-24, 69% of FRC expenses were utilised to support frontline operations and maintain the Commission's customer service standards to First Nations Queenslanders living in remote communities.

Performance Indicator 2: Employee retention and development

During the reporting period Commission staff undertook a varied range of development activities as required by their roles, such as First Aid training, or identified learning activities in employee Performance and Development Agreements (PDAs). The Commission continues to develop an appropriate assessment tool to best report against this performance indicator.

Performance Indicator 3: Increased diversity of our workforce

The Commission values diverse backgrounds and experience when hiring and continues to ensure the FRC is a safe and welcoming workplace. In the 2023-24 reporting year, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees as defined by the Public Sector Commission increased to 18%. See pages 84 and 85 for details relating to the Commission's workforce profile.

Approximately 97% of the FRC's 38 Commissioners, inclusive of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and 36 Local Commissioners, identifies as Aboriginal. The knowledge and experience of our combined workforce makes the FRC, as a Queensland public sector entity, a leader in cultural capability and First Nations employment.



Our strategic objectives

Strategic objective four

Improve engagement through co-design and partnerships.

Our achievements

This objective is achieved through the following strategies:

-
1. Position the FRC as an invaluable part of the service ecosystem through collaborative and collegiate engagement with our partners.
 2. Provide quality advice to the Family Responsibilities Board, Ministers and Parliamentary Committees to inform policy, legislation and service delivery to our community members.
 3. Help clients have agency in their experience with the FRC by co-designing projects and services, and embracing First Nations ways of doing, being and knowing.
-

Performance Indicator 1: Number of partnerships and engagement activities

Over the course of the 2023-24 reporting year the FRC had 19 referral pathways to community support services, in which a total of 662 referrals were made relating to 454 clients.

The FRC also formalised its partnership through memorandum of understandings with 12 of those service providers and other partners to deliver targeted support to our clients and their families. Details relating to the FRC's client referrals to its community support service partners can be found at page 53.

Performance Indicator 2: Rate of stakeholder satisfaction

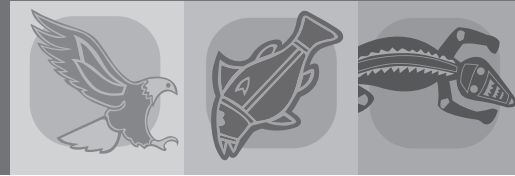
The Commission continues to develop an appropriate assessment tool to best record stakeholder satisfaction rates and service standards. The FRC hopes to report against this performance indicator in the future.

Performance Indicator 3: Rate of participation in project and service design

Although the Commission is yet to finalise an appropriate assessment tool to best report against this performance indicator, there have been several initiatives co-designed and/or implemented throughout 2023-24 in collaboration with clients, stakeholders, and FRC staff and Local Commissioners. These initiatives include:

- **Client Engagement (CE) approach.** In the first half of the financial year the Commission developed and tested the program logic and methodology. The CE approach was then implemented in the second half of the financial year following a review of internal systems and the building of fit-for-purpose infrastructure and processes to support the delivery of this new engagement approach with community members. Half-yearly data collected by the FRC, which records 951 client engagement activities, is overwhelming evidence of the successful co-design of the initiative in response to the evolving needs of our community members. See pages 11, 24, 28, 30, 31, 71 and the Community operations reports for further details.

Our strategic objectives



- **Elevated School Response (ESR) strategy.** The Commission previously reported in the 2022-23 annual report the early development of the ESR strategy. This year ESR was further refined and progressively rolled out in four communities. It was designed as an interim measure to support schools and parents as part of their school attendance and retention strategies. For instance, some communities do not have a reliable school bus or operational School Attendance Officer (SAO) programs and the FRC saw an important role for the Commission to scaffold these essential strategies.

The program in each of the participating communities has been co-designed to reflect the specific priorities of those clients, local schools and Local Commissioners. For instance, in Aurukun the initial focus was on long-term disengaged young people, including those students impacted by foetal alcohol spectrum disorders. In Doomadgee, clients who already had a case plan referral to the SAO program were prioritised. Local Commissioners then worked with clients and their children to implement strategies to overcome barriers to school attendance and engagement. Hope Vale's ESR strategy included targeting the early years as well as school aged children and focussed on families whose children were eligible to start kindergarten and Prep. Mossman Gorge's strategy included responding to the wishes of the community by aiming to reduce behavioural issues on the school bus, as well as improving school attendance.

The FRC has been requested to continue its ESR program for the foreseeable future. In Doomadgee, for example, FRC data shows that between Term 3 2022 and Term 2 2024 a total of 227 children had at some point been involved in ESR. The program has also received positive feedback from school staff, particularly in Aurukun, observing that school attendance *'always increases on the weeks that the FRC and the Local Commissioners are engaging ESR clients and their children'*.



FRC registry and decision-making functions

The registry is responsible for the administration of the Commission.

Operations

During the 2023-24 financial year data has been collected across the three main service delivery areas of the Commission's operations: intake and assessment, facilitation of conferences and hearings, and supporting client engagement activities outside of conference.

The Commission received and assessed 7,546 notices of which 5,067 were within the Commission's jurisdiction. The majority of within jurisdiction notices received this financial year were for school attendance, followed by Magistrates Court, child safety and welfare, and then DV matters. Information regarding our performance during the year is located in the Non-financial performance outcomes and the Review of financial performance sections.

At a glance – the 2023-24 year

7,546 Agency notices assessed	5,067 Agency notices deemed within jurisdiction	1,186 Community members deemed the subject of agency notices
991 Conferences and hearings held	554 Community members prioritised for conferences and hearings	0 Appeals of FRC decisions
951 Client engagement activities outside of conference	386 Community members supported in client engagement activities	441 Hours spent supporting client engagement activities

A capable administrative workforce is key to an efficient, agile and innovative organisation.

The FRC's administrative workforce in the Commission's registry consists of:

- the 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.
- the Deputy Commissioner. Under section 44 of the FRC Act the Commissioner may delegate the Commissioner's functions to a Deputy Commissioner and under section 25 of the FRC Act the Deputy Commissioner may act as the Commissioner in certain circumstances.

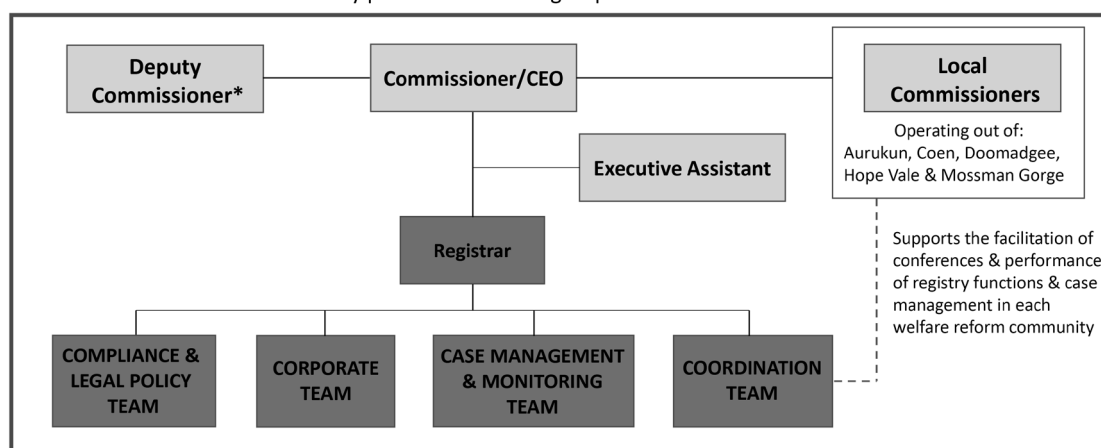
FRC registry and decision-making functions



- 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 (Corporate) who is responsible for providing financial and strategic/corporate advice and support to the Commission's operations across Cairns and the communities
- an Executive Assistant to support the Office of Commissioners plus 16 additional positions across the four teams of Compliance and Legal Policy, Corporate, Case Management and Monitoring, and Coordination. The Coordination team includes 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.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

Key positions and workgroups



* Pursuant to section 24 of the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*, the Commissioner may delegate functions to a Deputy Commissioner

Further details relating 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 C).

A client-centred approach to registry systems and processes

Business and operational strategies this year have continued a focus on maximising results for clients by internally strengthening the FRC model to achieve accountability and continued relevance in a changing policy environment.



FRC registry and decision-making functions

Coordination team – The Coordination team consists of the Manager (Coordination) and four Local Registry Coordinators who work in each of the five welfare reform communities. The function of the Local Registry Coordinator is to support the efficient and effective operations of the Commission in the welfare reform community area for which the coordinator is appointed, including:

- taking appropriate steps to facilitate the holding of conferences
- nominating appropriate Local Commissioners for a conference
- providing information about community support services and the operation of the Commission to persons living in the area
- keeping the records and information the Registrar considers appropriate
- assisting a person who is a community member to enter into a voluntary agreement under part 10 of the FRC Act
- undertaking programs as determined by the Commissioner.

This year CE has been the focus of the Coordination team in each of the five communities. The CE approach allows clients to engage with the FRC, particularly with Local Commissioners and Local Registry Coordinators, outside of the formal processes of conference to encourage autonomy and decision-making for themselves and their families. If needed, clients can also receive ongoing case management support to achieve their case plan goals. The number of mandated conferences has decreased in line with the increase of consistent engagement with clients. We have seen an increase in clients entering agreements on a voluntary basis through this process. CE captures other projects that have continued successfully from the previous year, ESR and Intensive Case Management (ICM) (for particularly complex matters), and is becoming the preferred way of engagement with the FRC for many of our clients.

Activity data for 2023-24 financial year: Snapshot of the Coordination team’s workload

<p>991</p> <p>Conferences and hearings held across five communities – averaging approximately 29 conferences and hearings per week over a 34-week schedule</p>	<p>1,010</p> <p>Occasions where notices were served on persons to attend conferences and hearings (including clients, support persons and other relevant persons)</p>	<p>5.0</p> <p>Full time employees of the Coordination team</p>
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FRC registry and decision-making functions



Case Management and Monitoring (CM&M) team – Responsibilities for the CM&M team include the following:

- receiving and processing agency notices
- determining jurisdiction
- gathering information for consideration of agency notices
- setting conference and CE timetables
- processing conference and CE outcomes
- managing CIM and VIM processes
- monitoring CCPs from FRAs and orders and VCPs
- ensuring compliance with the FRC Act.

The team also provide support to Local Registry Coordinators in their further engagement with community members outside of the conference setting through initiatives such as ESR and ICM.

Activity data for 2023-24 financial year: Snapshot of the CM&M team’s workload

<p>7,546</p> <p>Agency notices assessed to determine jurisdiction – averaging approximately 145 notices assessed per week</p>	<p>342</p> <p>Community members on non-voluntary active case plans had their progress monitored throughout the year (for periods between 3 to 12 months) following conference.</p>	<p>4.0</p> <p>Full time employees of the CM&M team</p>
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The Coordination and CM&M teams together have established a cohesive group to provide high-level support and information to Local Commissioners in order to better inform the delivery of support services to clients in line with the Commission’s focus on more intensive, quality, client-centred conferencing.



FRC registry and decision-making functions

Commissioners are responsible for decision-making at conferences and hearings.

Commissioner Williams, Deputy Commissioner Curtin and 36 Local Commissioners appointed across the five welfare reform community areas of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge, preside over locally convened conferences and hearings involving community members and make legally binding decisions.

Constitution of conferences and hearings

The FRC's continuation of assurance and oversight mechanisms throughout the 2023-24 financial year resulted in quality decision-making with improved client-focused outcomes and contributed to the result of no appeals against Commission decisions by community members.

Commission decisions use local authority and are made within a legal framework.

All FRC decisions made at conference require the decision-making panel to comprise of locally appointed Commissioners. During the reporting period 984 conferences were held and constituted by using the following combinations:

- three Local Commissioners sitting **without the assistance/advice** of the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner (section 50A conferences, monitored under section 50B) with one of the Local Commissioners acting as the chairperson
- three Local Commissioners sitting as a panel (section 50A conferences, monitored under section 50B) with one of the Local Commissioners acting as the chairperson and **with assistance/advice** provided by the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner
- two Local Commissioners sitting with the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner acting as chairperson.

When deciding to hold a conference in relation to a community member named in an agency notice it is the function of the Commissioner to appoint up to three Local Commissioners¹ to comprise the panel and decide the matter, having regard to the knowledge and experience of each Local Commissioner to determine the issues to which the agency notice relates, cultural and gender diversity considerations and potential conflicts of interests.

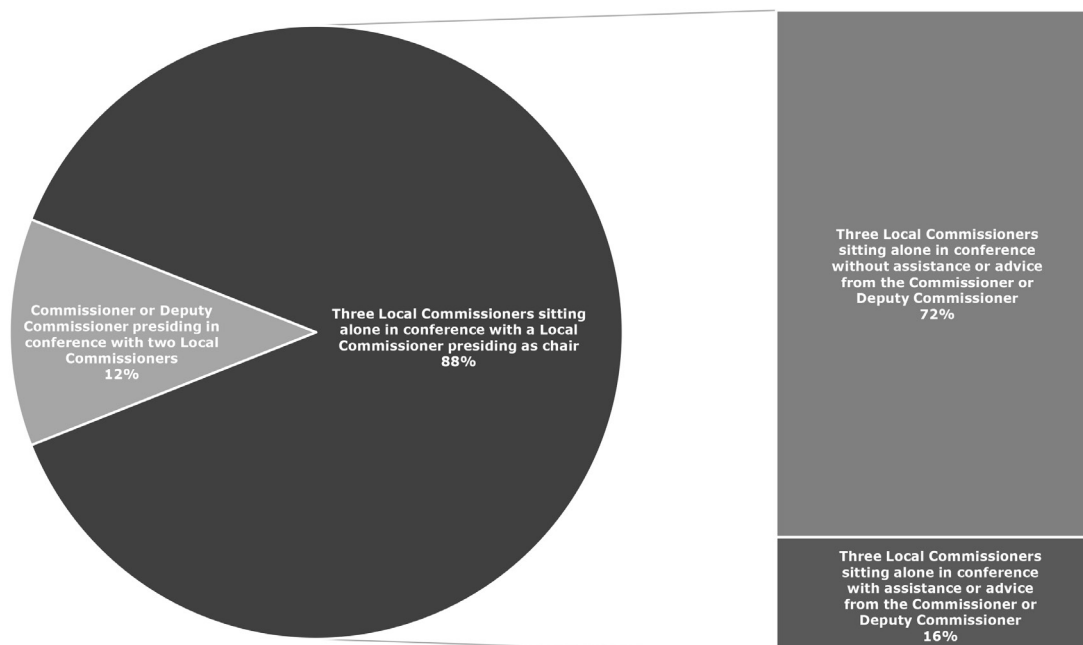
As seen in previous years the vast majority (88%) of Commission decisions at conference throughout 2023-24 continued to be made by three Local Commissioners sitting alone to constitute the panel.

1. A pool of Local Commissioners for each welfare reform community area are appointed by Governor in Council for a term: section 12(2) and (3) of the FRC Act.

FRC registry and decision-making functions



Conferences Constituted 2023-24



Graph 5: Constitution of conferences 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Quality assurance and oversight of decisions

All Commission decisions are made within a legal framework. There are mechanisms in place to ensure appropriateness and consistency of FRC decisions including:

- the appointment of a legally trained and suitably qualified Commissioner, and Deputy Commissioner if appointed, with the statutory function to ensure the efficient discharge of Commission business including the holding of conferences and making decisions about agency notices under the FRC Act
- monitoring of Commission decisions when made at conference by a panel comprised of three Local Commissioners sitting alone
- the delivery of regular and appropriate training to Local Commissioners and registry staff to perform their statutory duties and achieve the objects of the FRC Act
- the creation of the Compliance and Legal Policy team within the registry to provide advice to the Commissioner and members of the Commission's Executive Management Team (EMT), and drive quality assurance practices.

The Commissioner is required under the FRC Act to monitor all decisions made at conference by a panel constituted entirely by three Local Commissioners to ensure consistency of decision-making. Commissioner Williams, with the assistance of Deputy Commissioner Curtin, does so in several ways.



FRC registry and decision-making functions

Firstly, Local Commissioners can seek legal advice and guidance from the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner prior to determining a matter at conference. Throughout the 2023-24 financial year 864 conferences were presided over and constituted by three Local Commissioners sitting alone, and for 152 of these conferences Local Commissioners sought legal advice and guidance from either the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner (these are deemed ‘Commissioner assisted conferences’ for reporting purposes).

Secondly, following all conferences, the Commissioner conducts a review of every outcome. In this reporting period 71% of decisions were monitored by Commissioner Williams within 28 days of the date of conference.

The FRC remains committed to building the capability of Local Commissioners, so they continue to make reasonable and proportionate decisions reflective of the evolving and often complex needs of community members, their families and broader community expectations and standards of behaviour. The FRC provides regular training and assistance to Local Commissioners to support their ongoing ability to perform their duties as statutory decision-makers.

During the reporting period Commissioner Williams and Deputy Commissioner Curtin delivered training content to Local Commissioners in small groups within their respective communities, on topics relevant to their individual capabilities and requirements. Formal training was also delivered at the annual Local Commissioner Development Week in Cairns. Further details regarding the training provided at the Local Commissioner Development Week can be found on page 86.

It is evident that the training provided by Commissioner Williams and Deputy Commissioner Curtin over the last three years has grown the capability of the Local Commissioners to preside in conference without the need to seek assistance and guidance regarding the matters and decisions before them in conference.

Commissioner assisted conferences	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percentage of three Local Commissioners sitting without the assistance/advice of the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner	16%	45%	72%

Application hearings held to consider changing needs of community members

Each application to amend or end an agreement (including a voluntary agreement) or order follows a transparent process and is considered by the Commissioners on its own merit whilst observing the principles of natural justice. A timely decision on the application is made under the FRC Act pursuant to section 99 for a FRA or order, or section 109 for a voluntary agreement, and may include either agreeing or refusing to amend or end an agreement or order. Alternatively, if the Commissioners deem the application for an FRA or order frivolous or vexatious they may decide to dismiss the application.

FRC registry and decision-making functions



For an application received under section 97 of the FRC Act, if the Commission fails to make a decision within two months of receipt of the application, section 101 of the FRC Act determines that the failure is taken to be a decision by the Commission to refuse to amend or end the FRA or order. For an application to amend or end a voluntary agreement, section 109(2) of the FRC Act states: “The Commissioner must amend or end a voluntary agreement as requested by the person, unless the Commissioner is satisfied the amendment or ending would be detrimental to the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in a welfare reform community area”.

Decisions on amend/end applications for FRAs or orders

Following the decision of the Commission at conference relating to an agency notice, a community member who is the subject of that decision can make an application to the FRC seeking to alter or end the original decision because their circumstances or behaviours have changed. During this reporting period 6 amend/end applications were decided for orders.

Decisions on amend/end applications for voluntary agreements

A person who has entered into a voluntary agreement about VIM with the Commissioner can ask the Commissioner at any time to amend or end the agreement. During this reporting period 19 amend/end applications were decided for VIM agreements.

Timeframe on deciding applications in 2023-24

Number of applications decided in 2023-24	Average number of days to make a decision in 2023-24
6 applications to amend or end a CIM and/or a CCP	12.5 days
19 applications to amend or end a VIM	3.74 days

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.

Timely decision-making with increased client participation

The Commission continued its focus throughout the 2023-24 reporting period on timely decision-making and on encouraging agreements to be made in the first instance (pursuant to sections 46 and 68 of the FRC Act). The efforts of Local Commissioners to encourage clients to have agency in the FRC’s decision-making process cannot be over-estimated. Increased client participation facilitates better outcomes through personal commitment and a shared consideration of a balance of options available to clients.



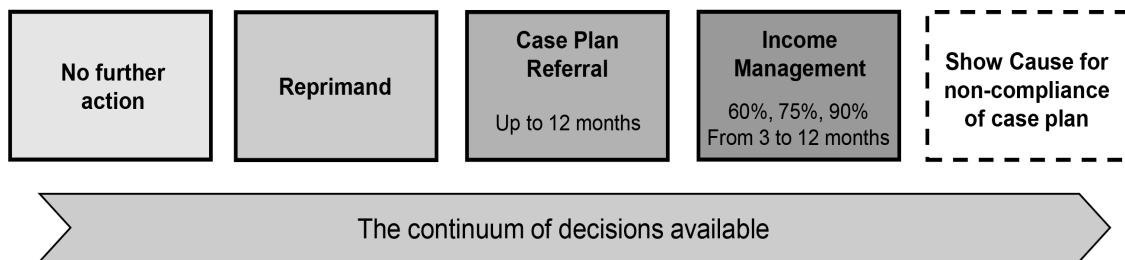
FRC registry and decision-making functions

Conference attendance	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Conference attendance	60.7%	67.0%	65.7%

Additionally in 2023-24, the majority of conferenced agency notices were determined within two conferences (with the client), whilst 88% of clients who were served a notice to attend a conference participated in the FRC's decision-making process by attending at least once.

FRC decisions have a focus on capacity-building and self-determination.

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.

Engagement at conference

As can be seen from the table below, clients continue to assume personal responsibility demonstrating insight regarding their actions at the earliest opportunity (i.e., agreements entered into at conference). As a proportion of all decisions in 2023-24 to attend support services in conference, 74% were by agreement.

Conference outcomes	2022-23	2023-24	% change
Agreements to attend community support services	265	284	+7%
Orders made to attend community support services	147	100	-32%

Further information regarding conference activity and outcomes during the reporting period can be found in the Non-financial performance outcomes section.

FRC registry and decision-making functions



Voluntary engagement – a ‘right fit’ for many who self-refer

The FRC Act sets out a process for voluntary engagement in which a community member can self-refer to the Commission and voluntarily seek help for a referral to a community support service under a VCP or to be subject to VIM.

The continuing rise in the number of clients who have engaged with the FRC on a voluntary basis highlights the increase in community members who are exhibiting a heightened self-awareness of their personal circumstances and are willing to accept assistance from the Commission at the earliest opportunity.

Voluntary income management

VIM agreements are seen as a useful tool to assist community members to manage their budgets and meet the cost of everyday essentials. A number of elderly community members (who have not otherwise been referred to the FRC) are volunteering to have a portion of their welfare payments subjected to income management to help safeguard funds for their own needs and protect from humbugging and/or other elder abuse or violence.

Number of voluntary agreements for VIM	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	% change 2022-23 to 2023-24
Voluntary agreements for VIM	140	118	115	-3%

Number of clients with voluntary agreements for VIM	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	% change 2022-23 to 2023-24
Clients with voluntary agreements for VIM	126	100	104	+4%

As at 30 June 2024 there were 63 clients on a VIM who were claiming Centrelink payments for 74 children of which 43 were of school age.

Voluntary income management and conditional case plans

During conference Local Commissioners focus on reaching an agreement with clients in the first instance whilst explaining the benefits of service referrals, even if only to develop a budget and savings plan to aid in the management of money on the SmartCard.

The Commission is seeing a consistent number of clients who attend conference and, although they may receive a compulsory referral under a CCP from an FRA or order (subject to show cause if required), they may also volunteer to be on a period of income management.



FRC registry and decision-making functions

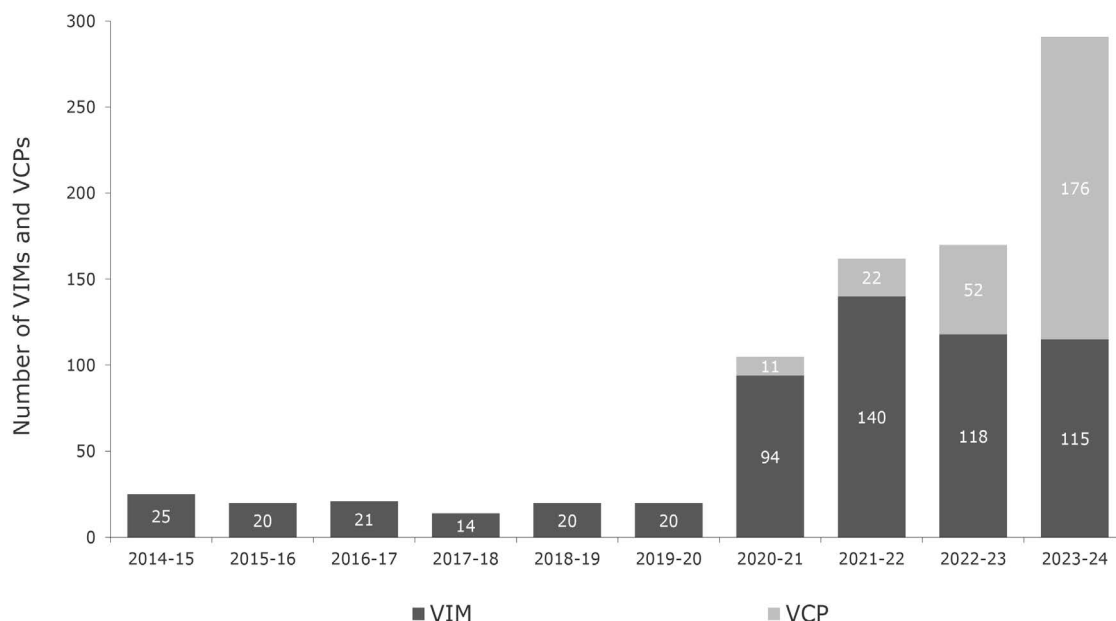
Clients on CCPs, VCPs and VIMs ²	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number of clients on a VIM with a CCP only	51	42	22
Number of clients on a VIM, CCP and VCP only	1	9	15

The Commission is seeing an increase in the number of clients who self-refer without a mandated requirement to attend conference. As can be seen in the next table these clients engage with the FRC on an entirely voluntary basis. The FRC considers these clients to be the best indicator of a community member's willingness to take greater personal responsibility with increased expectations of themselves and their families.

Clients on VCPs and/or VIMs ³	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number of clients on a VIM only	68	26	27
Number of clients on a VIM with a VCP only	4	21	32
Number of clients on a VCP only	9	11	78

As is evident from the following graph and table, the Commission is seeing a continued overall increase in the number of voluntary interactions with clients over the last four financial years.

VIMs and VCPs by Financial Year



Graph 6: Number of VIMs and VCPs by financial year 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2024

- Counts in this table only include clients who had a combination of a VIM and CCP only and VIM, VCP and a CCP only, in other words there has been no CIM issued.
- Counts in this table only include clients who had a VIM or VCP and no CIM or CCP.

FRC registry and decision-making functions



Number of VCPs and VIMs	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of voluntary agreements	20	105	162	170	291

Conditional case plans and conditional income management

Conditional income management alone does not reduce welfare dependency and cannot be expected to rectify the multiple and complex issues of poverty, disempowerment, addiction, child abuse and neglect, violence and offending. The graduated range of FRC decisions provides a system of local authority through which FRC clients can be appropriately encouraged to take up responsibility and access the supports needed to build the capabilities required to break the cycle of disadvantage.

A total of 342 clients were placed on a CCP in 2023-24 either through an FRA or an order to attend community support services. Out of the 342 clients, 92% of these clients (315⁴) were placed on a CCP without a CIM, reflecting the intent of the Local Commissioners decision-making powers to provide avenues for their community members to receive appropriate support to address their behavioural issues.

Clients placed on a CCP without a CIM	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percentage of clients placed on a CCP without a CIM	85%	82%	92%	92%

Referral pathways and case management

Conditional referrals

Commissioners are guided by the FRC Act, sections 4 and 5, to encourage community members to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour and, in doing so, to make appropriate use of community support services. The Commissioners use the referral pathways available in each community to help strengthen clients' resilience to face the challenges they experience, and to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable people.

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, DV or social and emotional health-related issues
- 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 a school
- other appropriate support services.

4. Note the 315 clients on a CCP without a CIM does include 15 clients who were on a CCP, VCP and VIM and 22 clients who were on a CCP and VIM.



FRC registry and decision-making functions

As demonstrated in the table below the Commissioners have continued to make a number of referrals from FRAs and orders.

Number of referrals from FRAs and orders	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Conditional referrals to service providers ⁵	464	499	472

During 2023-24, 342 clients were referred to attend support services under either an FRA or order. The percentage of finalised conferenced clients who were referred increased from 62% in 2022-23 to 67% in 2023-24.

Percentage of finalised conferenced clients referred	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percentage of finalised conferenced clients referred	66%	62%	67%

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/s. 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, under Part 8 of the FRC Act to provide the best support possible for the client. 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.

Voluntary referrals

Under section 106(a) of the FRC Act a community member may ask the Local Registry Coordinator for a welfare reform community area to refer the person to a community support service.

The FRC has seen an increase of 245% in the number of referrals under a VCP from 2022-23. This is indicative of the broader acceptance by community members to undertake personal responsibility.

Number of referrals from VCPs	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Voluntary referrals to service providers ⁵	24	55	190

5. 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 and decision-making functions



Conditional income management – a nuanced approach of ‘last resort’

At conference a decision may be made to issue a client with a CIM order. Due consideration is given 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 CIM in the first instance.

Following conference, the Commission is required by the FRC Act to notify the Secretary of the Department of Social Services (DSS) with details of the CIM, whereby the community member’s welfare payments are income managed by DSS in accordance with the decision of the Commission and remain subject to FRC’s continued jurisdiction. The SmartCard is issued to the community member by Services Australia to reflect the Commission’s CIM under an order or agreement.

The Commissioners use 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 needs. 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. Community members 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. Details of the process available to FRC clients, seeking to end or change their income management status are discussed in the relevant section on pages 34 and 35.

Applications to amend or end agreements or orders

Applications to amend or end an agreement (including a voluntary 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 order by providing their reasons for making the application. Commissioners view the hearing of the applications as an opportunity to engage with clients.

Applications to amend or end received	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Applications to amend or end received	71	35	26

Statistical reporting and analysis of referenced data

Additional statistical reporting and analysis of the data referenced in this chapter can be found at the Commission’s Non-financial performance outcomes section of this report.



Non-financial performance outcomes

The FRC model is designed 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.

The policy context for the FRC is aligned with, and achieves outcomes relevant to, several Queensland Government objectives and initiatives.

The Commission's activities support the broader welfare reforms implemented across Cape York Peninsula since 2008 and the Queensland Government's Objectives for the Community:

Statement of the Queensland Government's objectives for the community

GOOD JOBS



Good, secure jobs in our traditional and emerging industries

- » **Supporting jobs:** Good, secure jobs in more industries to diversify the Queensland economy and build on existing strengths in agriculture, resources and tourism.
- » **Backing small business:** Help small business, the backbone of the state's economy, thrive in a changing environment.
- » **Making it for Queensland:** Grow manufacturing across traditional and new industries, making new products in new ways and creating new jobs.
- » **Investing in skills:** Ensure Queenslanders have the skills they need to find meaningful jobs and set up pathways for the future.

BETTER SERVICES



Deliver even better services right across Queensland

- » **Backing our frontline services:** Deliver world-class frontline services in key areas such as health, education, transport and community safety.
- » **Keeping Queenslanders safe:** Continue to keep Queenslanders safe as we learn to live with COVID-19 and ensure all Queenslanders can access world-class healthcare no matter where they live.
- » **Connecting Queensland:** Drive the economic benefits, improve social outcomes and create greater social inclusion through digital technology and services.
- » **Educating for the future:** Give our children the best start by investing in our teachers and schools.

GREAT LIFESTYLE



Protect and enhance our Queensland lifestyle as we grow

- » **Protecting the environment:** Protect and enhance our natural environment and heritage for future generations and achieve a 70 per cent renewable energy target by 2032 and net zero emissions by 2050.
- » **Growing our regions:** Help Queensland's regions grow by attracting people, talent and investment, and driving sustainable economic prosperity.
- » **Building Queensland:** Drive investment in the infrastructure that supports the State's economy and jobs, builds resilience and underpins future prosperity.
- » **Honouring and embracing our rich and ancient cultural history:** Create opportunities for First Nations Queenslanders to thrive in a modern Queensland.

Non-financial performance outcomes



The Commission delivers services to five communities, all of which are culturally unique and some of which are geographically remote. Each community is different, yet 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 individuals and their families who have complex needs.

In meeting this challenge, the Commission works with community-based service providers and partner agencies with statutory requirements under the FRC Act¹ and the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA) as part of a linked service system to achieve individualised client outcomes.

In doing so the FRC complements several Queensland Government strategies and reforms such as:

- ***'Our Way' strategy and 'Breaking Cycles' action plan*** – to build upon existing initiatives such as the FRC to ensure Indigenous children grow up in a safe and nurturing environment and address the over-representation of Indigenous children in Queensland's child protection system. A detailed analysis of the alignment between the *'Our Way'* strategy and the FRC Act can be found at Appendix B.
- ***'Path to Treaty'*** – the Path to Treaty is a shared journey between the Queensland Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people – a key reform with the ultimate goal of negotiating a treaty, or treaties. The principle of Indigenous local authority is a cornerstone of the FRC model and is a primary example of true self-determination by Aboriginal people as decision-makers, supporting their community members to overcome life challenges and become primarily responsible for their own wellbeing.
- ***'Local Thriving Communities' reform*** – reframing and reforming how the Queensland Government works with Indigenous communities to deliver better outcomes through the establishment and continued operations of the FRC (with locally appointed decision-makers) after extensive consultation with each of the five welfare reform community areas.
- ***'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 FRC's annual budget (the reader is referred to page 90) allocates 69% to frontline operations, with the chief purpose of facilitating conferences and hearings in remote Aboriginal communities and undertaking ongoing case management of clients in collaboration with local service providers. This expenditure directly benefits local and regional economies and is consistent with the objectives of both the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy.

1. Department of Education, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Department of Housing, Department of Justice and Attorney-General (Queensland Courts) and the Queensland Police Service.



Non-financial performance outcomes

The FRC's performance and activity data show linkages between client outcomes and the FRC's strategic objectives and indicators.

The following statistical report and analysis of the Commission's non-financial performance outcomes is for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. This data, additional to the statistical information cited elsewhere in this report, is used by the FRC's EMT to monitor the organisation's progress in achieving the main objectives of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

The FRC knows its clients and communities.

From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, the Commission received a total of 7,546 agency notices across a range of notifiable behaviours of which 5,067 notices relating to 1,186 clients were within jurisdiction, comprising:

Table 1: In jurisdiction notices by type and community 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Type of notice	AU	CO	DM ²	HV	MG	Total
Supreme Court	0	0	0	0	0	0
District Court	24	1	0	0	4	29
Magistrates Court	1,203	46	0	226	42	1,517
Domestic Violence Breach	63	6	0	37	12	118
Domestic Violence Order	125	14	0	65	17	221
School Attendance	785	59	1,297	533	103	2,777
School Enrolment	1	0	1	6	0	8
Child Safety and Welfare						
Child Concern Reports	113	12	126	61	7	319
Finalised Child Protection Investigations	37	0	2	23	4	66
Housing Tenancy	9	0	0	1	2	12
Total	2,360	138	1,426	952	191	5,067

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

- Aurukun (AU) received 2,360 notices relating to 489 clients (266 female and 223 male)
- Coen (CO) received 138 notices relating to 52 clients (25 female and 27 male)
- Doomadgee (DM) received 1,426 notices relating to 312 clients (218 female and 94 male)
- Hope Vale (HV) received 952 notices relating to 281 clients (144 female and 137 male)
- Mossman Gorge (MG) received 191 notices relating to 52 clients (29 female and 23 male).

2. Agency notices for the community of Doomadgee are presently received from the Department of Education and the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services only.

Non-financial performance outcomes



Table 2: In jurisdiction notices by type and quarter 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Type of notice	Qtr 61	Qtr 62	Qtr 63	Qtr 64	Total
Supreme Court	0	0	0	0	0
District Court	2	10	1	16	29
Magistrates Court	432	378	322	385	1,517
Domestic Violence Breach	47	29	21	21	118
Domestic Violence Order	51	63	57	50	221
School Attendance	745	693	619	720	2,777
School Enrolment	1	0	1	6	8
Child Safety and Welfare	150	93	65	77	385
Housing Tenancy	6	0	1	5	12
Total	1,434	1,266	1,087	1,280	5,067

Table 3: In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Number of notices	Qtr 61	Qtr 62	Qtr 63	Qtr 64	Total
Aurukun	577	606	543	634	2,360
Coen	68	22	22	26	138
Doomadgee	407	345	313	361	1,426
Hope Vale	317	246	176	213	952
Mossman Gorge	65	47	33	46	191
Total	1,434	1,266	1,087	1,280	5,067

Our clients have complex needs.

Over-crowded housing, high rates of Indigenous welfare dependency and multi-generational poverty have resulted in communities with high numbers of individuals and families with complex needs. Table 4 provides some insight into the complexity of the issues faced by many clients. During the financial year 815 clients (69%) were notified to the Commission with only one type of notice, whilst the remaining 371 clients (31%) received more than one type of notice.

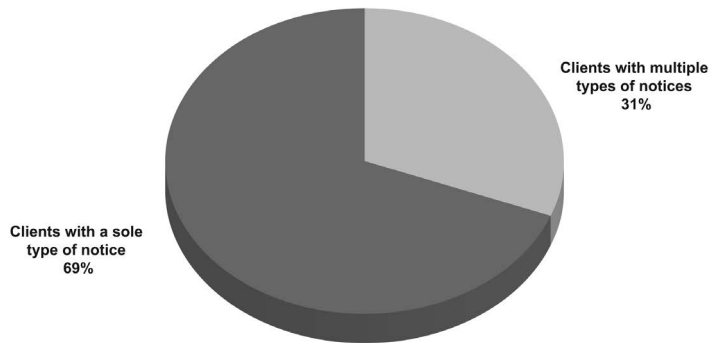


Non-financial performance outcomes

Table 4: FRC clients by the number of types of notices 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Number of types of notices received	Number of clients
1	815
2	280
3	71
4	19
5	1
Total	1,186

Client Allocation Based on Single and Multiple Types of Notices 2023-24



Graph 7: Client allocation based on single and multiple types of notices 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Analysis reveals the following information regarding the types of sole notices received by FRC clients during the reporting period:

- 35% received a school attendance (EQ) notice
- 18% received a Magistrates Court (MAG) notice
- 9% received a child safety and welfare (CS) notice
- 5% received a domestic violence order (DVO) notice
- 1% received a domestic violence breach (DVB) notice and
- 1% received a District Court (DIS) notice.

The remaining sole notices received for Commission clients were 1 client with a school enrolment breach (SEN) notice and 5 clients with a housing tenancy breach (HT) notice.

Additional insight into the complexity of issues faced by clients can be seen in the following table which shows the combination of notices received for the 371 clients with more than one type of notice. One can see that predominantly there is a nexus between court convictions and domestic violence orders/breaches with education notices and child safety issues, and also a strong nexus between child safety issues and education notices.

Non-financial performance outcomes



Table 5: FRC clients by number of types of notices 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

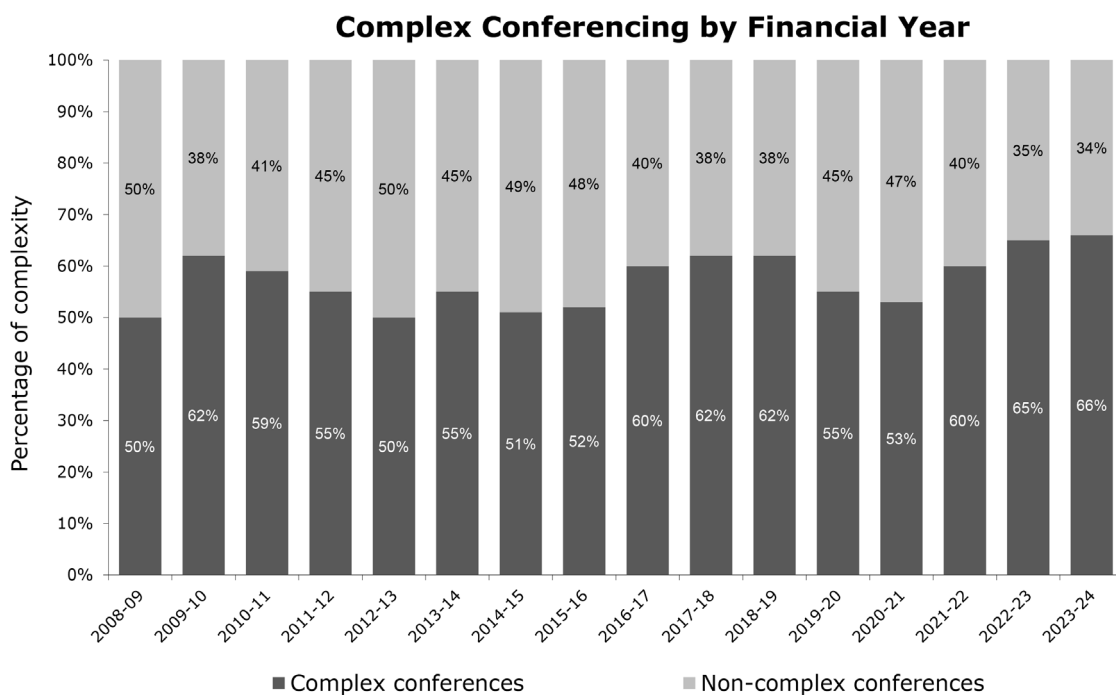
Type of notice/s ³	Number of clients	Type of notice/s ³	Number of clients
CS,DIS,DVB,DVO,MAG	1	DIS,DVO,MAG	1
CS,DIS,DVO	1	DIS,MAG	1
CS,DVB,DVO	2	DVB,DVO	5
CS,DVB,DVO,EQ	2	DVB,DVO,EQ	1
CS,DVB,DVO,MAG	3	DVB,DVO,EQ,MAG	4
CS,DVB,EQ,MAG	3	DVB,DVO,MAG	14
CS,DVB,MAG	5	DVB,DVO,MAG,SEN	1
CS,DVO	10	DVB,EQ,MAG	4
CS,DVO,EQ	3	DVB,MAG	24
CS,DVO,EQ,MAG	5	DVO,EQ	5
CS,DVO,MAG	10	DVO,EQ,MAG	7
CS,EQ	92	DVO,HT,MAG	2
CS,EQ,MAG	16	DVO,MAG	51
CS,EQ,MAG,SEN	1	EQ,HT	1
CS,EQ,SEN	1	EQ,HT,MAG	1
CS,HT	1	EQ,MAG	54
CS,MAG	30	EQ,MAG,SEN	2
DIS,DVB	2	EQ,SEN	2
DIS,DVB,MAG	1	HT,MAG	1
DIS,DVO	1		
Total			371

3. Descriptions for each type of notice acronym can be found in the glossary.



Non-financial performance outcomes

Most FRC conferences respond to high levels of complexity in terms of client needs. The FRC is primarily dealing with clients who suffer multiple and entrenched forms of disadvantage. There exists within this cohort clients who experience extreme complex disadvantage and are also unable or reluctant to seek support. In addition to the substantial work and preparation undertaken before every conference, the most complex matters represent a further 'step up' in the related workload. Conferencing such clients makes higher demands of the FRC to respond. The FRC has experienced an increase in the percentage of conferences conducted that are considered complex (whether it is multiple notices of the same type or multiple types of different notices) over the last three financial years.



Graph 8: Complex conferencing by financial year

The FRC improves community wellbeing by supporting the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour.

The FRC uses conferences as a forum to discuss with clients the issues outlined in an agency notice/s. Conferences are held in a manner which facilitates early intervention and encourages clients to take personal responsibility for their actions. From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 a total of 984 conferences were held relating to 553 clients.

Non-financial performance outcomes



Table 6: Conferences by community and quarter 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Conferences	Qtr 61	Qtr 62	Qtr 63	Qtr 64	Total
Aurukun	88	122	92	85	387
Coen	8	7	9	9	33
Doomadgee	88	115	78	74	355
Hope Vale	31	51	57	26	165
Mossman Gorge	13	16	8	7	44
Total	228	311	244	201	984

Conferences during the financial year resulted in 284 agreements to attend community support services (an increase of 7% from 2022-23), 100 orders made to attend community support services (a decrease of 32% from the previous reporting period) and 54 CIM orders issued (a 16% decrease from the previous reporting period). As a subset of the total number of conferences conducted for the financial year, 210 DV-related conferences were conducted in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge, a decrease of 17% from 2022-23.

Clients on conditional income management

From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, there was a total of 54 CIMs (a decrease of 16% from 64 CIMs in 2022-23) relating to 54 clients.

As at 30 June 2024, there were 13 clients subject to a CIM with 54% at 75 percent and 92% for a 6 month duration. As a subset of the total number of CIMs in the financial year, 8 CIMs were made at conference in relation to DV notifying behaviours.

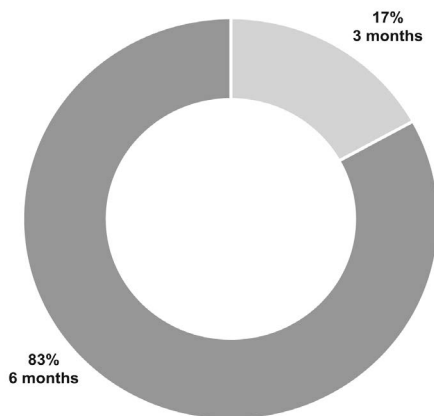
The statistical information provided in graphs 9 and 10 demonstrates the FRC's continued use of CIM is proportionate to the client's circumstances and that CIM is used to encourage personal responsibility with terms and percentages of CIM orders and agreements adjusted according to the client's progress or lack thereof. During the 2023-24 reporting period, 37% of CIM orders and agreements quarantined 60 percent, 41% of CIM orders and agreements quarantined 75 percent and 22% of CIM orders and agreements quarantined 90 percent of a client's welfare payment. During the same period 83% were for a period of 6 months.



Non-financial performance outcomes

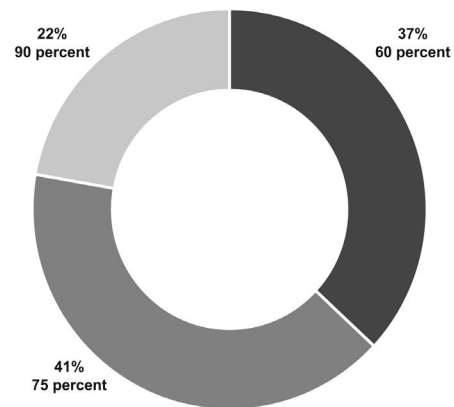
The Commission processed the 54 CIMs issued in 2023-24 as follows:

CIM Duration



Graph 9: Breakdown of SmartCard CIMs by duration 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

CIM Percentage



Graph 10: Breakdown of SmartCard CIMs by percentage 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

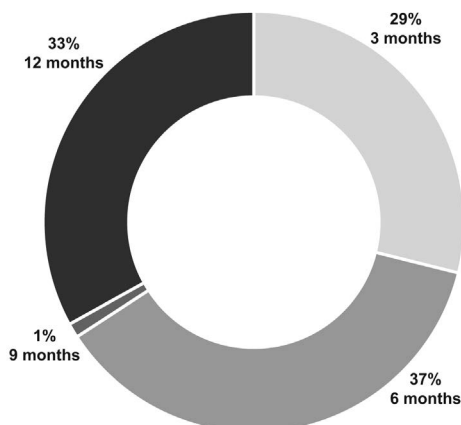
Clients on voluntary income management

The Commission processed 115 VIM agreements (a decrease of 3% from the 118 VIMs in 2022-23) for 104 clients (an increase of 4% from the 100 clients in 2022-23).

Since the commencement of the Commission, 397 clients (256 female and 141 male) have had an active VIM agreement. As at 30 June 2024, there were 63 clients on a VIM, with 81% at 60 percent and 33% for a 6 month duration and 52% for a 12 month duration.

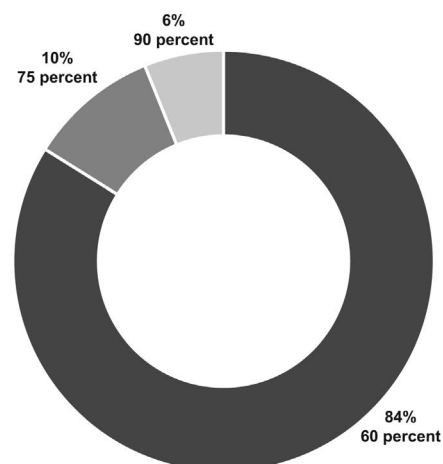
During the 2023-24 reporting period, 84% of VIMs quarantined 60 percent of a client's welfare payment. During the same period, 29% were for a period of 3 months, 37% were for a period of 6 months, 1% were for a period of 9 months and 33% were for a period of 12 months.

VIM Duration



Graph 11: Breakdown of SmartCard VIMs by duration 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

VIM Percentage



Graph 12: Breakdown of SmartCard VIMs by percentage 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Non-financial performance outcomes

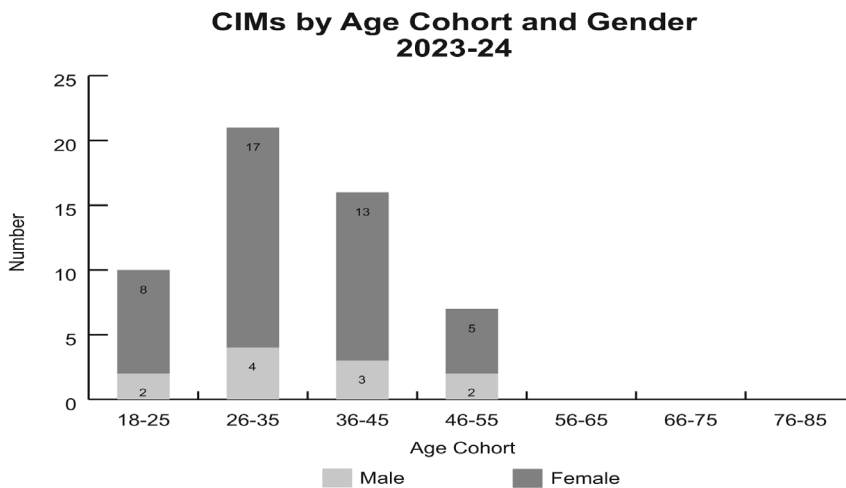


Conditional and voluntary income management age and gender breakdown

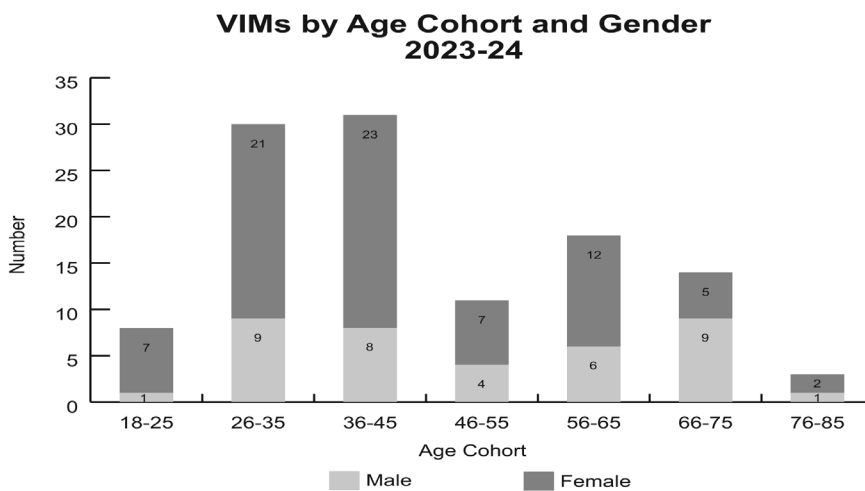
During 2023-24 most community members conditionally income managed by the FRC were in the 26-35 year age group, and females accounted for 80% of all the CIM orders and agreements. No community members older than 55 years were conditionally income-managed by the FRC during the financial year. For the 43 CIMs relating to females, 88% related to children in some way, whether it was for a notice regarding school attendance or school non-enrolment, or for a notice regarding child safety and welfare. For the 11 CIMs relating to males, 45% related to children in some way. These figures correlate to the often-female role of caregiver in the family structure.

The age ranges of clients exercising the option for VIM spanned all age cohorts from 18 to 85. Again, females represented the majority of all VIM agreements at 67%.

Graph 13: Breakdown of SmartCard CIMs by age cohort and gender 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024



Graph 14: Breakdown of SmartCard VIMs by age cohort and gender 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

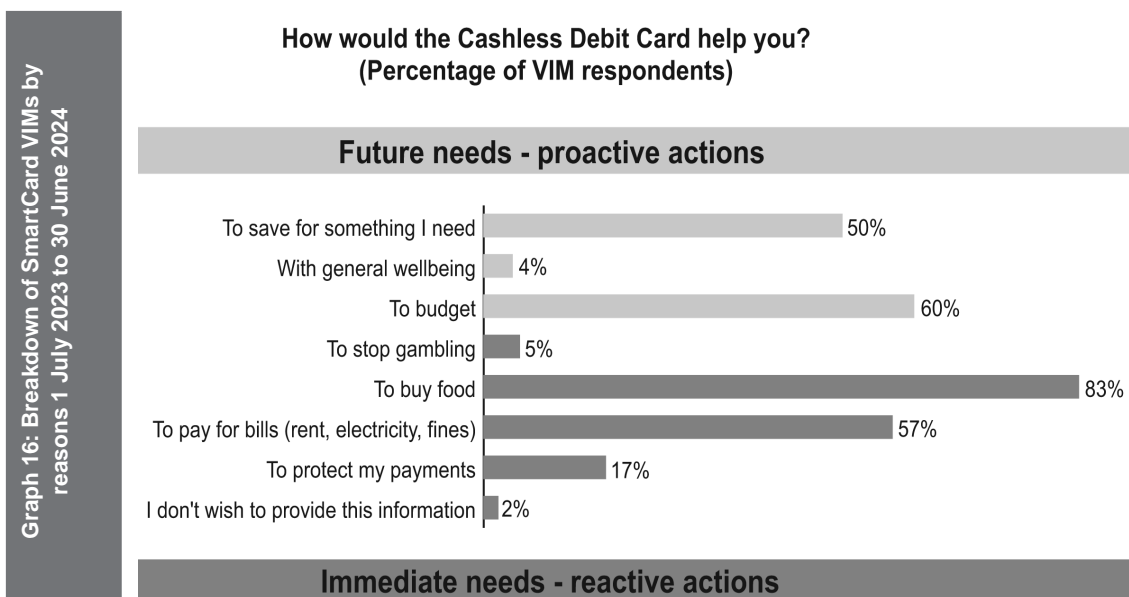
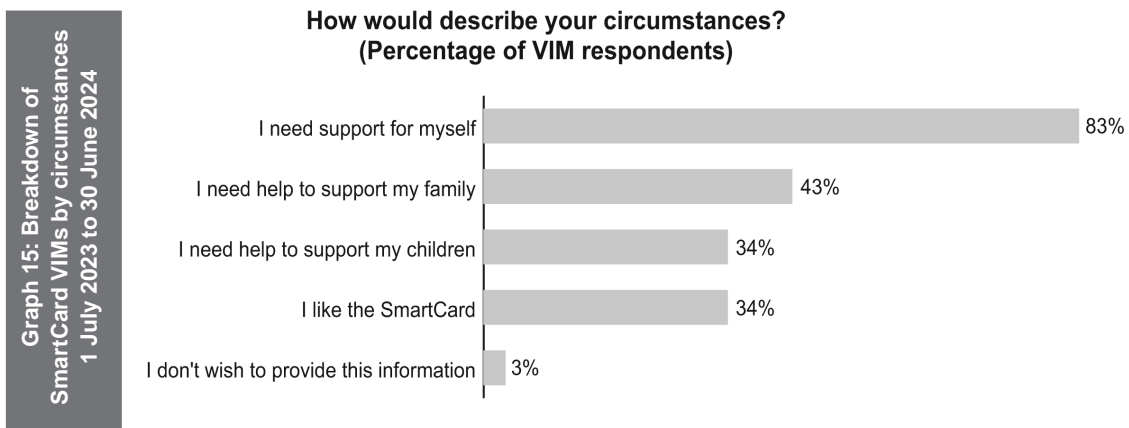




Non-financial performance outcomes

Voluntary income management respondent reasons⁴

Since the introduction of the CDC and its replacement, the SmartCard, the FRC has recorded the reasons and circumstances of those requesting a VIM. During 2023-24 the primary reasons for applying for a VIM (reactive perspective) were to address the immediate need of buying food (83%) and to pay for bills (57%). The primary reasons for applying for a VIM from a proactive perspective were to set up a budget (60%) and save for something the client needed, e.g. a fridge or washing machine (50%). Circumstances given by the VIM participants when applying for the card were primarily to support themselves (83%), followed by the need to support their family (43%) and the need to support their children (34%).



4. A client may choose one or more options to reflect their individual reasons and circumstances in participating in voluntary income management and therefore the percentage is derived by using the number of VIM agreements as the divisor.

Non-financial performance outcomes



The FRC improves community responsibility by building partnerships and helping people to resume primary responsibility.

Referrals help build individual client capabilities.

Referrals to service providers are an integral part of achieving the Commission's strategic outcomes of improved community wellbeing and responsibility.

During 2023-24 a grand total of 662 referrals were put in place (inclusive of referrals from FRAs, orders and VCPs) relating to 454 clients.

As a subset of the above, during this reporting period 472 referrals were made (inclusive of FRAs and orders) to attend support services for 342 clients.

Table 7: FRC conditional referral pathways by referral type and quarter 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Referral type	Qtr 61	Qtr 62	Qtr 63	Qtr 64	Total
Aurukun Mediation	1	0	0	0	1
Cape Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Services	0	0	1	0	1
Cape York Employment	1	1	1	0	3
Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation	2	2	5	2	11
Cooktown District Community Centre	0	10	4	1	15
Gungarde (Family Wellbeing Services)	1	3	1	0	5
Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation	0	1	0	0	1
Mossman Elders Justice Group	0	3	2	1	6
MPower	17	22	11	11	61
My Pathways	1	3	1	0	5
Police-Citizens Youth Club	0	1	0	1	2
QLD Health	2	2	1	1	6
RAATSICC (Family Wellbeing Services)	1	8	9	1	19
54 Reasons/Save the Children	6	11	6	4	27
School Attendance Officer	26	31	14	30	101
School Re-Engagement Program	0	1	0	0	1
Wellbeing Centre - Apunipima	33	63	58	44	198
Wellbeing Centre - NWRH	1	5	0	2	8
Wuchopperen Health Service Ltd.	0	0	1	0	1
Total	92	167	115	98	472

The number of referrals from FRAs and orders for the financial year represents a slight decrease of 5% from the previous reporting period of 499 referrals. As a subset of the total number of these referrals, 142 referrals were made in relation to DV conferences.



Non-financial performance outcomes

A further 190 voluntary referrals (an increase of 245% from the 55 reported in 2022-23) to attend support services were requested from 152 clients.

Table 8: FRC voluntary referral pathways by referral type and quarter 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Referral type	Qtr 61	Qtr 62	Qtr 63	Qtr 64	Total
Cape York Employment	0	0	0	1	1
Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation	0	3	1	1	5
Cooktown District Community Centre	0	2	4	14	20
Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation	0	0	4	1	5
Mossman Elders Justice Group	0	1	4	0	5
MPower	11	18	16	10	55
My Pathways	0	0	1	0	1
QLD Health	0	0	3	0	3
54 Reasons/Save the Children	1	0	0	0	1
School Attendance Officer	5	4	8	15	32
Wellbeing Centre - Apunipima	10	8	25	19	62
Total	27	36	66	61	190

Show Cause hearings are another tool available to hold clients accountable.

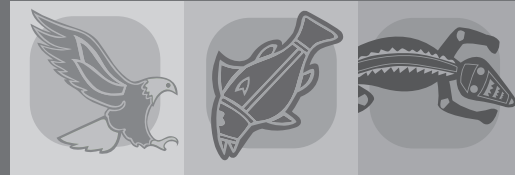
From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 no Show Cause hearings were held. These hearings are intended by the FRC Act to be a formal mechanism to address non-compliance with a requirement under a case plan to attend a community support service.

Similar to the 2022-23 reporting period, no clients were issued with a Show Cause notice to come before the Commission for non-compliance of their case plan/s due to the following:

- limitations on availability of support services on the ground
- capacity of support services to accept and deal with the existing number of referrals from the FRC
- lack of confirmation from support services in some cases that client engagement has been attempted
- limited, (or no) information from which to proceed on a Show Cause for non-compliance
- ability to implement a CIM order at 90% to address non-compliance.

The need to conduct Show Cause assessments has also been diverted as a result of the number of clients demonstrating proactive steps to take personal accountability for their actions and commit to a journey towards self-improvement. This is demonstrated by clients entering into agreements to willingly accept referrals and be placed on a case plan, along with those self-referring community members seeking to voluntarily participate in income management and voluntary referrals.

Non-financial performance outcomes



Applications to amend/end agreements or orders

From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, 26 applications relating to 24 clients (19 females and 5 males) to amend or end an agreement (including a voluntary agreement) or order were received. Where an amend/end application is received at the end of a financial year the decision on the application may take place in the following financial year.

Table 9: Applications to amend or end agreements or orders by community and quarter 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Number of applications	Qtr 61	Qtr 62	Qtr 63	Qtr 64	Total
Aurukun	2	2	3	6	13
Coen	1	2	0	0	3
Doomadgee	0	0	0	1	1
Hope Vale	2	3	3	0	8
Mossman Gorge	1	0	0	0	1
Total	6	7	6	7	26

Application decisions

From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, a total of 25 applications were decided:

- 6 applications for FRAs and orders
- 19 applications for VIMs.

Out of the 25 decisions made, 92% (23) of all applications were granted, whilst 2 were refused because the statutory requirements were not met.

Accepted applications to amend or end FRAs or orders were as follows:

- 3 CIM orders ended
- 2 CIM orders amended
- 1 CIM order and CCP ended.

Accepted applications to amend or end VIM agreements were as follows:

- 14 VIM agreements ended
- 1 VIM agreement amended from 60 percent to 90 percent for the remaining period of the existing agreement
- 1 VIM agreement amended from 60 percent to 75 percent for the remaining period of the existing agreement
- 1 VIM agreement amended from 90 percent to 60 percent for the remaining period of the existing agreement.



Community operations Aurukun

FRC operations in Aurukun were undertaken by Local Commissioners Edgar Kerindun, Doris Poonkamelya, Ada Woolla, Dorothy Pootchemunka, Vera Koomeeta, Keri Tamwoy and Dereck Walpo, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Cara Marks. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.

Aurukun Commissioners' report

Each year we strive to bring positive changes to the lives of our community members in Aurukun. Our goal is to preserve our strong culture and support our youth in becoming the leaders of tomorrow. This crucial work requires dedication and perseverance as we continually strive for the quality of life our community deserves. We have adapted our methods to achieve meaningful results for the people of Aurukun. Collaborating with agencies, local council, police, Aurukun State School and health services enables us to engage with families early on and provide support through our Client Engagement (CE) approach. CE has become a cornerstone of our work, alongside conference. The community's increasing willingness to engage with us reinforces our determination to continue this important work.

Significant achievements

- The number of family responsibilities agreements entered into by clients to attend support services continued to increase from 155 in 2022-23 to 177 in 2023-24. This is a positive indication that clients acknowledge that change is required to improve their circumstances and those of their children.
- Voluntary agreements for a voluntary case plan increased by 392%, from 12 in 2022-23 to 59 in 2023-24.
- The increase in voluntary agreements can, in part, be attributed to our new CE approach. Since we have started to collect data, between January to June 2024, we have undertaken 267 client engagement activities outside of conference.

Challenges

Aurukun State School

Our collaboration with the Aurukun State School through the Elevated School Response (ESR) strategy aims to enhance student engagement and attendance. However, the school has faced significant challenges over the past 12 months due to a severe shortage of teachers. At times the school has operated with up to ten teachers fewer than required, impacting the educational opportunities available to our children.

Community operations Aurukun



The consistent shortfall in teacher numbers has created substantial gaps in education delivery which is a significant concern for the future of our students. On top of classroom responsibilities teachers are also taking on additional roles, such as driving school buses, to ensure students are collected for school. This is indicative of their dedication but also highlights the extent of the support needed. Several students who are children of our clients have been identified with learning difficulties requiring extra support. The current teacher shortage makes it difficult to provide these students with the support they need.

We deeply respect and admire each teacher who has joined our community to share their knowledge and skills with our children. Their commitment and efforts to cover the shortfall and go beyond their teaching duties are truly commendable. It is for this reason we urge the government to take immediate action to address these pressing issues and resolve the teacher shortage at the Aurukun State School.

Domestic Violence

The Aurukun community faces high rates of domestic violence. Our work involves engaging with perpetrators, victims and their families, to address and reduce the prevalence of this significant issue. However, there are critical gaps in support systems available to our community.

- Currently there is no perpetrator program in Aurukun for us to refer clients to. This absence severely limits our ability to intervene and effectively support behavioural change among perpetrators.
- Men in our community do not have access to a Men's Shed or any dedicated space where they can seek respite from overcrowded family homes. This lack of private space contributes to stress and can exacerbate domestic tensions.
- To truly make a difference we also need culturally appropriate programs to address the root causes of domestic violence and provide support in ways that are meaningful for community members. We believe access to such programs could significantly improve the lives of the people in Aurukun, fostering a safer more supportive environment for everyone.
- It is distressing to witness our community members engaging in harmful behaviours and facing incarceration. We firmly believe the number of incarcerations could be reduced if programs to support and educate perpetrators were available. An "On Country" program which integrates our cultural practices and provides practical support is essential for meaningful change.

Alcohol in community

The pervasive presence of alcohol in Aurukun has had a profoundly negative impact contributing to a range of social, health, and economic issues. Additionally, there is a significant lack of referral pathways for those drinking excessively making it challenging for the FRC to find appropriate support and interventions. Our police work tirelessly to prevent alcohol being brought into the community, yet it continues to find a way in. Addressing alcohol abuse through culturally sensitive prevention and rehabilitation programs is essential to mitigating its detrimental effects and promoting a healthier, more resilient community.



Community operations Aurukun

Other community matters

Aurukun State School Awards – November 2023

Each year Aurukun State School celebrates its achievements with a vibrant awards ceremony, where we present awards to top attenders across various year levels. The 2023 Wik Awards, a highlight of the school calendar, occurred on 29 November 2023.

Elders and community members captivated attendees with a display of traditional Wik dance. Amidst the festivities, a tribute was paid to those returning to the Aurukun community from boarding schools, after graduating from Year 12, underscoring the school's commitment to nurturing a student's journey to success. Then Aurukun Mayor, Keri Tamwoy, expressed her wish for every student to reach the pinnacle of their educational journey. Local Commissioners Doris Poonkamelya, Dereck Walpo, and Edgar Kerindun rewarded students with FRC medals. The evening finished with a delightful surprise: a video featuring teachers and staff in a "Tik Tok" style compilation, eliciting laughter and cheers from the children. The enduring partnership between the Local Commissioners and the school was evident, as they proudly reaffirmed their commitment to fostering excellence within the Aurukun community.

The next 12 months

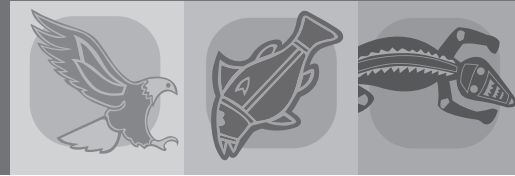
As we look forward to the next 12 months our commitment to the Aurukun community remains unwavering despite the inevitable challenges of our advancing ages. Our goal is to strengthen our team through the recruitment of new, younger Local Commissioners, thereby enhancing our capacity to make a meaningful impact. This infusion of new members will provide the FRC with fresh perspectives and the strength needed to continue this vital work.

Through the ongoing CE approach supporting our clients outside of conference, we will continue to assist community members with the incremental changes that our people are ready to make. Over the past 12 months we have observed positive changes attributed to our evolving approach, with more individuals than ever before seeking our help.

Focus areas for the upcoming year:

- Our focus on education remains unchanged. We will work diligently with the children of Aurukun to ensure consistent school attendance and support their educational journey from their early years through to the achievement of their Year 12 certificate.
- We will continue to encourage and support employment opportunities for our people, helping them to achieve their personal and professional goals.
- We are committed to continuing to support our people within the justice system. Our efforts will focus on reducing incarceration rates and alleviating the financial burden associated with the legal process.

In the coming year we will build on the progress made, drawing on the strengths of our team of Local Commissioners. Our commitment to education, employment and justice system support remains steadfast. By continuing to engage with the community and adapting our approaches we are confident in our ability to foster positive change and enhance the wellbeing of Aurukun community members.



FRC operations in Coen were undertaken by Local Commissioners May Kepple, Elaine Liddy, Alison Liddy, Maureen Liddy, Ramana Walker and Naomi Hobson, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Kate Gooding. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.

Coen Commissioners' report

Last year we sadly reported on needing to change our strategy to allow us to continue to engage with our clients through the waves of sorry business affecting our community at the time. Many conferences needed to be postponed and, recognising it was important for us to continue to work with vulnerable community members, we had to adopt a completely different approach outside of the formal conferencing environment. This year we are proud and delighted to report on the successes and positive outcomes achieved through that innovative approach, so much so, that for us, it has developed into a whole new way of working, through Client Engagement (CE) outside of conference. This approach has been widely accepted by community members with the majority of clients seeking support opting into voluntary agreements for both case plan referrals and voluntary income management.

Significant achievements

- Voluntary agreements for voluntary case plans continued to provide a pathway to access support services through the CE approach with 31 agreements signed in 2023-24, an increase of 11% from 2022-23.
- There was also a corresponding increase in voluntary referrals from voluntary case plans increasing from 30 in 2022-23 to 40 in 2023-24, an increase of 33%.
- Voluntary agreements for voluntary income management remained consistent through the CE approach with 25 agreements signed in 2023-24, the same number as in 2022-23.
- Conference attendance rose to 87.9% this year, topping the previously recorded highest ever conference attendance of 75.9%.
- Two new Local Commissioners for Coen, Ms Naomi Hobson and Ms Ramana Walker, commenced appointment to the Commission on 1 July 2023.

Challenges

Local Commissioner availability

Although we have seen success in our new approach to CE, it has been a challenging phase to keep a consistent panel of Local Commissioners for the higher-level matters that require a formal conference setting. The challenge is due to the very sad and ongoing sorry business that has affected our community, as well as our employment commitments where many of us have other significant leadership roles in the community. We are finding priorities in our usual employment and our roles as Local Commissioners, are often clashing. We would like to see more Local Commissioners join the FRC to support our work in Coen. We value gender diversity, but our conferencing panel currently consists of all female Commissioners. It is important that we find male leaders to join our team, so we can best support the needs of our male clients in a culturally appropriate and inclusive manner.



Community operations Coen

Other community matters

School attendance

The Coen Campus of Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) end of year School Awards event was held on Thursday 30 November 2023. FRC Local Commissioners Elaine Liddy and Ramana Walker attended the event and assisted in presenting the school awards. The FRC contributed 16 awards for students with over 90 per cent school attendance, and a further 10 awards for students with the most improved school attendance. CYAAA Coen Principal Ben Foran finished in the role at the end of Term 2 2024, with recruitment taking place during Term 3. We may see the unintentional disruption having an effect on attendance for the upcoming term.

Voluntary engagements

The focus on CE outside of the conference setting has resulted in a high number of positive interactions between the FRC and clients. This has resulted in a total of 55 client engagement activities outside of conference, resulting in the signing of 25 voluntary agreements for voluntary income management and 31 voluntary agreements for voluntary case plan referrals. These are very high levels of engagement for a community of Coen's size. This outcome can be equally attributed to the willingness of our clients to assume personal responsibility and self-determination over their own lives, and their trust and respect for our role as Local Commissioners, built up over many years of hard work, and maintaining our high professional standards and conduct.

Inter-agency collaboration

There is no doubt that the successes the FRC can report on in Coen are bolstered by the positive working relationship between the Commission and other local agencies and the collaborative relationship that exists between all stakeholders. We believe that the way the various groups come together through regular inter-agency collaboration with a shared vision sets an example of what can be achieved when forces combine to work together toward a common goal.

The next 12 months

We will continue to build on our successes engaging community members in a voluntary capacity as our Local Commissioner role evolves to increasingly support clients outside of conference. We believe personal responsibility is the best way forward for positive behaviour change and voluntary engagement is the best indicator of a person's willingness to take that step.

As our voluntary engagements and resulting voluntary referrals increase, so too does the need for additional support services. The capacity of existing service providers does not match the current demand for services. As in previous years we call for additional services in the areas of mental health, domestic and family violence and children and youth support services.

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.



Community operations Hope Vale

FRC operations in Hope Vale were undertaken by Local Commissioners, Priscilla Gibson, Doreen Hart, Erica Deeral, Cheryl Cannon, Selina Kerr-Bowen, Dora Gibson and Robert Gibson, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Josephine Pinder. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.

Hope Vale Commissioners' report

In commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Family Responsibilities Commission's operations in the Welfare Reform Communities in 2023, we found ourselves along with the Hope Local Registry Coordinator not only reflecting on past achievements but also charting a course for future endeavours. Energised by a renewed sense of purpose we resolved to uphold and expand upon the transformative work already underway within the community.

Significant achievements

- The number of family responsibilities agreements entered into during conference remained steady at 30. This number is significant as it is consistent with the 33 family responsibilities agreements entered into in 2022-23 despite the number of conferences held decreasing from 196 in 2022-23 to 165 in 2023-24.
- The number of voluntary agreements to attend a support service signed outside of the conference setting has increased by 238% from 8 in 2022-23 to 27 in 2023-24. The number of voluntary income management agreements entered into outside of the conference setting remained steady with 19 agreements entered into relating to 19 clients.
- We believe the number of voluntary agreements for case plans and voluntary income management are the result of our hard work engaging with clients outside of the conference setting. We have recorded 122 client engagement activities.

Elevated School Response

In previous years it was recognised that students were not adequately prepared to start school by week 1 of Term 1 and needed support to transition into the new academic year. Our Elevated School Response (ESR) strategy involved an early outreach to families at the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024 to assist with pre-term preparation.

Referrals to the Cooktown District Community Centre pre-readiness program for parents with children aged 0-5-year-olds significantly supported the enrolment process, orientation and transition to kindergarten or Prep for both parents and children alike. The program offered guidance and support to navigate through paperwork, deadlines and requirements, easing the stress of enrolment.

Providing comprehensive support to parents and children during the critical transition period to kindergarten or Prep, empowers parents with the knowledge and skills to better support their child's educational journey and contributes to a smoother and more successful start to formal education.



Challenges

Domestic and family violence

In the 2023-24 reporting period the FRC in Hope Vale received 65 Domestic Violence Order notices and 37 Domestic Violence Breach notices. This resulted in us holding 53 conferences to deal with these matters, with 26 referrals made to support services including the Wellbeing Centre, Cooktown District Community Centre, MPower and My Pathway.

Over the years we have seen the devastating impacts of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) throughout our families and community. It needs a whole-of community response. The Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council has partnered with Work Haven to develop a DFV Action Plan as part of the Local Thriving Communities Program.

The FRC in Hope Vale participated in a series of consultations to inform the development of the Action Plan. Our work as Local Commissioners provides us with a unique insight into the prevalence of DV in our community. We were able to share these learnings and help shape the strategies needed in the local Action Plan, whilst identifying the infrastructure required to support victims and perpetrators.

Disengaged young people

Long-term disengaged students remain a concern. This has led to an increase in referrals we made to service providers to address this issue. In 2023-24, 13 voluntary referrals and 5 conditional referrals were made to support clients and their families to address underlying causal factors leading to their children's disengagement from the school system.

When we had the opportunity to meet the Assistant Minister for Clean Economy Jobs, Shane King MP and Government Champion Mike Kaiser during their recent visit to Hope Vale, we used it as an opportunity to raise this issue. When chronically disengaged students are not attending school, they are often roaming the streets instead. One idea raised was for the establishment of a transition hub in Hope Vale to serve as a supportive environment to help these children catch up on their schoolwork and aid their transition back into the classroom.

We also used the opportunity to again advocate for the reinstating of the Childrens Court trigger. Our inability to use this trigger for the past eight years has severely impacted our ability to deal with youth in our community. By drawing attention to the types of offences being committed by young people, we emphasised to our visitors the need for targeted interventions and support systems that can effectively address the root causes of youth crime.

Addressing the needs of long-term disengaged school students, and those that go onto offend, requires a multifaceted approach. There must be ongoing collaboration between educators, families and support services to provide targeted interventions for at risk students and foster a positive school environment that promotes engagement. This will remain a focus of ours into the next reporting period.



Community operations Hope Vale

Other community matters

NIAA consultation

Throughout 2023-24 we have been actively involved in consultations initiated by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). These consultations encompassed the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) survey and the Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) consultation, signifying a commitment to engaging local voices in policy development and decision-making processes.

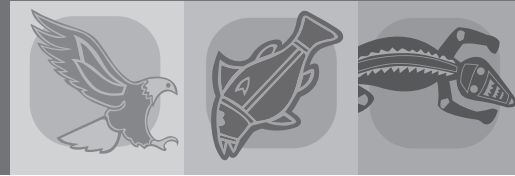
Since April 2023 we have participated in the CEP survey conducted by NIAA. This survey served as a mechanism for gathering feedback and insights from Indigenous communities on the effectiveness and impact of the CEP initiatives. Our involvement in the survey reflects our dedication to representing the interests and perspectives of our community members in shaping government programs and policies.

In addition to the CEP survey, we were then invited to engage in the RJED consultation. This consultation aims to solicit input from Indigenous communities, including Hope Vale, on strategies and initiatives to promote economic development and create employment opportunities in remote areas. Throughout the consultations we highlighted how disheartening it is for qualified local tradespeople who are ready and willing to work, when external contractors are brought in instead to work on local job sites. This practice can have implications for the community, including economic concerns and a potential lack of connection between the project and the community it serves.

The next 12 months

Positive outcomes from the Client Engagement approach, together with active participation in various consultation processes, shows our involvement and commitment to understanding community needs and working towards positive outcomes. Our contributions through participating in consultations and meetings with government representatives are valuable in shaping policy and program decisions that can have long-term benefits for the community. Our roles as Local Commissioners and these collaborative efforts will hopefully lead to meaningful improvements and positive impacts for everyone involved.

Community operations Mossman Gorge



FRC operations in Mossman Gorge were undertaken by Local Commissioners Loretta Spratt, George Ross-Kelly, Zara Ryan, Jarrod Kulka, Daphne Creek and Julie-Ann Williams, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Kate Gooding. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.

Mossman Gorge Commissioners' report

It has now been over twelve months since the appointment of four of our new Local Commissioners to Mossman Gorge, as we sadly said goodbye to Helenia Creek, who relocated out of the area. We wish Helenia luck in her journey for the future. The team have adapted well, and with quality training the new Local Commissioners have progressed into their formal decision-making roles responding to the needs of individuals and families in our community.

Our team of six Local Commissioners and a Local Registry Coordinator have shown flexibility, understanding and consistent strength when engaging with clients who are confronting difficulties. We believe this consistency has encouraged client willingness to consider voluntary pathways and move towards changing behaviours. We have seen clients voluntarily agreeing to enhanced income management and an increase in voluntary referrals to service providers.

Significant achievements

- Voluntary referrals to service providers have increased from 5 in 2022-23 to 34 in 2023-24. There has been a slight increase in the number of voluntary income management agreements (VIMs) from 10 in 2022-23 to 11 in 2023-24.
- We believe the increase in voluntary agreements has come about because of our new approach to engaging and supporting clients outside of conference. Between January and June 2024, we have recorded 131 client engagement activities.
- Conference attendance has increased again to 65.9% this year and is the highest attendance since the commencement of the Commission, surpassing last year's previous highest attendance of 65.4%.
- The decisions we are making at conference is also reflecting the desire of our clients to seek help. For instance, the number of decisions made by the FRC ordering a client to attend a support service has decreased by 50% from 20 in 2022-23 to a total of 10 in 2023-24. Also, the number of orders for conditional income management has decreased from 6 in 2022-23 to 0 in 2023-24. Instead, we are pleased to see clients taking up income management on a voluntary basis (see VIM statistic above).



Community operations Mossman Gorge

Challenges

Youth crime

The rate of our young people in detention is appalling with the current annual Closing the Gap data reporting Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention is 40.9 per 10,000 youth on an average day.¹

Along with our colleagues, Local Commissioners from the four other FRC communities, Commissioner Williams, Deputy Commissioner Rod Curtin and registry staff, we stand together to advocate for the operationalising of the Childrens Court trigger in the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*. This will allow us to work alongside the Queensland Government and provide opportunities for early intervention to vulnerable and at-risk youth and their families in our communities.

Domestic family violence

Domestic and family violence has been an ongoing challenge in our community and last year we raised concerns about the increase in domestic violence offences from 2021-22 to 2022-23 with increases of 18% in Domestic Violence Orders (DVO) and 29% in Domestic Violence Breaches (DVB). This year we are happy to report a favourable decrease shown in the statistics. DVO notices have declined by 40% compared to last year, decreasing from 20 in 2022-23 to 12 in 2023-24 and DVB notices have declined by 1 from 18 notices in 2022-23 to 17 notices in 2023-2024.

Whilst we are pleased to see the reduction in notices and we continue to collaborate with service providers to undertake early intervention practices, the challenge remains for our community to find and implement culturally appropriate perpetrator interventions that are accessible to our clients. Along with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner we are advocating for services to fill this gap which will be funded, developed and delivered in a timely way and align with the strengthened laws enacted by the Queensland Government on 1 August 2023, through the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023*.

Devastating effects of the flood

In December 2023 Tropical Cyclone Jasper led to extraordinary flooding with devastating consequences for residents of the Mossman region. Lengthy power outages, large scale isolation, forced evacuations and road closures significantly impacted residents, businesses and service providers who support the most vulnerable people in our community. For some residents and businesses, the effects of the flooding meant they were unable to return to the community for several months. The local water treatment plant was also damaged in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Jasper leaving residents without drinking water for several weeks until it was fully restored.

Other community matters

Client Engagement

We have embraced a new approach with an increased focus on client interactions outside the formal conference setting. This approach has given community members a different way to move in a positive direction toward self-empowerment and changed behaviours for families and individuals. Clients have

1. <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/annual-data-report/report/snapshot-socioeconomic#seo11>

Community operations Mossman Gorge



demonstrated a willingness to take personal responsibility through the uptake of voluntary referrals to service providers and voluntary income management. We are also finding the interactions during home visits in community have served to build on the relationships we have and gain more respect from our clients. We are proud that the Client Engagement (CE) approach is working to further advance the main objects of the FRC Act in supporting the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority.

Elevated School Response

In last year's annual report, we discussed the introduction of an Elevated School Response (ESR) strategy which, in Mossman Gorge, was co-designed with parents and local stakeholders including the local Mossman State School and Mossman State High School to address school attendance and youth behavioural concerns raised by the community.

Prior to the commencement of the school year, we implemented early intervention strategies to assist with school readiness. During Term 1 and Term 2 2024, we received positive feedback from clients who were willing to engage in conversation about complex barriers affecting school attendance. An important aspect of the ESR strategy is to address the barriers impacting school attendance by offering a pathway to a service referral. Throughout the financial year there have been several voluntary case plan referrals to support services for clients involved in the ESR initiative. These referral pathways address issues impacting school attendance such as social and emotional wellbeing, parenting, youth support and anger management.

Closing the Gap targets are imperative for our people. Early in the year our focus was also on increasing the proportion of First Nations children enrolled in 'the year before fulltime schooling' target of 95% by 2025. With the support of the Local Registry Coordinator maintaining a list of children eligible to commence Prep in 2024, we worked with parents to actively encourage enrolment to ensure we are contributing to this critical target. We can confirm that to the best of our knowledge, all children of clients in our jurisdiction who were eligible for Prep were successfully enrolled in school for the start of the 2024 school year. This is reassuring and we will continue to educate and encourage children to engage in education for a better future for themselves and their families.

Whole of community approach

On our behalf the Local Registry Coordinator facilitates and participates in a monthly, inter-agency complex case management meeting, where various support services and stakeholders identify vulnerable individuals and/or families facing complex and challenging circumstances that may have fallen through the gaps or who have difficulty engaging. The meetings work well with consistent attendance and valuable information sharing.

The next 12 months

We, as Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners, have brought our diverse backgrounds and experiences together to engage, support and respond to community needs. Statistical evidence together with feedback from our clients has found the CE approach to be successful in empowering our community members to assume greater responsibility for the wellbeing of their family. We will continue to focus our work in this area to enhance the opportunities our people deserve.



Significant events and achievements

Significant events

The past financial year has seen a number of significant events which have impacted on the operations of the FRC.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

On 9 August 2023 an MoU was entered into between the Australian and Queensland Governments to ensure the Commission continued to service its operations at full capacity for a fixed period of three years from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026. The Commission was pleased with the collegiate approach to the negotiations between the tri-partite partners and is grateful for the outcome of a three-year period to be able to provide relative stability to clients, Local Commissioners and staff.

Community Support and Services Committee

Chair and Deputy Chair of the Community Support and Services Committee visited Aurukun

In July 2023 the FRC welcomed Ms Corrine McMillan MP, Member for Mansfield (then Chair) and Mr Stephen Bennett MP, Member for Burnett (Deputy Chair) of the Community Support and Services Committee for QLD parliament, (the FRC's oversight committee) to Aurukun to witness conferencing and see first-hand the work of our Local Commissioners and registry staff. The Commission appreciates Ms McMillian's and Mr Bennett's commitment to better understand the Commission's operations and the challenges experienced by our clients.

Tabling of the 2022-23 Annual report

The Commission's Annual Report for 2022-23 was provided to the Hon Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Treaty, Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts on 20 October 2022. On 1 March 2024 the Family Responsibilities Commission's Annual Report for 2022-23 was tabled by the Hon Leanne Enoch, Minister for Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts in the Queensland Parliament.

Significant events and achievements



Achievements

Information Communications Technology (ICT) upgrade

During the 2023-24 reporting period the EMT agreed to proceed with an upgrade of the Commission's ICT infrastructure as part of a two-stage project. Several key milestones of the first stage of the project have been completed resulting in improvements to the Commission's security and compliance.

- The migration of the FRC's files and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to the latest Windows Server and SQL versions was completed as the previous systems were nearing end-of-life. This ensures the systems' security and compliance.
- The FRC's network and internet infrastructure were upgraded due to aging infrastructure and outdated services that were no longer needed. A faster and more reliable internet service was implemented, along with modern networking equipment and a mobile service backup ensuring internet redundancy. These upgrades have significantly boosted the network's speed, efficiency, and reliability, while also reducing costs.
- With the upgraded networking equipment and internet services, the phone system was also upgraded to a more advanced platform. Costs were reduced by removing legacy network-specific services and equipment. The implementation of backup internet has further improved reliability, ensuring continuous phone connectivity.
- The FRC migrated to its own Microsoft tenant, providing better control over cloud data and significantly improving security and compliance capabilities. This allows for customised security measures to meet the FRC's specific needs.

The second stage of the project planned for 2024-25 will focus on enhanced end user functionality of the CRM system including performance monitoring, data analysis and reporting aligned with the Commission's strategic plan and objectives.

Client Engagement approach

The Commission has discussed elsewhere in the report, especially in the Community operations section, its increased focus on interactions with clients outside the conference setting. A calendar setting out the scheduling of Client Engagement (CE) activities can be found at Appendix E and covers quarter 63 and 64 (January to June 2024) of the FRC's operations. This reflects the increasing time and resources allocated to CE including ESR, and further highlights its emergence as a core service delivery area for the Commission. For the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 there have been 951 client engagement activities relating to 386 clients. Data prior to this is unavailable as our CRM database had not been updated to capture the information.



Significant events and achievements

A noteworthy observation since the introduction of the CE approach outside of the conference setting has been the consistency in engagement between the FRC and clients, which has empowered clients to exercise their right to self-determination and personal agency. This initiative has fostered an environment where clients feel encouraged to seek support and actively participate in the decision-making process regarding the wellbeing of themselves and their families.

The significant increase in clients entering into voluntary agreements for VCPs from 44 clients in 2022-23 to 152 clients in 2023-24, reflects the success of CE, providing personalised interaction and building trust. This approach prioritises the needs and preferences of clients, enabling them to access resources and services while maintaining autonomy over their choices.

Clients have demonstrated a willingness to take personal responsibility through the uptake of voluntary referrals to service providers and VIMs. The FRC is finding the interactions Local Registry Coordinators and Local Commissions have when they are out and about in community has served to build on the relationships they have with community members.

Voluntary engagement

Voluntary case plans

The increase in the number of voluntary agreements for VCPs can be largely attributed to CE with an increase from 52 case plans (relating to 44 clients) in 2022-23 to 176 case plans (relating to 152 clients) in 2023-24, an increase of 238%.

Voluntary income management

The number of voluntary agreements for VIM reduced slightly recording 115 in 2023-24 compared to 118 in 2022-23. It is interesting to note that although the number of VIM agreements was less in 2023-24 the number of clients requesting a VIM increased from 100 in 2022-23 to 104 in 2023-24. This may be reflective of a greater number of clients becoming aware of VIM and the benefits of the SmartCard.

Challenges and outlook



With the relative stability of a three-year funding term along with a new strategic plan, FRC Commissioners and staff continued to evolve our operations to respond to the changing needs of clients and other external factors impacting our work.

Cyclone Jasper

After closely following Queensland Government warnings an Incident Management Team (IMT) was convened and the FRC's Business Continuity Plan was formally activated in preparation for Cyclone Jasper. The FRC registry was closed from 12pm on Tuesday 12 December 2023, to enable staff to make final preparations for the cyclone. Tropical Cyclone Jasper crossed the Queensland coast as a category 2 system in the vicinity of Wujal Wujal at around 8 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time on the evening of 13 December 2023. The registry remained closed on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 December 2023.

Tropical Cyclone Jasper was then associated with an extraordinary flooding event causing large-scale isolation, widespread power outages across north Queensland, and significant impacts to agriculture, animal welfare, small business and tourism. Whilst the FRC office remained physically unaffected, along with most Cairns residents, FRC staff were affected by extended power outages, flooding and isolation. The flooding event occurred between Sunday 17 and Tuesday 19 December 2023. As major roads began to reopen, and where it was safe for staff to travel, the registry reopened from Wednesday 20 December 2023.

Throughout the cyclone and the associated flooding event the IMT continued to convene regularly and provide advice and support to staff. The FRC also continued to support Local Commissioners and clients during this time. The event represented a significant disruption to the Cairns registry office, but as always Commission staff responded with flexibility and resilience and maintained their support of the Local Commissioners and FRC clients during this time.

The FRC's Mossman Gorge office had a pre-existing mould infestation. Cyclone Jasper and the associated extraordinary flooding event has seen a further increase in the mould infestation in the office. The matter has been formally raised with Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation (BBNAC), the lessor. Alternative premises at the Mossman Gorge Gateway are being used for conferencing on a temporary basis until the building can be assessed as to its suitability for ongoing occupancy. This has resulted in the FRC incurring additional expenses in this interim period.

Registrar

In early 2023 the Commission's then Registrar, Maxine McLeod, indicated her intention to take long service leave later in the year. The position of Registrar is an essential role, provided for by the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*, and is responsible for managing the registry and the administrative affairs of the Commission.¹

It has been an important consideration of the EMT to ensure the FRC continued to maintain efficient and effective operations throughout the Registrar's period of leave.

Maxine's length of tenure in the role has meant the FRC has enjoyed some stability in its administration whilst there have been periods of uncertainty including a change of Commissioner/CEO.

1. Section 35 of the FRC Act.



Challenges and outlook

Recruiting an acting Registrar therefore required careful management and succession planning over many months.

Following an external recruitment process Helen Weedon was appointed acting Registrar in July 2023 for a period of 12 months. Maxine assisted with Helen's onboarding in the weeks following her commencement. These strategies helped to maintain the Commission's high standards of operations and business continuity.

At the conclusion of her leave in June 2024 Maxine gave notice of her intention to resign from the Registrar's position. As of 1 July 2024, Helen Weedon was permanently appointed Registrar on a fulltime basis. The EMT is pleased Helen has agreed to continue working at the Commission after the expiry of her temporary contract. The EMT notes that in a relatively short period of time Helen has already made a positive impact on the Commission's operations which has contributed to improved client outcomes.

The Commission extends sincere thanks to Maxine for her years of service, dedication and commitment to the FRC. As one of the longest serving members of FRC staff Maxine has developed enduring relationships with Local Commissioners, partners and staff and has been an extremely capable steward of the FRC's operations through periods of instability, allowing the organisation and its staff to flourish.

Office space and workforce capacity

The FRC's registry in Cairns has occupied the same premises since 2008. The Commission's workforce has grown in recent years in response to an increase in workloads and operational activities due to evolving client needs. The premises does not adequately address the FRC's unique and specific service delivery needs. Years of short-term funding commitments meant the Commission was not able to consider alternative premises or commit to a refurbishment of existing accommodation. The relative stability now provided by the Queensland and Australian governments' decision to fund the Commission's operations at 'full capacity' for three-years means the EMT is finally able to address these issues.

As a public sector entity, the FRC is required to submit a Request for Accommodation application to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Public Works. While the application progresses through the assessment phase, the FRC will also explore other interim measures such as reconfiguring its existing premises to try to reduce existing pressures on current service delivery needs.

Submissions

One of the FRC's key strategies to improve engagement through co-design and partnerships, is to provide quality advice to our government and Parliamentary colleagues to inform policy, legislation and service delivery to our community members. Accordingly, the FRC has devoted considerable time and resources over the 2023-24 year to making representations to the Queensland and Australian governments and parliamentary committees on matters that directly affect the FRC and its clients. A summary of these submissions follows.

Challenges and outlook



Submission to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on a Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrator Strategy

In September 2023 the FRC made a submission to the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General's consultation on a Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrator Strategy (the Strategy). Although the FRC is not an expert in the field of domestic and family violence the Commission considered it could provide a unique perspective as a novel bi-cultural institution supporting both person/s using violence and victim-survivors, on what is needed for an effective perpetrator strategy in FRC and other First Nations communities.

The Commission made the following recommendations to the consultation:

Early intervention

1. The Strategy should include greater use of the FRC and other established bodies or services supporting people with multiple risk factors, to capitalise on opportunities to provide early support to those using or at risk of using violence.
2. The FRC's Childrens Court trigger should be operationalised to support young people already using or at risk of using violence.

Strengthening perpetrator interventions

3. The Strategy should urgently provide for the funding and implementation of accessible, evidence-based, culturally appropriate perpetrator interventions both:
 - on the ground in First Nations communities; and
 - in correctional centres for prisoners with shorter sentences or on remand.
4. The Strategy should include capacity building for police and others in the justice system, to reduce the application of standard, long-term conditions on protection orders in First Nations communities. The Strategy should include greater support for First Nations respondents in remote communities to navigate the justice system.

Systemic reform

5. The FRC is an existing model of community accountability, which provides a fulcrum to support both systemic and individual accountability. The Strategy may consider like models in other geographic locations.

Submissions to the Queensland Parliament regarding the operationalisation of the FRC's 'Childrens Court trigger'

On 15 March 2024 the FRC lodged a submission to the Queensland Government's Youth Justice Reform Select (YJRS) Committee's inquiry into ongoing reforms to the youth justice system and support for victims of crime.

The FRC's submission sought, once again, that amendments be made to the FRC Act to operationalise the Childrens Court trigger that exists in s43 of the FRC Act. The FRC submitted that the proposed amendment would provide clarity in the interpretation and application of both the FRC Act, and the *Youth Justice Act 1992*.

The submission noted that further delays in amending the legislation to operationalise the FRC's use of the 'Childrens Court trigger' lead to missed opportunities for early intervention to vulnerable and at-risk First Nations young people and their families, living in remote communities. The



Challenges and outlook

submission also contended that not operationalising the Childrens Court trigger was an under-utilisation of existing resources and local infrastructure of the FRC, a public sector entity.

In mid-April 2024, the YJRS Committee released its draft interim report. Recommendation 11 specifically related to the FRC and amending the FRC Act per the Commission's submission:

'That the Queensland Government consider introducing legislation seeking to operationalise the 'Childrens Court Trigger' in accordance with section 43(2) of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008, to enable the Childrens Court to provide court advice notices to the Family Responsibilities Commission in relation to a child or young person who has been convicted of an offence.'

The under-utilisation of the FRC as a public sector entity was identified in the YJRS Committee's interim report. The YJRS Committee commented that 'it may be necessary to remedy any legislative impediment to the provision of notices concerning children and young people to ensure that the FRC can fulfil its role'.

On 1 May 2024, the Queensland Government tabled in Parliament its response to the YJRS Committee, including its response to recommendation 11 specifically in relation to the FRC.

'This matter has been considered by the Family Responsibilities Board and is now under further consideration by the Department of Youth Justice. This issue requires further policy analysis and consultation with impacted communities prior to consideration of legislative amendments.'

On 1 May 2024, the government also tabled the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024 which progressed some of the initiatives identified by the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee. The Bill did not advance YJRS Committee's recommendation 11, specific to the FRC.

The FRC was disappointed by the Queensland Government's response to the YJRS Committee's recommendation. On 16 May 2024, the FRC made a further submission to the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee which has the responsibility of examining the Queensland Community Safety Bill. The FRC's recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- The Queensland Government reconsiders its response to the YJRS Committee's draft interim report, specifically in relation to recommendation 11 as it relates to the Family Responsibilities Commission; and
- The Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024 be amended so that the Family Responsibilities Commission can operationalise its existing power to receive notices from the Childrens Court.

The submission sought further consideration by both the Queensland Government and Parliament of progressing urgent amendments to the FRC Act. This plea was made on the basis that further delay may lead to missed opportunities for early intervention and risks compounding the issues experienced by vulnerable and at-risk First Nations young people and their families living in remote communities.

Submission to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on the Anti-Discrimination Bill 2024

In September 2022, the Queensland Human Rights Commission released its report: *Building Belonging: Review of Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*. In its response to the report, the Queensland Government recognised that there was a need for new anti-discrimination

Challenges and outlook



legislation to be introduced that reflects contemporary best practice and is in keeping with modern community expectations and standards of behaviour. Accordingly, in February 2024, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General released an exposure draft of a new Anti-Discrimination Bill 2024 and sought community input.

On 2 April 2024, the FRC made a submission to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General expressing support for many of the reforms proposed in the Bill. However, the Commission raised some specific concerns with the proposed requirements for affirmative measures for racial substantive equality. The FRC recommended specific amendments to certain clauses of the draft Bill to address legal uncertainty, ambiguity, operational challenges, and the need for genuine consultation with First Nations people. The submission highlighted the Commission's commitment to human rights, shared decision-making and the importance of considering the implications of the draft Bill particularly on remote First Nations communities.

Submission to the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Compulsory Income Management

The FRC was invited by the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (PJCHR) to make a submission to its inquiry into compulsory income management. The PJCHR sought input on issues including whether compulsory income management had been successful in achieving its stated aims, and the extent to which compulsory income management is consistent with international human rights law.

In May 2024, the FRC made a detailed submission to the PJCHR outlining the features of the FRC's model of income management and submitted that the flexible, client-centred, and nuanced model of income management implemented by the FRC was compatible with human rights.

The submission outlined that after 15 years of working with clients and their families the FRC recognises that income management alone cannot rectify the complex issues of trauma, poverty, addiction, child abuse and neglect and domestic and family violence experienced in our First Nations communities. However, the flexible, client-centred, and nuanced model of income management implemented by the FRC can provide protection and stability for households in crisis; can be an effective catalyst to encourage behavioural change; and can be a helpful and effective tool for financial management. The Commission submitted that the FRC's model of income management limits human rights only to the extent that is reasonable and proportionate in individual circumstances, and it is necessary to protect the rights of children and other vulnerable people.

The submission made the following recommendations:

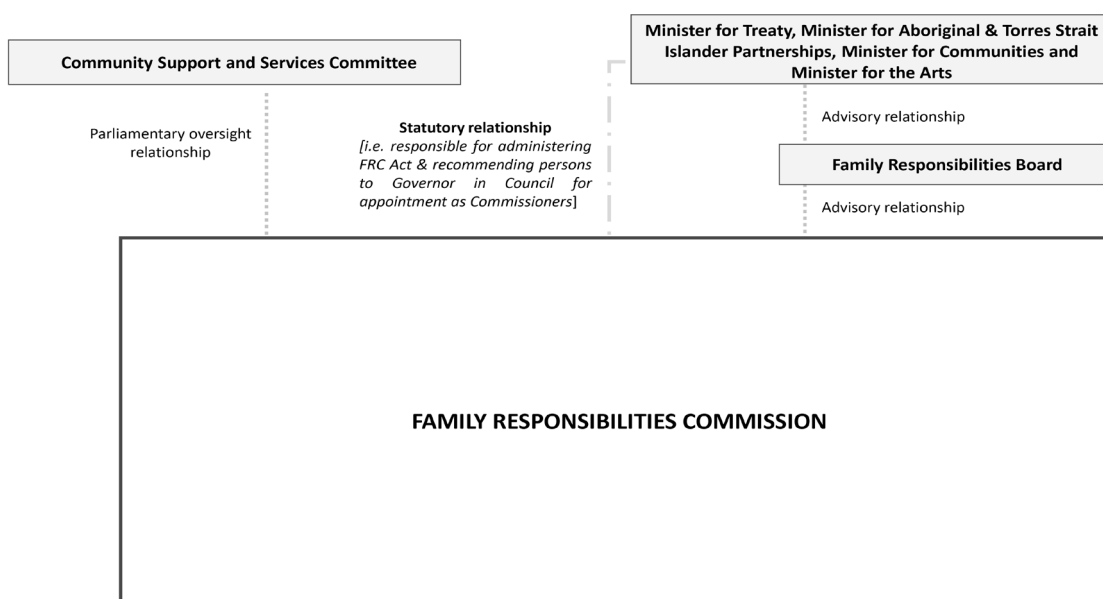
1. The PJCHR endorse the FRC model of income management, with its complementary case management approach to clients, as one that is compatible with human rights.
2. The Australian Government continues to invest in the FRC and maintain its legislative and policy settings.
3. The Australian Government supports the FRC to administer its model of voluntary income management to interested persons across Queensland and considers greater flexibility and autonomy to participants in deciding the percentage to be voluntarily quarantined.
4. The Australian Government continues to invest in support services, and employment and training opportunities, in the five remote communities in which the FRC operates, that are effective and responsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of community members.



Governance

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 Arts. The Minister and FR Board have advisory relationships to the Commissioner.



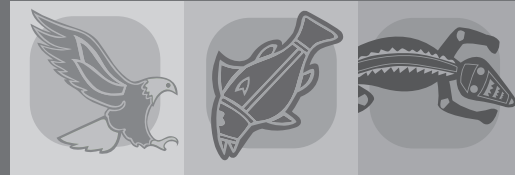
Ministerial portfolio

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 the Minister responsible for administering the FRC Act was the Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts.

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.

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 2024 were:

Ms Clare O'Connor	Director-General, DTATSIPCA as the Chair
Ms Jody Broun	CEO, NIAA
Mr Noel Pearson	Founder, Cape York Partnership representing 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	Board Attendees
5 September 2023	Level 9, Cairns Corporate Tower, 15 Lake Street, Cairns	Ms Clare O'Connor (Chair), Director-General DTATSIPCA; Ms Jody Broun CEO, NIAA; Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, CYI.
20 February 2024	Room 1402, 1 William Street, Brisbane	Ms Clare O'Connor (Chair), Director-General DTATSIPCA; Ms Jody Broun, CEO, NIAA; Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, CYI.

Executive Management Team

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 2023-24 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.



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 are employed 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. 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 of Conduct 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 Strategic Plan 2023-2027 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 DTATSIPCA's learning management system in regard to the legislative requirements of the *Human Rights Act 2019*.



Governance

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 Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts. 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 Commission's CRM system was periodically audited 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

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 18 April 2024, by invitation, Commissioner Williams, Executive Officer (Corporate) Wayne Massey and Manager (Compliance and Legal Policy) Camille Banks appeared in person 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 MoU for funding for three consecutive years resulting in continuity for Local Commissioner recruitment and employment
- Local Commissioner aging and gender balance issues; eligibility issues under the FRC Act and the difficulty of obtaining a blue card
- the importance of operationalising the Childrens Court trigger in the FRC Act
- the success of the ESR and resultant increase in school attendance data
- the success of Client Engagement through VCPs and VIM
- capacity issues for service providers with the increased demand for their services.



Governance

Information systems and records governance

The Commission's ICT system plays a vital role in supporting employees in the Cairns registry and regional offices. The Commission 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.

The Commission has policies and protocols in place for the provision of information and communication technology services. These policies ensure 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.

Workforce profile

At 30 June 2024 the Commission had an employee establishment of 20.2 full time equivalent positions (FTE) occupied by a headcount of 20 staff members equating to 18 FTE.

Additionally, the Commission employs 36 Indigenous Local Commissioners on a fee for service basis under the *Remuneration Procedures for Part-Time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies*. The Commission employs a Deputy Commissioner (included in the figures above) 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 below are based on the workforce profile of the Commission, including the Commissioner as CEO, and the Deputy Commissioner, but excluding the Local Commissioners.

Gender

Gender	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Woman	15	75.00
Man	5	25.00
Non-binary	0	0



Diversity target group data

Diversity groups	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Women	15	75.00
Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	<5	<25.00
People with disability	<5	<25.00
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English ¹	5	25.00

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	<25.00
Senior Executive Service and Chief Executives (Classified and s122 equivalent combined)	<5	<25.00

The Commission conducts all recruitment and selection processes in accordance with the requirements of the *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 new employee 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 2023* and relevant PSC directives, and maximising employment security as reflected in the whole of government Employment Security Policy.

During the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid.

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



Governance

Performance management

To facilitate employee development, each manager is instructed to enter into a PDA with the employees in their team. The PDA 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.

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

Local Commissioner Development Week

A Local Commissioner Development Week was conducted during the week commencing 4 September 2023. Local Commissioners from each community travelled to Cairns to participate in the following activities:

- update on the new Strategic Plan 2023-2027 from Camille Banks
- site visit to Djarragun College, and the Ngak Min Health Service
- occupational violence and aggression de-escalation training facilitated by an external specialist training provider
- domestic and family violence training workshop presented by Deputy Commissioner Rod Curtin and Simon Bright from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
- understanding trauma informed approaches workshop by Professor Judy Atkinson
- strategic direction round table facilitated by Commissioner Tammy Williams and Deputy Commissioner Rod Curtin.

Governance



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
- 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.



Governance

In line with the above strategies and practices, employees are offered backfill roles in higher duty positions where appropriate 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 2023-24 employee professional development, training, and workshops cost \$22,917 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 2023-24 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 2023-24

1. Annual Report 2022-2023
2. Quarterly Reports 59 - 61 (January 2023 to September 2023)

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

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 2023-24 and a comparison to 2022-23. A comprehensive set of 2023-24 financial statements covering all aspects of the Commission's activities commences on page 91.

Our overall performance

Table 10: Summary of financial performance

Summary statement	30 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2023
	\$000	\$000
Income	4,802	4,450
Less: expenses	4,873	4,299
Operating surplus	(71)	151

Income

Table 11: Summary of income by type

Income by type	30 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2023
	\$000	\$000
State Government funding	2,565	2,489
Australian Government funding	2,000	1,800
Interest income	237	160
Other income	0	1
Total	4,802	4,450

The increase in funding is in line with the MoU signed between the FRC and the Australian and Queensland Governments on 9 August 2023. Interest income earned on the cash at bank balance increased year on year by \$77K due to higher interest rates and average cash balances in 2023-24.

Expenses

Table 12: Summary of expenses by type

Expenses by type	30 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2023
	\$000	\$000
Employee expenses	3,321	3,063
Supplies and services	1,479	1,129
Depreciation and amortisation	12	53
Finance/borrowing costs	8	7
Other expenses	53	47
Total	4,873	4,299

Employee expenses represent 68% of the total expenditure in 2023-24 compared to 71% in 2022-23 even though there was an increase in employee expenses from \$3,063,000 in 2022-23 to \$3,321,000 in 2023-24. The increase of 8.4% from the prior year is in part attributable to the 4% wage increase and the Cost of Living Adjustment payment following the certification of the 2023 Core Agreement. Payments to Local Commissioners and Deputy Commissioner were also higher due to increased training, community engagement and additional resources required to support input into government submissions.

The increase in supplies and services relates to engaging temporary employment services to fill vacancies throughout the year, including the Registrar and Executive Officer (Corporate) roles. Increased levels of community engagement and training resulted in higher travel costs. Additional motor vehicle related costs were associated with the prolonged wet season causing delays in transitioning from old vehicles coming off lease to new vehicles.

The expenditure of the FRC can be categorised as follows:

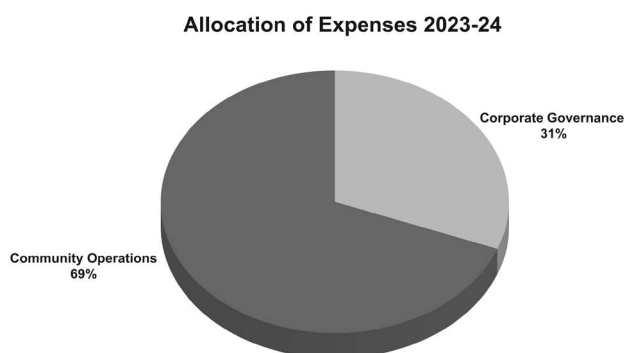
- **Community operations** – further broken down into:
- **On-the-ground community operational expenses** including the operational expenses in each of the five communities to conduct conferences and hearings, prepare and monitor case plans for clients for attendance at community support services and prepare and monitor income management orders and agreements.



Review of financial performance

- **Support and facilitation expenses** including costs associated with facilitating the holding of conferences and hearings in the five communities, providing support to the Local Commissioners and Local Registry Coordinators to hold conferences and hearings, assisting with the ongoing monitoring of case plans for clients through the provision of data and other information and processing income management orders and agreements.
- **Corporate governance** includes finance, statistical reporting, corporate governance, compliance, information technology, training and other administrative functions to ensure the effective and efficient operations of the Commission.

The allocation of the FRC's costs in 2023-24 based on the above was:



Graph 17: Allocation of expenses
1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

These expenses can be further categorised as front-line and non-frontline in accordance with the Queensland Public Service Commission definitions.

Community operations and conference facilitation expenses are frontline expenses and are conducted on-the-ground in community by Local Registry Coordinators and Local Commissioners, and in the Cairns registry office to support the holding of FRC conferences and hearings across the five communities.

The Local Commissioners are paid sessional fees per Level 3 Adjudication and determination in accordance with the *Remuneration Procedures for Part-Time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies*. When engaged, the Local Commissioners could be holding conferences and/or hearings, serving notices, attending meetings, undertaking client engagement activities and professional development.

The work undertaken by the CM&M team in the Cairns registry includes duties which are undertaken to support conference prioritisation and scheduling and preparation of client records for consideration by the Local Commissioners, processing decisions made and preparing and monitoring case plans and/or income management orders and agreements. This work is essential to support the Local Commissioners when conferencing which is central to the FRC's role and could not be efficiently or easily undertaken in the communities themselves.

For 2023-24 **69% of FRC expenses were utilised to support frontline operations**, whilst 31% supported corporate governance.

Our position

Total assets as at 30 June 2024 consisted of current assets of cash, prepayments and receivables in addition to non-current right-of-use assets.

Total liabilities as at 30 June 2024 consisted of payables, accrued employee benefits and lease liabilities.

Table 13: Statement of financial position

Statement of financial position	30 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2023
	\$000	\$000
Total assets	3,952	4,026
Total liabilities	343	346
Net assets	3,609	3,680
Total equity	3,609	3,680

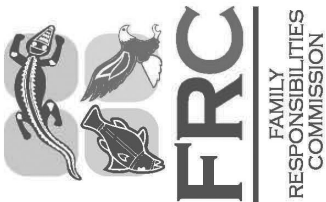


Appendices

Appendix A – Strategic Plan 2023-2027



FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027



The FRC partners with the Australian and Queensland Governments and FRC communities to help close the Gap on life outcomes for our clients.

The FRC supports the Queensland Government's objectives for the community:

GOOD JOBS

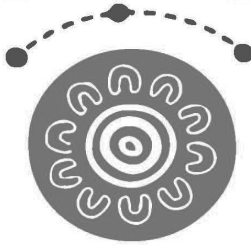
Good secure jobs in traditional and emerging industries.

BETTER SERVICES

Deliver even better services right across Queensland.

GREAT LIFESTYLE

Protect and enhance our Queensland lifestyle as we grow.



VALUES

- Safety
- Respect
- Ownership
- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Diversity

PURPOSE

Supporting welfare reform community members to restore socially responsible standards of behaviour, local authority and wellbeing for themselves and their families.

VISION

Vibrant welfare reform communities that are responsible, healthy, safe and sustainable, built on cultural respect, self-determination and empowerment for a future of opportunity.

SERVICE CHARTER STATEMENT

The Family Responsibilities Commission knows that you value efficient and effective engagement and support. Our aim is to provide the best service possible. We will partner with the Australian and Queensland Governments, stakeholders and clients to deliver outcomes that are responsive to the needs of the communities in which we work. 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 those we serve.

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

- Embedding the FRC as a partner in the co-design and decision-making of Government.
- Expanding our impact to new communities and with new triggers targeting areas of need.
- Increasing voluntary engagement, particularly through increasing options for Voluntary Income Management.
- Harnessing the evolution of the Local Commissioners' role to increasingly support clients and communities outside of conference.
- Increasing recognition of the FRC's mode of self-determination, through the FRC's local Indigenous-led decision making, and the cultural capability of the registry.

OUR CHALLENGES

- Maintaining legitimacy, and improving levels of engagement and personal responsibility without a clear authorising environment.
- Sustaining, renewing and broadening the pool of Local Commissioners.
- Supporting a stronger commitment from service provider partners for suitable, available and accountable services for clients.
- Strengthening resilience and wellbeing in staff and Local Commissioners to meet evolving challenges.
- Protecting our information assets.

The Commission recognises we are visitors to the country we travel across and work in. We acknowledge that many of our Local Commissioners are Traditional Owners and Elders of their communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. 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.

FRC STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

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Appendix A continued

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement proactive and agile responses to changing community needs that reflect all functions of the FRC Act Support Local Commissioners and FRC staff to have meaningful and effective engagement with FRC communities Strengthen self-determination by investing in individual leadership and decision-making capability development for Local Commissioners Support Local Commissioners to advocate for their communities Support partner agencies to provide information in a timely way within the FRC Act framework 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Retention and development of Local Commissioners Proportion of conferences held with Local Commissioners sitting independently Rates of client participation in the decision-making process Judicious use of CIM Number of successful appeals against FRC decisions Helping to Close the Gap on disadvantage for clients in Aurukui, Coen Doornadagee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge
Help people in welfare reform communities to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities and the individuals and families of their communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support individuals and families to change through effective conferencing, case plan referrals and income management Protect children and other vulnerable people including through compulsion and income management where necessary Continue to explore incentive projects to increase families' capabilities and move towards pursuing opportunities Engage families in recognising the importance of, and playing an active role in neonatal and early childhood development Support evidence-based interventions for disengaged young people and employability skills training Build mutual accountability and foster shared high expectations of service providers and community members 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increased motivation of clients to change through personal responsibility Increased periods of respite for clients from daily living pressures Strength of mandated interventions decreased Increased client engagement with support services to build capacity Helping to Close the Gap on disadvantage for our clients in Aurukui, Coen Doornadagee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge
Create a capable, culturally safe, agile and innovative organisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the FRC attracts and values an agile, diverse, inclusive and high performing workforce to meet current and future business needs Embed a culture of innovation and continuous improvement to deliver more flexible, effective and efficient services Embed safety, including cultural and psychological safety, as a core value to enhance overall wellbeing and engagement in our work environment Leverage technology, data and information to enhance outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of budget spent on frontline services Employee retention and development Increased diversity of our workforce
Improve engagement through co-design and partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Position the FRC as an invaluable part of the service ecosystem through collaborative and collegiate engagement with our partners Provide quality advice to the Family Responsibilities Board, Ministers and Parliamentary Committees to inform policy, legislation and service delivery to our community members Help clients have agency in their experience with the FRC by co-designing projects and services, and embracing First Nations ways of doing, being and knowing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of partnerships and engagement activities Rate of stakeholder satisfaction Rate of client participation in project and service design



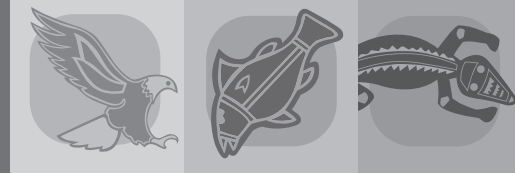


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Appendix B – Analysis of the Queensland Government’s ‘Our Way’ strategy and the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*.

The FRC Act supports Queensland’s ‘Our Way’ strategy, initiated to address the over-representation of Indigenous children in Queensland’s child protection system, as demonstrated in the following table.

<i>Our Way</i> Strategy Enablers and Building Blocks	<i>Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008</i> Objects and Principles
Focus on the child	<p>Best interests of children</p> <p>s5(1): The FRC Act is to be administered under the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of a child are paramount.</p> <p>s5(2)(b): In a conference about an agency notice involving a child, the child’s views and wishes should be taken into account in a way that has regard to the child’s age and ability to understand.</p>
Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families and communities	<p>Early intervention and local authority</p> <p>s4(1)(b): A main object of the FRC Act is to help people in welfare reform community areas to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and the individuals and families of the community.</p> <p>s5(2)(a)(i) & (iii): The Commission should deal with matters in a way that facilitates early intervention...and makes appropriate use of community support services.</p> <p>s5(2)(c): Aboriginal tradition and Island custom must be taken into account in matters involving Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders.</p>
Enable self-determination	<p>Local authority and decision-making</p> <p>s50: Constitution of commission for conferences requires Local Commissioners appointed for the welfare reform community area from where the client lives or lived.</p> <p>s51(3): In appointing Local Commissioners for conference the FRC must consider their appropriateness, having regard to the clan or family group to which the person belongs; and consider whether the Local Commissioners should be male or female.</p> <p>The decision-making power of the FRC at conference is held by Aboriginal Commissioners.</p>



Appendix B continued

<i>Our Way Strategy</i> Enablers and Building Blocks	<i>Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008</i> Objects and Principles
<p>Set high expectations and positive norms</p>	<p>Socially responsible standards of behaviour</p> <p>s4(1)(a): A main object of the FRC Act is to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform community areas.</p> <p>s4(2)(b) The objects are to be achieved mainly by establishing the FRC... to deal with matters in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) encourages community members to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour; and (ii) promotes the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in a welfare reform community area.



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Appendix C – Biographies of Commissioners and the Registrar

Family Responsibilities Commissioner

Commissioner Tammy Williams

Tammy Williams was appointed as Commissioner of the FRC on 2 September 2019. Since her appointment she has been working hard to apply her own work culture and extensive business acumen to 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 to the Supreme Court of Queensland and High Court of 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.

Deputy Commissioner Rodney Curtin

Deputy Commissioner Rodney (Rod) Curtin was born and raised in Cairns and completed his secondary education at St Augustine's College. He attained a Bachelor of Law degree through the Queensland University of Technology and was appointed a Barrister-at-Law to the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia in 1987. Deputy Commissioner Curtin's practice has been predominately in the jurisdictions of Family Law and Criminal Law. His experience has involved the conduct of circuits in the Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait regions for more than 25 years. Over the years he has been called on to conduct many seminars

and training sessions for students at James Cook University, the Department of Education and Family Court counsellors on family law and domestic violence issues. Deputy Commissioner Curtin has also mentored young solicitors and field officers attached to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

Deputy Commissioner Curtin is passionate in the pursuit of access to justice services for Indigenous people. He advocates for the advancement of programs to provide better resources and achieve better outcomes for Indigenous people who appear before the courts. Deputy Commissioner Curtin has been involved with the Cape York Peninsula Youth Justice Program and has been a strong advocate for Juvenile Justice issues. His service to the Indigenous communities has been acknowledged as dedicated and compassionate, having an in-depth knowledge of the cultural and social issues of people within those communities. Rod's original appointment as Deputy Commissioner from July 2010 expired in December 2018. He was reappointed to the role in July 2020. Deputy Commissioner Curtin advises that he thoroughly enjoys his work, the most rewarding aspect of which has been his association with the Local Commissioners. Their dedication and tireless persistence in striving toward creating a better community and setting a wonderful example for the next generation has been inspirational.

Local Commissioners

Aurukun

Commissioner Edgar KERINDUN OAM (Sara Clan) was born and raised in Aurukun and is a traditional owner of the area. Before his election as a Councillor for the Aurukun Shire Council in 2012 Commissioner Kerindun worked as an Engagement Officer at Queensland Health. He served as a Councillor for eight years, including four years as Deputy Mayor, until 2020 when he decided not to run for re-election. On

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26 January 2015 Commissioner Kerindun was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to the community. One of the original Community Police Officers in Aurukun, he continues to advocate for justice and rehabilitation for ex-offenders. Along with his partner, Commissioner Doris Poonkamelya, he cares for three children from their extended family. Commissioner Kerindun believes that showing respect to everyone fosters mutual respect.

Commissioner Doris POONKAMELYA OAM (Putch Clan) was born at the Kendall River Outstation and moved with her family to Aurukun when she was a child. She dedicated 29 years of her life to working as a senior health worker for Queensland Health, retiring in 2009. On 26 January 2015 Commissioner Poonkamelya was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her services to the community. From 2016 to 2020 she served as a Councillor for the Aurukun Shire Council but chose not to run in the 2020 Local Government elections. A founding member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group, Commissioner Poonkamelya is also deeply committed to education as a pathway to employment and a promising future for young people. As a carer for Child Safety Services, she believes in creating 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 Commissioner Woolla served as a Councillor on the Aurukun Shire Council, deciding not to stand for re-election in 2020. Upon her election to Councillor in April 2012 she retired from her position as a Recognised Entity where she assisted families and children in Aurukun.

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

services to the community. In September 2018 she was appointed to the Queensland First Children and Families Board, which oversees the implementation of *“Our Way” – a generational strategy 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 Aurukun Church, a founding member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group, and a respected mediator and community elder. Her support for the education and training of young people is well recognised. Alongside 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. She has 10 children, 17 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Commissioner Pootchemunka’s interests encompass a wide range of traditional activities including fishing, camping and basket weaving using Pandanus and Cabbage leaves. Her baskets are displayed in national galleries in Australia and overseas. In 2023 Aurukun State School engaged Commissioner Pootchemunka to deliver cultural classes to senior students, teaching weaving, collecting roots to extract dye, and fire building.

Commissioner Pootchemunka is a registered Wik interpreter, and her expertise is utilised within the court system and by the Department of Human Services. More recently she worked with the Youth Justice team as an interpreter for local Aurukun youth. She became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 4 March 2010. Commissioner Pootchemunka 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 there. She continued her studies at Scots PGC College in Warwick, completing Year 10, and later earned a qualification in community teaching from Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Cairns. From 2012 to 2020 Commissioner Koomeeta served as a Councillor in the Aurukun



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Shire Council, choosing not to run in the 2020 Local Government elections. On 26 January 2015 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her services to the community.

Commissioner Koomeeta is a Justice of the Peace (Magistrates Court) and a registered interpreter, as well as a member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group. As a representative of her clan group, she is involved in several committees and holds positions on multiple boards. Her extensive experience enhances her ability to make independent and informed decisions as a Local Commissioner. In 2022 she joined the Aurukun School Board (Paamp) to support school attendance and children's wellbeing. When not working Commissioner Koomeeta can be found fishing and camping with her grandchildren. Commissioner Koomeeta is an established artist, with her paintings featuring at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.

Commissioner Keri TAMWOY (Putch Clan) was born in Cairns but has spent her entire life in Aurukun. She met her husband Gerald Tamwoy when they were 17 and 18 years old respectively. Together they have raised their six children in Aurukun, deeply embedding themselves in the community.

Commissioner Tamwoy has extensive experience as a mediator and has successfully run the mediation program in Aurukun which has been instrumental in helping families resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. She considers the mediation program a valued service in Aurukun.

Professionally, Commissioner Tamwoy has previously worked as the Office Manager for the Aak Puul Ngantam Ranger Program and currently serves as the chairperson of the organisation. She is also a Director of her husband's business and runs her own business delivering cultural and community awareness workshops for Aurukun stakeholders.

Commissioner Tamwoy became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 1 January 2018 at the age of 44. She was elected Mayor of the Aurukun Shire Council in the Local Government elections on 28 March 2020. Throughout her term of four years, she was dedicated to supporting the Wik people of Aurukun, striving to empower them and enhance their community.

On 1 December 2021 Commissioner Tamwoy was honoured with the National NAIDOC Person of the Year award. In 2022 she became an active member of the Paamp Aurukun State School Board, which was established to address the attendance and wellbeing of Aurukun's school-aged children. Commissioner Tamwoy believes that education is the foundation for children's futures and supports personalised learning for each child.

In her spare time Commissioner Keri Tamwoy enjoys fishing and camping or simply relaxing at home watching movies with her seven grandchildren.

Commissioner Dereck WALPO (Kiadilt Clan) was born and raised on Mornington Island. After completing his primary schooling on Mornington Island, he completed his senior studies while boarding in Warwick Queensland. Commissioner Walpo then moved to Cape York where he met his partner of 40 years, fellow Commissioner Ada Woolla of the Winchanum Clan. He has worked in various positions across Aurukun including in plumbing, as a road worker and machinery driver before finding work in the health system and becoming the Team Leader of the Wellbeing Centre. In 2016 Commissioner Walpo joined the Apunipima Board to support the Aurukun community and ensure their voices are heard. He recognises the importance of mental health support and the need for services to support remote Indigenous communities such as Aurukun.

From 2012 to 2020 Commissioner Walpo held the position of Mayor in the Aurukun Shire Council using his authority to work towards improving social norms and helping the community of Aurukun grow. In November 2023 Commissioner Walpo joined the Aurukun Community Indigenous Corporation as a member of the board.

Commissioner Walpo has two children and nine grandchildren and enjoys spending the weekends with his grandchildren fishing and hunting. Commissioner Walpo became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022. He wants to use his role as a Local Commissioner to further restore social norms and encourage community members to take responsibility for their futures.

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Coen

Commissioner May Mary KEPPLE OAM (Wik-Munkan Clan) is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified). Commissioner Kepple has had a variety of positions in retail and sales and enjoys painting on canvas. 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 Cape York/Gulf Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care (RAATSICC) as a Community Recognised Entity and Advisor. On 23 December 2021 Coen Commissioner Kepple retired from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General as a Member Elder where she was 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 her 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 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. She 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.



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Since 2010 Coen Commissioner Maureen Liddy has held several positions including with Cape York Partnership as a manager involved with the academy schools and teachers, with the RFDS in Coen as a Community Development Officer and later Services Coordinator, with Apunipima Cape York Health Council as Team Leader, with Good to Great Schools in the role of Community Partnership Engagement Manager, and more recently as Implementation Manager with Pama Futures. Commissioner Liddy has now transitioned to the position of Opportunity Hub Leader with Cape York Partnership and has returned to live in Coen.

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.

Commissioner Ramana WALKER (Wik-Mungkan Clan) commenced with the Commission on 1 July 2023. Commissioner Ramana Walker has a deep connection to Coen, having been born and raised there. She is currently raising her two young boys in the same community and takes great pride in her role as a mother.

Commissioner Ramana Walker brings a wealth of experience in working with families in Coen, with eleven years of dedicated service at Queensland Health. Previously, she held the position of Domestic Violence Prevention Worker at the Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation. Her current role at the same organisation is Coordinator of the Coen Justice Group.

Commissioner Ramana Walker is committed to continuous growth and development, actively pursuing a Certificate IV in Mental Health, and engaging in other relevant studies. Commissioner Ramana has also recently become a Justice of the Peace (Qualified). These educational

endeavours aim to equip her with the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively support individuals and families in her community, particularly in the area of suicide prevention.

Beyond her professional pursuits, Commissioner Ramana Walker is passionate about helping people.

Commissioner Naomi HOBSON (Southern Kaantju Clan) commenced with the Commission on 1 July 2023. She received her early education in Coen and then completed her studies at several different high schools. After completing school Commissioner Hobson undertook further studies and has obtained numerous certificates.

Commissioner Hobson has extensive working knowledge within her community, having held numerous positions in Coen and holds director positions in several local and regional government organisation as well as not-for-profit organisations.

Commissioner Hobson enjoys travelling and experiencing different cultures, something she has been able to achieve through the numerous accolades she has achieved in the arts. Commissioner Hobson also believes strongly in the importance of family and preserving cultural practices.

Doomadgee

Commissioner Christopher LOGAN (Garrawa Ghuthaarn / Takalaka Clans) 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, provided foster care for many more and have 16 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. 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

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Shire Council and Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council 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 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 of 19 and great-grandmother of eight, Commissioner Elaine Cairns has firm ties to several clans within the community and derives great joy from her extended family. A strong Indigenous woman, Doomadgee Commissioner Elaine 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 Elaine 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.

At the Local Government elections conducted on 16 March 2024 Commissioner Cairns was elected again as a Councillor for the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council. 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 Elaine Cairns loves reading, gardening and spending time out bush, fishing and camping. As a hobby she also enjoys composing and writing poems and songs and painting.

Commissioner Kaylene O'KEEFE grew up in Mount Isa before moving to her parents' hometown of Doomadgee in 1990. Married to Dwayne O'Keefe since 2001, Commissioner O'Keefe is a mother of three daughters, and she became a grandmother to a granddaughter in 2023. 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, 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



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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 16 grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

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, Project Worker at 54 Reasons (formerly Save the Children) for the Doomadgee Deadly Homes Program, a Senior Community worker and Health Services Manager for Gidgee Healing. Doomadgee Commissioner Douglas is currently employed as an Indigenous Liaison Officer for the Rheumatic Heart Disease project with QLD Health. In this role Commissioner Douglas provides assistance to hospital staff in the management and treatment of community members suffering from Rheumatic Heart Disease.

Commissioner Douglas is married to Cecilia, is father to six children and they have five grandchildren. 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. He is also a board member of the Doomadgee Health Council. 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 eight grandchildren who she loves having around. Having not had the opportunity to attend boarding school herself, Commissioner Toby was determined that her own children would not miss out on a good education and has sent each of them to boarding school to further their studies. One of her sons is currently in his last

year of a carpentry apprenticeship. Commissioner Toby would also like her grandchildren to follow in the same steps to ensure they receive the education they deserve. Doomadgee Commissioner Toby has worked at Centrelink, the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council and Job Futures and as a teacher aide. She is currently employed as a Team Leader to Family Support Workers at 54 Reasons where she has worked for ten 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 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 54 Reasons. Commissioner Dawn Aplin has five children, three boys and two girls, is a grandmother of 18 grandchildren and a great-grandmother of three great-grandchildren with another one on the way. 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 1 November 2019 Dawn Aplin was appointed as a Doomadgee Local Commissioner. Coupled with her employment at 54 Reasons, 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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Commissioner Wendy TAYLOR (Lardil / Gangalidda / Garrawa Clans) was born in Doomadgee where she attended Doomadgee State School as well as School of the Air, whilst living on an outstation. Commissioner Taylor later attended school in Malanda where she completed Years 8-10. After completing school, Commissioner Taylor returned to Doomadgee where she commenced working in various positions in the community. She worked at both the Doomadgee shop and the Doomadgee State School for a couple of years each and is currently working at the Doomadgee Childcare Centre where she has been since 2000. Commissioner Taylor spends her personal time fishing, hunting and collecting bush tucker with her friends and family. She is a mother of five children, grandmother of 18 grandchildren and great-grandmother of five great-grandchildren. Commissioner Taylor became a Doomadgee Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

Commissioner Leila CAIRNS (Waanyi Clan) was born at Gregory Downs Station. She attended school in Burketown and Doomadgee before moving to Brisbane to complete Year 9, and then to Malanda to complete Year 10. After completing school, Commissioner Leila Cairns returned to Doomadgee where she held various positions in the community. She has managed both the aged care facility and the local bakery, worked in the local store for five years, held the position of receptionist at the Doomadgee Rural Hospital for 15 years, and worked as a health worker for 10 years. Commissioner Leila Cairns has four children, 12 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. In her spare time, Commissioner Leila Cairns enjoys time with her family fishing, camping and spending time outside. When she is not enjoying the great outdoors, she likes to attend church and participate in Christian conventions held throughout the state. Commissioner Leila Cairns became a Doomadgee Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

Commissioner Virginia Grace COLLINS (Waanyi / Gangalidda / Garrawa Clans) was born in Mt Isa but has lived in Doomadgee for most of her life. Whilst in Doomadgee, Commissioner Collins attended Doomadgee State School. After

completing school, she commenced working with Community Development Employment Projects in Doomadgee and then other organisations such as the store and the Women's Shelter before settling into her current employment with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council in the Post Office, where she has been employed since 2020. Commissioner Collins is a mother of two boys and is eagerly waiting to become a grandmother. She enjoys going out bush camping and fishing, as well as reading and spending time with family and friends. Commissioner Collins became a Doomadgee Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

Hope Vale

Commissioner Priscilla GIBSON (nee BOWEN) has ancestral heritage to the following clan groups: Dharrba Warra and Bagaarmugu from both her parents with the latter being from her mother. From her grandparents she also has traditional affiliation with the Walkaman and Birraguba clan group from her maternal grandmother and the latter from her father's dad. Putting this aside she is a Guugu Yimithirr woman, born and raised in the Hope Vale community, with a strong cultural background intertwined with her own cultural spiritual beliefs and customs immersed into her spiritual and religious beliefs of the Lutheran teachings.

Commissioner Gibson has lived in Hope Vale all her life only leaving the community for education and working purposes.

Commissioner Gibson has a Diploma in Early Childhood having trained as a Kindy craft teacher at the Creche and Kindergarten and a Diploma in Nursing, having trained at the Cairns Hospital and qualified as an endorsed enrolled nurse. She has a Diploma in Advanced Health Worker/Nutritionist, and Health Promotion with the University of Sydney and completed her research qualification. She has completed the Parent Training Program, Parent Child Interaction Therapy-Circle of Security, Positive Parenting Program, Behavioural and Emotional Skills and Defiant Teens program.

She has a diversified working background having worked in various organisations in both



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management and operational duties as well as holding positions on Boards in the role of Director and committee member. Previously Commissioner Gibson has worked as a Parenting Officer with Cape York Partnership. Currently she works in the role of Project Officer/Support Officer with the Rinyirru (Lakefield) Aboriginal Corporation dealing with the jointly managed National Park, assisting her clan groups to create employment in tourism ventures and play a role in the management and governance. Commissioner Gibson also gives back to her community in participating as a community elder in the role of Local Commissioner for the FRC.

Commissioner Priscilla is a community person, and her interest and purpose is helping her community, and especially the young people, to take control of their lives through education. She achieves this by working with the parents in an informal way and seeks support from the various organisations that service the community to strengthen, mentor and support the parents. She instills in people not to forget the power of their own culture in how they communicate and care for each other, and that the power lies with them, it is with the people.

Commissioner Doreen HART OAM (Binhthi / Bulcan Clans) was selected as a Cape York representative for the 2015 Emerging Leaders Program hosted by Jawun. In 2021 Commissioner Hart, with the support of her workplace, completed her Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care. 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. In December 2021 Commissioner Doreen Hart retired from her position as Team Leader/Service Provider with Apunipima Cape York Health Council. Commissioner Hart is enjoying retirement with family and friends, with grandchildren playing a big part in her life.

Local Commissioner Hart is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) and a member of the Thurrpiil

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 including 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Some of her children live in different parts of Australia but they are all close to her heart. Commissioner Cannon enjoys her leisure time pottering around home and 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 had her employed as a Student Development Officer at the Hope Vale Campus of CYAAA. Her role involved 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. Commissioner Cheryl has high expectations for her family to do well in school, be positive role models, and always do the right thing.

From 2021 to February 2023 Commissioner Cannon was the Education Coordinator of the CYAAA Hope Vale Playschool which is a learning environment for children aged 0 to 4 years. Their learning is focused on literacy, language and numeracy, delivered through fun and enjoyable activities for children and their parents. In 2023 Commissioner Cannon commenced in a new role as Secretary of the Thurrpiil Community Justice Group. Commissioner Cannon enjoys being involved in community events that engage all age groups.

Cheryl joined the Commission as a Hope Vale Local Commissioner in August 2014. She enjoys using her FRC role to support and encourage families to be the best people they can be. In 2023 Commissioner Cannon met up with two former students who have joined the FRC, one as a Local Commissioner in Coen and the other as

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a teacher aide in Hope Vale. “We were all once Teacher-Student now we are colleagues - such proud moments”. As a Commissioner for Hope Vale, Cheryl’s vision and values run parallel to that of the wider community, and she is eager to set in motion change for the positive future of Hope Vale. Always care for your children!

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 also held a role in the live performance and re-enactment of the landing of Captain Cook and his interactions with the Guugu Yimithirr Bama at the Cooktown and Cape York Expo 2021.

She attended Hope Vale State School, Cairns West State School, Trinity Bay High School and the Cairns Business College. She is a traditional owner, a Director of the Hope Vale Congress Aboriginal Corporation, and a Director of her own Gamaay Warra family business. In January 2022 she was elected as Deputy Chair of Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation before being appointed as Chairperson in August 2022. In 2024 Commissioner Deeral was appointed as a Director on the Board of Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation. These positions reinforce her vision of providing a range of services and positive initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Cooktown and surrounding areas.

Commissioner Deeral is a mother of two sons and grandmother of five granddaughters and one grandson. Commissioner Deeral became a Hope Vale Local Commissioner on 20 October 2011.

Commissioner Selina KERR-BOWEN is married to Ronald Bowen from the Thuubi / Dharrba Warra Clans of Hope Vale. Commissioner Kerr-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 Nancee-Rae is currently schooling at St Patrick’s College in Townsville. She is striving to also graduate secondary school, like her older brothers, Warwick and Coleridge. Commissioner Kerr-Bowen has lived in Hope Vale for most of her life, only leaving to complete her secondary schooling in Brisbane where she graduated from Hendra High in Nundah. 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 Kerr-Bowen commenced with the Commission on 14 May 2015 and feels good parenting is vitally important. She would like other parents to also enjoy the close relationship and respect from their teenagers that she enjoys with her children. Over the years Commissioner Kerr-Bowen and her husband have committed their time as General Carers. Since 2019 they have been raising four children who were placed into Child Safety. Commissioner Kerr-Bowen has recently undertaken, and greatly enjoys, organising functions for women in the community, such as Mother’s Day and other related Women’s events.

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 Robert 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



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Robert 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 Robert 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 1 November 2019 Robert Gibson was appointed as a Hope Vale Local Commissioner.

Commissioner Robert Gibson has been blessed with two daughters and one grandson 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.

Commissioner Kathryn Dora GIBSON (Thuubi/Dhaarrba/Biri Gaba Clans), or Dora as she prefers to be called, is currently employed by My Pathway as an Activity Supervisor and works at the newly established Hope Vale Community Activity Hub.

She is married to Trevor Gibson from the Bulgun/Binthe clans, and has four children, ten grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren of whom she is very proud.

She has had a career in education which spanned almost 40 years, initially in administration at the Hope Vale State School and then as a teacher-aide. After years as a teacher-aide, she was encouraged to study for her teaching diploma. She graduated with a bachelor degree, which was special as she graduated together with her daughter Tamara. Within her teaching role, she was seconded as a multi-lit teacher for two years, also holding down many acting-principal positions, the last being at Coen State School. She retired from teaching in 2012.

In 2013 Commissioner Dora Gibson applied for and was successful in acquiring a role as the

Education & Youth Support Officer for the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council, a position she held for four years. In 2018 she was offered a position with My Pathway at the Youth Hub. This role focused on after-school and holiday activities at the hub for school children. Within this role she worked closely with the school, supporting them with incentives, and used the Hub to manage behaviour and improve attendance.

Commissioner Dora Gibson is passionate about keeping her language and culture alive and works tirelessly with her husband to run cultural programs in the community. Commissioner Dora Gibson became a Hope Vale Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

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

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spend time with her nieces and nephews fishing, enjoying the natural beauty of the Daintree area, reading and particularly gardening at home.

Commissioner George ROSS-KELLY (Kuku Nyungkul / 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 include 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 on 1 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 Rossville/Cooktown areas with his family.

Commissioner Daphne CREEK (Kuku Nyungkul / Southern Kaantju Clans) was born and raised in Mossman where she attended Mossman State School and Mossman State High School. She is the youngest of two children and is a proud mum of six children. In 2012 Commissioner Daphne

Creek purchased her first home with her husband and sons.

Working as a health worker in the late 1990's immersed Commissioner Daphne Creek into the Mossman Gorge community whilst linking families with support services. Early in 2003 saw Commissioner Daphne Creek embark on her career with BBNAC. There she has worked in many roles including administration, finance and payroll and as housing manager.

Weekends include spending time with family and enjoying a meal together. Gardening and quiet times at home are also important to Commissioner Daphne Creek.

Commissioner Daphne Creek became a Mossman Gorge Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

Commissioner Zara RYAN (Yalanji / Nyungkul and Southern Kaantju Clans) was born in Cairns and raised in Mossman, where she completed school at Mossman State High School. She has three siblings and a young daughter.

Working part-time whilst completing her secondary studies, Commissioner Ryan worked in a local café and for an Indigenous Family Support Service. Training and skilling herself with tools to grow and progress in January 2019 took Commissioner Ryan to Ayers Rock in a position as front office receptionist. With the ever-changing world in 2020, she moved back to Mossman to be closer to family. Commissioner Ryan has a very relatable perspective of growing up in the area as a young Indigenous person, assisting her ability to interact with clients in an authentic and genuine manner.

Having a love of all sports, at seventeen Commissioner Ryan was a representative in the under 18's Indigenous Australian Netball Schoolgirl team that travelled to New Zealand. Her interests and passions include continuing to learn her language and culture, and performing and teaching her traditional dancing, which she wants to pass on to her daughter and the younger generation. Commissioner Zara Ryan became a Mossman Gorge Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.



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Commissioner Jarrod KULKA (Kuku Yalanji Clan on his father's side and Wulgurukaba People on his mother's side) has lived in Mossman his whole life. Commissioner Kulka attended Mossman State High School, and afterwards went on to gain accreditations including a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management, Chainsaw Certificate, Construction White Card, and a Certificate III in Tourism.

Commissioner Kulka's background is in skilled manual work as a trainee deckhand, labourer, farmhand, fencing contractor, and he spent time working in the mines as a heavy truck operator. He then went into roles where he could use his strong knowledge of Indigenous culture – a Lead Tour Guide at Mossman Gateway and then a Cultural Awareness Teacher for Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation. He has taught cultural awareness to local businesses and visitors in the area, breaking down barriers and closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Commissioner Kulka's calm, stable and easy-going nature enables him to engage with clients respectfully and attentively.

Commissioner Kulka's hobbies and interests on the weekends include rugby league, fishing and hunting which is an important cultural tradition he wishes to continue. Commissioner Kulka became a Mossman Gorge Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

Commissioner Julie-Ann (Julie) WILLIAMS (Kuku Yalanji Clan) was born and raised in Mossman where she attended both Mossman State School and Mossman State High School. Being one of 12 children, life has always been busy for Commissioner Julie Williams.

She has a passion for encouraging the health and wellbeing of her community. Stepping into the Local Commissioner role is something that seemed a natural progression for her. Having worked for many years in Mossman Gorge, improving people's lives is very close to her heart. Early in her career Commissioner Julie Williams worked as an Indigenous Student Support Officer and teachers-aide, nurturing, and encouraging youth. In 2009 Commissioner Julie Williams embarked on her role as a Youth Development

Coordinator in Mossman delivering youth programs and offering counselling and support to stabilise health and lifestyle.

Her commitment to improving the wellbeing of her community expanded to the role of Parenting Consultant in Mossman Gorge, working closely with many community members. Increasing her skill set then saw Commissioner Julie Williams move into the role of Community Support Worker, supporting families to address alcohol and drug problems. In 2016 Commissioner Julie Williams undertook a role of travelling into thirteen Cape York communities delivering a drug and alcohol program. In 2021 Commissioner Julie Williams felt that she needed to be closer to her family and country and returned to Mossman to undertake her role at Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation, hosting a girl's On Country Program.

When not immersing herself into community, Commissioner Julie Williams practices Bowen Therapy and Reiki, enjoys painting, camping and looking after her own wellbeing. Commissioner Julie Williams became a Mossman Gorge Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

Registrar

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 Human Resource 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

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capability of the Commission, introducing and implementing reforms and overseeing the operations of the registry.

Prior to joining the Commission Maxine was employed by the 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.

Acting Registrar Helen Weedon

Helen was born and raised in Nottingham, England. Originally with a strong science focus she first graduated university with a Bachelor of Science (BSc) Hons in Biological Sciences from Lancaster University. After graduating she moved into the corporate arena and went on to further study whilst working full time. Her additional tertiary qualifications include a Post Graduate Diploma (with Distinction) in Management Studies from Nottingham Trent University and a Post Graduate Masters level qualification in Advanced Investigative Practice. In addition, she has a professional qualification from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Europe's leading professional body for HR, Learning and Development. Helen is also PRINCE2 project management certified and qualified, and successfully completed the BCI Certificate Examination from the Business Continuity Institute (a global membership association for business continuity and resilience professionals). She believes strongly in the benefits of education and training as a complement to real lived experience.

Helen has also studied at the University of Minnesota in the United States of America and lived in Minneapolis and Saint Paul for a year as part of her BSc Hons, contributing to a rich tapestry of cultural experiences over the years.

Helen has many years professional experience across a very diverse range of industries including Health, Financial Services and Energy. She has

extensive business management and operational skill and capability with multidisciplinary and client focused organisations. Prior to moving to Australia Helen was the Investigations Manager and Security Risk Manager for E.ON UK. After emigrating to Australia in 2010 Helen made Cairns her home and embarked on a lengthy career with Queensland Health where she had responsibility for a large operational portfolio of non-clinical functions comprising of several hundred staff and a \$35m dollar operating budget.

Helen joined the Family Responsibilities Commission in July of 2023 as Acting Registrar when Registrar, Maxine McLeod, took well deserved leave. Helen was then permanently appointed to the position of Registrar on 1 July 2024 and is truly delighted to continue to be a part of delivering on the aims and objectives of the Commission in a permanent capacity.

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:	Ms Cara Marks
Coen:	Ms Kate Gooding
Doomadgee:	Mr Brenden Joinbee
Hope Vale:	Ms Josephine Pinder
Mossman Gorge:	Ms Kate Gooding



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Appendix D – Sitings calendar

Family Responsibilities Commission 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023

WEEK COMMENCING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	OTHER
3 July					Special Holiday - DM	7 NAIDOC Day - DM
10 July			AU			
17 July		DM	DM	DM	Show Holiday	21 Cairns Show Day
24 July	Show Holiday - MG	AU	AU			24 Mossman Show Day
31 July		MG	HV		Special Holiday - AU	4 Aurukun Day Special Holiday
7 August						
14 August		AU	AU	DM		
			HV			
			DM			
21 August		AU	AU		Special Holiday - DM	25 Doomadgee Day Special Holiday
		MG				
28 August			DM		Student Free Day	
			CO			
4 September		LCDW	LCDW	LCDW		Local Commissioner Development Week
11 September			HV	DM		
18 September	Special Holiday - AU					18 Aak Ngamparam Special Holiday - AU
25 September						
2 October	Public Holiday			DM		2 King's Birthday Public Holiday
				HV		
9 October		AU	AU			
		MG				
16 October			DM	DM		
			HV	HV		
23 October						
30 October		AU	AU	DM		
			HV			
			DM			
6 November						
13 November			DM	DM		
			HV			
20 November		AU	AU	AU		
		MG				
27 November		AU	AU	DM		
		DM	DM			
			HV			
			HV			
4 December			AU	CO		
11 December						
18 December						
25 December	Public Holiday	Public Holiday				Public Holidays 25 Christmas Day and 26 Boxing Day, 27, 28, 29 Office Closed for Xmas

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Family Responsibilities Commission 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024

WEEK COMMENCING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	OTHER
1 January	Public Holiday					1 New Year's Day Public Holiday
8 January						
15 January						
22 January		MG			Public Holiday	26 Australia Day Public Holiday
29 January			AU	DM		
			HV			
			DM			
5 February		AU	AU			
			CO			
12 February			DM	DM		
			HV	HV		
19 February		AU	AU			
26 February			DM	DM		
4 March		MG	AU			
11 March			DM	DM		
			HV	HV		
18 March		AU	AU			
25 March			HV		Public Holiday	29 Good Friday Public Holiday
1 April	Public Holiday					1 Easter Monday Public Holiday
8 April			AU			
15 April		AU	AU	DM		
			CO			
			DM			
22 April		MG		Public Holiday		25 ANZAC Day Public Holiday
29 April			DM	DM		
			HV			
6 May	Public Holiday					6 Labour Day Public Holiday
13 May		AU	AU	DM		
			DM			
20 May						
27 May		AU	AU	DM		
			DM			
		MG	HV	HV		
3 June	Special Holiday - DM					3 Mabo Day - DM
10 June		AU	AU	DM		
			CO			
			HV			
17 June		MG				
24 June						



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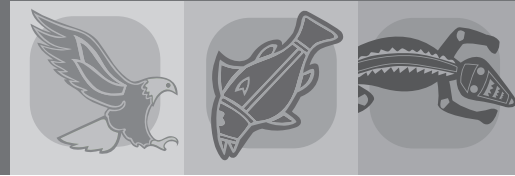
Appendix E – Client Engagement activities

Family Responsibilities Commission 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024¹

WEEK COMMENCING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	OTHER
1 January	Public Holiday					1 New Year's Day Public Holiday
8 January						
15 January	AU	MG	AU	AU		
22 January	AU	MG			Public Holiday	26 Australia Day Public Holiday
29 January	DM	DM	AU	HV		
		HV				
5 February	AU	AU	CO	AU		
		CO		CO		
		DM		DM		
12 February		DM		MG		
		MG				
19 February		AU	AU	AU	DM	
		DM	DM			
26 February	DM	DM		AU	HV	
	MG	HV		HV		
		MG		MG		
4 March	MG	AU	AU	AU	AU	
		DM	DM	DM		
		MG		MG		
11 March	DM	HV	DM	DM		
	HV			HV		
18 March		AU	AU	AU	AU	
		MG	DM	DM		
			MG	HV		
25 March	DM	DM	DM	CO	Public Holiday	29 Good Friday Public Holiday
	AU	AU				
	HV	CO	CO			
		HV				

1. Client Engagement activity reports are not available prior to 1 January 2024 as the FRC's CRM system had not been updated to capture this information.

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Family Responsibilities Commission 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024

WEEK COMMENCING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	OTHER
1 April	Public Holiday					1 Easter Monday Public Holiday
8 April		AU	AU			
15 April	AU	AU	AU	CO		
	MG	CO	CO	HV		
22 April	MG	HV	MG	Public Holiday		25 ANZAC Day Public Holiday
		MG				
29 April	AU	CO	AU	DM		
	CO	DM	HV	HV		
	DM	MG				
	HV					
	MG					
6 May	Public Holiday	HV	CO	DM		6 Labour Day Public Holiday
			DM			
			HV	MG		
			MG			
13 May	AU	AU	AU	AU	MG	
	HV	HV	HV			
20 May					AU	
27 May	AU	AU	HV	AU	AU	
	DM	DM		HV	DM	
	HV	HV				
	MG	MG				
3 June	AU	DM	DM			
10 June	AU	DM	DM	CO		
	HV	HV	HV	HV		
17 June	MG	MG	AU	AU		
24 June						



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Appendix F – Compliance checklist

Family Responsibilities Commission 2023-24 annual report

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s 	ARRs – section 7	Page 4
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table of contents 	ARRs – section 9.1	Page 5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glossary 		Page 137
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public availability 	ARRs – section 9.2	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreter service statement 	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright notice 	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 9.4	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information licensing 	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5	N/A
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Information 	ARRs – section 10	Pages 8-41, 70-77, 112-113
Non-financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's objectives for the community and whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives 	ARRs – section 11.1	Pages 42-43, 114-115
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency objectives and performance indicators 	ARRs – section 11.2	Pages 16-69, 112-113
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency service areas and service standards 	ARRs – section 11.3	Pages 16-69
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of financial performance 	ARRs – section 12.1	Pages 89-90
Governance – management and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational structure 	ARRs – section 13.1	Pages 12-13, 28-31, 78-79
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive management 	ARRs – section 13.2	Pages 28-29, 79-80
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) 	ARRs – section 13.3	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Sector Ethics 	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4	Page 81
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights 	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5	Pages 81-82
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland public service values 	ARRs – section 13.6	Page 80

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Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Governance – risk management and accountability	• Risk management	ARRs – section 14.1	Page 82
	• Audit committee	ARRs – section 14.2	Page 82
	• Internal audit	ARRs – section 14.3	Pages 82-83
	• External scrutiny	ARRs – section 14.4	Page 83
	• Information systems and record keeping	ARRs – section 14.5	Page 84
	• Information security attestation	ARRs – section 14.6	N/A
Governance – human resources	• Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 15.1	Pages 84-88
	• Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No. 04/18 <i>Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 15.2	Page 85
Open Data	• Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	Page 88
	• Consultancies	ARRs – section 31.1	Page 88
	• Overseas travel	ARRs – section 31.2	Page 88
	• Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 31.3	N/A
Financial statements	• Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	Page 18 of 20
	• Independent Auditor's Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	Pages 19-20 of 20



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Appendix G – 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 808 people as at 30 June 2023.^{1,2}

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 204 people as at 30 June 2023.^{1,3}

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 918 people as at 30 June 2023.^{1,2}

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 667 people as at 30 June 2023.^{1,2}

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 102 people as at 30 June 2023.^{1,4}

1. Note: Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3, July 2021 – June 2026 boundaries for local government areas of Aurukun, Doomadgee and Hope Vale, and statistical areas level 1 (SA1s) of 31501139616 for Coen and 30604116408 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 2023.
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 2023.
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 2023.

Glossary of terms



Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	FPMS	<i>Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019</i>
AD	Dame of the Order of Australia	FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
ARRs	Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government agencies	FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
AU	Aurukun	FTE	Full-time Equivalent
BBNAC	Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation	HT	Housing Tenancy
BCP	Business Continuity Plan	HV	Hope Vale
CCP	Conditional Case Plan	ICM	Intensive Case Management
CDC	Cashless Debit Card	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
CE	Client Engagement	IMT	Incident Management Team
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	MAG	Magistrates Court
CEP	Community Empowerment Program	MG	Mossman Gorge
CIM	Conditional Income Management	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
CM&M	Case Management and Monitoring	NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
CO	Coen	NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
CRM	Customer Relationship Management	NWRH	North and West Remote Health
CS	Child Safety and Welfare	OAM	Medal of the Order of Australia
CVO	Commander of the Royal Victorian Order	PDA	Performance and Development Agreement
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy	PJCHR	Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
CYI	Cape York Institute	PSC	Public Service Commission
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence	QGSO	Queensland Government Statistician's Office
DIS	District Court	QLD	Queensland
DM	Doomadgee	RAATSICC	Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care
DSS	Department of Social Services	RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
DTATSIPCA	Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts	RJED	Remote Jobs and Economic Development
DV	Domestic Violence	SAO	School Attendance Officer
DVB	Domestic Violence Breach	SEN	School Enrolment Notice
DVO	Domestic Violence Order	TAFE	Technical and Further Education
EMT	Executive Management Team	VCP	Voluntary Case Plan
EQ	Education Queensland School Attendance	VIM	Voluntary Income Management
ERP	Estimated Resident Population	WBC	Wellbeing Centre
ESR	Elevated School Response	YJRS	Youth Justice Reform Select
FAA	<i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</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

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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
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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.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-partnerships/discrete-remote-communities/welfare-reform> and <https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles>.



FRC

FAMILY
RESPONSIBILITIES
COMMISSION