



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.

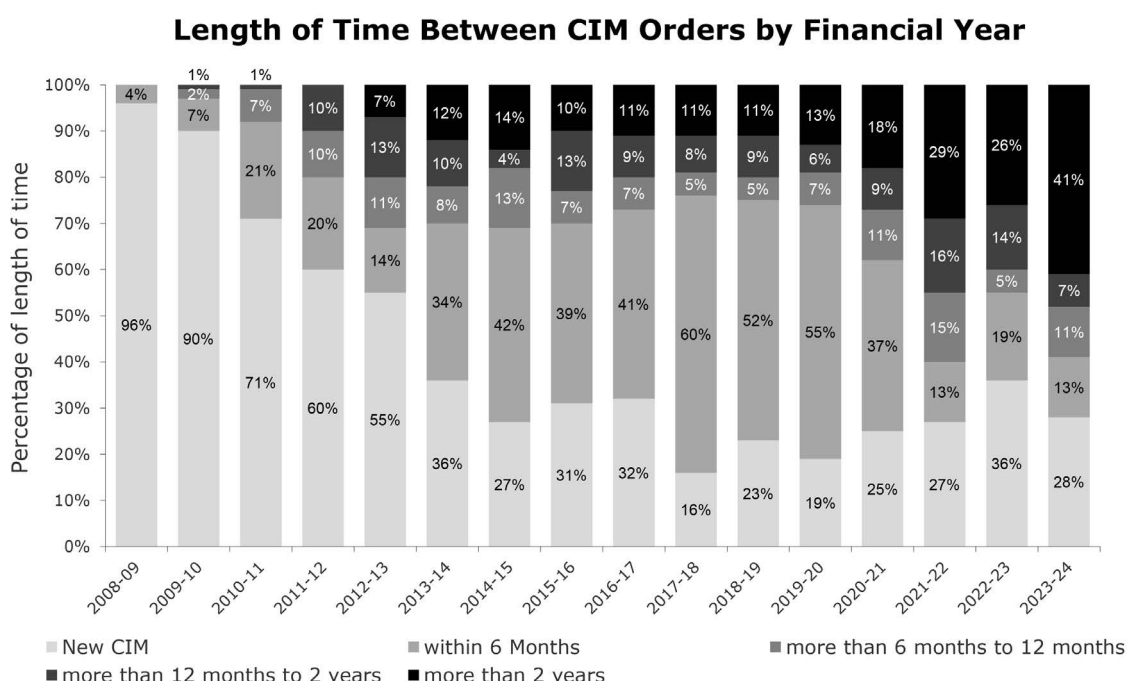
This demonstrates the FRC's continued use of CIM is proportionate to the client's circumstances and that CIM is used to encourage personal responsibility, with terms and percentages of CIM orders and agreements adjusted according to the client's progress and circumstances. During the 2023-24 reporting 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.



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.

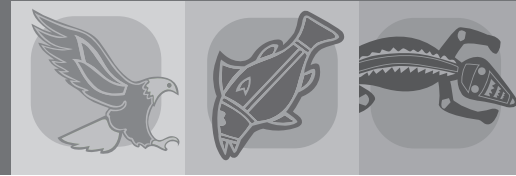
Performance Indicator 5: Number of successful appeals against FRC decisions

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:

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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.
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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.

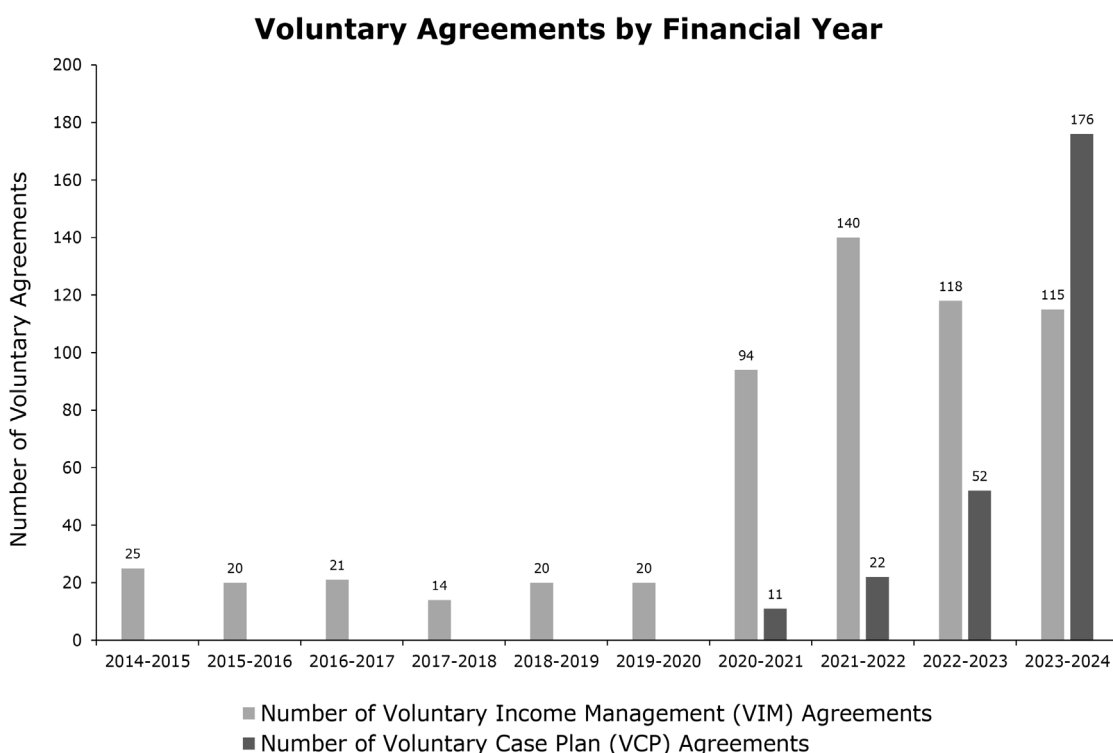


Our strategic objectives

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.



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

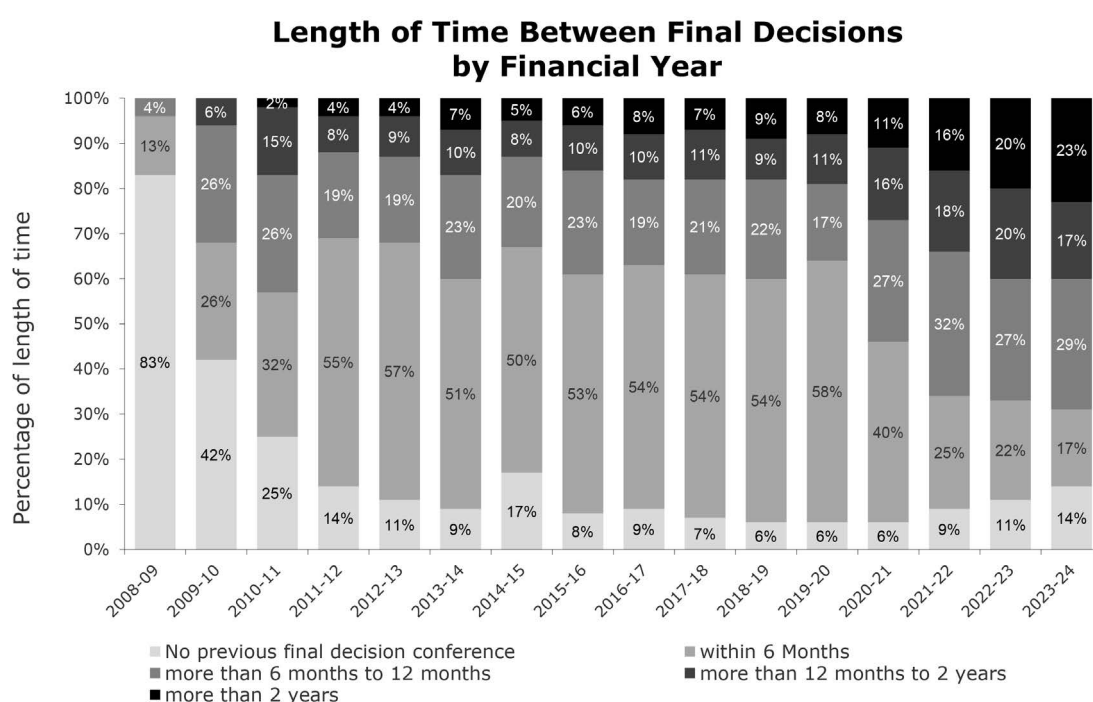
More information about voluntary agreements can be found in the FRC registry and decision-making section of this report. Further analysis of VIM data can be found at page 50 and is also discussed further in the context of another performance indicator.

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

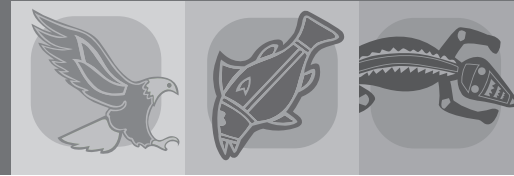
During 2023-24 the highest circumstance³ chosen by clients to enter into a voluntary agreement for VIM was “I need support for myself” (95), followed by “I need help to support my family” (49), “I need help to support my children” (39) and “I like the SmartCard” (39).

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



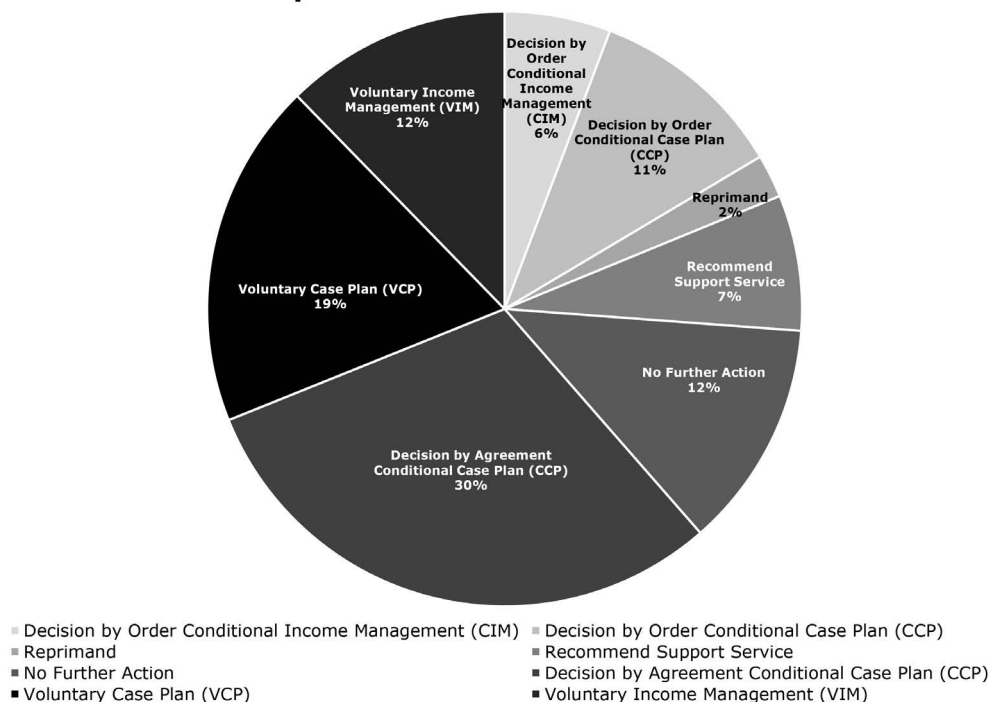
Performance Indicator 3: Strength of mandated interventions decreased

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.

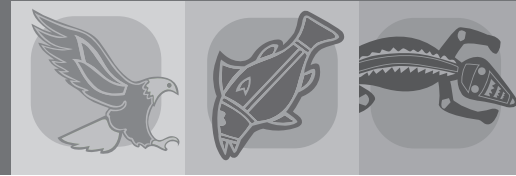
For the last 6 months of the financial year the FRC has been recording and collating these interactions. This data reveals there have been 81 occasions where a partner service provider has joined with an FRC staff member or Local Commissioner as part of our CE approach.

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:

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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.
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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:

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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.
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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'*.