



OUR PERFORMANCE — REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

A Grandmother's Story

I'm a grandmother and have been looking after my four grandchildren for about two years. It took a while to get the money sorted out and I had some rough times trying to manage with the kids and felt that every time someone came to my house they were judging me and my kids. Every time someone came around it was just about the kids, not how I was feeling. I felt that they did not care about me.

This new Family Responsibilities Commission said that I need to come to a meeting, I thought they were going to judge me and take my kids away, I thought the worst. I went to the meeting and I felt OK because I knew the Commissioners from the community but I was really embarrassed. We did lots of talking and they told me about the Wellbeing Centre and FIM and even suggested that I should apply for my own house with the kids. I agreed to go to a counselor and to go back to FIM. I was worked up at the end of the meeting and felt very mixed up. A couple of days later I went to the counselor and they helped me, they listened to me. I told them I needed a house and they helped me. I decided to make some rules of my own and now don't allow anyone to drink at my house. At first I thought I shouldn't do this but I thought it would be better for my kids to have a house with no grog. I can go and have a drink somewhere else away from the kids. It is safer for them because people are not coming around all the time and my house is cleaner too. The Commission spoke to other people that I live with and explained to them that we all need to try together to make it better.

You know what else, I am buying a fridge and a freezer through FIM I have some money coming from Centrelink, I went to the toy shop and looked for my kids, I am going to put some things away for Christmas day. If I have a fridge I will not have to walk to my auntie's house to get the food. I also want to buy the kids a bed each.

The Commission explained that it was important for my youngest to go to the Kindy a few days a week. She is going and she has a special teacher helping her. This has made it easier for her to learn and she is better behaved. She is used to going to Kindy now.

I look at what happened since the meeting with the Commission. I think I am cared about now. I don't think all these good things would have happened (as she looks around her house) if I did not give it a chance. You know, I felt there was no one who cared about me.

The Commission could help other people like it helped me. I feel better about myself and I am getting used to not drinking in my house. I still love to drink but now I go away and make sure someone is with my kids. I took the kids to a birthday party on the weekend, we had a good time and I did not drink. My house is clean and tidy with all new furniture's that I got with FIM's help, I am so glad I went back to FIM. I am glad the Commission listened to me.

Not long ago I met with the Commissioners again, just for a chat so they could hear what I am doing. I am proud of where I am now you know. It was nice that they listened to me. I still have a problem with grog but I am working around it.

There are more important things to life than just drinking.