

# Family Responsibilities Commission

*Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and  
The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs*

## Quarterly Report

**No. 20**

**April 2013 to June 2013**



*Report prepared by the Family Responsibilities Commission under the leadership of  
Commissioner David Glasgow*

## Executive Summary

During quarter 20, 943 agency notices were received by the Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission) which were within jurisdiction, an increase of 257 from last quarter. There were 424 conferences held for the same period, representing an increase of 30 from last quarter. Six Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) were entered into, 56 orders were made to attend community support services and 62 Conditional Income Management (CIM) orders were issued. When compared to last quarter this represents a decrease of 2 FRAs, an increase of 21 orders to attend community support services and an increase of 4 orders for CIM.

Since the commencement of the Commission, 70 Voluntary Income Management (VIM) agreements have been processed. Community members continue to express their desire to enter into VIM agreements in order to assist with budgeting and ensure funds remain available for purchases.

The Commission case managed 183 clients during the quarter. The Commissioners made 102 referrals relating to 59 clients, an increase of 37 referrals from last quarter. Further activity during the quarter consisted of 25 Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders, an increase of 1 from the previous quarter. One Show Cause conference was held during quarter 20.

The Family Responsibilities Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners. Part of this professional development involves enhancing and expanding their relationships with other Indigenous organisations, government departments and agencies. The Commission invited the Local Commissioners from each community to Cairns for a Development Week commencing 6 May 2013, during which various activities and visits were conducted. Detective Senior Sergeant Kevin Goan from the Far Northern Drug Squad discussed the threat posed by cannabis use in Cape York communities and the strategies used to reduce the harm associated with its use. James Cook University (JCU) Associate Professor Alan Clough of the Community-based Health Promotion and Prevention Studies Group addressed those present about the Cape York Cannabis Project, an initiative between the communities and Queensland Police Service to target the problems directly related to substance abuse. Dr Ernest Hunter, a psychiatrist and public health physician who has been working in Indigenous communities for 30 years then spoke of his past research conducted on alcohol and its effects upon Aboriginal populations.

The Local Commissioners and Commission staff visited the Cape York AFL Boarding House where Indigenous students live in a small, personalised residential facility while attending schools and colleges in Cairns. Students are case-managed whilst culturally supported. Other visits conducted during the week were to Gindaja Treatment and Healing Indigenous Corporation, an accommodation facility catering for both men and women with drug and alcohol related problems and to JCU where in excess of 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are studying in Townsville and Cairns and at the study centres in Mackay, Mount Isa and Thursday Island. The Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners proudly hosted a visit to Mossman Gorge and the eco-tourism development of the Mossman Gorge Gateway Centre. Commission staff and Local Commissioners were also guided through the Mossman Gorge community to view horticultural and artistic initiatives based on the culture of the Kuku Yalangi people.

The finale of the Development Week was a visit by Noel Pearson. Mr Pearson spoke of the wonderful achievements of Cape York Welfare Reform and of the ongoing challenges. He thanked each Local Commissioner for their dedication to their communities, acknowledged the impact their role has had on each of their lives and spoke of his admiration for their continued leadership. Mr Pearson said he was immensely proud of what each of them had achieved and that each of them individually had been responsible for the betterment of their communities.

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### **Abbreviations**

CIM	Conditional Income Management
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DATSIMA	Department of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs
DETE	Department of Education, Training and Employment
EFV	Ending Family Violence
FRA	Family Responsibilities Agreement
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
VIM	Voluntary Income Management

### **Also:**

Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)  
*Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the Act)  
Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry)  
Family Responsibilities Board (the Board)

# Family Responsibilities Commission Cape York Welfare Reforms

Report to 30 June 2013.

## 1. Activities and Trends

### Notices

In quarter 20 the Commission received **1,313 agency notices**<sup>1</sup>. Some individuals may have been the subject of more than one agency notice. Of that figure 943 notices (72 percent) were within the Commission's jurisdiction and 370 notices (28 percent) were outside the Commission's jurisdiction.

Within jurisdiction notices comprised of:

345	Magistrates Court notices
558	School Attendance notices
18	Child Safety and Welfare notices
22	Housing Tenancy notices

Of the 370 notices not within the Commission's jurisdiction, there were 321 Magistrates Court notices, 46 School Attendance notices and 3 Child Safety and Welfare notices.

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

- **Aurukun's 479** notices constitute **50.8 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction across the four CYWR trial communities:

166	Magistrates Court notices
295	School Attendance notices
9	Child Safety and Welfare notices
9	Housing Tenancy notices

Fifty-two Magistrates Court notices, 11 School Attendance notices and 1 Child Safety and Welfare notice were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Coen's 41** notices constitute **4.3 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

14	Magistrates Court notices
27	School Attendance notices
0	Child Safety and Welfare notices
0	Housing Tenancy notices

One Magistrates Court notice and 7 School Attendance notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> Counting rules are that an agency notice is counted on the basis of number of 'clients' on the notice. For example a child safety and welfare notice relating to two parents is counted as two notices.

- **Hope Vale's 340** notices constitute **36.1 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

122	Magistrates Court notices
204	School Attendance notices
7	Child Safety and Welfare notices
7	Housing Tenancy notices

Sixty-three Magistrates Court notices and 26 School Attendance notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

- **Mossman Gorge's 83** notices constitute **8.8 percent** of the total notices in jurisdiction:

43	Magistrates Court notices
32	School Attendance notices
2	Child Safety and Welfare notice
6	Housing Tenancy notices

Two hundred and five Magistrates Court notices, 2 School Attendance notices and 2 Child Safety and Welfare notices were processed as not within jurisdiction.

Since its commencement the Commission has received 14,025 agency notices within its jurisdiction. Total notices increased from 1,036 in quarter 19 to 1,313 in quarter 20. Of those notices in jurisdiction, Magistrates Court and School Attendance notices increased, whilst Child Safety and Welfare and Housing Tenancy notices decreased.

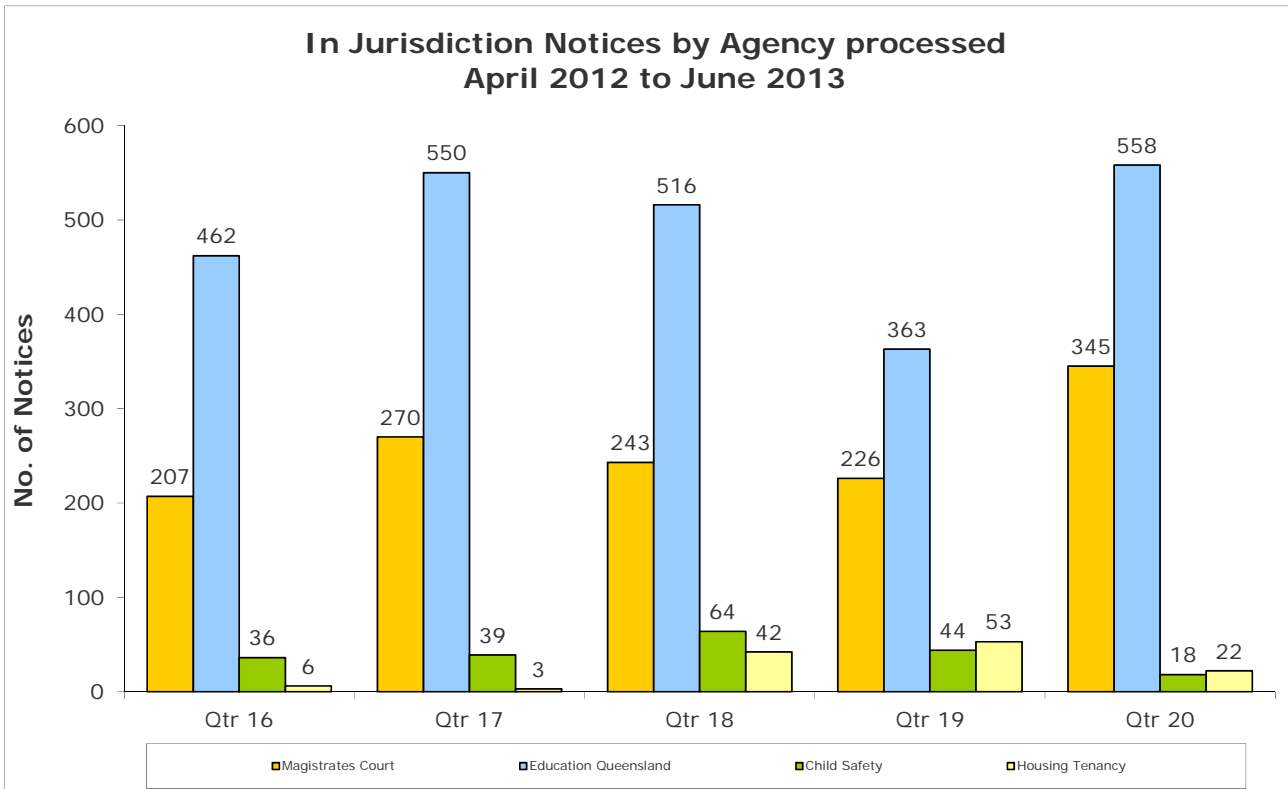
Magistrates Court notices increased this quarter to 345 from the 226 received in the previous quarter. All four communities experienced an increase in notices this quarter. Aurukun increased by 95 notices, Coen increased by 8 notices, Hope Vale increased by 10 notices and Mossman Gorge increased by 6 notices.

School Attendance notices increased from 363 in quarter 19 to 558 in quarter 20. Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge communities all experienced an increase in notices for the quarter of 83, 7, 81 and 24 notices respectively.

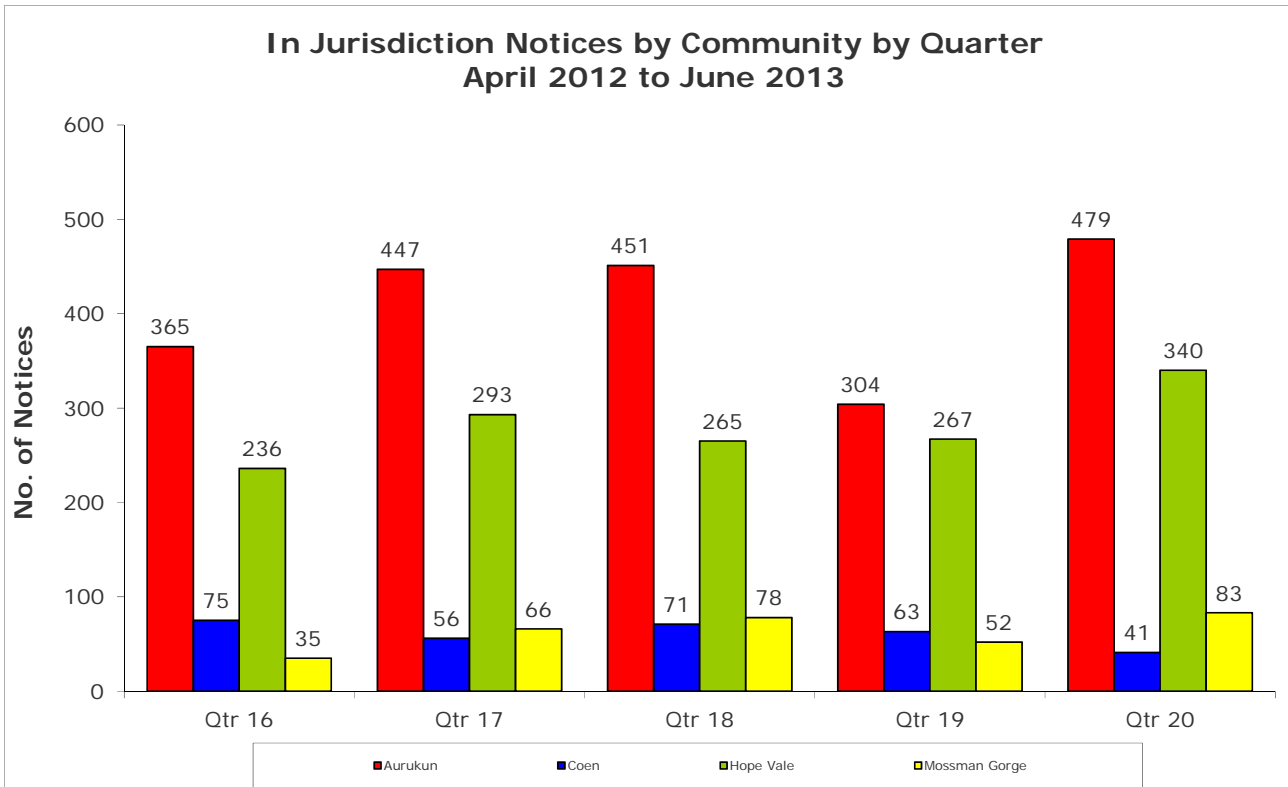
Child Safety and Welfare notices decreased from 44 in quarter 19 to 18 in quarter 20. Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge communities all experienced a decrease in notices for the quarter of 3, 4, 18 and 1 notices respectively.

Housing Tenancy notices decreased to 22 from the 53 received in the previous quarter. Coen notices decreased by 33; Mossman Gorge notices increased by 2; whilst Aurukun and Hope Vale remained stable for the quarter.

The Commission receives school attendance data from the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE). The release of relevant data relating to quarter 20 was not available at the time of writing this report, however, the available data provided by DETE is published on the Commission's web page at <http://www.frcq.org.au> when available.

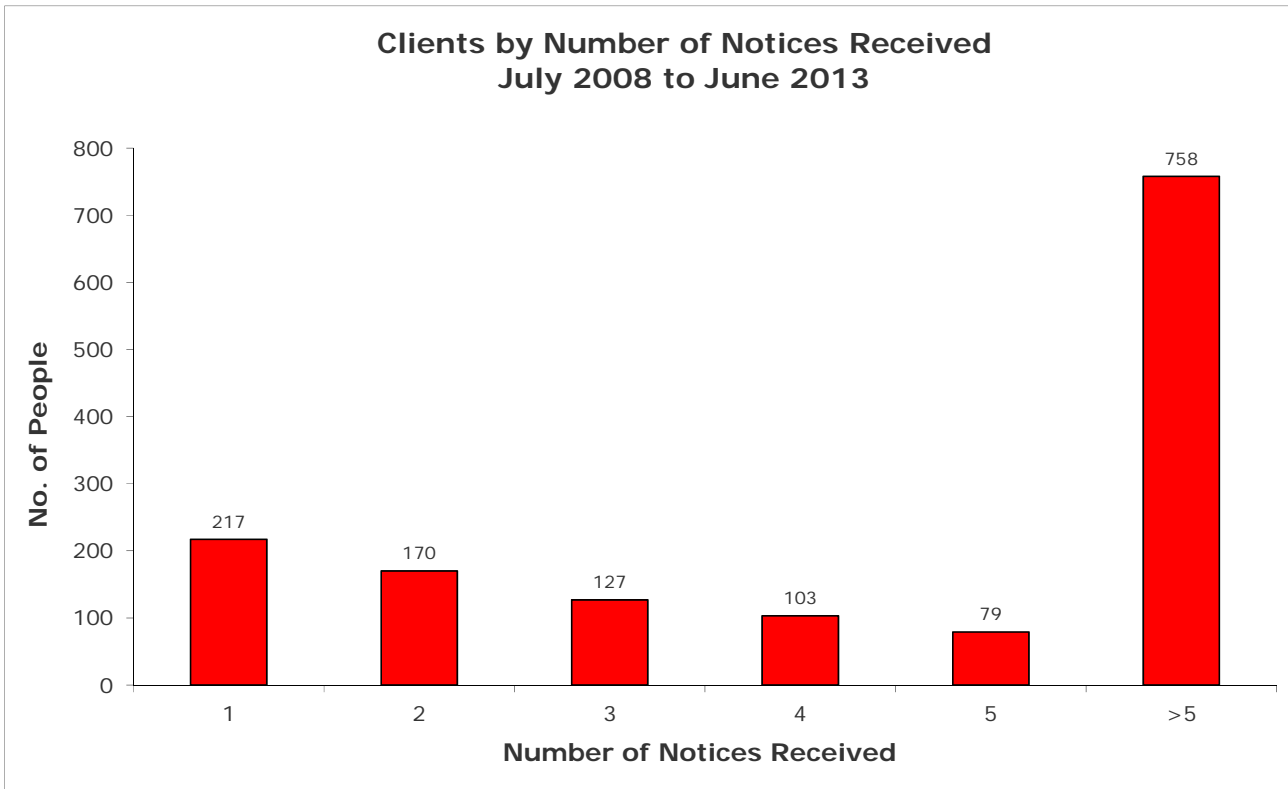


**Graph 1:** In jurisdiction notices by type and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.



**Graph 2:** In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

Since commencement in July 2008, 85.1 percent of clients have received more than one notice with 52.1 percent of clients receiving more than five notices. Frequently this illustrates multiple child school absences for the one family or multiple Magistrates Court notices relating to one incident. Conversely, 14.9 percent of clients have received only one notice.



**Graph 3:** FRC clients by number of notices 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2013.

**(Note:** Counting rules stipulate that where multiple charges are received each charge is counted as an individual notice or each child’s absence is counted as one notice – i.e. if three children from the one family were absent, that was counted as three notices).

**Conferences**

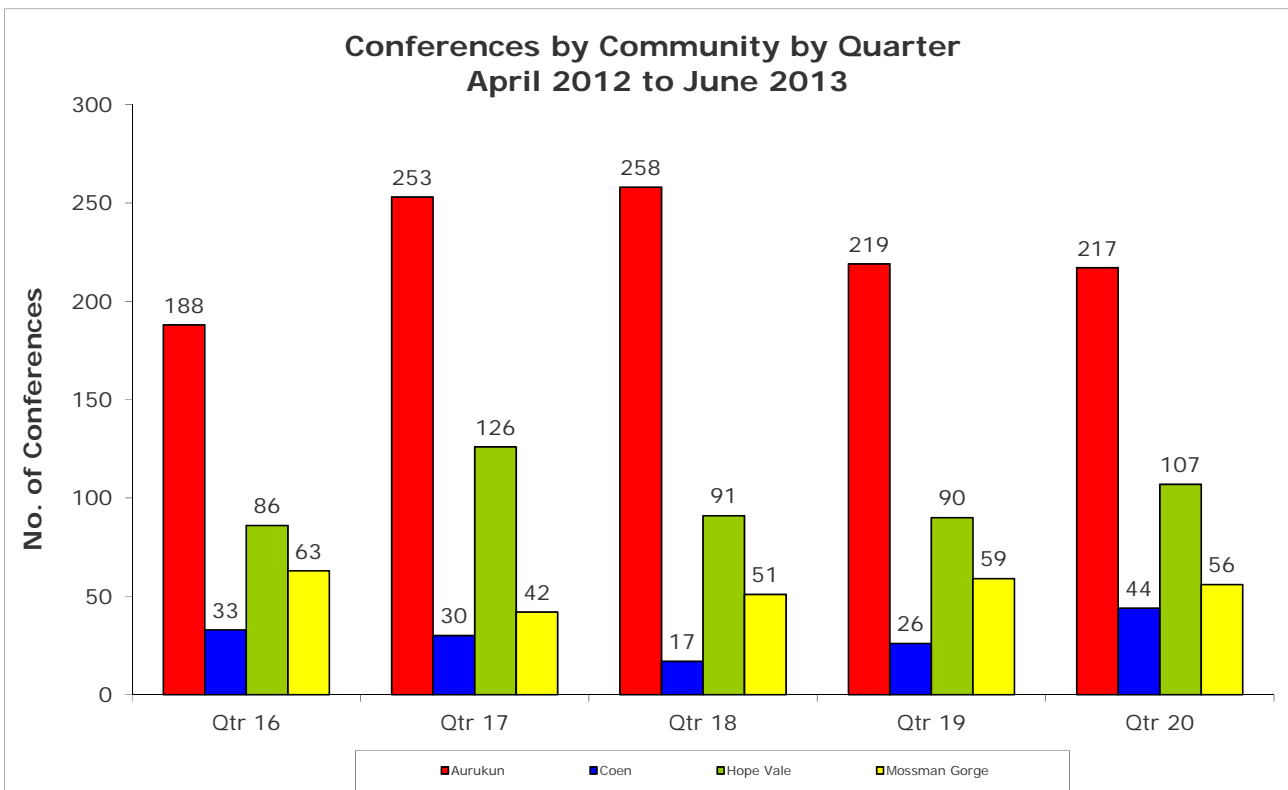
Four hundred and twenty four conferences<sup>2</sup> were held across the four communities in quarter 20 resulting in 6 FRA’s being entered into, 56 orders made to attend community support services and 62 CIM orders as well as no further action, rescheduling and scheduling to return for review with compliance. Thirty-five new clients were conferenced during the quarter. Details of conferencing activity in each community for quarter 20 are as follows:

- 217 conferences were held in Aurukun
- 44 conferences were held in Coen
- 107 conferences were held in Hope Vale
- 56 conferences were held in Mossman Gorge.

Conferences increased from 394 in quarter 19 to 424 in quarter 20.

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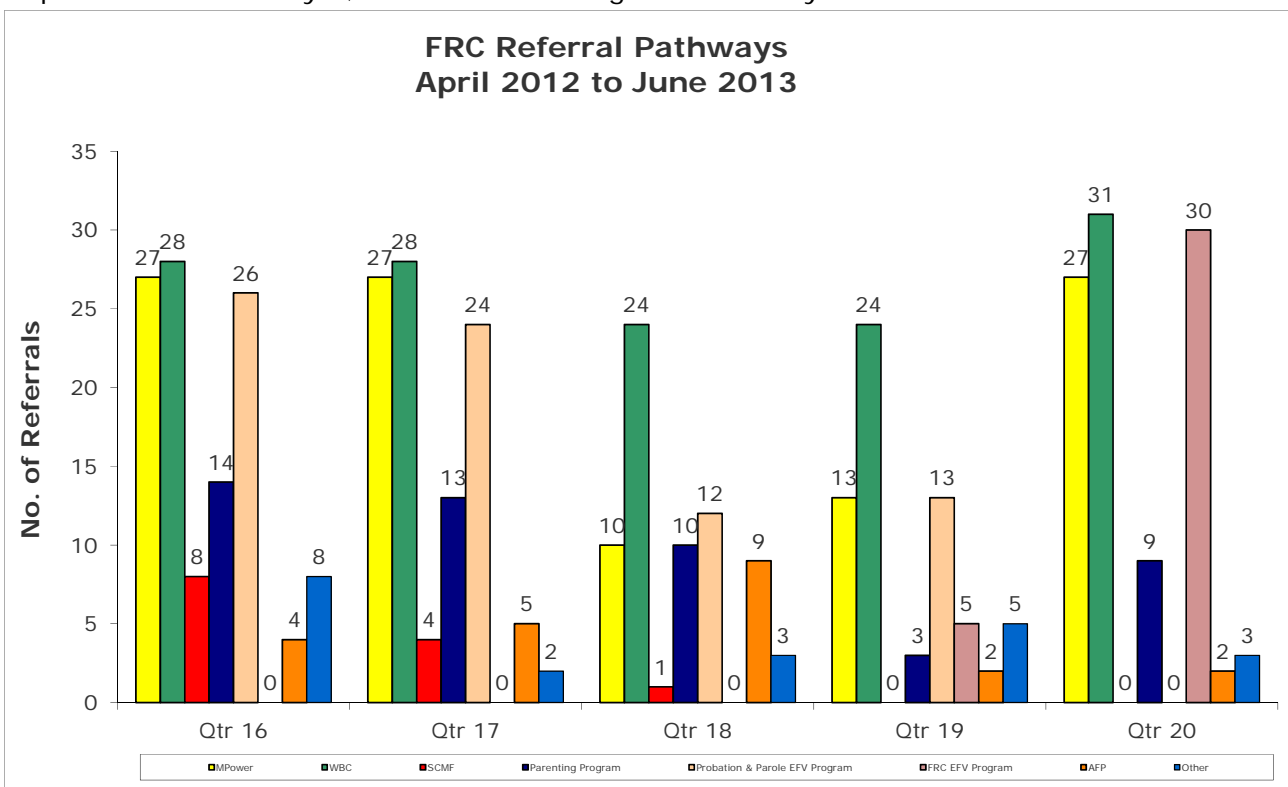
<sup>2</sup> The number of conferences held relates to the number of conferences listed, which includes where a client was served with a Notice to Attend Conference and subsequently failed to attend.



**Graph 4:** Conferences by community and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

### Referrals

Referrals to service providers increased from 65 in quarter 19 to 102 in quarter 20, relating to 59 clients. Since commencement the Commission has referred 753 clients to service providers resulting in approximately 51.4 percent of clients on 12 month service referral plans. Referrals in the communities during the quarter were as follows: Aurukun increased by 25; Coen increased by 2; Hope Vale increased by 9; and Mossman Gorge increased by 1.



**Graph 5:** Referral pathways by referral type and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> EFVP referrals converted to FRC from Probation and Parole on 1 March 2013.

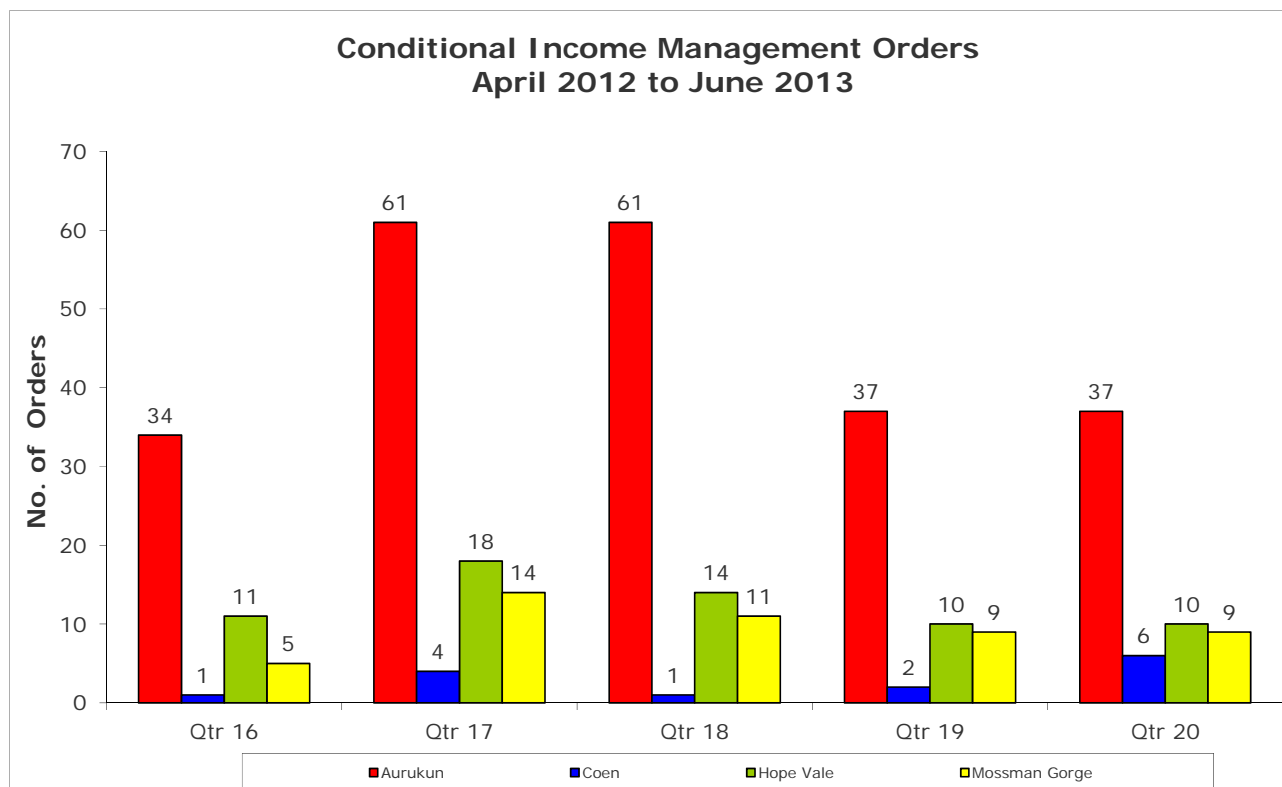


## Conditional Income Management

Sixty-two CIM orders were made in quarter 20, an increase of 4 from quarter 19. Since the commencement of the Commission 1,066 CIM orders inclusive of original orders, extensions and amendments have been made relating to 564 clients. During the quarter an increase was experienced in one of the four communities with Coen increasing by 4 CIM orders. Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge remained stable for the quarter.

As at 30 June 2013, 38.4 percent of the Commission's clients have been subject to a CIM order over the past five years. As at 30 June 2013 there were 228 clients subject to a CIM order which equates to 15.5 percent of clients on a CIM order at a point in time. Commissioners continue to negotiate with clients to achieve desirable outcomes or to demonstrate motivation and commitment to make appropriate life choices. Demonstrated positive steps toward taking responsibility provide the Commissioners with sufficient reason to consider revoking CIM orders when requested by the client.

Since the commencement of the Commission in 2008, 70 VIM agreements have been processed relating to 59 clients. Those clients that request a VIM agreement use income management as a savings and budget tool, often for a specified period and to deter family members from accessing their income.



**Graph 6:** Conditional Income Management orders by community and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

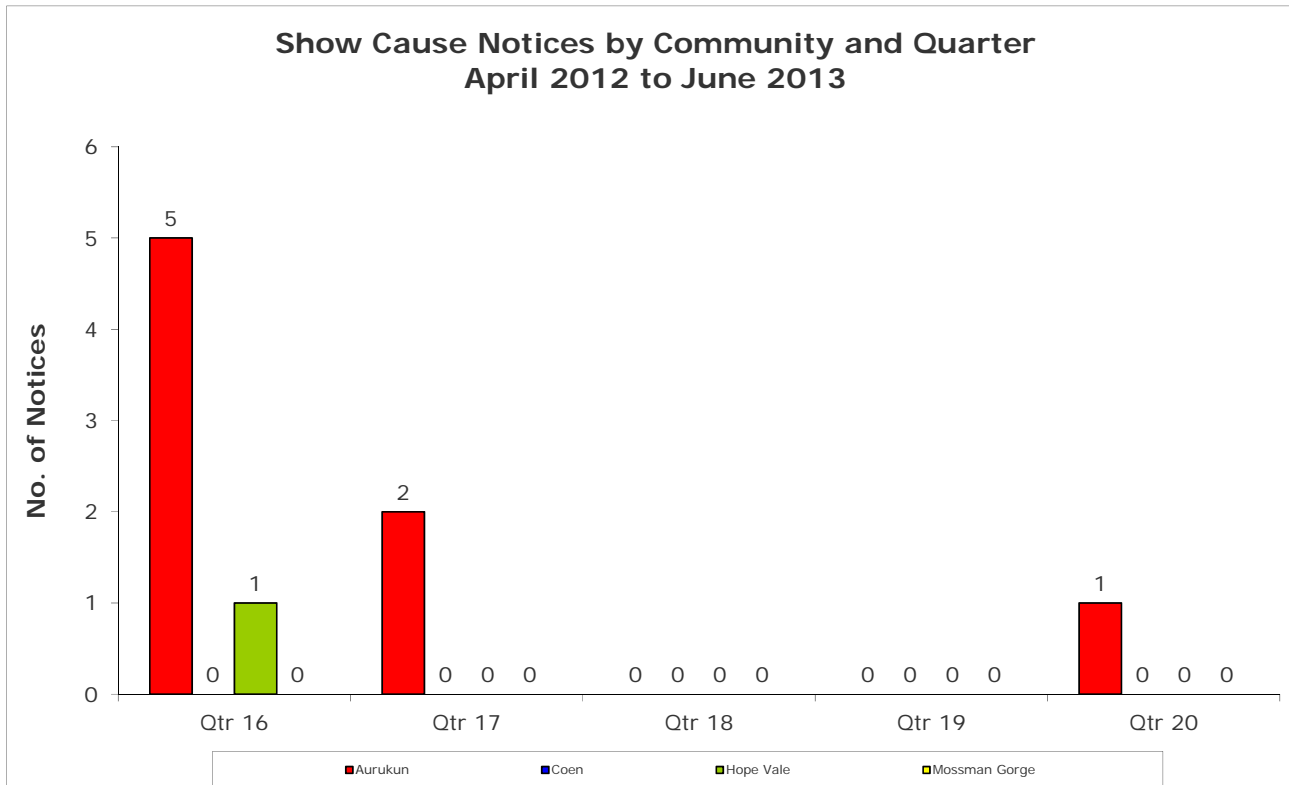
## Case Management

As at 30 June 2013, 183 clients were being case managed, an increase from 167 in quarter 19. Since the last quarter the number of clients being case managed in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale has increased by 15, 1 and 2 respectively whilst Mossman Gorge has decreased by 2.

## Show Cause Notices

During quarter 20, 1 Show Cause hearing was held. This matter resulted in:

1 Client Income Managed



**Graph 7:** Show Cause Notices by community and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

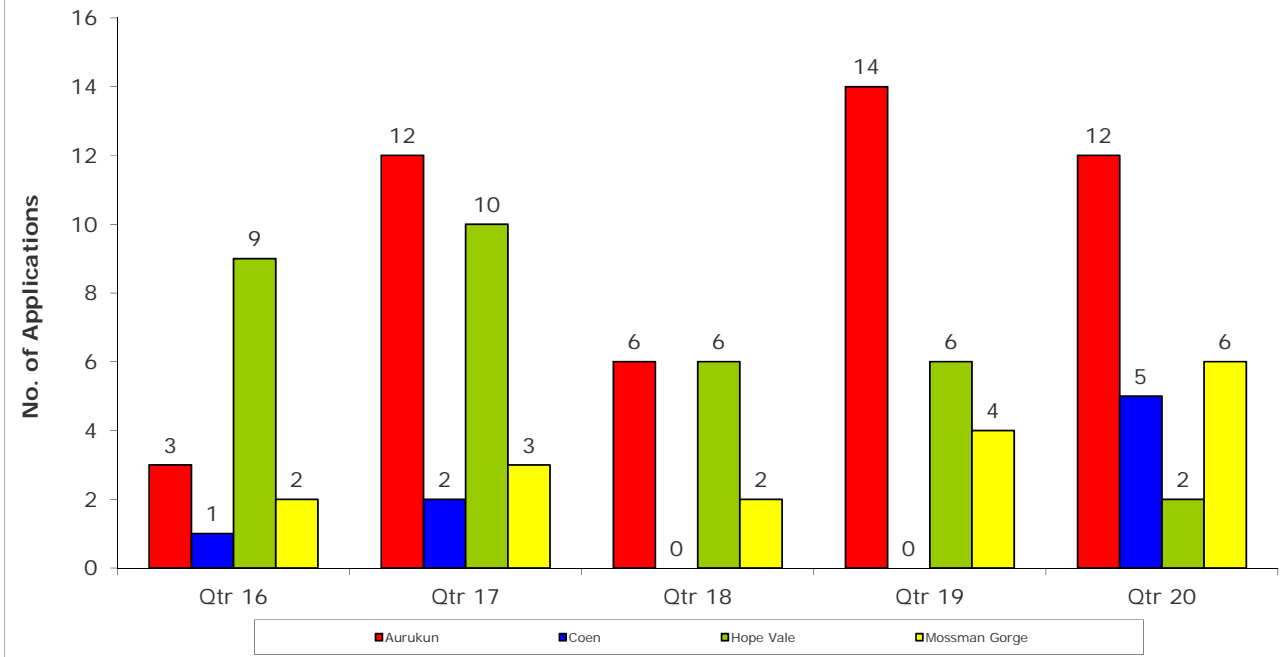
## Applications to Amend or End Agreements or Orders

Twenty-five Applications to Amend or End a Family Responsibilities Agreement or Order were received in quarter 20, an increase of 1 from quarter 19. Outcomes of the 25 applications received are as follows:

- 9 Applications granted and Income Management agreements and orders revoked
- 6 Applications dismissed
- 10 Applications received at the end of the quarter, decision pending

The Commission continues to encourage clients to participate in the Amend or End process. Commissioners report increasing client confidence to question decisions and the reasons behind decisions, both for decisions delivered by the Commission and decisions delivered by external agencies and bodies.

### Number of Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order April 2012 to June 2013



**Graph 8:** Applications to Amend or End FRA or Order by community and quarter 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

## 2. Future Direction and Challenges

### Future Direction

As with mainstream communities, the CYWR trial communities live in a rapidly changing world. The Local Commissioners are witnessing a shift in community values and its resultant needs. The future direction and challenge for the Commission is to shape its service delivery to meet the changing needs of the communities. In doing so it is necessary to discern what has worked in the past, what has not worked, and importantly what is possible. The Local Commissioners have identified the need for a holistic approach to provide services outside of the legislative framework of the Commission in order to galvanise upon the momentum of welfare reform.

Of particular importance to the CYWR trial communities is the need to re-engage secondary school students in education. The communities of Aurukun and Hope Vale report a significant number of disengaged youth of high school age who have returned to community but have not engaged in an education option. These youth participate in dysfunctional behaviour and feel disengaged from mainstream society and also from their own communities. The Local Commissioners will be focusing their efforts on engaging these students to encourage their education, divert them to vocational education if practical, and otherwise strengthen partnerships with boarding schools and transition organisations. In doing so the Commission will work with the Cape York Institute and other State and Australian agencies to develop appropriate strategies through the CYWRT Education Stream Meeting Subgroup and the CYWRT Disengaged Youth Working Group to return these students to regular schooling, or otherwise re-engage them with their communities.

### 3. Financial Operations

#### Governance

Part 12 of the Act provides for the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (the Board).

The Board has a mandate to give advice and make recommendations to the Minister about the operation of the Commission and similarly to give advice and make recommendations to the Commissioner about the performance of the Commission's functions.

The Board must meet at least every three months. The meeting may be held by using any technology available which will allow for efficient and effective communication, however, the Board members must meet in person at least once a year. A quorum for the Board is comprised of two members. The Board's membership consists of:

- Ms Debbie Best                      Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and Multicultural Affairs
- Mr Noel Pearson                    Director, Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
- Mr Finn Pratt                        Secretary, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

#### Operational

In meeting obligations under Part 3 of the Act, the Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the Registry) commenced operations on 1 July 2008 with a central Registry office established in Cairns and local Registry offices operating in each of the four CYWR trial communities.

The Registry, managed by the Registrar, provides corporate and operational support to the Commissioner, the Local Commissioners and the Local Coordinators.

#### Financial

The total funding budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year is \$3.3 million, \$1.5 million from the Australian Government and \$1.8 million from the Queensland Government.

Income:

- Income received by the Commission for the period 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013 totalled \$67,031. This income consisted of:
  - \$49,230 funding received from Queensland State Government for the EFV program
  - \$10,913 interest received
  - \$6,888 received in sundry revenue.

The balance of available funds in the bank as at 30 June 2013 is \$1,324,176.

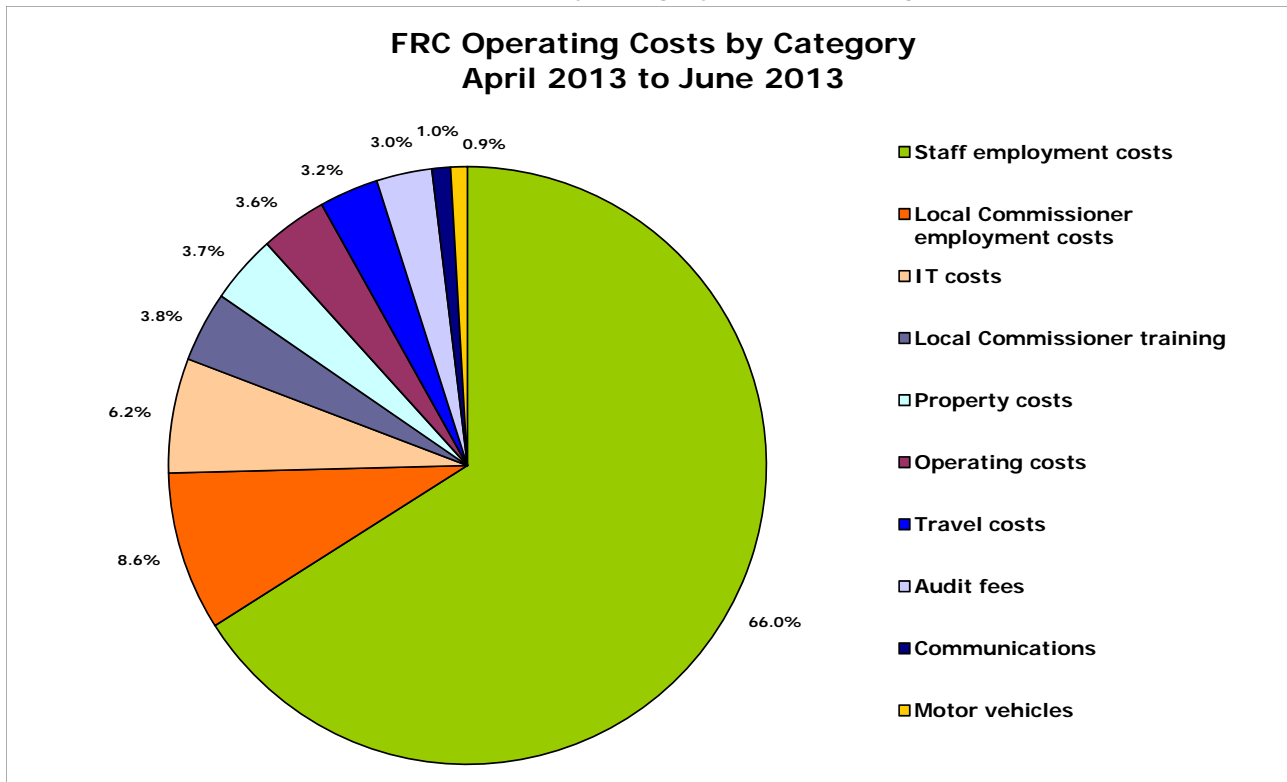
Expenditure:

- Expenditure for the period 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013 was \$932,135.30 (Table 1). This total represents 22.5 percent of the projected annual expenditure of \$4.135 million as stated in the 2012-13 projected expenditure and disclosed in the Queensland State Budget 2012-13 Service Delivery Statements.

1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013	Expenditure Qtr 20	1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013	Expenditure Qtr 20
Staff employment costs	\$614,698.64	Operating costs	\$33,336.51
Local Commissioner employment costs	\$80,199.63	Travel costs	\$30,200.10
IT costs	\$57,520.33	Audit fees	\$28,200.00
Local Commissioner training	\$35,513.14	Communications	\$9,283.78
Property costs	\$34,395.06	Motor vehicles	\$8,788.11
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$932,135.30</b>

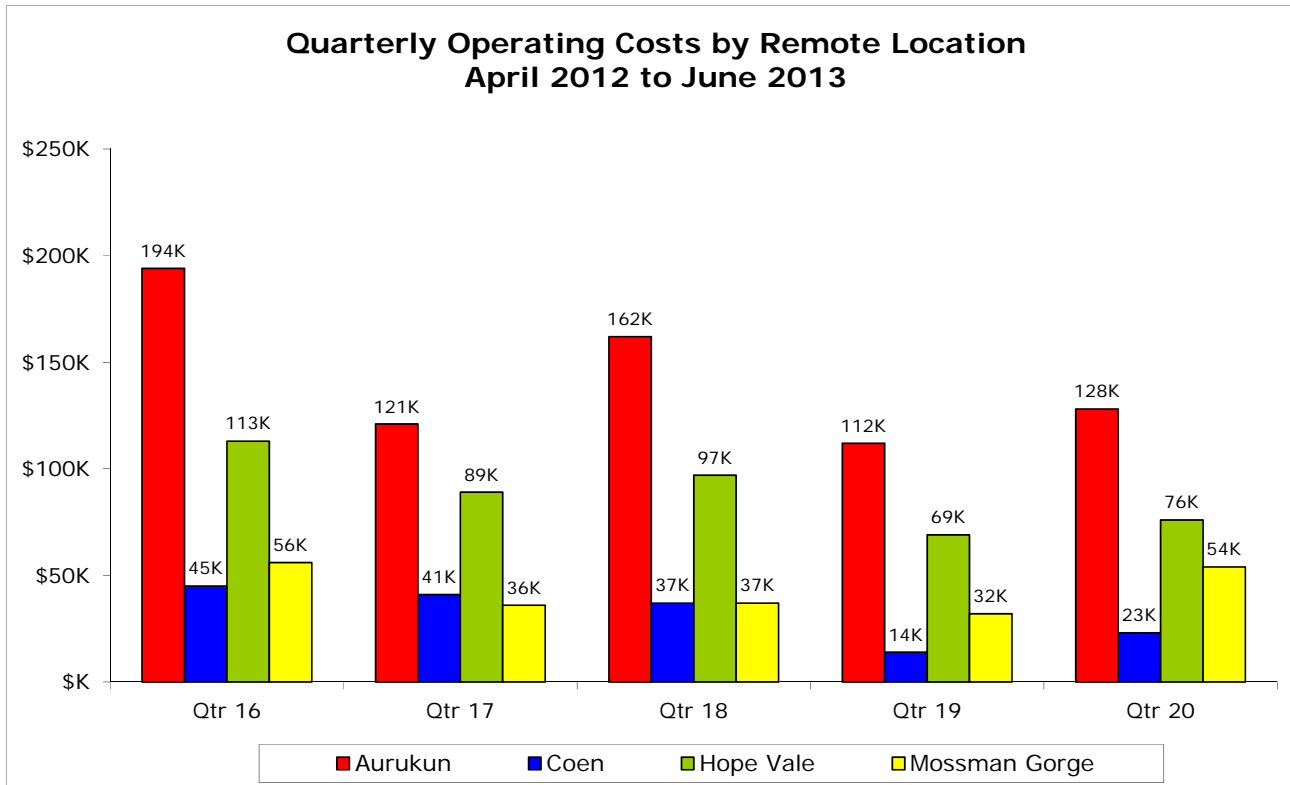
Table 1: Unaudited expenditure in quarter 20.

Quarter 20 disbursement of expenditure by category and percentage of total expenditure.



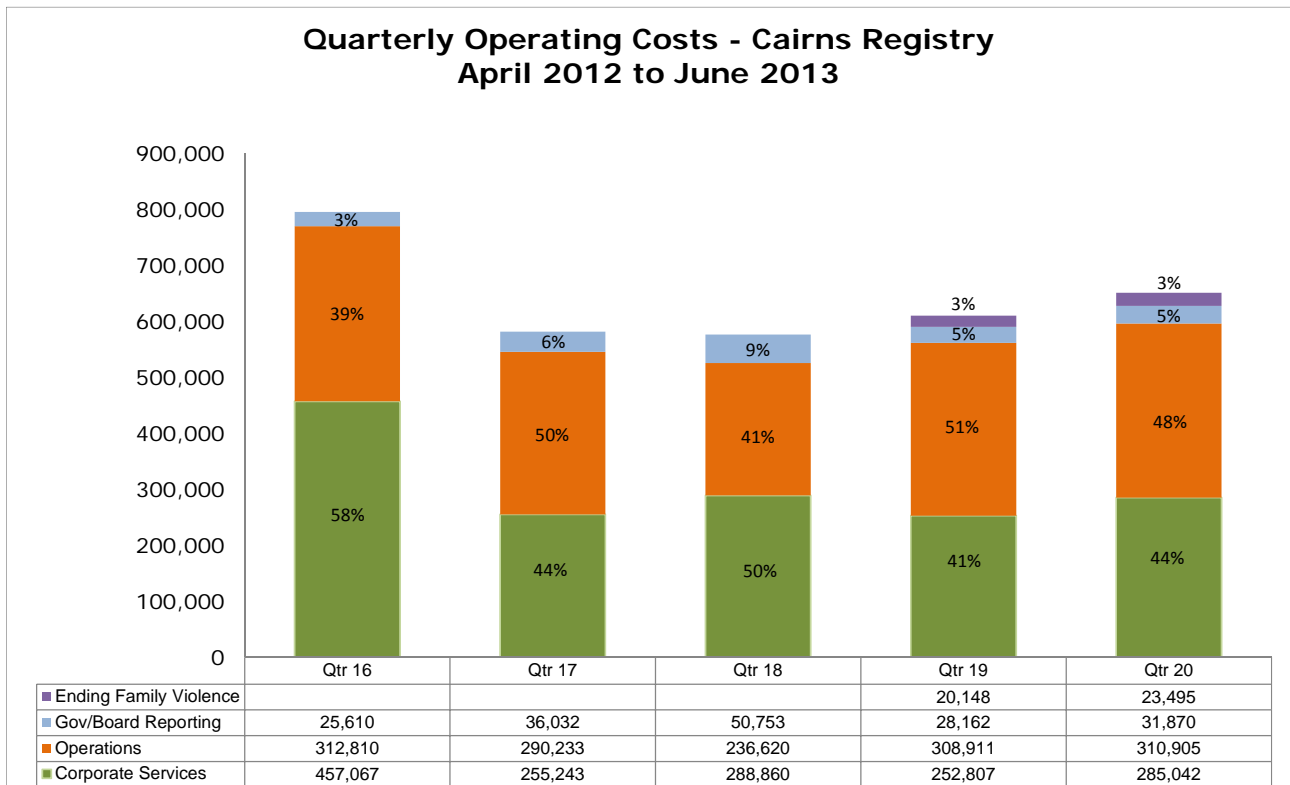
Graph 9: FRC operating costs 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013.

Regional operational expenditure by location and quarter.



**Graph 10:** Operating costs by remote location 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

Cairns Registry expenditure for quarter 20 compared to the previous four quarters.



**Graph 11:** Quarterly operating costs Cairns 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2013.

APPENDIX A



**SITTING CALENDAR 2013**  
**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION**



1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
31 DECEMBER			Public Holiday			31 Office closed for Xmas, 1 New Year's Day, Office week
7 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
14 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
21 JANUARY	DRG					Office week
28 JANUARY	DRG	Public Holiday	29, 30, 31			28 Australia Day Public Holiday, 1 Feb
4 FEBRUARY	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8 4 FR Board Meeting
11 FEBRUARY	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			15
18 FEBRUARY	DRG			19, 20	21	18, 22
25 FEBRUARY	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 28 Feb, 1 March
4 MARCH	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8
11 MARCH	DRG	11	12, 13, 14			14, 15
18 MARCH	DRG			19, 20	21	18, 22
25 MARCH	DRG		26, 27, 28			25, 28, 29 Good Friday
1 APRIL	DRG	Public Holiday				1 Easter Monday Office Week
8 APRIL	DRG					Office Week
15 APRIL	DRG			16, 17	18	15, 19
22 APRIL	DRG	22	23, 24		Public Holiday	25 ANZAC Day, 26
29 APRIL	DRG			30, 1		29 April, 2, 3 May
6 MAY	DRG					Commissioner Week 7 FR Board Meeting
13 MAY	DRG		14, 15, 16			13, 17
20 MAY	DRG			21, 22	23	20, 24
27 MAY	DRG	27	28, 29, 30			31
3 JUNE	DRG			4, 5	6	3, 7
10 JUNE	DRG	Public Holiday	11, 12, 13			10 Queen's Birthday 14
17 JUNE	DRG			18	19	17, 20, 21 Laura Dance Festival
24 JUNE	DRG					Office week





## SITTING CALENDAR 2013 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION



1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013

WEEK COMMENCING	Commissioner	COEN Mon	AURUKUN Tues/Wed/Thurs	HOPE VALE Tues/Wed	MOSSMAN GORGE Thurs	OFFICE CAIRNS
1 JULY	DRG					Office week NAIDOC Week
8 JULY	DRG	8	9, 10, 11			12
15 JULY	DRG			16, 17	18	15, 19 Cairns Show Day
22 JULY	RC		23, 24, 25			22, 26
29 JULY	DRG			30, 31	1	29 July, 2 August 31 FR Board Meeting
5 AUGUST	RC					Office Week
12 AUGUST	DRG	12	13, 14, 15			16
19 AUGUST	DRG			20, 21	22	19, 23
26 AUGUST	DRG		27, 28, 29			26, 30
2 SEPTEMBER	DRG			3, 4	5	2, 6
9 SEPTEMBER	DRG	9	10, 11, 12			13
16 SEPTEMBER	DRG			17, 18	19	16, 20
23 SEPTEMBER	DRG					Office Week
30 SEPTEMBER						Office Week
7 OCTOBER	DRG	Public Holiday		8, 9	10	7 Labour Day, 11
14 OCTOBER	DRG	14	15, 16, 17			18
21 OCTOBER	DRG			22, 23	24	21, 25
28 OCTOBER	DRG		29, 30, 31			28, 1 November
4 NOVEMBER	DRG			5, 6	7	4, 8 4 FR Board Meeting
11 NOVEMBER	DRG		12, 13, 14			11, 15
18 NOVEMBER	DRG			19, 20	21	18, 22
25 NOVEMBER	DRG	25	26, 27, 28			29
2 DECEMBER	DRG			3, 4	5	2, 6
9 DECEMBER	DRG		10, 11, 12			9, 13
16 DECEMBER	DRG					Office Week
23 DECEMBER	DRG			Public Holiday	Public Holiday	25 Christmas Day, 26 Boxing Day, 27 Office closed for Xmas
30 DECEMBER	DRG			Public Holiday		30, 31 Office closed for Xmas, 1 New Year's Day