# ANNUAL REPORT 22

FRC
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION

Annual Report 2021-2022
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 2021 to 30 June 2022.

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

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

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*The Commission recognises we are visitors to the country we travel across and work in and that many of our Local Commissioners are Traditional Owners and Elders of their communities. 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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11 October 2022

The Honourable Craig Crawford MP
Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
PO Box 15397
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Minister Crawford

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2021-22 including financial statements for the Family Responsibilities Commission.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

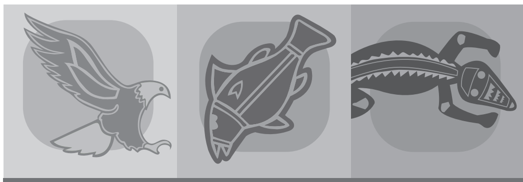
- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government Agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements can be found at page 134 of this report.

Yours sincerely

Tammy Williams
Commissioner
Family Responsibilities Commission

# Contents



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# Service charter statement

*The Family Responsibilities Commission knows that you value good customer service. Our aim is to give you the best service we can. We will work with the Australian and Queensland Governments, stakeholders and clients to deliver the outcomes sought by the welfare reform communities. 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 our communities.*

# Preamble
# Noel Pearson

It is now 14 years since the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) was first established as the centrepiece of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial in 2008. During this time, the case for new effective and empowering approaches to address complex and entrenched disadvantage across Australia has only grown. It has never been clearer—a decisive shift from the welfare paradigm to a development paradigm is imperative.

Remote and discrete Indigenous communities across Australia remain places where people remain ‘stuck’ in disadvantage. Our communities continue to experience unacceptably low levels of school attendance, educational outcomes, employment opportunities, home ownership and other asset development opportunities, and extraordinarily high levels of welfare dependence, addiction, mental illness, crime, violence, and criminal justice and child safety interventions. Closing the Gap on entrenched disadvantage in remote Indigenous communities is the country’s most profound challenge.

The FRC is a precedent setting reform. It shares power and responsibility with Elders and family leaders so they can tackle the problems afflicting their own communities, and bring our own cultures, knowledge, and expertise to bear in doing so. The FRC continues to be one of few examples in Australia of a structural reform embedded in legislation, genuinely empowering Indigenous people. It is the benchmark of shared decision-making.

It is also a rare proven example of success in tackling disadvantage. There have already been four evaluations that publicly report data relevant to assessing the FRC’s success. The evidence shows the FRC is a necessary and central element for transformational change. More must also be done, however, in concert with the FRC to tackle entrenched disadvantage more effectively, including the opportunity to work.

The FRC continues to evolve and improve with experience. From March 2021, the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) replaced the BasicsCard as the operational mechanism for FRC income management. The unique FRC model otherwise remained unchanged. Income management remains only one tool that FRC Local Commissioners use in their restorative justice style conferencing and decision-making.

Since the introduction of the superior CDC technology, we’ve seen a sharp increased uptake of Voluntary Income Management (VIM). As at 30 June 2022, 69 percent of FRC clients on income management were on VIM and only 31 percent were on Conditional Income Management (CIM) after an FRC decision. Many of those taking up VIM, have previously been on CIM, showing that personal responsibility is building.

The take up of VIM shows families see income management as an effective tool to manage one of the most essential elements of a functioning family household—the budget. VIM is being used to resist ‘humbugging’ and manage finances so life’s most basic needs can be met—i.e., to buy food and to pay bills. Women are using VIM to protect their income in relationships involving domestic violence and coercive control. Many parents who use VIM, do so to ensure they can support their children.

The Local Commissioners and the whole FRC team have our gratitude for their tireless work supporting positive change. Some of those appointed from the outset in 2008 are now very senior, and I know they are looking forward to younger and emerging leaders being supported into Local Commissioner roles and taking up their life’s work.

We continue to work in a unique partnership with the FRC, the communities involved, and the Queensland and Australian Governments to secure a clear and guaranteed long-term future for the FRC.

Noel Pearson

# Commissioner Williams' Message

***In 2021-22 the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) continued to demonstrate why it is Queensland's leading model of shared decision-making and self-determination, that is responsive to the evolving needs of individuals and their families.***

The financial year was defined by extraordinary challenges caused by widespread community transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in Far North Queensland. The vulnerability of community members living in the FRC communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge was exacerbated by the decision of many organisations and government agencies to suspend all face-to-face support services for several months. The systemic disruption of widespread service delivery caused unintended consequences, increasing the risk of harm to the most vulnerable members of community.

The FRC recognised full suspension of its own community-based operations was not an acceptable option. The Executive Management Team on advice of the Local Commissioners unanimously resolved '*It is at times like this, when there is great hardship and disadvantage felt by our community members, that the FRC must find a way to work to protect the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons*'.

Although compliance with health guidelines necessitated the postponement of conferencing from January to March 2022, the FRC devised a new 'Intensive Case Management' (ICM) framework and used other agile methods to engage with clients. These approaches utilised existing provisions under the FRC Act, to work intensively with clients outside of the formal conference environment and in a COVID-safe manner.

Notwithstanding disruption to operations for at least a quarter of the year, the FRC saw a tremendous demand for its services which resulted in the 2021-22 financial year recording the second highest number of clients referred to attend support services under either an FRA or order in the Commission's 14-year history.

The FRC also reports continued growth in the number of community members who self-refer and engage with the Commission on an entirely voluntary basis: an increase of 71 percent in the number of referrals under a voluntary case plan, and a 49 percent increase in voluntary income management agreements.

The year was also impacted by a four-month FRC Future Directions Review commissioned by the Queensland Government to inform a 'modernisation' of the Commission. The Commission provided a submission to the review titled '*The FRC: A Model of Self-Determination, An operational analysis of the Family Responsibilities Commission from 2008 to 2022*'. The 160-page document included evidence-based data to inform the review process so the FRC's performance throughout the life of the Commission could more readily be assessed. It found that the FRC provides good value for money. Evidence of the FRC's workload performance shows it is a lean and agile, yet highly efficient and cost-effective organisation. A copy can be downloaded from the FRC's website.

The submission further concluded that the FRC's model of self-determination is entirely consistent with the approaches envisaged under the Queensland Government's *Statement of Commitment*, ongoing development of the *Path to Treaty*, and the *Local Thriving Communities* reforms. Most importantly the FRC achieves practical and real outcomes including helping the Queensland Government to reach the National Closing the Gap targets.

I am delighted to report that many of the positive trends identified in the FRC's operational analysis have maintained trajectory throughout the 2021-22 year. This is a remarkable feat considering the disruption to the FRC's core operations caused by COVID-19. Such outcomes would not have been possible without the enduring work of my fellow Commissioners and registry colleagues, and their unwavering commitment to achieving exceptional customer service outcomes in partnership with our clients and stakeholders.

I am pleased to present the Family Responsibilities Commission Annual Report for 2021-2022.

**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 Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs 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 protection order against the person.

The FRC applies a locally based and culturally relevant conference-style 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.

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.

# About the FRC

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. 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 give 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.

## Legislative scheme

The FRC operates within a legislative framework comprising of:

- *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*
- *Family Responsibilities Commission Regulation 2014*
- *Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* (Expired 30 April 2022)
- *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 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).

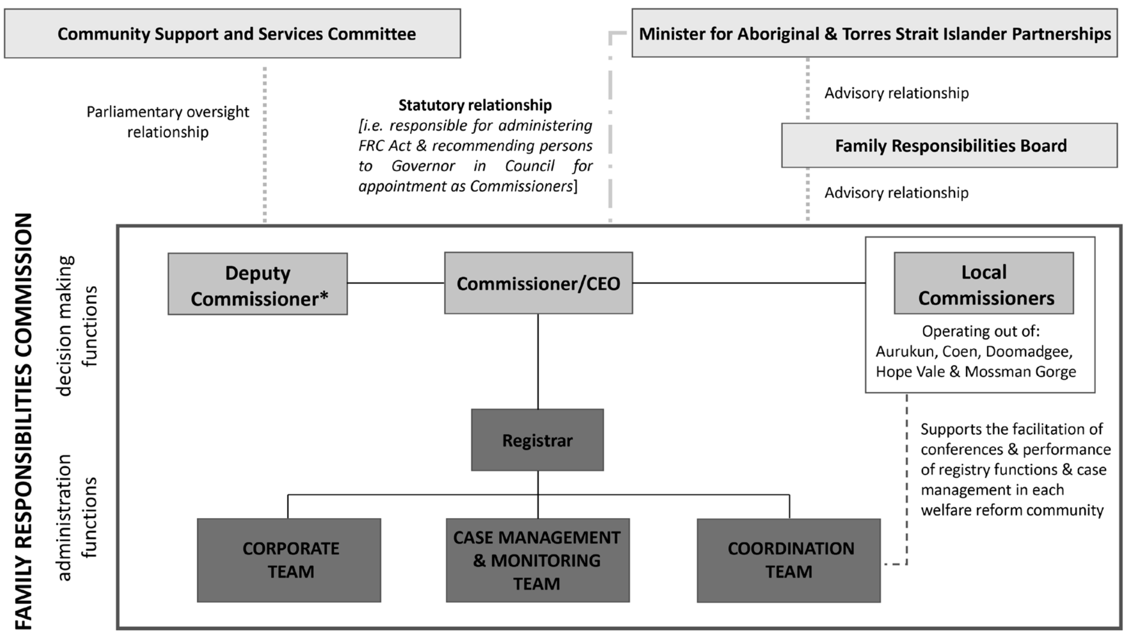
# About the FRC

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).

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

As at 30 June 2022 all members of the Commission's decision-making arm are Aboriginal - comprising 38 Local Commissioners[1] and the FRC Commissioner, Tammy Williams, with the exception of Deputy Commissioner Rodney Curtin whose powers as a decision-maker at conference are executed only upon delegation by the Commissioner.[2]

An innovative feature of the FRC is the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board). The FR Board's functions are provided for in the FRC Act and it has 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 74 and 75.




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

1. The total number of 38 Local Commissioners includes 12 new Local Commissioners who were retrospectively appointed from 5 May 2022. The new Local Commissioners are yet to be inducted and trained and they have not commenced conferencing duties.
2. Section 24 of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008

# About the FRC

## Our vision

Our vision is to support vibrant welfare reform communities that are responsible, healthy, safe and sustainable.

## 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 |

## Strategic objectives

Our strategic objectives for 2018-22 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, agile and innovative organisation and
- know our clients, communities and build partnerships.

The Strategic Plan 2018-22 can be found in the appendices (Appendix A). Our performance against the Strategic Plan 2018-22 is addressed throughout this report.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

## The registry is responsible for the administration of the Commission.

### Operations

During the 2021-22 fiscal year the Commission received 8,278 notices of which 4,533 were within the Commission's jurisdiction.

The majority of notices within jurisdiction received this financial year were for school attendance, followed by Magistrate Court, child safety and welfare and then domestic violence (DV) offences. 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 2021-22 year**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8,278**<br>Agency notices assessed | **4,533**<br>Agency notices deemed within jurisdiction | **1,024**<br>Community members deemed the subject of agency notices |
| **1,096**<br>Conferences and hearings held | **568**<br>Community members prioritised for conferences and hearings | **0**<br>Appeals of FRC decisions |

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

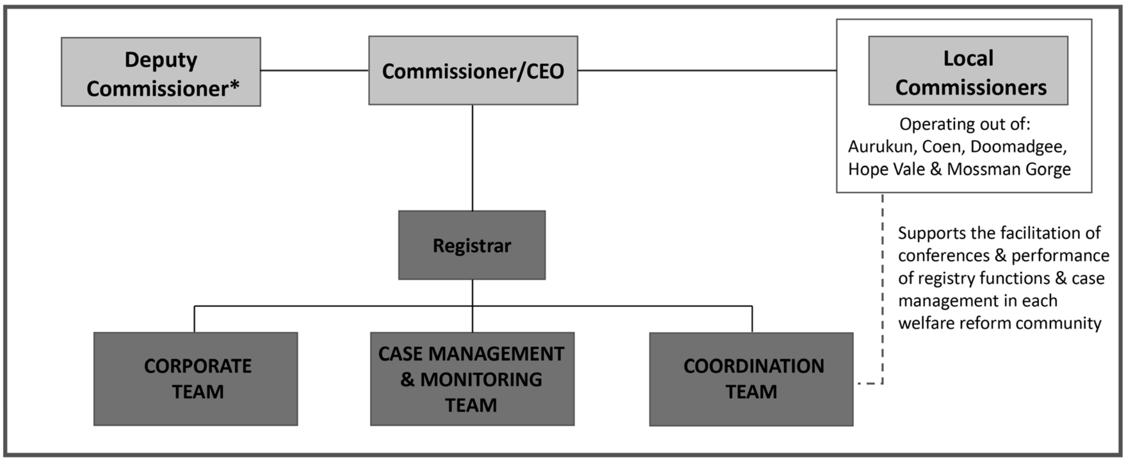
The FRC's administrative workforce in the Commission's registry consists of:

- the FRC 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 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 (Finance) who is responsible for providing financial and strategic/corporate advice and support to the Commission's operations across Cairns and the communities and
- 14 positions across the three teams of Case Management and Monitoring, Coordination and Corporate, including 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.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

**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. In response to COVID-19 and the postponement of community conferences in early 2022, a new 'Intensive Case Management' (ICM) framework was developed to ensure children and vulnerable persons had access to support. Many of our partners servicing the FRC communities were unable to engage clients face to face due to their COVID-19 policy guidelines. The FRC was able to identify, engage and link clients to support services during this temporary phase. The framework is ongoing and designed to work intensively with targeted clients through case management outside of the formal conference environment.

**Coordination team** – The coordination team provides 'on the ground' support in each of the five FRC communities. The four Local Registry Coordinators who work across the five communities facilitate client-centred conferences, manage and coordinate daily operations of their local registry, and inform, and connect residents to community support services. The coordination team work closely with the case management and monitoring (CM&M) team to provide advice and analysis of community operations informed by their professional relationships with Local Commissioners, FRC clients, community members, Australian, State and Local Government partners and non-government service partners.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

**Activity data for 2021-22 financial year: Snapshot of coordination team's workload**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1,096**<br>Conferences and hearings held across five communities – averaging approximately 33 conferences and hearings per week over a 33[1]-week schedule | **1,138**<br>Occasions where notices were served on persons to attend conferences and hearings (including clients, support persons and other relevant persons) | **5.5**<br>Full time employees of the coordination team |

**Case management and monitoring team** – The CM&M team is responsible for receiving and processing agency notices, determining jurisdiction, gathering information for Commissioner considerations, setting conference timetables, processing conference outcomes, managing conditional income management (CIM) and voluntary income management (VIM) processes, and ensuring compliance with the FRC Act. This year, and particularly from January 2022, during a period where travel to communities was again halted due to COVID-19 restrictions, the FRC's utilisation of the ICM framework led to the team undertaking a case assessment review and consideration process to identify vulnerable clients who required ongoing supportive intervention notwithstanding the COVID-19 risk.

During the reporting period, the team continued to focus on capacity building with all team members either attending professional development training or enrolling in further education.

**Activity data for 2021-22 financial year: Snapshot of the CM&M team's workload**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8,278**<br>Agency notices assessed to determine jurisdiction – averaging approximately 159 notices assessed per week | **346**<br>Community members on non-voluntary active case plans had their progress monitored throughout the year (for periods between 3 to 12 months) following conference | **4.5**<br>Full time employees of the CM&M team |

The coordination and CM&M teams together have established a cohesive group to provide high-level support and information to 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.

1. The number of sittings weeks does not include two special conferences convened outside of the normal conference sitting schedule. The FRC became aware of a situation that was detrimental to the wellbeing of family members and facilitated early intervention and access to services.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

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

Commissioner Williams, Deputy Commissioner Curtin and 38 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 implementation of additional assurance and oversight mechanisms throughout the 2021-22 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 1,078 conferences were held and constituted by using the following combinations:

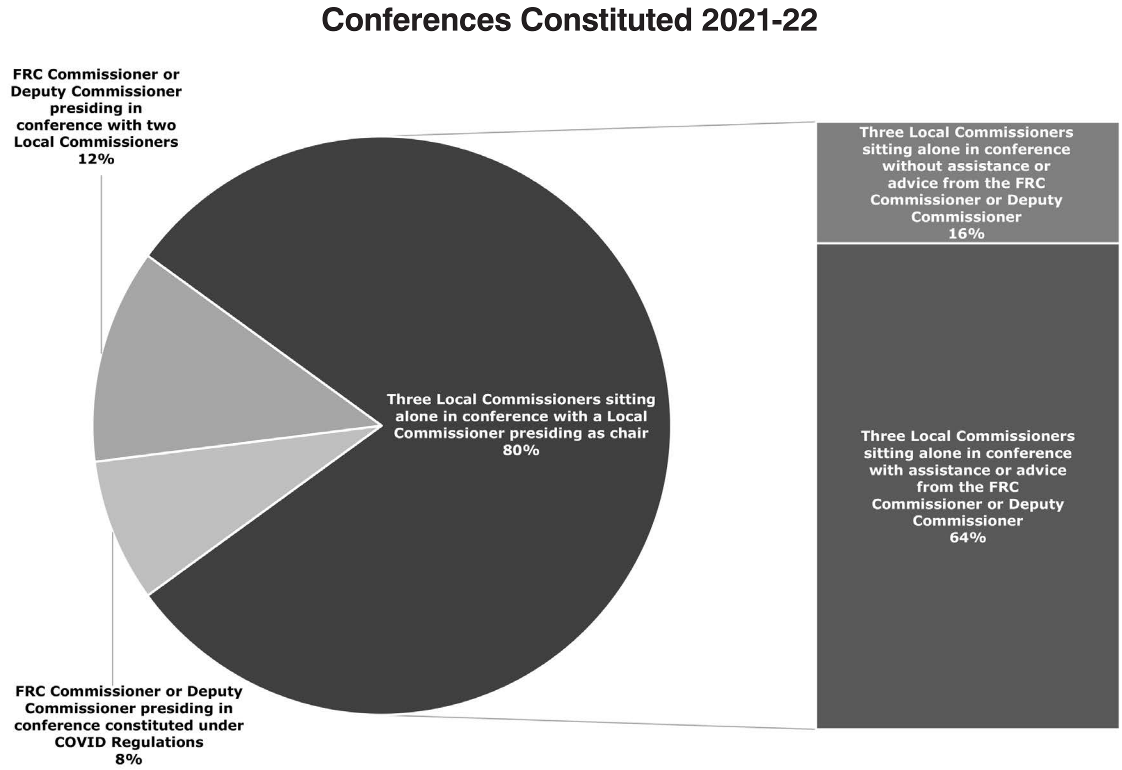
- three Local Commissioners sitting **without the assistance/advice** of the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner (section 50A conferences, monitored under section 50B) with one of the Local Commissioners acting as the Chairperson
- three Local Commissioners sitting as a panel (section 50A conferences, monitored under section 50B) with one of the Local Commissioners acting as the Chairperson and **with assistance/advice** provided by the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner
- two Local Commissioners sitting with the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner acting as Chairperson and
- the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner sitting with one Local Commissioner in a conference conducted pursuant to the *Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020*.

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 Commissioners[2] 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 (80 percent) of Commission decisions at conference throughout 2021-22 continued to be made by three Local Commissioners sitting alone to constitute the panel.

Due to only two Local Commissioners being appointed to the community of Mossman Gorge during this reporting period, the Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners were unable to hold conferences constituted by three Local Commissioners (section 50A conferences), thus negatively impacting the overall percentage of Local Commissioners sitting alone.

2. 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.




**Graph 1: Constitution of conferences 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

### *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 and
- 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 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.

Firstly, Local Commissioners can seek legal advice and guidance from the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner prior to determining a matter at conference. Throughout the

2021-22 financial year 864 conferences were presided over and constituted by three Local Commissioners sitting alone, and for 686 of these conferences, legal advice and guidance was sought by Local Commissioners from either the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner (these are deemed ‘Commissioner assisted conferences’ for reporting purposes).

Secondly, following all conferences, the FRC Commissioner conducts a review of every outcome. In this reporting period 95 percent of decisions were monitored by the Commissioner 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 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 pages 61 and 62.

### *Conferences constituted as part of the COVID-19 emergency response*

A total of 85 conferences were held pursuant to the *Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* (FRC’s COVID-19 Regulation) from 1 July 2021 to 30 April 2022 when the regulation expired. These conferences permitted the panel deciding a conference or hearing to be constituted by either the FRC Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, and one Local Commissioner. In these limited circumstances the FRC Act was still administered in such a way that the wellbeing and best interests of children were paramount and the interests, rights and wellbeing of other vulnerable people living in the community were safeguarded. It was considered in the best interest of vulnerable clients and children that these matters proceed pursuant to the FRC’s COVID-19 Regulation and not be adjourned.

The FRC’s COVID-19 Regulation was particularly important to the Commission in light of the Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners being reduced to only two members from 1 July 2021. Should one Local Commissioner have been unable to sit in conference, the conference could not have been held without this regulation. For further detail regarding the appointment of Local Commissioners, refer to the Significant events and achievements section of this report.

### *Conferences and the impact of COVID-19*

COVID-19 continued to present a public health concern of national and international proportions. FRC communities are particularly vulnerable to this pandemic threat with limited healthcare facilities available, community members having to travel considerable distances to access mainstream healthcare, an Indigenous population with a high percentage of co-morbidities and other health vulnerabilities caused by long term economic disadvantage, and overcrowded housing.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

With borders open, in January 2022 Queensland began experiencing the first wave of the Omicron variant. As a result, the FRC made the decision to suspend conferencing in each community until March 2022. Hope Vale conferencing was also significantly impacted by sorry business from May through to June 2022 with a 49 percent reduction in the number of conferences conducted in 2021-22 when compared to 2020-21.

| FRC conferences conducted | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | % change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of FRC conferences conducted | 1,491 | 1,078 | -28% |

Notwithstanding the onset of the Omicron variant, the FRC innovated its operations to ensure it could still achieve its statutory objects in a COVID-19 safe manner. In the absence of conferencing throughout much of the third quarter of the reporting period, i.e. January to March 2022, the FRC commenced the ICM framework to ensure that targeted vulnerable clients requiring immediate supportive intervention were identified and engaged on a voluntary basis.

### *Application hearings held to consider changing needs of community members*

Each application 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 family responsibilities agreement (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, or if the Commissioners deem the application for an FRA or order frivolous or vexatious, dismissing the application. 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".

**Timeframe on deciding applications received in 2021-22**

| Number of applications received and decided in 2021-22 | Average number of days to make a decision in 2021-22 |
|---|---|
| 53 applications to amend or end a VIM | 2.45 days |
| 17[3,4] applications to amend or end a CIM and/or conditional case plan | 11.45 days |

3. Not included in this count is an application that was received within 2021-22 and was deemed as refused after two months had passed under section 101(1) of the FRC Act. In the two months after the application was received the FRC attempted unsuccessfully to serve the client to attend a hearing.
4. Eighteen amend/end applications for family responsibilities agreements or orders were received and decided in 2021-22. One additional application which was received at the end of 2020-21 was decided also in 2021-22.

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.

### *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 19 amend/end applications were decided for FRAs or orders, noting there was one application received at the end of 2020-21 which was heard in 2021-22 along with the 18 applications received in 2021-22.

### *Decisions on amend/end applications for voluntary agreements*

A person who has entered into a voluntary agreement about income management with the Commissioner can ask the Commissioner at any time to amend or end the agreement. During this reporting period 53 amend/end applications were decided for VIM agreements.

## Timely decision-making with increased client participation

During the prior 2020-21 financial year the Commission focused 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). This method of decision-making has been successful and continued throughout this financial year. This year the Commission focused on developing Local Commissioner skills to support the holistic approach of encouraging client participation in the decision-making process. The cultivation of buy-in in the decision-making process cannot be over-estimated as it facilitates better outcomes through personal commitment and a shared consideration of a balance of options available to clients.

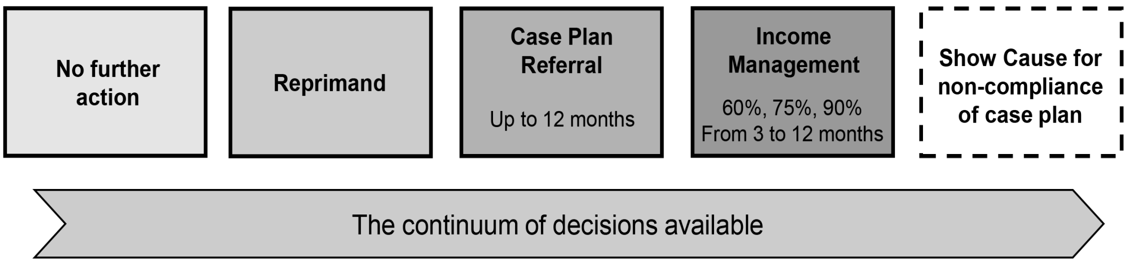
| Conference attendance | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conference attendance | 59.2% | 58.7% | 60.7% |

During the 2021-22 financial year 90 percent of conferenced agency notices were determined within two conferences held with the client, whilst 84 percent of clients who were served a notice to attend a conference participated in the FRC's decision-making process by attending at least once.

The Commission often adjourns conferences and hearings to accommodate the attendance of clients and/or support persons, or to obtain updated information from service providers about progress made under active case plans. Adjournments can also be used in circumstances where clients have developed insight into their own behaviours and would like sufficient time to take personal responsibility and implement their own strategies, often with assistance from within their family and/or other support networks. The Commission considers that the success of the holistic and collaborative approach to decision-making is reflected in the increase of client engagement as mirrored in the conference attendance statistics provided in the previous table.

### FRC decisions have a focus on capacity-building.

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. The primary goal of the Commissioners is to enter into an agreement with the community member in the first instance. Clients may seek to amend or end a decision by demonstrating their circumstances have changed and children/vulnerable persons would not be detrimentally impacted by the alteration to the decision.

The Local Commissioners received training this year during the Local Commissioner Development Week to support client engagement through the motivational interviewing technique – a strategy focused on laying down a foundation of trust and connection to foster a safe environment for clients to feel heard and share their stories. It is through this support clients are able to build their capacity to change their behaviour and minimise collateral harm to others.

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). Sixty-six percent of all decisions to attend support services were by agreement.

| Conference outcomes | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | % change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Agreements to attend community support services | 271 | 271 | 0% |
| Orders made to attend community support services | 157 | 138 | -12% |

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

## 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 ways, and in doing so, make appropriate use of community support services. The Commissioners use the referral pathways available in each community to strengthen the client's resilience to face the challenges they experience, and to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable people through broad-based counselling and education.

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 or
- other appropriate support services.

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 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Conditional referrals to service providers[5] | 402 | 519 | 464 |

Activity this year has resulted in the second highest number of clients referred to attend support services under either an FRA or order in the Commission's 14-year history with 346 clients referred. The percentage of finalised conferenced clients who were referred increased from 60 percent in 2020-21 to 66 percent in 2021-22.

| Percentage of finalised conferenced clients referred | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of finalised conferenced clients referred | 38% | 60% | 66% |

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.

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 to provide the best support possible for the client. The Commission is aided in this capacity by Part 8 of the FRC Act which outlines sophisticated provisions about information exchange between the FRC and relevant entities. 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 71 percent in the number of referrals under a voluntary case plan from 2020-21. This is indicative of the broader acceptance by community members to undertake personal responsibility.

| Number of referrals from voluntary case plans | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Voluntary referrals to service providers[6] | 0 | 14 | 24 |

## 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 Cashless Debit Card (CDC) is issued to the community member by Services Australia to reflect the Commission’s CIM under an order or agreement.

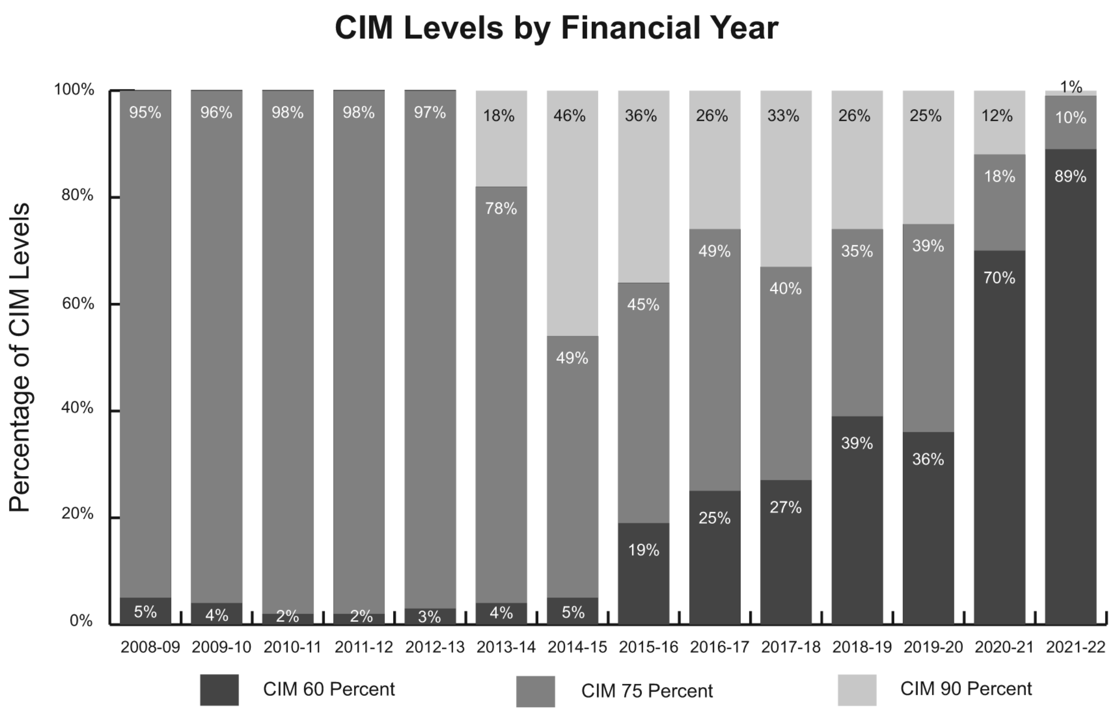
6. A case plan can have multiple referrals e.g. a client may be referred to both the Wellbeing Centre and MPower under the same case plan.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

The Commissioners utilise 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 skills gaps (social and economic). 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 page 27.

As at 30 June 2022 there were 33 FRC clients subject to a current CIM who were claiming Centrelink payments for 48 children, of which 39 were of school age.

In 2014 a new level of 90 percent CIM was introduced as an option to protect the most vulnerable community members where Commissioners considered it necessary. Data over the last four years shows 90 percent CIM has been used in a declining proportion of income management agreements and orders, with only 1 percent of CIMs issued at 90% for 2021-22, confirming the nuanced approach of last resort.




**Graph 2: Percentage of CIM levels by financial year 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2022**

### *Conditional income management and conditional case plans*

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.

As demonstrated in the following table, during this reporting period there has been a continuing reduction in the number of clients placed on a CIM without a conditional case plan (CCP). This reduction demonstrates that CIM is delivered with a highly targeted approach linking in support services to support the client's needs.

| Clients placed on CCPs and/or CIMs | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of clients placed on a **CIM** **without a CCP** | 53 | 35 | 26 |
| Number of clients placed on a **CCP** **without a CIM** | 174[7] | 304[8] | 283[9] |
| Number of clients placed on a **CCP** **and CIM** | 112 | 55 | 63 |

## Voluntary income management – a 'right fit for many' who self-refer

The FRC Act sets out a process under which a community member can voluntarily seek help from the Commission for a referral to a community support service under a voluntary case plan (VCP) or be subject to VIM. In these circumstances the Commission has not received notification from a relevant government agency alleging certain behaviours, and the community member would not otherwise be mandated to attend conference and be the subject of an FRC decision.

VIM agreements are seen as a useful tool to assist community members to manage their budget and meet the cost of everyday essentials. Elderly community members (who have not otherwise been referred to the FRC) are also volunteering to have a portion of their welfare payments subject to income management to help safeguard funds for their own needs, and not be subject to humbugging and/or other elder abuse or violence.

Although the number of clients who have engaged with the FRC on a voluntary basis remains small, it nonetheless highlights the increase in community members who are exhibiting an increased self-awareness of their personal circumstances and are willing to accept assistance from the Commission at the earliest opportunity.

7. This figure also includes two clients who were placed on a CCP and on a VIM in 2019-20 and reported in the second table on the next page.
8. This figure also includes 32 clients who were placed on a CCP and on a VIM in 2020-21 and reported in the second table on the next page.
9. This figure also includes 51 clients who were placed on a CCP and on a VIM in 2021-22 and reported in the second table on the next page.

# FRC registry and decision-making functions

Following the Australian Government transitioning from the BasicsCard to the CDC, during the 2021-22 reporting period the FRC has seen a continued growth in the number of community members willing to enter into a VIM agreement.

| Number of voluntary agreements for VIM | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | % change 2020-21 to 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voluntary agreements for VIM | 20 | 94 | 140 | +49% |

As at 30 June 2022 there were 75 clients on a current VIM who were claiming Centrelink payments for 66 children of which 41 were of school age.

### *Voluntary income management and case plans*

Changes in conferencing style include focusing 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 aide in the management of money on the CDC.

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

| Clients on CCPs and VIMs[10] | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of clients on a **VIM <u>with a CCP</u>** | 2 | 32 | 51 |

The Commission is further seeing an increase in the number of clients who self-refer (not subject to show cause) without a mandated requirement to attend conference. As can be seen in the table below these clients engage with the FRC on an entirely voluntary basis.

| Clients on VCPs and/or VIMs[11] | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of clients on a **<u>VIM</u>** | 16 | 53 | 68 |
| Number of clients on a **VIM <u>with a (VCP)</u>** | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Number of clients on a **VCP <u>without VIM</u>** | 0 | 3 | 9 |

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. Although the number of persons is still quite small, the FRC nonetheless has noticed

10. Counts in this table only include clients who had a combination of a VIM and a CCP and no CIM or VCP

11. Counts in this table only include clients who had a VIM or VCP and no CIM or CCP.

an upward trend of voluntary engagement by community members across all three reporting categories. For instance, when comparing data from 2020-21 to 2021-22, there is a 28 percent increase in the number of clients entering into a VIM only, a 300 percent increase in the number of clients on a VIM and VCP and a 200 percent increase in the number of clients entering solely into a VCP.

## 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. The increase in applications to amend or end received is primarily due to the 49 percent increase in VIM agreements. Commissioners view the hearing of the applications as an opportunity to engage with clients.

| Amend or end applications received | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---|---|---|
| Applications to amend or end received | 29 | 71 |

## 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 'Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities' published by the Queensland Government:

**CREATE JOBS IN A STRONG ECONOMY**

by assisting clients to access support services to achieve the confidence and capability needed to obtain employment, creating purpose and allowing families to fully participate in society, and by initiating a continuous improvement strategy for our organisational capability

**GIVE ALL OUR CHILDREN A GREAT START**

by supporting expectant mothers and young families in welfare reform communities to access maternal and child health, early childhood education and care services, and to understand the importance of the early years to the long-term health and wellbeing of their children

**KEEP QUEENSLANDERS HEALTHY**

by working with service providers to support the delivery of effective responses to alcohol and drug misuse, mental illness and violence for our clients in the welfare reform communities and developing self-care and resilience in Local Commissioners

**KEEP COMMUNITIES SAFE**

by influencing the wider acceptance of socially responsible standards of behaviour, promoting Indigenous local authority and nurturing a spirit of inquiry and innovation in order to address the complex problems facing the welfare reform communities

**BE A RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT**

by providing effective and efficient client services for families, strengthening collaborative cross-agency partnerships to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authorities, improving access to relevant service provision in the communities and working to increase school enrolment and attendance

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 with complex needs.

In meeting this challenge, the Commission works with community-based service providers and partner agencies with statutory requirements under the FRC Act[1] and the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP) as part of a linked service system to achieve individualised client outcomes.

1. Department of Education, Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, Department of Justice and Attorney-General (Queensland Courts) and the Queensland Police Service.

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

- ***'Moving Ahead strategy'*** – a whole-of-government strategy to improve Indigenous economic participation. The FRC assists Indigenous Queenslanders in remote communities to achieve the outcomes sought by facilitating their access to support services to overcome barriers to employment and training.
- ***'Our Way' strategy and 'Changing Tracks' 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.
- ***'Tracks to Treaty' commitment*** – aimed at rebuilding the relationship between the Queensland Government and Indigenous peoples structured upon mutual respect, recognition, acknowledging a shared history and the right to self-determination. 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. Over 72 percent of the FRC's annual budget (the reader is referred to page 87) is allocated to community 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 and the Moving Ahead strategy.

### The FRC's client outcomes assist the Queensland Government to achieve national targets and commitments under bilateral agreements with the Australian Government.

The Commission's activities specifically support DSDSATSIP – the department responsible for promoting and monitoring the government's progress to Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage – to reach the agreed national targets.

# Non-financial performance outcomes

***The FRC helps 'Close the Gap' on disadvantage in five remote communities.***

In February 2021 the Commission undertook a longitudinal performance assessment of outcomes achieved since the commencement of its operations in July 2008 to July 2020.

It showed positive trends emerging in the five remote Aboriginal communities where the FRC operates, and has been updated to include data from 2021-22, with specific evidence of progress being made to Close the Gap in the following areas of disadvantage:

| Reducing the rate of over representation of Indigenous children in out of home care | |
|---|---|
| **Closing the Gap target** | **FRC outcome already achieved** |
| Reduction of 45% by 2031 | Notices received for child safety finalised investigations have decreased by 57%[2] resulting in children less likely to be removed |

| Increasing the proportion of Indigenous people living in appropriately sized housing | |
|---|---|
| **Closing the Gap target** | **FRC outcome already achieved** |
| Increase to 88% by 2031 | Notices received about residential tenancy breaches (for not complying with a remedy notice) have decreased by 46%[3] resulting in increased housing stability |

| Reducing the rate of Indigenous adults held in incarceration | |
|---|---|
| **Closing the Gap target** | **FRC outcome already achieved** |
| Reduction of at least 15% by 2031 | Notices received from the District and Supreme Courts have decreased by 59%[4] indicating a desirable downward trend in the incidence of more serious indictable offences in FRC communities |

## 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 2021 to 30 June 2022. This data, additional to the statistical

2. Decrease is calculated when comparing the total of two seven-year time series: (1) financial years 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2015 [528 total notices]; compared with (2) financial years from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022 [229 total notices]
3. Decrease is calculated when comparing the total of two seven-year time series: (1) financial years 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2015 [452 total notices]; compared with (2) financial years from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022 [246 total notices]
4. Decrease is calculated when comparing the total of two four-year time series: (1) financial years 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018 [311 total notices]; compared with (2) financial years from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2022 [127 total notices]

information cited elsewhere in this report, is used by the FRC's Executive Management Team (EMT) to monitor the organisation's progress in achieving the main objectives of the Strategic Plan 2018-22.

## The FRC knows its clients and communities.

From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, the Commission received a total of 8,278 agency notices across a range of notifiable behaviours of which 4,533 notices relating to 1,024 clients were within jurisdiction, comprising:

**Table 1: In jurisdiction notices by type and community 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Type of notice | AU | CO | DM[5] | HV | MG | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supreme Court | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| District Court | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **29** |
| Magistrates Court | 914 | 61 | 0 | 222 | 66 | **1,263** |
| Domestic Violence Breach | 84 | 18 | 0 | 27 | 17 | **146** |
| Domestic Violence Order | 134 | 14 | 0 | 43 | 14 | **205** |
| School Attendance | 787 | 50 | 1,174 | 453 | 79 | **2,543** |
| School Enrolment | 0 | 1 | 18 | 15 | 0 | **34** |
| Child Safety and Welfare | | | | | | |
| Child Concern Reports | 49 | 10 | 87 | 43 | 9 | **198** |
| Finalised Child Protection Investigations | 23 | 0 | 38 | 14 | 0 | **75** |
| Housing Tenancy | 31 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 | **39** |
| **Total** | **2,051** | **155** | **1,317** | **822** | **188** | **4,533** |

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

- Aurukun (AU) received 2,051 notices relating to 430 clients (222 female and 208 male)
- Coen (CO) received 155 notices relating to 52 clients (26 female and 26 male)
- Doomadgee (DM) received 1,317 notices relating to 270 clients (187 female and 83 male)
- Hope Vale (HV) received 822 notices relating to 224 clients (122 female and 102 male)
- Mossman Gorge (MG) received 188 notices relating to 48 clients (26 female and 22 male).

5. Agency notices for the community of Doomadgee are presently received from the Department of Education and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs only.

# Non-financial performance outcomes

**Table 2: In jurisdiction notices by type and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Type of notice | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supreme Court | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **1** |
| District Court | 12 | 3 | 2 | 12 | **29** |
| Magistrates Court | 276 | 326 | 388 | 273 | **1,263** |
| Domestic Violence Breach | 41 | 45 | 39 | 21 | **146** |
| Domestic Violence Order | 56 | 46 | 58 | 45 | **205** |
| School Attendance | 637 | 604 | 612 | 690 | **2,543** |
| School Enrolment | 0 | 10 | 2 | 22 | **34** |
| Child Safety and Welfare | 66 | 73 | 74 | 60 | **273** |
| Housing Tenancy | 8 | 2 | 10 | 19 | **39** |
| **Total** | **1,096** | **1,110** | **1,185** | **1,142** | **4,533** |

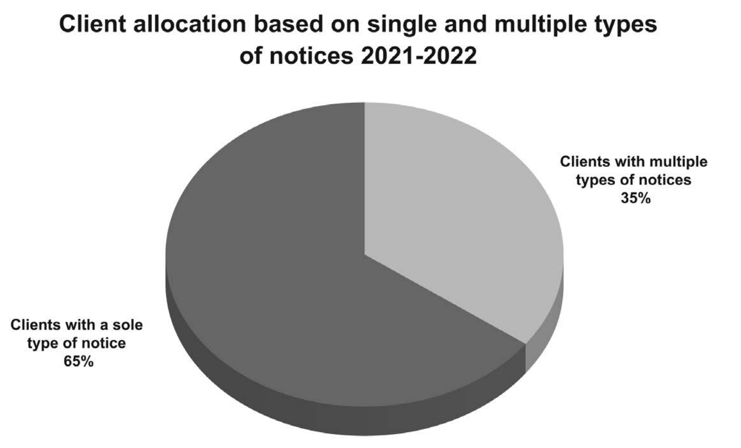
**Table 3: In jurisdiction notices by community and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Number of notices | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aurukun | 439 | 506 | 608 | 498 | **2,051** |
| Coen | 60 | 48 | 26 | 21 | **155** |
| Doomadgee | 307 | 297 | 349 | 364 | **1,317** |
| Hope Vale | 260 | 207 | 144 | 211 | **822** |
| Mossman Gorge | 30 | 52 | 58 | 48 | **188** |
| **Total** | **1,096** | **1,110** | **1,185** | **1,142** | **4,533** |

### *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 665 clients (65 percent) were notified to the Commission with only one type of notice, whilst the remaining 359 clients (35 percent) received more than one type of notice.

| Table 4: FRC clients by the number of types of notices 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 | |
|---|---|
| Number of types of notices received | Number of clients |
| 1 | 665 |
| 2 | 268 |
| 3 | 72 |
| 4 | 16 |
| 5 | 3 |
| **Total** | **1,024** |




Graph 3: Client allocation based on single and multiple types of notices 2021-2022

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

34 percent received a school attendance (EQ) notice

17 percent received a Magistrate Court (MAG) notice

6 percent received a child safety and welfare (CS) notice and

5 percent received a domestic violence order (DVO) notice

1 percent received a domestic violence breach (DVB) notice

1 percent received a District Court (DIS) notice and

1 percent received a housing tenancy breach (HT) notice.

The remaining sole notices received for Commission clients were 3 clients with a school enrolment breach (SEN) 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 359 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 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Type of notice/s[6] | Number of clients |
|---|---|
| CS,DVB,DVO | 1 |
| CS,DVB,DVO,EQ | 1 |
| CS,DVB,DVO,EQ,MAG | 2 |
| CS,DVB,DVO,MAG | 3 |
| CS,DVB,EQ,MAG | 3 |
| CS,DVB,MAG | 2 |
| CS,DVO | 7 |
| CS,DVO,EQ | 5 |
| CS,DVO,EQ,HT | 2 |
| CS,DVO,EQ,HT,MAG | 1 |
| CS,DVO,EQ,MAG | 2 |
| CS,DVO,HT | 1 |
| CS,DVO,MAG | 3 |
| CS,EQ | 81 |
| CS,EQ,HT | 1 |
| CS,EQ,HT,MAG | 1 |
| CS,EQ,MAG | 12 |
| CS,EQ,SEN | 5 |
| CS,HT | 1 |
| CS,MAG | 9 |
| CS,MAG,SEN | 2 |
| CS,SEN | 2 |
| DIS,DVB,DVO,MAG | 1 |
| DIS,DVB,EQ | 1 |
| DIS,DVO | 2 |
| DIS,DVO,EQ | 2 |
| DIS,EQ | 1 |
| DIS,EQ,HT | 1 |
| DIS,MAG | 1 |
| DVB,DVO | 3 |
| DVB,DVO,EQ | 3 |
| DVB,DVO,EQ,MAG | 3 |
| DVB,DVO,HT | 1 |
| DVB,DVO,MAG | 13 |
| DVB,EQ | 3 |
| DVB,EQ,MAG | 8 |
| DVB,HT | 1 |
| DVB,MAG | 31 |
| DVO,EQ | 5 |
| DVO,EQ,MAG | 9 |
| DVO,HT,MAG | 1 |
| DVO,MAG | 52 |
| EQ,HT | 9 |
| EQ,MAG | 42 |
| EQ,MAG,SEN | 1 |
| EQ,SEN | 13 |
| HT,MAG | 3 |
| MAG,SEN | 1 |
| MAG,SUP | 1 |
| **Total** | **359** |

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

# Non-financial performance outcomes

## 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 2021 to 30 June 2022 a total of 1,078 conferences were held relating to 566 clients.

**Table 6: Conferences by community and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Conferences | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aurukun | 162 | 128 | 39 | 109 | **438** |
| Coen | 22 | 28 | 7 | 14 | **71** |
| Doomadgee | 140 | 122 | 40 | 84 | **386** |
| Hope Vale | 50 | 43 | 21 | 11 | **125** |
| Mossman Gorge | 22 | 14 | 11 | 11 | **58** |
| **Total** | **396** | **335** | **118** | **229** | **1,078** |

Conferences during the financial year resulted in 271 agreements to attend community support services (the same number as reported in 2020-21), 2 CIM agreements, 138 orders made to attend community support services (a decrease of 12 percent from the previous reporting period) and 89 CIM orders issued (a 4 percent decrease from the previous reporting period). As a subset of the total number of conferences conducted for the financial year, 200 DV conferences were conducted in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

### *Clients on conditional income management*

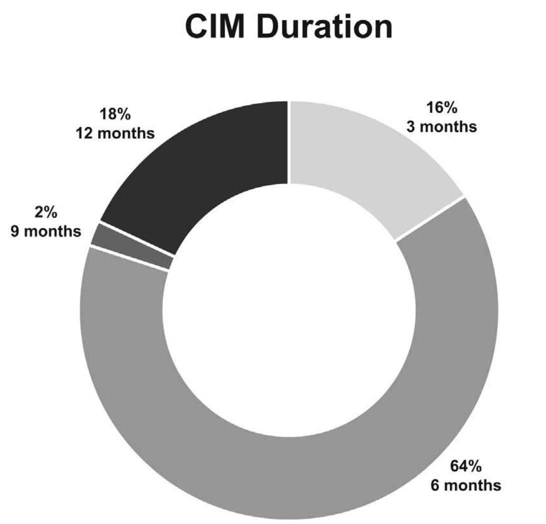
From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, there was a total of 91 CIMs (2 from agreements and 89 from orders) relating to 89 clients.

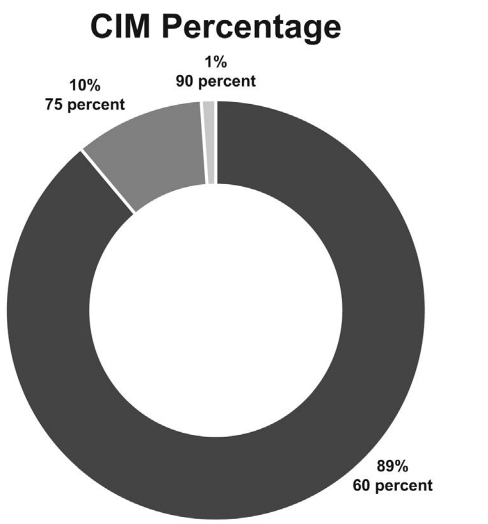
**Table 7: Conditional income management by community and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Number of CIMs | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aurukun | 22 | 16 | 2 | 10 | **50** |
| Coen | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| Doomadgee | 8 | 11 | 2 | 6 | **27** |
| Hope Vale | 5 | 1 | 0 | 3 | **9** |
| Mossman Gorge | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | **4** |
| **Total** | **36** | **29** | **6** | **20** | **91** |

# Non-financial performance outcomes

The Commission processed the 91 CIMs issued in 2021-22 as follows:




**Graph 4: Breakdown of CDC CIMs by duration 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022**

**Graph 5: Breakdown of CDC CIMs by percentage 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022**

The above statistical information 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 2021-22 reporting period 89 percent of CIM agreements or orders quarantined 60% of a client's welfare payment. During the same period 80 percent were for a period of 6 months or less.

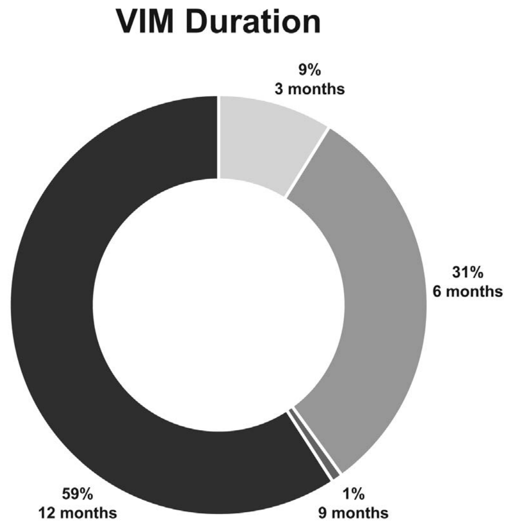
As at 30 June 2022, there were 33 clients subject to a current CIM with 91 percent at 60% and 61 percent for a 6-month or less duration. As a subset of the total number of CIMs in the financial year, 18 CIMs were made at conference in relation to DV notifying behaviours.

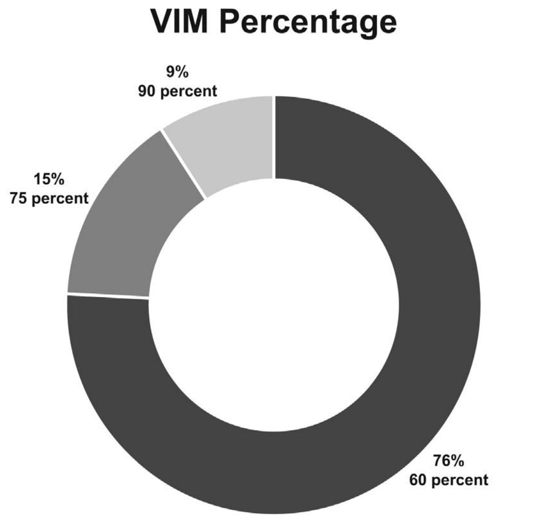
### *Clients on voluntary income management*

Following the transition from the BasicsCard to the CDC in FRC communities from 17 March 2021, requests by community members to voluntarily participate in income management have risen steeply. Several factors account for the steep rise including greater flexibility offered by the CDC, the card having the appearance of many other bank cards, and community members having developed a greater understanding of the benefits gained to their lifestyle and security through VIM.

The Commission processed 140 VIM agreements (an increase of 49 percent from 2020-21) for 126 clients. Since the commencement of the Commission 308 clients (196 female and 112 male) have had an active VIM agreement. As at 30 June 2022, there were 75 clients on a current VIM, with 83 percent at 60% and 73 percent for a 12-month duration.

The Commission processed the 140 VIMs issued in 2021-22 as follows:



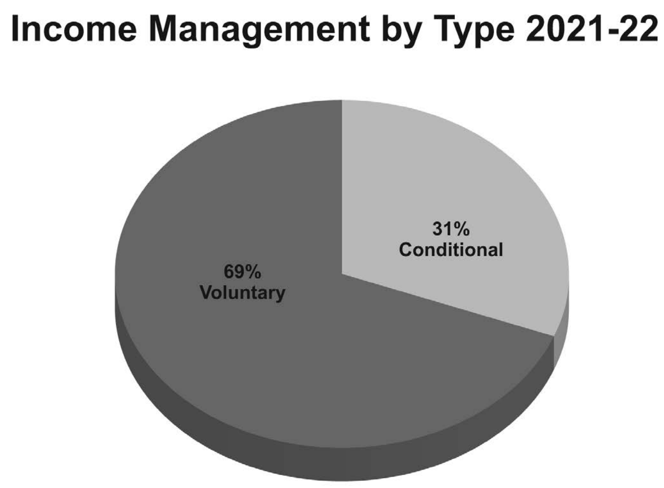

**Graph 6: Breakdown of CDC VIMs by duration 17 March 2021 – 30 June 2022**

**Graph 7: Breakdown of CDC VIMs by percentage 17 March 2021 – 30 June 2022**

In 2021-22 126 clients entered into a voluntary agreement for a VIM. During the financial year:

- 75 clients (60 percent) still had a current VIM as at the end of the financial year
- 23 clients (18 percent) decided not to renew their last VIM agreement/s
- 26 clients (21 percent) ended their VIM/s via a voluntary amend/end application without a further current renewal and
- 2 clients passed away.

As at 30 June 2022, there were more clients on a VIM than a CIM, with 69 percent of income managed clients on a VIM agreement, demonstrating that the FRC is achieving its strategic objective of encouraging community members to resume primary responsibility for their wellbeing and that of their families.




**Graph 8: Percentage of clients on income management by type as at 30 June 2022**

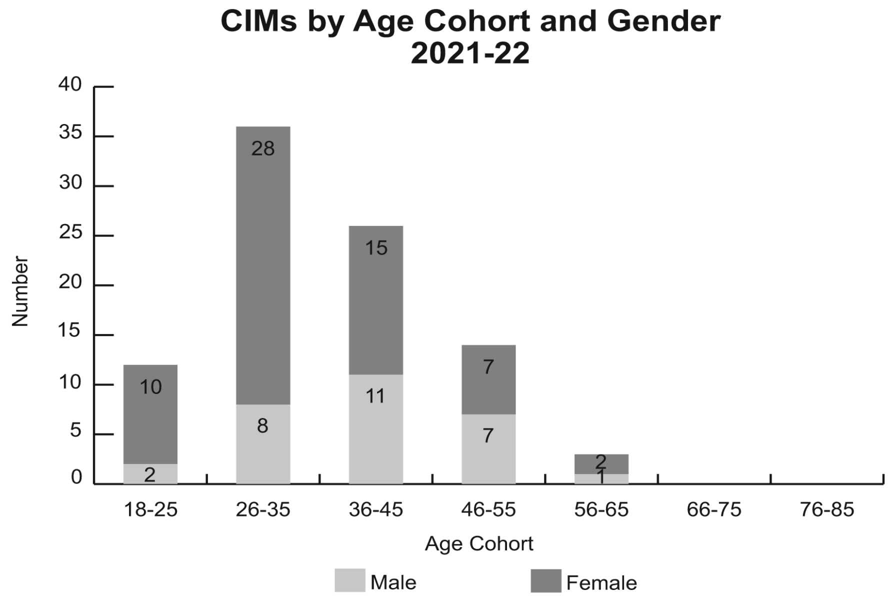
# Non-financial performance outcomes

### *Conditional and voluntary income management age and gender breakdown*

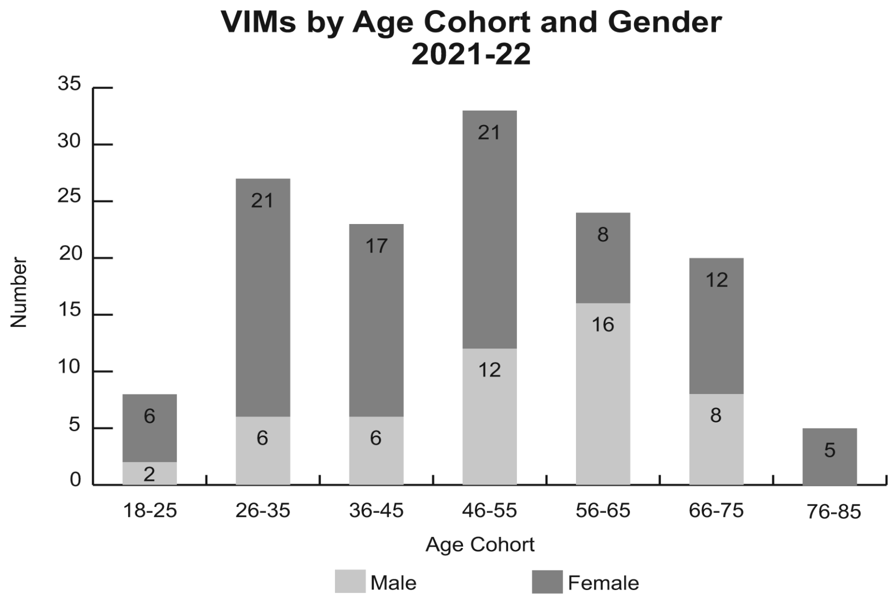
During 2021-22 most community members conditionally income managed by the FRC were in the 26-to-35 year age group, followed by the 36-to-45 year age group. Females accounted for 68 percent of all the CIM agreements and orders. No community members older than 65 years were conditionally income-managed by the FRC during the financial year. For the 62 CIMs relating to females, 71 percent 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 29 CIMs relating to males, just 28 percent related to children in some way. These figures correlate to the female role of caregiver in the family structure.

The age ranges of clients exercising the option for VIM spanned the years from 18 to 85 with the 46–55 year age group having the most voluntary agreements. Again, females represented the majority of all VIM agreements at 64 percent.

Graph 9: Breakdown of CDC CIMs by age cohort and gender 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022



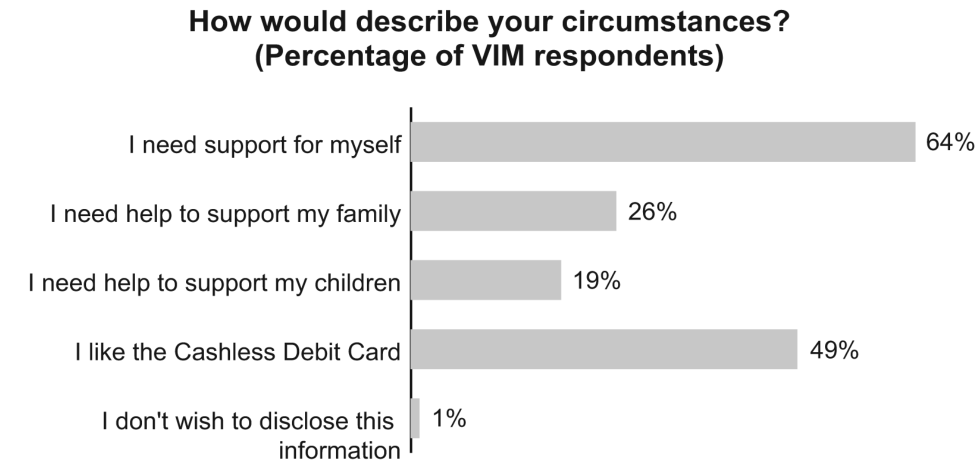

Graph 10: Breakdown of CDC VIMs by age cohort and gender 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022



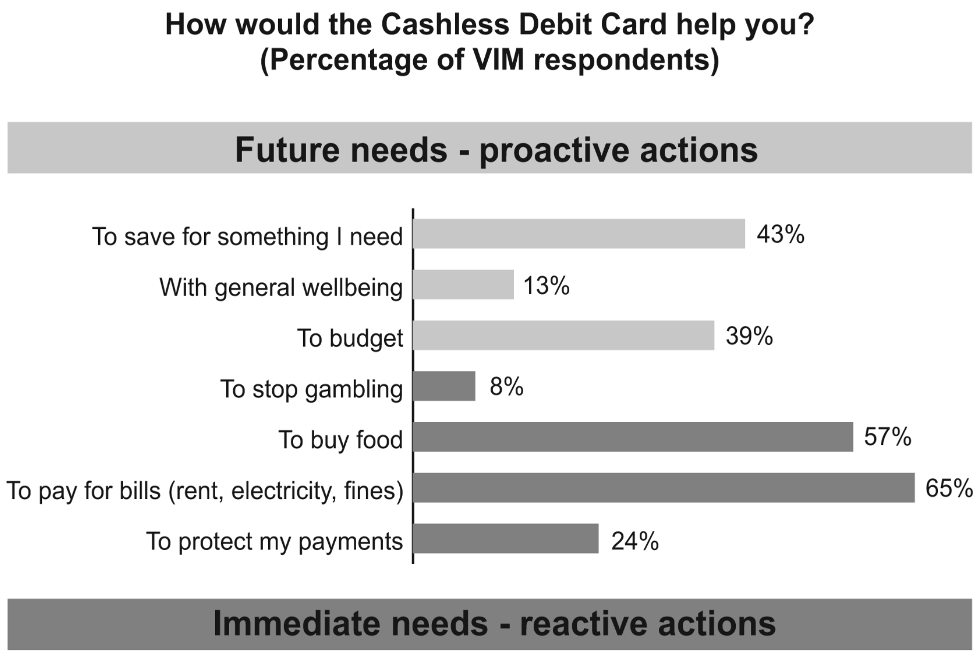
### *Voluntary income management respondent reasons*[7]

Since the introduction of the CDC, the FRC has recorded the reasons and circumstances of those requesting a VIM. During 2021-22 the primary reasons for applying for a voluntary CDC (reactive perspective) were to address the immediate needs of paying bills (65 per cent) and buying food (57 per cent). The primary reasons for applying for a voluntary CDC from a proactive perspective were to save for something the client needed, e.g. a fridge or washing machine (43 per cent), and to set up a budget (39 percent). Circumstances given by the VIM participants when applying for the CDC were primarily to support themselves (64 percent). Nearly half (49 percent) reported on their application that they liked the CDC.

Graph 11: Breakdown of CDC VIMs by circumstances 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022




Graph 12: Breakdown of CDC VIMs by reasons 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022




7. A client may choose one or more options to reflect their individual reasons and circumstances in participating in voluntary income management.

# 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 this reporting period 464 referrals were made (inclusive of FRAs and orders) to attend support services for 346 clients. This is the second highest number of clients referred since the commencement of the Commission.

As a subset of the total number of these referrals in the financial year, 124 referrals were made in relation to DV conferences.

**Table 8: FRC conditional referral pathways by referral type and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Referral type | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BBNAC | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | **4** |
| Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| Cape York Employment | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | **4** |
| Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | **7** |
| Cooktown District Community Centre | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | **6** |
| Gungarde (Family Wellbeing Services) | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | **5** |
| Mossman Elders Justice Group | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | **5** |
| MPower | 50 | 12 | 9 | 19 | **90** |
| Mulungu (Family Wellbeing Services) | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **3** |
| NWQICSS | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | **4** |
| QLD Health | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | **6** |
| RAATSICC (Family Wellbeing Services) | 0 | 2 | 0 | 12 | **14** |
| Royal Flying Doctor Service | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| Save the Children | 5 | 5 | 2 | 13 | **25** |
| School Attendance Officer | 40 | 32 | 20 | 44 | **136** |
| WBC - Apunipima | 43 | 37 | 25 | 27 | **132** |
| WBC - NWRH | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | **19** |
| **Total** | **157** | **105** | **74** | **128** | **464** |

A further 24 voluntary referrals to attend support services were requested from 20 clients.

**Table 9: FRC voluntary referral pathways by referral type and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Referral type | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cape York Employment | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| Cooktown District Community Centre | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| Mossman Support Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| MPower | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | **7** |
| Save the Children | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| School Attendance Officer | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| WBC - Apunipima | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | **10** |
| **Total** | **0** | **1** | **10** | **13** | **24** |

***More partnerships have led to increased referral pathway options for clients.***

The Commission is continually seeking to identify additional support service pathways to broaden the scope of options for clients seeking assistance.

| Number of active FRC community service provider partnerships | |
|---|---|
| **16**<br>2020-21 financial year | **17**<br>2021-22 financial year |

As a key objective of the Commission's strategic plan, building and maintaining a network of community-based partnerships helps achieve the Commission's legislative requirement to 'make appropriate use of community support services'[8] as the mechanism through which clients can be helped to resume primary responsibility for their own wellbeing. Identifying gaps in service provision leads to discussions with our current service partners around broadening program delivery for a targeted approach. A consistency in referral pathway options across all five welfare reform communities means Commissioners can tailor case plans to better suit the individual needs of clients and their family.

8. Section 5(2)(a)(iii) of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008.

### *Show Cause hearings are another tool to hold clients accountable.*

From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, 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. The proposed actions for a Show Cause notice given to a person include imposing a CIM order, increasing the proportion of the person's welfare payments to be income-managed, or increasing the period for which the person is subject to income management. Conversely the Commissioners may elect to take no further action. Each Show Cause hearing is decided on its merit.

Similar to the 2020-21 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:

- lack of (or limited) support services available on the ground due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and/or reported recruitment difficulties for much of the reporting period
- lack of evidence from support services that client engagement was attempted
- lack of reporting from service providers leading to limited, or no information from which to proceed on a Show Cause for non-compliance.

The FRC has been witnessing an increase in the number of clients demonstrating proactive steps to take personal accountability for their actions and commit to a journey towards self-improvement. This is best 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. These collaborative actions in the main have averted the need to conduct a Show Cause assessment.

### *Applications to amend/end agreements or orders*

From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, 71 applications relating to 62 clients (38 females and 24 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 10: Applications to amend or end agreements or orders by community and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Number of applications | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aurukun | 10 | 29 | 13 | 3 | **55** |
| Coen | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **2** |
| Doomadgee | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | **4** |
| Hope Vale | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | **10** |
| Mossman Gorge | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| **Total** | **16** | **32** | **16** | **7** | **71** |

### *Application decisions*

From 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, 19 applications were decided for FRAs and orders, noting that one of these applications was received at the end of 2020-21 and heard in 2021-22.

Fifty-three applications were decided for VIM amend/end applications.

**Table 11: Decisions on applications to amend or end FRAs or orders by community and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Number of applications | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aurukun | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | **12** |
| Coen | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **1** |
| Doomadgee | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **2** |
| Hope Vale | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | **4** |
| Mossman Gorge | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| **Total** | **6** | **8** | **2** | **3** | **19** |

**Table 12: Decisions on applications to amend or end voluntary income management agreements by community and quarter 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**

| Number of applications | Qtr 53 | Qtr 54 | Qtr 55 | Qtr 56 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aurukun | 6 | 26 | 10 | 2 | **44** |
| Coen | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| Doomadgee | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | **2** |
| Hope Vale | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | **6** |
| Mossman Gorge | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| **Total** | **8** | **27** | **13** | **5** | **53** |

Whether the outcome was successful depended on what the client requested. This year out of the 72 decisions made, 92 percent (66) of all applications were granted, whilst 6 were refused.

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

- 10 CIM orders ended
- 1 CIM order and ordered case plan ended
- 1 CIM order amended from 75% to 60% for the remaining period of the existing order
- 2 Case plan orders ended.

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

44 VIM agreements ended

5 VIM agreements amended from 90% to 60% for the remaining period of the existing agreement

2 VIM agreements amended from 75% to 60% for the remaining period of the existing agreement

1 VIM agreement amended from 12 months to 6 months 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 and Keri Tamwoy, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Bryce Coxall. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## Aurukun Commissioners' report

We continued this year to strengthen engagement between the FRC and key government agencies and support services in Aurukun as we believe it is through these relationships that our clients will benefit. Our relationship with service providers has never been better and we believe this is resulting in improved support for our clients despite the COVID-19 restrictions affecting service delivery. We are glad to report that as at the end of this financial year, the environment in community seems to be getting back to the pre-COVID normal.

### Significant achievements

We report what we consider to be significant achievements for the 2021-22 financial year. These achievements are due not only to our efforts as Local Commissioners, but also the support we are provided by Commissioner Williams, Deputy Commissioner Curtin, Local Registry Coordinator Bryce Coxall, and the registry staff in Cairns.

- We believe the best indication of client engagement for us is the number of agreements that were signed with clients compared to the number of orders that were made for clients. 2021-22 saw 136 family responsibilities agreements compared to 123 during the 2020-21 financial year, an increase of 11 percent.
- In 2021-22 we only ordered 40 clients to attend support services compared to 58 in 2020-21, a decrease of 31 percent. This number was significantly down as most of our clients are choosing family responsibilities agreements to seek support.
- The Cashless Debit Card (CDC) continues to provide financial security for many families with 79 voluntary income management agreements for the card in Aurukun compared to 69 in 2020-21, an increase of 14 percent.

### Challenges

#### *Impact of COVID-19 and the introduction of ICM*

The last 12 months has been challenging for us, but we continued to work hard to support our clients and community to ensure we are all heading in a positive direction. COVID-19 was the biggest challenge with many organisations not travelling into Aurukun to provide face-to-face support services. The lack of hands-on wellbeing services resulted in increased pressure on our community. Even though our conferencing was delayed in 2022 until March due to the spread of the Omicron variant, we are proud to say that our operations continued throughout this period with the implementation of an Intensive Case Management (ICM) framework as a way to support community members on the ground when other services could not.

# Community operations Aurukun

### *COVID-19 vaccinations*

As stated, our biggest challenge throughout the year was the COVID-19 pandemic – not just for our operations at the FRC, but the impact it had on the greater community. Many Aurukun community members had a fear of vaccinations, and Queensland Health worked well with the community to educate them and reach a 90 percent double vaccination rate. We know this saved countless lives. As FRC Commissioners we were amongst the first to get vaccinated and wherever possible we encouraged community members to do the same, including providing information to our clients during conferencing.

### *Community unrest*

In early February Aurukun saw significant community unrest between two feuding families which resulted in arson, and one house being completely burnt to the ground. The situation had the potential to further escalate due to retaliation. At the FRC we immediately began work with affected families. Two of the most impacted families opted into our ICM framework. We facilitated a forum to link the families in with service providers and we continue to monitor their progress and encourage them to engage with these services. We would like to thank the police in Aurukun during this time who provided great support to the FRC and local families. Their timely and committed intervention assisted in avoiding escalation of the unrest.

### *School attendance and youth crime*

Aurukun school attendance figures are at an all-time low, with previous issues affecting attendance compounded by the fear of COVID-19. Low school attendance has led to non-attending children out on the streets, creating mischief with break and enters and vandalism to property. This group of disengaged youth continue to be the primary age group where community unrest begins. We see the only way to tackle this issue is for the FRC to have the Childrens Court trigger reinstated so that we can begin working directly with the youth and their parents/carers to promote positive change.

### *Sorry business*

Consecutive weeks of sorry business have also had a huge impact on school attendance. We are currently working with DSDSATSIP and the Aurukun Shire Council on a community sorry business protocol. The protocol will provide clear guidelines for families around what is expected in relation to school attendance during sorry business time. It's a very sensitive topic but a huge issue that needs to be addressed if we are going to see school attendance improve.

## Other community matters

### *Cashless Debit Card*

We continue to share information on the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) and work with community members to ensure they have current details and knowledge on the benefits of voluntary participation. We have noticed an uptake of clients who were previously given an income management order now signing up to a voluntary CDC. That is proof that even community members originally ordered onto the CDC by the FRC recognised the benefits that the card offers and translated that into participating on a voluntary basis. Many residents in Aurukun's aged care facility are also voluntarily participating in the CDC, reinforcing the importance of the CDC in protecting vulnerable community members' money.

# Community operations Aurukun

### *Aurukun Justice Group*

We were pleased to see the Aurukun Justice Group fill two vacant positions to allow for the mediation service to become operational again. Michael Quinn and Katherine Gardiner are leading the mediation team and we are excited that they have already reached out to work closely with us. The mediation service is vital for Aurukun to defuse family disputes that can lead to whole of community unrest, and we will endeavour to continue to enhance our relationship so that we work together to maintain a healthy community environment.

## FRC Future Directions Review

Again, we are being subjected to a review of our operations in Aurukun, commissioned by DSDSATSIP. These reviews, which we have been the subject of numerous times, bring unnecessary stress and impact upon our operations. Originally, we were told the review would be held in November 2021, and with minimal contact or information on the review it was frustrating that nothing happened on the ground in Aurukun until May 2022.

We were happy that the reviewers took the time to come and observe an FRC conference, had lunch with us and consulted with us to get our perspective on the FRC and how it can be improved. We remain sceptical as to whether (and what) changes may occur from this current review, as previous reviews have neither guaranteed lengthy extensions, nor altered our processes.

Many of us have been with the FRC since its inception and have remained consistently in the service of our community through the many ups and downs over the last 14 years. At times our work is hard to capture in data alone, but we know the Aurukun we live in today is a very different Aurukun to the one we lived in before the FRC began in 2008. We hope that the review will capture that and the important role the FRC plays in Aurukun.

## The next 12 months

We are happy to report that on 5 May 2022, three new Local Commissioners were appointed to Aurukun – Dereck Walpo, Kemuel Tamwoy and Waynead Wolmby. We welcome our new brother Commissioners and look forward to them joining us as decision-makers in the next financial year following induction and training.

We eagerly await the outcome of the FRC Future Directions Review to see what the future is for the FRC. While we wait, we will continue our work in community to improve the lives of our community members. We will continue to promote the CDC and refer our clients on a case-by-case basis for support. We intend to grow our ICM framework to include more clients and their families as it appears already, in a short time, the framework has been effective in promoting positive change. The antisocial issues which Aurukun has suffered from for many years are never going to be fixed overnight, but we are committed to supporting our clients to make the changes necessary to improve their lives and protect the children of Aurukun.

# Community operations Coen

***FRC operations in Coen were undertaken by Local Commissioners May Kepple, Elaine Liddy, Alison Liddy and Maureen Liddy, supported by Acting Local Registry Coordinators Simeon Miglioranza, Sandi Rye and Cara Marks. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## Coen Commissioners' report

Our focus this year remained consistent with last year – to improve outcomes for clients who are wanting access to support for complex needs.

### Significant achievements

Together with our Acting Local Registry Coordinators, and registry staff, we made significant progress in achieving outcomes in partnership with our clients and key stakeholders including:

- family responsibilities agreements entered into with our clients increased from 12 in 2020-21 to 23 in 2021-22, an increase of 92 percent from the 2020-21 financial year
- clients who entered into voluntary case plan agreements increased from 1 to 6, an increase of 500 percent from the 2020-21 financial year
- clients who entered into voluntary income management agreements increased from 7 to 14, an increase of 100 percent from the 2020-21 financial year
- orders for conditional income management decreased from 8 in 2020-21 to 1 in 2021-22 a decrease of 88 percent.

Building and sustaining relationships with service providers and stakeholders is an ongoing strategy for us to ensure clients will benefit from more successful outcomes. Working collaboratively allows for connection, innovation and efficiency. With our advice the Local Registry Coordinator attends local meetings with service partners. These meetings provide current statistical information, communicate challenges, break down service delivery silos and allow for a coordinated approach to improve client referral pathways. The Coen Interagency bi-monthly meetings are of significant value, providing a networking opportunity with stakeholders, together with sharing and gaining insight into the wider community social and operational activities. We invite service providers to attend conference for complex matters to offer support to clients in a multi-disciplined approach. We have found this strategy successful in connecting clients with support services to expedite their case plan interaction.

### Challenges

#### *Local Commissioners – the importance of gender and cultural diversity*

Our greatest wish for this year, was to increase the number of Local Commissioners to represent all Clan groups in the region. Unfortunately, our wish has not materialised. Last financial year saw the retirement of one of our Local Commissioners who was a founding member of the FRC in Coen. We are now only a small group of four female Local Commissioners without a gender balance. All of us have work commitments which have added complexity to our sitting schedule, and most of us also work away from community. The five main clan groups in Coen comprise the Ayapathu, Kaanju, Lama Lama, Umpila and Wik-Mungkan peoples. The four of us represent only two of those clan groups – Lama Lama and Wik-Mungkan. We believe that bearing in mind the importance of our role in community, a greater clan diversity is required as well as gender diversity.

### *Legislative constraints*

We raised concerns with the Queensland and Australian Governments in regard to the legislative constraints which affect the recruitment of new Local Commissioners, and we hope that when our long-term future is determined, we will see these difficulties addressed. The primary problem with our legislation is that should an applicant for a Local Commissioner role have been the subject of an FRC decision in the past, they are ineligible to apply. This particular legislative section has prevented quite a few of our community members (who we consider well placed to serve as a Local Commissioner) from being appointed. We would like to see this legislation altered. Often, the very best people to serve their community, are the ones who have experienced hard times, who have a thorough understanding of what it is like to be vulnerable and need assistance, and who have overcome their difficulties. They understand what it takes, and the sometimes-hard decisions that are required. In a community as small as Coen, there is not a large pool of applicants to choose from.

### *Impact of COVID-19 and the introduction of ICM*

Further challenges were experienced at the start of 2022 due to the spread of the Omicron variant into the community, and the decision was made to suspend conferencing until late March 2022. To overcome temporary travel restrictions and continue to support vulnerable community members, an Intensive Case Management (ICM) framework was established. The ICM framework was offered to clients on a voluntary basis who may be experiencing some difficulties and was an alternative to engage clients while conferencing was suspended. ICM is a safe, holistic approach where we link clients to various support services.

### *Community unrest*

January and February 2022 saw escalating tensions in Coen between Clan groups, resulting in community fighting involving over 40 people including youth. We were advised that at least 40 residents were charged by Coen Police with offences in regard to the unrest.

### *Housing shortage*

Coen continues to navigate the impact of housing shortages due to growing families and visitors to the area, resulting in overcrowding. This is not a new challenge for Coen. For many years we have continued to receive Magistrate Court notices for family and domestic violence. We believe this is a symptom of overcrowded housing and other issues in our community.

## Other community matters

### *Changed serving practice*

We are proud to report that our clients are demonstrating a more collaborative and progressive attitude. This can be shown with a 500 percent increase in the number of voluntary case plan agreements and the 250 percent increase in voluntary referrals to support services during this financial year. Serving of notices to attend conference has historically been completed by the local Coen Police. At the conclusion of 2021 it was decided we would trial serving the notices ourselves in order to enhance and increase our engagement with clients prior to the conference setting. We thank Cape York Partnership for assisting with the use of a vehicle and believe that this opportunity and changed practice has directly contributed to the 12.8 percent increase in client attendance at conference from 2020-21.

### *Domestic and family violence*

Domestic and Family Violence prevention month was held in May with the FRC supporting two events in Coen. Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation (CRAC) facilitated a street march through Coen that included school students to raise community awareness and send a clear message that violence will not be tolerated in our community. Supporting these events strengthens our commitment to address these serious matters with clients. We note that this year referrals for FRC clients to support services to address domestic family violence increased by 57 percent compared to 2020-21.

## FRC Future Directions Review

We appreciate Abt Associates visiting our community. We hope Abt Associates left Coen having a good understanding of our roles as FRC Commissioners, how the FRC benefits Coen, and how we would like to see the FRC evolve to increase the benefit we bring to our people.

It is important to remember that the FRC was not forced on Coen. In 2007 and 2008 consultations were held with the Coen community, and the Coen community chose to be a part of Cape York Welfare Reform. A small but very significant part of that Cape York Welfare Reform was the FRC.

We live and breathe our position as Local Commissioners of the FRC here in Coen. We are the leaders of the FRC in our community. Most importantly, we listen and hear the problems our community brothers and sisters face. We provide guidance to our people by sharing our knowledge – built up from a lifetime of lived experiences and from what we ourselves were taught by our old people. We make the hard decisions. We live with those decisions, and they affect our lives and the lives of our families. We are perhaps the only Aboriginal organisation that is truly community-based with real powers to make decisions, and not merely an advisor to a decision-maker. Our powers are granted to us by the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*.

## The next 12 months

Adding to our already established referral pathways, we would like to see additional support services to fill gaps in mental health, domestic and family violence, and children and youth support services. Working alongside our service partners in complex conference settings will provide for a client centred focus and create better outcomes by connecting clients with service providers at the time of conference.

We are committed to working with clients in the conference setting and with the ICM framework. We are using the ICM framework where appropriate and believe it is building a better rapport with clients. We will continue our focus on ICM for the coming year and we look forward to being able to identify and monitor the results with a view to continuously improving our engagement with FRC clients.

# 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 and Dawn Aplin, supported by Local Registry Coordinator Brenden Joinbee. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## Doomadgee Commissioners' report

Last year our focus was to enhance our working relationship with the community to create a greater understanding of what we wished to accomplish as Local Commissioners for the benefit of our community members. We will continue to build this relationship, identify gaps in service and advocate for needed changes.

### Significant achievements

When this financial year commenced, we set out a number of goals that we wished to achieve. The ones we are most proud of are:

- voluntary income management agreements have increased 100 percent from the 2020-21 financial year
- conference attendance has increased by 2.9 percent from 2020-21 (57.2 percent in 2020-21 to 60.1 percent in 2021-22).

We continue to see our clients requesting to go on the Cashless Debit Card on a voluntary basis, as they recognise the benefits of the card in managing their funds and planning for future needs.

### Challenges

#### *Impact of COVID-19*

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a challenge for us during this reporting period. Many community members contracted COVID-19 outside the community and then returned, which led to an increase in community transmission. Our conferencing functions in Doomadgee during 2022 were also curtailed due to the pandemic, only recommencing in March, however, we ensured that we were still available to engage with our clients during this difficult period.

#### *School attendance*

Unfortunately, the community transmission of COVID-19 had a huge impact on school attendance as families were reluctant to send their children to school for fear of contracting and spreading the virus further. Staffing levels at the school were severely impacted by COVID-19, affecting the school's ability to operate to full efficiency. To assist the Doomadgee State School address the non-attendance of Doomadgee children, we have started to participate in the school bus run, when able, to encourage more children to attend and resume their education. It is well known that chronic absenteeism is linked with substance abuse and poor health, as well as low grades and failing at school. School related anxiety then leads to depression and other mental health conditions for our children. Our children deserve to have the same opportunities as children in mainstream society and we believe education and employment are key elements to access these opportunities. We want our children to go to boarding school and continue their education and training outside of Doomadgee in the hope that it will provide a more positive life for them and their families.

### *Sorry business*

Sorry business continues to affect our community. We believe that sorry business protocols must be established with the leadership of our local Council and negotiated with the community and the Doomadgee State School. Until the whole community agrees on a shared strategy to ensure our children, whilst respecting sorry business, do not miss out on too many school days, the school attendance in Doomadgee will continue to be affected.

### *Lack of trigger notices*

Another challenge we have faced as Local Commissioners for Doomadgee is the lack of trigger notices we receive. As we have mentioned in previous reports, we only receive three trigger notices upon which we can act – school non-enrolment, school non-attendance and child safety and welfare. We feel that we are restricted and are doing our job with one arm tied behind our backs. If we received the additional trigger notices that other FRC communities have, we feel we could better meet our clients' needs and address family issues in a more holistic way.

### *Youth crime*

Youth crime continues to plague our community. Children break into properties and destroy buildings. We need more youth support services in Doomadgee to help address delinquent behaviour. If we were able to use the Childrens Court trigger which exists within the Family *Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* under section 43, we would be able to discuss these issues with parents/carers and find solutions for the family as a whole, and also the children who are participating in these illegal activities.

## Other community matters

### *Reintroduction of Opal fuel*

A positive for our community is that since the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council made the decision to reintroduce Opal fuel to the community, we have seen a significant decrease in the amount of volatile substance misuse by our young people.

### *Cashless Debit Card*

In August we helped facilitate an information day for the community relating to the new Cashless Debit Card (CDC) that was introduced to the community in March 2021. The information day allowed us to discuss the new card with our clients and other community members and gave us the opportunity to not only discuss the benefits of the card, but also answer any questions that people had regarding the CDC and the impact it would have upon them if they chose to participate. As part of the promotion of the CDC the Department of Social Services engaged Lonestar to attend our community and interview clients who were on the card. We are proud to say that these interviews now form part of the Department's promotional videos that run in the Northern Territory.

### *Working with the Police*

The police continue to be a strong ally for us in the community. We enjoy working with the police as both of our organisations aim to ensure that our community and our people are safe. We regularly meet with Doomadgee police officers to discuss issues in the community and work with them to find solutions to issues that arise.

## FRC Future Directions Review

In June 2021 Minister Craig Crawford wrote to us to advise that the Queensland Government would undertake yet another review of the FRC. In 2014, after an extensive consultation, the Doomadgee community signed up for the FRC. The FRC was proposed as a way to help combat significant challenges in our community including poor school attendance and substance misuse. The Doomadgee community chose the FRC model. We know that having our people lead the change, not government agencies or service providers, is the only way that social reform can work. The FRC is the start of the change that allows our people to lead by re-establishing Elder Authority, instead of having the government make all the decisions in regard to our community. We have given those in our community who are struggling a place to come, talk and seek support, and we have the means to give them that support through referrals to support services, income management, and sometimes by just lending them an ear.

We can see there is much more we could achieve through the FRC if we had the wholehearted support of government. We hope that the outcome of this review will lead to the introduction of the full range of triggers in Doomadgee, and a permanent place for the FRC. Give us the tools to take the FRC as far as we know it can go.

## The next 12 months

We are happy to report that on 5 May 2022, three new Local Commissioners were appointed to Doomadgee – Virginia Collins, Lila Cairns and Wendy Taylor. We welcome our new sister Commissioners and look forward to working with them as they complete their induction and training. We are thankful to see our ranks expanding and know that collectively our life experiences and various strengths will build our capability.

Over the next 12 months we will be continuing to work alongside My Pathway to ensure that our community, and especially our young people, have the opportunity to participate in meaningful employment and training. We believe that increasing employment in Doomadgee will lead to increasing community participation and economic wellbeing.

We have a good working relationship with the Doomadgee State School, and we intend to continue capitalising on this relationship by offering whatever assistance we can to encourage parents and students to value education and its role in improving life outcomes. School attendance is frequently influenced by many factors including domestic and family violence, substance abuse and child neglect. We will continue to barrack for the full suite of triggers available to other communities in order to tackle the issues causing school absenteeism.

Our relationship with the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council has strengthened over the past year and we will continue to work with our Council to ensure that Doomadgee has the best outcomes possible.

# Community operations Hope Vale

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

## Hope Vale Commissioners’ report

As Local Commissioners and Elders we understand the importance of strong relationships with government and non-government organisations. The strengthening of these partnerships creates a pathway to trust for our people. It is our community members and families that will benefit from the partnerships we forge now and into the future. The past year has been spent on improving relationships and strengthening community understanding of what the FRC is, and what our responsibilities are as Local Commissioners.

### Significant achievements

With the support of our Local Registry Coordinator, Josephine Pinder, and registry staff we list some of our achievements this financial year.

- We have increased our conference attendance percentage each year since 2018-19. This year our conference attendance has increased by 11.2 percent when compared to the 2020-21 year, recording an attendance of 76.0 percent, the highest attendance rate since the commencement of the Commission. Hope Vale clients have gained trust in coming to conference with us, are reaching out for guidance and support when needed, and are embracing the conference process.
- The Cashless Debit Card was introduced in March 2021 and its improved look and functionality have removed the stigma and increased the flexibility of accessing welfare funds. Our data is testament to the acceptance of the new card with more clients in Hope Vale on voluntary income management (an increase of 150 percent from 2020-21) than conditional income management (a decrease of 25 percent since 2020-21).

We are proud of the way we have collaborated with the Hope Vale community and local and visiting support services to work on strategies to combat youth issues associated with disengagement from education. We see this as evidence of Indigenous leadership and responsibility. In the past 18 months we have invited school staff, support services and notifying agencies to attend conference with clients. Their attendance has led to a better understanding of our clients’ needs, tailored support for them in a collaborative way, and kept everyone accountable while working for the clients’ benefit.

### Challenges

#### *Impact of COVID-19*

Until December 2021 Hope Vale had been shielded from the COVID-19 pandemic, but it was inevitable that when the Queensland borders were opened Omicron would make its way to Hope Vale, and it did. Families affected by Omicron obeyed the stay-at-home directive.

Service provider delivery of programs and counselling was interrupted and compromised due to not being able to offer face-to-face engagement and home visits. Counselling was instead conducted via telephone sessions; this is challenging in Indigenous communities as mobile phone numbers frequently change and often credit is not available to return messages left by counsellors.

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and sorry business had a significant impact upon our operations with only 125 conferences held this financial year – a reduction of 49 percent from 2020-21. This reduction resulted in fewer clients conferenced (a drop of 33 percent), hampering our ability to engage with as many clients as we would have liked.

### *School attendance*

School attendance was reduced as a result of the Omicron wave as parents were reluctant to send their children to school fearing that Omicron would be contracted and brought into the household. As a result many families have experienced difficulties in breaking the COVID habits and re-establishing a school-ready routine. During conference we are highlighting to parents the negative impact of low school attendance and behavioural issues upon boarding school applications. The new Playschool and long-running Kindy programs are also laying foundations for establishing strong school-ready routines to ensure children have the skills they need when they start school.

### *Youth crime*

Hope Vale is not immune to youth crime which is a problem being experienced in Far North Queensland and across the State. We have significant problems with young people who have disengaged from school and are offending or showing anti-social behaviours. As research and studies have shown, there is a direct correlation between youth crime and disengaged school students. If students are engaged in school or an education pathway, they are significantly less likely to offend and/or reoffend.

The FRC has been an integral part of the whole of community approach to attempting to mitigate youth crime, but we need the Childrens Court trigger to be reinstated so that we can encourage parents to be accountable and to connect them with services and supports. We have the support of the Alliance of Guugu Yimithirr People which passed a resolution supporting amendments to the FRC Act to enable the Childrens Court trigger to be reactivated.

We agree with others who have called for urgent action to create significant employment growth in remote Indigenous communities to inspire and motivate our youth to pursue career goals, education, and training. Without these opportunities youth will transition to passive welfare and the cycle of disadvantage will continue.

## Other community matters

### *Domestic violence support services*

Survivors fleeing domestic violence in our community report that they identify a lack of local support infrastructure. We are aware of service gaps around perpetrator (male and female) programs, and support programs to assist with early intervention and community education. When domestic violence incidents occur, police are called to transfer victims to Cooktown facilities. The absence of adequate emergency accommodation and frontline Indigenous family violence workers in Hope Vale leads to victims and their children being placed in Cooktown, which then impacts the child’s ability to attend school.

# Community operations Hope Vale

## FRC Future Directions Review

Last year we received information there was to be an FRC Future Directions Review. We were informed that the purpose was to look at options for the transformation of the FRC and advised that it was not about terminating the FRC. As this was in line with our aspirations to improve the FRC model, we welcomed the review and looked forward to putting forward our ideas to take our community into the future. We became concerned when the documents which were provided to us and our stakeholders prior to the consultation used terminology which suggested the review was geared towards determining whether the FRC should continue, and whether the FRC was compatible with other State Government policies including Local Thriving Communities. We thank Abt Associates, the review consultants commissioned by DSDSATSIP, for consulting with us and providing us with an opportunity to relay our strong belief in the FRC. As Local Commissioners we presented our views and advised that the challenges we have always faced remain, but so does our commitment to working for our community, and our pride in what we have achieved in the last 14 years.

## The next 12 months

We are a group of Local Commissioners with one voice, with one vision; we are a group of people not afraid of change. To live and have a great community we first must help those people in our community who need a hand up. We believe every child deserves the best start in life and our focus going forward is to work in collaboration with families, local services and education providers in the community. Our intention is to encourage and promote the importance and benefits of early engagement in playschool and kindergarten in preparation for 2023 enrolments.

Our Council and our community are concerned as to how to address the issue around disengaged youth. We look forward to future meetings with the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council and other services in the community to continue the discussion relating to an action plan for long-term disengaged students. We believe more teaching staff are required to supervise a learning program where students are supported to transition back to an earning or learning pathway.

Although we must not dwell on it, we first must look at our past to fix the future. Our job will be made easier with the appointment on 5 May 2022 of a new Local Commissioner, Dora Gibson. We welcome her and look forward to the value she will add to our team. As Local Commissioners we have the courage to face the truth and take responsibility. We will stand alongside our community and work toward a better future for all, one with wellbeing, educational and economic opportunities.

# Community operations Mossman Gorge

***FRC operations in Mossman Gorge were undertaken by Local Commissioners Loretta Spratt and George Ross-Kelly, supported by Acting Local Registry Coordinators Simeon Miglioranza, Sandi Rye and Cara Marks. An account of their operations during the reporting period follows.***

## Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners' report

We continue to refine our conferencing and decision-making skills through training to improve the way we support and communicate with clients. Our significant achievements listed below are a testament to our professional approach in this regard.

### Significant achievements

- Voluntary income management agreements for the Cashless Debit Card increased by 200 percent.
- Conditional income management decreased by 64 percent.
- Voluntary case plan referrals have increased by 150 percent.
- Conference attendance increased to 63.8 percent this year and is the highest attendance since the commencement of the Commission.

### Challenges

#### *Impact of COVID-19 and the introduction of ICM*

COVID-19 challenged us again at the start of 2022, causing a delay to the commencement of conferencing. The Intensive Case Management (ICM) framework was established which allowed us to work with clients outside of the traditional conference setting. This initiative allowed us to engage with vulnerable and at-risk clients, connecting them to support services on a voluntary basis for targeted priority needs. Building trust and reinforcing the work we do through actions and messaging is important to us. The ICM has been well accepted and has allowed us to support clients when many other support services were unable to deliver face to face engagement due to their policy restrictions.

#### *Legislative constraints*

Legislative constraints in regard to jurisdiction continue to inhibit us in addressing the antisocial behaviour of people who visit Mossman Gorge and stay for lengthy periods. We have lobbied for all visitors to adhere to the values of our community, but still struggle to address poor behaviours. Engaging with residents returning to the community from incarceration and having knowledge of their return has proven difficult to navigate, with returning residents only being identified upon receiving a new trigger notice. It would be helpful were we able to conference these returning community residents and provide support in their assimilation back to community life.

### *Local Commissioner appointments – exercising Local Authority*

During 2021-22 there were only two of us available to sit as Local Commissioners in Mossman Gorge, and although we are very committed to our role, we feel it is also a large burden to carry for two people. We have been asking for the appointment of new Local Commissioners since before Local Commissioner Karen Shuan's retirement on 30 June 2021 and have required consistent support from Commissioner Tammy Williams and Deputy Commissioner Rodney Curtin to be able to legally form a panel to conduct conference as required by section 50 of the FRC Act. We have been unable to constitute a panel under section 50A and have therefore been unable to utilise full local authority in our decision-making. We are very happy to advise that on 30 May 2022 the Commission was informed of the successful appointment of five new Mossman Gorge Local Commissioners effective from 5 May 2022: Zara Ryan, Jarrod Kulka, Daphne Creek, Helenia Creek and Julie-Ann Williams.

## Other community matters

### *Cashless Debit Card*

Income management has been an invaluable tool for the people of Mossman Gorge over the years. With the introduction of the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) we have seen more of our community members volunteer to have part of their welfare payments quarantined. Those that volunteer to be income-managed tend to be those most vulnerable people (such as our Elders) who can be taken advantage of, but increasingly other community members who simply need some help to make sure there is food in the house see the benefits of the CDC.

To kick start the financial year we held a Cashless Debit Card information session in conjunction with Cape York Partnership to share knowledge on the opportunities available through voluntary income management, while the staff from MPower shared knowledge of their new digital PAMA app. The day was a success with a few community members signing voluntary income management agreements. This year we have seen the number of voluntary income management agreements rise significantly with clients experiencing positive outcomes from the use of the CDC.

### *Mossman Gorge complex case conference meetings*

The FRC has always been a key part of coordinated responses to community issues. In the past year the FRC has continued to lead the Mossman Gorge Complex Case Conference meeting on a monthly basis. The aim of the meeting is to identify and action a plan of support for vulnerable people with complex needs or those that have fallen through service gaps. The group consists of representatives from our service partners at Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation (BBNAC), Mossman Police, Mossman Elders Justice Group, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Queensland Housing and Queensland Health Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATODS). The group identifies vulnerable community members, not just FRC clients, and together the services identify and coordinate which organisations are relevant to provide support for the individual and their families. We are proud to be involved in this whole of community collaboration which will provide long-term benefits for those in need.

## FRC Future Directions Review

During this reporting period we were advised, yet again, that the FRC would be subject to a review, “*to inform a modernisation of the FRC, and to consider its operations in a contemporary context*”. The Mossman Gorge community decided to have the FRC model in our community over a decade ago because it offered us the hope of giving local people decision-making power, and the power to link our community with the support they needed. FRC Mossman Gorge was the beginning of many support services coming into our community; the O-Hub and the Wellbeing Centre were brought in to support the work of the FRC, and we continue to have strong relationships with those services to this day. We have remained consistent and committed to supporting our people as Local Commissioners, because we still believe it is the best way we can help. We know that the FRC has worked in Mossman Gorge. We have seen with our own eyes the change from the days of dysfunction with drinking in the streets, parties, loud music, and lack of respect for the community. We still experience these issues, but we know that the situation has greatly improved since 2008. We need the ongoing support of Government, so that we can make the FRC work even better to suit the needs of our community.

## The next 12 months

Developing our ICM framework will be an active focal point in the coming months. The positive response to the intent of the framework has filled us with the hope of engaging more clients in this setting.

We are delighted to grow our team of local decision-makers and welcome the five new Local Commissioners to our family. With our team of two Local Commissioners now growing to seven, the diversity, knowledge, and experience this brings to the community is a gift and overwhelmingly exciting. We look forward to sharing our knowledge and guiding their way through training over the coming months.

In the FRC’s annual report for 2018-19 we made the following statement:

> *“Our vision for the future of Mossman Gorge is simple. We envision a community where respect for each other is valued; capacity building is present to support our mob toward improved social and emotional wellbeing; opportunities for employment exist in a variety of sectors; our children are attending school consistently and education is valued; there is no violence, loud music or parties; and our Bama people are happy.”*

This simple vision remains. It is a vision that we are confident we can see come to pass, in time, with the support of the Queensland and Australian Governments to make the FRC the best it can be.

# Significant events and achievements

## Significant events

***The past fiscal year has seen a number of significant events which have impacted upon the internal operations and outlook of the FRC.***

### Statutory appointments

#### *Reappointments July 2021 – June 2022*

On 30 June 2021 the Commission was advised by DSDSATSIP that the Governor in Council had approved the reappointment of Commissioner Williams as the FRC Commissioner for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. Further, to support the Commissioner in her role, Mr Rodney Curtin was reappointed as Deputy Commissioner, and all then current Local Commissioners for the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge were reappointed for the same period. Additionally, the chair of the FR Board changed from Dr Chris Sarra, Director-General of DSDSATSIP, to Mr Robert (Bob) Gee, Director-General, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). The remaining two members of the FR Board Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC Secretary of DSS and Mr Noel Pearson, Founder of CYI were reappointed for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

#### *Reappointments July 2022 – June 2023*

On 6 May 2022 the Commission was advised by DSDSATSIP that the Governor in Council had approved the reappointment of Commissioner Williams as the FRC Commissioner for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Further, to support the Commissioner in her role, Mr Rodney Curtin was reappointed as Deputy Commissioner, and all then current Local Commissioners for the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge (with the exception of Local Commissioner Victor Gibson of Hope Vale who did not seek reappointment) were reappointed for the same period. Additionally, the chair of the FR Board Mr Robert (Bob) Gee, Director-General, DAF and Mr Noel Pearson, Founder of CYI were reappointed to the FR Board for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. The third FR Board member, Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC Secretary of DSS, did not seek reappointment and was replaced by Ms Jody Broun, Chief Executive Officer, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

#### *New appointments*

At the FR Board meeting held on 4 November 2021, the Commission presented a paper to board members requesting approval to recruit further Local Commissioners in each community. The request was made as the Commission had on frequent occasions experienced difficulty in securing the attendance of three Local Commissioners to meet the requirements of holding s50A conferences. Additionally, the Commission wished to provide greater diversity amongst the pool of Local Commissioners currently appointed in regard to gender, age, clan affiliation and expertise.

In March 2022 the Commission forwarded 12 new Local Commissioner applications for consideration for the communities of Aurukun, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. On 30 May 2022, the Commission received advice from the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships that, in accordance with the FRC Act, 12 new Local Commissioners (three from Aurukun, three from Doomadgee, one from Hope Vale and five from Mossman Gorge) had been appointed by the Governor in Council for the period 5 May 2022 to 30 June 2023. The new Local Commissioners will commence induction and training early in the 2022-23 financial year.

# Significant events and achievements

## Tabling of 2020-21 Annual Report

The Commission is pleased to report that its 2020-21 Annual Report was tabled in the Queensland Parliament by the Honourable Craig Crawford MP, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, on 1 February 2022 in accordance with the requirements of the FRC Act. The FRC Annual Report 2020-21 can be accessed on the Commission's website: www.frcq.org.au.

## Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

In late February 2022, advice was received from DSDSATSIP that agreement had been reached between Minister Crawford and the then Hon Ken Wyatt AM, to fund the FRC for a two-year period, from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023. The MoU was signed by all parties and executed on 11 March 2022. Noting the impact of funding uncertainty on the FRC's operations, the Commission is pleased to have the formal funding agreement in place until 30 June 2023, and to be able to provide a measure of stability to clients, Local Commissioners and registry staff.

## Community Support and Services Committee

On 28 March 2022, Commissioner Williams, along with Registrar Maxine McLeod and Executive Officer (Finance) Tracey Paterson, appeared at a Public Briefing of the Community Support and Services Committee of the Queensland State Parliament.

Commissioner Williams reported to the Committee on:

- the operational performance highlights outlined in the recently tabled Annual Report
- the MoU for funding and the impact of successive short-term funding agreements on the Commission's operations
- the history of external scrutiny of the FRC and potential data limitations in the context of the Future Directions Review, and
- the importance of operationalising the Childrens Court trigger in the FRC Act.

## Local Commissioner Development Week

The Commission is committed to providing professional development to the Local Commissioners as required by the FRC Act under sections 22 (Commissioner's functions) and section 35 (Registrar's functions). A Local Commissioner Development Week was conducted from 23 to 27 May 2022. Local Commissioners from each community travelled to Cairns and participated in:

- motivation and empowerment training and
- motivational interviewing techniques.

Motivational interviewing is a communication style which sits between following (listening) and directing (giving advice) and is designed to empower people by drawing on their own capacity for change. The motivational interviewing technique is a valuable tool to assist the Local Commissioners to help people find the motivation to make a positive behaviour change. These skills are intrinsic to the Commissioners and fundamental to the conferencing process.

DSS held an information session on Income Management (IM) and the CDC, specifically in FRC communities. The presentation covered the background of income management, differences in IM models, and comparisons of the features of the CDC against the BasicsCard. Some meaningful information included the areas of responsibilities specific to DSS, Services Australia, Indue and the FRC.

Transition Support Services (TSS) informed the Commissioners on assistance available for students who are required to leave home in order to complete secondary schooling. TSS is a service which assists students from remote communities in Cape York to transition into boarding school and residential facilities throughout Queensland. Services include assistance with placement at boarding school, support for families of students, including financial help for familiarisation visits to potential schools, and the support of a TSS presence at airports for transiting students.

Two experts in Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies from James Cook University delivered lectures separately addressing the over-representation of Indigenous young people in the juvenile justice system and the problem of youth crime in Far North Queensland, with a focus on Townsville as a current hot spot.

The Department of Justice and Attorney General held an information session on Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) services funded in Far North Queensland and what future funding could look like. Information was provided in regard to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce's report 'Hear her voice' and the Queensland Government's response to some of the 89 recommendations. This presentation expanded awareness on DFV generally, its impact on the community and what support services are needed to address this increasing social problem.

The final presentation was on Cape York Employment's delivery of NIAA's funded Community Development Program in Aurukun and Coen. The presentation also advised on employment pathways, training and job readiness programs in those two communities.

It is important in each Local Commissioner Development Week that time is set aside for the Commissioners to participate in a 'round table', a time when Commissioners come together to discuss current issues affecting the Commission and the FRC communities. It provides an opportunity for Commissioners to contribute their perspectives and ideas in a supportive environment. This year the Commissioners were joined by Mr Bob Gee, Director-General for DAF, Government Champion for Doomadgee and Chair of the FR Board. Mr Gee listened intently as Commissioners spoke of their frustration and despair at the ongoing high level of uncertainty around funding arrangements between the Australian and Queensland Governments for the FRC, and their sense of apprehension leading into the 'FRC Future Directions Review' including the role and future of the FRC.

The Local Commissioner Development Week is a highlight in the FRC calendar. It is the only time where Local Commissioners from the five widespread FRC communities are provided the opportunity to join together to receive training, share their experiences, support each other and build relationships. Last but not least, the Local Commissioners are afforded an opportunity to experience a brief respite from the burdens they carry every day in the communities in which they live.

# Significant events and achievements

## Gambling harm minimisation

On 22 February 2021 the FRC made a submission to the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Fair Trading of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General as part of the consultation process for the Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan for Queensland 2021-2025. Following this submission on 20 August 2021 the Commission received correspondence from the Office thanking the Commission for the feedback in relation to gambling activities in the five welfare reform communities, noting that our "*personal experiences and views have been important in helping to shape the final version of the plan*".

The Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan for Queensland 2021-2025 shows consistencies between the FRC's submission and elements of the high-level plan such as:

- recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and communities are an at-risk group
- as a strategic risk it is recognised that there is "*potential for increased harmful gambling behaviours due to the impacts of COVID-19*" and
- in order to achieve its vision of working together to prevent and minimise gambling harm to individuals, families and Queensland communities, the Plan seeks to deliver this through four strategic pillars:
    - Leadership and culture – by "*creating a strong mandate, identifying and encouraging leadership and grass roots level engagement*" and developing "*information, tools and services tailored for general, at-risk and high-risk populations*".
    - Technology and environment – by "*transitioning to safe cashless environments*" (note: our submission addressed the proactive use of income management and its benefits).
    - Public Health Approach – by "*interventions addressing specific needs of 'at risk' communities*".
    - Regulatory Framework – by "*taking a local and national approach to regulation*" (note: our submission addressed the need for the use of local by-laws to prohibit certain forms of gambling activities such as card games because the state regulatory framework does not adequately address this).

Although the Commission was only one of a number of stakeholders to make a submission, and further noting that aspects of the Plan are fairly generic and possibly could have also been issues raised by other stakeholders in their submissions, it is nonetheless pleasing to see consistencies between the Commission's position and that of the Attorney-General's department. The Commission is committed to look for opportunities to link the work of the FRC with the objectives of the Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan. Specifically, the FRC would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Queensland Government the development of a statutory trigger to enable the FRC to better support community members who are exhibiting anti-social behaviours caused by problematic gambling.

# Significant events and achievements

## Achievements

### Intensive Case Management Framework (ICM)

Advice was received in January 2022 from key stakeholders in the five welfare reform communities regarding the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant in each community, and the continuing need for the FRC to provide support to community members – including those whose vulnerability was further exacerbated by the public health emergency – to resume primary responsibility for their own and family members' wellbeing. It became clear that some issues faced by vulnerable clients would be heightened by the outbreak and the inaccessibility of other support services. Indeed, many community support services were not operating face-to-face during the Omicron outbreak, and some were not operating at all.

In early 2022, whilst conferencing was suspended due to the Omicron wave of COVID-19, the FRC developed an ICM framework. The goal of the ICM framework is to better utilise the Commission's existing case management powers under the FRC Act and provide an increased level of oversight and assistance to vulnerable clients who may benefit from an increased level of support in the absence of the conferencing environment. Clients were identified and prioritised collaboratively between the registry staff and Local Commissioners. Together with registry staff and Local Registry Coordinators, Local Commissioners began working intensively with a small group of clients in each community who were in need of immediate support to identify specific needs and implement plans to have those needs met. Ongoing support and coordination were then provided for these clients.

Local Commissioners report that encouraging clients to be part of the ICM framework assisted to further build a trusting and supportive relationship with clients and service providers. Because the ICM interactions occurred outside the more formal conference setting, it reinforced the supportive nature of FRC interventions. Clients reported valuing the assistance offered by the ICM framework, as many other services were not in community offering face-to-face support. The increased connections made with clients during home visits, and the fact that FRC staff and Commissioners were visible in community, not only connected clients and services, but also contributed to the increased conference attendance reported during quarter 55.

### Increased duties for Local Commissioners

As a result of the temporary suspension of normal conferencing during January and February 2022, and the contemporaneous need for increased community support, the EMT considered and approved Local Commissioners to undertake a broader range of administrative duties. These duties included serving notices to attend conference (once conferencing recommenced) and conducting ICM engagements, along with other administrative activities to ensure business continuity.

The performance of additional duties was approved on a case-by-case basis after a careful risk versus needs assessment. The COVID-19 risk was continually balanced against the need for supporting vulnerable FRC clients. The cost of additional duties performed by Local Commissioners was met from within existing budget allocations.

## Building better partnerships

In order for the FRC legislation to operate effectively and to ensure Commissioners had all the information available to them to enable quality decision-making, the Commission entered into discussions with the Department of Education (DET) during September 2021 to draft an Exchange of Information Guideline to provide guidance in the principles that apply to information exchange regarding school attendance and enrolment information, and the method to be adopted in the exchange of information. The new procedures were adopted and implemented during quarter 54. The Commission is pleased to report that the new procedures, negotiated with DET, have resulted in the availability of timely and relevant information which has streamlined the conferencing of education notices.

## Numbers of children protected by income management

It is interesting to note a 'point in time' report demonstrating the protective benefits provided by income management in regard to young people. As at 30 June 2022, the Commission had 33 clients on CIM who were responsible for 48 children in their care (39 of whom were school aged children). Additionally, the Commission had 75 clients on VIM who had 66 children in their care (41 of whom were school aged children). Therefore, of the 108 clients being income-managed who had children in their care as at 30 June, 114 children were receiving the benefit of their caregivers being connected to additional services and supports to encourage spending on priority needs, to alleviate financial hardship, and to reduce the amount of income available to be spent on items such as alcohol, gambling products or from the withdrawal of cash to be spent on those items. This is an example of the broader impact the FRC has on community members within its jurisdiction.

# Challenges and outlook

***A lack of certainty regarding the FRC Future Directions Review, together with COVID-19 and the Omicron variant and the expiry of the Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 contributed to significant challenges experienced this year.***

## COVID-19 and the Omicron variant

Queensland experienced widespread community transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 during January 2022. This Omicron wave resulted in the beginning of the school year being delayed by a week, and the EMT took the decision to move to Scenario 2 of its Preparedness Framework for COVID-19. Scenario 2 required FRC operations be modified on a case-by-case basis according to a need versus risk assessment. As there were a high number of cases of COVID-19 in Cairns, and cases in each of the FRC communities, conferences were suspended and travel to community by registry staff assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Conferencing resumed in Mossman Gorge on 1 March 2022, and in the remainder of the FRC communities in the two weeks following. This delay in the beginning of conferencing is reflected in a reduction in the number of conferences from 335 in quarter 54 to 118 in quarter 55. Conference attendance however, increased during this time by 9 percent, from 61 percent in quarter 54 to 70 percent in quarter 55. These conference attendance statistics demonstrate the growing willingness of clients to engage with the FRC, especially in trying times.

## Expiry of the *Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020*

For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FRC had been able to utilise, where necessary, the provisions of the *Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* (the FRC COVID-19 Regulation). This permitted the FRC to be constituted by the Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner and one Local Commissioner for conferences. It further allowed the FR Board to conduct all meetings digitally. Periodic amendments and extensions were made to the temporary legislative framework, including the *Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Act 2021* which received royal assent and commenced on 9 September 2021. The Act further extended measures in the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*, including the FRC COVID-19 Regulation to 30 April 2022, or an earlier date to be prescribed by regulation.

The Queensland Parliament Community Support and Services Committee invited the FRC to make a submission for consideration in its inquiry whether to extend the operation of public health measures. The FRC made a submission outlining concerns that should the FRC COVID-19 Regulation not be extended, the FRC's continuity of operations would be at risk because of the number of Local Commissioners available (at that time) to sit in conference to form a decision-making panel. The FRC's submission argued that transitional arrangements extending the expiry of the FRC COVID-19 Regulation would allow the FRC to facilitate the return of normal operations. Even if the appointment of new Local Commissioners were to occur, it would still take between six and nine months for new Commissioners to undertake induction and training to enable them to fulfil the legislative functions required of their roles.

Unfortunately, the Commission's submission to request a continuation of the COVID-19 regulation was unsuccessful. The *Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* expired on 30 April 2022.

# Challenges and outlook

## FRC Future Directions Review

On 25 March 2022, the FRC was advised by DSDSATSIP that Abt Associates had been engaged to undertake an independent review of the FRC to inform the Queensland Government's decision-making on its future. The Terms of Reference provided by Abt Associates advised that: "*On 14 July 2019, the Queensland Government signed a Statement of Commitment and launched Tracks to Treaty, which commits the Queensland Government to reframing the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and the Queensland Government. It is important that the role and future of the FRC be considered having regard to the current policy environment including the principles underlying the Statement of Commitment, Tracks to Treaty and other Queensland Government policy reforms*". The review team were to be informed by the views of the program partners (Australian and Queensland Governments and CYI), the FRC, its clients and community members. The final report is to be provided to the Minister (anticipated in July 2022). The FR Board will be provided with the final report once endorsed by the Premier for release and will provide advice to the Minister in line with its statutory role under the FRC Act.

Notably, the Honourable Craig Crawford MP, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, provided a statement to the Commission on 24 June 2021 advising that:

> *"…I am proposing to conduct a Future Directions Review of the FRC to inform a modernisation of the FRC, and to consider its operations in a contemporary context. I am proposing that this review will be finalised by the end of this year, to inform the future directions of the FRC.* ***Again, I want to confirm that this review is not about terminating the FRC****. [Emphasis added]. The FRC, Local Commissioners, FRC Communities and clients will all have an opportunity to provide their input to the review so that together we can provide a mechanism that continues to support and empowers clients and communities. I ask you all today to work with us over the coming months to consider how we evolve the FRC and what is required to improve the FRC model."*

In the development of the reviewer's recommendations, the following was to be considered: the original intent of the FRC and its enabling legislation; past reviews; analysis of data across the life of the FRC; contributing factors, challenges and reasons for outcomes; the appropriateness and effectiveness of the FR Board as a governance mechanism; the operation of the existing triggers; service and support availability (including gaps); aspirations and input of key stakeholders; analysis of risks, benefits and cost effectiveness; the ability of the FRC to meet its objectives; and lastly, any other matters considered relevant to the review.

The FRC commenced discussions with Abt Associates in April 2022 with the first recorded consultation held between members of Abt Associates and FRC executive management on 19 April. Further consultations were then undertaken by Abt Associates with FRC executive management, Local Commissioners and FRC communities during May and June.

The Commission approached and participated in the review in a spirit of collaboration, and considered the review as an opportunity to celebrate successes, recognise and report challenges and seek new opportunities to continue improving the FRC model of social change. It is hoped that the results of the review will provide opportunities to improve and evolve the Commission into an organisation with greater reach and impact and lead to long-term operational stability.

# Challenges and outlook

## Submission to the FRC Future Directions Review

On 26 May 2022 the Commission provided a submission to Abt Associates titled '*The FRC: A Model of Self-Determination, An operational analysis of the Family Responsibilities Commission from 2008 to 2022*'. The document formed part of the Commission's response to the review consultations. It was provided on the basis it be read in conjunction with the submissions made by Local Commissioners in each of the five communities and all other feedback provided on behalf of the FRC to the review team.

The FRC's submission included evidence-based data to inform the review process. Below is a summary from the submission detailing the Commission's cost effectiveness.

### Evidence of success

**The FRC provides good value for money.** Evidence of the FRC's workload performance shows it is a lean and agile, yet highly efficient and cost-effective organisation. Using available information and performance efficiency measures of other comparable institutions, including the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) which has some similar quasi-judicial functions, the FRC compares favourably using the following indicators:

1. ***employee expenses as a percentage of total expenses*** – over a five-year period between 2016-17 to 2020-21, average employee-related expenses (including Local Commissioners) accounted for 72% of FRC's annual budget.
2. ***cost per matter*** – Over a period from 2017-18 to 2020-21, the average FRC cost per notice was $426*.
3. ***spend in remote and regional areas*** – almost three-quarters of FRC expenses (71%) are spent on community operations.

Note: * An FRC efficiency measure calculated by considering cost per matter—that is, the total cost of the FRC per matter on the basis of the number of notices assessed—provides a true measure of the FRC's efficiency. The FRC Act imposes a statutory obligation on the FRC to assess all notices received by notifying agencies to determine jurisdiction. There is a workload created for the FRC with every notice received.[1] For instance, those matters which are determined to be within the FRC's jurisdiction, are then prioritised for conference and finalised with a decision.[2] There are also circumstances as defined in the FRC Act, where facts relating to a person the subject of an agency notice may change, resulting in a matter previously deemed 'outside of jurisdiction' to later fall 'within jurisdiction'.

The role of the FRC is to work in small communities which experience deep and persistent disadvantage. While the FRC's workload is high, the FRC does not work with large populations, and this is not the intended role and purpose of the FRC.

1. The type of workload generated for each notice uniquely depends on an assessment of the facts by the Registry and the applicability of processes set out in the FRC Act.
2. Section 45 of the FRC Act.

## FRC Recommendations

Seven recommendations were made in Part 4 of the submission. Each recommendation was framed to support the FRC's continued operations and the growth required to provide innovative responses to highly disadvantaged clients and their families in empowering and effective ways. The recommendations can be summarised as follows:

**Recommendation 1: A permanent FRC with renewed local authority**

The Queensland Government should guarantee the long-term future of the FRC so that the Crown's decision-making powers and responsibility continue to be shared with First Nations people under the FRC Act. Immediate steps must also be taken to ensure business continuity, succession planning and renewal of leadership through the appointments of the FRC Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners for multi-year terms. This is the kind of partnership and shared decision-making model that puts high level policy commitments recently made by government into action.

**Recommendation 2: The FRC to be supported to expand and contract across communities**

The FRC should never be imposed from the top-down. This is contrary to empowerment and self-determination which is at the heart of the FRC model. Rather the FRC partners should jointly engage with other interested communities about how an efficient, effective, agile, and responsive FRC model could be expanded to new locations.

**Recommendation 3: Adding 'Opportunity' to 'Responsibility', and renaming the FRC**

Given elements of the FRC are a special measure, there is a strong argument for the need to evolve and enhance the current model so opportunities increasingly complement the FRC's welfare responsibilities agenda, as was intended from the outset.

The Australian Government's current commitment to co-design and replace the Community Development Program, including to ensure there are more job opportunities available, especially in remote locations, allows the partners to revisit the opportunities that must accompany responsibility for real empowerment. The FRC is ideally placed to play a central role as job opportunities are increased. This could be through a 'work obligation' trigger where the FRC receives notifications when participants are not meeting agreed obligations. The FRC could then utilise the conferencing process to identify barriers to a participant's employment, for example substance misuse or interpersonal issues, and make appropriate referrals to support service. It could then be appropriate to rename the FRC, the Family Responsibilities and Opportunities Commission (FROC).

**Recommendation 4: FRC supported to ensure the service ecosystem is working as required**

The FRC's ability to restore local authority, provide support to community members to deal with everyday challenges, and encourage clients to take up personal responsibility, is crucial but of course limited. The FRC cannot be effective where services are unaware of, and/or not meeting their professional obligations to the FRC. Such obligations include but are not limited to government agencies providing trigger notices as required under the law, and service providers engaging FRC clients and/or meeting their legal obligations to report back to the FRC against case plans.

Change is needed so there is more support provided across the partnership to promote and leverage the potential benefits of the FRC's case plan, referral, case management and monitoring, and information sharing functions with service providers and government agencies. This includes putting in place agreed processes for information sharing so FRC input is provided into relevant decision-making of Courts, Queensland Corrective Services and Education Queensland. This will ensure that these disparate agencies are working as a cohesive unit to incentivise and support positive behavioural change within clients. This could take the form of FRC advice or 'certification' issued by the FRC Commissioner to the relevant agency as to whether a person is engaging with the FRC and attending referral agencies. This information could provide input into critical decisions being made by these agencies with respect to joint FRC clients.

**Recommendation 5: FRC to administer Voluntary Income Management (VIM) state-wide to help those suffering entrenched disadvantage to protect income**

Given the success of VIM since the introduction of the CDC, consideration should be given to the FRC administering VIM in other geographical areas. In this way VIM could be applied on request in any location where a person believes the tool will assist them manage their income so that bills can be paid, and money is available for food and other essentials despite challenging factors such as addictions and/or relationships with others. Women in FRC communities have found VIM helpful in protecting their income in DV and/or coercive relationships, for example.

The FRC's administration of VIM across the state, or to other geographical areas as required, would provide an additional tool for those experiencing disadvantage, and allow for the efficient delivery of this innovation utilising the existing systems and back-end support of the FRC.

**Recommendation 6: Changes to strengthen the FRC model**

There are straightforward changes needed to strengthen the FRC model:

- Activating all the FRC triggers in Doomadgee would enhance local authority and assist the community to respond to high levels of offending (including DV) and breaches of social housing tenancy obligations.
- Reactivate the Childrens Court trigger notice as provided for, and intended to operate, under the FRC Act.

- A new trigger for those cautioned by police would be consistent with the FRC's intention to provide early community-based intervention.
- A stronger formal partnership with Queensland Corrective Services to assist the reintegration of released prisoners into FRC communities to tackle recidivism and high rates of incarceration. A trigger notice to advise of a prisoner's release would provide a more closely coordinated approach to offender and prisoner re-integration, which is much needed in the community.

**Recommendation 7: Reinvigorated, aligned, learning focused leadership and governance**

Given its success, the FRC partners should continue to support the FR Board to perform its limited and defined statutory role. The form of the FR Board has been largely successful, although the FR Board has worked best when its membership has been able to reflect a 'whole-of-government' perspective and influence. The FR Board's governance practices may benefit from establishing FR Board protocols setting out details of how the FR Board performs its functions.

The partners' reinvigoration of a holistic approach to support the work of the FRC must also include establishing complementary governance processes, or an additional board, distinct from the FR Board. The early successes of the FRC coincided with the effective operations of the Welfare Reform Advisory Board (WRAB) which drove the 'whole-of-government' and system changes that were needed. Representation from senior representatives from local, state, and national governments and community leaders on such a complementary governance mechanism could form a key plank in the Queensland Government's 'Reframing the Relationship' and 'Local Thriving Communities' reform programs.

## Elevated response in Coen

Tensions escalated in Coen between clan groups during January and early February 2022. On 8 February 2022 the unrest culminated in a vicious community fight resulting in over 40 people being charged with various offences, including the use of weapons. Individuals came out of isolation to participate in the fighting, which resulted in a sharp spike in Omicron cases.

Local service delivery in Coen was subsequently affected with many of the offices in the CRAC building closed. The Coen Justice Group informed the Commission's Local Registry Coordinator that the unrest stemmed from youth in the community, many of whom had not returned to boarding school at the beginning of the school year. Due to the delay in the commencement of conferencing attributed to COVID-19, the progression of the ICM framework became a key priority. FRC clients were directly affected by the unrest, and there was a lack of trust and coordinated support between community members and local services.

The Commission considered that an elevated response to support families and individuals was required, with face-to-face contact for clients who were not available by telephone. The Commission's EMT approved the Local Registry Coordinator to travel to Coen and:

- engage with prioritised clients and service providers to initiate intensive case management of vulnerable community members
- offer support to FRC clients and families affected by the unrest
- discuss voluntary case plans and/or income management with vulnerable FRC clients
- provide support to the Local Commissioners
- engage with service providers in response to the unrest and in preparation for conferencing in March (including the Coen Justice Group Coordinator, Apunipima Wellbeing Centre and the Officer-in-Charge of Coen Police) and
- provide support to families to complete boarding school requirements for the return of boarding students.

For months following the public unrest the community received only limited support service provision due to a lack of skilled staff available to undertake the roles. As at the end of this reporting period the community unrest had settled, however, clan group differences continue to affect community cohesion with largely historical issues not forgotten.

## FRC's partnerships with community support services in welfare reform communities

### *Case plan reporting*

The Commission has a legislative mandate to receive information from support services in order to monitor case plan compliance and progress, and further assist the Commissioners to make appropriate decisions. Part 8, Information exchange, of the FRC Act defines the information which can be requested by the Commissioner, and from whom this information can be requested, including community support services that are attended by a person under a case plan.

It is a requirement under section 35 of the FRC Act for the Registrar to monitor and report on a person's compliance with a case plan to attend a community support service under an FRA or order. The Commission seeks information from service providers via a user-friendly online portal through which service providers are requested to provide information on their attempts to engage the client, the client's attendance at the service, and assessment of progress made under the case plan. Training is provided in the use of the portal. Emailed requests are sent monthly from the Commission to service providers for progress reports for specific clients at key stages of case plans.

During this reporting period the Commission continued to experience challenges in receiving timely and informative reports from some support services. The Commission will continue to strengthen relationships with support services through the drafting and negotiation of MoUs, and the provision of additional training in the use of the FRC portal and the legislative requirements of the FRC Act.

## FRC's partnerships with notifying agencies

### *Legislative compliance*

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. In most instances, time limits apply within which an agency must provide the Commission with a notice. Should this time limit not be met by the notifying agency, the notice is deemed invalid for conferencing purposes. There have been occasions where notices have been received out of time and therefore deemed invalid. During this reporting period 90 agency notices were received outside of the legislated timeframe. The Commission has implemented quality control audit practices overseen by the Manager (Case Management and Monitoring) and continues to work with the relevant notifying agencies in a proactive and collaborative manner to resolve the issue.

## A going concern

Each year, as part of the preparation of the Commission's financial statements, the responsible person (FRC Commissioner) is required to undertake an assessment as to whether it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. This requires the FRC Commissioner to contemplate the continuity of a significant portion of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the normal course of business for a minimum of 12 months from date of signing of the financial statements (which usually occurs in August of each year for the preceding financial year ending in June). In making the assessment of continuity, the FRC Commissioner needs to consider future funding to be received, the term/s of such funding and any conditions or changes anticipated that will significantly impact operations. Where this information is not available to inform such decisions, the Commissioner may be required to 'not prepare' the financial statements on a going concern basis.

On this basis, the Commission finalised its financial statements for the 2021-22 year on a going concern basis. This disclosure can be found at Note 1(i) on page 7 of the financial statements in this annual report. The Commission has been aware of material uncertainties and making the necessary disclosures since the 2015-16 year.

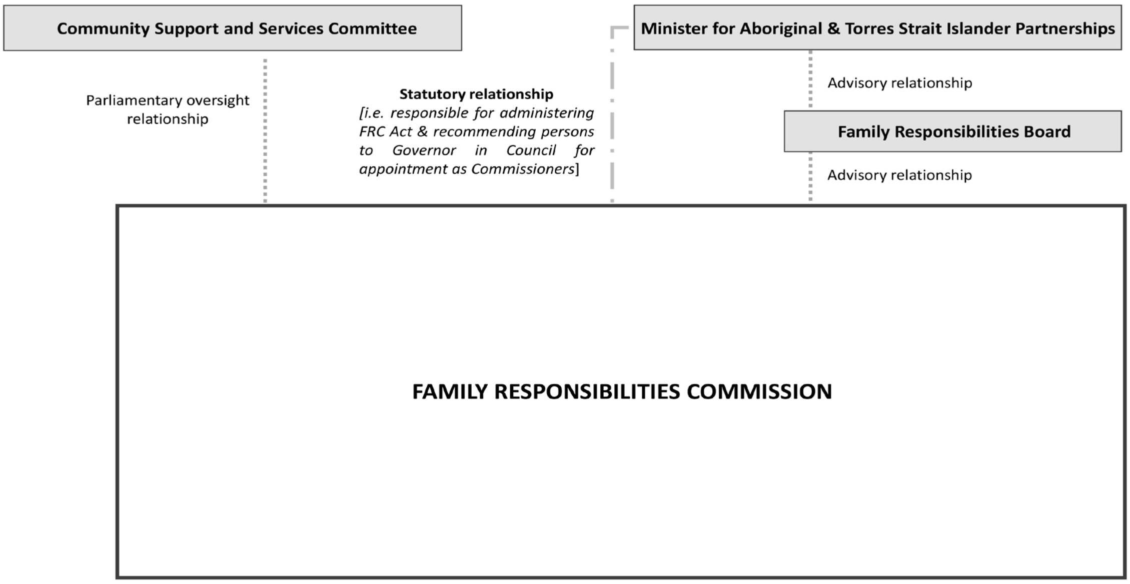
An additional consequence of the above, is that the Queensland Audit Office has issued the Commission with an 'Emphasis of Matter' audit opinion referencing the material uncertainty related to going concern since the 2017-18 financial year.

The strategic and operational challenges experienced by the Commission's EMT in managing a going concern environment for the past five years has led to a conservative approach being exercised in relation to expenditure and commencing any significant projects.

On occasion, the Commissioner is required to enter into agreements which bind the Commission into the future. Agreements include various contractual obligations including office leases, motor vehicle leases and staff accommodation, as well as contracts to address pressing operational requirements. Long-term strategic and operational planning has been inhibited by the uncertainty of continuing government funding, and the term of such funding.

## External governance

The FRC, as an independent statutory authority, falls under the umbrella of DSDSATSIP. The FRC Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council under recommendation by the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The Minister and FR Board have advisory relationships to the FRC Commissioner.




## Ministerial portfolio

For the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 the Minister responsible for administering the FRC Act was the Honourable Craig Crawford MP, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

## 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.

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 2022 were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Bob Gee | Director-General, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) as the Chair |
| Mr Ray Griggs | AO, CSC, CEO, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) until 21 July 2021, then Secretary to the Department of Social Services (DSS) from 22 July 2021. |
| Mr Noel Pearson | Founder, Cape York Partnership representing the Cape York Institute (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 | Attendees |
|---|---|---|
| 4 November 2021 | 1 William Street, Brisbane | Mr Bob Gee (Chair), Director-General DAF; Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC, Secretary, DSS; Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, CYI. |
| 21 April 2022 | 1 William Street, Brisbane | Mr Bob Gee (Chair), Director-General DAF; Mr Ray Griggs AO, CSC, Secretary, DSS; Mr Noel Pearson, Founder, CYI. |

## Executive management

The Commission's EMT is comprised of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, the Registrar, and the Executive Officer (Finance). 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 and
- 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 and
    - 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 2021-22 year.

## Queensland public service values

| Customers first | Be courageous |
| --- | --- |
| • Know your customers<br>• Deliver what matters<br>• Make decisions with empathy | • Own your actions, successes and mistakes<br>• Take calculated risks<br>• Act with transparency |
| **Ideas into action** | **Empower people** |
| • Challenge the norm and suggest solutions<br>• Encourage and embrace new ideas<br>• Work across boundaries | • Lead, empower and trust<br>• Play to everyone's strengths<br>• Develop yourself and those around you |
| **Unleash potential** | |
| • Expect greatness<br>• Lead and set clear expectations<br>• 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 pledges 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 Family Responsibilities Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and the Local Commissioners – who are appointed by Governor in Council – staff of the Commission are employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*. 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 on the intranet. 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 and is consistent with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008*, 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 communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge conduct Code of Conduct training for the Local Commissioners on an annual basis and facilitated Code of Conduct training for the Local Commissioners in the first quarter of this financial year. 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 and the Local Commissioners' Conference Guidelines. 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 Commission's Strategic Plan is under review and is to be informed and finalised following completion of the FRC Future Directions Review commissioned by DSDSATSIP. The FRC Future Directions Review report is expected to be provided to the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships early in July 2022.

## 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 annual online training through iLearn, the Learning Management System for DSDSATSIP. In-house training to be delivered by the Queensland Human Rights Commission will be scheduled once the threat and impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic has been lessened. Training regarding the legislative requirements of the *Human Rights Act 2019* is included as mandatory induction training.

The Commission has reviewed its complaints management policies to 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 and
- 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 Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. 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 (Finance) 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 EMT requested periodic audits of the Commission's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system 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; and
- 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 22 March 2022, by invitation, Commissioner Williams, Registrar Maxine McLeod and Executive Officer (Finance) Tracey Paterson appeared at a public briefing before the Community Support and Services Committee in Brisbane. 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 shared outcomes achieved with the support of our tripartite partnership and joint Australian and Queensland Government investment, highlighted in the Commission's Annual Report 2020-21 tabled in the Queensland Parliament on 1 February 2022
- the signing of an MoU for continued funding for the FRC to 30 June 2023
- the engagement of a consultant to undertake an independent review to inform the Queensland Government's decision-making on the future of the FRC commissioned by DSDSATSIP – the long history of external scrutiny and independent evaluative assessments of the FRC were outlined for the benefit of the Committee
- the Commission's data management systems, highlighting the limited nature of the system which was not established with the aim of providing accessible client-focused outcomes data, but rather to capture the process orientated functions of the registry showing high quality output, but not a system capable of tracking client data to demonstrate outcomes for individual clients and/or their children
- the relevant law and operational issues impacting the Commission's ability to receive notices from the Children's Court and

- an exchange of information guideline between the FRC and DET to provide guidance in the principles that apply to information exchange regarding school attendance and enrolment information, and the method to be adopted in the exchange of information.

## Information systems and records governance

The Commission has a service level agreement with the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) for the provision of information and communication technology services. This agreement ensures 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.

The Commission's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system plays a vital role in supporting employees in the Cairns registry and regional offices. The Commission, in conjunction with CAA, 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.

Cyber security is paramount to the operations of the Commission staff, clients and stakeholders. To initiate a proactive approach to cyber security as a crucial defence in keeping the Commission's sensitive information safe, the Commission invited CAA to conduct cyber security training for all staff on 3 December 2021. The training assisted to boost the awareness of staff by informing on current cyber security trends and building the capability and resilience of the Commission against malicious cyber security threats.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way people work around the world and accelerated digital adoption and transformation. The Commission has adapted to incorporate more flexible and resilient systems and processes to support staff working and collaborating remotely. Information security is paramount and was carefully considered through this implementation.

Various projects were undertaken by our ICT Administrator during the reporting period.

- Substantial additions and alterations were required to the Commission's CRM database to implement and support the functioning of the new ICM framework (see page 64 for details).
- Enhancement of the ICT system was undertaken to incorporate new end point management software. End point software improves real-time visibility and compliance of ICT devices within the Commission's network, whilst also migrating parts of the Commission's network to the Queensland Government Network. The migration will increase reliability and speed of access to support the delivery of services.
- Considerable data compilation and analysis was undertaken and reported in the Commission's submission titled '*The FRC: A Model of Self-Determination*' to the reviewer Abt Associates, engaged by DSDSATSIP to undertake the FRC Future Directions Review.

The Commission can report that no breaches of information security have occurred to date, and no records have been lost due to disaster or other occurrences.

The Commission complies with recordkeeping practices in accordance with section 141 of the FRC Act, the *Public Records Act 2002* and sections 7, 22 and 23 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. Approximately 90 percent of Commission records are held in digital format.

As the Commission has been dependent upon funding commitments from the Queensland and Australian Governments on an annual basis, only those records which are identified as falling within section 141 of the FRC Act are destroyed. All other public records have been retained. No records have yet been transferred to the Queensland State Archives.

## Workforce profile

At 30 June 2022 the Commission had an employee establishment of 18 positions occupied by 16.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members, and a permanent separation rate of 0 percent.

The Commission also employs Indigenous Local Commissioners on a fee for service basis under the remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland Government Bodies. On 30 May 2022, the Commission received advice from the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships that, in accordance with the FRC Act, 12 new Local Commissioners had been appointed by the Governor in Council effective from 5 May 2022. These new Local Commissioners will commence induction and training early in the 2022-23 financial year, bringing the total number of Local Commissioners as at 30 June 2022 to 38.

The Commission also employs a Deputy Commissioner who is engaged subject to a delegation from the FRC 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 are based on the public servant workforce profile of the Commission, including the FRC Commissioner as CEO, but excluding the Local Commissioners and Deputy Commissioner.

| Workforce profile data | FTE |
|---|---|
| Total FTE for the Family Responsibilities Commission | 16.9 |

Target group data is reflected below.

| Equality of Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups | Number (Headcount) | Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount) |
|---|---|---|
| Women | 15 | 83.33 |
| Women in leadership roles | <5 | 11.11 |
| Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples | <5 | 16.67 |
| People with disability | 0 | 0 |
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Born overseas in a mainly non-English speaking country | <5 | 11.11 |
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English including ATSI/ASSI languages | <5 | 11.11 |
| **Gender** | **Number (Headcount)** | **Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)** |
| Man | <5 | 16.67 |
| Woman | 15 | 83.33 |
| Non-binary | 0 | 0 |

The Commission conducts all recruitment and selection processes in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 2008* 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 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 2019* and PSC Directive 09/20 Fixed term temporary employment, and maximising employment security as reflected in the whole of government Employment Security Policy. As a result, effective from 1 July 2021 three employees were transitioned to tenured positions from fixed term temporary contracts having met the required criteria of PSC Directive 09/20.

During the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid.

## Performance management

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

Employees across the public service contributed to the COVID-19 pandemic response in a range of different ways. Commission employees contributed to this effort by continuing to deliver essential services. The Commission continued to focus on ensuring the health and safety of its employees by maintaining compliance with the directions of the State Chief Health Officer and by drafting a COVID-19 policy and safety plan in March of this reporting period. The policy outlines the general health and safety responsibilities of Commission managers, employees and other people at the workplace in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers have a duty under the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to minimise the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace. Employers also have a duty to consult workers regarding COVID-19 risks and how these risks are to be managed. To meet this expectation and to minimise risks of COVID-19 in the workplace, the Commission has:

- undertaken a risk assessment of the current COVID-19 threat to employees, the safety measures implemented, and effectiveness of current control measures
- provided information and Directions from the Queensland Government to employees in regard to how to manage the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace to ensure the health and safety of employees at work and others interacting with employees in the course of their work
- consulted with staff to determine their views to inform the Commission's COVID-19 policy and safety plan and how to best support employees in the current COVID-19 environment and any possible future pandemic scenarios which may develop.

In order to develop a comprehensive WHS management system in regard to COVID-19 the Commission has:

- established a written policy which meets best practice criteria
- established a process for effective consultation on WHS issues
- ensured that employees are informed in regard to leave provisions available in the event of a COVID-19 infection, and or the need to isolate due to Government directives
- established a risk register to inform on the potential impact of COVID-19 on Commission operations and employee health
- delegated a staff member to ensure legislative changes are complied with, managers are informed on WHS issues and consultation mechanisms are working and effective and
- established a system to review the effectiveness of the COVID-19 WHS management system on a regular basis for continuous improvement.

## Professional development

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 a training week during which the Local Commissioners received professional training in motivational interviewing techniques to assist clients to make positive behavioural change, information from experts in criminology and criminal justice studies addressing the over representation of Indigenous young people in the juvenile justice system and the problem of youth crime in North Queensland, and the impact of domestic and family violence on the community together with a review of the types of support services needed to address what is an increasing social problem
- 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.

In line with the above strategies and practices, employees are offered backfill roles in higher duty positions where available 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 2021-22 employee professional development, training, and workshops cost $14,152 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. Unfortunately, inhouse leadership training plans continued to be affected by COVID-19 safety limitations during this reporting period.

## 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. For consultancies and overseas travel, refer to the Queensland Government Open Data website at https://data.qld.gov.au.

## Publications by the Commission during 2021-22

1. Annual Report 2020-2021
2. Quarterly Reports 52 - 55 (April 2021 to March 2022)

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 2021-22 and a comparison to 2020-21. A comprehensive set of 2021-22 financial statements covering all aspects of the Commission's activities commences on page 88.

### Our overall performance

**Table 13: Summary of financial performance**

| Summary statement | 30 Jun 2022 | 30 Jun 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 |
| Income | 4,245 | 4,184 |
| Less: expenses | 3,964 | 3,829 |
| Operating surplus | 281 | 355 |

### Income

**Table 14: Summary of income by type**

| Income by type | 30 Jun 2022 | 30 Jun 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 |
| State Government funding | 2,418 | 2,359 |
| Australian Government funding | 1,800 | 1,800 |
| Other revenue | 27 | 25 |
| **Total** | **4,245** | **4,184** |

The increase in State Government funding is the application of a CPI increase. Other revenue increased this year and is primarily interest received. Interest received was marginally higher this year (increase of $1K) with the remainder of the increase due to receipt of reimbursement for staff jury duty ($1K).

### Expenses

**Table 15: Summary of expenses by type**

| Expenses by type | 30 Jun 2022 | 30 Jun 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 |
| Employee expenses | 2,967 | 2,827 |
| Supplies and services | 910 | 938 |
| Depreciation and amortisation | 40 | 19 |
| Finance/borrowing costs | 3 | 2 |
| Other expenses | 44 | 43 |
| **Total** | **3,964** | **3,829** |

Employee expenses (representing 74.8 percent) of total expenditure (2021: 73.8 percent) increased in 2021-22 due to the application of two wage increases during the year (one of which was deferred from 2020-21 due to Queensland Government COVID-19 austerity measures), an increase in the superannuation rate for the Commissioner and Local Commissioners as well as the resulting increases in payroll tax and other payroll oncosts. Savings in employee expenses for Local Commissioners due to cancelled conferences have been offset by the above increases as well as the cost of staff returning from maternity leave.

The decrease in supplies and services is due to the reduction in employment agency costs following the conversion to tenure of previous agency staff in line with directive 09/20. This reduction was offset by increased legal and consultancy expenses.

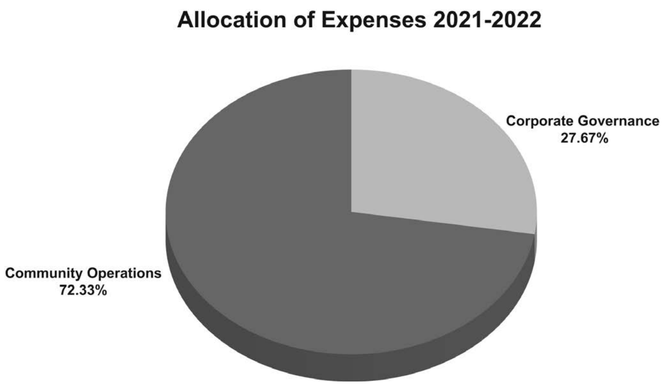
Increased depreciation and amortisation and finance/borrowing costs relate to Commission property and equipment leases that have been recognised as right-of-use assets and lease liabilities in accordance with Accounting Standards.

# Review of financial performance

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 agreements and orders.
  - **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 on-going monitoring of case plans for clients through the provision of data and other information and processing income management where considered necessary.
- **Corporate governance** includes finance, statistical reporting, corporate governance, training and other administrative functions to ensure the effective and efficient operations of the Commission.

The allocation of the FRC's costs in 2021-22 based on the above was:




**Graph 13: Allocation of expenses 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022**

These FRC 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 expense 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 or undertaking professional development.

This work includes work that is 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. 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 the 2021-22 year, **72.33 percent of FRC expenses support frontline operations**, while 27.67 percent support corporate governance.

## Our position

Total assets as at 30 June 2022 consisted of current assets of cash, prepayments and receivables in addition to non-current plant and equipment and right-of-use assets.

Total liabilities as at 30 June 2022 consisted of payables, accrued employee benefits and lease liabilities.

**Table 16: Statement of financial position**

| Statement of financial position | 30 Jun 2022 | 30 Jun 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 |
| Total assets | 3,960 | 3,640 |
| **Total liabilities** | **431** | **392** |
| Net assets | 3,529 | 3,248 |
| **Total equity** | **3,529** | **3,248** |

# Financial Statements

## For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

# Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2022

## Contents

# Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2022

| | Notes | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Income from continuing operations** | | | |
| Grants and other contributions | **2** | 4,218 | 4,159 |
| Other revenue | | 27 | 25 |
| **Total income from continuing operations** | | 4,245 | 4,184 |
| **Expenses from continuing operations** | | | |
| Employee expenses | **3** | 2,967 | 2,827 |
| Supplies and services | **4** | 910 | 938 |
| Depreciation and amortisation | **5** | 40 | 19 |
| Finance/borrowing costs | **10** | 3 | 2 |
| Other expenses | **6** | 44 | 43 |
| **Total expenses from continuing operations** | | 3,964 | 3,829 |
| **Operating result from continuing operations** | | 281 | 355 |
| **Total other comprehensive income** | | - | - |
| **Total comprehensive income** | | 281 | 355 |

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

## Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2022

| | Accumulated surplus $000 |
|---|---|
| **Balance as at 1 July 2020** | 2,893 |
| Operating result from continuing operations | 355 |
| Total comprehensive income | 3,248 |
| **Balance as at 30 June 2021** | 3,248 |
| **Balance as at 1 July 2021** | 3,248 |
| Operating result from continuing operations | 281 |
| Total comprehensive income | 3,529 |
| **Balance as at 30 June 2022** | 3,529 |

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

## Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2022

| | Notes | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Current assets** | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | **7** | 3,807 | 3,541 |
| Receivables | **8** | 27 | 10 |
| Other current assets | | 78 | 46 |
| **Total current assets** | | 3,912 | 3,597 |
| **Non-current assets** | | | |
| Plant and equipment | **9** | 2 | 4 |
| Right-of-use assets | **10** | 46 | 39 |
| **Total non-current assets** | | 48 | 43 |
| **Total assets** | | 3,960 | 3,640 |
| **Current liabilities** | | | |
| Payables | **11** | 190 | 172 |
| Accrued employee benefits | **12** | 193 | 179 |
| Lease liabilities | **10** | 48 | 41 |
| **Total current liabilities** | | 431 | 392 |
| **Total liabilities** | | 431 | 392 |
| **Net assets** | | 3,529 | 3,248 |
| **Equity** | | | |
| Accumulated surplus | | 3,529 | 3,248 |
| **Total equity** | | 3,529 | 3,248 |

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

## Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2022

| | Notes | 2022<br>$000 | 2021<br>$000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cash flows from operating activities** | | | |
| *Inflows:* | | | |
| Grants and other contributions | | 4,218 | 4,159 |
| Interest receipts | | 23 | 24 |
| Other receipts | | 1 | 1 |
| GST input tax credits from ATO | | 94 | 95 |
| *Outflows:* | | | |
| Payments to suppliers and employees | | (4,029) | (3,832) |
| **Net cash provided by operating activities** | | 307 | 447 |
| | | | |
| **Cash flows from financing activities** | | | |
| *Outflows:* | | | |
| Lease payments | | (41) | (18) |
| **Net cash used in financing activities** | | (41) | (18) |
| | | | |
| **Net increase in cash held** | | 266 | 429 |
| **Cash at beginning of financial year** | | 3,541 | 3,112 |
| **Cash at end of financial year** | 7 | 3,807 | 3,541 |

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2022

### Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation

**(a) General information about the reporting entity**

The Commission is an independent statutory body established under the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* ("the Act"). The Commission does not have any controlled entities.

The objectives of the Commission as set out in the Act are:

(i) to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform community areas; and

(ii) 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.

The head office and principal place of business of the Commission is Level 3, Cairns Commonwealth Centre, 107 Lake Street, Cairns QLD 4870.

**(b) Authorisation of financial statements for issue**

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Commissioner and Executive Officer (Finance) at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

**(c) Compliance with prescribed requirements**

The Commission is a Statutory Body under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* and these financial statements have been prepared in accordance with section 39 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*.

The Commission is a not-for-profit entity. These general purpose financial statements are prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. These financial statements comply with the recognition and measurement requirements of all Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations applicable to not-for-profit entities, and the presentation requirements in those standards as modified by AASB 1060.

**(d) Underlying measurement basis**

The financial statements are prepared on an accrual basis (with the exception of the statement of cash flows which is prepared on a cash basis).

The historical cost convention is used as the measurement basis.

**(e) Presentation matters**

*Currency and rounding* – Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and have been rounded to the nearest $1,000 or, where that amount is $499 or less, to zero, unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

*Comparatives* – Comparative information reflects the audited 2020-21 financial statements.

*Current / Non-current classification* – Assets are classified as 'current' where their carrying amount is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting date. Liabilities are classified as 'current' when they are due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting date, or the Commission does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement to beyond 12 months after the reporting date. All other assets and liabilities are classified as non-current.

### Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

**(f) Accounting estimates and judgements**

The preparation of financial statements necessarily requires the determination and use of certain critical accounting estimates, assumptions, and management judgements that have the potential to cause a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Such estimates, judgements and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in future periods as relevant.

Accruals for employee benefits is an area where some estimates and judgements are applied, further details are included in Note 12. Management is not aware of any further assumptions and estimation uncertainties that have a significant risk of resulting in a material adjustment within the next financial year.

**(g) Taxation**

The Commission is a State body as defined under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and is exempt from Australian Government taxation with the exception of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST). The net amount of GST recoverable from the ATO or payable to the ATO is shown as an asset or liability respectively.

**(h) Insurance**

The Commission's risks are insured through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund, premiums being paid on a risk assessment basis. In addition, the Commission pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation.

**(i) Economic dependency and going concern**

The Commission is a not-for-profit entity and is reliant on government funding in order to continue its operations.

The Australian and Queensland Governments entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during the 2021-22 year. This memorandum continued the operations of the Commission through to 30 June 2023 with funding to be provided by both parties. Funding for 2022-23 year has been confirmed by the Queensland Government at $2.479 million with the Australian Government to provide $1.8 million as per the MOU.

The Commission’s strategic partners in Welfare Reform, the Queensland Government, Australian Government and Cape York Institute, continue their discussions on the future of Welfare Reform and the Commission. Currently there is no agreement between the parties beyond 30 June 2023, however, there is no stated intention to cease operations of the Commission at the time of signing these statements.

The Queensland Government is currently undertaking a review of the Commission (known as the Future Directions Review). The outcome of this review remains unknown to the Commission at the time of signing these statements.

## Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

### (i) Economic dependency and going concern (continued)

The statutory appointment of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners expired on 30 June 2022. Governor-in-Council approved the reappointments of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Local Commissioners on 5 May 2022 for the period 1 July 2022 through to 30 June 2023.

After consideration of all of the above factors, management have assessed that, while uncertainty exists in relation to the Commission's ability to continue all operations in their current form beyond 1 July 2023, should government funding beyond that time be significantly reduced or curtailed, it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, which contemplates continuity of a significant portion of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business.

The financial statements do not include adjustments relating to the recoverability and classification of recorded asset amounts, nor to the amounts and classification of liabilities that might be necessary should the entity not continue as a going concern.

### (j) New and revised accounting standards

*First time mandatory application of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations*

One new accounting standard was applied for the first time in 2021-22:

- AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities.*

AASB 1060 introduces the Simplified Disclosures framework for general purpose financial statements prepared by entities reporting under Tier 2 of the Differential Reporting Framework. This new disclosure framework applies to the Commission. While most of the disclosures remain the same as 2020-21, there have been some changes by way of additional or reduced disclosures reflected in these financial statements.

The new accounting standard does not change any recognition or measurement requirements, and the Commission's financial statements continue to comply with the recognition and measurement requirements of all applicable accounting standards and interpretations applicable to not-for-profit entities.

*Changes in significant accounting policies*

Other than the application of AASB 1060 noted above, no new accounting standards applicable for the first time in 2021-22 had a material impact on the Commission.

*Other Accounting Standards changes*

No accounting pronouncements were early adopted in the 2021-22 financial year.

No voluntary changes in accounting policies occurred during the 2021-22 financial year.

## Note 2 – Grants and other contributions

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| **Other grants and contributions** | **$000** | **$000** |
| Queensland Government grants | 2,418 | 2,359 |
| Australian Government grants | 1,800 | 1,800 |
| **Total** | 4,218 | 4,159 |

**Accounting policy**
Grants and contributions arise from transactions that are non-reciprocal in nature (i.e. do not require any goods or services to be provided in return).

Where a grant agreement is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations for the Commission to transfer goods and services to a third-party on the grantor's behalf, the grant would be accounted for under AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers.* In this case, revenue is initially deferred as unearned revenue (contract liability) and recognised as or when the performance obligations are satisfied.

Otherwise, the grant or contribution is accounted for under AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit* Entities, whereby revenue is recognised in the year in which the Commission obtains control over them.

### Disclosure – Grants and other contributions

*Australian and Queensland Government Grants – recognised upfront*
The Commission received a total of $4.218 million in respect of its operations for the 2021-22 year. This funding has been recognised in these financial statements as revenue on receipt under AASB 1058 as the Commission's obligations are not sufficiently specific. The grant funds received are to be used to fund the operations of the Commission. Specifically, the operations of the Commission are to support welfare reform community members to restore socially responsible standards of behaviour, local authority and wellbeing for themselves and their families. A welfare reform community is prescribed by regulation. The Commission has full discretion as to how and when it conducts these operations during the financial year.

## Note 3 – Employee expenses

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 |
| **Employee benefits** | | |
| Wages and salaries | 2,271 | 2,167 |
| Recreation leave expense | 215 | 204 |
| Employer superannuation contributions | 281 | 262 |
| Long service leave levy | 53 | 49 |
| **Employee related expenses** | | |
| Workers' compensation premium | 15 | 12 |
| Payroll tax and fringe benefits tax | 117 | 113 |
| Other employee related expenses | 15 | 20 |
| **Total** | 2,967 | 2,827 |

**Disclosure – Employee numbers**
The number of employees including full-time, part-time and casual employees measured on a full-time equivalent basis:

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Number of employees: | 16 | 16 |

### Accounting policies

Employer superannuation contributions and long service leave levies are regarded as employee benefits.

Payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance are a consequence of employing employees but are not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. They are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as employee related expenses.

*Other employee benefits –sick leave*

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken in each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods. Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised.

As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2022

### Note 3 – Employee expenses (continued)

**Accounting policies (continued)**

*Employer superannuation contributions*

Superannuation benefits are provided through defined contribution (accumulation) plans in accordance with the employee's conditions of employment and employee instructions as to superannuation plan (where applicable). Employer contributions are based on rates specified under conditions of employment and are expensed when they become payable at the end of each fortnightly pay period.

*Termination benefits*

Termination benefits expense represent cash payments made to employees who accepted voluntary redundancies during the year.

### Note 4 – Supplies and services

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 |
| Communications | 14 | 14 |
| Internet and IT | 238 | 217 |
| Materials and running costs | 214 | 242 |
| Fleet vehicle expenses | 39 | 38 |
| Office accommodation | 125 | 120 |
| Employee housing | 8 | 8 |
| Lease expenses | 42 | 67 |
| Staff travel | 230 | 232 |
| **Total** | 910 | 938 |

**Accounting policy – leases**

Lease expenses include lease rentals for short-term leases and leases of low value assets. Short term and low value lease payments are representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred.

Short term and low value leases are entered into as a means of acquiring access to office and staff accommodation, storage facilities and motor vehicles. Current lease terms at year end range from 1 month to 1 year. On conclusion of the lease terms, the lease terms are renegotiated on an as needs basis having regard to the going concern uncertainty referred to in Note 1(i).

Lease payments are generally fixed but some agreements include annual escalation clauses for predetermined percentages or the Consumer Price Index (CPI) changes upon which future year rentals are determined.

Refer to Note 10 for breakdown of lease expenses and other lease disclosures.

## Note 5 – Depreciation and amortisation

| | Notes | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Depreciation - plant and equipment | **9** | 2 | 4 |
| Depreciation - right-of-use assets | **10** | 38 | 15 |
| **Total** | | 40 | 19 |

### Accounting policies

*Depreciation*

Plant and equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis so as to allocate the net cost of each asset progressively over its estimated useful life to the Commission. The estimation of the useful lives of assets is based on historical experience with similar assets.

Reassessments of useful lives are undertaken annually by the Commission. Any consequential adjustments to remaining useful life estimates are implemented prospectively. Where the estimated useful life of the asset is greater than the estimated remaining funded life of the Commission, the lesser of the two has been deemed the useful life.

For each class of asset the following rates are used:

| | |
|---|---|
| Plant and equipment | 20 - 50% |

## Note 6 – Other expenses

| | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|
| Queensland Audit Office – external audit fees (1) | 30 | 30 |
| Insurance premiums - QGIF | 14 | 13 |
| **Total** | 44 | 43 |

(1) Total audit fees due to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2021-22 financial year are estimated to be $30,000 (2020-21: $29,500). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.

## Note 7 – Cash and cash equivalents

| | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|
| Cash at bank | 3,807 | 3,541 |
| **Total** | 3,807 | 3,541 |

Interest earned on cash held with the Commonwealth Bank was between 0.10% to 1.85% in 2021-22 (between 0.10% to 0.75% in 2020-21).

### Accounting policy

For the purposes of the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Cash Flows, cash assets include all cash and cheques receipted but not banked at 30 June as well as deposits at call with financial institutions.

## Note 8 – Receivables

| | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|
| Sundry Debtors | 10 | 1 |
| GST Receivable | 13 | 7 |
| Interest Receivable | 4 | 2 |
| **Total** | 27 | 10 |

### Accounting policy

Trade debtors are recognised at the amounts due at the time of sale or service delivery, i.e. the agreed purchase/contract price. Settlement of these amounts is required within 30 days from invoice date.

The collectability of receivables is assessed periodically and if there is objective evidence that the Commission will not be able to collect all amounts due, the carrying amount is reduced for impairment. No allowance for impairment has been made as at balance date. All known bad debts were written off at year end.

## Note 9 – Plant and equipment

| | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|
| Gross | 46 | 46 |
| Less: Accumulated depreciation | (44) | (42) |
| Carrying amount at 30 June | 2 | 4 |
| *Represented by movements in carrying amount:* | | |
| Carrying amount at 1 July | 4 | 8 |
| Acquisitions | - | - |
| Depreciation | (2) | (4) |
| Carrying amount at 30 June | 2 | 4 |

### Accounting policy

Actual cost is used for the initial recording of all non-current physical asset acquisitions. Cost is determined as the fair value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including all other costs incurred in getting the assets ready for use. However, any training costs are expensed as incurred.

Items of plant and equipment with a cost equal to or in excess of the following thresholds are recognised for financial reporting purposes in the year of acquisition in the following classes.

| | |
|---|---|
| Plant and equipment - computer and other technology equipment | $5,000 |

Items with a lesser value are expensed in the year of acquisition.

Expenditure is only capitalised if it increases the service potential or useful life of the existing asset. Maintenance expenditure that merely restores original service potential (arising from ordinary wear and tear etc) is expensed.

Assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset.

Plant and equipment is measured at depreciated cost in accordance with the non-current asset policies. The carrying amounts for plant and equipment approximate their fair value.

## Note 10 – Right-of-use assets and lease liabilities

| | Buildings $000 | Plant and equipment $000 | Total $000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Right-of-use assets** | | | |
| Opening balance at 1 July 2021 | 35 | 4 | 39 |
| Additions | 45 | - | 45 |
| Depreciation charge | (36) | (2) | (38) |
| **Closing balance at 30 June 2022** | 44 | 2 | 46 |

| | Buildings $000 | Plant and equipment $000 | Total $000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Right-of-use assets** | | | |
| Opening balance at 1 July 2020 | 10 | 7 | 17 |
| Additions | 37 | - | 37 |
| Depreciation charge | (12) | (3) | (15) |
| **Closing balance at 30 June 2021** | 35 | 4 | 39 |

| | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Lease liabilities** | | |
| Current | 48 | 41 |
| **Total** | 48 | 41 |

**Accounting policy - Leases**
*Right-of-use assets* are measured at cost on initial recognition and measured at cost subsequently.

The Commission has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities from short-term leases and leases of low value assets (<$10,000 when new). The lease payments are recognised as expenses on a straight-line basis over the lease term. Refer to Note 4 for disclosure of these expenses.

*Lease liabilities* are initially recognised at the present value of lease payments over the lease term that are not yet paid. The lease term includes any extension or renewal options that the Commission is reasonably certain to exercise. The future lease payments included in the calculation of the lease liability are only comprised of fixed payments that would be payable during the lease term.

The Commission uses its incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate where the interest rate implicit in the lease cannot be readily determined. To determine the incremental borrowing rate, the Commission uses loan rates provided by Queensland Treasury Corporation that correspond to the commencement date and lease term.

## Note 10 –Right-of-use assets and lease liabilities (continued)

| **Disclosures - Leases** | **2022** | **2021** |
|---|---|---|
| | **\$000** | **\$000** |
| *(i) Amounts recognised in profit and loss* | | |
| Interest expense on lease liabilities | 3 | 2 |
| Breakdown of 'lease expenses' included in Note 4 | | |
| - Expenses relating to short-term leases | 42 | 67 |
| *(ii) Total cash outflows for leases* | 41 | 18 |

*(iii) Details of leasing arrangements*

*Buildings*
The Commission has various leases for both office accommodation and employee housing accommodation in addition to separate arrangements with the Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW). One of these leases is considered to be a short-term lease. During the year, the Commission renegotiated four office accommodation leases. Three of these leases were previously considered right-of-use assets with corresponding lease liabilities and were remeasured with adjustments made to the right-of-use asset and lease liability as required. The remaining lease was previously considered a short-term lease however upon execution, the Commission assessed the lease as having a term of thirteen (13) months and accordingly recognised the right-of use assets and corresponding lease liability.

*Plant and Equipment*
The Commission also leases plant and equipment under an agreement of 3 years.

*(iv) Office accommodation, employee housing and motor vehicles*

The Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW) provides the Commission with access to office accommodation, employee housing and motor vehicles under government-wide frameworks. These arrangements are categorised as procurement of services rather than leases because DEPW has substantive substitution rights over the assets. The related service expenses are included in Note 4.

*(v) Lease Liability Maturity*

Undiscounted future lease payments included in the lease liability are as follows:

| | **2022** | **2021** |
|---|---|---|
| | **\$000** | **\$000** |
| Not later than one year | 54 | 40 |
| Later than one year and no later than five years | - | 2 |
| **Total** | 54 | 42 |

### Note 11 – Payables

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| **Payables** | **$000** | **$000** |
| Trade creditors | 94 | 57 |
| Other payables | 96 | 115 |
| **Total** | 190 | 172 |

**Accounting policy**

Trade creditors are recognised upon receipt of the goods or services ordered and are measured at the agreed purchase/contract price, net of applicable trade and other discounts. Amounts owing are unsecured and are generally settled on 30 day terms.

### Note 12 – Accrued employee benefits

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | **$000** | **$000** |
| Salary and wage related | 13 | 14 |
| Recreation leave | 180 | 165 |
| **Total** | 193 | 179 |

**Accounting policies**

*Other long-term employee benefits – annual and long service leave*

**Annual Leave**

Annual leave liabilities are classified and measured as other long-term employee benefits and are presented as current liabilities as the Commission does not have an unconditional right to defer payment for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

**Long Service Leave**

Under the Queensland Government's long service leave scheme, a levy is made on the Commission to cover the cost of employees' long service leave. The levies are expensed in the period in which they are payable. Amounts paid to employees for long service leave are claimed from the scheme quarterly in arrears.

No provision for long service leave is recognised in the Commission's financial statements, the liability being held on a whole-of-Government basis and reported in those financial statements pursuant to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

## Note 13 – Commitments

There are no commitments known to the Commission as at 30 June 2022 which would give rise to the disclosure of any commitments.

## Note 14 – Contingencies

There are no significant matters known to the Commission as at 30 June 2022 which would give rise to the recognition of a contingent asset or liability.

## Note 15 – Events occurring after balance date

There were no significant events occurring after balance date.

## Note 16 – Financial instruments

| | Notes | 2022 $000 | 2021 $000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Financial assets** | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7 | 3,807 | 3,541 |
| Receivables and other current assets at amortised cost (excluding prepayments) | | 35 | 14 |
| **Total** | | 3,842 | 3,555 |
| **Financial liabilities** | | | |
| Payables | 11 | 190 | 172 |
| **Total** | | 190 | 172 |

### Accounting policy

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when the Commission becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

## Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2022

### Note 17 – Key management personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Commission during 2021-22 and 2020-21.

| **Position** | **Responsibilities** | **Contract classification and appointment authority** | **Appointment Details** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Commissioner | The Commissioner is responsible for ensuring the efficient and quick discharge of the Commission's business, ensuring the Local Commissioners and the staff of the registry receive regular and appropriate training, preparing the annual report, making the Commission guidelines and carrying out the activities the Commissioner reasonably considers necessary to achieve the objects, as per the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*. | Commissioner, Governor in Council under the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* | 2 September 2019<br><br>Current appointment term expires 30 June 2023 |

**Remuneration**
The Commissioner's remuneration is set by the Governor in Council as provided for under the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*.

Due to Queensland Government COVID-19 austerity measures, no increase was applicable to the remuneration for the Commissioner in the 2021-22 or 2020-21 years.

Remuneration packages for key management personnel comprise the following components:

- Short term employee benefits which include base salary, allowances and leave entitlements paid and provided for the entire year or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position. Amounts disclosed equal the amount expensed in the statement of comprehensive income.
- Long term employee benefits include long service leave accrued.
- Post employment benefits include superannuation contributions.
- Termination benefits include payments in lieu of notice on termination and other lump sum separation entitlements (excluding annual and long service leave entitlements) payable on termination of employment.
- Redundancy payments are not provided for within individual contracts of employment. Contracts of employment provide only for notice periods or payment in lieu of notice on termination, regardless of the reason for termination.

## Note 17 –Key management personnel (continued)

Total fixed remuneration is calculated on a 'total cost' basis and includes the base and non-monetary benefits, long term employee benefits and post employment benefits.

**2021-22**

| Position | Short term employee expenses | Long term employee expenses | Post employ-ment expenses | Termination benefits | Total expenses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 | $000 | $000 | $000 |
| Commissioner | 390 | 10 | 36 | - | 436 |

**2020-21**

| Position | Short term employee expenses | Long term employee expenses | Post employ-ment expenses | Termination benefits | Total expenses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $000 | $000 | $000 | $000 | $000 |
| Commissioner | 397 | 9 | 35 | - | 441 |

### Performance payments

No performance payments are available or made to any key management personnel.

## Note 18 – Related party transactions

The Commission did not transact with any people or entities related to its key management personnel during the year.

### Note 19 – Impact of COVID-19 on the Commission

During the 2019-20 year , the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic and caused significant volatility and disruption to the Australian economy and some organisations ability to operate. Throughout the 2020-21 year, the pandemic continued to cause significant volatility and disruption.

During the 2021-22 year, the Commission continued to balance its business continuity with community needs whilst adhering to all bio-security restrictions and public health directives issued by the Australian and Queensland Governments.

The Commission regularly monitored restrictions during the year and when required suspended travel to the relevant locations.  Where travel was suspended, the Commission maintained its focus on ensuring that operations continued in our communities in order to meet our obligations to the children and vulnerable people residing there.  In this situation, where conferencing was possible, it conducted by the Cairns Registry through the use of remote technology linking Local Commissioners sitting in conference with members of the Cairns Registry team and the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner.  Travel to the Commission's communities was possible during the majority of the year except for the period January and February 2022. Measures implemented in the prior years in all registry offices to support social distancing including working from home (where considered necessary) and enhanced hygiene have continued throughout the 2021-22 year.  Staff were instructed to undergo COVID testing when experiencing COVID related symptoms, and not return to the workplace prior to receiving a negative result.  Staff were also instructed to undergo COVID testing before undertaking any travel.

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge our operating model, with some logistical changes we have been able to continue to meet our obligations.  Additional expenses have been incurred in relation to the Commission's COVID-19 response however these are somewhat offset by reduced expenditure in other areas.  Overall, the Commission's financial result has not been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

## Management Certificate
### of the Family Responsibilities Commission

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to section 62(1)(a) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), section 39 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with section 62 (1) (b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

(a) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and

(b) the financial statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Family Responsibilities Commission for the financial year ended 30 June 2022 and of the financial position of the Commission at the end of that year.

We acknowledge responsibility under s.7 and s.11 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* for the establishment and maintenance, in all material respects, of an appropriate and effective system of internal controls and risk management processes with respect to financial reporting throughout the reporting period.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Tammy Naomi Williams** | **Tracey Leigh Paterson CA** |
| Commissioner | Executive Officer (Finance) |
| Family Responsibilities Commission | Family Responsibilities Commission |
| Date: 30 August 2022 | Date: 30 August 2022 |

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# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Commissioner of the Family Responsibilities Commission

## Report on the audit of the financial report

### Opinion

I have audited the financial report of the Family Responsibilities Commission.

In my opinion, the financial report:

a) gives a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2022, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended

b) complies with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures.

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including summaries of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the management certificate.

### Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report* section of my report.

I am independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

## Emphasis of matter – Material uncertainty relate to going concern

I draw attention to Note 1(i) of the financial report, which indicates that funding for the Commission beyond 30 June 2023 and later years is uncertain. These circumstances, along with other matters as set forth in Note 1(i) indicate that a material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### Responsibilities of the entity for the financial report

The Commissioner is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures, and for such internal control as the Commissioner determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Commissioner is also responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the entity or to otherwise cease operations.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report**

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances. This is not done for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls, but allows me to express an opinion on compliance with prescribed requirements.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the entity.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the entity's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. I base my conclusions on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Commissioner regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

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## Statement

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2022:

a) I received all the information and explanations I required.

b) I consider that, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.

## Prescribed requirements scope

The prescribed requirements for the establishment and keeping of accounts are contained in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, any other Act and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019. The applicable requirements include those for keeping financial records that correctly record and explain the entity's transactions and account balances to enable the preparation of a true and fair financial report.

C Dougherty

31 August 2022

Carolyn Dougherty
as delegate of the Auditor-General

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane

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## Appendix A – Strategic Plan 2018-22

# 2018—2022 FRC STRATEGIC PLAN

**Family Responsibilities Commission**

### OUR VISION

Vibrant welfare reform communities that are responsible, healthy, safe and sustainable.

### OUR PURPOSE

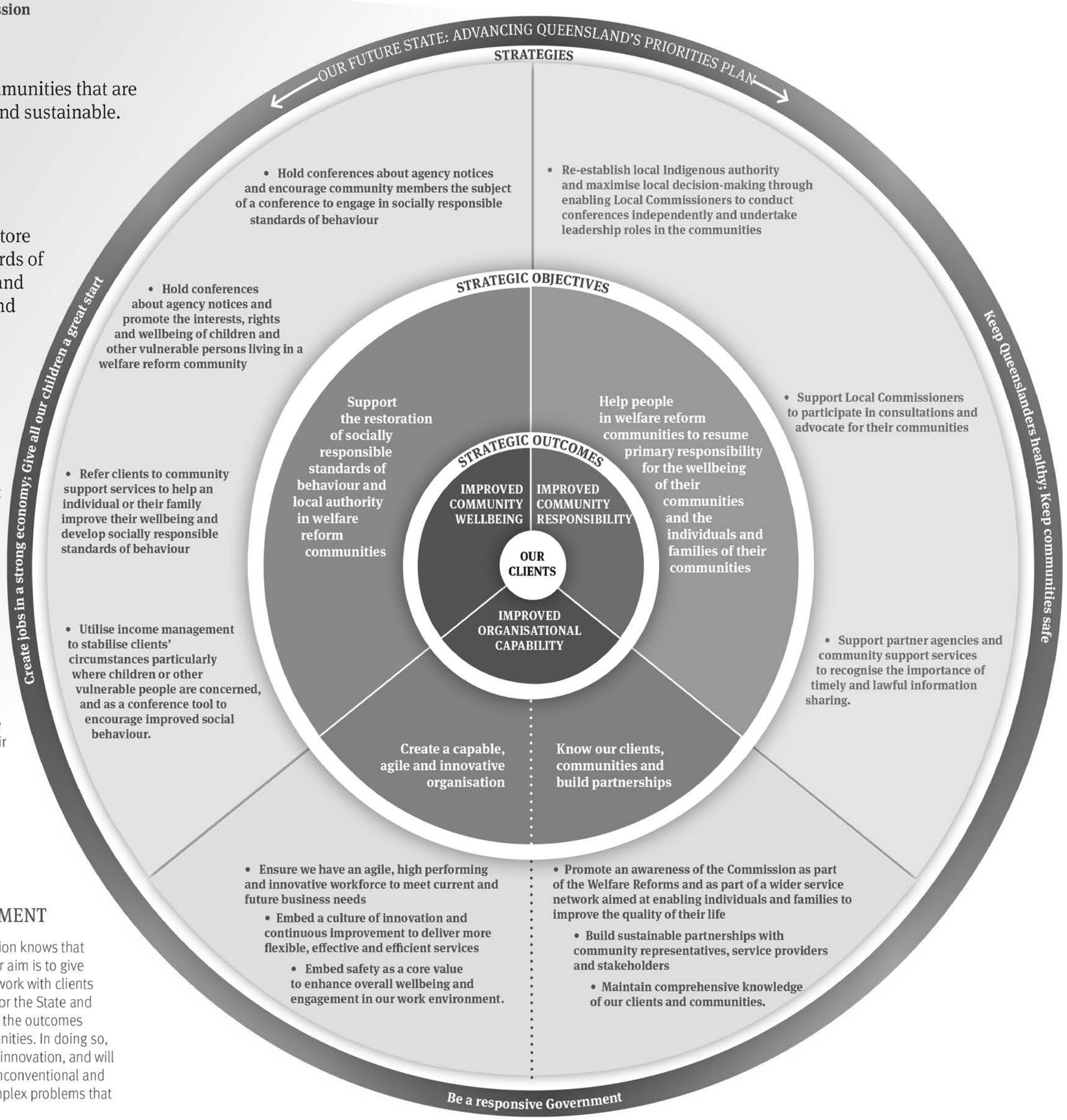
Supporting welfare reform community members to restore socially responsible standards of behaviour, local authority and wellbeing for themselves and their families.

### OUR VALUES

- **Safety:** We value the right of 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 of the communities.

### SERVICE CHARTER STATEMENT

The Family Responsibilities Commission knows that you value good customer service. Our aim is to give you the best service we can. We will work with clients and stakeholders to deliver outputs for the State and Australian Governments that achieve the outcomes sought for the welfare reform communities. 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 our communities.




### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Percentage of conferences attended
- Percentage of school attendance for FRC clients
- Percentage of CIM clients who have had their CIM orders reduced or revoked.

- Training and development provided to the Local Commissioners
- Percentage of conferences conducted independently by Local Commissioners
- Request for Local Commissioner consultations.

**Create a capable, agile and innovative organisation**

- Continuous improvement projects completed
- Staff performance and development plans completed
- Performance against budget allocation
- Positive safety culture
- Healthy and engaged staff
- WHS as a key accountability in performance agreements
- Internal audit recommendations implemented and reflected in system processes.

**Know our clients, communities and build partnerships**

- Participation in external governance groups
- Awareness raising sessions conducted
- Enhanced reporting frameworks developed and maintained.

Queensland Government

## 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.

| *Our Way* Strategy<br>Enablers and Building Blocks | *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*<br>Objects and Principles |
|---|---|
| **Focus on the child** | **Best interests of children**<br>s5(1): The FRC Act is to be administered under the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of a child are paramount.<br>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. |
| **Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families and communities** | **Early intervention and local authority**<br>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.<br>s5(2)(a)(i) & (ii): The Commission should deal with matters in a way that facilitates early intervention…and makes appropriate use of community support services.<br>s5(2)(c): Aboriginal tradition and Island custom must be taken into account in matters involving Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders. |
| **Enable self-determination** | **Local authority and decision making**<br>s50: Constitution of commission for conferences requires Local Commissioners appointed for the welfare reform community area from where the client lives or lived.<br>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.<br>The decision-making power of the FRC at conference is held by Aboriginal Commissioners. |

## Appendix B continued

| *Our Way* Strategy<br>Enablers and Building Blocks | *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*<br>Objects and Principles |
|---|---|
| **Set high expectations and positive norms** | **Socially responsible standards of behaviour**<br>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.<br>s4(2)(b) The objects are to be achieved mainly by establishing the FRC… to deal with matters in a way that:<br>(i) encourages community members to engage in socially responsible standards of behaviour; and<br>(ii) promotes the interests, rights and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable persons living in a welfare reform community area. |

## Appendix C – Biographies of Commissioners and the Registrar

### Family Responsibilities Commissioner

#### Commissioner Tammy Williams

Tammy Williams was appointed as the FRC Commissioner 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 2019. 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. Commissioner Kerindun previously held the position of Engagement Officer at Queensland Health until his election as a Councillor for the Aurukun Shire Council in 2012. He held the position of Councillor for a further eight years during which time he was also appointed as the Deputy Mayor for the last four years until 2020. Aurukun Commissioner Kerindun decided not to stand as a candidate in the 2020 Local Government elections. On 26 January 2015 Aurukun Commissioner Kerindun was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his services to the community. He was one of the original Community Police Officers in Aurukun and continues to promote justice and rehabilitation for ex-offenders. Together with his partner, Aurukun Commissioner Doris Poonkamelya, they have in their care three children from their extended family. Commissioner Kerindun has a strong belief that if you show respect to everyone, everyone will have more respect for you.

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

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

In September 2018 she was appointed to the Queensland First Children and Families Board. The Board was established to oversee the implementation of *Our Way – A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017 – 2037 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 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 and together with 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, and now has 10 children, 16 grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Commissioner Pootchemunka's interests span the full spectrum of traditional activities including fishing, camping and the customary female craft of basket weaving using Pandanus and Cabbage Palm leaf. Her baskets are on display in national galleries in

Australia and overseas. Aurukun Commissioner Pootchemunka is also a registered Wik interpreter and her expertise is utilised within the court system and by the Department of Human Services. Commissioner Pootchemunka became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 4 March 2010. She 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 in Aurukun. She continued her studies at PGC and Scots College in Warwick completing Year 10, and then obtained a qualification in community teaching from Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Cairns. From 2012 to 2020 Aurukun Commissioner Koomeeta held the position of Councillor in the Aurukun Shire Council, deciding not to stand as a candidate in the 2020 Local Government elections.

On 26 January 2015 Aurukun Commissioner Koomeeta was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of her services to the community. She is a Justice of the Peace (Magistrates Court) and a registered interpreter as well as a member of the Aurukun Community Justice Group. As the representative of her clan group she is involved in several committees and holds positions on a number of boards. Aurukun Commissioner Koomeeta's experience assists in her ability to make independent and informed decisions as a Local Commissioner. When not working, she can be found spending time with her three grandchildren, camping and fishing. She also enjoys painting in her spare time.

**Commissioner Keri TAMWOY** (Putch Clan) although born in Cairns has lived her entire life in Aurukun. Commissioner Keri Tamwoy met her husband, Gerald Tamwoy, when they were 17 years old and they have raised their six children in Aurukun.

Commissioner Keri Tamwoy is a qualified mediator and has in previous years run the mediation program in Aurukun which has been a huge success in bringing families together to resolve issues without resorting to violence. Commissioner Keri Tamwoy considers the mediation program to be a valued service in Aurukun.

Aurukun Commissioner Keri Tamwoy has previously worked as the Office Manager for the Aak Puul Ngantam Ranger Program, and also as an Administration Officer in her husband's business. Commissioner Keri Tamwoy became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 1 January 2018. At the Local Government elections conducted on 28 March 2020 Commissioner Tamwoy was elected Mayor of the Aurukun Shire Council. She is extremely committed to supporting the Wik people of Aurukun and empowering them to grow and improve their community into the future.

Commissioner Keri Tamwoy enjoys fishing and camping when she can find the spare time, or just a quiet day at home watching movies with her three grandchildren.

**Commissioner Dereck WALPO** (Kiadilt Clan) was born and raised on Mornington Island. After completing his schooling on Mornington Island, he completed boarding school in Warwick Queensland. Commissioner Walpo then moved up to Cape York where he met his partner of 40 years, fellow Commissioner Ada Woolla of the Winchanum Clan. Commissioner Walpo 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. He recognises the importance of mental health support and the need for these 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. 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 new role as a Local Commissioner to further improve social norms and encourage parents to take a bigger role in their children's education.

**Commissioner Kemuel TAMWOY** (Putch Clan) was born in Cairns and raised in Aurukun and is passionate about Aurukun and preserving the Wik culture. On 28 March 2020 Aurukun Commissioner Kemuel Tamwoy was elected to the position of Councillor in the Local Government elections. He values this role very highly along with the responsibility of being seen as a leader at such a young age. His hope for the future is that he can stay in this role and continue to help shape Aurukun for the better.

Commissioner Kemuel Tamwoy began his schooling at the Aurukun State School where he now works and completed years 8 – 12 at Brisbane Boys' College. Commissioner Kemuel Tamwoy currently holds the position of Manager, Student Attendance Officer at the Aurukun State School, encouraging education as a pathway to help shape the future leaders of Aurukun. He understands the importance for the Aurukun children to continue their education at boarding school as he did. His former roles also include working at his father's earth moving business. Aurukun Commissioner Kemuel Tamwoy has three sisters and two brothers and enjoys fishing and being in the boat in his spare time. Commissioner Kemuel Tamwoy became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

**Commissioner Waynead WOLMBY** (Wanum clan) was born in Cairns and grew up in Aurukun. He is passionate about Aurukun having local decision-makers and leaders paving the way for Aurukun. Commissioner Wolmby completed prep – year 7 at the Aurukun State School and then travelled to Brisbane to complete years 8 – 12, boarding at Marist College Ashgrove. Commissioner Wolmby has two younger brothers and two younger sisters. He aims to be a good role model for his siblings and the younger generation of Aurukun. Aurukun Commissioner Wolmby currently works at the Aurukun State School to help support the children of Aurukun. Commissioner Wolmby is passionate about staying fit and has competed in several marathons across Australia thanks to the Indigenous Marathon Foundation. He has been lucky enough to be selected to travel to Athens in November 2022 to compete and represent the Indigenous Marathon Foundation and Aurukun. At such a young age Commissioner Wolmby wants to encourage education in Aurukun for the upcoming leaders and to preserve the Wik culture. Commissioner Wolmby became an Aurukun Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

## 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.

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.

## 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 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 18 (with one on the way) 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. 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.

**Commissioner Kaylene O'KEEFE** grew up in Mount Isa before moving to her parents' home town of Doomadgee in 1990. Married to Dwayne O'Keefe since 2001, Commissioner O'Keefe is a mother of three daughters. 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 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 15 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 Save the Children for the Doomadgee Deadly Homes Program and Health Services Manager for Gidgee Healing. Doomadgee Commissioner Douglas is currently employed at Save the Children as the Senior Community Worker. In this role Commissioner Douglas provides education and support to male community members and assists with facilitating programs that Save the Children run including the Young Dad's Program.

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 five grandchildren, with one on the way. 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 third 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, Job Futures and as a teacher aide. She is currently employed as a Team Leader to Family Support Workers at Save the Children 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 the 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 Save the Children. Commissioner Dawn Aplin has five children, three boys and two girls, is a grandmother of 18 grandchildren and a great grandmother of two great-grandchildren. 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, the appointment of Dawn Aplin took effect as an FRC Local Commissioner. Coupled with her employment at Save the Children, Commissioner Aplin sees her work as a Local Commissioner as being extremely important in aiding and guiding young families in the community.

**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 Center 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 and grandmother of 18 grandchildren. Commissioner Taylor became a Doomadgee Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

**Commissioner Lila 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 Lila 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 Lila Cairns has four children, 12 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. In her spare time, Commissioner Lila 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 Lila Cairns became a Doomadgee Local Commissioner on 5 May 2022.

**Commissioner Virginia Grace COLLINS** (Waanyi / Gangalidda / Garrawa Clans) was born in Mt Isa, before moving to Doomadgee when she was a young girl. Whilst in Doomadgee, Commissioner Collins attended Doomadgee State School. After completing school, she commenced working in Doomadgee in a number of different roles, some of which included the Doomadgee Retail store, the Woman's Shelter and the Community Development Employment Projects office. Commissioner Collins then worked for MMG Century Mine in Lawn Hill for 10 years before working in the Northern Territory. She later moved back to Doomadgee where she worked at the Doomadgee Roadhouse as well as the Doomadgee State School. Since 2020 Commissioner Collins has been employed by the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council. 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 Victor Patrick GIBSON OAM** (Binhthi / Bulcan Clans) worked as a Student Case Manager for Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) in Hope Vale for three years until his retirement. He has served his community in many diverse roles advocating for his people on many levels. In doing so he has encouraged young people to become the leaders of tomorrow. He has been an active member of the Hope Vale Men's Group supporting the young and encouraging the role and merits of cultural and community activities. Commissioner Victor Gibson has devoted much of his working career to Hope Vale, assisting to build up his community. In the past he has served as Deputy Mayor and Councillor.

On 26 January 2015 Hope Vale Commissioner Victor Gibson was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his services to his community.

Commissioner Victor Gibson retired from his role as a Hope Vale Commissioner on 30 June 2022. He remains a keen supporter of the FRC and continues to advocate for his community with humour, laughter and the wisdom gained from being a strong Guugu Yimithirr Bama.

**Commissioner Priscilla GIBSON (nee BOWEN)** a Guugu Yimithirr speaking woman has ancestral heritage to Daarrbra, Bagarrmugu, and Birra-gumba from her grandfather George Bowen (Emerson) who was removed from his homeland (Proserpine area) to Cape Bedford Mission after the closure of Mari Yamba Lutheran Mission.

She has skills and qualifications in early childhood education, having established a centre in her hometown of Hope Vale, later acquiring the 'George Bowen Memorial Kindergarten', and assisting it to achieve accreditation under the Childcare and Kindergarten Association. Commissioner Priscilla Gibson holds a Diploma in Nursing, Nutrition and Advanced Practice in Aboriginal Health, and a Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion, Counselling and Referral Skills. She has served on various boards as a Director, worked with the TAFE College in Cairns in the position of Program Manager for the Community Ranger Program, Local Coordinator for the FRC, Coordinator for the Well Being Centre and Senior Parenting Practitioner with Cape York Partnership. Commissioner Priscilla Gibson and her husband Commissioner Victor Gibson perform strong community engagement roles by providing opportunities for social gatherings through concerts, Yarning Circles, contributing to the Young Leaders Program and opening their door as foster carers for the community.

Commissioner Priscilla Gibson states, "Culture and my family is important to me. It is the embodiment of my existence and that of my ancestors and descendants."

On 1 November 2019, the appointment of Priscilla Gibson took effect as an FRC Local Commissioner.

**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 and will soon enrol for her Diploma in Mental Health. 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. She has recently retired from her position as Team Leader/Service Provider with Apunipima Cape York Health Council. Local Commissioner Hart is a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) and a member of the Thurrbill 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 and pottering around home 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. In 2021 Commissioner Cannon commenced a new role as Education Coordinator of CYAAA Hope Vale Playschool which is a learning environment for children aged 0 to 4 years. Learning is focused on literacy, language and maths, delivered in fun and enjoyable activities for children and their parents.

She joined the Commission as a Local Commissioner in Hope Vale in August 2014, and thoroughly enjoys the experience. As a Commissioner for Hope Vale, Cheryl's vision and values run parallel to that of the wider community and she is willing to set in motion responsibilities that bring about change for the positive future of Hope Vale.

**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 also a Director of her own Gamaay Warra family business. In 2022 she was elected as Deputy Chair of Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation.

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 Thuupi / 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 the majority of her life, only leaving to complete her secondary schooling in Brisbane where she graduated from Hendra High in Nunda. 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 has with her children. Today Commissioner Kerr-Bowen and her husband commit their time as General Carers, raising children placed into Child Safety. Commissioner Kerr-Bowen has recently undertaken, and greatly enjoys, organising functions for women in the community for Mother's Day and International Women's Day.

**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 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 the appointment of Robert Gibson took effect as an FRC 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/Binthi 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 in a similar role to her current role. 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 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 included 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 Roseville/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 Helenia CREEK** (Nyungkul and Southern Kaantju Clans) grew up in Mossman and attended Mossman State High School. She comes from a big family with five siblings. She also has four of her own children, and now has two grandchildren.

Commissioner Helenia Creek has worked across a wide range of services in Cape York over the years including: assistance/coordinator for the Goobidi Karrakay Karrakay Playgroup; Outside of School Hours Coordinator; she worked at the Jawunkarra Family Support Service; and O-Hub Manager at Cape York Partnership. Her work experience has brought her an array of interpersonal skills, and in particular the ability to communicate with all age groups with respect and understanding. Commissioner Helenia Creek has volunteered much of her time to the community as a board member of Goobidi Bamaga Community Advancement Co-operative for ten years, helping with the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) events and other community events.

Outside of work she likes to keep very active with lots of sports including rugby league, basketball, netball, touch football and swimming. Her interests include continuing to learn her culture and she is passionate about empowering her people and community. Commissioner Helenia 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 Schoolgirl team. 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.

**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 Julia-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 teacher's 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 girls 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 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 HR 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 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.

## 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: | Mr Bryce Coxall |
| Coen: | Ms Cara Marks (Acting) |
| Doomadgee: | Mr Brenden Joinbee |
| Hope Vale: | Ms Josephine Pinder |
| Mossman Gorge: | Ms Cara Marks (Acting) |

# APPENDIX D – SITTINGS CALENDAR

## Family Responsibilities Commission 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021

| WEEK COMMENCING | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | OTHER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 July | | | | | | |
| 12 July | | AU<br>HV | AU | | Public Holiday | 16 Cairns Show Day |
| 19 July | Public Holiday - MG | DM<br>CO | DM | | | 19 Mossman Show Day |
| 26 July | | AU<br>MG | AU | AU<br>HV | | |
| 2 August | | DM | DM<br>Public Holiday - AU | | | 4 Aurukun Day |
| 9 August | | AU<br>MG | AU | AU | | |
| 16 August | | DM<br>CO | DM | | | |
| 23 August | | AU<br>MG | AU<br>HV | AU<br>HV | Public Holiday - DM | 27 Doomadgee Day |
| 30 August | | | DM | DM | | |
| 6 September | | AU<br>MG | AU | AU<br>HV | | |
| 13 September | | DM<br>CO | DM | | | |
| 20 September | | | | | | |
| 27 September | | | | | | |
| 4 October | Public Holiday | | AU | AU | | 4 Queen's Birthday |
| 11 October | | DM<br>MG | DM<br>HV | | | |
| 18 October | | AU<br>CO | AU | AU | | |
| 25 October | | DM | DM | HV | | |
| 1 November | | | | | | |
| 8 November | | DM<br>MG | DM | | | |
| 15 November | | AU<br>CO | AU | | | |
| 22 November | | DM | DM | HV | | |
| 29 November | | AU<br>CO<br>DM | AU<br>DM | AU | | |
| 6 December | | MG | | HV | | |
| 13 December | | | | | | |
| 20 December | | | | | | |
| 27 December | Public Holiday | Public Holiday | | | | 27 Christmas Day and 28 Boxing Day Public Holidays,<br>29, 30, 31 Office Closed for Xmas |

## Family Responsibilities Commission 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2022

| WEEK COMMENCING | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | OTHER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 January | | | | | | |
| 10 January | | | | | | |
| 17 January | | | | | | |
| 24 January | | | Public Holiday | | | 26 Australia Day |
| 31 January | | | | | | |
| 7 February | | | | | | |
| 14 February | | | | | | |
| 21 February | | | | | | |
| 28 February | | MG | | | | |
| 7 March | | DM | DM<br>HV | | | |
| 14 March | | AU | AU | AU | | |
| 21 March | | DM<br>MG | DM<br>HV | HV | | |
| 28 March | | | AU | AU<br>CO | | |
| 4 April | | AU | | | | |
| 11 April | | AU | | | Public Holiday | 15 Good Friday |
| 18 April | Public Holiday | | DM | | | 18 Easter Monday |
| 25 April | Public Holiday | MG | AU<br>HV | AU | | 25 ANZAC Day |
| 2 May | Public Holiday | | DM | DM | | 2 Labour Day |
| 9 May | | | AU | AU<br>CO | | |
| 16 May | | MG | DM | DM | | |
| 23 May | | LCDW | LCDW | LCDW | | 24, 25, 26 Local Commissioner Development Week (LCDW) |
| 30 May | | | AU | AU | Public Holiday - DM | 3 Mabo Day - Doomadgee |
| 6 June | | DM | DM | | | |
| 13 June | | | AU | AU<br>CO | | |
| 20 June | | | DM | DM | | |
| 27 June | | | | | | |

AU Aurukun  CO Coen  DM Doomadgee  HV Hope Vale  MG Mossman Gorge  Office Weeks

## Appendix E – Compliance checklist

**Family Responsibilities Commission 2021-2022 annual report**

| Summary of requirement | | Basis for requirement | Annual report reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Letter of compliance | • A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s | ARRs – section 7 | Page 4 |
| Accessibility | • Table of contents<br>• Glossary | ARRs – section 9.1 | Page 5<br>Page 137 |
| | • Public availability | ARRs – section 9.2 | Page 2 |
| | • Interpreter service statement | *Queensland Government Language Services Policy*<br>ARRs – section 9.3 | Page 2 |
| | • Copyright notice | *Copyright Act 1968*<br>ARRs – section 9.4 | Page 2 |
| | • Information licensing | *QGEA – Information Licensing*<br>ARRs – section 9.5 | N/A |
| General information | • Introductory Information | ARRs – section 10 | Pages 8-27, 60-73, 115 |
| Non-financial performance | • Government's objectives for the community and whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives | ARRs – section 11.1 | Pages 28-30, 116-117 |
| | • Agency objectives and performance indicators | ARRs – section 11.2 | Pages 29-59, 115 |
| | • Agency service areas and service standards | ARRs – section 11.3 | Pages 13-59 |
| Financial performance | • Summary of financial performance | ARRs – section 12.1 | Pages 86-87 |
| Governance – management and structure | • Organisational structure | ARRs – section 13.1 | Pages 10-11, 13-15, 74-76 |
| | • Executive management | ARRs – section 13.2 | Pages 75-76 |
| | • Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) | ARRs – section 13.3 | N/A |
| | • Public Sector Ethics | *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*<br>ARRs – section 13.4 | Page 77 |
| | • Human Rights | *Human Rights Act 2019*<br>ARRs – section 13.5 | Pages 77-78 |
| | • Queensland public service values | ARRs – section 13.6 | Page 76 |

| Summary of requirement | | Basis for requirement | Annual report reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Governance – risk management and accountability | • Risk management | ARRs – section 14.1 | Page 78 |
| | • Audit committee | ARRs – section 14.2 | Page 78 |
| | • Internal audit | ARRs – section 14.3 | Pages 78-79 |
| | • External scrutiny | ARRs – section 14.4 | Pages 79-80 |
| | • Information systems and record keeping | ARRs – section 14.5 | Pages 80-81 |
| | • Information security attestation | ARRs – section 14.6 | N/A |
| Governance – human resources | • Strategic workforce planning and performance | ARRs – section 15.1 | Pages 81-85 |
| | • Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment | Directive No.04/18 *Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment*<br><br>ARRs – section 15.2 | Page 82 |
| Open Data | • Statement advising publication of information | ARRs – section 16 | Page 85 |
| | • Consultancies | ARRs – section 33.1 | Page 85 |
| | • Overseas travel | ARRs – section 33.2 | Page 85 |
| | • Queensland Language Services Policy | ARRs – section 33.3 | N/A |
| Financial statements | • Certification of financial statements | FAA – section 62<br><br>FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46<br><br>ARRs – section 17.1 | Page 22 of 25 |
| | • Independent Auditor's Report | FAA – section 62<br><br>FPMS – section 46<br><br>ARRs – section 17.2 | Pages 23-25 of 25 |

## Appendix F – 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 786 people as at 30 June 2021.[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 182 people as at 30 June 2021.[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 933 people as at 30 June 2021.[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 660 people as at 30 June 2021.[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 100 people as at 30 June 2021.[1,4]

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1. Note: Australian Statistical Geography Standard 2021 boundaries used are local government areas for 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 rebased (to 2021 Census) Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data by age and sex at the Local Government Area level for 30 June 2021.
3. Note: Adults 18 years and over provided by QGSO, Queensland Treasury, based on the ABS unpublished preliminary rebased (to 2021 Census) ERP data by age and sex at the Statistical Area level 1 for 30 June 2021.
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 rebased (to 2021 Census) ERP data at the Statistical Area level 1 for 30 June 2021.

# Glossary of terms

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ARRs | Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government agencies |
| ASSI | Australian South Sea Islander |
| ATSI | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander |
| AU | Aurukun |
| BBNAC | Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Aboriginal Corporation |
| BCP | Business Continuity Plan |
| CAA | Corporate Administration Agency |
| CCP | Conditional Case Plan |
| CDC | Cashless Debit Card |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CIM | Conditional Income Management |
| CM&M | Case Management and Monitoring |
| CO | Coen |
| CRAC | Coen Regional Aboriginal Corporation |
| CRM | Customer Relationship Management |
| CS | Child Safety and Welfare |
| CSC | Conspicuous Service Cross |
| CYAAA | Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy |
| CYI | Cape York Institute |
| DAF | Department of Agriculture and Fisheries |
| DET | Department of Education |
| DFV | Domestic and Family Violence |
| DIS | District Court |
| DM | Doomadgee |
| DSDSATSIP | Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships |
| DSS | Department of Social Services |
| DV | Domestic Violence |
| DVB | Domestic Violence Breach |
| DVO | Domestic Violence Order |
| EMT | Executive Management Team |
| EQ | Education Queensland School Attendance |
| ERP | Estimated Resident Population |
| FAA | *Financial Accountability Act 2009* |
| FPMS | *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* |
| FRA | Family Responsibilities Agreement |
| FRC | Family Responsibilities Commission |
| FTE | Full-time Equivalent |
| HT | Housing Tenancy Breach |
| HV | Hope Vale |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IM | Income Management |
| LCDW | Local Commissioner Development Week |
| MAG | Magistrate Court |
| MG | Mossman Gorge |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NIAA | National Indigenous Australians Agency |
| NWQICSS | North West Queensland Indigenous Catholic Social Services |
| NWRH | North and West Remote Health |
| OAM | Medal of the Order of Australia |
| PSC | Public Service Commission |
| QGSO | Queensland Government Statistician's Office |
| RAATSICC | Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care |
| RFDS | Royal Flying Doctor Service |
| SEN | School Enrolment Notice |
| TAFE | Technical and Further Education |
| TIS | Translating and Interpreting Service |
| TSS | Transition Support Services |
| VCP | Voluntary Case Plan |
| VIM | Voluntary Income Management |
| WBC | Wellbeing Centre |
| WHS | Workplace Health and Safety |

Also:

Apunipima Cape York Health Council (Apunipima)

Family Responsibilities Board (FR Board)

Family Responsibilities Commission (the Commission)

*Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008* (the FRC Act)

*Family Responsibilities Commission (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* (FRC's COVID-19 Regulation)

Family Responsibilities Commission Registry (the registry)

Ms Tammy Williams, Family Responsibilities Commissioner (the Commissioner)

# Contact details

## Family Responsibilities Commission

### *Cairns central registry*

PO Box 5438, Cairns Qld 4870
Level 3, 107 Lake Street, Cairns 4870
Ph (07) 4081 8400
Fax (07) 4041 0974
**www.frcq.org.au**

### *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
Ph (07) 4745 8111
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*

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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.

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