

# Cape York welfare reform and child protection

## Information for parents and carers

**The Cape York Welfare Reform trial is a world-first initiative linking parental responsibility with Centrelink assistance. Four Queensland communities – Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge – will be part of the four year trial from 1 July 2008.**

The Departments of Education, Housing, Justice and Child Safety are required by laws outlined in the new *Family Responsibilities Commission Act (2008)* to provide information to the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) about families who breach their welfare responsibilities.

### What are welfare responsibilities?

Welfare responsibilities relate to a parent or carers failure to ensure a child's safety and wellbeing, engaging in criminal conduct and domestic violence; failing to send a child to school; and breaching housing tenancy agreements.

Under the new laws, the Department of Child Safety must notify the FRC of all reports of child abuse or neglect. This reporting includes children who are on child protection orders and who live with foster or kinship carers.

### What will the FRC do?

The FRC will then determine whether the parents or carers are in breach of their welfare responsibilities. When concerns are reported, the FRC may:

- take no further action or
- provide a warning to the parent or carer or
- refer the parent or carer to support services (voluntarily or compulsorily) or
- redirect the parent or carers Centrelink payments (in part or in full) to conditional income management or to another adult who is able to care for the child and fulfil welfare responsibilities.

### For foster and kinship carers

Where a child has been placed with a foster or kinship carer and a placement concern report or notification (with either a substantiated or unsubstantiated outcome) has been recorded, the Department of Child Safety must advise the FRC. This advice is to include any current or planned intervention by the Department of Child Safety, with the FRC to consider this information in deciding what, if any, action they will take in relation to a carer.

If a family is in breach of their welfare requirements and moves from a trial site they must still be referred to the FRC.

### Please remember:

- If a parent or carer is in breach of their welfare responsibilities and moves from Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale or Mossman Gorge they must still be referred to the FRC.
- The Department of Child Safety will continue to have lead responsibility for investigating and assessing matters relating to children at harm or at risk of harm.
- The FRC will work with the Department of Child Safety to help the families in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge to get the support they need to keep their children safe. The aim is to prevent families from entering, or to assist them to exit, the child protection system.
- The Department of Child Safety is required by law to refer all allegations of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person to the FRC.
- Not all referrals to the FRC will result in further action.
- The Department of Child Safety will continue to be involved where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children, irrespective of whether the FRC is involved.

### For more information

For more information about the Cape York Welfare Reform trial visit your local Child Safety Officer or call the Department of Child Safety on freecall **1800 811 810** or visit:

- Department of Child Safety:  
**[www.childsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au)**
- Indigenous Government Coordination Office, Department of Premier and Cabinet:  
**[www.premiers.qld.gov.au](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au)**
- The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership (OATSIP), Department of Communities:  
**[www.atsip.qld.gov.au](http://www.atsip.qld.gov.au)**
- Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership:  
**[www.cyi.org.au](http://www.cyi.org.au)**

