CAPE YORK WELFARE REFORM EVALUATION
Facts from the Independent Evaluation

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT ABOUT?
This document is to let you know about some of the results from the recent evaluation of Cape York Welfare Reform which your community was involved in. Firstly, the Australian Government would like to thank you and all community members who contributed to this evaluation by talking to researchers about their experiences living and/or working with Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR), including community leaders, service providers, FRC Commissioners and staff, and especially the many people who participated in the Social Change Survey.

"We are making a better place for our children to live in and to grow up in so they can be proud of their community."

MORE RESULTS OF THE SOCIAL CHANGE SURVEY CAN BE FOUND AT THE WEBSITE BELOW.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
The evaluation found that despite the establishment of new services in the four communities, stronger leadership, and more people taking good care of their children and families, there are challenges that will take longer to overcome. Challenges that still remain in the communities include:

- increasing employment and home ownership opportunities
- assisting particular groups in the communities, including young people who are no longer engaged in education
- providing more intensive alcohol and other drugs treatment and services

The Australian Government is considering the evaluation findings and is talking to the Queensland Government, the Family Responsibilities Commission and the Cape York regional organisations to develop a shared view on the next steps.

FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THE EVALUATION
The full CYWR Evaluation Report can be found at the following website address:

You can also talk to your Government Engagement and Coordination Officer or Indigenous Engagement Officer.
BACKGROUND TO CAPE YORK WELFARE REFORM

Before CYWR started in 2008 you may recall leaders from your community and government representatives speaking about the CYWR in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge.

CYWR HAS FOUR AIMS:

1. Restore positive social norms
2. Re-establish local Indigenous authority
3. Move people away from welfare passivity
4. Move individuals and families from welfare housing to home ownership

CYWR combines resources under four streams: Social Responsibility, Education, Economic Opportunity and Housing to support these aims. You may be aware of these services and activities in your community which are shown in the table below.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC)
- Support services – including Wellbeing Centres, Parenting Programs, Ending Family Violence
- Conditional Income Management
- MPower

EDUCATION

- Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA)
- Multilit (which went before CYAAA)
- Attendance Case Management Framework (now known as Student Case Management)
- Student Education Trusts (SETs)

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Business Precincts
- Mentoring and up skilling
- Conversion of CDEP jobs into real full-time jobs
- Mobility

HOUSING

- Mainstream tenancy
- Pride of Place (PoP)
- Home ownership

Evaluations of Wellbeing Centres and CYAAA are being conducted separately.

WHAT DID THE EVALUATION FIND?

The evaluation found some positive changes and shows that progress is being made towards the aims of CYWR in the four communities.

INDIGENOUS AUTHORITY

Most community members and other stakeholders believe that the FRC has strengthened leadership, particularly through the Local Commissioners’ listening, guiding and supporting role. One community member expressed this as “A lot of the elders are stepping up and being confident”. The CYWR Evaluation Report noted that the FRC conferencing process is similar to traditional Aboriginal dispute resolution practices and that a successful feature of the trial has been the rebuilding of Indigenous authority to tackle antisocial behaviour through the local FRC Commissioners.

The evaluation report found that the foundations for CYWR have been established, which have helped to bring about behaviour change. However, this success relates more to the streams of Social Responsibility and Education than it does to Housing and Economic Opportunity.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CYWR has had an impact in encouraging and assisting community members to better meet the needs of their children and families. One community member said “We are making a better place for our children to live in and to grow up in so they can be proud of their community.” Community members feel that people are generally taking more responsibility for their families and children and trying to be better parents. This was highlighted by one community member who said “everyone is starting to see what happens in the community as their responsibility.”

EDUCATION

The evaluation found that there has been a large increase in school attendance in Aurukun and this increase was supported by FRC conferencing and Student Case Management. The three other CYWR communities have maintained relatively high attendance rates.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

CYWR also established the foundations for economic development, through developments such as the Mossman Gorge Centre, and the construction of Business Precincts in Aurukun and Hope Vale. While there is a long way to go, employment has risen through the conversion of CDEP positions into 103 properly paid jobs and the creation of 118 new service delivery jobs through the trial itself.

HOUSING

Some progress has been made in helping individuals and families to take responsibility and pride in their homes. Many residents are contributing more to their homes by paying normal public housing rent. Some residents are taking advantage of an opportunity to improve their home through the Pride of Place program, which provides funding for home improvements conditional on the householder demonstrating commitment and responsibility by contributing their own time and money. Home Ownership was identified by community members in the evaluation as a key area still to be addressed.

THE SOCIAL CHANGE SURVEY

The Social Change Survey, which included 582 adults (about 35% of adults) from the four CYWR communities, asked people about how things were going since CYWR started in July 2008.

“People are taking responsibility about managing their money, school attendance has been instrumental around the FRC.”

“Attitudes have changed...parents now take their children to school every day.”