



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Families and Social Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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**Palaszczuk government must reverse decision
to axe Cape York Income Management**

A review of Cape York income management released today shows the error of the Queensland Government's decision to cut off funding, Federal Family and Social Services Minister Paul Fletcher said.

"The Review shows that the work of the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) has effected real and positive change in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale, Doomadgee and Mossman Gorge," Mr Fletcher said.

The independent review was conducted by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), which analysed more than 10 years of data on Cape York Income Management.

"The Cape York model of income management under the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) has been community-driven, culturally appropriate and has increased community wellbeing over the past 10 years," Mr Fletcher said.

"The Palaszczuk government's decision last week to axe the scheme is most unwise and has blindsided the FRC after a decade of success.

"It's the scrapping of a successful policy without consultation and without regard to the consequences.

"I call on the Queensland Deputy Premier Jackie Trad to reverse this short-sighted decision. I also call on Bill Shorten and Linda Burney to stand up, and go in to bat for the communities affected."

Mr Fletcher said the FRC's Local Commissioners help people through a personal case management role which means their personal circumstances are factored into their welfare needs.

"This provides more options to help people address any issues they might be having," Mr Fletcher said.

It found good qualitative evidence of a reduction in the problematic consumption of alcohol, drugs, violence and crime.

“Importantly, it found that the welfare of children has improved, and that the income management measures are helping keep some children safely in the family home rather than being removed,” Mr Fletcher said.

“The element of co-design in the Cape York model makes it a valuable tool which can be readily adapted to local needs for communities looking to make positive change.

“The Local Commissioners are vital to the improved social conditions these communities now experience.

“The work and achievements of Local Commissioners, highlighted in this report, will form part of the evidence base the Government will use to decide the future of welfare quarantining.”

At the Federal level, Income Management retains bipartisan support and has been extended until 30 June 2019.

“The Cape York model has the potential to evolve, improve and bring further benefits to communities across Queensland. It can also further the evidence base for improving welfare reform across the rest of Australia,” Mr Fletcher said.

ENDS

Independent review:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programmes-services-welfare-conditionality-income-management/income-management-evaluations>

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