



Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO


Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 12 October (see p. 3115), on motion of Mr Pearce—

That the House take note of report No. 52, *Oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission*, tabled on 28 August 2017

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.45 am): The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee visited the welfare reform community of Aurukun with Commissioner Glasgow and his staff to view firsthand the work of the Family Responsibilities Commission. I visited the community of Aurukun some 20 years ago and I am pleased to say that the community has changed over that period of time; however, there are still significant challenges. No doubt there has been a considerable amount of taxpayer funds spent in that community by governments of both persuasions to help with services and infrastructure in an isolated and challenging community.

Under the Family Responsibilities Commission Act the primary responsibility of commissioners is to hold conferences with community members and this is not easy. It is not an easy task at all. I wish to thank all of the commissioners in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge who undertake these conferences in local communities. Their task is a difficult one. They are the ones who have to implement the welfare reform at the front line and sometimes with their own family members or with family members of other families of whom there may be long-term cultural differences.

The succession planning of these local commissioners is particularly important. There are not many people who are willing to do that work in those local communities or have the skills to do it. I can fully understand why they do not want to do those jobs for long periods of time and how they can become quite tired doing them. I understand that they appreciate the support they receive from Commissioner Glasgow and his staff. I particularly want to mention Ada Woolla, whom we met in Aurukun. She is a commissioner and was a great contributor to the *Not now, not ever* domestic violence report.

On behalf of the committee I thank Commissioner Glasgow and the other commissioners and staff of the Family Responsibilities Commission. I also thank those individuals, organisations and departmental officers who assisted the committee on its visit to Aurukun and, in particular, Brendon McMahon. I stress that it is particularly important to have succession planning with the Family Responsibilities Commission. The Family Responsibilities Commission is not something that you can stop and start at the whim of government funding; it is something that needs to be well planned. There need to be succession plans in place in relation to commission staff and also commissioners in the communities. I commend the report to the House.