




Speech By
Nigel Hutton

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

EDUCATION, ARTS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HUTTON** (Keppel—LNP) (3.01 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Education, Arts and Communities Committee Report No. 3, 58th Parliament, *Report on visit to Hope Vale and Cooktown with the Family Responsibilities Commission*, tabled on 23 May 2025.

It was the pleasure of the Education, Arts and Communities Committee to visit the communities of Hope Vale and Cooktown with the Family Responsibilities Commission. In February this year, our committee received an invitation from the commissioner, Ms Tammy Williams who, for the benefit of members who are not aware, leads the Family Responsibilities Commission. The FRC is a partnership organisation which was created in 2008 by the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Cape York Institute, an initiative founded by Noel Pearson.

The Family Responsibilities Commission is designed to directly support individuals and families from the five welfare reform communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. It uses a model of community-led conferencing to promote the rights and wellbeing of children, vulnerable persons and families living in these communities. The FRC engages residents in place-based programs to respond to the challenges of school enrolment and attendance, the impact of convictions in state-based courts, child welfare notifications, tenancy agreement breaches and, in some communities, domestic and family violence incidents. It works towards strengthening the foundation of socially responsible standards of behaviour for the community, by the community.

The FRC is administered by the Minister for Women and Women's Economic Security, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Multiculturalism, and under the standing orders our committee has oversight responsibilities. The Education, Arts and Communities Committee spent three days in Far North Queensland and met with local commissioners who play a special role in providing on-the-ground support to communities and who help link individuals and families to both government and non-government services.

We had the privileged opportunity to witness the FRC in conferencing with two families and saw firsthand the tender yet direct way they work together. We bore witness to a mother and child who received a small hamper to recognise the huge changes the family had sustained in seeking to improve the quality of their lives. We also had the opportunity to meet with local police and participated in an FRC and Cape York Institute justice reinvestment roundtable discussion.

Among our agency visits, a highlight was attendance at Cooktown State School, a prep to year 12 school, and the Hope Vale Campus, prep to year 6, of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy. The deputy chair and I both enjoyed the opportunity to be restored to a life before parliament. We assisted some of our smallest Queenslanders with their maths and their spelling. I offer the thanks of the committee to the school for opening their arms to us and giving us the opportunity to be involved in this way. The geography of Queensland is one of our greatest attributes and undoubtedly provides

wondrous and diverse environments, yet the tyranny of distance adds a layer of complexity which requires a steadfast commitment to making a difference for government, families, and not-for-profit and service agencies.

I thank the committee members for committing their time to visiting these communities. I thank the secretariat for all their work in organising and keeping us on track and on time. Most of all, I thank the communities for their partnerships and engagement. It is an honour to serve Queensland and it is a great way to learn more about Queensland through this experience.