1. The Cape York Welfare Reform Trial (the Trial) commenced in July 2008 and aims to build stronger and more resilient communities; re-establish local Indigenous authority; enable children to achieve their full potential; support engagement in the real economy; and move individuals and families from welfare housing to home ownership. The Trial operates in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge with the support of local stakeholders.
2. The objective of the Trial is to change behaviours in response to chronic levels of welfare dependency, social dysfunction and economic exclusion.
3. The Trial is a partnership between the Queensland Government, the Australian Government and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership.
4. The Trial consists of a range of services and initiatives designed to promote economic opportunity, normalise housing arrangements in the communities and provide supported self help services to improve wellbeing.
5. A key part of the Trial is the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) which aims to restore positive social norms, through attaching behavioural obligations to receipt of welfare payments. The FRC Commissioner and Local Indigenous Commissioners hold conferences with local people, who are ‘notified’ to the FRC for failing to enrol and send children to school; coming to the attention of the Department of Communities for a child safety matter; being convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court; or failing to remedy a breach of a tenancy arrangement.
6. As the Trial was due to end in December 2011, consultation about whether the Trial should be extended for an additional calendar year was undertaken.
7. Stakeholders, including in each of the Trial communities, were asked if the Trial had provided benefits to the people of the community, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable in the community—the women and children—what the gaps were, and what would happen to the community if the Trial stopped.
8. Stakeholders were also asked about their awareness of the FRC and how it worked to help people.
9. The overwhelming feedback from those consulted was that the Trial has brought positive benefits to the communities, particularly to the children through additional educational and wellbeing services. In Hope Vale, further discussions will be undertaken to ensure community members are aware of the role of the FRC and the range of services that has been provided to their community through the Trial.
10. Cabinet approved the extension to the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial in the existing Trial communities until 31 December 2012.
11. *Attachments*
* [Consultation Report](Attachments/Cape%20York%20Welfare%20Reform%20Consultation%20Report.pdf).