

## ***WHAT IS A FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ORDER?***

A Family Responsibility Order is a direction handed down by the Magistrates Court to families that need assistance managing the anti-social or criminal behaviours of their child. The family and young person are obliged by law to follow the directions the court has given.

### **When is a Family Responsibility Order made?**

Part 6A of the *Youth Justice Act* says that a Family Responsibility Order can be made if a Family Responsibility Agreement has failed to make a difference in the family and young person's behaviour or if the Agreement has been breached.

An Order cannot be made for a child less than 10 years of age.

### **Who decides that a Family Responsibility Order is needed?**

The Magistrates Court decides if an order is needed following an Inquiry into Family Circumstances, which identifies exactly what efforts have been made to assist and support the family and if an Order is an appropriate way forward.

NT Police may request an Inquiry into Family Circumstances without an Agreement having been in place. NT Police are the only Appropriate Agency who can do this. The Magistrate will decide if an Order is required, based on information gathered in an Inquiry into Family Circumstances.

### **What will a Family Responsibility Order contain?**

A Family Responsibility Order will contain information about the actions parents, the young person and other family members must do to make the Order work. These actions will take into account the special needs and circumstances of each family and may include:

- parents to undertake counselling or therapy to overcome addictive, destructive or damaging behaviour and to gain parenting skills;
- parents to join and participate in activities of a support group and other courses or programs for their personal development;
- parents to exercise proper care and supervision of their children, including ensuring children go to school, avoid contact with certain persons, or stay away from certain places;
- young person to attend counselling, course or programs for their personal development; or
- any other actions that will assist families and their children.

### **How long is a Family Responsibility Order for?**

A Family Responsibility Order is valid for a maximum period of 12 months and expires when a child turns 18 years old.

### **What happens if the Order is not followed?**

If an Order is breached or parents fail to comply, consequences include:

- prosecution for non-compliance;
- fine to the maximum value of \$2200;
- execution against family goods not necessary for the maintenance of a modest lifestyle or earning a livelihood; or
- that the fine be paid through the parent undertaking a Community Work Order.