



Liberal National Party's proposals for overhauling Queensland's
child protection system

Survey Findings

*On the proposed trial to extend payments to Foster
Carers until young people in their care turn 21*

7 September 2020



Thank you to all who took time from their busy schedules to respond to our survey about the Liberal National Party's proposals for overhauling the child protection system. We trust that you have made a valuable and constructive contribution to the further development and refinement of the policy platforms of Queensland's political parties. We look forward to the informed discussion and debate the survey findings will generate. Following on from our report providing an overview of the survey findings, this is the second in the series of detailed reports, that addresses the proposal to conduct a trial to extend payments to Foster Carers until young people in their care turn 21 years of age.



Lindsay Wegener
Executive Director



Garth Morgan
A/ Chief Executive Officer



Contents

Introduction	6
About this report and the reports to follow	6
About the survey respondents	6
About the strength of the survey	6
Overall response	7
Responses by stakeholder groups	9
Employees of PeakCare Member organisations	9
Employees of QATSICPP Member organisations	10
Employees of non-Member non-government organisations	12
Employees of Government agencies	14
Employees of peak bodies, industry and representative groups	17
Academics	19
Private consultants and employees of consultancy or training organisations	20
Parents (and other family members) with a lived experience of the child protection system	21
Young people (under 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system	22
Older people (over 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system.....	23
Foster Carers	24
Kinship Carers	25
Others	26

Introduction

Following the announcement on 17 June 2020 of the Liberal National Party's (LNP's) [plans for overhauling Queensland's child protection system](#), PeakCare Queensland Inc. (PeakCare) and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) conducted a survey to gauge stakeholders' views about the plans. The survey was released on 19 June and closed on 10 July 2020.

PeakCare and QATSICPP will look for similar opportunities to seek feedback about the policy platforms of other political parties as they are released. Pleasingly, the findings of the survey are being used to inform bipartisan dialogue agreed to by Premier Palaszczuk and Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington about improvements that can be made to Queensland's child protection system.

About this report and the reports to follow

An [overview of the survey findings](#) was released on 24 August 2020, as a precursor to a series of reports that will delve, with greater detail, into specific matters addressed within the LNP's proposals. The first in this series of reports, [On the question of re-naming the Child Safety Department, the Child Protection Force](#) was released on 3 September 2020.

This is the second report within the series and addresses the question included within our survey – *The LNP proposes to “extend payments to foster carers for children in care until they are 21 under a \$4 million trial that will bring Queensland in-line with most other states”. Do you agree with this proposal?*

About the survey respondents

In total, 1,998 people responded to the survey from across 13 identified stakeholder groups including:

Survey respondent sub-groups	No (%)
Employees of non-government organisations including:	811 (40.82%)
• PeakCare Member organisation employees	289 (14.54%)
• QATSICPP Member organisation employees	63 (3.17%)
• Non-Member NGO employees	459 (23.10%)
Employees of Government agencies	633 (31.86%)

Employees of peak bodies or other industry or representative groups	56 (2.82%)
Academics	38 (1.91%)
Private consultants or employees of private consultancy or training organisations	42 (2.11%)
Parents (or other family members) with a lived experience of the child protection system	65 (3.27%)
Young people (under 25) with a lived experience of the child protection system	15 (0.75%)
Older people (over 25) with a lived experience of the child protection system	42 (2.11%)
Foster Carers	121 (6.09%)
Kinship Carers	35 (1.76%)
Others	129 (6.49%)

Eleven survey respondents skipped the question requesting them to identify the sub-group to which they belonged.

The 129 survey respondents who identified as belonging to the 'others' category described themselves as follows:

Interested community member (e.g. parent, concerned citizen, “just an ordinary person”)	39
Retired, semi-retired or former employee of either a government or non-government agency or both	33
Member of a particular professional or occupational group (e.g. a barrister, private school teacher, allied health professional, Union Organiser)	18
Member of two or more of the listed sub-groups (e.g. person who has had a lived experience of child protection as a child who is now a Carer and/ or employee of a govt or non-govt organisation)	14
Relative or friend of a Carer or employee of a government or non-government organisation	13
Non-specified connection with the child protection system	6
Former Foster Carer	4
Friend of a person who was formerly in care	2

About the strength of the survey

As noted in the overview report, the respondents to the survey are not a representative sample and therefore the results cannot be generalised to specific stakeholder groups or stakeholders as a whole. The strength of the survey and its findings lies in the diversity of views that have been collected from within and across stakeholder groups. This provides a rich source of data to generate debate about how to best protect children, promote their development and well-being, and support their families.

Overall response

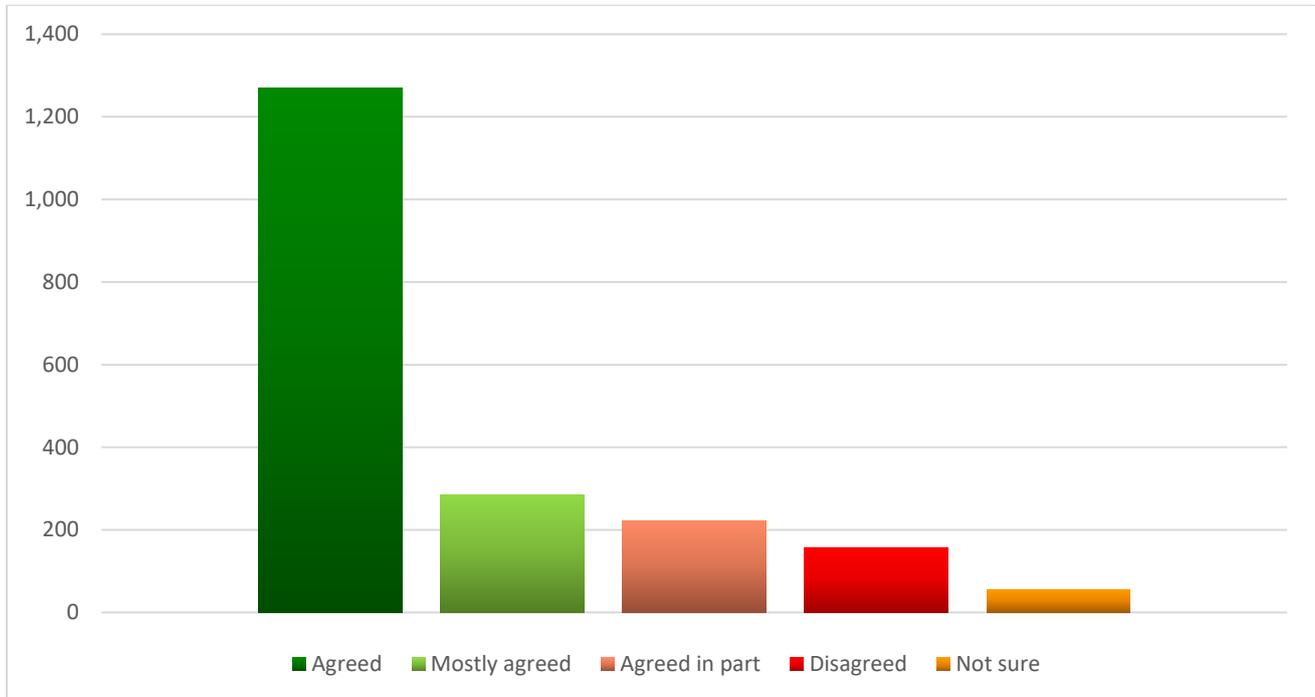
Of the 1,998 survey respondents, 1,990 answered and 8 'skipped', this question.

Of the 1,990 respondents who answered the question:

- 1,270 (63.82%) agreed with the proposal
- 285 (14.23%) mostly agreed
- 223 (11.21%) agreed only in part

- 156 (7.84%) disagreed, and
- 56 (2.81%) indicated that they were not sure

A majority of survey respondents within all 13 stakeholder groups agreed or mostly agreed with this proposal.



A majority of survey respondents within all 13 stakeholder groups agreed or mostly agreed with this proposal.

Noting that not all respondents provided additional comments, a review of the comments that were entered into the survey identified the following key themes.

Enabling transition

The vast majority of respondents supported the proposal to extend payments to Foster Carers until young people in their care turn till 21 years of age due to:

- all young people of this age being at a stage in their development where they need support in transitioning to adulthood
- the role increasingly being played by parents in providing economic support of their children including continued accommodation within the family home, throughout their early adult years
- the vulnerability of young people who have been in care in often being unable to access this

support from their families while also dealing with the impact of trauma on their development

- evidence of the positive impact of 'extending care' initiatives undertaken elsewhere in achieving improved outcomes for young people, and
- the benefits of supporting Foster Carers to continue providing care and support as young people transition from care to adulthood

Just introduce it

Some respondents suggested that a trial is unnecessary, and the initiative should just be introduced, based on evidence of its worth accumulated in Australia and elsewhere, and research supporting its introduction.

Not just about payments

The need for broader system reforms to support the intent of this proposal was also highlighted by some respondents. Suggestions included the need for a

continuum of services for young people to support their transition including:

- life skills development
- supported independent living programs and post care support
- funding of support services for Foster Carers to provide ongoing care including recruitment, assessment, training and support of Carers
- funding for ongoing casework and case management of young people, and
- increased allowances or a wage for Foster Carers and professionalisation of Carers to better meet the needs of vulnerable young people

In addition, there were concerns expressed about:

- the level of funding required to support this initiative, and
- reductions that may be made to the funding allocated to transition from care and post care support services to pay for it

Conditional

Some respondents placed conditions on their support for the proposal. These included requiring assurances that:

- young people's views and consent would be sought
- entry into the trial would be driven by young people's needs and circumstances, and that criteria would be established to determine their eligibility
- payments would be made directly to young people who would then pay their Carers for their board and lodging
- payments would be directly made for the purchase of goods and services that support young people's transition and access to education and employment, and
- mechanisms would be established for ongoing monitoring of the care arrangement, the care provided by the Foster Carers and their use of the funds

A number of comments reflected opinions about the need to establish the parameters of the proposal and details about how it would be implemented and monitored.

Extend access

While agreeing with the proposal in respect of young people living in foster care, some respondents suggested that many young people are living in other care arrangements including kinship care, residential care, supported independent living or are 'self-placed' and that they too should have access to similar support until they are 21 year of age.

Others suggested the initiative also be extended to 'informal' care arrangements (i.e. the care of young people living with relatives or other carers outside of the statutory system).

Some respondents called for payments to be extended until young people turn 25 years of age based on the age at which young people are generally regarded as 'dependent' on their parents, social trends involving young people living at home longer, and the particular needs of young people who have been in care.

Don't extend

Some respondents indicated they did not support extending payments to Foster Carers until young people in their care turn 21 years of age or had significant concerns about it. The reasons provided included:

- at 18 years of age, young people are adults and independent, and have access to other government financial support
- it would create inequity with other young people not in care and their families, and
- Carers can already access extended payments to support a young person's transition until they reach 19 years of age

Other respondents suggested that:

- the development of life skills and independence should happen before young people turn 18 so that they are ready to leave care
- Foster Carers should be trained and supported to facilitate young people's skill development, and
- services and programs to support young people post care at 18 years already exist

Some respondents questioned the extent to which young people are placed with or stay with Foster Carers, and/or the capacity of these Carers to provide the care and support needed. They suggested the funds would be better spent on residential care and supported independent living programs.

Other respondents suggested the funds should be used to prevent young people needing to be in care by supporting families to provide safe care, or to provide early intervention and harm reduction programs to reduce the need for care.

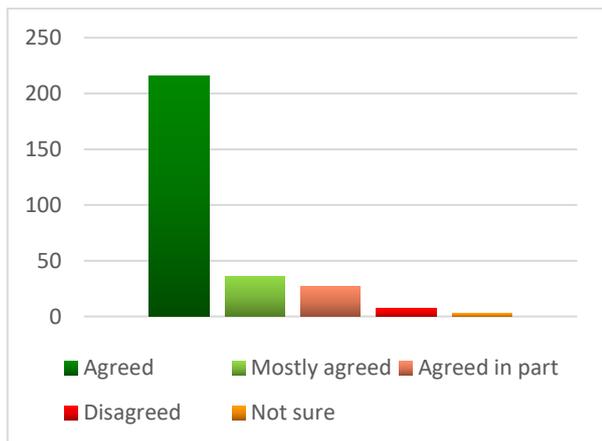
The remainder of this report sets out the responses of each of the stakeholder groups.

Responses by stakeholder groups

Employees of PeakCare Member organisations

Of the 289 employees of PeakCare Member organisations who answered this question:

- 216 (74.74%) agreed with this proposal
- 36 (12.46%) mostly agreed
- 27 (9.34%) agreed only in part
- 7 (2.42%) disagreed, and
- 3 (1.04%) indicated that they were not sure



93 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

The vast majority of respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people at this age for support in their transition to adulthood, the vulnerability of young people in care arising out of the impact of trauma and subsequent need for ongoing support, evidence of positive outcomes being achieved for young people when Carer payments are extended, and the benefits of enabling Foster Carers to continue providing support:

- *18 is too young for kids in care to be expected to be completely independent*
- *This would decrease levels of vulnerability for young people when their child protection orders expire and*

help to facilitate the ongoing connection to a safe family environment for young people transitioning to independence

- *Neuroscience shows that a brain isn't fully developed until the late 20's. A child who has experienced trauma will have that impacted in some way and is unlikely to be able to manage meaningfully in society as an 'adult' at 18*
- *Yes, research indicates that young people who remain with their carers post 18 have significantly better outcomes, especially related to education*
- *Most children in care are not ready to live independently in a healthy way and if the Foster family can keep them in their care a little longer and the burden of finance is relieved then that can only be a good thing*

Just introduce it

Some respondents indicated that the proposal should be introduced without a trial:

- *It needs to go beyond that. A trial is not necessary, there is enough research and anecdotal evidence that shows the benefits of doing this*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, some respondents highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *There is also a need to fund NGOs to support Foster Carers*
- *I believe that we need a transitional care program. Kids currently are dropped at 18 and they are not equipped to deal with the real world themselves*
- *There should be lot more funding for supported independent living so the kids have support in this area post 18*
- *You still need to have Foster Carers to provide these placements - Queensland government needs to be open to alternate models such as the SILS provided in Victoria and the social hubs set up around these*

Others were concerned that this initiative not come at the cost of other strategies to support young people transition from care and post care:

- *Long overdue reform. Please don't reduce support to young people leaving care to pay for it though*

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person or directly towards the purchase of goods and services required for the young person, it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers and their use of the funds, and consideration be given to young people's access to Centrelink payments:

- *Only if it supports the needs of the child, not if it perpetuates stability of income. Maybe consider the support needs of the child rather than an age cut off (post school education, employment options, living security, etc) and young people's entitlements to Centrelink payments*
- *I think that children should be entitled to manage their own payments once they turn 18*
- *As long as the Foster Carers are willing to ensure the safety of the children in their care until they reach 21 years*
- *They would need a process in place to ensure that they weren't just keeping kids to get their money - they should need to be able to show how this money is being used to assist the kids getting ready for transition*
- *Most kids in care can access Centrelink payments from 16 years old and have the ability to self-place. This needs to be taken into account*

Extend access

A number of respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements and/or extended to young people until they are 25 years of age:

- *Yes, but what happens to the young people in care who are in residential or don't have a placement at all? They also need access to the opportunities for stability that young people in foster care get*
- *I think this should be until they are 25 with a reduced payment where the child is able to work or is entitled to benefits*

Don't extend payments

A small number of respondents indicated payments should not be extended as it is already available up until young people turn 19 years of age and concerns about foster care and Foster Carers' motivations:

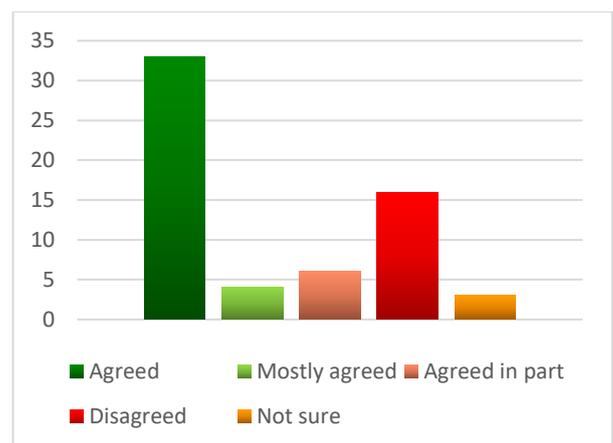
- *It's already being extended to 19, I don't see how 21 is going to change anything*
- *Many times, too many children are placed in large foster care situations this does not work*
- *This is poorly thought out. Financial reimbursements do not identify who is at best capacity to care for children*
- *As a Youth Worker who works in this industry, the amount of cases I hear about Foster Carers only being in it 'for the money' is astounding and disturbing. If this is implemented, I can foresee so many issues arising*

Employees of QATSI CPP Member organisations

Of the 60 employees of QATSI CPP Member organisations who answered this question:

- 33 (55%) agreed with the proposal
- 4 (6.67%) mostly agreed
- 6 (10%) agreed only in part
- 16 (26.67%) disagreed, and
- 1 (1.67%) indicated that they were not sure

3 respondents skipped this question.



18 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people for support in their transition to adulthood, the vulnerability of young people in care arising out of the impact of trauma and their subsequent need for ongoing support, evidence of positive outcomes being achieved for young people when Carer payments are extended, and the benefits of enabling Foster Carers to continue providing support:

- *This was always meant to happen. We know the brain isn't developed in a normal child until mid-20s and we abandon kids in out of home care with a trauma history at 18*
- *Absolutely agree with this measure. The outcomes would be considerably better if this was implemented*
- *Extending payments to foster carers to support children up to the age of 21 years will give Foster Carers the means to continue to provide support to young people as they establish themselves in work or study. It also means that a young person will be able to maintain a support network after they leave out of home care and enable them to establish themselves in adult life*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, some respondents highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *More funding support needs to go into transition from care and funding directly to supporting the children. What we have experienced is once kids turn 18, they are left to their own devices and not set up/supported appropriately*
- *This support would be more effective if carer entities are supported to remain as viable placement options, by increasing the actual tangible support, but not only agencies, but also Child Safety, using an individual carer and child assessment and responding in an appropriate time frame*

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be directly made to the young person, and it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers:

- *Support needs to be genuine, not just a money throwing exercise*
- *Payments be provided directly to the young people*
- *Depends on whether the child/children are well looked after*

Extend access

A number of respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements and/or extended to young people until they are 25 years of age:

- *Kids coming out of residential care need more funding due to them having to establish their lives as an adult. This is just a way to keep carers happy and possibly recruit more. If the children are case managed appropriately and the funding support provided to the carer to result in the best outcome for the child then this is a good thing*
- *It should also be applied to kin who are carers of children as they are significantly disadvantaged*
- *It should be at least until 25 when they get the adult payments from Centrelink*

Don't extend payments

Some respondents indicated funding for this proposal could be better directed to purchasing goods and services for the young person, increasing the number of Carers and decreasing the use of residential care and keeping children with their parents:

- *I feel that if the child can get Centrelink and you as a service this will be double dipping in monies. The monies could be injected to the child to get them a qualification or to set them up for a qualification e.g. paying for the course, get them a laptop, ensure they have fuel vouchers to get to the course or even a 'Go CARD', appropriate uniforms/clothes that are appropriate. As I feel that the above payments will not directly go to better the child. Or inject the monies in 'life skills' programs for the child to attend - How to manage your monies, what is a credit card and the % on payment, what are the traps of credit cards/After pay*
- *Put the funding to better use. Place parents and children together with family, increase the number of Foster Carers so 8-year old's aren't placed in residential care because of a lack of carers available. In my experience, most carers who support children until transition from care do not do so for the money and consider the child as family. In Australia we do*

not 'kick a child out' when we cease receiving payment for them so the extending of payments to Foster Carers is moot. Better support to transitioning these kids to education and employment would be a better use of the Government's money rather than paying the carers until the child is 21

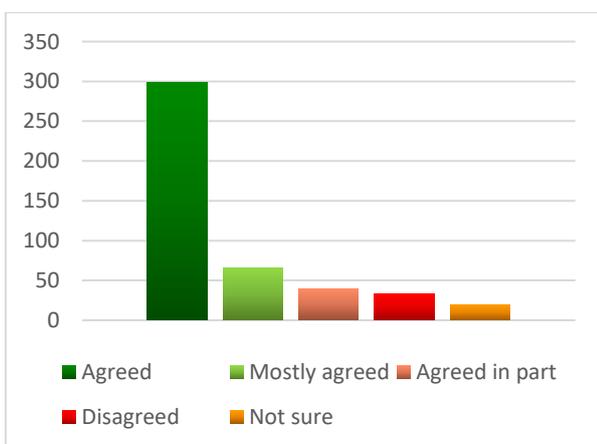
- *Kids will never go home, while we continue to invest in the business of placing children outside of their families. What about investing in making homes safe so children can stay in their homes with their family. What about investing in a blue card system restructure so we can increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers. Every child has a family - start paying families to look after their children, that would at least assist in eliminating some child protection concerns around neglect and poverty. Doesn't make sense that you would fund Foster Carers until kids are 21 but parents lose half of their income benefits when their child turns school age*

Employees of non-Member non-government organisations

Of the 458 employees of non-government organisations that are not Members of either PeakCare or QATSICPP who answered this question:

- 299 (65.28%) agreed with the proposal
- 66 (14.41%) mostly agreed
- 40 (8.73%) agreed only in part
- 33 (7.21%) disagreed, and
- 20 (4.37%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



120 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the development needs of young people for support in their transition to adulthood, the vulnerability of young people in care arising out of the impact of trauma and subsequent need for support, evidence of positive outcomes being achieved for young people when Carer payments are extended and benefits of enabling Foster Carers to continue providing support:

- *As a parent we know that our children require support beyond 18. It should also apply for those young people that have been in care with the same carer for many years and will most likely remain in the home*
- *This will continue support for young people to continue to be supported within carer homes where possible. This will give an added 3-year growth for young brains and ensure every opportunity to not continue cycles of abuse and harm to children*
- *Potentially throwing a child / young adult with complex issues and trauma background out on the street at 18years old is unacceptable*
- *This would reduce children and young people exiting community early by disengaging with limited ability to be supported in independent living recreating the dependent cycle on society; it would allow the building of healthy networks and connections to support their neurological development at a time where research indicates attachment and relationships is integral*
- *If this affords better duty of care to assist children and young people in care to transition to independent living and access to resources and support to launch them into adulthood and parenthood*
- *Great idea. There's good evidence that every dollar invested in this realm saves the government \$3 through reduced social issues in the future. Most children aren't ready to leave care at 18, especially children who have been removed from their biological families, have experienced abuse and harm and often have complex attachment issues. The three extra years will allow the maturation of these children in their stable homes with a more suitable transition to independence*
- *This would encourage carers to better support young people to live an adult life post-care*
- *Foster and kinship carers need financial support to care for children after 18 years old to allow them to sufficiently transition them to independent living.*

This financial burden should not be placed on volunteers

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, some respondents highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *Would need much more than \$4 million. In this would need to consider funding for agencies supporting carers as they would need to continue to remain registered as carers which requires two yearly assessment and review, as well as continued monitoring and support throughout. Depending on order child on ongoing visits to home by Child Safety, Orders currently expire when children turn 18 years*
- *Young people are not being transitioned out of care with the skills and resources they need and some are ending up homeless. More training required for transition officers and if paying carers past 18 then foster agencies need to remain engaged with carer to support*
- *We need semi-independent models that don't continue to put kids at risk. We need a continuum of care that will continue to support children and young people till they are 18, not just foster care*
- *We need more tailored responses. We need models of care that will meet the need of some of our most traumatised and at-risk children and young people. We need professional carers who are paid accordingly to support traumatised children*
- *It would also be beneficial to put the money toward hiring professional carers who can support these young people and can work within a therapeutic framework. This will support working through trauma, emotional regulation, positive engagement within the community and support them to prepare for transition and adult life after care. If this did occur programs like Next step would not be so overwhelmed with young people coming out of care with no life skills at all. Would also be great to either have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers as well to support the young people through generational trauma, help with their identity and belonging, as well as keeping that connection to family and culture which has such a great impact on our young people when they are not given their birthright*
- *We do not have enough Foster Carers now. We are already seeing a system of foster care that has nowhere for 18 year old's to exit to, therefore they*

are staying in care past 21 which means we have no capacity for young people coming into the care system

- *Better support for children exiting care is needed. Foster care systems also need uphauling*
- *Evidence showing increased homelessness etc for the 18-year-old cohort leaving care suggests this is warranted. I suggest that investment in housing/employment etc and life skill development relevant to 18-21 years is also needed*

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person or paid directly for the purchase of goods and services a young person needs, and it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers and their use of the funds:

- *Yes and No depends on the child and where they are at when ageing out at 18, but think the option should be available if they need it*
- *As soon as the child is working and independent enough to provide for themselves then payments should stop*
- *I agree with this proposal only if the funds are provided into the bank account of the child when they turn 18. We need to create independence, teach children about money and develop life skills. Not provide Foster Carers with more money to pay their rent. The money should go directly to the 18-year-old*
- *With the consent of the young person themselves - with accountability to ensure that said child is being appropriately cared for in this setting*
- *Foster Carers must be regularly checked to see that they are committed to properly looking after the children and that this money is being spent on the welfare of the child - their education, medical and mental health supports*

Extend access

A small number of respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements and/or extended to young people until they are 25 years of age:

- *Also need to consider what happens to young people at 18 when in residential care. They also need*

ongoing support and not to be kicked out before they are ready to care for themselves

- *Children need support beyond 18, but how does this extend for children not in care or foster care situations? That transition is important, but should be considered in relation to how children out of foster care are supported*
- *Should be extended to 25yrs #homestretch*

Don't extend payments

A number of respondents expressed concerns about extending payments. Some respondents suggested that the funds could be better used in supporting young people's transition from care or early intervention, while others questioned carers' motivation and capacity, the need for such payments due to the age of young people and equity with young people not in care, and how the initiative would be implemented and monitored:

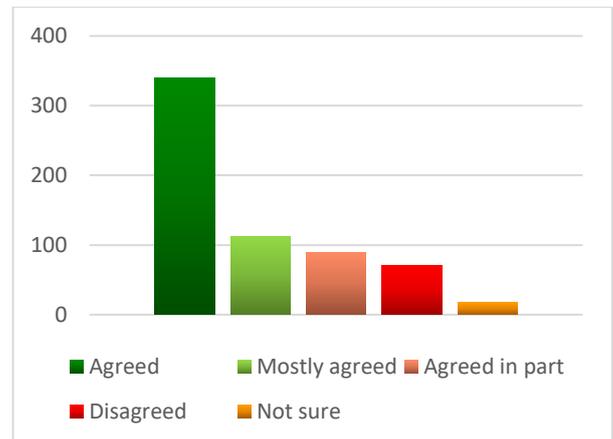
- *I believe this investment should go into services that can support your people developing the life skills to grow and be independent post 18 - instead of 'enabling' them for another 3 years*
- *Maybe implementing a compulsory program that could teach the children of the age 12+ the basic life skills before they exit foster care*
- *Maybe we should be spending \$4 million on early intervention and harm reduction programs instead so foster carers are less needed*
- *This money should be used to better improve life skills for children transitioning from foster care. Why should Foster Carers be paid more when the children leaving the foster care system are not equipped with the skills when entering adulthood or communities*
- *Put the money toward training Foster Carers on how to look after foster care children. Implement strategies so that carers actually teach the children how to look after themselves and cope when they leave home. Most carers only want the money and don't actually care for the kids. Accreditation for Foster Carers would be better and stricter monitoring of carers - so less kids get abused in care*
- *100% disagree. WHY should a child in care be supported until 21 when normal families and children do not have that right- that is not fair and equal for all families?*
- *This is taxpayers' \$\$\$, how will this be implemented and what strategies and protocols will be in place i.e. how KPI's are set out?*

Employees of Government agencies

Of the 630 employees of Government agencies who answered this question:

- 340 (53.97%) agreed with the proposal
- 112 (17.78%) mostly agreed
- 90 (14.29%) agreed only in part
- 70 (11.11%) disagreed, and
- 18 (2.86%) indicated that they were not sure

Three respondents skipped this question.



194 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the development needs of young people to be supported in their transition to adulthood, the vulnerability of young people in care arising out of the impact of trauma and subsequent need for support, evidence of positive outcomes being achieved for young people when Carer payments are extended and benefits of enabling Foster Carers to continue providing support:

- *Yes. Children do not suddenly become self-sufficient at 18 and often peers outside the child protection system remain at home into their 20's*
- *Absolutely agree. The adolescent brain at age 18 is still growing with respect to frontal lobes and capacity for abstract systemic reasoning and levels of insight to process their own lives and identity and navigate the adult world. Maintaining foster care support from 18 to 21 could be crucial to lifelong mental, physical and social well-being*
- *Agree completely, the idea of payments and potentially placements stopping at 18 is setting so many of our vulnerable young people up for failure. It's not usually expected in a normal family setting*

that your 18th birthday means the end of living at home, or support, so I don't know why we would not do this for our most vulnerable youth

- *Absolutely - our young people in care are extremely disadvantaged and require ongoing support well beyond 18yo and are often not supported well by other systems and services after they turn 18yo*
- *There is good international evidence that better outcomes are achieved if young people are supported past their 18th birthday (as they are by their parents)*
- *This will assist Foster Carers to provide a stable environment for our vulnerable teenagers. Just wondering which other area of the department's budget they will get the money from?*
- *Absolutely agree - Foster Carers need as much support as they can get to keep children safe, supported, and thriving into adulthood*
- *Looking after our Foster Carers needs to be at the core of everything we do. They are often forgotten, not supported well enough or not communicated with often enough*
- *I agree with this. I believe Foster Carers don't get paid enough as it is. If we can continue to financially support Foster Carers with their care to the child even when the child becomes an adult, then the child has a greater chance of sustaining employment and contributing positively in the community*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, some respondents expressed concern about how the initiative will be funded, while others highlighted the need for broader system reforms around payments to carers, professionalising care and enhancing transition from care:

- *This would require a huge budget increase. We already cannot provide for children in care with children having to be placed on long waiting lists for services*
- *Yes, whatever it takes to attract and maintain a Foster Carer. Professionalise the foster carer system and pay them a wage*
- *We expect so much from Foster Carers. They should be paid for all they put up with and not treated like volunteers. There is not enough Foster Carers. The placement system is under so much stress, getting paid to be a carer will be an incentive for more people to apply instead of kids sleeping in child*

safety office buildings or in hotels with rostered youth workers. Give them more money!!!

- *This can only be successful if more Foster Carers are recruited as there is currently an enormous shortage of Foster Carers in Queensland (and nationwide)*
- *While an overhaul is the view, there really needs to be work/overhaul of the foster carer system. I do agree to longer financial support given foster carer system is overhauled*
- *I could see a benefit for this but unless there are more Foster Carers or those children who are 18+ not counting towards the numbers in placements then this will take away places in the Foster System for children who need to enter. Need more youth specific housing for children to transition into from age of 16+. Young people are unable to secure housing in private markets and there is not enough public housing and often 16+ young people can't get access to it either*
- *Only if the entire system is expanded and funded to carry the work in all aspects of case management and case work (including financial costs in child related costs which are currently not funded above 18 but we are expected to meet the costs for up to 19) - not just Foster Carers. They need support and will have expectations around Child Safety Case Management and financial supports*
- *What happens to the children and young people after turning 21 years of age with the Child Safety System? What supports are available to these already vulnerable young people after leaving a foster care placement. There needs to be various other supports put in place to ensure that young person can still grow, mentoring in making the right decisions life skills etc.*

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person or paid directly for good and services needed to support young people in their transition to adulthood, it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers and their use of the funds:

- *Would not like to see it across the board, would need to be on a specific needs level. Many carers only provide foster care for \$, this would just reduce foster care places available as carers would keep kids until 21 just to keep getting \$ and no increase in the number of carers*

- *The money should be going to the child not the carer after the child turns 18 years (just like a normal 18-year-old would continue to get money from their parent)*
- *Payments should go to young people so that they can be self-sufficient and making payments to foster carers keeps young adults in the system longer than necessary. This would be particularly frustrating for young people who have had a negative experience with the Department, as many children do*
- *This is purely dependent on the quality of the Foster Carer and the care they provide. Our foster care system needs an overhaul. Some Foster Carers only do this for the money*
- *Sounds reasonable but what are the expectations of what this money is used for and how is this monitored? What are the suitability requirements for continuing to receive the funding?*

Other respondents raised issues about the parameters of the proposal:

- *I agree with this. What I would add though is that it would need to be very thoroughly thought through before implementing. There are a lot of foreseeable difficulties with the technicalities of this that open up complications. For example, if from the ages of 18-21, the young adult in question remains with a carer, but is not subject to a Child Protection Order, is that carer obliged to meet the standards of care? If so, how is this overseen? There is simply a myriad of questions that are raised, which need to be thought through before implementing this. I hope those questions will be worked through though, because continued care of some sort to 21yo is going to be a powerful support option for the young people Child Safety works with*

Extend access

A number of respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements and/or extended to young people until they are 25 years of age:

- *Should be to age 25 - parents are expected to support their children to this age and the foster system should be no different*
- *The most vulnerable young people leaving care come out of residential and service provider models with very few independent living skills to survive at 18. What about this area? There should also be*

extension options for children in residential care, so they are not homeless when they turn 18

- *I agree care should be able to be extended but it is not just for foster care - most young people when they leave care are not in a foster care arrangement. Why shouldn't the department support the young people by providing them payments to pay to whom they choose? This would also have the added benefit of supporting them to make adult decisions about budgeting, spending, etc.*

Don't extend payments

Some respondents indicated payments should not be extended to Foster Carers as young people are adults at 18 years of age and can access their own payments, young people don't tend to stay in foster care arrangements, carers shouldn't be motivated by money, greater emphasis should be placed on preparing young people transitioning from care at 18 years of age and there are already services in place for young people post 18 years of age:

- *Children in normal families leave home at 18 (adults). Children in care have moved out into own accommodation/at university etc.*
- *For what purpose? Young people over the age of 18 are able to claim their own support via Centrelink. Does the LNP also propose to extend payments to parents looking after their own children up to 21?*
- *It's pretty rare for young people to remain with their carers through adolescence anyway... most self-place/return home unapproved etc.*
- *Most children leave their foster placements and seek out their families or others. Foster Carers who wish to make the children part of their families will seek LTG-O or a PCO. This will be more wasted money*
- *There should be more focus on plans for independence for young people from 16 to 18 years old and then they should be ready for independent living by the time they are 18*
- *We need Foster Carers who want to support the kids. Not get the money for the kids. We also need more of them*
- *No, I don't support this. We begin the transition to adulthood process from 15 years old and there are services like Next Step After Care, CREATE and YFS to help young people transition out of care*

Other respondents commented that the outcomes could be achieved through increasing foster care allowances or

paying a 'wage', providing long term stable placements and accessing community-based services:

- *Just increase the foster carer allowance across the board*
- *I think that the money would be better spent paying carers in general a wage which would enable more people to become Foster Carers and allow increased expectations regarding quality of care*
- *I think resources could be better spent on overhauling the care system. The current system is not working - the majority of Foster Carers do not prioritise expenditure on children and fail to provide trauma informed care. How about that \$4 million is used to 1. recruit more staff and 2. recruit more permanent Foster Carers so that we can get children into long term stable placements where carers will raise these children into well-functioning adults who can contribute to society. I currently work with permanent Foster Carers, and I know that they have every intention to support children placed with them in every way (including financially) beyond the age of 18 years until a time where they are financially independent*
- *A partner agency would be better equipped to assist with these cases. An example would be the Next Steps agency*
- *The issue with this is most children transition from residential programs, so I recommend extending the SILS program overextending the foster care placements*

Some respondents felt the funds could be better spent elsewhere:

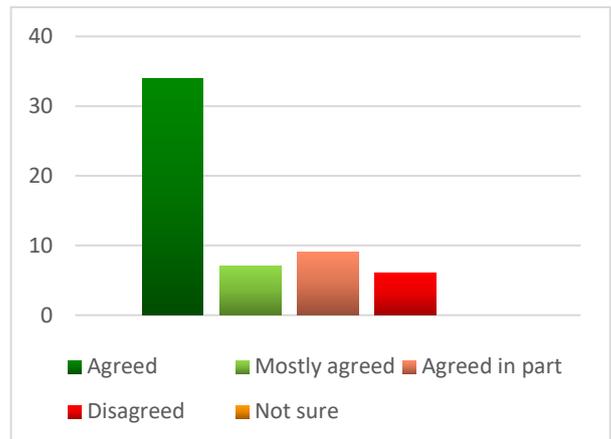
- *The best place for the children is to be with their family. Need to put extra funding for in-home support e.g. affordable housing, DV shelter, practical application in home teaching parents how to care for children*
- *Would need to see evidence of how many carers continue to care for children post 18. This investment should go into roles to assist officers to find family earlier on and alleviate that burden*

Employees of peak bodies, industry and representative groups

Of the 56 employees of peak bodies, industry and representative groups who answered this question:

- 34 (60.71%) agreed with this proposal
- 7 (12.50%) mostly agreed

- 9 (16.07%) agreed only in part
- 6 (10.71%) disagreed, and
- 0 (0.0%) indicated that they were not sure



19 of the respondents within this stakeholder commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people for support during their transition to adulthood, the vulnerability of young people in care arising out of the impact of trauma and subsequent need for support, evidence of positive outcomes being achieved for young people when Carer payments are extended and benefits of enabling Foster Carers to continue providing support:

- *It is what a good parent would do - it will help to reduce homelessness*
- *Definitely extra supports need to be in place for someone entering adulthood that has a background of trauma*
- *A person who has not suffered trauma would find it hard to go and live outside of the family home at 18 years of age. How can traumatised vulnerable children be expected to do this with no safe family connections for assistance?*
- *This is a fantastic announcement. I hope that Labor also follows their lead to affirm this policy. At present, 30% of young people experience homelessness in the first year after leaving care. This policy is a positive step towards improving this*
- *Young people need the support of their carer families to move into independence. These relationships should be encouraged as many identify their Foster Family as their family. The longevity of these relationships and the support they offer can be life*

changing. it needs to be a supportive transitional payment to support the changing needs of the young adult. Carers need more support to help them identify the speed bumps in the placement with kids who have experienced trauma

- *There are great costs associated with raising children. As a parent I am aware of these costs. When children are in care they tend to face greater psychological issues that increase the need for greater costs*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, some respondents highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *Foster carers are paid abysmally in Queensland and this should definitely be rectified to increase this substantially, however the quality of care and expectations associated with these payments also need to be explored. If Foster Carers are going to be paid a working wage (as in some other child protection jurisdictions), then they should also be responsible for taking children to and from family contact and school- which are real things that carers are currently unable and unwilling to do and that CSOs and CSSOs (support officers) are instead doing which takes them away from valuable work they could be doing developing their risk assessment, meeting with families and planning for children's safety as they are doing Foster Carer work*

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person, and it requires monitoring of the care arrangements and how the funds are administered:

- *Depends on the entire circumstances, whether the children have advanced to Uni then assist, however if they have a job then it is not needed*
- *This needs to be monitored closely and the child must have evidence they remain with the family and receive this support otherwise a permanent intermediate program for semi-independent living should be set up for the option to access*
- *While extending the ability of carers to remain in the lives of young people and not forcing them to leave on the day they turn 18 is needed, this proposal needs to be viewed in another way. Young people as*

they turn 18 should have access to funding that enables them to support themselves, either by staying with Foster Carers and contributing to the household or setting up independently. This increases the self-esteem of these young people and teaches them important life lessons that will lead to greater independence and less reliance on other services. The model could be similar to NDIS in that plans and goals would be set with each young person and their support networks for what needs to be funded and safeguards put in place for appropriate use of the funds for those identified purposes. The money should follow the young person, not the young person forced to stay in any given situation because that is where the money is. This should also include young people living in residential care

Extend access

A number of respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements and/or extended to young people until they are 25 years of age:

- *This should be extended to ALL young people in care (residential, SILS, non-approved placements etc) and be implemented not as a trial*
- *But how far will \$4 million go? It can't be a trial; this support must be offered to all 18-year olds leaving care*
- *It would be great for this policy to be extended beyond a trial for all young people leaving care. Whilst this is a vital and important first step, it is important that young people in residential care, semi-independent and non-approved placements also access supported placements to 21 as these young people are statistically more vulnerable*
- *I would only agree to this if this were not a trial and, it included Kinship Care and other forms of care such as Residential Care with a funding model more like SIL's. There would also need to be work undertaken to identify what allowances, not payments looked like depending on where the young person was at with an example of a young person who continues to live with their carer family but works full time and another example being a young person engaged in full time study who has part time work. There are many scenarios to consider here*

Don't extend payments

Some respondents expressed concerns about extending payments to Foster Carers when young people often 'self-place' and are not living in foster care, while others questioned carers' motivation and capacity to provide the care that may be required and argued that the proposal should not be regarded as a priority:

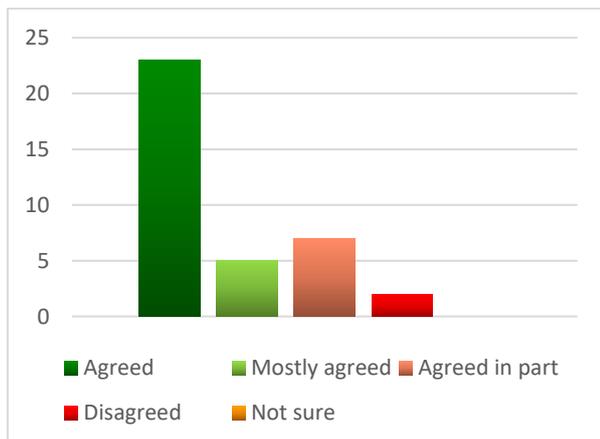
- *The child can self-place as young as 12 as they are with a safe adult and will self-place anywhere at an age as young as 15. Police under the current laws will not remove a child unless they are at risk. So a waste of taxpayers money- rethink where to spend the money? Increase in residential carers/youth workers is a better option*
- *Unfortunately some people will still take this on for the self-gain/money not for the benefit of the child/young adult*
- *To me this is not an area that needs immediate changes... Children's lives are more important*

Academics

Of the 37 academics who answered this question:

- 23 (62.16%) agreed with this proposal
- 5 (13.51%) mostly agreed
- 7 (18.92%) agreed only in part, and
- 2 (5.41%) disagreed

One respondent skipped this question.



15 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people for support in their transition to adulthood,

evidence of positive outcomes being achieved for young people when Carer payments are extended and benefits of enabling Foster Carers to continue providing support:

- *Data showing the number of kids exiting the foster care system going on to sleeping rough makes this a no-brainer*
- *This will reduce young adult incarceration*
- *Yes yes yes! And permanent foster families. I believe more families would participate in the foster system if they could adopt or know this child (after a certain point in time) would be with them permanently. Allowing them to move house, city or state, go on holidays with their foster child more easily*
- *Of course, current proposals would massively increase kids taken into care. Where are they going to be cared for and by whom? And what would their long-term prospects look like re: health, education, emotional well-being, identity of self and family? It is common sense that children should not be moved from carer to carer, but when there aren't enough carers this is inevitable*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, one respondent highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *However, I would add that the foster system must be overhauled to stop people 'doing it for the money' and giving kids back to the state when they have had enough*

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person or paid directly for the goods and services required by a young person, and it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers and their use of the funds:

- *There should be qualifying criteria - the young adult be in full time course of study, vocational training or employed work*
- *Payments may be direct to young people rather than carers*
- *Kids are pretty dependant on parents these days. But it shouldn't be automatic - should be case by case*

Extend access

Some respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements and/or extended to young people until they are 25 years of age:

- *And something is needed to support young people in residential care*
- *Extend payments to informal kin carers also - they are stopping children needing to go into care*

Don't extend payments

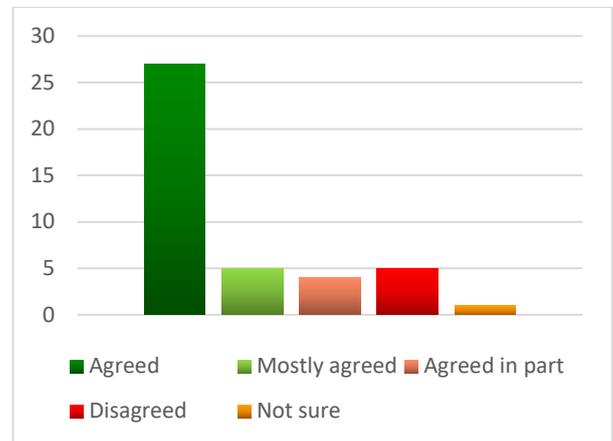
A small number of respondents expressed concerns about extending payments to Foster Carers. Some suggested that the funds could be better used to support young people's transition from care or early intervention, while others questioned the need for continuing payments and what would be achieved:

- *At risk children rarely stay in placements once they have reached adult hood - 18 years of age. This money would be better put aside to offer the young adults training courses, set up furniture, driving lessons and other adult needs*
- *We must look at why kids are leaving home at a later age and what we can do to encourage and guide their entry to the workforce. Simply extending payments won't do much but allow kids to stay at home longer without having to study or work*
- *No. Maybe go to uni or read an article or something. Come back to me when you have actually thought about it without only considering dollars for yourself*
- *I would need to see the information behind this. I would hope that by that age the young person is in employment or working and that they have become an embedded part of the family*

Private consultants and employees of consultancy or training organisations

Of the 42 private consultants and employees of consultancy or training organisations, who answered this question:

- 27 (64.29%) agreed with the proposal
- 5 (11.90%) mostly agreed
- 4 (9.52%) agreed only in part, and
- 5 (11.90%) disagreed,
- 1 (2.38%) indicated that they were not sure



14 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people for support in their transition to adulthood:

- *Great initiative. Very child-focussed*
- *I do think this is an important change to legislation. Young people require transition support, inclusive of ongoing emotional and practical support that young people outside of foster care are afforded by their families and communities*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, some respondents highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *You get what you pay for. It's time to make foster caring a 'job' to ensure we are attracting the right people to this crucial role*
- *I agree carers need more support to continue placements past 18. However, we have to acknowledge the reason placements end is not because they run out of payment; it's most often because carers aren't skilled or supported enough to manage traumatised behaviours*

Conditional

Some respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based and take into account the nature of the care arrangements, it should not be compulsory, and it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers:

- *Only in cases where the child remains a close family member (of the Foster Carer)*
- *My concern is the safety and well-being of children, we need to better assess and monitor Foster Carers, not just give more money; could it be more case by case rather than whole of carers?*
- *What about kids who want to leave care when they are 18yrs old, would it be compulsory for them to remain in the system if they no longer want to be?*
- *If placements are high quality and carers/young people want to remain together*

Extend access

One respondent suggested access should be made available for all young people in care:

- *This should be extended to include all young people in care*

Don't extend payments

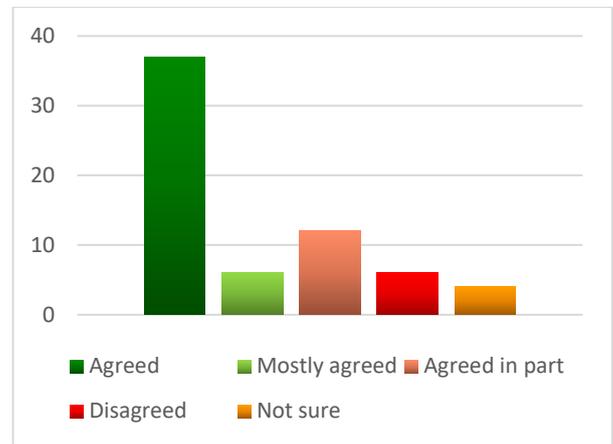
Some respondents expressed concerns about extending payments. Some respondents questioned the need for such payments due to the age of young people, equity with the support given to other parents, the motivation and capacity of carers, or suggested other strategies to improve the care of young people:

- *18 is adult age*
- *Other parents do not receive this support*
- *Majority of kids are independent by this stage and this may create more issues for carers with kids wanting the money themselves or saying they are doing it for the money*
- *Adopt out children rather than placing them with foster carers. Have paid professional carers. Both recommended in the Carmody Report*

Parents (and other family members) with a lived experience of the child protection system

Of the 65 parents (or family members) with a lived experience of the child protection system who answered this question:

- 37 (56.92%) agreed with the proposal
- 6 (9.23%) mostly agreed
- 12 (18.46%) agreed only in part
- 6 (9.23%) disagreed, and
- 4 (6.15%) indicated that they were not sure



16 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most comments were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people for support in their transition to adulthood, the vulnerability of young people who have been living in care, and the benefits to be achieved in improving outcomes for young people:

- *18 is too young for a person who has been in care to leave the home - which is often the case. They are not capable of looking after themselves*
- *Absolutely! 18 is such a vulnerable age and they are still working out life. To cut them off from their support systems at that age when they are already having to try work out adulthood can be a massive stress. I've seen first-hand how any gains from prior input can all be wasted when young people crash with that transition*
- *The children are already 'lost'....many forever....if Foster Carers are there for \$\$ only...at least they can mature for a bit longer without massive financial strain and homelessness...*
- *The results of this age increase for children in the US and UK halved their poor outcomes*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, one respondent suggested the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- *Children of the system need education on how to self-manage life after care. Education with accommodation, finance, budgeting, health everyday life skills*

Conditional

Some respondents placed conditions on their support of the proposal including it should be needs based, be subject to young people's circumstances, voluntary and subject to monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers:

- *If needed for the children, yes. Though this may be problematic potentially posing a financial incentive to have more children in out of home care*
- *Depends on the child and situation. I am sure some Foster parents are only in it for the money*
- *I understand that some children have no parents to go home to and I support Foster Carers receiving this payment under these circumstances*
- *Only when the circumstance for the protected child are such that they cannot be safe and independent, and not compulsory*
- *As long as the child is still in their care and they get proper support*

Extend access

One respondent suggested access be extended to grandparents:

- *Payments equalling foster care payments must be a priority to grandparents raising their grandchildren as well*

Don't extend payments

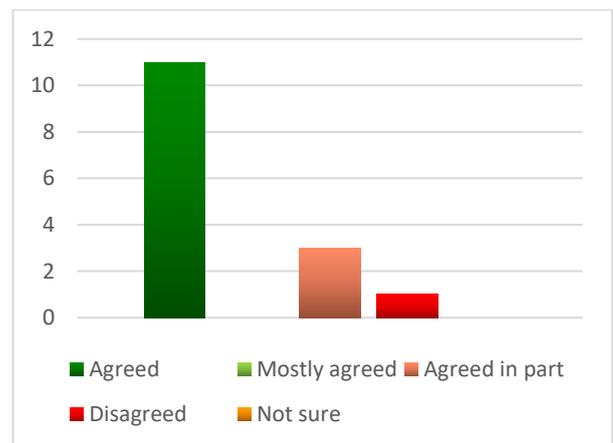
Some respondents expressed concerns about the inequity of not providing similar support to parents, questioned the motivation of some Foster Carers, and suggested that the funds could be better used elsewhere:

- *Unaffected parents don't get this payment. Why should Foster Carers?*
- *Unfortunately, I know of some foster families that have multiple foster children and believe they are more concerned about the money they receive than the children*
- *I am not really sure about this. Should more effort be put into re-uniting children in care with their family (safely)?*
- *The 4 million dollars should be invested into supported independent living services*

Young people (under 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system

Of the 15 young people (under 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system who answered this question:

- 11 (73.33%) agreed with this proposal
- 0 (0.00%) mostly agreed
- 3 (20.00%) agreed only in part
- 1 (6.67%) disagreed, and
- 0 (0.00%) indicated that they were not sure



6 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

One respondent supported extending payments due to the age and developmental needs of young people:

- *Yes, because there is a number of children and families that get cut off due to ages even though the kids may still be in school*

Conditional

Two respondents placed conditions On their support of the proposal suggesting that payments should be made directly to the young person and the motivation of Foster Carers should be monitored:

- *Give payments to kids. There are countless young people with intellectual impairments or just straight up trauma that are in abusive foster homes and stay past 18. You're giving this to a carer for what reason? Why can't the young person in care pay rent/board and lodgings from that money to the carer? Why bypass the child?*

- *Be sure that new foster families are doing it for the right reasons- of looking after foster children*

Extend access

One respondent suggested that access be extended to young people living in other care arrangements:

- *This needs to be extended to kids in residential placements and also self-placements*

Don't extend payments

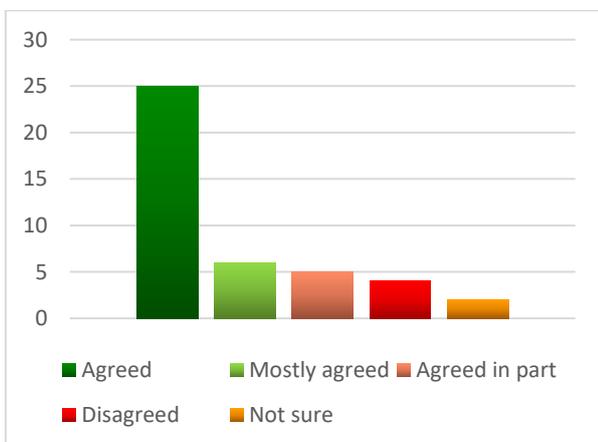
Two respondents expressed concern about extending payments suggesting that the funds could be better used elsewhere and that the initiative is already in place:

- *Need to invest in family systems and group family therapy. As drugs are self-medicating trauma, we need to treat whole family systems and resource specific solutions for recognising and treating family scapegoat system ... the real problem*
- *This feels like it is just to win votes. Labour is already supporting this proposal*

Older people (over 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system

Of the 42 older people (over 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system who answered this question:

- 25 (59.52%) agreed with this proposal
- 6 (14.29%) mostly agreed
- 5 (11.90%) agreed only in part
- 4 (9.52%) disagreed, and
- 2 (4.76%) indicated that they were not sure



11 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the developmental needs of young people for support in transitioning to adulthood, and the vulnerability of young people in care arising from the impact of trauma and the subsequent need for support:

- *Yes!! There is rarely an 18 year old who is suddenly moved out and living independently. I think more work should be done on engaging carers who want to be involved with the child post 18 years old*
- *Quite often the children leaving care are unprepared for life on their own because of the trauma that they have been through*
- *Child Safety staff see it all the time when young people turn 18 and they have no-one to support them into adulthood. It is also recognised and acknowledged that young people turning 18 years and have been in care for a significant amount of time, they frequently have minimal to no supports and are therefore expected to do things that they have not done previously. Also build in the trauma component and then you are essentially dealing with a 12 year old child who has never been able to move forward due to being stuck at a time when this young person's life changed*

Conditional

Some respondents placed conditions on their agreement with the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person, and the decision to enter into the arrangement should be led by the young person:

- *Only if there are high risk factors e.g. disabilities, cognitive impairments etc If no issues they can let them live with them if they consider them family*
- *A child in care cannot be turfed out of the system once they turn 18. There needs to be a safety net for them. I don't believe the money should be wholly made available to the 'foster parents' but rather the child who is trying to exit the system and become autonomous and emancipated from the child protection system*

- *Depends why they are doing this. Is it for the child or the foster parent? Some children will want to stay until 21. Others may wish to become independent. Let the child make the decision if they want to stay*

Extend access

One respondent supported extending access:

- *What about Indigenous kinship carers? And grandparents etc who get no financial support*

Don't extend payments

Two respondent raised issues with extending payment in relation to age and independence:

- *If the adult age is already set as 18, then why extend it to 21?*
- *This could mean some foster children are unable to become independent once they are adults*

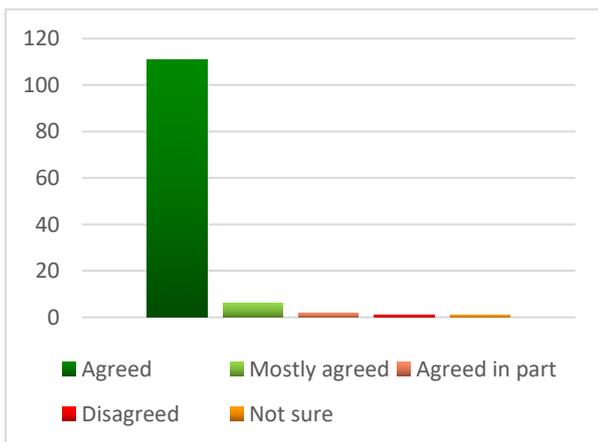
One respondent questioned if the government was already doing this:

- *I think the current Govt is doing this?*

Foster Carers

Of the 121 Foster Carers who answered this question:

- 111 (91.74%) agreed with this proposal
- 6 (4.96%) mostly agreed
- 2 (1.65%) agreed only in part
- 1 (0.83%) disagreed, and
- 1 (0.83%) indicated that they were not sure



34 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most respondents were supportive of extending payments due to the development needs of young people, the vulnerability of young people in care arising out of the impact of trauma and subsequent need for support, and improving outcomes for young people by enabling Foster Carers to continue providing care:

- *Children at 18 are not yet ready for independence. Centrelink requires parents support biological children till 25...why the lack of support for more vulnerable children?*
- *Definitely! Trauma takes 3-4 years off their development. Most have other conditions like ASD, FASD, ADHD. So, they need more time, more help so why kick them out at 18 when developmentally they are about 14?*
- *Absolutely if the dept does not meet the goals of a child ageing out of the system it is left up to the carer to maintain that. These kids don't leave home at 18, they are part of a family and that family does not cease to exist at 18. 18 is also a very young age to expect any kid especially a kid who has been in care to pick up and live independently. I don't know an 18yr that would not need help beyond 18yrs*
- *I believe that this is important as it will help young people transition more successfully out of care by remaining with carers to a time when they are more mature. Most stable intact families care for their children well beyond the point of adulthood to ensure they are launched with work, education, independent accommodation and basic resources. Children in care need at least this to help them have successful lives*
- *Not all children in care will be ready to leave home at 18. Extending the payments ensures that they continue to be cared for and supported and that the onus for doing so does not fall to the carer*
- *Foster carers are often undervalued, poorly treated and often end up in financial difficulty themselves meeting the needs of some children. The Child Safety Service Centres demonize those carers who fight for help*

Just introduce it

Two respondents indicated that the proposal should be introduced without a trial:

- *Don't trial it, do it*

- *It has been negligent for the government to refuse to support carers to support young people who are both already disadvantaged. There is no trial needed - just do it*

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, two respondents highlighted the need for broader system reforms around financial support for young people and for carers:

- *We have experienced this first hand and still experiencing it as our older daughters are 20 and 23 and struggle with money management and set up for housing. We also think there should be financial support of \$5000 a year for post kids in care to support them in managing transport and acquiring a license to better assimilate them to the work force....*
- *This is much needed. Maybe look at the superannuation for the carer who is selflessly caring for children who would otherwise be placed in residential care at a far greater cost. This is not an income but what about the working sacrifice from the carer who will have no superannuation as a result of caring for the nation’s children in their hours of need*

Conditional

Two respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, and the care provided by Foster Carers and their use of the funds should be monitored:

- *If you do a great job, they won’t need it. It should be case by case*
- *Please check first that the money is being spent on the child, there are a lot of Carers who only do this for the money, so don’t give them extra money to spend more time at the pokies and neglecting the child*

Extend access

Two respondents suggested access should be provided to all young people regardless of their child protection order and be extended to young people in residential care:

- *This option needs to also be available to young people in residential. They would benefit from ongoing transitional support from residentials and youth workers providing accommodation, funding, education support, employment support etc.*

- *For all orders e.g. LTGO*

Don’t extend payments

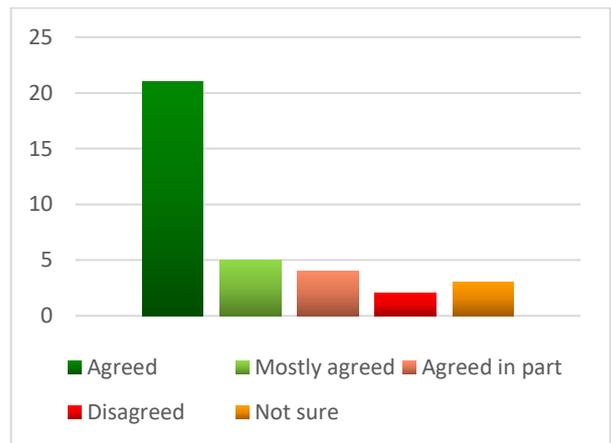
One respondent did not support extending payments, suggesting the issue was not about payments:

- *Just a joke. Not about payments. Foster carers can’t keep a teen in a placement once they are about 12 as the second there is any instability, the department are bound by having to bow down to the young person and let them move on. And on and on. Until there is only residential care left*

Kinship Carers

Of the 35 Kinship Carers who answered this question:

- 21 (60%) agreed with the proposal
- 5 (14.29%) mostly agreed
- 4 (11.43%) agreed only in part
- 2 (5.71%) disagreed, and
- 3 (8.57%) indicated that they were not sure



7 of the respondents within this stakeholder group commented on their responses.

Enabling transition

Most comments were supportive of extending payments due to the development needs of young people, and improving outcomes for young people by enabling Foster Carers to continue providing care:

- *Yes, I’m an experienced carer. No child is ready at 18*
- *Absolutely! Biological parents support their children well past 18 years of age, removing this support too early isn’t good for anyone and would impact a foster child’s ability to be a productive adult*

- Especially if those kids want to further their education

Conditional

One respondent placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal suggesting it must be of benefit to the child:

- Only if it benefits the child, NOT the carer

Don't extend payments

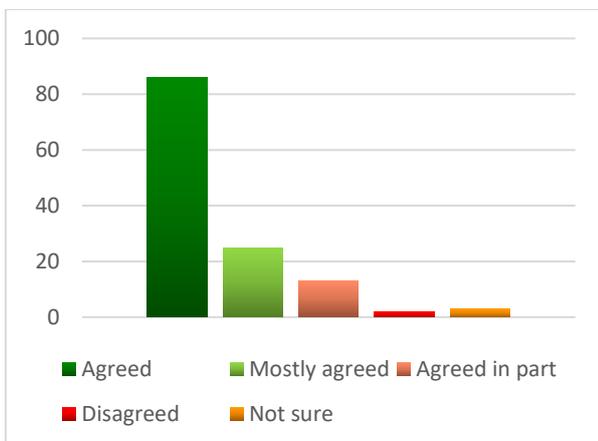
Two respondents raised issues with extending payments relating to the need for transition support and removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:

- Kids in care need support past 18. I'm not sure foster care payments will help with this, but the transition support needs more funding
- What about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being placed away from their parents, grandparents, Uncles, Aunties, brother, sisters, cousins, community and then their culture?

Others

Of the 129 survey respondents who indicated that they did not belong to one of the aforementioned groups or who identified with multiple groups:

- 86 (66.67%) agreed with the proposal
- 25 (19.38%) mostly agreed
- 13 (10.08%) agreed only in part
- 2 (1.55%) disagreed, and
- 3 (2.33%) indicated that they were not sure



36 of respondents within this stakeholder group provided comments.

Enabling transition

Most comments were supportive of extending payments due to the development needs of young people, the vulnerability of young people in care and subsequent need for support, and improving outcomes for young people by enabling Foster Carers to continue providing care:

- There is no point in 'saving children from child abuse' if you push them out into a world at age 18 years, when they have no savings, no supports, their family networks are fractured and sometimes need help. Children in care need community support for their whole lives when their families are unable to provide grounded support. When you are an adult, telling someone you were abused as a child, usually does not attract support. Criticism and attack are a lifelong experience when people ask about their family of origin. They usually end up living a life of virtual poverty, no matter how hard they try to succeed, because in the end, a child's successful life comes back to family cohesiveness
- Yes. Children in care are highly vulnerable if abandoned as soon as they reach 18, at a time where many young people stay at home into adulthood
- Definitely allows for transition into adulthood rather than being dumped at 18
- Young adults still need guidance and mentors
- Yes, this will actually provide support in stopping generations of children coming into care

Just introduce it

Two respondents indicated that the proposal should be introduced without a trial:

- Don't trial it, just do it!
- Should not be a trial - be instigated for all who are not self-sufficient and follow up on those that are self-sufficient until 21 years old also

Not just about payments

Whilst endorsing the proposal, one respondent highlighted the need for broader system reforms around transition from care:

- Possibly creating education carer pathways for foster children, and or scholarships

Conditional

A number of respondents placed conditions on their endorsement of the proposal including it should be needs based, payments should be made directly to the young person or paid directly for the good and services required by the young person, it requires monitoring of the care provided by Foster Carers and their use of the funds, and a commitment to funding the initiative:

- *Depends on the circumstances of the child in care at age 21, lot of questions on why financial support is required at that age*
- *Only where there is mental health or disability. I believe that often there is a case for the young person getting payments to support their life into adulthood, through training and study*
- *Many foster parents are default parents and will have the emotional attachment anyway. Role of foster parents needs to be examined to ensure they are not just in it for the money*
- *Carer payments ought to be dependent on achieving certain plans/milestones for the young person*
- *Much greater scrutiny of who becomes a Foster Carer is where the money should go. Respecting the limitations of good Foster Carers and providing them with timely support when requested would achieve better outcomes. Flexibility for the Foster Carers once they have a child/children in care so they are able to give the children a more normal home life is essential instead of the control from within the department, treating the good Foster Carers like they are untrustworthy*
- *It depends. Are we talking family-based placements that will continue to care for the children after they turn 18, then 100% But really you should instead have a trust for children once they turn 18 and they can apply to use the funds as needed. Buy a car, bond loan, washing machine etc.*
- *There must be a commitment to funding*

Extend access

Two respondents commented that payments should be made available for all young people in care regardless of their care arrangements, or extended to all parents:

- *Also for children in non-family based placements*
- *Only if such payments are extended to all parents*

Don't extend payments

Some respondents expressed concerns about extending payments. Concerns included that the funds could be better used to enhance foster care, the need for payments when a child is considered an adult at 18, and how the initiative would be implemented and monitored:

- *We need to attract qualified and well paid professional carers. Where is the money coming from?*
- *We don't do this for the money. Children from 0 to 4 are the most expensive to raise... Re-evaluate the payment process*
- *I think it would be better served by making it 18 and offering a part or full payment to those who have children in long term guardianship*
- *Considered an adult at 18*
- *What would the disadvantage be for the young person? Would this police and ensure that a young person does not pay the carer 'board' to stop carers from 'double dipping'?*
- *Would the young person know this is occurring, would they know their rights with this, would this require further support planning during this payment period, would the carer still need to be a current approved carer, will the young person be informed they are able to contact Child Safety to inform them they have moved out of the home, would the payment be provided again if the young person moves out and then returns to the home?*

