



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

# Survey Findings

*On the proposal for the Child Protection Force to adopt  
a hierarchy and rank structure similar to the Police*

16 October 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 seventh in the series of detailed reports that addresses the proposal for the Child Protection Force to adopt a hierarchy and rank structure similar to the Police.



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## 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.

### About this report and the reports to follow

An [overview of the survey findings](#) was released on 24 August 2020. More detailed reports about the survey findings released since include:

- [On the question of re-naming the Child Safety Department, the Child Protection Force](#)
- [On the proposal to extend payments to Foster Carers until children in their care turn 21](#)
- [On the proposal to increase use of adoption through a new triage model with permanency order targets](#)
- [On the proposal for random compulsory drug tests for people on Intervention with Parental Agreements](#)
- [On the proposal that positive drug tests will require parents to participate in a drug rehabilitation service](#)
- [On the proposal that a second positive drug test will lead to children being placed on foster care under a no-second chances model](#)

This report addresses the question included in our survey – *Do you agree with the proposal that the Child Protection Force “adopt a hierarchy and rank structure similar to the Queensland Police Service to ensure proper oversight and accountability”?*

This report is best read in conjunction with the following reports that address related topics:

- [On the proposal for Child Protection Force officers to be on-hand 24-hours a day under new shift arrangements](#)
- [On the proposal that a rapid response team be placed on stand-by for after-hours support](#)
- [On the proposal that a new team of police investigators be formed to clear backlogs and overhaul investigation procedures for high-risk cases](#)

### About the survey respondents

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

| Survey respondent stakeholder groups                 | No (%)       |
|--|--------------|
| Employees of non-government organisations including: | 811 (40.82%) |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • PeakCare Member organisation employees   | 289 (14.54%) |
| • QATSCIPP 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 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 (eg. a barrister, allied health professional) | 18 |
| Member of two or more of the listed groups  | 14 |
| Relative or friend of a Carer or employee of a government or non-government organisation                | 13 |
| Non-specified connection with 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.

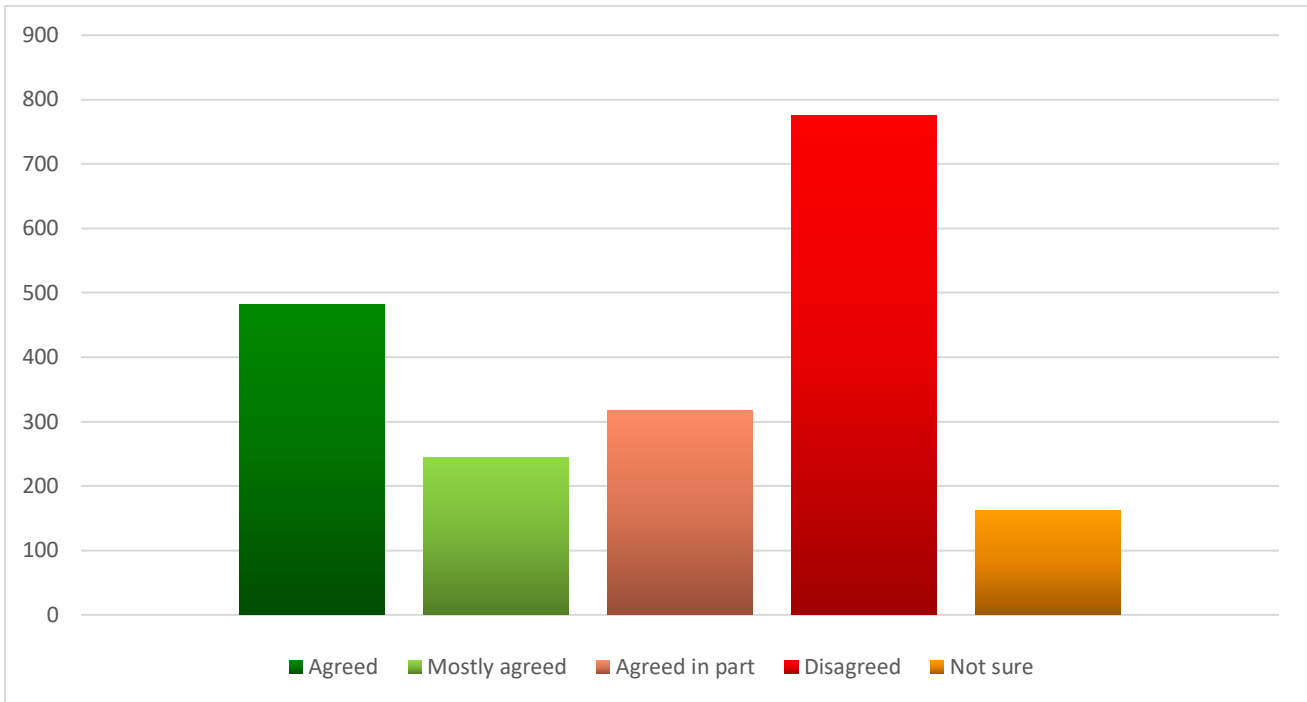
The strength of the survey and its findings lies in the diversity of views that have been collected from within and across stakeholder groups. This provides a rich source of data to generate debate about how to best protect children, promote their development and well-being, and support their families.

## Overall response

Of the 1,998 survey respondents, 1,983 answered, and 15 'skipped', this question. Most who answered the question disagreed (39.13%) or agreed only in part (16.04%) with this proposal.

Specifically, of the 1,983 respondents who answered this question:

- 482 (24.31%) agreed with the proposal
- 245 (12.36%) mostly agreed
- 318 (16.04%) agreed only in part
- 776 (39.13%) disagreed, and
- 162 (8.17%) indicated that they were not sure



A majority of respondents (i.e. 50% or more) within 7 of the 13 stakeholder groups disagreed or agreed only in part with the proposal.

A majority of respondents (i.e. 50% or more) within 3 of the 13 stakeholder groups agreed or mostly agreed with the proposal.

More employees of non-government organisations that are not Members of either PeakCare or QATSICPP disagreed or agreed only in part (47.80%) than those who agreed or mostly agreed with the proposal, but they were less than 50% of the total number of respondents within this group.

In respect of the remaining stakeholder groups, a larger number agreed or mostly agreed than the number who disagreed or agreed only in part, but they did not constitute a majority:

- older people (over 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system (48.79%)
- others who did not belong to one of the listed groups or who identified with multiple groups agreed or mostly agreed (47.29%)

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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Many respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Child Safety Department that provides for internal and external oversight and accountability and therefore the proposal to introduce one similar to the Queensland Police Service was unnecessary.

Other comments highlighted the differences between the two departments and expressed concern that a Police-like structure:

- focuses on enforcement, command and control
- was inappropriate to the role and functions of the Department
- was inappropriate to engaging and working with children and families
- would have a negative impact on outcomes for children and families

The respective roles and responsibilities of each department were acknowledged and the need to work together was stressed.

### ***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

Many respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department. These respondents cited a range of issues impacting on the capacity of the Department and its staff including:

- level of staffing and caseloads
- support, training and retention of staff
- supervision and mentoring
- strong practice frameworks and practice models
- specialist teams
- expansion or provision of additional services to meet the need the needs of children and families
- prevention and early intervention
- internal and external collaboration with others

Some respondents highlighted issues with the:

- existing layers of management and tensions between frontline staff and management in decision making
- independence of decisions made

### ***Queensland Police Service has its own issues***

A number of respondents indicated the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model upon which to draw.

### ***Insufficient information***

Some respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/ or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change. There were calls for more information and consultation. Some of the questions posed included:

- What are the issues with the current structure?
- What is the Queensland Police hierarchy and rank structure?
- How would this translate to Child Safety?
- How would it lead to better oversight and accountability?

### ***Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure***

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response. Respondents focused on the:

- needs of children and families and complexity of child protection
- role and function of Child Safety and how this differs from those of the Queensland Police Service
- need for a model specific to child protection and looking to child protection or human service models in place elsewhere
- need for independent oversight and accountability through an external body, stakeholder group, or auditing and accreditation processes

Other respondents questioned the efficacy of both the child protection and police structures, and the contribution of hierarchy and rank structures to better oversight and accountability, and called for systemic reform.

### ***Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure***

Some respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of these factors, and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements. Respondent comments highlighted:

- the important nature of the work
- failure to protect children
- inconsistency in departmental decision making
- the need for leadership

Others stressed the need to consider:

- employment of people with understanding of the context and professional expertise
- delegations, career development and roles
- support given to staff in undertaking complex work
- need to ensure cultural safety
- engagement of local support workers
- need to guard against corruption and having external oversight in place

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



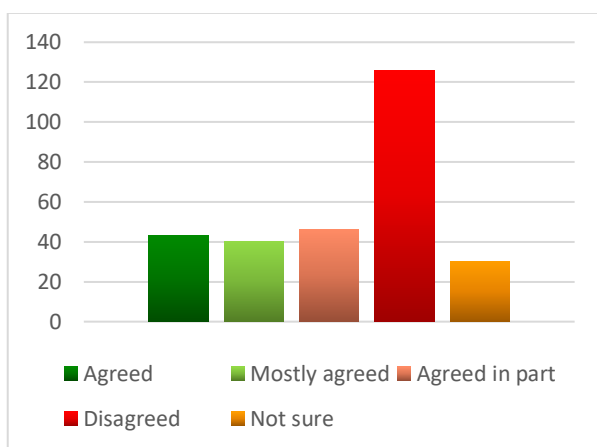
## Responses by stakeholder groups

### Employees of PeakCare Member organisations

Of the 285 employees of PeakCare Member organisations who answered this question:

- 43 (15.09%) agreed with this proposal
- 40 (14.04%) mostly agreed
- 46 (16.14%) agreed only in part
- 126 (44.21%) disagreed, and
- 30 (10.53%) indicated that they were not sure

Four respondents skipped this question.



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

#### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Many respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *The Queensland Public Service, of which Child Safety Services is part, already has a hierarchical organisational structure that provides accountability and oversight...this proposal demonstrates a lack of understanding of the checks and balances that are already in place*
- *Adopting a policing framework is highly unlikely to result in an improved system. There is already a hierarchy of positions that aligns with experience and knowledge of a child protection professional i.e. CSSO, CSO, Team Leader, Senior*

*Team Leader, Senior Practitioner, Manager etc.... these positions are social work / welfare professionals that work in alignment with an appropriate framework to this field. The power driven language of rank is not conducive or required to ensure accountable practice in a social work/ welfare context*

- *Child Safety is not law enforcement*
- *Police are not what is needed in Child Protection. Social workers and other social science-based professionals are what is needed as they can assess the situation holistically and look for structural boundaries that are preventing the parents from keeping the children safe. Police are a hammer and child protection is not a nail. Child protection needs a skilful and thought out approach not a hammer!*
- *The children, young people and families involved with child protection services have extensive histories of trauma, often involving police. Modelling the government agency that responds to their needs on the Queensland Police Force's hierarchy and rank structure will further alienate families from engaging with these services. Further, there is an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families involved in the child protection system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have historically experienced and continue to experience high levels of discrimination and violence from the Queensland Police Force. Further codifying this in the structure of the state's child protection agency will further stigmatise and alienate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, youth, families and communities from engaging with the agency. Child protection services are already viewed with suspicion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities due to the legacy of the Stolen Generation and forced removals. Changing the structure to one that is the same as the Queensland Police Force will reinforce previous inter-generational and systemic trauma experienced by these communities*
- *This concept creates a military approach rather than complex care panels which include multiple support systems who are well trained and educated to make collective decisions*
- *Suggests that the work is undertaken using a command and control structure rather than a flat structure of collaboration and*

*empowerment to work side by side with families and young people and allow them decision making over their own interventions. Whilst there is a necessary element of legal/ legislative power, unlike the police force, the sector works hard to consider life history and family structures/ supports as part of its intervention and case planning. However, creating a police structure within another department seems to be repeating history (very tragic part of Australian history). Would be better to let police do policing, and train them to be culturally and trauma responsive, and let child protection be good at their job - appropriate training, role discrimination and systems for working together - would be far more beneficial*

- *A hierarchy and rank structure is problematic for a range of reasons. Research from the Royal Commission into Child Abuse showed that these types of organisational cultures increase risk of harm to children, and workers within these organisations are often fearful of speaking up when they identify bad practice by colleagues for fear of 'rocking the boat'*
  - *a change in structure is unlikely to lead to proper oversight or accountability - the issue is more likely associated with lack of training and support*
  - *Given the increasing attention being given to problematic policing within Indigenous communities, it is strange that we would be thinking of introducing this model into an already broken system*

***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

A number of respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads; support, training and retention of staff; supervision and mentoring; strong practice frameworks and quality practice; early intervention; and collaboration with others:

- *Think it is a resource issue not a hierarchy issue. There is not enough time for staff to respond to needs and then enable the structure to respond. High staff turnover also impacts and this won't resolve that issue*
- *There is already a level of accountability and governance structures within the department. I am not sure what a rank structure would do to*

*enhance this or improve it. If you want proper oversight and accountability - then your focus should be on training and retention of staff - as this is the biggest gap around poor accountability*

- *Children and families would benefit most from having a Department made up of workers with strong practice frameworks grounded in evidenced-based interventions in relation to trauma, addiction, domestic and family violence and the psychology of change. Quality practice requires a leadership approach, not a management approach. In my experience, outputs and outcomes are more impacted by extremely high caseloads (for both front line workers and their leaders), impacting accountability*
- *The hierarchy is the problem in the child protection system. Frontline workers have the insight, the knowledge, the relationships, the understanding and when it is handed up the line to over worked management, to people who don't know what they are truly dealing with, this causes a lot of oversight and neglect*
- *The Child Protection system is over-burdened and under resourced leaving people in positions that make children, families and staff vulnerable. Providing more support to do a good job (which includes mentoring, lower cases loads and more time to discuss individual cases with a supervisor) would be beneficial but not necessarily in a punitive framework*
- *Where is the evidence that this will achieve the outcomes needed? How will this protect our children? More resources to reduce the caseloads for Child Safety officers, proper pay rates to reflect the responsibility they have in order to keep the most experienced staff on the front line rather than tying pay to 'going up the managerial ladder'. Also, more investment in the early years of life from conception and onwards. We know that having a health visitor for the first two years of life has good outcomes. Behavioural issues at kindy and pre-school are good indicators that there may be a problem at home or with the child with intervention (supportive and therapeutic and engaging of parents and families positively) to address these and prevent future problems would be beneficial in terms of child protection, education and the youth justice system. Need to utilise Indigenous*

led organisations. A hierarchy often leads people to avoid/not take responsibility - just wait for orders from above and then carry them out as stated: this work is so much more nuanced and requires good skills and judgement from people with the relevant training

- The solution needs to be centred on a collaborative approach from Education; Health; Police; Drug and Alcohol; Employment, Family Planning and Disabilities to look at early intervention approaches that aim at prevention

One respondent identified:

- There is already far too much hierarchy and rank structure in the Department as it is

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

A number of respondents indicated the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- Sorry, but the police force continues to struggle to maintain its own oversight and accountability and therefore it would seem that this model does not guarantee success
- If you consider that the police are responsible for addressing DFV within our communities, keeping women and children safe and holding perpetrators to account under the same hierarchy and rank structure - I would suggest it is failing dismally. Why would it be any better or more successful in protecting children?
- Given the recurrent oversight and accountability issues that occur in Queensland Police, including officers acting improperly I can't see that this offers any great improvement

### **Insufficient information**

Some respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- I am unaware of the structure of QPS and how this would provide more oversight and accountability
- This needs clarity, there could be benefits though it's not clear what this means

- Have no idea whether this is likely to improve oversight and accountability. What are the failings of the current structure?

### **Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- I agree with the need for oversight and accountability but I'm not sure that the QPS hierarchy and rank structure would ensure we are partnering with parents who need approachable and accessible support and early intervention to ensure they can parent safely
- Yes, there should be proper oversight and accountability, but that does not come by hierarchy and rank structure. If that was the case, there would be no need for Royal Commissions into any Police Forces, Defence Forces, Corrective Service, etc., due to poor or mismanagement, corruption, oversight, and accountability!
- There needs to be an independent body to ensure accountability
- Surely there are other structural models that promote 'proper oversight and accountability' that are not 'top down', enforcing behaviour, that might be more appropriate when working with vulnerable people
- Child protection is a multi-layered and complex system, completely different to the QPS and should not adopt similar structures, however, there should be systems in place to ensure oversight and accountability, possibly an accreditation process like the affiliated agencies have to undergo regularly?
- An overhaul of the hierarchy and structure of Child Safety is welcomed, but this should be done as a 'change process', not imposed on staff and not similar to the QPS

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

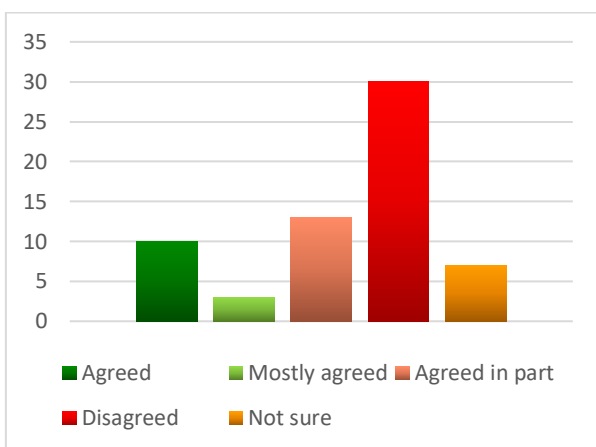
A small number of respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *Oversight and accountability are important at all levels of child safety, child protection and police work*
- *I agree. The current structure allows for too much of a difference in threshold levels between Team Leaders*
- *Child safety workers need some accountability, especially when evidence shows some children should never have been returned home and have then experienced horrendous crimes against them again*

## Employees of QATSI CPP Member organisations

Of the 63 employees of QATSI CPP Member organisations who answered this question:

- 10 (15.87%) agreed with the proposal
- 3 (4.76%) mostly agreed
- 13 (20.63%) agreed only in part
- 30 (47.62%) disagreed, and
- 7 (11.11%) indicated that they were not sure



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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Some respondents indicated that this would have a negative impact on children and families, and a negative impact on oversight and accountability:

- *Historically police have not been trained in understanding social issues that impact on families such as addiction, trauma, poverty.*

*Similarly, I am concerned about how they would respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families if they are not culturally competent*

- *How does this fit with identifying the risk for children to emotional and physical harm and abuse?*
- *I completely disagree, this leaves the door open for mismanagement and abuse of the system if the wrong person was to get into the job*

### ***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

Most respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads; support, training and retention of staff, supervision and mentoring; the need to look at other models that work; the need for cultural change; and the need for additional powers:

- *There is already a hierarchy system in Child Safety - appropriate staffing, supervision, professional development and funding of more staff is what is necessary for proper oversight and accountability. Don't blame others for a system not working if you don't fund the system to work properly*
- *The resolve isn't via more punitive systems. The system is overburdened and doesn't have appropriate supervision. Why enforce a punitive structure when there are Scandinavian models that 'work' and have great outcomes? This is very reactive*
- *This can be set up right without the extra costs of setting up 'a hierarchy and rank structure'. Money is wasted in the administration instead where it needs to be spent in resources and services. Engage with the appropriate services and discuss the best way to formulate the process so it can be done efficiently yet still have the appropriate levels of accountability*
- *While accountability and hierarchy are necessary components of large organisations, in of themselves they do not lead to child safe responses. The hierarchy would need to have a good understanding of child maltreatment, dynamics of family functioning, and the long-term impacts socially, psychologically and economically of a criminological response to child protection matters*

- *There is already a lot of red tape in Child Protection now. Adoption of hierarchy and rank structure would only mean more. More training and support to local level/regions is required*
- *Again, a structure change is not a culture change. What's more important is changing the culture and ways of working (practice and managerial)*
- *Child Safety are there to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable families. Child Safety should have the authority to remove children and place with kin if the situation is high risk and warrants it. Waiting for the court system is ineffective and results in children dying*

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

One respondent indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *There are so many issues with the culture of QPS. If any department needs a complete overhaul it is QPS. The culture of QPS is far right, racist, sexist and authoritarian. Children and families do not need this*

### **Insufficient information**

Some respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *Don't know what this looks like to agree*
- *Isn't the department structured in ranks? CSSO > CSO > Team Leader > Senior Practitioner? I don't think I understand the police structure to accurately answer this question*
- *It would be good if the proposed structure with the oversight responsibilities and responses published for the community and organisations to provide feedback. Suggestions of solutions from the community service sector should be taken into consideration rather than those not connected to the grass roots service delivery making decisions and implementing them without consultations - more information is needed*

### **Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *There does need to be more accountability and oversight in Child Safety, however moving toward a police structure is not the correct way. Having capable, measured and fair workers is key, regardless of how or what you label to model*
- *Police system isn't that good anyways, you need to change the system within, e.g. the people that work in the system need changing*

One person felt that both systems face issues and challenges:

- *Like our Child Protection system, our Police structure is fraught with issues and challenges. By using an already 'strong arm' system of response, it would be expected that our Child Protection system will see a significant increase of children who enter the care system, with little to no possibility of placing them with family or appropriate placement options. The assessment and response of Social Workers differ greatly to the forensic lens used by our Police Officers, again, resulting in a different response system. Finally, if our Police systems and process is not working, why would it be assumed that this would be an appropriate and safe response to family need and crises. This is directly supported by the continued Police brutality, aggressive and authoritative way that Police interact with community and specifically Indigenous peoples*

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

A small number of respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

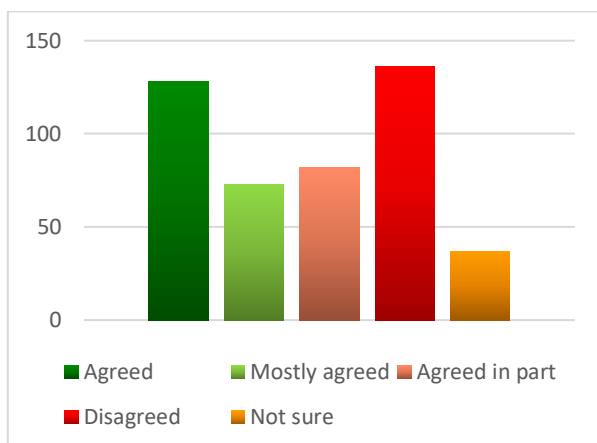
- *Yes, it will oversee those in the department with the attitude of 'good enough'*
- *If done in a constructive manner, a hierarchy or rank structure could promote proper oversight and accountability*
- *The Child Protection Force needs to include social workers mental health experts etc*

## Employees of non-Member non-government organisations

Of the 456 employees of non-government organisations that are not Members of either PeakCare or QATSICPP who answered this question:

- 128 (28.07%) agreed with the proposal
- 73 (16.01%) mostly agreed
- 82 (17.98%) agreed only in part
- 136 (29.82%) disagreed, and
- 37 (8.11%) indicated that they were not sure

Three respondents skipped this question.



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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Many respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *There is already accountability and oversight within the current child protection system*
- *Child Safety already has a hierarchy; Manager-Team leader-CSO-CSSO. They don't need named ranks. They are NOT like the QPS. That is definitely the wrong direction. Please heed the Carmody Report*
- *I think this misses the point - that working towards ensuring the safety of children requires collaborative/not punitive approach to practice*
- *Child protection is social justice work, not police work, except in some circumstances*

- *Child safety should use a therapeutic and supportive framework and should not model itself on the police force. Most child safety cases do not involve criminal behaviour. Child safety cases which involve possible criminal actions are referred to police for investigation*
- *Creating another police force will reinforce these beliefs and make lifelong enemies of the families you separate without providing effective evidence based prevention interventions*
- *Child Protection is completely different to the police service...it is about engaging and building relationships with families so that the best outcome can be achieved for a child*
- *How is handing over the reins to the 'police force' going to make any change? There's a hierarchy in Child Safety exactly the same as there would be in the new 'proposed' system, so how is that actually changing anything?*
- *This is a violent structural response, not a proactive response to combat issues regarding poverty and disadvantage*
- *This feels that we are stepping back to historical measures and this will create a culture of secrecy*
- *Absolutely not. This adds more power and control to the department, what we need is a community based, relationship focused approach where the community has trust and confidence in child protection services, not fear of punishment which this proposal will do*
- *We have some very experienced Child Safety Officers and having a 'police like force' response can be very traumatic for families/children. We have experienced some very inappropriate police response to trauma, drug use and domestic violence which has left 'victims' not heard or accusers playing victim. I think we need strength based, highly experienced individuals in these roles, not police officers*

### ***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

Some respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads, support and retention of staff, supervision and mentoring, consistency and early intervention:

- *There already is a hierarchy in Child Safety, it just needs to be better managed and funded appropriately*
- *How is changing 'accountability' going to stop children from getting harmed?*
- *While accountability and oversight are important, I don't think this will be achieved by bringing in a rank structure. This is more likely to reinforce the message of 'us against them' and that 'officers' are to be more loyal to their organisation than to the families they work with- more likely to cover up wrongdoing and put the blame back on the family to nullify responsibility of the worker. Oversight and accountability are a lot easier to achieve if workers are not overloaded with work and responsibility, which would likely require hiring a larger number of workers*
- *There needs to be more supervision and transparency around capability, training and specifically record keeping that can be audited in most cases, but specifically in extreme high-risk cases*
- *Having a ranking system, in my opinion, does not guarantee proper oversight and accountability. I think that ensuring that the right people with experience and abilities are in senior positions is more important. Too many decisions are being made by people who have neither the skills nor abilities to make them. A merit-based system with proper training and personal development will ensure better outcomes*
- *I do not see any benefit in changing to a hierarchy and rank structure similar to the QPS. I struggle to see how this is going to provide additional support to frontline Child Protection Officers and value add in terms of protecting vulnerable children... I can see this leading to more blatant misuse of tax payers' money with new uniforms, and changes to pay structures. Just hire more frontline Child Protection workers*
- *Whichever hierarchy structure is adopted, should be universal across all Child Safety teams/sectors, and NGOs funded by Child Safety. This will contribute to efficiency. A militant hierarchy will not be the only contributing factor to better 'oversight and accountability'. The issues that surround poor oversight is the requirement for Child Safety Team Leaders being responsible for the oversight of children anywhere from 80 - 120. This number is too high*

*for any one person to keep track of. Therefore, not all children are afforded the same level of oversight*

- *There needs to be MORE early intervention and prevention for vulnerable families BEFORE they enter into the child safety system*

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

A number of respondents indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *Police are highly corrupt and unaccountable already, so is the law and courts*
- *Don't agree with the police hierarchy, it allows for corruption and lack of accountability*
- *Firstly, the QPS is not transparent or accountable. Reports have arisen that 84 QLD police have been accused of DV in the past five years with few held accountable. Similarly, QPS has been criticized for not taking DV complaints seriously, and undermining concerns of people in DV situations. How will this model work appropriately with vulnerable families and young people? Additionally, there is the matter of the Aboriginal deaths in custody, of which no Queensland Police officer has been held accountable. Young people in child safety are over-represented in the youth justice system, First Nations young people are over-represented in the Child Safety system and the justice system. It would be irresponsible to put these young people under more scrutiny from a police style force. So I question how replicating a police force for child safety matters will promote accountability and transparency*
- *It clearly has not worked in the QPS and has many flaws and problems. Why adopt these existing flaws and problems and why would it work any better in this context? Have the cultural impacts been considered, in a highly compliance centred workforce this may adversely impact a compliance culture?*

### **Insufficient information**

Some respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *I don't know enough about the police structure to comment but I do know that what is currently happening isn't working so something has to change*
- *Should there be more information I would be able to make a decision. As in what levels would be which teams and how that would look*

**Need more oversight an accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *Oversight and accountability are important, but can be achieved without following a police structure*
- *We don't need another 'Queensland Police', but the system needs to be reviewed to see how it can be preventative and offer support to those families that need it*
- *Not sure how well this works within the police department, should be external audit to ensure proper oversight and accountability*
- *While I feel there should be some level of oversight that allows more transparency and accountability, I do not think you can necessarily take another system's model and have it work. I think it would be more appropriate to develop a model that is specific to the Child Protection system that can use elements that would be able to be adopted from the QPS system*

**Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

Some respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *This would make workers accountable for their actions or inaction*
- *As long as everyone involved in this hierarchy is culturally safe for our first Nations communities and people and be properly trained in terms of knowledge, skills, ability and best practice*
- *This will ensure that families do not slip between the cracks of being identified as a family in need of support and children in need of protection*

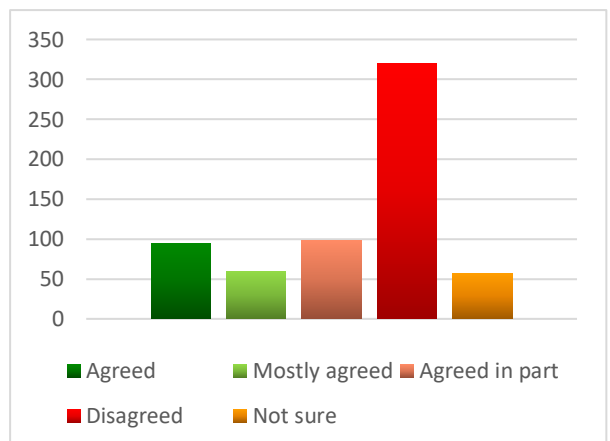
- *More accountability would be highly beneficial, as currently the Department of Child Safety has little accountability and this impacts highly on their service*
- *Yes, they need strong leadership*
- *As long as it doesn't become as political and, in some areas, corrupt like QPS*
- *Yes, and would be great to see experienced local support worker experts within this structure, either as part of the team or as a liaison process*
- *Assuming this will result in improved outcomes for young people and families, yes. This structure will need to be resistant to corruption seen in some areas of the QPS. Will members of this Child Protection Force receive additional and relevant training required to fully understand the complexities involved with responding to the needs of young people? Will they receive the additional support and reduced caseloads required to improve outcomes and responses to young people? Will they be educated on harm-minimisation strategies for parents and young people using illicit substances? Will they be empowered to truly support outcomes for young people? Or will this be an additional avenue to fight the unwinnable 'War on Drugs'?*

**Employees of Government agencies**

Of the 629 employees of Government agencies who answered this question:

- 95 (15.10%) agreed with the proposal
- 59 (9.38%) mostly agreed
- 98 (15.58%) agreed only in part
- 320 (50.87%) disagreed, and
- 57 (9.06%) indicated that they were not sure

Four respondents skipped this question.





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

***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Many respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *There is already a hierarchy structure within Child Safety and clear lines of accountability*
- *As with all government agencies, there already is a hierarchical structure in place that provides oversight and accountability. All staff are accountable for their practice to a line manager and beyond. There are a number of processes in place to reflect on and examine practice, from individual supervision to broader systems review processes. External oversight and accountability were provided by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian but this agency was devolved to put more emphasis on early intervention. The QFCC and OPG provide some of that oversight now. It is unclear how a hierarchy and rank structure similar to QPS would achieve 'proper' oversight and accountability, over and above the structures already in place. Again, child protection work and police work are not the same, so duplicating structures does not make sense*
- *We already have proper oversight and accountability.....laying the blame on an individual Child Safety Officer when a parent harms a child will help no one*
- *The person who proposed this plan should spend at least one month with front line child protection staff to fully understand the complexity of the work Child safety officers do*
- *There currently is an established hierarchy between Child Safety Officers, Senior Team Leaders and Managers, with each staff member having different statutory delegations. Accountably is vital but oversight shouldn't translate into a blame culture so staff become completely risk adverse due to potential personal consequences*
- *We have a hierarchy with managers, team leaders etc and above, we do not need ranks, our system is political enough without adding that, and as there is very little room for*

*advancement I don't believe a focus on this would make any positive changes*

- *We should be working to diffuse power and privilege, not build it*
- *Child Safety has different approaches to QPS. Each service has its expertise that it brings to the table and diversity is a better approach*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disadvantaged through Invasion without treaty 1788 to present - massacres 1780s to 1920s - mission and reserves early 1800s to present - stolen generation - exploited labour 1840s to 1970s - social exclusion 1880s to 1960s - institutionalised discrimination 1880s to present - undermining law, society, culture and beliefs systems - intergenerational trauma. Throughout Australian history Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not trust and have been scared by Police who to this day still treat/justice to my people in an inappropriate way*
- *We already have rank structures in place, I don't see how this would impact or create change for the children*
- *Many of our clients come from controlling social structures. Should the Department reflect that clients would disengage from us*
- *I think the issues that we are dealing with are: Families suffering from impacts of DFV; Families suffering from ICE use and ongoing substance abuse - usually because of underlying issues; Families suffering from mental health issues. (I don't think any of these issues would benefit from a police or criminal response)*

***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

A number of respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads; support, training and retention of staff; supervision and mentoring; layers of management; best practice models; specialist teams and early intervention:

- *Accountability is essential, but I think adequately staffing child protection services is the way to go, so that people are able to do their job properly. Accountability is unreasonable to demand of people if there aren't enough hours in the day to fulfill your job description. Hence, they don't stay. And don't call it a 'force'*

- *A huge amount of problems relate to hierarchical structure of government that disables and disempowers the voice of the front line as information is filtered and diluted as it goes up the chain, if it goes up. The key executive measures are finances (budget) and throughput statistics without genuine measure of outcomes and tokenistic measures of quality. The Queensland Police Service is better at responding due to better resourcing, not due to command and control hierarchies*
  - *One of the difficulties with the current system is the top heavy structure. There are too many levels of management through which decisions and information has to be passed before it is acted on and there are not nearly enough frontline staff to deal with the ever expanding child protection system. This has been a constant complaint for many years and although numbers of frontline staff have been increased in some areas so too has the amount of red-tape and paperwork thereby voiding the potential for the new staff to make a difference. Having a hierarchy and rank structure does not instil confidence that the basic issue of not enough experienced and qualified frontline staff is being recognised yet again*
  - *There is already a hierarchy structure in Child Safety; it is a totally different situation to the police force. There does however need to be new roles additional to Team Leaders to ensure vulnerable children are visited on time, and the children are actually seen by Child Safety Officers. There needs to be more staff for these high risk IPA cases*
  - *This infers there is not proper oversight and accountability already. Further oversight and accountability is not the answer here. What is needed is purely more staff at the ground level to reduce caseloads so they are available to work with and respond to children and young people in need of care*
  - *QPS have better work conditions and support for their employees. They have better penalty rates. At what point has the QLD government EVER been prepared to actually protect and support child protection workers with reasonable award rates and penalties? Neither Liberals or Labour have*
  - *You need to investigate and look at best practice models elsewhere (overseas) before you go in with knee jerk solutions*
  - *The focus of change needs to be on legislation, policy, process, and early intervention*
  - *This seems unnecessary. Why not just utilise existing structures? We already have CPIU, we already have a Child Safety After Hours Service. Why not just expand those services to meet the need?*
  - *There are presently team leaders, senior practitioners and managers who fulfil these roles, however specialist teams i.e. specialist domestic violence practitioners and cultural advisors embedded in service centres and intake would be highly beneficial*
  - *No - focus should be on children - not policing, focus (and funding) should be on early intervention and prevention*
- Queensland Police Service has its own issues**
- A number of respondents indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:
- *Have you seen how many police are stood down from the 'rank' structure? The public service code of conduct has the same accountability provisions for all public servants*
  - *Most emphatically strongly disagree. I have not seen any evidence which says even that the hierarchical structure of the QPS ENSURES 'proper oversight' OR, let alone AND, 'accountability'*
  - *QPS has the recommended hierarchy however the general consensus currently regarding policing systems would not suggest high levels of internal accountability and transparency in their decision making*
- Insufficient information**
- Some respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:
- *I don't have enough information around how this works in QPS to understand why it might be of benefit in child protection. It sounds costly,*

*expensive, confusing and it would take a lot of time to align*

- *It is difficult as an outsider to the QPS to know how their hierarchy and rank structure actually works and how different it is to the existing structure within Child Safety*

### ***Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure***

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *Oversight and accountability is vital, and appears to be lacking in the current structure. Unsure if a Police hierarchy is the correct approach*
- *I believe the child protection system requires an independent body to ensure accountability. The current Community Visitor practice does not go far enough in ensuring Child Safety as a department is held accountable. It appears that the current system is unable to implement child safety developed resources across their practice continuum. Whether the hierarchy and rank structure would address the current issues within child safety is very unclear*
- *Better accountability is definitely needed, however a 'police' structure may not be the answer given corruption, brutality and poor ethics are often rife in the police forces. Independent oversight is needed*
- *It might be beneficial to review the hierarchal structure, but this statement makes it sound like we don't already have one. We already have a working system of checks and balances and to be honest I'm not convinced that the hierarchy and rank structure used by the QPS has ensured proper oversight and accountability in their department*
- *Hierarchy is not needed. Accountability is essential and should be required from all agencies. Child Protection is everyone's business. Look at the model used in the UK it is clear. Working Together for example brought forward policies to ensure that every agency – Police, Health, Education, Child Safety - are equally accountable when they encounter harm to a child. They have to follow procedures which are conducive to ensuring the child is safe.*

*Investigations into child abuse are joint between the police and child safety. If the police attend a property out of hours and a child/ren requires protection they liaise with Child Safety out of hours team placing child with a significant other/kin/neighbour/friend checks can be done systems are up to date. Child Safety picks up the next day in normal office hours*

- *As applicable to the Queensland Police Service (QPS), reasons for adopting a 'flatter' organisational structure were taken into account during the 'Fitzgerald' Inquiry, and later outlined in the 'Fitzgerald' report. Recommendations were to 'flatten' rank structures, clarify lines of communication, specify responsibility and devolve authority and so on. Although ideas about structure may be derived from the QPS, organisational structures across the spectrum should be considered and especially models proven to be effective in human and social service delivery*

Three respondents indicated there is already a hierarchy and rank structure which does not work very well:

- *Rearranging structures within an (at least partially) broken system is pointless. Hierarchy and rank by no means ensures proper oversight and accountability. I would approach the problem as a hacker would. I think upon closer inspection there seem to be much more glaring opportunities to make real change rather than hierarchy and rank*
- *No. It's a horrible and old system. I think it should be a board of directors. It already has a hierarchical system. Which I don't think works that great. Clearly doesn't if your wanting to change it*
- *No that is the problem with the department as it is; the elitists in the department do not foster a collaborative professional working relationship; the hierarchy does not work for the police and would not work for child safety*

### ***Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure***

A number of respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *Anything is better than what we have right now*

- *There needs to be more accountability and response to poor performance in child protection, as there is in QPS*
- *I have worked in QPS for eight years and the structure does work. Chain of command does assist. Further questions to assist:*
  - *Delegation of approvals: what can be delegated as only Manager to then allow decisions by Team Leaders*
  - *Career development: so many experienced Child Safety Officers leave because the lower structure is so poor. You have all CSO's starting as PO2's which really does not pay adequately against the roles and responsibilities that a CSO does (a JEMS assessment would easily show this), they have to prove they can do complex work after waiting two years before being elevated to a PO3. When they hit the top of that, the next step is Team Leader which many don't want to do or there are very few positions. The Government installed Senior CSO's at PO4 but they are rare (one to each office) and apparently do all the 'complex' IPA (which many IPA's are not considered 'complex') and their colleagues who do just as complex work are paid less as a result*
  - *The CSO structure needs to change. If a CSO can do the role to the standard after 12 months they should be able to apply to be a PO3 and allow them to take on more complex cases. They should then allow experienced PO3's who reach the top of the PO3 to move up to PO4 in a similar process. PO4's are specialist workers who also conduct other responsibilities within the service centre. This would then promote retention and keep on experienced staff*
  - *What needs to occur is a consistent approval structure as different Child Safety Service Centres have different processes and it changes based on changes to management. For example, one CSSC requires certain approvals to go through the Senior Practitioner to the Manager. I can see the positive that it frees up the Manager's time but it really becomes an issue of double handling and ultimately delays the approval process*
  - *The Senior Practitioner role to go and instead be replaced by another delegated role under the Manager. Or alternatively, provide each CSSC with two Managers*
- *It can only work if, like the police force, there is a Criminal Justice Commission which can make*

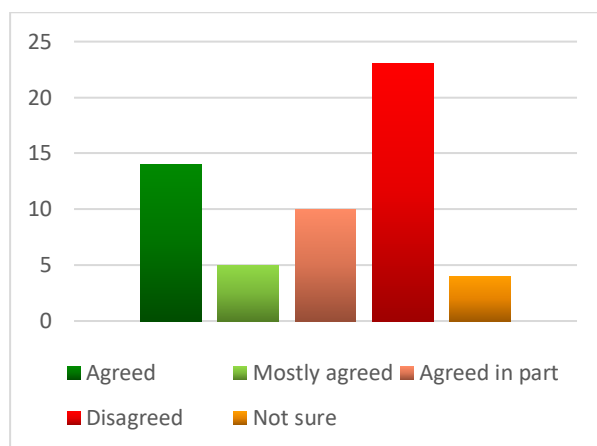
*decisions about the conduct of the Child Protection Force*

- *Can we implement this for DV as well so it is not minimised at the first point of contact?*
- *Yes I do, this way all parties including parents and children, regardless of the orders or level of response to harm, will have legal representation at the beginning of the process. I believe there will be better oversight and accountability through a judiciary structure especially around practice*
- *With more checks and protection for whistleblowers*

### **Employees of peak bodies, industry and representative groups**

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

- 14 (25%) agreed with this proposal
- 5 (8.93%) mostly agreed
- 10 (17.86%) agreed only in part
- 23 (41.07%) disagreed, and
- 4 (7.14%) indicated that they were not sure



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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Some respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *The Department already has a hierarchy and structure including more senior and junior positions - this just sounds like misguided bravado*
- *Backward step to the progress made after Carmody. Failed enforcement model from yesteryear*
- *Given that this so called force indicates the use of force and I don't agree with that, then I could not agree to a hierarchy of structure that proposes force to undertake a task*
- *Hierarchy means 'power and control' - reflected in current highly stressful, under pressure environment that staff work and then this attitude is reflected back to parents - suspicion, no trust*

### **Oversight and accountability are not the main issues**

Some respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads; support and retention of staff; supervision and mentoring; independence of decision making, and collaboration with others:

- *There is already a hierarchy and rank structure in Child Safety, the challenge is work force retention and people being able to subvert the recruitment process to positions of authority. A Senior Team Leader in Child Safety can get to that position in a very short time by taking rural and remote postings or even just through natural attrition, you can see team leaders as young as 23 with no work or life experience to call on. A Senior Team Leader is on par with a Senior Sergeant in terms of pay and responsibility, to become a Senior Sergeant there is a clear training and development pathway, with multiple courses and qualifications to be achieved, where as to become a child safety team leader, there is usually just the one application process to go through*
- *Oversight and accountability are already very strong in the child protection system and more specifically the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. Specialist skills are required to work within this very complex area of human service delivery and supervisors that provide oversight and accountability must understand these complexities to be effective*

- *Child Safety has a hierarchy within its department, anyone who knows anything about Child Safety or who had even read the coronial inquiry would know this as Child Safety Officers, Senior Team Leaders (supervisors of CSOs) and Managers (who supervise STLs and have oversight over their respective Child Safety Service Centres) all participated. If you're looking to change the structure of the hierarchy look at implementing additional leadership supports as team leaders within the department struggle to balance supervision, development support for staff and the required KPIs- as do CSOs*
- *Accountability yes, a hierarchy that makes all the decisions no, there needs to be a panel or an independent body available to make decisions that cannot be agreed upon, currently Child Safety has no proper complaints system that is independent of the department*
- *Child Safety currently works in a power over relationship with the NGO partners, it needs to be a collaborative approach*
- *I do believe there needs to be a stronger message but it will require the cooperation of Magistrates to acknowledge the risks in supporting any orders taken. I think a more collaborative approach with Police and Child Safety or maybe acknowledging the overload on a daily basis of the current staff and system which perhaps leads to gate keeping on the basis of priority and not seeing the inherent risks*

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

One respondent indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *The police force is broken and abusive, not something we should look up to*

### **Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *Hierarchy and rank structure does not necessarily equate to accountability as has been witnessed in other government departments*

- *I agree with oversight and accountability, not convinced that hierarchy and rank are strategies that have anything to do with achieving accountability for child's safety*
- *I believe that there does need to be more oversight to hold the department accountable but I think there are better ways to do this than police presence*

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

A number of respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements and practice:

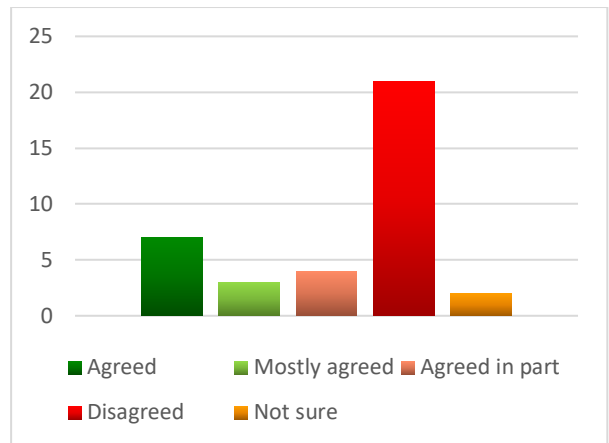
- *At present everyone is held accountable except for Child Safety staff*
- *Anything has got to be better than what is happening now. We're talking about risk of harm of children here. There should be no mucking around because the psychological and physical damage to a child can be lifelong, eventually leading to DV, adult crime and youth justice across all levels of society. Childhood trauma must be prevented at all costs*
- *I appreciate and agree on more accountability, however this structure isn't always respected. The persons filling these roles would need to be considered carefully*

## **Academics**

Of the 37 academics who answered this question:

- 7 (18.92%) agreed with this proposal
- 3 (8.11%) mostly agreed
- 4 (10.81%) agreed only in part
- 21 (56.76%) disagreed, and
- 2 (5.41%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

### **There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already**

Most respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *There is already a hierarchy and rank structure. The department currently has more oversight bodies than police - in addition to CCC and ombudsman it has the QFCC. I hope and expect child safety is more accountable than police service, which seems to take very little action in relation to wrongdoing or poor practice. The police service has a woeful record of accountability (e.g. police officer who gave address details of ex-wife to her violent partner). I think the current process for oversight and accountability for child safety is adequate - no oversight body is going to stop awful things from occurring*
- *This suggests the current workforce who are highly skilled and educated to understand the intersections between domestic and family violence, criminality, mental health issues, intergenerational trauma and substance misuse, don't already function in a hierarchy and that they don't have proper oversight. This model is underpinned by nothing other than a short sighted, ill-informed opinion and propaganda to win votes*
- *This assumes there is no proper oversight and accountability which is again disrespectful and ill informed, the current DCSYW has multiple*

accountability structures in place. Unlike Police the DCSYW undergoes rigorous internal reviews following critical incidents and deaths and fronts the media and parliament about these, there is a level of transparency that would never occur within police

- *What evidence is there to indicate that a police force structure would lead to 'proper' or 'better' oversight or accountability? This is marketing gone mad*
- *No. We already have a police force. Child protection is about saving families. The police are already under scrutiny for being heavy-handed. Complex social issues cannot be addressed by authoritarian lawmaking. Families require subtle gentle long-term support*

### **Oversight and accountability are not the main issues**

One respondent indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to congruence between management and frontline staff:

- *Child protection is in its current state BECAUSE of hierarchy. When my professional opinion as a CSO and social worker might be to develop a therapeutic relationship with a family but the team leader (who has never met the family) is working defensively to avoid a child death, our practice is not congruent with our social work values or framework for practice and the CSO will be directed to act in line with the Team Leader's perspective. My Social Work knowledge, values and ethics mean nothing in this hierarchy*

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

Two respondents indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *the QPS structure is based on likeability and corruption not dissimilar to CSS changing the name does nothing to combat the bullying and corruption within both systems*
- *No organisation should look to the QPS for ideas of what a good structure is. The QPS is a disgusting embarrassment to humankind and should be abolished*

### **Need more oversight an accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *What needs to be created, is an independent body that all social services can take their lead from. They can deal with internal and external grievances from employers and employees working in the child protection industry*
- *Policing the police doesn't work clearly. Independent accountability is required*

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

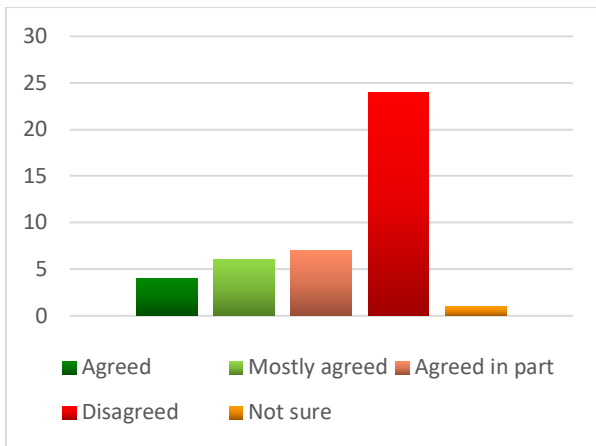
A number of respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *Good. Separation of concerns: Let Child Safety be concerned with safety of children and let Communities be concerned with care of other stakeholders. For too long the safety of the child has been drowned out by the myriad of support workers assisting the parent. Chloe Valentine, Mason Jet Lee. The lists go on and on*
- *Try anything different, what you have now is a disaster. I realise a whole lot more funding is required to do this. Pay kinship carers*
- *What we have is a failure for children in Queensland and a disgrace*

### **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:

- 4 (9.52%) agreed with the proposal
- 6 (14.29%) mostly agreed
- 7 (16.67%) agreed only in part
- 24 (57.14%) disagreed, and
- 1 (2.38%) indicated that they were not sure



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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Some respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *Child Safety has a hierarchy and 'rank' structure already - I can't see how this would add any value to proper oversight and accountability*
- *Child Protection has enough problem trying to work with parents now without this proposal*
- *This needs to be a community driven process with no Law enforcement. This will make the relationship with community and families worse*
- *Uniforms, medals, silver braid and emblems of rank really wouldn't work when conducting home visits to support vulnerable and dysfunctional families - the core of what child protection is all about*
- *Child Safety has greater oversight and accountability than most all other government departments. No one ever asks why police were unable to prevent a murder*
- *Sounds like nonsense - focus on the broad and irrefutable issues stemming from violence - of which drug use and mental health are included. Who cares about a rank and structure of child protection force - for goodness sake*

### ***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

A number of respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing

the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads; support, training and retention of staff; supervision and mentoring; and independence of decision making:

- *There is already a structure in place, it just needs more supervision and support. Changing the structure won't necessarily bring about improvements, it's about supporting and holding the existing structure to account*
- *I don't really know what the QPS structure is but no, I don't agree that this is the solution to myriad of issues Child Safety faces. Structure is often seen as a quick fix but tends to just be disruptive. Improvement comes from people having adequate training, professional supervision and resourcing*
- *The 'new' hierarchy system being suggested here, already exists within current Child Protection structure and model. In my view, matters of concern would have greater 'real outcomes' if they were handled solely (as 'lead') by the Queensland Police Department (Child Protection Units) completely independent of the Department of Child Safety*

Two respondents indicated that the abuse of power is rife in hierarchical structures.

### ***Insufficient information***

One respondent questioned the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *Does this provide proper oversight??*

### ***Need more oversight an accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure***

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *I agree wholeheartedly that a new structure needs to be considered for Child Safety - a structure that involves more oversight for frontline staff, more supervision and leadership qualities for management, but having a rank structure will do nothing to address the inadequacies of the current system. It will likely only add to the issue (which sometimes involves middle management who feel they are 'untouchable' and can make decisions that are*



*not based in practice but are personal and highly inappropriate*

- *Purely independent oversight required*

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

A number of respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the need to improve decision making and effectiveness:

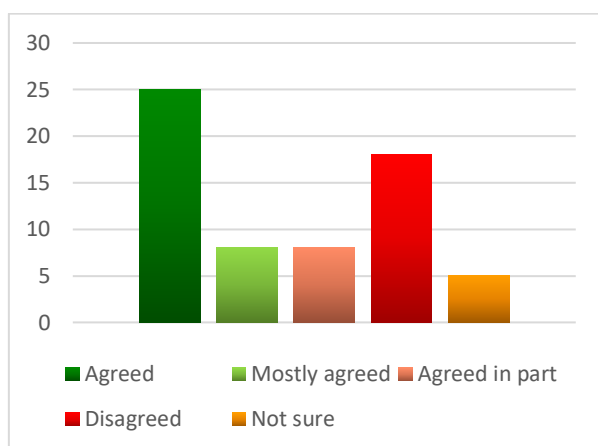
- *No more ignoring poor decisions*
- *If will protect more children*
- *If the hierarchy is effective, trauma informed, creative and focused and supports staff appropriately to do the complex job*

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

Of the 64 parents (or family members) with a lived experience of the child protection system who answered this question:

- 25 (39.06%) agreed with the proposal
- 8 (12.50%) mostly agreed
- 8 (12.50%) agreed only in part
- 18 (28.13%) disagreed, and
- 5 (7.81%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Some respondents indicated this was inconsistent with the role and work of the Department or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *I think keeping children safe should be done through a warm, friendly, community atmosphere type environment. Ranking sounds cold*
- *I need help not a police officer*
- *The police force seems to have nothing in the way of social work/sensitivity/ training/ understanding of the needs of mentally ill and vulnerable people etc. Child Safety SHOULD have people better informed in a wholistic socially minded manner instead of just a punitive force as the police tend to be*

### **Oversight and accountability are not the main issues**

Most respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads; support, training and retention of staff; supervision and mentoring, levels of bureaucracy; resourcing and collaboration with others:

- *I think it is important to have most staff on the ground instead of too many chiefs and not enough Indians. Don't let the good work being done daily be buried under too much bureaucracy*
- *Needs humanity in protecting children. For the children's sake... Force equals resistance by parents and covering up. No building transparency and ability to identify and put in early support*
- *I am not convinced that a rank and file approach that is similar to the Police Service will improve outcomes for children in Queensland. Police Services seem to be increasingly militarised and I don't think that this should be the approach for Child Protection. Certainly, training relevant to the role and seniority of staff is important*
- *Clearly TOP down doesn't work. How about you look at how our Indigenous friends manage decision making on big issues. Accountability and overseeing needs to be a joint roll shared to ensure risk of cover ups and other associated behaviours are identified and dealt with in the manner in which all child protection cases need to be dealt with ... IMMEDIATELY*

- *There needs to be more resources for these children. Unfortunately the police system has shown corruption, how will this differ?*

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

Two respondents indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *However...if a FORCE, QPS, who do NOT HANDLE COMPLAINTS THEMSELVES on QPS ISSUES...always INTERNAL...with " expected outcomes-exoneration ...there could be just the same old risk-shift issue...prejudice also as QPS ARE a FORCE...*
- *Adopting the structure of a more punitive organisation can only result in poorer outcomes*

### **Insufficient information**

Some respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *Depends who is running it. DO they understand children and their needs?*

### **Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While one respondent agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *QPS does not have accountability either. Both systems should have rigorous INDEPENDENT oversight and accountability*

Two respondents sought broader systemic reform of the department:

- *A lot of the issues are based on the views and biases of the workers towards parents and the protections for the workers under the Child Protection Act. Some parents, like myself, have been demonised and treated like the worst criminals on earth. After 11 years and with everything that I have achieved, I am still supervised with my 16 year old children amongst many other things. For some reason some parents are treated this way and others are*

*abusing their children and their children aren't removed. There are real systemic problems with how cases are managed and there is really no accountability for the staff. If anything they just get a slap on the wrist. Bring parents, carers and community leaders to the table and redo the entire structure of the Department from the ground up*

- *That would be no different to what is now constructed. It doesn't work. Look at the turnover employment of that department. No one lasts for long, unless they are at the top and a psychopath*

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

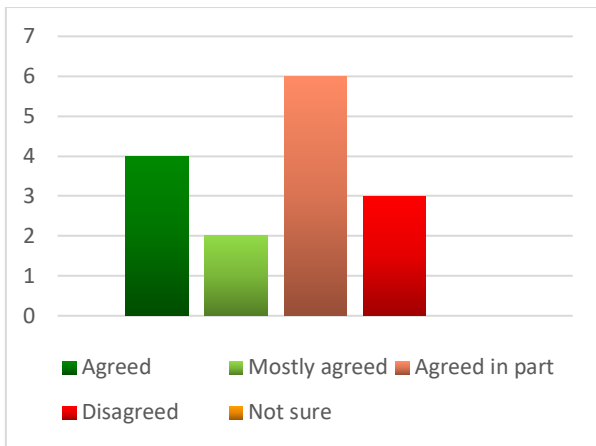
Some respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *Yes I do. The department are left to run rampant with no accountability*
- *Yes I am a victim of the system, I am in pain every day without my son, these officers who make false statements to the courts, of course they should be ranked. and accountability, yes of course*
- *Uncertain what the Queensland Police Force have in terms of structure but again, the system structure of the Child Safety Department needs improvement*
- *There needs to be accountability in this too, to avoid abuse of power or inappropriate decision making to act or not*

### **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:

- 4 (26.67%) agreed with this proposal
- 2 (13.33%) mostly agreed
- 6 (40%) agreed only in part, and
- 3 (20%) disagreed



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

***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Two respondents indicated that there are grey areas as to where responsibilities would be held and the proposal would have a negative impact on children and families:

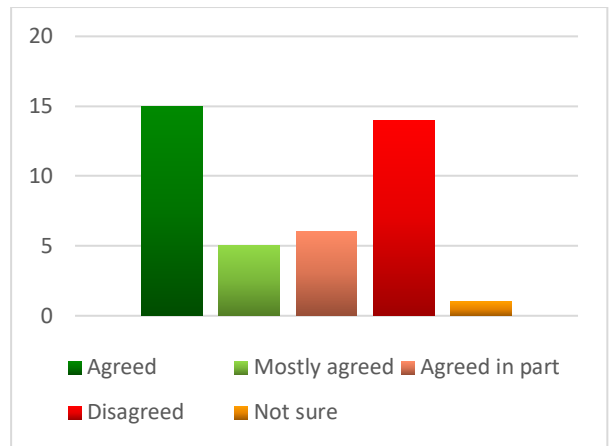
- *There is a lot of grey areas as to where responsibilities lay and how this would create accountability*
- *Children and young people deserve to have a family mode around them*

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

Of the 41 older people (over 25 years) with a lived experience of the child protection system who answered this question:

- 15 (36.59%) agreed with this proposal
- 5 (12.20%) mostly agreed
- 6 (14.63%) agreed only in part
- 14 (34.15%) disagreed, and
- 1 (2.44%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

One respondent indicated that a hierarchy and rank structure would be inappropriate to the role and work of the Department and would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *Police are not university trained and therefore do not have the knowledge, understanding and skills to effectively manage families in crisis*

***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

A number of respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to level of staffing and caseloads, support and retention of staff, supervision and mentoring, whole of community response; and a collaborative and caring environment:

- *Accountability comes from a framework within an organisation providing good management and training practice. It doesn't need a hierarchy of rank and military style*
- *There must be a lot more supervision of the workforce and accountability from the top down*
- *I think this may help, however, human error, balancing workloads and having capacity to remove children will still be an issue. I think having more staff and less workload would improve the situation instead*
- *Funds should not be used to recreate public service structures but used to build whole of community support to protecting children*

- *Hierarchy and rank. Blame culture. Create a human collaborative and caring environment in the Department to provide proper care... not 'proper oversight and accountability'. Blame culture. Create a human environment to help people grow and heal. All your terms and talk are about tightening control, but you will not be able to serve your families this way. People heal and thrive through trust and co-operation not coercing. Rank, Hierarchy, all terms covering your lack of understanding and compassion but your desire for power. I totally disagree. You will solve nothing this way. Your families will continue to flounder. Your children continue to be distressed and as you tear families apart you will find it harder to put them together again. Read the Carmody Inquiry and apply the recommendations! Stop this game of power when evidence is clear that it is not working!*
- *I think unless you've got the right people at the top, it doesn't matter how you structure it*

**Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

One respondent indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *The police are in dire need of a shift towards community policing rather than militaristic 'people control'. So they are an extremely poor model*

**Insufficient information**

One respondent indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *I am not sure how the hierarchy works*

**Need more oversight an accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While some respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *There should be a clearly defined hierarchy, but not a rank structure like the police. There*

*already exists a public service administration position structure, use that*

- *No. It will still be top heavy and accountability non-existent*
- *Police over-sighting of police doesn't work so why would you copy that dysfunctional model? There needs to be a well resourced external group with stakeholders that represent the client demographics e.g. Indigenous, single parent, addressing poverty representatives, former children in care etc*

**Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

One respondent agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

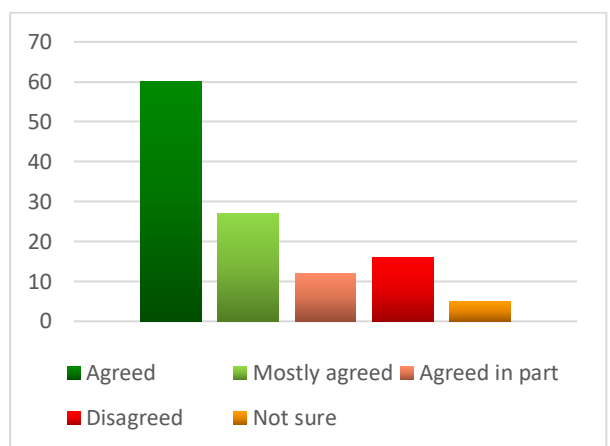
- *Not unless they become a division of the police*

**Foster Carers**

Of the 120 Foster Carers who answered this question:

- 60 (50%) agreed with this proposal
- 27 (22.50%) mostly agreed
- 12 (10%) agreed only in part
- 16 (13.33%) disagreed, and
- 5 (4.17%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Some respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary or it was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *We already have this in place with managers, team leaders, Child Safety Officers, etc*
- *It's hard enough to get anyone in the dept to listen to concerns without adding a formal ranking system. The ranking system is already there in the form of CSSO, CSO, team leader, manager and practice manager*
- *Very different issues- although I think that police should have the authority to remove children they deem at risk, I don't think this model would work for all parties - especially parents who have had bad experiences with police / also not good for First Nations people who have had such a negative experience with law and order*
- *Child Services should be TEAM orientated not rank and file. We are dealing with children and families, not recruits*

### ***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

A number of respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to skills of staff; orientation to the work; shared decision making; and cultural change:

- *Managing psycho-social issues does not need a rigid hierarchy. It needs more people skilled in managing complex family dynamics*
- *There is already a system through the delegations in the Child Protection Act. What we need is more time for family centred decision making and less focus on throughput and deliverables*
- *Foster carers should be given equal say, along with schools and medical teams, working together as a team to keep the child safe. Giving more power to agencies and Child Safety means more of a dictatorship. The law is already there to protect children, it just needs trained staff and may be a larger component to the police to take on complaints or reports. Also ween out the lazy and under performing workers*

- *I'm not entirely sure how this is going to help. I think heads need to roll – things come from the top and the culture seriously needs to change. Perhaps even some of the legislation*
- *There is already a hierarchy in place and delegated responsibilities. It is not working*

### ***Queensland Police Service has its own issues***

One respondent indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *The cultural issues embedded throughout the Police Force including its structure are entirely inappropriate when you are dealing with vulnerable families and children. This is an entirely inappropriate proposal*

### ***Insufficient information***

A number of respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *More details are required, however given recent events the must be more accountability*
- *Obviously there need to be a structure and rank, how that looks I don't have an opinion as yet*

### ***Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure***

Some respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *Yes I do because things are not done correctly and not overseen. Things get shoved away when they need to be addressed*
- *There most certainly needs something drastic done to ensure proper oversight and accountability. The system is rife with dishonesty and self-preservation*
- *It would be wonderful if persons are held accountable for their actions and not hide behind the title of their employee*
- *Accountability for CSO is paramount. Using the words it is in the child's best interest is a throw-away line to ensure the CSO is the only decision maker. Transparency on all decisions would be*

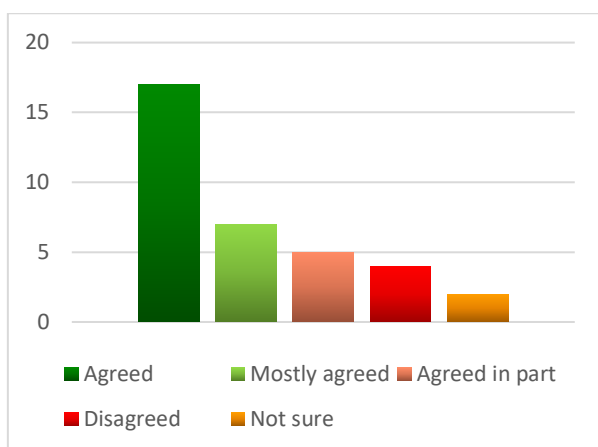
*ideal and therefore providing a logical system rather than a system which is the path of least resistance*

- *It sounds great, will it actually help the children at risk?*

## Kinship Carers

Of the 35 Kinship Carers who answered this question:

- 17 (48.57%) agreed with the proposal
- 7 (20%) mostly agreed
- 5 (14.29%) agreed only in part
- 4 (11.43%) disagreed, and
- 2 (5.71%) indicated that they were not sure



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

### ***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

One respondent indicated was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department:

- *I cannot see how this would work given the current employment agreements within each of the departments and hierarchy does not necessarily equate to good work with families - if it did every state in Australia would have 'the force'*

### ***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

One respondent indicated the need for more frontline staff:

- *We don't need more overpaid people that aren't in the field doing the actual work. We need more case workers, not more bureaucrats*

### ***Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure***

While one respondent agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *Would rather they were monitored by external parties that are their watchdog*

### ***Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure***

One respondent agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability emphasising the need for external accountability:

- *It will be an absolute requirement that accountability and oversight not be investigated by the police or justice department but by Crime and Misconduct Tribunal*

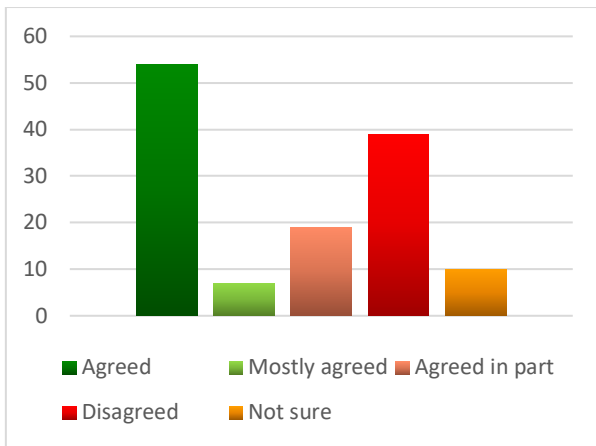
Two respondents raised issues with the current system:

- *When have questions to the Department there is very long time that we do not hear from the CSO*
- *I think parents need to understand the severity of the harm. And involved only for HARM not risk of harm*

## 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:

- 54 (41.86%) agreed with the proposal
- 7 (5.43%) mostly agreed
- 19 (14.73%) agreed only in part
- 39 (30.23%) disagreed, and
- 10 (7.75%) indicated that they were not sure



46 of respondent within this stakeholder group provided comments.

***There is a hierarchy and rank structure in place already***

Many respondents indicated that there was already a structure in place within the Department and therefore this was unnecessary, it was inappropriate to the role and work of the Department, or would have a negative impact on children and families:

- *Child Safety has oversight and accountability through many mechanisms*
- *They are social workers, not the police. A well-identified structure already exists*
- *I don't see any evidence that this either improves delivery of a professional service or accountability. Social work is a profession not a police or military style culture*
- *The needs of child care and protection are not the same as the police. We don't need a punitive force, we need councillors and health care workers to determine the best solution for the children and enact that solution in a way that considers the long term health and well-being of the children involved*
- *The people who are trapped in the cycle of poverty, violence, drug and alcohol use or who have disabilities do not need further institutional barriers put in place. They need people who are able to understand where they are stuck and what is the most appropriate cause of action, support etc*
- *Too harsh - it is probably easier to look at weaknesses because of these tragic events - but I think people have lost sight of some of the good work that occurs*

***Oversight and accountability are not the main issues***

Some respondents indicated that oversight and accountability were not the main issues facing the Department, citing issues related to decision making authority; level of staffing and caseloads; other services to meet the needs of children and families; and funding:

- *One of the major issues is that the CSO who has the intimate knowledge of the child and family has little to no decision making authority in relation to the cases they look after, Team Leaders and managers making arbitrary decisions then changing them mid-implementation is a major cause of client failure to address child safety concerns as well as high staff turnover*
- *The department already has a hierarchical structure with oversight. If genuine change is wanted by the government, more support needs to be provided to increase the number of CSOs and reduce caseloads, workloads also need to be reduced in other meaningful ways, including administration officers for each team to complete tasks such as processing invoices and Child Related Costs (CRCs). There needs to be transport officers to assist if a placement breaks down, or to transport children to and from contact. There needs to be contact centres that provide a safe place for children to have meaningful contact with their parents, and there needs to be more CSSOs to observe and monitor these contacts. These are some of the changes that would reduce the number of additional tasks on CSOs allowing them to have more home visits, gather information, complete court work. CSOs should also not be mandated to attend every Court mention by magistrates when they can give instruction and advice by phone to DCPL and OCFOS, or could appear by telelink if required*
- *Staff and safe houses for children are lacking therefore children will remain in danger and vulnerable*
- *Just protect children. Open more therapeutic homes and give agencies money to create these rapid response programs. IFYS foster care has some!*
- *Just fund them properly in the first place. Hierarchy won't ensure better funding*

### **Queensland Police Service has its own issues**

A number of respondents indicated that the Queensland Police Service has its own issues with oversight and accountability and is therefore not a suitable model to draw upon:

- *Where is the current 'proper oversight and accountability' in the Queensland Police Service?? Modelling a new system on one that is broken is not only stupid, but very dangerous*
- *I'm not sure the QPS has it right either - not a whole lot of trust in that system. Bias, bullying, ego and not necessarily transparent*

### **Insufficient information**

A number of respondents indicated they did not have enough information about the hierarchy and rank structure of the Queensland Police Service and/or could not understand the rationale behind the suggested change:

- *What would be the responsibilities?*
- *I would like to see how this model will work and what it looks like... there needs to be consultation from the grass roots up*
- *Depends on the structure. I am sure there is a requirement for officers to think on their feet. A very hierarchical structure might in fact make the situation work and reduce immediate and flexible responses*

### **Need more oversight and accountability but not the Queensland Police Service structure**

While two respondents agreed with the need for better oversight and accountability, they did not see a hierarchy and rank structure like the Queensland Police Service as an appropriate response:

- *Oversight and accountability should be external*
- *The structure of Child Safety needs to be overhauled. Senior positions need to be advertised and appointed on the basis of merit, not jobs for colleagues. Acting positions at a senior level should only exist for 6 months and then should be filled on a merit based system. Using a structure similar to police is difficult because Child Safety work in a balance of probability framework, not beyond reasonable doubt*

Two respondents identified issues with both child protection and police systems:

- *The police service hierarchy is just as fraught with systemic abuses and problems as the child protection system. This is swapping one problem for a new one and vulnerable families and children will suffer further systemic trauma*
- *This exists already and is part of the problem when 'issues of personality' infringe on professional judgement and leadership. A key issue is that CSOs can become STLs within a short time frame and yet have zero people leadership skills. When career advancement ambitions are so high, issues familiar with Police Services arise - such as protecting each other around mistakes, focusing on performance and KPIs as priority, deflecting blame, and taking short-cuts that lead to poorer outcomes for families*

### **Adopt a different hierarchy and rank structure**

Some respondents agreed with adopting a different hierarchy and rank structure to enhance oversight and accountability due to the importance of accountability and dissatisfaction with current departmental arrangements:

- *Accountability is the key and this is something the department has lacked ever since my involvement with them commenced 22 years ago*
- *Accountability and strong work ethics accompanied with professionalism is what the department desperately needs. Qld is failing to provide 'child services' to their vulnerable clients, hopefully with alignment of other departments it might improve*
- *Child Protection Force Officers should receive training equal to that of hospital nurses with set rosters, and should have 15 minutes at the beginning of their 8 hour shift, and 15 minutes at the end of their 8 hour shift, to conduct 'handover' to the next shift of Child Protection Force Officers commencing their shift. This would mean, in an 8 hour day, a Child Protection Force Officer would start with 15 mins handover, work for a 7hr shift plus a half hour meal break, then have another 15 mins to handover to the next shift. These human beings will perform best if their human needs are catered for first. These people cannot look after our vulnerable children if they do not look after themselves properly first*
- *As long as it is resourced*





