



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

Survey Findings

*On the proposal to introduce a requirement for regional
offices to undertake two-year accreditation programs*

2 November 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 twelfth in the series of detailed reports that addresses the proposal to introduce a requirement for regional officers to undertake two-year accreditation programs.



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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 (QATSCIPP) conducted a survey to gauge stakeholders' views about the plans. The survey was released on 19 June and closed on 10 July 2020.

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](#)
- [On the proposal for the Child Protection Force to adopt a hierarchy and rank structure similar to the Police](#)
- [On the proposal for Child Protection Force officers to be on-hand 24-hours a day under new shift arrangements](#)
- [On the proposal for a rapid response team to 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](#)
- [On the proposal to recruit more foster carers](#)

This report addresses the question included in our survey – *Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a requirement for regional offices to “undertake two-year accreditation programs to improve standards and increase local accountability, similar to recent changes in New South Wales”?*

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

- [On the proposal to introduce new performance reporting to increase transparency and accountability](#)

- [On the proposal that officers in the LNP's Child Protection Force undergo new training and development](#)

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.

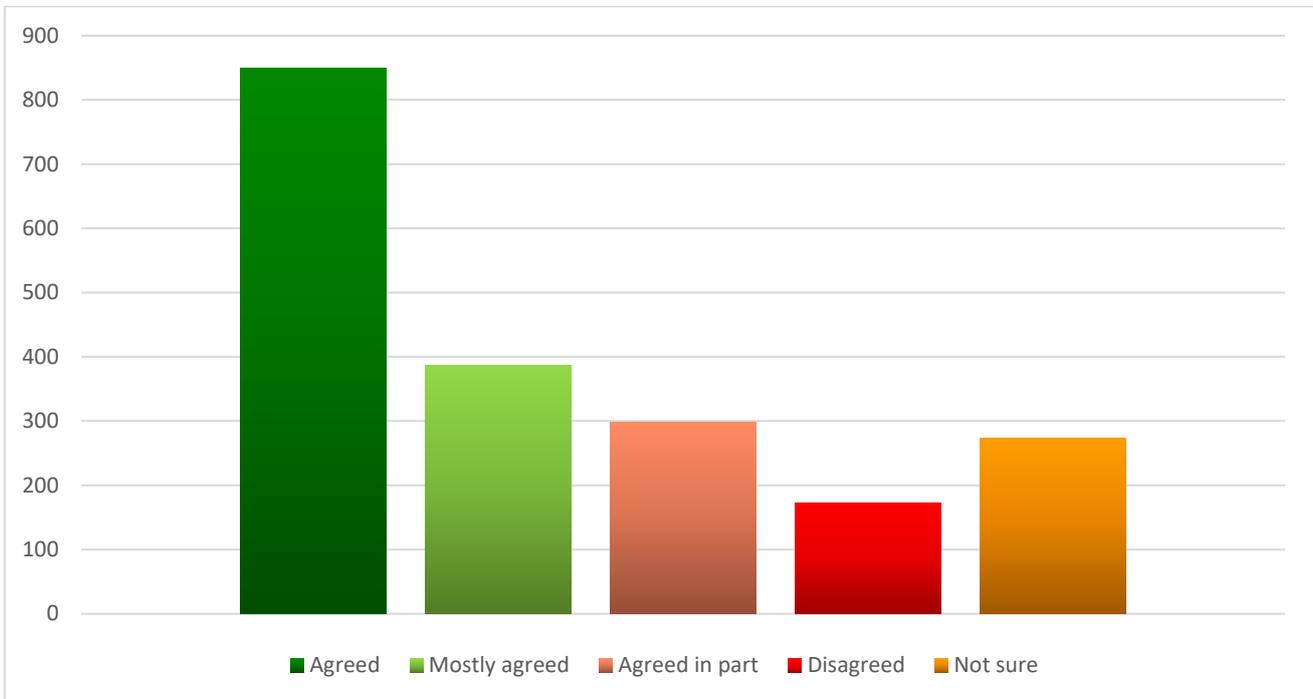
The strength of the survey and its findings lies in the diversity of views that have been collected from within and across stakeholder groups. This provides a rich source of data to generate debate about how to best protect children, promote their development and well-being, and support their families.

Overall response

Of the 1,998 survey respondents, 1,981 answered, and 17 'skipped', this question. A majority of respondents who answered the question agreed or mostly agreed with the proposal.

Specifically, of the 1,981 respondents who answered this question:

- 849 (42.86%) agreed with the proposal
- 387 (19.54%) mostly agreed
- 299 (15.09%) agreed only in part
- 173 (8.73%) disagreed, and
- 273 (13.78%) indicated that they were not sure



A majority of respondents (i.e. 50% or more) within 12 of the 13 stakeholder groups agreed or mostly agreed with the proposal:

- Employees of PeakCare member organisations (67.36%)
- Employees of QATSICPP member organisations (66.66%)
- Employees of non-government organisations that are not a member organisation of either PeakCare or QATSICPP (75.22%)
- Employees of a peak body or other industry or representative group (64.82%)
- Academics (52.64%)
- Consultants and employees of private consultancy or training services (66.67%)
- Parents (or other family members) with a lived experience of the child protection system (76.57%)
- Young people (under 25) with a lived experience of the child protection system (66.66%)
- Older people (over 25) with a lived experience of the child protection system (75.61%)

- Foster Carers (88.34%)
- Kinship Carers (82.85%)
- Others (71.10%)

More employees of government agencies (40.48%) disagreed or agreed only in part with the proposal, but their number was insufficient to constitute a majority (i.e. 50% or more) of this stakeholder group

A review of the comments indicates some confusion as to what accreditation involves (meeting service standards or staff competency and training required to be completed) and who is to be accredited – individual staff, CSSCs, Regional Offices or all offices. Respondents' comments therefore need to be considered in this light.

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

Increased transparency and accountability

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional

offices to increase transparency and accountability, provide for ongoing review, promote consistency across regional centres and bring requirements into line with those caring for children and those in the non-government sector.

Considerations

Many respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included:

- clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation
- ensuring cultural competence
- ensuring that staff are adequately supported and resourced to meet the proposed standards
- making funds available to meet the administrative costs of reporting
- improving training provided
- detailing how accreditation would operate
- ensuring staff willingness to work under the standards
- providing evidence of its effectiveness
- undertaking systems reform

Further information

Other respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal, how it is different to current Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes, what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness, who would be accredited.

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Many respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent, questioning the efficacy of the NSW model, identifying that CQI processes already exist and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them. The underlying issues and concerns identified included:

- high case loads
- insufficient staff to meet needs
- lack of staff support
- level of qualifications and experience of staff employed
- emphasis on compliance
- attention being taken away from working with children and families
- cost-benefit - lack of evidence that accreditation leads to better outcomes
- fund services for children and families
- enhance community understanding of child protection work
- address the systemic issues and societal issues impacting children and families

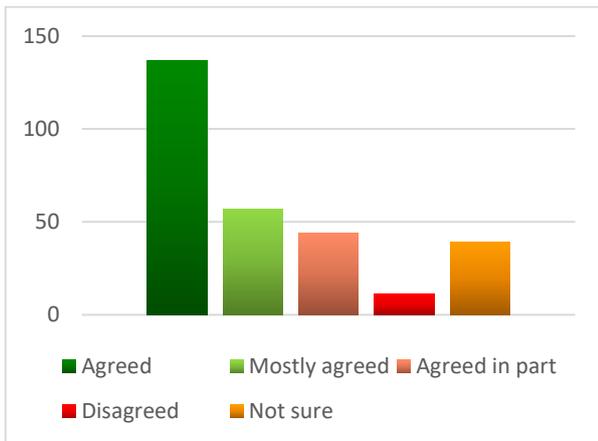
Responses by stakeholder groups

Employees of PeakCare Member organisations

Of the 288 employees of PeakCare Member organisations who answered this question:

- 137 (47.57%) agreed with this proposal
- 57 (19.79%) mostly agreed
- 44 (15.28%) agreed only in part
- 11 (3.82%) disagreed, and
- 39 (13.54%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, and bring requirements into line with those in the non-government sector.

- *These results should be transparent to the community and held accountable for actions to achieve high standards*
- *Not-for-profit agencies providing government funded services have to go through an accreditation process. It is a good thing and I can't see why govt departments shouldn't have the same requirements*

Considerations

Many respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for

further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, ensuring that staff are adequately supported and resourced to meet the proposed standards, making funds available to meet the administrative costs of reporting, and detailing how accreditation would operate:

- *As long as it is deeply practice based and not simply about compliance*
- *I believe that this could be a positive step, as I feel that this oversight will help to ensure the effectiveness of work practices and strategies within offices. Given the information in this proposal, I am concerned that the accreditation program may focus on some areas that are inappropriate or over-simplified in the accreditation criteria, rather than focusing on the safety and wellbeing of the individual child*
- *As long as it is at all levels including RED, RD's and PSS and CSSC Managers. This is where a significant part of the issue exists and egos get in the way of decisions for young people and children and also carers*
- *Accountability is always appropriate but lets make sure the accreditation program actually underpins best practice outcomes and doesn't just become tick boxes / further unhelpful bureaucracy / resource drain*
- *Accountability is great, as long as there is appropriate resourcing. My big concern about all of these accountability measures is that it will just place too much pressure on the people in the roles (to meet these new requirements with no extra resources) and will cause instability through staff turnover*
- *As long as the accreditation program does not create so much extra work as to hinder services' ability to adequately provide services*
- *Provision needs to be made for this in people's schedules and budgets. Frequently additional requirements are added and yet consideration is not given to the time required for this*
- *There is a need for an increase in the standards of practice and accountability within CSSCs. However, accreditation programs indicate that if a service does not meet accreditation standards it will be*

closed / defunded. This is not an option for government child protection services. We need our regional service centres. Currently staff across the state in CSSCs have huge caseloads to manage day-to-day. Accreditation process would eat in to time available to undertake investigations, assessments and work to ensure the safety the children. A funding boost across all levels (assessment, intervention, children under orders) in order to recruit (and retain) more staff in order to ease case load burdens will have a positive impact on accountability and provide the environment for accreditation processes to occur effectively

- *If the accreditation process is adequately resourced, realistic and tailored to the uniqueness of geographical locations within Qld. A one size fits all approach WILL NOT WORK and is UNFAIR*
- *Given that my agency works across states what I am seeing is some benefit in this however, as an auditor, I can also see that the NSW system is asking them to self audit, an external audit is more comprehensive as they look deeper into the client information systems to check on completion and quality of information and cross reference sign off by clients, as well as check due dates for document completion in line with legislation*

Further information

Many staff sought further information about the nature of the proposal, how it is different to what is happening now, and what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness.

- *Need more info on "accreditation program"*
- *I'd need more information. What happens if the accreditation process fails? Do staff get penalised?*
- *Again, what's different to what happens now*
- *I don't know enough about recent changes in NSW to comment*
- *I am not sure how well this has worked for NSW so would want more information on the results of this implementation*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Many respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent, identifying that CQI processes already exist and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

- *Do they seriously need to accredit their own departments - I get it for outsourcing services and ensuring that they are meeting the legal requirements - but their own department - it shows that they have not thought through the way they run their department and there should already be an accountability structure in place - which is probably why they are not performing as CSSCs clearly don't know the accountability processes they should be following*
- *There is already an accreditation process for CSSC's; I think this should be given a chance to show if its worked*
- *Will this only increase stress and pressures to an already pressured system??*
- *The improvement processes in NSW have not led to any appreciable improvements in service standards*
- *More emphasis on compliance will only lead to more focus on reporting of activities. This takes more time and will reduce the amount of work that CSO's and other workers will have to actually support families*
- *Instead of increasing compliance obligations, use that money to better resource the workers on the front line so that they are better trained and supported and don't have such ridiculous case loads, and to better resource the other systems that support families to parent safely*
- *I am not sure the focus should be on accreditation of offices but the focus need to be a focus on mapping total services by location to ensure sufficient services per location to meet demand*
- *Let's look at the best systems in the world and see how the have worked over the years and implement those changes. Let's also look at the support service that also need to be funded appropriately so support child safety such as health do counselling services like , EVOLVE can be more effective, housing so families can get off the streets into*

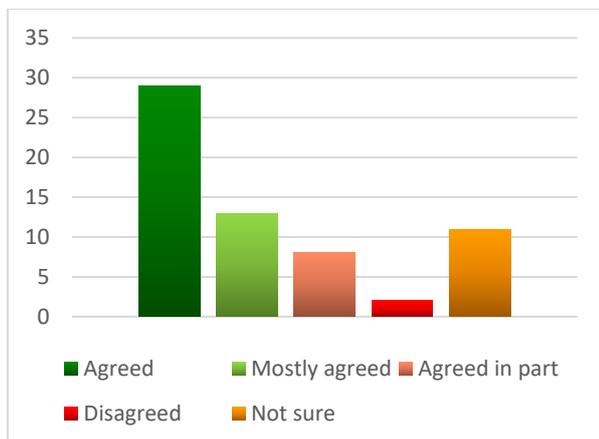
appropriate housing, counseling services such as trauma informed services, drug and alcohol support services, health services, education so schools can support vulnerable children better and have a trauma informed class to support learning for all

little oversight and accountability for the Departments within government

Employees of QATSICPP Member organisations

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

- 29 (46.03%) agreed with the proposal
- 13 (20.63%) mostly agreed
- 8 (12.70%) agreed only in part
- 2 (3.17%) disagreed, and
- 11 (17.46%) indicated that they were not sure



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Two respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability as it will improve standards and brings requirements into line with those in the non-government sector:

- *Yes, improving standards can only be a good thing*
- *All accreditation processes to improve standards and increase local accountability is long overdue. NFP's have strict requirements in terms of accreditation with*

Considerations

Most respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, ensuring cultural competence and providing evidence of its effectiveness.

- *The NGO sector must complete HSQF, which has helped us improve quality. The question isn't so much a matter of accreditation or not, but rather the content of the accreditation and a focus on building quality, not simply meeting benchmarks*
- *As long as these are in line with industry standards and needs such as DV informed practice*
- *Needs to be a lot more understanding of culture and working with communities*
- *This would depend on what outcomes have been found in NSW and whether the same or a modified version of the NSW accreditation was to be adopted*

Further information

Two respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal.

- *What does this mean? Accreditation in what?*
- *I have no idea what this is talking about. But if it is mandatory two year child protection experience before making decisions - maybe. The workforce takes approximately 18 months to 2 years to know and understand the system and decision making processes, as well as identifying risk and protective factors. People and the sector need appropriate training - not necessarily a degree, the degree doesn't ensure anything - just child protection knowledge is the must*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

A number of respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent and the efficacy of the NSW model, and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

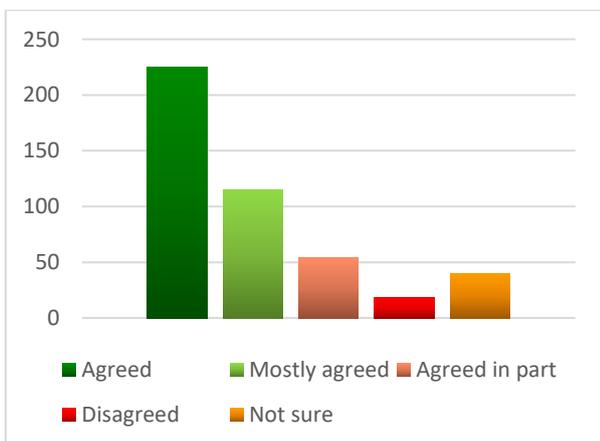
- *Accountability is why this has all come about, from reading the Mason Jet Lee report the Child Safety Service centre involved have a lot to account for and now this knee jerk reaction from Child Safety comes out of this. This would be good, but the main thing from this would be that the services that work with the families from the non-government sector need to be valued better by Child Safety for their input and advice. In many cases this does not happen and you are made to feel as if you don't know what it is that you are talking about*
- *Don't agree with the NSW model*
- *Child safety have constant training anyway, the extra burden of this could cause no end of issues. Free up child safety officers to work with high end cases by increasing funding to NGO's and encouraging referrals to families support services to free up CSO workers*

Employees of non-Member non-government organisations

Of the 452 employees of non-government organisations that are not Members of either PeakCare or QATSICPP who answered this question:

- 225 (49.78%) agreed with the proposal
- 115 (25.44%) mostly agreed
- 54 (11.95%) agreed only in part
- 18 (3.98%) disagreed, and
- 40 (8.85%) indicated that they were not sure

Seven respondents skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, provide for ongoing review, promote consistency across regional centres and bring requirements into line with those in the non-government sector:

- *This will make them more accountable and transparent. Communication is a big issue in all service centres*
- *Yes more accountability needs to occur at the top of the chain rather than pushing the blame and responsibility onto front line officers*
- *Constantly reviewing will highlight further areas that could be changed*
- *I think the industry needs to be regulated to ensure that people working in the industry have the knowledge and qualifications necessary to understand the complexities within families and how best to support them to make positive sustainable change ensuring that they experience a sense of achievement and their human rights are protected. Also the knowledge and understanding of mandatory reporting and how it can be used to provide positive supports and early intervention support to children and families at risk*
- *There appears to be very little accountability for CSSCs and their managers and no consistency from one centre to another*
- *Foster Care agencies require strict re-accreditation processes routinely. Similar systems and checks should be in place for routine CS reviews. This would ensure systems and policies that they put in place are adhered to and supported as continued best practice. If policies are no longer relevant then continued practice development should replace with updated systems and policies*

Considerations

Many respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for

further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, ensuring that staff are adequately resourced to meet the proposed standards, making funds available to meet the administrative costs of reporting, improving training provided, overhauling the system, and providing evidence of its effectiveness:

- *As long as these are linked with young people outcomes and not just numbers and figures*
- *As long as these are tailored to specific needs of the local service centre and services, as needs in the community differ greatly region to region*
- *Depends on the accreditation process. It seems that the child protection employees are being victimized rather than supported. Focus your attention on other areas, early intervention and increased front line staff*
- *Accreditation processes take time away from frontline work so additional resources should be implemented to enable fair and honest assessment of compliance. Is there evidence based outcomes that accreditation decreases risk to the most vulnerable? What are the standards being measured to ensure practice and outcomes do meet the most vulnerable?*
- *Urban, Regional, or Rural offices should all follow the same comprehensive investigation practices - which should include a holistic assessment of all aspects of the family situation*
- *Accreditation and third party review is necessary but must be adequately resourced and funded*
- *I agree, but this takes time and money and needs to be done by other staff - not put more pressure on staff on the ground*
- *Local accountability is great - but if there are not enough resources for the job, not good practice in place within each office, then this is just a big stick and no analysis of the situation*
- *As long as adequate training is made feasible and affordably available to existing staff in these areas*
- *I believe this is highly important. I worked under the New South Wales system for seven years. With the introduction of*

accreditation many child safety centres failed, this was highly concerning and I believe it would be the same for Queensland. Many children aren't being visited regularly in foster care, paperwork not being completed and the majority of the work being undertaken by the NGO. There needs to be an overhaul of the entire system and the NGO being provided with more decision making authority and case management

- *Consultation with NSW's experience should be sought to ensure the procedures are attainable and appropriate*

Further information

Some respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal and what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness.

- *I am all for keeping services accountable. I am not exactly sure what this looks like though so would require more information*
- *I am not familiar with the changes in NSW. Child Safety Officers are already overworked in a very stressful job. Will further accreditation processes add to their stress levels and competing agendas?*
- *Has this been effective in NSW?*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Some respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent, identifying that CQI processes already exist and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them.

- *Yes: But again.... there seem to be more 'checking' mechanisms and units and systems and staff every year: complaints, quality improvement, QFCC, Ombudsman, PSC..... we keep employing more auditors and IT systems people and quality folk in city buildings still nothing changes for the suburban family. Maybe focus somewhere else in the system? (Shouting at people and showing them new spreadsheets about how bad they are doing their job is not useful, when they know they can't do their job because there is no local support services and too much red tape)*

- *How would this help? By adding more job strain to those centres probably under the most strain and staff shortages?*
- *Once again more paper work. Children need hands on protection*
- *NSW still had issues and found ways to be able to continue to do things in ways that went round these measures, I worked there and saw managers change processes, this didn't increase safety for children*
- *Having worked in the statutory system and now in the non-government sector, I am aware of the already high compliance requirements. I am also aware that compliance as an end in itself runs the risk of bleeding resources from frontline work. So much time is already spent meeting compliance obligations that many professionals become frustrated with the lack of human interaction - decision-making becomes a paper-based endeavour with consequent human rights transgressions for vulnerable families. I am an advocate for streamlined, meaningful accountability measures and related transparency that fit within the resourcing framework*
- *This is not going to solve the issue. More paperwork. More tick boxes. It is about looking at the funding of child protection services and staffing issues first and foremost*
- *You keep thinking of top heavy processes instead of getting qualified workers with appropriate lenses to sort this out*
- *No doubt the 'accreditation program' will be completed by an external provider at considerable cost to government - the money would be better spent in providing front line support to children and young people in care e.g. paying for ongoing psychological and mental health support from professionals*

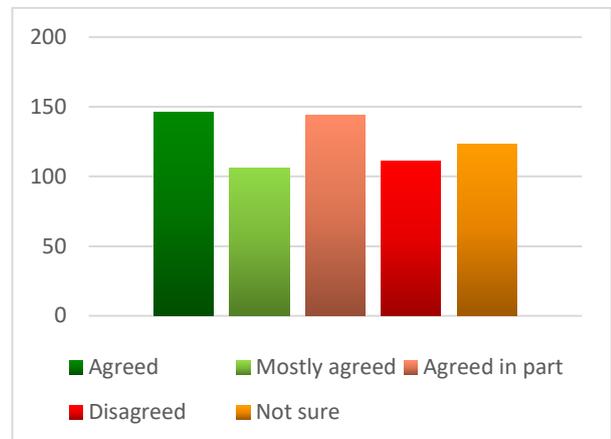
Employees of Government agencies

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

- 146 (23.17%) agreed with the proposal
- 106 (16.83%) mostly agreed

- 144 (22.86%) agreed only in part
- 111 (17.62%) disagreed, and
- 123 (19.52%) indicated that they were not sure

Three respondents skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, provide for ongoing review, promote consistency across regional centres and bring requirements into line with those in the non-government sector:

- *Agreed. Child safety has started a similar process to accreditation but is called something different and there is very little transparency*
- *regular review and upgrading would be beneficial*
- *There should be greater opportunities to engage in workplace education to improve practice, this should be incentive based and supported by the workplace*
- *There should be industry standards in the public service as we have this expectation for our NGO partners*
- *Regional centres operate differently and unhealthy cultures fester within these teams. This would hopefully change this unhealthy culture and raise the standard of work*

Considerations

Many respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, ensuring that staff are adequately resourced to meet the proposed standards, making funds available to meet the administrative costs of reporting, improving training provided, detailing how accreditation would operate, and providing evidence of its effectiveness:

- *This idea has some potential - so long as there is a genuine focus on improving practice standards; not on increasing throughput*
- *If this means supporting time and resources to train staff and prop this up with people to still manage the work then this would be welcomed. However if it is just adding more red tape and requirements with no resources and takes time spent with families away then it is counter productive*
- *A lot of these programs add to the workload of child safety staff without adding to the quality of services. Any program designed to improve standards should not rely on a high level of forms/paperwork as this detracts from service provision*
- *Being in an agency that does accreditation regularly there would need to be some acknowledgement of the time taken to participate and be funded accordingly*
- *Depends on the proposal. if the focus is on proper training, induction and support to our staff so that they are equipped to do their jobs properly then yes I support. The current training and supervision model is not working well*
- *Child Safety has recently undertaken Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) at CSSCs which has aimed to identify what areas require improvement and how this can be achieved.*
- *Any accreditation program should aim to develop capability in staff, to refine and expand their skills specific to their work. This should include highly structured staff supervision that includes regular engagement with professionals that are not attached to CSSCs and can support staff individually whilst tracking broader*

functioning of CSSCs to identify areas for improvement

- *It depends on what the accreditation process entails. There needs to be an understanding of the impact of staff turnover and support to retain experience*
- *Yes, this could be good if there is evidence supporting the effectiveness*

Further information

Many respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal, how it is different to current CQI processes, what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness, who would be accredited.

- *I don't fully understand who/what they are accrediting*
- *I am unsure what this accreditation system looks like and why again it is only for regional centres*
- *I don't understand what this proposal would look like, and we already have the CQI review process which is done regularly and captures information about performance*
- *I would need to be clearer on what those changes were predicated on and how they would be assessed as having potential to "improve standards" along with the who/what/how/when of both the accreditation and improvement processes/outcomes*
- *I am unfamiliar with the NSW changes/ accreditation programs and cannot comment*
- *Depends on how this would work? the NSW system is not effective either, should we be modelling the QLD system under one that does not work?*
- *Again, why regional offices? What about metro offices?? And why don't they bring back the accredited CSO training i.e. vocational grad certs? The current GRO induction program is grossly inadequate*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Many respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent, identifying that CQI processes already exist and indicating that

accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

- *This proposal makes the assumption that all regional offices are under performing, making significant errors, leaving children in immediate danger, which is just not the case. Most regional offices complete exceptional work every day. Every day they work hard to keep children safe with their parents or out of their parents' care, not only keeping them safe but trying to ensure they are having all their wellbeing needs met. The LNP, media and many others in the community do not hear about these successes as we are essentially gagged*
- *We already have CQI processes to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This program is only 2 years old and should be given the chance to be embedded. This was an outcome of Mason Lee inquiries. Chopping and changing programs before they are well established and proven will not keep children safe*
- *There are already provisions in place to review the performance of staff. Spend the money that these accreditation programs would cost, on training staff in how to implement, maintain and review the current provisions rather than creating a brand new and very expensive program*
- *A lot of time, money and resources have been directed toward this type of strategy. This removes focus from the children and families. Sound basic training that is then supported by supervisors and professional development opportunities have been more effective in developing and maintaining skills and retaining staff*
- *I worked for Department of Communities and Justice in 2019 and therefore have first hand experience of what the accreditation process requires. It was my experience it simply increased bureaucratic requirements to the detriment of any time to do efficacious work in the field or produce quality work. In fact the bureaucratic requirements were so cumbersome I have returned to Queensland Child Safety this year despite my living in NSW and being paid a higher wage at DCJ*
- *The problem is the service centres are not adequately staffed and CSO's and STL do not*

have adequate training to do the job. Case loads need to be significantly reduced to manageable levels and new mandatory training implemented for CSO's and STL - a two week face to face training package for new CSO's is not adequate - And there is nothing for STL - they teach themselves. They need to have Principal and Senior training officers in every service centre in the State. The staffing issue is so dire the Department is hiring STL's with no Child Protection Experience and wonder why children are dying. The retention rate is - well there is no retention of staff because they are not adequately trained - and the case loads are too high and not manageable

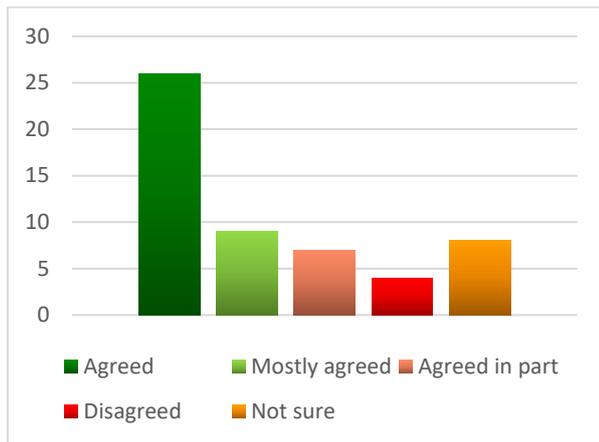
- *Regional offices (opposed to service centres) need to cease projects, put all available resources into the front line, not be required to have to respond to ministerial correspondence that relate to operational service delivery (similar to the Queensland Police Service). Service centres need to be resourced properly with caseload caps and predictive models of target population growth and many ongoing issues will disappear*
- *No, for the most part the community has no understanding of what the challenges we face are and do not understand the processes that Child Safety has to undertake on a daily basis. It would be preferable to educate the local community on what and why Child Safety does*
- *Again - unless you fix all the other issues, the greater systems issues and systematic societal issues will always override any work that is done on families*

Employees of peak bodies, industry and representative groups

Of the 54 employees of peak bodies, industry and representative groups who answered this question:

- 26 (48.15%) agreed with this proposal
- 9 (16.67%) mostly agreed
- 7 (12.96%) agreed only in part
- 4 (7.41%) disagreed, and
- 8 (14.81%) indicated that they were not sure

Two respondents skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Three respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, and bring requirements into line with those in the non-government sector:

- *Care must be taken to ensure the burden of accountability is not increased. It would be reasonable for Child Safety Offices to be held to account to the Human Services Quality Framework set of standards, which is the accreditation standard for human service providers across the state. This framework operates on a 3 year accreditation cycle with an 18 month review process, which is the generally accepted approach for accreditation purposes. It is specifically written to rigorous standards for the human services sector in order to ensure continuous improvement*
- *The Dept should be held to the same standards as NGO service providers*

Considerations

Most respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, ensuring that staff are adequately resourced to meet the proposed standards, making funds available to meet the administrative costs of

reporting, improving training provided. detailing how accreditation would operate, and providing evidence of its effectiveness:

- *Again, the standards need to be of relevance and particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who make up nearly half of the clientele*
- *The funding body should be monitoring standards all the time not undertake a 2 yr program*
- *Increased education knowledge and skills are essential as equally important reduced case load sizes to enable staff the needed time to investigate effectively*
- *If it is funded and managed well, at the moment a child safety officer can progress through their pay increments without assessment or further development. Resource the child safety service centres to do the job, train and develop staff and leaders and you will get a better outcome*
- *Not sure how "offices" can undertake accreditation programs. What is needed is better monitoring, as Independent Reviewing Officers do in UK*
- *If there is evidence to suggest that it will work*

Further information

A number of respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal, and what the NSW approach entails:

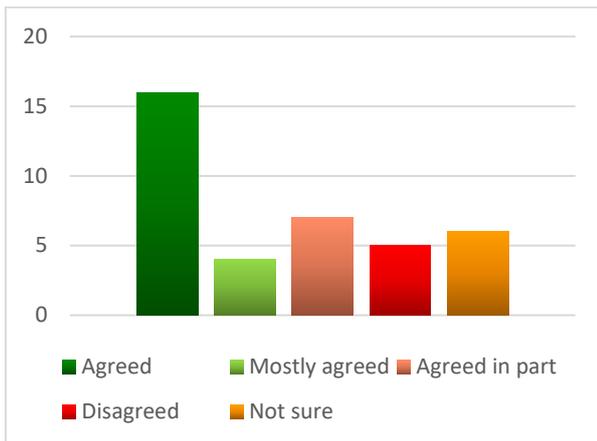
- *The devil is always in the detail and would want to see the proposed procedures first*
- *Child safety/protection is a govt service - accreditation sounds a bit like accrediting age care facilities which are privately run - is the proposal by LNP to privatise Child Protection Force service?*
- *Don't know the detail about the NSW scheme*

Academics

Of the 38 academics who answered this question:

- 16 (42.11%) agreed with this proposal
- 4 (10.53%) mostly agreed
- 7 (18.42%) agreed only in part
- 5 (13.16%) disagreed, and

- 6 (15.79%) indicated that they were not sure



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

Increased transparency and accountability

One respondent agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability:

- *It's obvious there needs to be massive improvements*

Considerations

A number of respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the focus of accreditation, ensuring it is funded, and detailing how accreditation would operate:

- *As long as the standards are culturally safe*
- *Only if they plan on paying for it*
- *Accountability must be more frequent than two years. Two years is a long time in a child's life. Do it every six months*
- *Like psychologists and social work and most health practitioners, levels of PD need to be completed and attained every year to ensure insurance and accreditation*

Further information

A number of respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal, and how it is different to current CQI processes.

- *Could have merit. I would need to understand the underlying rationale for this*
- *What do they mean by accreditation, for what? How would this differ to the internal processes that are currently in existence?*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

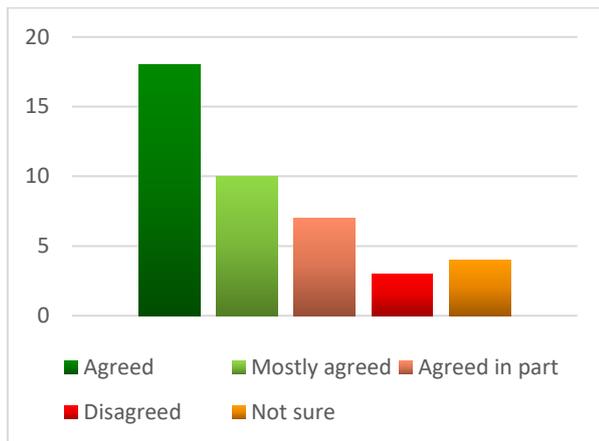
Three respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

- *This is likely to become another bureaucratic task that takes practitioners away from a focus on children. It is because practitioners aren't trusted that so many policies and procedures are in place. Staff are graduates with 3 years of a high level of education. If the system wasn't over-complicated then it would be straightforward to enact legislation. Even the best of the best could be hauled in front of ethical standards and fail as the requirements of the current system are unachievable. Please trust practitioners and give them effective tools to keep kids safe with less paperwork*
- *Good luck with the two year assessment program. Staff find this area too difficult to work in now. I'm sure the statistics will reflect a high turnover of staff many good staff find this type of work emotionally draining and exhausting in the long term. By the time the two years are up I reckon 80% will have left. Therefore you will be documenting that standard will never be met as far as staff education and ratios go*
- *Very expensive for little return. There is no evidence these accreditation processes improve quality (just look at aged care accreditation!). It promotes a compliance culture. Resources are consumed with accreditation paperwork rather than strategies that really make a difference. What is the cost of the NSW accreditation process? - put this money into education, health, and dental care services for children in care instead - it would be a much better investment*

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:

- 18 (42.86%) agreed with the proposal
- 10 (23.81%) mostly agreed
- 7 (16.67%) agreed only in part
- 3 (7.14%) disagreed, and
- 4 (9.52%) indicated that they were not sure



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

Agree

Two respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, and bring requirements into line with those in the non-government sector:

- *Hopefully will help reduce the deaths of these kids*
- *This is conducted already in NGO agencies so I agree that government agencies should be prepared to undergo the same standards. This will allow gaps in service to be addressed immediately in action plans that are taken seriously*

Considerations

Most respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation,

ensuring that staff are adequately supported and resourced to meet the proposed standards, and monitoring funding required to support accreditation:

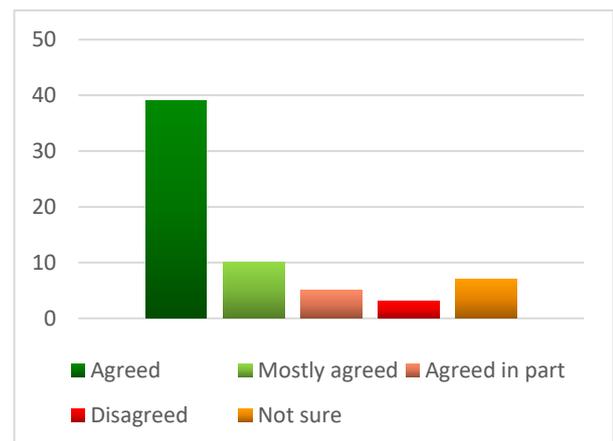
- *Provided the accreditation program is actually measuring what it is meant to measure, e.g. whether children are safe*
- *As long as it encompasses the development of DFV informed practice*
- *Whilst this could be a good initiative, care needs to be taken that it doesn't add to the administrative burden on frontline staff*
- *If they are afforded the time do to it*
- *Ongoing improvement always a goal as long as all the dollars aren't spent on accreditation processes*

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

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

- 39 (60.94%) agreed with the proposal
- 10 (15.63%) mostly agreed
- 5 (7.81%) agreed only in part
- 3 (4.69%) disagreed, and
- 7 (10.94%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Two respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability:

- *This needs to happen everywhere*
- *Definitely a requirement. I have heard of CSO's having very limited training yet they are dealing with the lives of families*

Considerations

A number of respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, ensuring cultural competence, and ensuring staff willingness to work under the standards:

- *My only fear with this is that more children will be removed to achieve new KPIs*
- *The process of accreditation would need to be supportive of regional offices in committing to continuous quality improvement for their services*
- *To whose standards? Will they be developed with cultural competency and cultural awareness and in conjunction with the needs of individual unique communities across Australia as provided by a researched investigation conducted by QATSICP or a QATSICP approved research group*
- *Weed out the old crowd that don't want to work differently*

Further information

Three respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal, what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness, and who would be accredited:

- *I am unsure of the NSW system*
- *Why only regional officers to require the 2 year training?*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

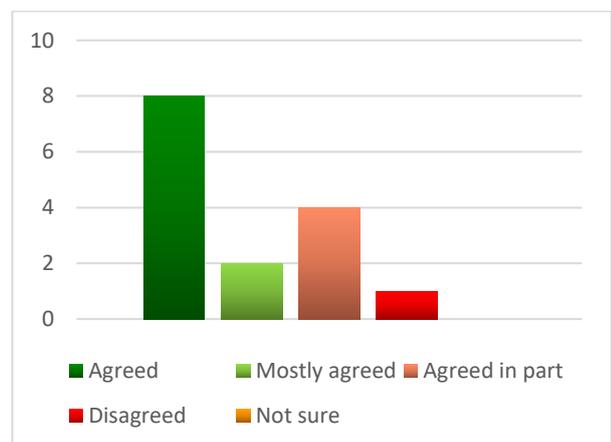
Two respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the assumptions about staff training and qualifications:

- *KPI Professionals in this field already exist at a higher qualification level, employ them*
- *Qld police are already higher trained on average than NSW*

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:

- 8 (53.33%) agreed with this proposal
- 2 (13.33%) mostly agreed
- 4 (26.67%) agreed only in part, and
- 1 (6.67%) disagreed



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

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Three respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the NSW approach and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

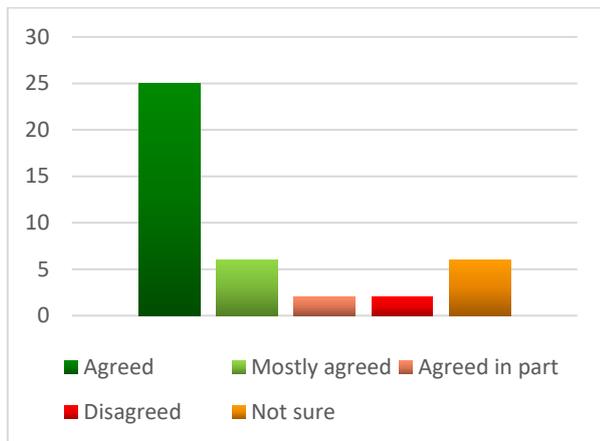
- *Nothing about aligning with NSW sits well with me*
- *People are always doing paperwork as it is instead of real work helping kids*
- *Drugs are self medicating trauma, we need to treat whole family systems and family scapegoat system the real problem*

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:

- 25 (60.98%) agreed with this proposal
- 6 (14.63%) mostly agreed
- 2 (4.88%) agreed only in part
- 2 (4.88%) disagreed, and
- 6 (14.63%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Two respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability:

- *Improving and maintaining high sustainable standards*
- *I wouldn't normally agree with anything that NSW does, however in this case, it sounds like a good idea*

Considerations

One respondent agreed with the proposal but suggested that all offices be subject to accreditation:

- *Why only regional offices? All offices should be subject to regular accreditation*

programs, including the support and management areas

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Three respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning its intent and highlighting the level of training already being provided:

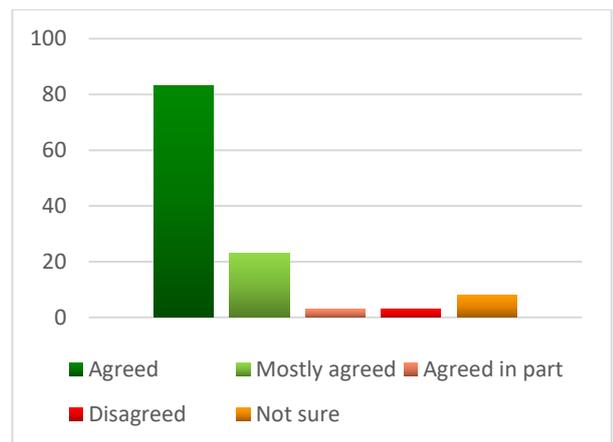
- *Suspect this is about more surveillance or control when you use the term 'accountability.' If you want to heal and bring change for the children and the families you need to use different terms than the ones that just assess and bring judgement and do not bring healing for anyone*
- *So much training happening already*

Foster Carers

Of the 120 Foster Carers who answered this question:

- 83 (69.17%) agreed with this proposal
- 23 (19.17%) mostly agreed
- 3 (2.50%) agreed only in part
- 3 (2.50%) disagreed, and
- 8 (6.67%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



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

Increased transparency and accountability

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, ensure up to date knowledge, and bring requirements into line with those caring for children and those in the non-government sector:

- *Anything that improves standards and accountability is good*
- *Department staff in front line roles have university degrees and training. Additional training and accreditation is welcome*
- *CSO's who are relevant and up to date are few and far between. I am always wanting a CSO who is young or have just arrived at the agency. They are more proactive and always the decisions are based around the children and not trying to appease the parents and especially the parents who have a lawyer. My advice to any parent would be to get a lawyer and then the department will always act in your favour rather than your child's interest*
- *We as foster carers need to go through reapproval every two years, so I don't see why workers shouldn't as well. Great idea!*
- *Childcare centres have this why not for our most vulnerable*

Considerations

Other respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the focus of accreditation and detailing how accreditation would operate and be funded:

- *All offices need improvements*
- *As long as \$\$ aren't thrown away to achieve restructure after restructure. Sick of money not being spent on children's needs*
- *Those working within CSS should have to come under a yearly registration such as Doctors, Nurses, and other health professionals*
- *We have to do it in early childhood services. Make them do it also with implications if areas are NOT met and information made public*

Further information

One respondent sought further information about the nature of the proposal:

- *I would need to know more about what that actually means to comment*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

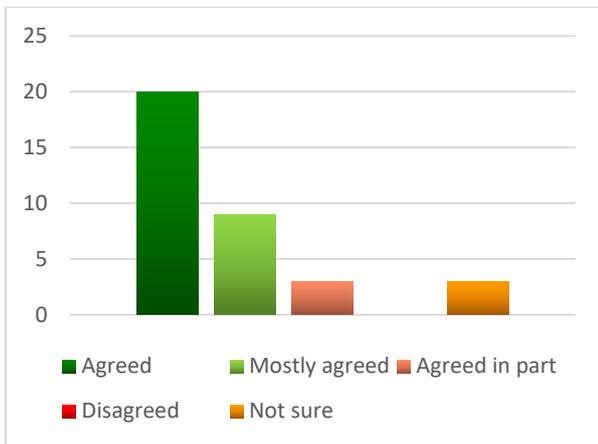
Many respondents disagreed with the proposal indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

- *More reporting and box ticking, really?*
- *Stop making things so complicated by bringing in more rules and regulations. Just employ smart people who actually care about their job and not doing it because it's all they could apply for after getting out of university. Employ people who have life experience and loads of common sense*
- *So you are going to create more paperwork which will reduce the efficiency of the dept. How about doubling the staff? We know that if it was staff within either party office they would be falling off the walls. This is just another cover up plan*
- *Staff are already under pressure if staff are not taken care of children will not be taken care of*

Kinship Carers

Of the 35 Kinship Carers who answered this question:

- 20 (57.14%) agreed with the proposal
- 9 (25.71%) mostly agreed
- 3 (8.57%) agreed only in part, and
- 0 (0%) disagreed, and
- 3 (8.57%) indicated that they were not sure



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

Considerations

Three respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the purpose and focus of accreditation, and ensuring that staff are adequately supported and resourced to meet the proposed standards:

- *For what ends? Are you going to sack all the workers from that service centre?*
- *Extra training can't make things worse, but this needs to be done in a way that doesn't take workers off the ground who are already under the pump*

Further information

One respondent sought further information about the nature of the proposal, how it is different to current CQI processes, what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness, who would be accredited:

- *This is not very clear ...but it could be similar to the current Continuous Quality Improvement process that has been going since 2018*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

One respondent disagreed with the proposal indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

- *I believe the child safety system is broken due to lack of staff and case loads are*

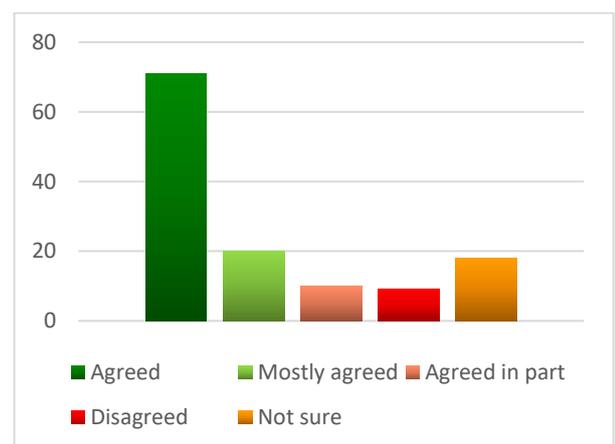
excessively high. Burnouts rates are very high, as CSO's can't sustain working all the requirements with very high case loads. I worked as a CSO for 4.5 years in I & A , IPA and short term orders teams. I worked most weekends and often afterhours till after 10 pm without any pay. In my previous role as a Child Safety Officer, I diligently took the safety of the children I worked with as my first priority. I ensured the children on my case load were seen regularly in person with genuine engagement, investigations were thoroughly examined, foster carers were supported and my court documents were completed. I left seriously burnout and no-one ever followed after with me after I resigned

Others

Of the 128 survey respondents who indicated that they did not belong to one of the aforementioned groups or who identified with multiple groups, and who answered this question:

- 71 (55.47%) agreed with the proposal
- 20 (15.63%) mostly agreed
- 10 (7.81%) agreed only in part
- 9 (7.03%) disagreed, and
- 18 (14.06%) indicated that they were not sure

One respondent skipped this question.



37 of respondent within this stakeholder group provided comments.

Increased transparency and accountability

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce an accreditation program for regional offices to increase transparency and accountability, provide for ongoing review, promote consistency across regional centres and bring requirements into line with those in the non-government sector:

- *Improving standards and accountability is always good*
- *YES. Regular assessment is paramount!*
- *Due to lack of uniformity across the state, this would ensure that all regions are operating at the same understanding of risk and have the same risk threshold*
- *Non govt complete the hsqf standards, so should govt*
- *The accreditation program in NSW has seen a better balance of NGO and Department accreditation and similar playing field on performance. This is a good thing*

Considerations

Other respondents agreed with the proposal with certain conditions or identified areas for further consideration. These included clarifying the focus of accreditation, ensuring that staff are adequately supported and resourced to meet the proposed standards, and detailing how accreditation would operate:

- *It's hard enough finding and retaining staff in all areas let alone regional offices. Accreditation programs should be uniform across the state*
- *Recruiting the staff for these positions will require people with empathy and understanding of each individual families needs, and the stakeholders who can support the families become better parents and offer support for children*
- *So long as don't lose people or stop hiring. This should be on the job training and integrated - perhaps as ongoing continuing professional development to improve/maintain skills*
- *Unclear of what the proposal is here other than it being an accreditation program. New CSOs would benefit with a long term mentoring system with more experienced CSOs when commencing a role in CSYW*

- *Ongoing annual reviews and performance monitored - just like any employee would be to ensure ongoing compliance and training undertaken*
- *It is important that the accreditation is overseen by independent people. Not old "friends of the system". Spot inspections should be undertaken so that the reality cannot be hidden in the systemic reporting and paperwork maze. I have been involved in many audits across governments departments and it is clear that the outcome can be anything you like based on the information provided*

Further information

Some respondents sought further information about the nature of the proposal, how it is different to current CQI processes, and what the NSW approach entails and its effectiveness:

- *I don't know what this entails*
- *I don't know what 'similar to NSW means'. There is nothing inherently wrong with accreditation per se, but that cannot be used to privatise systems*
- *Would like to see more information on this system as well as its success in NSW to be able to make an informed decision*

Unnecessary and doesn't address the underlying issues

Some respondents disagreed with the proposal questioning the intent, and indicating that accreditation will not address the underlying issues and may exacerbate them:

- *We should be focusing on the children not on tasks that will take staff away from their work to keep kids safe*
- *Not exactly sure what this would entail, but would not agree if it took time and focus off the face to face work with children and families. This process has an element of panic and fear that can focus time and resources in the wrong place*
- *If the government hires more child safety staff, rather than accreditors, quality practice can be attained*

- *Sounds like more bureaucratic Fix the fundamental flaws in the system, employ accredited social workers with life experience, minimum age of 25 yrs, so no new grads of 21 yrs and a minimum 2 years post grad experience. Cap case numbers to 15 max and 10 for complex cases*
- *They're big words, but what does this mean in reality? Staff need training, support and accountability, but they also need the resources and political will to address the causes of child protection issues*

