

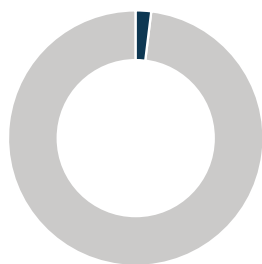
Accountability for Queensland

Integrity, accountability and consultation underpin everything the Queensland Government does.

Annastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier of Queensland, Minister for the Arts, The Queensland Government's objectives for the community.

Measuring accountability

As a proportion of the public sector profile, work performance matters represent 1.71 per cent of the Queensland public sector with 0.13 per cent of the workforce reported for the most serious breach of conduct expectations. This is a small number of employees relative to the total public sector workforce and overwhelmingly demonstrates that the majority of public servants are meeting or exceeding standards expected of them.



1.71%
employees involved
in reportable work
performance matters



40%
confidence in
poor performance
being appropriately
addressed, up from
32% in 2013

Westminster system of government

Public sector accountability forms a critical part of the Westminster system of government.

Accountability takes many forms—in parliamentary processes, in the independent roles of statutory bodies, in the frank and fearless advice of public sector employees to ministers, and the day-to-day activities that underpin fairness and trust.

Merit-based selection

Following the election of a new government in February 2015, an open merit-based selection process was announced for director-general and equivalent roles within the Queensland public sector.

As at March 2016, the 18 directors-general and the Commissioner Queensland Fire and Emergency Services roles have been appointed following an open merit-based selection process.¹¹ This process will also apply to the Commission Chief Executive role of the PSC and other members of the Leadership Board as individual contracts expire. The recruitment and selection process was designed to maximise transparency and openness. This commitment was reflected through:

- engaging an executive search firm through a select tender process
- engaging a probity adviser to support the tender evaluation process
- drawing a selection panel from a diverse background, chaired by the Commission Chief Executive of the PSC
- providing regular updates on the PSC website regarding project progress.

A Westminster system of government encourages a career-focused public sector in which opportunities for advancement are known, are competitive and sought after. The Westminster style of government ensures transparency and accountability, and ensures the best available candidate is awarded the role.

¹¹ The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) role is subject to the outcome of the PSBA review. The roles of Police Commissioner and Coordinator-General will also be subject to appointment following an open merit-based selection process when the contracts expire for the current incumbents.

Review of statutory appointments

In 2015, the Queensland Government announced a review of statutory appointments. The terms of reference required the review to:

- provide a consolidated overview of the range of CEO leadership positions across the Queensland public sector
- critically analyse the appointment frameworks, accountability, independence and performance mechanisms for certain CEO positions (within the context of the Westminster system of government), and make recommendations about the appropriateness and rationale of identified differences.

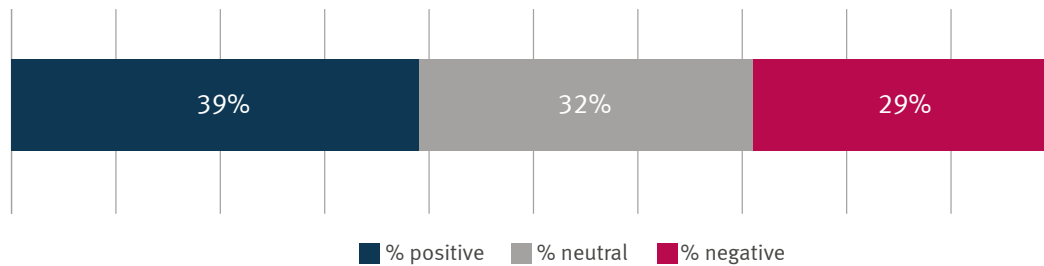
Interim findings indicate that accountability mechanisms across the public sector vary and while some variability is appropriate, there is scope to strengthen accountability in some cases.

Employee perceptions of accountability

Perceptions of fairness within the workplace have significant implications for employee morale and organisational commitment.

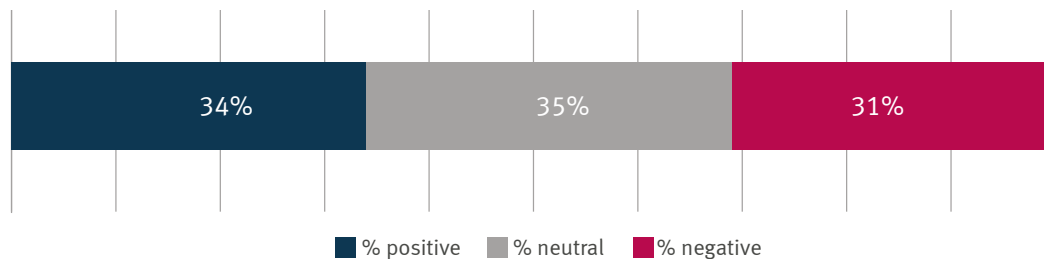
Understanding employee perceptions of fairness is also fundamental to managing organisational justice and accountability. The WfQ Employee Opinion Survey measures a series of concepts associated with fairness. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents agreed that recruitment and promotion decisions are fair, while 34 per cent felt that performance is assessed and regarded, fairly.

Figure 17: Recruitment and promotion decisions in this organisation are fair



Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015

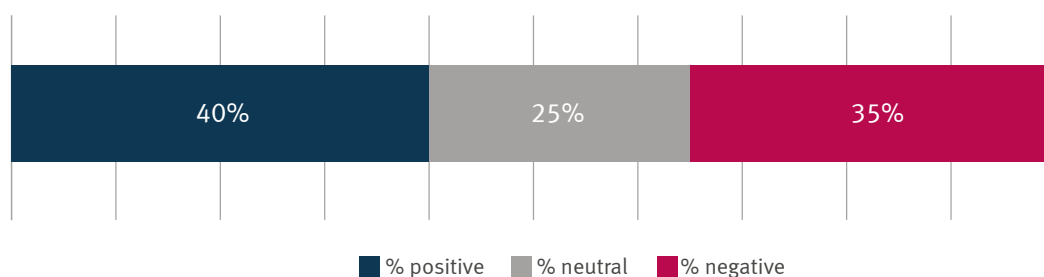
Figure 18: Performance is assessed and rewarded fairly in my workplace



Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015

Employee perceptions of the management of poor performance suggest there is opportunity for continued improvement across the sector.

Figure 19: I am confident poor performance will be appropriately addressed in my workplace



Source: WfQ Employee Opinion Survey 2015

Each of the above key metrics has improved over the past three years. The extent to which recruitment and selection decisions are perceived to be fair has improved by eight percentage points since 2013, while the perceived fairness of performance assessment has improved by four percentage points. The extent to which people feel that poor performance will be managed has improved eight percentage points since 2013.

Performance accountability

On 1 July 2014, a new legislative and administrative approach was implemented to assist Queensland Government agencies to promote excellent conduct and high performance, and manage poor conduct and performance.

The Conduct and Performance Excellence (CaPE) service was established within the PSC in July 2014 to support the public sector through the implementation of these changes. The role of the CaPE service is to:

- provide specialist advice and support to agencies on managing employee conduct and work performance
- collect conduct and performance management data from agencies to identify emerging issues, good practice and opportunities to further develop capability across the public sector
- monitor timeliness benchmarks for managing inappropriate conduct. Case categorisation (from least to most serious) and benchmarks are designed to improve consistency, resolve issues faster (and in proportion with the issue), and use public resources more efficiently
- build practical skills and capability through training on recruitment, selection and onboarding; setting performance goals and providing feedback; managing employee complaints and interpersonal conflict; and management action and discipline processes.

In 2015, for the first time, the PSC published information regarding agencies, number, types and management of work performance matters.

As a proportion of the public sector profile, work performance matters represent 1.71 per cent of the Queensland public sector with 0.13 per cent of the workforce reported for the most serious breach of conduct expectations. This is a very small number of employees, relative to the size of the sector, and overwhelmingly demonstrates that the majority of public sector employees are meeting or exceeding standards expected of them.

Addressing poor conduct quickly is of paramount importance to mitigating risks such behaviour can present to both the agency and affected staff. A total of 58 per cent of all reported work performance matters (2014–15) were finalised within the benchmark of the CaPE case categorisation framework. The performance target is 75 per cent and timeliness of management action will be a focus in 2015–16.

Future focus: accountability

Perceptions of organisational fairness among Queensland public sector employees is an area in need of improvement.

The Queensland Government has committed to taking the lead in this area with a renewed focus on traditional Westminster values of government which will support improved public sector integrity, transparency and accountability, and ultimately, better outcomes for Queensland.

Enhancing the capabilities of public sector leaders and HR practitioners in promoting excellent performance and managing poor performance is a key focus of CaPE.