

Teachers 'with a record'

MILES KEMP

NEW teachers are being allowed into the school system despite convictions for such offences as car theft, shoplifting, damaging property, reckless driving, cannabis possession and lying to police.

Parents have called for more information on how new and returning teachers are allowed registration after information obtained by *The Advertiser* shows the Teachers Registration Board, which soon will be the subject of

a parliamentary inquiry, allowed nine new teachers, with 16 convictions, to register in the past year.

The new teacher with the longest list of convictions was an unregistered, uninsured driver who drove a defective car in a reckless manner in 1986, for which he lost his licence and was fined. He also was found guilty of petty larceny (1990), damaging property (1991) and possessing cannabis (1992).

SA Association of State School Organisations director David

Knuckey called for more transparency in how the registrations were allowed to proceed and said parents did not know teachers were being allowed registration despite such offences.

The association last year successfully lobbied for a Parliamentary inquiry into the TRB, to be conducted this year. Since 2005 the TRB has had the right to carry out police checks on all new and serving South Australian teachers.

The figures were released for the

first time because of an electronic database established in March last year and a Freedom of Information request from Family First MLC Robert Brokenshire.

"The system is working because it seems to be finding those with criminal convictions but if a teacher has numerous convictions the department should have a monitoring process to help with their rehabilitation," he said.

Mr Knuckey said SAASO was concerned the TRB had never fined

a teacher for misconduct. TRB registrar Wendy Hastings defended the system, arguing many factors were taken into account when applicants with criminal backgrounds were considered, including the relevance to teaching, child protection, if a weapon or violence was involved and age at the time of the offence.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith said that since 2004, SA had the toughest criminal checks of teachers of any state.

It's just so cool to sing for a healthy future

MARTINA SIMOS

MEADOWS Primary School students are singing for a healthy supper with a new, educational CD.

The hip-hop CD will be used in a campaign to promote sport and a healthy lifestyle. The "Turning to Sport for Good Health" campaign will be launched in Diabetes Week in July.

The 17-student choir sings back-up vocals for *Turn to Sport and Play for Life* by Port Lincoln singer/songwriter Kristen Lawler.

"I think people will like it because it is nice and sporty and most people like sport," Mitchell, 10, said. Elly, 12, said going into a recording studio was "pretty cool".

Principal Jacqueline Stratford said students who attend the after-school program can participate in different sports each term. "We use locals who've got expertise where we can," she said.



IN THE SWING: Meadows Primary School students Jacob, Elly, Mitchell and Jade exercise their voices yesterday.

Picture: NAOMI JELICOE



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