



Parents back school rape inquiry

MICHAEL OWEN | THE AUSTRALIAN | SEPTEMBER 11, 2013 12:00AM

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A SCHOOL parents' association has strongly backed a new inquiry into unanswered questions from a royal commission into the rape of a child at a government school -- a crime kept from parents for two years -- despite strong objections by South Australian Labor Premier Jay Weatherill.

The state parliament's upper house is due to vote today on a motion proposed by Family First to establish a select committee of inquiry into issues arising from a damning royal commission report released in July.

The motion is set to pass with the unanimous support of opposition and crossbench MPs. A letter from the South Australian Association of State School Organisations, the peak body for parents and school governing councils, has been sent to parliament urging a new inquiry "in the interests of our children's safety".

"There was limited opportunity for broad community input into the (royal commission) inquiry . . . the process was rushed," the letter, obtained by The Australian, says.

This will come as a blow to the Premier, who stepped up his attack on the planned inquiry on Monday, vowing not to co-operate with it and warning that it would be a "political circus" ahead of the state election due in March.

SAASSO president Gino Amato says in the letter that parents had been alerting the government to serious culture problems in its disclosure policies since 2007, but the problems "appear to have worsened and spread . . . misinformation, lack of co-operation and outright fiction are not uncommon".

Mr Amato asks why the government had, since 2010, refused to even consider establishing an education ombudsman.

The letter claims that at the heart of the sex-abuse case is whether the department gagged the governing council.

If the Education Department had not intervened and the governing council had been left to do its job, SAASSO claims, the cover-up would not have happened and parents in that school community would have been told immediately of the "horrific offence committed".

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