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“Is this really what we want young people to be doing?”



– MOVING BACK HOME. Page 27.

“Last year’s national apology has seen many more taking part.”



– EMBRACING RECONCILIATION WEEK. Page 60.

“It is unfair for the changes to the Youth Allowance... to commence in 2010”



– DEBATING THE NEW INDEPENDENCE TEST. Page 61.

# ‘No-confidence’ vote on bullying

CALLIE WATSON

**P**ARENTS have “lost confidence” in schools’ ability to deal with bullying, with up to one in three saying their child had been bullied and attempts to stop it were unsuccessful.

An EducationNow survey reveals a high level of bullying at school, with 41.3 per cent of parents admitting their child had been a victim.

Of the 259 parents who responded, almost one third (29.2 per cent) said their child had been bullied and the school had not solved the problem.

This includes one mother who was told by a teacher that her son needed to “toughen up like the old days” after she approached him about bullying on three separate occasions.

## WHAT PARENTS SAY

“I approached a teacher on three occasions about some problems our son was having and was told the last time that maybe he needs to ‘toughen up like the old days’. I was shocked and when our son came to us in desperation, I said just hit him (the bully) back as a last resort.”

– MOTHER OF A YEAR 7 STUDENT BULLIED TWO YEARS AGO.

“My daughter went from independent to extremely clingy and we found out that bullying was primarily behind it. I was nervous about approaching the school, but found they were extremely helpful. They implemented different strategies, such as asking how the kids felt when they got back after recess and lunch, and it made a massive difference.”

– MOTHER OF A RECEPTION STUDENT.

“I found it took a while for something to be done. The initial reaction from the teacher and the subsequent meeting about bullying didn’t get too far. But once I’d pushed the issue even further I found it was resolved. I thought the school could have been a bit more proactive.”

– FATHER OF A YEAR 9 STUDENT.



concern about ostracising people, but they (teachers and principals) don’t know quite what to do to handle the issue; that’s the consistent picture that we get,” he said.

“What we’re seeing is parents who have lost confidence in approaching the school about bullying.”

Past research suggests one in six children will report being bullied at some time at school.

South Australian Association of State School Organisations president David Knuckey said the survey results suggested bullying was being under-reported.

“... You’ve got to wonder if (parents) know what processes are in place for them to interact and get something done,” Mr Knuckey said.

Child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg said some schools lacked the resources to tackle the issue.

“The common denominator among the schools that aren’t handling bullying well is that they are often impoverished and don’t have the resources to handle it (bullying) properly,” he said.

The documented consequences of bullying include truancy, anxiety and depression, Dr Carr-Gregg said.

Other findings from the report

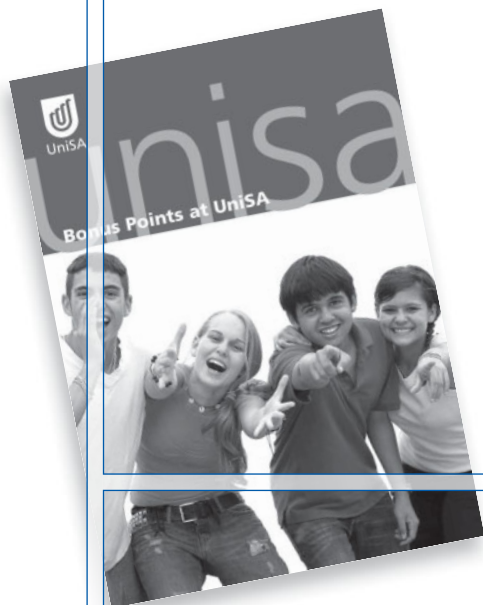
show more than half of primary school and high school teachers surveyed believe students proven guilty of bullying should be suspended. They took the hardest stance on punishing proven bullies.

Dr Cross said this was because teachers were at the “coalface”. “The school system itself is not following through and adequately dealing with the bully.”

An Education Department spokeswoman said an anti-bullying policy was required at public schools.

The State Government’s Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australia has also been established.

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