

Parents 'left in the dark'

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THE state's peak parent school body is calling for an inquiry into the Teacher Registration Board to address concerns over secrecy.

SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey said it was also "deeply concerned" that the 16-member board had an insufficient representation of parents and school bodies.

He added that parents were

being "left in the dark" over the number of complaints made against teachers each year.

"Every year there are numerous and disturbing complaints brought against public school teachers," he said. "Unfortunately, almost all aspects of the process, review and procedure are kept secret by the board."

Mr Knuckey said his organisation was calling for a parliamentary committee to be established, which already had the support of independent and Liberal MPs.

Among the concerns are:

THE inadequate representation of parents, police, principals and school organisations.

THE failure to involve school organisations when reviewing professional standards for teachers.

THE refusal to release data on the total number of complaints against teachers received.

Last year, the Teachers Registration Board heard 11 inquiries which resulted in the disqualification, cancellation or suspension of teachers' registrations.

Another 16 hearings were held in relation to inexperience or the capacity of teachers to teach.

But the names of the teachers and exact details of the complaints were not made public.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith yesterday defended the board, saying SA now had the "toughest" teacher registration requirements in state history.

Opposition education spokesman David Pisoni said he supported the inquiry, saying parents and school groups deserved access to complaints data.

THE BOARD'S MAKE-UP:

2 Independent Education Union;
5 Australian Education Union;
1 Catholic Education Office;
3 Education and Children's Services Department; 1 Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA); 1 University;
1 Independent chairperson; 1 lawyer;
1 parent of school student.
The last three reps are nominated by the Minister.

WHO PARENTS WANT: Police, more parents, SA Association of State School Organisation representative, principals, child welfare expert.

On the horns of a patriotic dilemma



NAILED: A reveller wearing an Australian flag is tossed by a calf yesterday during the third running of the bulls at the Los San Fermes Festival in Pamplona, northern Spain. It happened one day after an Australian was injured and an Irish spectator died during the festival. Throngs of thrill-seekers have poured into Pamplona for the annual event. Pictures: ALVARO BARRIENTOS/AP