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Parents: Let us have the power

THE body representing parents of public school students wants the State Government to form a panel of parents and bureaucrats to devise a policy for releasing information about serious school incidents.

The request by the SA Association of State School Organisations was prompted by revelations of at least six incidents of a serious sexual nature that occurred in schools over the past five years but which were kept from parents.

SAASSO vice-president Lauren Hindle wrote to former Education Minister Grace Portolesi in November saying parents had "little faith" in the Government's internal review processes and wanted more control over what information they were given about incidents - including sexual abuse but also bullying, violence or other concerns - in schools in future.

She said parents were "fed up

POLITICAL REPORTER

LAUREN NOVAK



with token consultation". "Parents want to decide when they will be told if a paedophile has had access to their children.

"They want to decide for themselves what rights they have."

A SAASSO survey found 95 per cent of parents wanted more involvement in reviewing department and police policies which guide when parents should be told about school incidents.

The panel proposed by SAASSO would comprise three parents, three bureaucrats and an independent, non-voting chairperson.

Ms Portolesi wrote back to Ms Hindle in late December but her letter was not delivered until mid-last month.

She did not directly address the suggestion of a parent panel but instead referred to an inquiry into the school sex cases commissioned by the Government and being undertaken by former Supreme Court justice Bruce DeBelle.

Mr DeBelle is expected to deliver his findings early this year and make recommendations about disclosure procedures that should followed in future.

New Education Minister Jennifer Rankine took over from Ms Portolesi in a Cabinet reshuffle last month.

She told *The Advertiser* she would consider SAASSO's proposal in conjunction with Mr DeBelle's recommendations and those of a separate taskforce.

Opposition education spokesman David Pisoni said there was no merit in forming a panel, instead arguing it should be the "default position" of the department to inform parents.

Head-turning new shades



Helen MIRREN



Nicki MINAJ



Christina AGUILERA



CANDY COLOURS: Alexandra from Finesse Models Australia with red hair extensions and Parlour Hair's Lauren Cooper with lavender hair. **Picture: MARK BRAKE**

ANNA VLACH FASHION EDITOR

YOU only live once, so why not have red or purple hair to dye for? Famously worn in the '70s by *Are You Being Served?* character Mrs Slocombe, who had a penchant for pink and purple rinses, candy-

coloured hair is making a comeback.

Women of all ages are flaunting the look including the normally pale blonde Helen Mirren, who had pink hair on the red carpet at the BAFTAs.

"I just thought it would be fun to dye my hair pink," Mirren said.

Other famous faces to try the pastel hair trend include singers Nicki Minaj and Christina Aguilera.

Hairdresser Lauren Cooper, 22, who works at Parlour Hair Unley, has dyed her locks lavender but has also had blue and pink hair.

"You have to bleach

all the colour out of your hair so it's light blonde and then tone it to the colour," she said.

Pastel hair and bright colours like the red extensions worn by Alexandra from Finesse Models Australia were favoured by "fashion forward" types, Ms Cooper said.