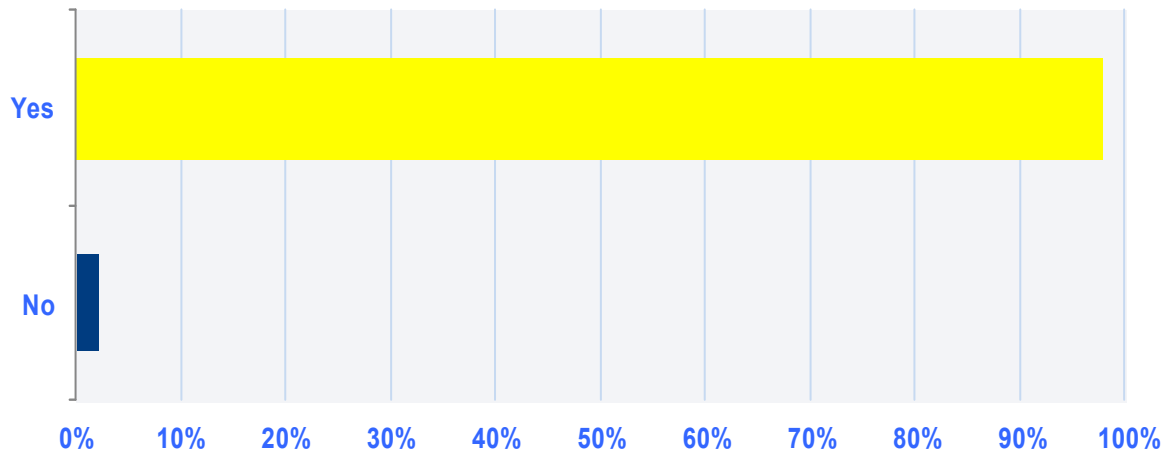




Should A Children's Commissioner Have The Power To Investigate Individual Complaints?



More than a decade ago another Royal Commission said we needed a 'Commissioner for Children'.

Three years ago, in the wake of the DeBelle Royal Commission, the Weatherill Government announced that we would finally get a Children's Commissioner.

However, the Weatherill Government's proposal was a Commissioner who could not actually investigate or do anything about any individual complaint.

Stakeholders, such as SAASSO, The Law Society & the Australian Medical Association were unanimous in their criticism that such a Commissioner would be a 'Toothless Tiger' - Then, nothing happened.

In the wake of the Nyland Royal Commission, the Weatherill Government has again announced that we will get a Children's Commissioner - still refusing to give a Commissioner powers to investigate individual complaints.

Last week, SAASSO asked members what powers a Children's Commissioner should have....

- 91.16% of respondents were parents
- 22.61% worked in a school.

- 97.8% of respondents want a commissioner to be able to individual complaints.

- 89.69% want a commissioner to then have the power to intervene in individual cases.

- 95.84% want a Children's Commissioner to be independent of the State Government.

From their votes and comments, parents and school staff are not confident in the capacity of the Weatherill Government to protect children.

- 91.98% of parents want a commissioner to be able to intervene in individual cases - compared with 66.23% of non-parents.

A slightly higher percentage of school staff want investigative powers for a commissioner, than non-staff.

Principals were the most emphatic; with the highest percentages wanting greater powers for all three questions.

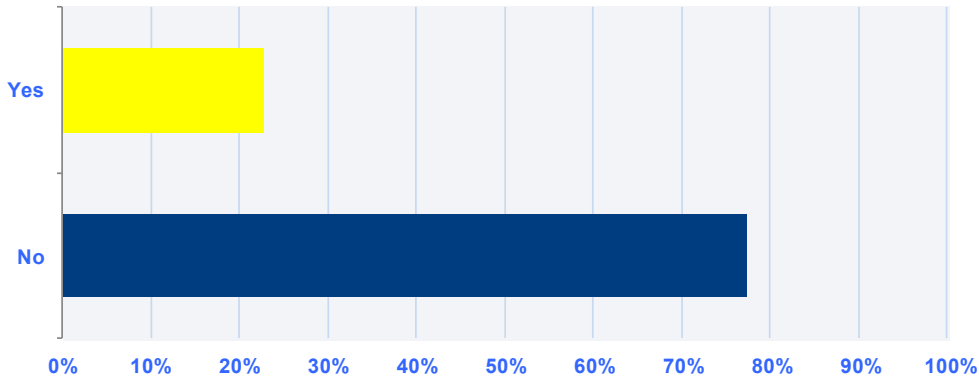
- 100% of principals voted for investigative powers for a Children's Commissioner

- 96.71% of parents and 95.38% of teachers voted for an independent commissioner.

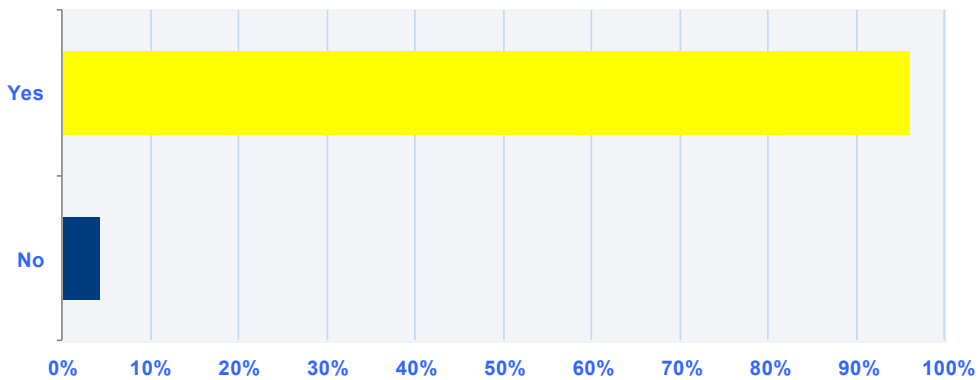
“Someone needs to protect our children”



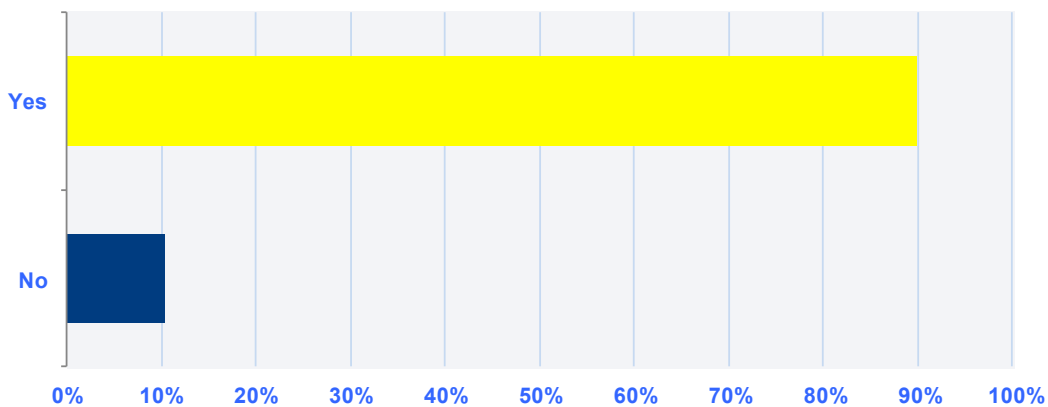
Do you work in a school?



Should a commissioner be independent of the government?



Should a commissioner have the power to intervene in individual cases?



Selected Comments



Too many children are slipping through the net. It is time to act now and give these children an voice.

We need someone we can trust and rely on.

To be effective a commissioner needs royal commission powers.

How is this even a debate?

It seems Jay's not for SA's kids.

Parents need somewhere to go to complain about how these disgraceful state government departments treat our children.

How many royal commissions will it take before Weatherill gets the message?

When it comes to protecting our children, if it's Weatherill's idea, you know it won't work.

Weatherill's plan is an advocate for a government that doesn't want anymore scandal.

A commissioner with no power? What an idiotic idea!

Toothless tiger - just what we need!

Same old merry go round another royal commission to tell us what the last one recommended. The commissioner can't be a toothless tiger they must have the power to make decisions for the kids and act in their best interests.

We don't trust these government departments. Why does Weatherill understand this?

Someone needs to protect our children.

Another Weatherill mistake.

If parents, lawyers and doctors all say it's a good idea, you can be sure Weatherill won't do it.

We should be more concerned with the selection process for a commissioner. If it's the same people who've appointed the last lot of CEOs for DECD, god help us.

This is no brainer!

You would need more than one commissioner to deal with all the complaints in this state.

Maybe jay could sack a few of his spin doctors and pay for some real child protection instead.

I work for the department and the message is don't ask don't tell.

How can Weatherill justify an advocate for children with no power?

Weatherill wants a toothless tiger

We don't need more reports. We need someone who can hold this incompetent government to account

A Children's Commissioner should have comparable powers as the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption - as they relate to offences against children.

If a position is going to be created that will certainly be well paid it must be unique, be able to achieve things, be free from govt but be accountable to someone.

it's well overdue. The commissioner needs FULL authoritative power to act on the behalf of children/situations under their review.

Children's Commission should be over power of any Government or private company it is about the welfare of our children. We need more workers out there working through a back log and get on top of this. It is outrageous we even have to discuss this in this day and age.

Children do not have a voice in the systems of our state. A fully independent Children's Commissioner with the power to investigate and intervene in individual cases is the ONLY way to give children a voice and give them the protection they deserve and have a right to have.

Our children deserve the right to be represented fairly and equitably. Without independent investigations, and the power to act on the findings, our most vulnerable citizens- our children- are without voice.

Might as well not have a 'Commissioner for Children' if they do not have investigative powers. Govt. were dragged kicking and screaming to have an ICAC. None of ICAC's findings are transparent!!!!!!! Why have one. Smells of a cover up!!!!!!!

Who is going to choose this commissioner? Another of Weatherill's mates?

How long until Theres a royal commission into coverups by the children's commissioner?

A child advocate who cannot advocate. What is the point?

No independence. No trust. It's that simple.

This government cannot be trusted.

So there will still be nobody we can turn to that we can trust?

Another government puppet

Toothless tiger indeed!

Disgraceful government

Another episode of Weatherill ignoring parents

It is obvious that the government has been unable satisfactorily protect children at risk from harm. An independent Commissioner for Children would be able to assess the high risk cases without having to worry about political concerns and put in place solutions that put the child's safety and wellbeing first.

The scope and legal framework within which the commissioner might intervene would need to be very clearly specified.

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