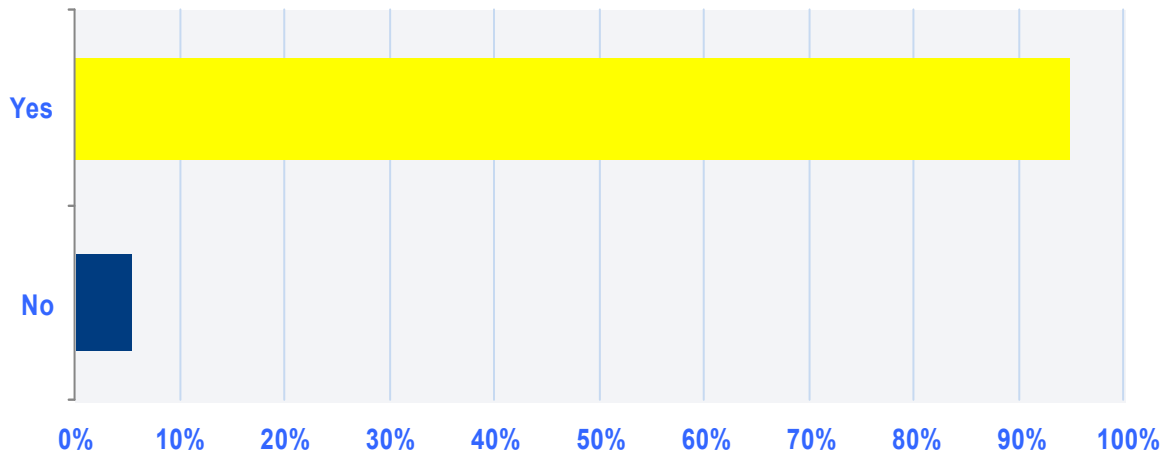




## Should Parents Have To Pass A Police Check To Volunteer In Schools?



In January 2016, the Weatherill State Government relaxed the rules on police checks for people volunteering in our public schools.

In recent years, the estimated 140,000 checks needed per year in SA created a bottleneck that saw workers and volunteers wait months to be cleared.

Recent FOI documents revealed dozens of people had failed police checks in the last two years - dozens of people who could now volunteer in schools with no check into their background.

SAASSO recently conducted a survey of members, asking parents and school staff whether all volunteers - including parents - should have to pass a criminal history check. The survey collected more than 1,000 unique responses.

- An overwhelming 94.44% of respondents stated that all volunteers - including parents - should be required to pass a police check in order to volunteer in schools.
- 96% of respondents also want the Weatherill Government to increase funding so that all volunteers can be checked in a timely manner.

Parents and staff were clear in their comments that the safety of their children far outweighs the financial costs of testing all volunteers.

- 76.29% of respondents volunteer in schools.
- 22.45% work in schools.
- 90.55% identified themselves as parents.
- 94.72% of respondents had undergone a police clearance.

92% of school staff stated that the Weatherill Government should increase funding for police checks. This includes 90% of school principals.

9 out of 10 school principals want all parents checked in order to volunteer in schools.

95% of parents want all parents checked in order to volunteer in schools.

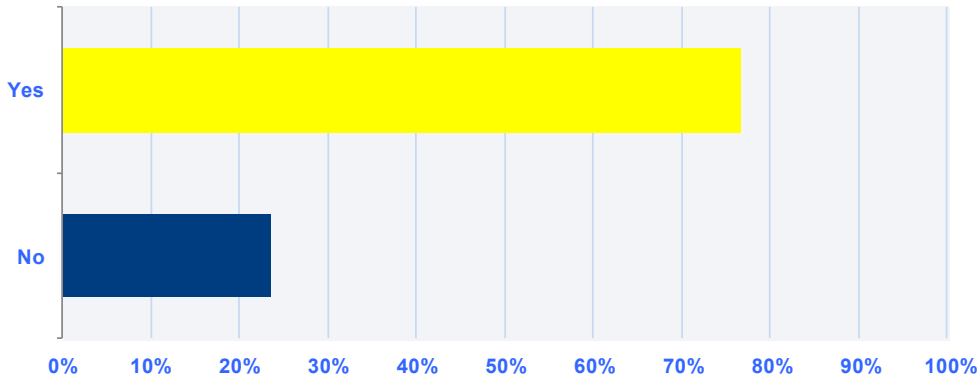
Those who had undergone a police check (95%) were far more likely to want criminal history checks for all than those who had not (70%)

Of those who do not believe parents should be police-checked, most did not volunteer in schools.

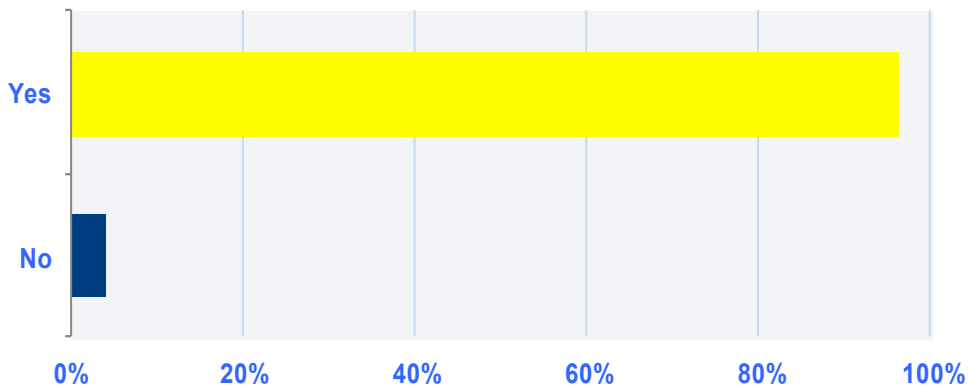
*“Yes, please check us!”*



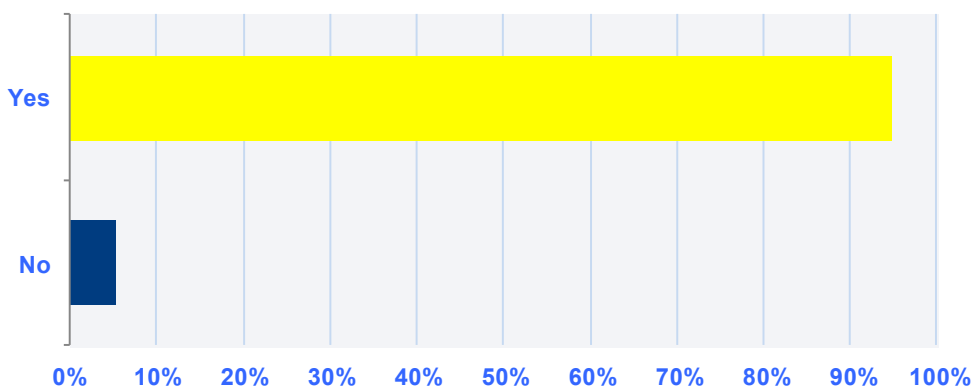
**Do you volunteer in a school?**



**Should the Weatherill Government increase funding so that all volunteers are checked in a timely manner?**



**Have you undergone a criminal history check?**



## Selected Comments



I personally have spent a lot of hours, time, training parents/staff in regards to making sure that all our parent/school volunteers are screened and have an understanding of this. We set up a data base so staff could check easily who could be in the class to volunteer and who could go on excursions. I was very disappointed when I found out that the rules were relaxed. With all the issues in the media one wonders the stupidity of Government why they would change something so very important which covers volunteers and their safety.

Relaxing this rule at the beginning of 2016 made a joke of all of the hard work we did to put processes in place to ensure all volunteers were screened. You cannot have a half cocked rule when it comes to the safety of children.

Staff working in schools should have a police check. Volunteers who work directly with children should work under the visible supervision of teacher.

Thank you for opportunity to partake in survey. :o)

What is Weatherill thinking?

Vitally important this is done to protect our children!

Words fail me!

They don't seem to know what to do

Unfair to place the responsibility on principals. We have enough to do.

When will Weatherill learn?

The safety of our children is paramount and goes beyond money!

If you don't need clearance if you are working with one of your family being a student in that group you do not require clearance but if a family member is not part of the group you are working/helping with then you are required to have clearance. This is very difficult to police and can become embarrassing to be constantly asked about the clearance or relationship to the group. Clearance for all is a better way to go.

Schools should be a safe environment for our children as a parent I feel better knowing that the right checks have been done so my kids are safe.

Have a specific office & many personnel to do the checking.

It is the schools responsibility for all volunteers and governing council members to have a police check.

Every adult that has close contact with a student must be police checked to ensure no student is put at risk. The school has a duty of care to provide a safe learning environment .

Having 3 school aged children I believe that everyone who is in contact with them should be checked and cleared

Everyone should have a police check

This government just doesn't learn.

Yes, please check us!

Some clarification on what offences exclude people would be terrific.

If all school volunteers are again required to have a police check, I hope this won't reduce supervision of volunteers or relax vigilance about how volunteers interact with children. Having a police clearance does not necessarily make a person trustworthy or safe or effective around children.

there should be a national online system that is streamlined and done once a year

Children need to be protected regardless of the cost. If they don't want the increase in work load - then why not put the onus back onto the SAPOL - VOAN system how it used to be. Then if people need a police check they can do it for free or a discounted cost of their own, and not at the cost of the Education Dept.

there needs to be a single police check that can be verified across all services by carrying a card - I have 3 different police checks, which is time consuming and costly and redundant.

It is important that school students work in safe secure environments, trusting parents as volunteers is passing too much responsibility to school staff, everyone should be required to complete a check to ensure the safety of all.

How can Weatherill think not checking backgrounds will protect children?

The government is more concerned with saving money than protecting our children.

Ridiculous idea. Clearly this government knows nothing about child abuse. For shame.

We are trying to protect these children and the government keeps making it more difficult.

This latest change is nothing more than a cost cutting exercise.

This is a no-brainer in the light of the Child Protection System Royal Commission

This government has many issues regarding child abuse and to stop police checks is absolutely ridiculous. Time they started accepting responsibility and put the money where their mouth is!!!

there should be a national card system. South Australia is the only state that does not have a system where one check covers all environments.... do what vic and nsw do for simplicity .... so much better

If police checks are taking more than a month to process then it would be important to find out why the delays are occurring and implement appropriated changes which may include more funding.

If we aren't ensuring we provide the safest area possible for our students to be in at schools, who will be looking after our vulnerable children?

I believe parents should be checked regardless... as all parents generally work with their own child and then others when they're reading.