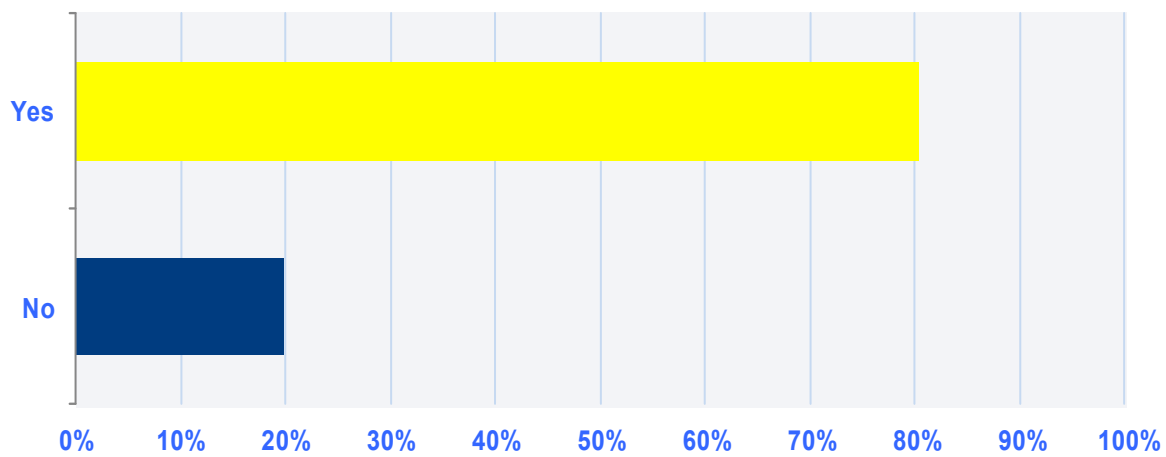




### Should The Weatherill Government Toughen Laws To Make It Easier to Prosecute Bullies - Including Jail Time Of Up To 10 Years?



In the wake of the tragic suicide of a young bullying victim, new laws are being put to the government to make it easier for police to prosecute bullies. These laws include up to 10 years jail for extreme offenders.

Both the police and the parents of the victim support the new laws - modelled on Victoria's 'Brodie's Law', people who cause physical or mental harm to another person through bullying would face up to 10 years in jail.

Last week, SAASSO asked parents and school staff what they think of tougher anti-bullying laws....

Asked if the Weatherill government should toughen laws on bullying:

- 80.12% voted - 'Yes'
- 19.88% voted - 'No'.

Over 1200 votes were received - with 92.98% being from parents.

51.45% of votes were from school staff - the first time school staff have been the majority of responders.

81.45% of school staff support tougher laws, compared with 79.25% of non-school staff.

Parents and non-parents were equally supportive of the proposal, with and 80.16% and 78.82% respectively voting for tougher laws.

In another first, the largest block of school staff responses came from teachers.

School staff voting yes to tougher laws, included:

- 71.65% of principals
- 80.65% of teachers
- 87.69% of SSO's
- 90.27% of 'other' school staff.

Comments showed that parents and educators acknowledge that police prosecution is a drastic step - but one that is sadly necessary to combat a plague of unchecked bullying.

School staff stated they simply do not have the resources to tackle extreme cases.

There were also numerous comments lamenting the lack of action from the Weatherill Government since the recent, tragic suicide.

## Selected Comments



Bullies need to be stopped. I applaud your leadership here.

Jay is overseas. Close is MIA. Family First is trying to change laws. Who is running the state?

We aren't equipped to deal with prolonged bullying in schools.

Current consequences aren't working, too many kids suffering.

Bullying needs to be addressed as it is a common problem in schools. There needs to be severe consequences for the offender....but jail time is probably a bit extreme!

I haven't always agreed with things SAASSO says, but recently they have been raising issues that need to be addressed. These surveys generate debate and provide a perspective other than the same old talking heads.

Another child protection failure by Weatherill.

I strongly agree with enacting a bully law.

I have both been a victim of bullying while at school and I have now seen it first hand while working at a school. The problem has only become worse, not better.

My daughter and son were both victims of constant bullying at their school. The school did little to support the victims. As a result we had to send our daughter to a private school where bullying is not tolerated and if it happens there are consequences.

Not sure jail is the answer but there needs to be consequence that stops the behaviours ...

The law should be changed but 10 years is very harsh when bullying is a culture at school. Schools need also to be held responsible as they let this happen on their watch, they turn a blind eye to what is happening.

Has Jay left SA?

The department doesn't want to know. The parents aren't around. Schools are left to deal with it.

Stiff jail penalties should apply.. trial minors as adults if necessary. Keep our children safe.

Why have we heard nothing from minister Close about this latest suicide. Trying to lie low until the election.

Children are dying in school - anybody know where our premier is?

How about we prosecute those who fail in their duty of care?!

The problem I have found is bullying is not reported because of the repercussions.

Where does SAASSO come up with these ideas?

Tougher laws, yes. But how are you going to prosecute?

Good work SAASSO

Not much help after someone dies.

It's a crime. Treat it like one.

I never thought I'd be praising family first but somebody has to do something. Where is the education minister?

It should also extend to students who bully teachers and principals who bully staff.

There is much less respect from children & young adults due to less discipline in the world today.

My 11 year old daughter has been bullied for the last 12 months. This has ranged from being physically hit, emotionally hurt, psychological bullying. The school has done as much as they can for her but it is not enough. Safety is meant to be paramount with children, but that can not be provided for my child. She has been hospitalised for anxiety and failure to eat.

There is too much bullying in schools to staff as well as students. Maybe someone needs to make staff accountable for the way they treat other staff.

My son was severely bullied and was suicidal at 8. The principal supported the bullies and did not help my son. He came home bruised or bleeding every day. I brought it up with the education department and have emails to show this. Nothing was done. I would like to see teachers who actively turn a blind eye (I have proof this happened) to be held accountable.

I don't necessarily agree with jail time for teenage bullies, but community service at least to make them understand the seriousness of the consequences.

We need to have properly qualified counsellors in every school, not teachers who think they know what they're doing.

Is Close still minister?

One should not lose a life because of someone else's actions. It has become too common of late.

Personal friend of the child that died, Victim of bullying at school - schools and police need more power to stop this.

If it was a union workplace Jay would be all over it.

As a deterrent, actioning consequences is a bold and positive move. I believe police need more powers to follow up on this behaviour.

Bullying can change the outcome of a child for their future and should be stopped by all ways possible.

I am a parent of a child that has self harmed themselves after traumatic bullying through several methods. There is no place for bullying in any form, in a school, community or society.

It should happen now as it should have been in place years ago.

Extreme but necessary.

Lost my niece at 16 to teen suicide through bullying. These people need to be made accountable.

Bullying in DECD. Are we really shocked at bullying in schools.

A better question would be, 'how is bullying not already a crime?'

Good to see parents being included in decision-making.