



Parent patrol

Mums and dads go wild

**Katie Robertson
and Jessica Evans**

A “PARENT police” team should be set up to investigate bullying mums and dads who attack school principals and teachers.

The controversial proposal comes after a three-year study on the health and wellbeing of 2000 school leaders across the country found they were regularly threatened with violence.

Key findings from the study, by Monash University researcher Philip Riley, were obtained by the *Sunday Herald Sun* ahead of the report’s release.

Dr Riley said each state should create its own independent taskforce with the power to interview teachers, parents and students about offensive behaviour in schools. He said it should

have full legal powers and the ability to forward concerns to the police.

Other recommendations include more training for principals on the emotional aspects of teaching and more mental health support. But Dr Riley said the taskforce should be the priority.

“This recommendation is the most urgent: the need to look for the causes, and reduce the levels, of adult-to-adult bullying, threats and actual violence,” the report said.

Dr Riley said most school principals face six times the incidence of physical violence than those in other professions, with the majority of the threats coming from aggressive parents.

He blamed NAPLAN tests

and a “surveillance culture” in schools, in which parents were increasingly anxious when schools were not performing when tested.

Victorian Association of Secondary Schools Principals president Frank Sal has called for government support for teachers who are threatened by parents.

“There is a small percentage of parents who feel they have the right to behave in an unsatisfactory manner that can turn to verbal or physical assaults,” Mr Sal said.

“Schools and principals go out of their way to work with parents, but parents can’t always expect that they will get exactly what they want.”