

Experts warn parents too much homework may do children more harm than good

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PARENTS have been warned against pressuring their children to do hours of homework every night as it can do more harm than good, warns one of the nation's top education academics.

Education guru Professor John Hattie makes the call in an upcoming documentary as new research shows 70 per cent of parents believe regular homework at high school is crucial to student success.

The ABC television show shines a light on the stress students are under to perform, including a student, 12, who toils away at his studies until 11.30pm.

SA Secondary Principals Association (SASPA) President Peter Mader, said his organisation was against any concept of homework being regarded as "busy time".

"We are against students being asked to do work that is unrelated to their studies but is given just to keep them busy," he said. "I'm not suggesting schools would do that deliberately but it is a consequence of parents demanding schools set more homework."

He said SASPA was focused on the 21st century learning model of the "flipped" classroom.

"That's where the old homework model is flipped on its head so you get your first level of knowledge at home digitally through the portal via podcasts from teachers before you enter the classroom where you then deepen your knowledge" he said. "We shouldn't be focused on homework but the continuation of learning some of which happens in the school and some at home."

A public attitudes survey commissioned for the TV series, *Revolution School*, found 55 per cent of parents felt strict enforcement of homework improved academic results.

But Prof Hattie, of the University of Melbourne, said it could actually have the opposite impact. "The involvement of parents, maintaining and making sure the kids do their homework, sometimes can be negative,"

said Prof Hattie on the show. “The biggest effect parents can have is on their sense of encouragement and expectation for the students.”

His research has found that five to 10 minutes of homework can be just as important as one to two hours in secondary school.

President of the SA Association for School Parent Clubs, Jenice Zerna, said moderation in the setting of homework provided the best environment. “Some children need it and some don’t but we haven’t heard of any parents pressuring schools to give their children extra homework,” Ms Zerna said. “We believe a balance works best as it’s important children can also participate in after school activities.”