

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOME SCHOOLING

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Questions Taken on Notice by BOSTES officers during the hearing on 7 October 2014

- 1. How many requests for an internal review has the BOSTES received since 2010? How many of these internal reviews have resulted in the original recommendation to refuse registration being overturned?**

Since 2010, the BOSTES has received 20 requests for an internal review of a recommendation to refuse home schooling registration pursuant to the *Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997* ('the ADR Act').

For 11 of these requests, the recommendation to refuse home schooling registration was set aside and registration granted as a result of the review which provided the opportunity for the applicant to provide additional information.

- 2. How many applicants have sought a statutory review of a BOSTES' recommendation to refuse registration since 2010? How many of the BOSTES' recommendations have been overturned as a result of a statutory review?**

Since 2010, one applicant has sought a statutory review of a BOSTES' recommendation to refuse home schooling registration pursuant to the ADR Act. This matter is still before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

- 3. What precise training do Authorised Persons receive?**

Authorised Persons receive initial and ongoing training.

The initial training of Authorised Persons involves an induction process including direct input, shared and supervised home visits and regular follow up support and debriefing.

The one day induction training program focuses on the following content:

- the role of an Authorised Person – legislative and organisational context
- the BOSTES' *Registration for Home Schooling in NSW – Information Package* and *Authorised Persons Handbook*

- BOSTES expectations for working as an Authorised Person, with particular reference to the BOSTES' Code of Conduct and Ethics, information security and Work Health and Safety
- child protection legislation including Authorised Person's obligations with regard to mandatory reporting
- the BOSTES' process for exchange of information under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- the diverse range of approaches to home schooling
- the process for making initial contact with applicants
- the process for assessing an application for registration by home visit
- requirements for the educational program and common approaches to developing a home schooling educational program
- resources commonly used by home schooling families
- alternative and equivalent Courses - TAFE and Year 10
- administrative procedures including records management, allocations and invoices
- guidelines for making recommendations regarding registration
- report writing.

Other components involve:

- a minimum of two days of 'shadowing' an experienced Authorised Person during the assessment of a range of different types of applications and contexts
- reviewing the report writing process for the 'shadowed' visits
- leading two to three assessments under the supervision of an experienced Authorised Person
- drafting reports for the supervised visits
- debriefing the induction process
- regular contact by telephone and email to provide feedback and additional guidance
- identifying and planning to address further training needs and support, as relevant.

Authorised Persons also participate in routine one day briefings in relation to ongoing training needs. Briefings are conducted two to three times each year. The purpose of the briefings is to provide:

- ongoing training and guidance
- input on emerging issues and policy matters
- collegial discussion and reflection on the Authorised Person role and responsibilities
- opportunities for sharing information, expertise and experiences
- opportunities for clarifying understandings
- opportunities for strengthening consistency of judgement
- opportunities for questions and answers.

Each agenda for the Authorised Persons' briefings includes the following items:

- curriculum awareness and update
- child protection awareness and update
- the BOSTES' Code of Conduct and Ethics
- reviewing a sample of educational programs taking into account the diverse range of approaches
- sharing strategies to assist with consistency of judgement
- other topical matters.

Some of the recent 'other topical matters' have included:

- Home Education Association (HEA) – a presentation by the then HEA President
- different approaches to home schooling: review and discussion of 12 different approaches
- approaches to home schooling for children with special needs
- current research relating to Autism Spectrum Disorders
- using digital resources in a home schooling environment
- child well-being issues: DEC Student Welfare Directorate
- report writing workshops
- providing advice about the Certificate of Completion of Year 10 and BOSTES' Stage 6 curriculum
- BOSTES' Program Builder and Scootle resources: access for home schooling families
- Work Health and Safety issues
- distance education: presentation by the DEC.

The agenda for each briefing is also responsive to suggestions from Authorised Persons, feedback from home schooling parents and emerging issues.

Each briefing session is evaluated by all participants and feedback informs future briefing sessions.

Feedback from the mentoring and monitoring programs also contributes to the ongoing training of Authorised Persons.

4. Provide an overview of the background of Authorised Persons in terms of how many are from the government sector and how many are from the non-government sector and how many are retired teachers or principals?

The BOSTES employs on a casual basis 18 Authorised Persons in various regions throughout NSW. These Authorised Persons undertake most of the assessments for home schooling registration in NSW.

The following provides an overview of the background of these Authorised Persons in relation to previous education sector and role.

Background – education sector	Number
APs from government sector	13
APs from non-government sector	2
APs with experience in both sectors	3

Background – previous role	Number
Principal	11
Coordinator/Head of Department/	6
Teacher	1

These Authorised Persons have an average of 26 years teaching experience.