

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I would like to make a brief submission on 1 (iii), in particular, the motivation of parents to home school their children.

I had five children all of whom were well educated in government schools. But if I had children today I would make any sacrifice to home school them. Why? Because I deplore the ideological biases and the pedagogical trendy fads that underlie contemporary education.

An example of the first is the uncritical acceptance of feminist and homosexual speculations - and they are only that - about the nature of the sexes. Children are being brainwashed into 'correct' thoughts that in many cases contradict their own parents' values. How dare strangers be so contemptuous of students' parents!

Australian children's educational performance would be vastly improved if they concentrated more on learning how to solve a quadratic equation and memorizing foreign language vocabulary lists. Instead they are encouraged to fret about their sexuality. Good grief! Such rubbish has hitherto never been seen as part of a good education.

My second objection is the focus on groups. Australian children from their most tender years are herded into groups. But groups don't think; only individuals do. I can only conclude that social conditioning, not genuine education, is the aim of modern schooling. And boy does it show: children and young people have little resilience these days. Is that what governments want? Unthinking citizens who are easily herded? Maybe it is.

My father left school at 10 years old. Yes 10. He could read fluently, calculate well enough for life's purposes and had beautiful handwriting. My mother left school after the old Intermediate. She too was intelligent, read for pleasure and had a lively interest in the world and current events. They weren't educated by today's standards, and lucky them. A friend of mine was homeschooled by her mother. In the morning there were lessons for her and her brothers, but the afternoons were free for them to roam the Barrington Tops as they pleased. She was one of the most intelligent and widely read person I've ever met. Such people used to develop their character, not their image.

I worked in a university for twenty years as a librarian and witnessed the educational decline in the undergraduates over that time. Many were functionally illiterate, most were hopelessly ignorant and gloried in their ignorance. Shelley Gare documented the type in her, "The Triumph of the Airheads". And these are the 'educated' ones!

My own grandson, an intelligent child, was taught by an amiable but ignorant teacher in primary school. He corrected the boy's work from, "Mary should have done her homework" to, "Mary should

OF done her homework". True. This person also encouraged the children to add up on their fingers because that's what he did. This same child, now in high school, was set a geography assignment to write to Environment Minister Greg Hunt objecting to activity in Tasmanian forests or the Great Barrier Reef. Since when has geography become training in environmental activism? Two of my siblings, ex-teachers, were shocked at such politicization of the classroom, as was I.

These are just some of the reasons I would opt for home-schooling children today. It is vastly superior to the mass warehousing of children into age cohorts that is the alternative. Far more humane too.

Thank you,