

**Submission
No 4**

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Cardinal Newman Catechist Consultants

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Submission on Home Schooling

for the Select Committee of the Parliament of NSW

from The Rev. B.J.H. Tierney, B.Sc., Dip.Ed.

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Official Research already available

The NSW Parliamentary Research Service, in August, 2013, published an [e-brief issue 7/2013](#), *HOME EDUCATION IN NSW*, by Talina Drabach. In 15 pages it documents with succinct thoroughness the state of Home Education in NSW and the other Australian states, with briefer coverage of UK and USA, . It concludes:

“Ultimately, much of the division of opinion centres around whether the greatest right and responsibility for a child’s education rests with the state or with parents.”

The NSW Board of Studies (now named The Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards) within NSW Department of Education, answered written queries thus:

(1) They admitted they are aware of this report;

(2) that they did not commission it;

(3) are dismissive of its relevance.

(4) At the time this e-brief 7/2013 was issued, the Board of Studies added further restrictive regulations which they claimed were already in place and already being implemented. Moreover, they ignored requests that they examine the actual successful Outcomes of those who had completed their Home Schooling.

Personal Credentials for this Submission

The Rev. B.J.H. Tierney lives in retirement from the parish ministry where he was much involved in religious education and particularly with parents in family catechetics (a partial Home Schooling). He has been a counsellor to many Catholic home schooling and some Protestant families, in NSW and other states of Australia, by letter, phone, fax, as well as face to face for people living closer.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, Physics and Geology, a Diploma in Education, as well as his seven year formation in Philosophy and Theology before ordination. He has taught teachers how to teach the Catholic religion, and tutored children in mathematics, physics, chemistry.

Personal Acquaintance with successful Home Schoolers

The following describes the academic achievements of some large home schooling families. Their graduates are well-adjusted citizens, ennobling of Australian society, noted for their affability and social consciousness. Their families suffered financial deprivation through home schooling, yet have produced the new tax payers to finance the burgeoning social welfare of our demographically unbalanced society.

Their first motive for home schooling was religion and all remain practising Catholics, active in the Church and in society. All those who have completed their schooling are employed, either as tax-paying bread-winners or full time home-makers deprived of tax deductions and income splitting.

They were all home schooled except where noted.

Family 1: three boys and five girls

Two GP doctors; a specialist Physician, an actuary, two engineers, and a chiropractor. They were home schooled in Primary, partially or completely; then in government high schools.

Family 2: four boys and four girls

Two B.A.s with first class honours and Dip.Ed.; an LL.B.; a B.Communication; a B.M.Sc. now completing a medical degree. They were entirely homeschooled, except the first for kindergarten.

Family 3: five boys and five girls

Eldest, B.A., Dip.Ed.; a B.N.; B.A., M.Teaching; two TAFE qualified tradesmen; a double diploma in hospitality; a qualified Child Care Worker; an undergraduate B.A.; and two still homeschooled. All were entirely home schooled except the first did infants’ school and the second, kindergarten.

Family 4: four girls

Eldest, B.M. who topped medical school with university medal (home schooled Years 7-12); then a B.A. Dip.Ed., a governess and a jillaroo, who began homeschooling at same time as the eldest.

Family 5: four boys and four girls

Eldest, B.Ag. (at school, K-2 only); an electrician (at school K only); a B.A.; a Year 12 in a private Catholic school; and four still home schooled.

Family 6: three boys and four girls

Eldest, an electrician; then an honours graduate in music; a forester; an B.N.; a manager of a chain of small gift stores; and two still home schooled.

Recommendations

1. FACT FINDING

Invite interviews and/or written reports from **recent graduates** of home tutoring.

Seek out reports from **employers** in industry, business, primary production and higher education on their experiences with home tutored graduates, and how they compared with mainstream school graduates.

2. THE BOARD OF STUDIES TEACHING AND RESOURCE STANDARDS

Government should heed the appeals from home schooling parents to be **freed from the excessive regulation** of the such departments as the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards of the NSW Department of Education.

The present **Authorized Persons** should become available as tutors to parents rather than inspectors, offering skilled guidance, information and inspiration, and then only when requested by parents. It is noteworthy that among the present Authorized Persons, a number have proved most supportive in exactly such a role, even while a number are now making a difficult task more difficult or even manifesting hostility.

The background problem is the bureaucratic mania for regulations and reports, for pieces of paper and statistics. **It is as much the scourge of classroom teachers as of home tutoring parents.** The present experiment in Western Australia of **allowing government schools to be privatized** is proving popular with both teachers and parents. At long last, it is enabling teachers and parents to innovate and use their initiative and creativity, values much talked about for classroom pupils but much inhibited for the vitally concerned adults.

3. REGISTRATION

A nominal registration of home tutored pupils would be quite sufficient.

It could be supervised by a small Board which includes some long-term home tutoring parents.

See precedents in other Australian states (in [e-brief issue 7/2013](#), already cited on p. 2).

If challenged, and only if challenged, the onus should be on the parents to demonstrate to an independent assessor such as a court that they are providing an adequate academic tutoring. Indeed, it would be hard for some schools to face such a challenge, considering the compulsory schooling they are compelled to give to unwilling pupils, who do not want to learn and make it very difficult to teach the pupils who do.

It is already an unstated duty of parents who send children to school to have instilled good manners and basic obedience. Teachers in schools find the absence of such virtues their biggest burden, indeed, battle, in teaching in schools, but it can scarcely be policed.

4. THE CURRICULUM

Recognize that the humble aims of literacy and numeracy are not always achieved even by Year 12 in schools. Therefore it is unreasonable for government regulations to demand more of home tutoring families.

They are already providing the literacy, numeracy and enough civics for their pupils to take part in our democracy.

There should be no national curriculum nor NSW curriculum.

Let schools and homes make their own. They have plenty of material at hand, and they will exchange their good ideas on the social media and publications.

“Home Schooling” — its other names

Home Schooling at its simplest is teaching and learning school subjects at home.

Some prefer the term “**Home Educating**” to emphasize total formation of mind and character.

However, in this submission, the term “**Home Tutoring**” is preferred. It clearly distinguishes the tutoring **home-making mother** from the **classroom teacher**.

Home Tutoring

HOME TUTORING is quite distinct from classroom teaching. It a **SPECIALITY**. It is legal in all Australian states and territories, though conditions apply. Its popularity is on the increase.

It is characterized by its:

1. Extra content.
2. Distinctive methods.
3. Nobler aims.

In so far as it involves teaching school subjects, it utilizes:

1. **One-to-one direct tuition.**
2. **Self-tuition.**
3. **Guided discovery.**
4. **Free discovery.**
5. **Multiple Tutoring** of two or three pupils together, benefitting from or allowing for their interaction, i.e. group dynamics.
6. It is a second cousin to **coaching** for ‘catching up’ or ‘boosting’ the teaching given elsewhere.
7. It is a first cousin to **one-teacher primary schools** of 15 to 30 pupils, which were (and still can be) run on family lines as far as possible, for K-6 or even K-8.

One-teacher Schools

For 170 years, **one-teacher schools** in Australia and the USA developed techniques now used in Home Tutoring, especially in larger families with more than two children:

1. **Vertical streaming:** pupils master each stage, and are not promoted by age. Diverse ages might even be set the same tasks.
2. **Peer mentoring:** some pupils help near-age siblings and, just as in a school, sometimes see the difficulty of another pupil more clearly than the tutor/teacher and explain it more aptly.
3. **Self-tuition** from text books & internet (with safe-guards), getting intellectual skills & disciplines for lifelong learning and tertiary studies.
4. **Cross-age tutoring:** Older pupils regularly tutor younger ones in science, craft and physical exercise etc, or even hear them read aloud, and conduct spelling and tables tests.
5. **Cross-age activities:** Listening/reading aloud, singing, art, sport, exercise: all done together; more is expected of older ones.

Convictions about Home and Family

Home Tutoring or Home Schooling or Home Educating is based on convictions:

1. It is better that a **child be “home-made”**, and therefore for some, best to be home tutored.
2. Schooling is a **child’s right** and **choice of schooling** is a **mother’s right**, a **father’s right**.
3. A vital parameter of a free society is just such **private enterprise**.
4. **Diversity** shuns the narrowness of a nation of conformists.
5. **Free trade** itself favours efficiencies like home tutoring.
6. **Manners, morals and religion** depend primarily on home formation.
7. Home formation produces **good or even better citizens** for this world (and the next) than schools.

Note: Marriage and family are the God-provided vital means for procreating new human beings. Redefining them to suit social engineering is theft from those who own them already. The natural family is normatively made up of children of a marriage. Each child is “the two-in-one-flesh” of the marriage of father and mother. Father, mother and children are bonded to each other in a truly unique way, not only socially and psychologically, but biologically. Hence the family is the natural social grouping and foundation of any society.

Advantages of the Home Tutoring

Proven well-documented advantages of Home Schooling/Educating/Tutoring are:

1. A richer and **different lifestyle** centred on the family.
2. **Socialization** (with ages 0 to 90+) is better without the **peer dependence** engendered from age-grading in schools, and the peer friends outside the home of the home-tutored need not weaken the 'getting on' with those at home.
3. **Employability** of its graduates proves its academic and social success.
4. It forms children for **inner security** in an insecure world.
5. **No time is wasted in travelling** nor money in school fees.
6. **Each child sets the pace** (with promptings, of course) which is less likely with the higher pupil-teacher ratios and greater distractions in school classrooms.
7. Further, the home-tutored are **freer to work ahead** of schedule in the various subjects.
8. Family **discipline/manners** disposes children for home-tutoring. By contrast, classroom teachers often battle to teach anything and zealous pupils suffer from the less effective teaching.

Parental Competence

Today's parents have proven that, through their own upbringing, schooling, self-education and living their marriage, they are well-equipped to tutor basic **content and attitudes for K-10**.

Experience and their unique affection for their children motivate them to become **home tutoring specialists K-12**. The normal qualifications for classroom teachers are not aimed at such tutoring and do not necessarily equip them for it.

Various networks, support groups, camps, phone calls, email, ideas/ideals in text books, libraries and internet, help home-tutors, just as in-service days help classroom teachers.

Social involvement while Home Tutored

The home tutored are not isolates but are usually involved in local society:

Community sports' groups and Little Athletics
orchestras, bands
other recreations and hobby groups
Service groups, Church groups
Friends to stay-over weekends
Music groups and choirs
Public speaking/debates/drama groups.

Social Philosophy of Schooling

The tried-&-true social thinking of free societies avoids the horrors of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*:

1. **People do not exist for the sake of governments.**
2. Rather, governments exist **for the sake of the people.**
3. Governments "**harmonize**" life in society for the common good of all.
4. **Citizens** elect politicians, employ them, and employ the public service.
5. **Subsidiarity** requires governments and their officials **support without usurping** the personal rights and freedoms of citizens and groups of citizens, and in particular of families.
6. **Solidarity** requires that citizens and groups **co-operate** with governments and their officials.
7. **Parents procreate the children, so governments do not own them.**
8. **Governments** quite reasonably require a **schooling for citizens.**
9. Parents have prior rights to governments **to choose schooling.**
10. Parents who home tutor are **not government employees.**
11. Government can intervene as a **last resort**, only if and when parents fail.
12. **Over-rigid rules** are a faulty means of promoting education and actually **hinder it.**
13. **Flexibility, innovation and initiative** contribute to the real purposes of education.
14. **Home-tuition & private schools** are historically the default means of education.
15. Government schools historically were a **last resort**, a 'fail-safe' provision.
16. Western Australia now has **private government schools controlled by parents.**
17. In justice, home tutored pupils deserve the **privileges** provided to those in schools.

A Religious Curriculum

Australia officially believes in God:

1. God is in the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia.
2. Parliaments open with the Lord's Prayer.
3. Witnesses in law courts usually declare, "So help me, God."
5. Criminal codes of the State Government are in large part based on the Judaeo-Christian morality of Moses's Ten Commandments, i.e. of natural morality native to all human beings.
6. Such are facts, despite the push by self-appointed 'change agents' and 'thought-police'.

In our pluralist democracy, many alternative schoolings accord with civil law and government regulations. **Natural morality** is common ground for all legitimate religious curricula. Natural morality observes and upholds freedom of religious belief, the rights and duties of parents, and respect for the life, marriage and property of others, and telling the truth about them.

Objectives of Christian Home Schooling/Educating/Tutoring

There are 7 **R** words in a Christian religious curriculum:

1. Religion.
2. Respect
3. Reason.
4. Responsibility.
5. Reading.
6. 'Riting.
7. 'Rithmetic.

The world-view of a Christian Curriculum is high and noble — Truth, Beauty, Goodness and God. Indeed, Truth, Beauty and Goodness are attributes of God.

It ennobles human being with ideas/ideals quite counter-cultural to the widely promoted politically-correct atheism-agnosticism-amorality-immorality. A Christian Curriculum is grounded in a simple profound truth that **God made us to know, love and serve Him here on earth and to see and enjoy Him for ever in Heaven.**

It includes that vital motive for morality that, after death, **our Creator will also be our Judge.**

It provides a **supreme motive** for all studies and a vital content for living: "Heaven and earth are full of God's glory"

It takes cognizance of those effects of **original sin** which remain after Baptism or conversion — Satan's hindrances to clear thinking and virtuous choosing. Today's widely promoted philosophy of individualism tends to engender insensitivity, injustice and even anarchy.

The God-given **dignity, duty and destiny** of human beings is learnt from the natural world and from supernatural revelation. Manners and morals flow from Christian doctrine and from putting precepts into practice, with good example from family-centred education.

Education Relating to Sex

The NSW curriculum lists Learning Areas including **Personal Development, Health, Physical Education**. This includes intimate human relationships which are better taught **individually** by mother/father out of respect for a child's mental privacy and varying readiness: physical, mental, psycho-social, moral and spiritual, because this is a religious matter.

Indeed, it has been to avoid false teaching and attitudes on this subject matter that a considerable number of parents choose home tutoring.

Human Respect

At school, a child falls so easily into *human respect*, i.e. thinking or speaking or even acting out false or ignoble ideas, lest he lose esteem in the eyes of his peers — like a crowd lowering individual moral sensitivities. Peer pressure becomes a form of psychological bullying.