

**Submission
No 223**

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

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Inquiry into home schooling

Introduction

My husband and I both completed tertiary level education and went on to have lucrative career paths in our chosen professions. We now have one boy (8yrs old) and one girl (4yrs old) who I have been successfully home schooling since birth.

Our decision to home educate was initially based on the desire to travel with our children. As our children got older and we became more heavily involved with the home school community, our reasons to home educate evolved into ones that are more focussed on meeting and nurturing the individual needs of our children and the exceptional all-encompassing development of our children that the home school environment can provide for them.

1. The background of home schooling including comparison of practices with other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand

I have not researched the background of home schooling or compared to other jurisdictions so I do not wish to comment on this topic.

2. The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:

a. outcomes of home schooling including in relation to transition to further study and work

It is my understanding that the tertiary education system is set up to accept children who have progressed through the regular school system. Home educated children find the process to enter tertiary education more tedious.

From my experience of what I have seen in the home educated children, many of them excel academically, and in general they tend to be more confident, more social and readily able to self-motivate. All of these traits are desirable when seeking future employment and to integrate into a diverse working environment.

b. financial costs

The biggest financial disadvantage is the loss of one income in order to home educate. We do not receive any government assistance. We have additional costs for workbooks, subscriptions, computers, stationery, paying for the things that we cannot provide in our home such as sports, drama, musical tuition, excursions. We also have other incidental costs such as fuel and wear and tear on the car to take our children to their regular weekly events.

c. demographics and motivation of parents to home school their children

Reasons for home educating are many. Isolation and distance to a school; religious beliefs; the inability of the child reach their full potential in the current school environment due to special needs of the child; avoiding bullying, social and peer pressures; wishing to provide a more tailored education to suit the individual needs of the child; a desire to build a stronger

family structure; a belief that the school system is lacking in some areas and is unable to sufficiently provide for the child and cover all aspects of development.

d. extent of and reasons for unregistered home schoolers

I do not know what percentage of home educators are unregistered. I am sure the reasons are many but it is not something I have looked into. I do know that some just do not wish to be governed by regulations; some do not see any reason to do so; some do not want the ongoing task of re-registering; some are daunted and fearful of the registration process.

e. characteristics and educational needs of home schooled children

In my personal experience the home schooled children are extremely mature, highly social (especially in areas that children who have attended school lack such as being accepting of others of various ages, needs, cultures, beliefs, etc), highly family orientated, able to mix and converse confidentially with adults, and are emotionally well balanced.

The educational needs of home schooled children are no different to any other child.

f. comparison of home schooling to school education including distance education

I have not had any experience with distance education so am unable to comment on this. Comparing home schooling with school education, however, I have seen both sides of the equation. I believe that many children can thrive in the school environment, and many will suffer. Similarly, many children will thrive in the home environment and many can suffer – the trick is finding what is THE BEST for you child(ren). From my experience of watching home schooled children over the years and seeing how they mature and progress, I am very happy with the decision I made to home educate my own children.

I can appreciate the services that our teachers provide in our schools. Educating and controlling large groups of school aged children in the classroom environment must be challenging. It is difficult to cater for the complete range of children in the spectrum and unless the child is considered the “norm” there is a shortfall in the attention that the child requires to excel (if the difference is academic in nature), or the child is forced to conform (if the difference is a personality trait that doesn’t fit in with the classroom environment).

3. Regulatory framework for home schooling including:

a. current registration processes and ways of reducing the number of unregistered home schoolers

I am happy with the current registration process and would not change it. I believe that if a parent decides they do not wish to register then changing the current process will not change their mind.

b. training, qualifications and experience of authorised persons

I cannot comment on this topic.

c. adherence to delivery of the New South Wales Syllabuses

I am happy with the syllabuses and follow them.

d. potential benefits or impediments to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing

Children can be potentially at risk and need to be protected no matter where they are. There is the potential for them to be at risk at school, in the playground, and at home. This will never change. I have not seen an evidence of neglect so cannot adequately comment on this topic.

e. appropriateness of the current regulatory regime and ways in which it could be improved

I am happy with the current system. I do think that financial support would be of great benefit to some home educators.

4. Support issues for home schooling families and barriers to accessing support

Financial assistant and possibly access to educational aides (such as the tools used for industrial arts in high school).

5. Representation of home schoolers within Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BoSTES)

I am unable to comment on this topic.

6. Any other related matter.

I have nothing further to add.