

**INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

## Submission: Inquiry into vocational education and training in New South Wales

We are a home educating family with two children – currently 14 years of age and 11 years of age.

Our two children are very different learners and we anticipate that they will take different future study and career paths.

The first Term of Reference for this Inquiry relates to student choice relating to accessing the VET system, including motivation and barriers. Our brief submission addresses this Term of Reference.

We have been anticipating that our younger child, who has a long-standing and focused interest in animals, will start accessing VET programs at TAFE for science and animal care at the soonest possible opportunity. Through our own research and hearing from families with similar children, we have identified TAFE as providing suitable course content, flexible delivery and the educational environment that will best suit our child. We believe that our child's learning style will not suit a direct transition to university or even an immediate and full time transition to VET post-school age. As a result we planned to access VET courses in an incremental way by starting TAFE study part-time and early while still undertaking home education activities. This approach will achieve a balance between her educational interests and our duty to ensure suitable learning opportunities and setting.

As members of the Home Education Association, which has pursued this issue with Smart and Skilled administrators, we are aware that home educated students who are still registered for home education are excluded from accessing this educational option. This will expose us and many other home educating families to substantial costs to access the education option that will best meet our children's needs. We are not in a position to pay full fees for this element of our child's education in addition to the other costs we already incur.

We currently receive no financial support for our children's education. Accessing TAFE (or similar) courses in a planned manner as one pathway to further (post-school) study prepares our children for work and life beyond the home.

Having read the Smart and Skilled funding agreements we are aware that there is an exceptional circumstances clause in these contracts that would allow home educated students to access these programs without contravening the intention of the contract. This clause should be activated for home educated students as a general policy.

We are glad that the current Inquiry has identified home educating families as a group for specific consideration relating to VET service provision and funding. We hope that our needs will be considered as equal alongside the needs of students in schools. To date this has not been the case in many decisions made in the education domain.

The current blanket exclusion of students who are still enrolled for home education from the Smart and Skilled assistance disadvantages many children. Our child will be one of them. We ask that this Committee recommends this position be overturned in order that our children get the education they deserve.