

Submission  
No 160

## INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 8/08/2014

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Partially Confidential

8 August 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Select Committee Inquiry – Home Schooling

We wish to submit the following information for consideration by the committee.

## 1. Changes in home education registration from 1991 to 2013

We have researched the Australian Overview from page 11, Home Education in Tasmania, Report of Ministerial Working Party, October 1991 and the NSW Parliamentary Research Service e-brief, August 2013.

It is important to examine the changes made in each state over the 22 years between the reports, and the comparative number of registered families respectively.

Referring to item 4.6 on page 11 of the Tasmania 1991 report, we observe that in 1991, the working party made the conclusion that the high degree of regulation in Queensland was the cause of the low rate of official home education registration.

There is no evidence to suggest any improvement in the quality of a child's education brought about by tighter regulation, higher degree of compliance or enforcement of a particular curriculum to the exclusion of others.

We ask the committee to consider that an emphasis on ease of registration, positive support and trust, rather than compliance and red tape, would result in a better outcome for the child. While we do not object to an appropriate level of recordkeeping, this change of emphasis would enable home educating parents to focus on improving the quality of their children's education.

The following is the excerpt from the Tasmania 1991 report.

#### 4. AUSTRALIAN OVERVIEW

- 4.1 In Australia, the home schooling movement is not yet as well established as in the USA, but it is growing. Most state governments tend to discourage the practice.
- 4.2 Queensland now has the strictest rules. A home schooling parent must apply each year through the regional Director of Education and must be a state-registered teacher (or must employ a registered teacher to come to the home) and teach an approved course which is appropriate for the child. The only other Queensland option is enrolment in the School of Distance Education at a cost of \$1000 per year, where the parent supervises government lessons at home.
- 4.3 South Australia is similar. Parents wishing to home school must write to the Director of the Open Access College who assesses their application. Exemption from the Education Act may be granted and reviewed on a yearly basis if the parents can substantiate religious or other grounds for home schooling. An Education Department officer visits the home to assess the suitability of the environment and curriculum. If the parent is a registered teacher, some choice is allowed in curriculum. If not, the parent must enrol the child in the SA Open Access College (which charges no fee).
- 4.4 In NSW, Victoria and WA, home schooling requirements are less rigid. Parents are not required to be registered teachers, but must apply to the Education Department (NSW) or their regional education office (other states). The Superintendent or Education Department representative personally visits the family to ensure that the surroundings, curriculum and attitude of the parents will be conducive to a good education. NSW and Victorian parents must show that their children will receive "regular and efficient instruction". Christian curricula from the US are allowed provided they are used in conjunction with other Australian material and cover the core areas of the state syllabus. The home school regulations in WA are under review.
- 4.5 In the ACT the Act provides that 'a good defence in any prosecution' for failing to send the child to school is that the child receives 'regular and efficient education' in the home, with the onus of proof being with the parent or guardian. There is no requirement for the parent to apply for exemption or permission to home educate.
- 4.6 Many home schooling parents in Australia do not inform the State government of their situation. They believe that education is the responsibility of parents, not the State. In Queensland, where guidelines are restrictive, it is believed that fewer than 30 families home school their children officially. The actual number is believed to be many times greater. (Phillips,1990)

## 2. Home educators should receive newsletters

Just as schools are informed of tests, activities, events in the education realm, so home educators should receive timely and relevant information.

We ask that the administrators of home education provide us with a home education newsletter similar to that of the Home Education Unit in Queensland.

Please see the following quarterly newsletters:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/home-education/newsletters.html>

We suggest that the information should include:

- News
- What's on?
- Curriculum update
- Resources update

This information will help home educators to deliver a quality education. It is something positive that can be done to better support home educators.

Home educators in NSW have been asking for more support, rather than more regulation.

Thank You