

**Submission
No 263**

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Mrs Diane Sylvester

Date received: 8/08/2014

To The Director, Select Committee on Home Schooling

Submission to the Homeschooling Inquiry

I have been homeschooling seven of my children officially for 14 years. I currently homeschool five children, two of them having proceeded to further education at university and TAFE. My philosophy of education reflects our family's personal tastes and convictions and has changed only slightly, but developed greatly, during this time.

While many parents are happy to entrust the education of their children to the state, we are eager and happy to take this responsibility back into our family and home and enjoy the many rich benefits that are the result. We believe that our children will benefit from our stimulating home environment and that their education can be carried out effectively there.

Education is part of our lives, not a chore. We respect each child as we learn about life together. The beauty of homeschooling, for us, is that teaching/learning is not artificially imposed or confined to particular times and places but is part of our everyday lives. Education is not a thing we do, but the way we live.

The main benefits of home schooling have been:

- Using the best parts of many approaches to education in a way that reflects who we are and what we believe;
- The children have the freedom to pursue their own interests, making discoveries in their own ways at their own pace;
- The academic agenda of each of our children can be developed with due consideration to their respective abilities/disabilities, personalities, needs and gifts - children can work at their own levels in the more academic areas of learning (e.g. maths, reading, writing, etc.) and are able to join in with their siblings and/or other homeschoolers for some activities, when they are appropriate to their ages and stages of development (e.g. some crafts and sports, music activities, excursions, etc.).

As part of my education program, some or all of my children attend the following out-of-home classes and activities:

- drama/art/history/science classes with other home educated children;
- excursions;
- social groups;
- sporting groups and sports carnivals;
- events organised by the Sydney Home Education Network and other home educating families.

I would like to have registration, not regulation, for home education in New South Wales. I believe that the current registration process, with its increased regulatory push, is burdensome and anxiety-ridden, and further, it is overly time-consuming and focused more on paperwork than on improving learning outcomes. I firmly believe

that a new model needs to be formed - one that will support and encourage home educators and facilitate achieving the best learning outcomes possible in each home schooling situation. The model which has proven to be the most effective in Australia is the Tasmanian model – Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council - and I believe that this model would be acceptable and beneficial to most, if not all, home educators in Australia.

I have felt that because I have chosen to home school my children I have been discriminated against. I would like to have notification and equal access to educational support services, resources, opportunities and any initiatives that are available to children in the school system.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.