

**Submission
No 62**

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

Name: Ms Norma Mou

Date received: 23/07/2015

Thursday 23 July 2015

To whom it may concern,

I am making a submission in regards to having TAFE as an option for home educated students who wish to access TAFE as part of their education & training or as a pathway to University.

- Many home educated students undertake TAFE courses as a component of their home education program.
- Home educated students are ineligible for the award of the Higher School Certificate and many use a TAFE courses as a pathway to further study.
- People with a disability are overrepresented amongst home educated students (a primary reason for home education is that schools were unable to meet the educational, health or psychological needs of the children). TAFE provides a supportive environment for entry/re-entry into formal education.
- Home educated students receive no funding from the NSW government.
- Students who are registered for home education in NSW are meeting the compulsory education requirement of the NSW Education Act 1990 but they are not enrolled in a school and are not considered to be "school students" by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) or TAFE. School students who wish to undertake TAFE studies are directed to school based apprenticeships or traineeships or TVET courses as a pathway to vocational education. Home educated students are excluded from these courses. Access to TVET courses and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships require that students be enrolled in school and

therefore TAFE and DEC policy is that home educated students cannot undertake these programs.

- Even were school based apprenticeships and traineeships available to home educated students they would not meet the needs students who wish to use TAFE as a pathway to university. This is because school based apprenticeships and traineeships are generally only to Certificate II and III level. While in theory a Certificate III is equivalent to the HSC, in practice a Certificate III is not an effective pathway to university as the ATAR it provides is very low. In contrast, a Certificate IV provides an ATAR that is sufficient to allow home educated students to access a wide variety of university courses. Furthermore, the school environment is unsuitable for many home educated students, for example, many have experienced severe bullying and serious mental health issues as a result of school attendance- these students cannot be returned to school.

- From the viewpoint of home educators, it would be a good outcome if policies were developed that echoed other directives and determined that home educated students are not school students. Alternatively if home educated students were considered to be "at school" it would be beneficial if being home educated was considered an "exceptional circumstance" that allowed home educated students to qualify for Smart and Skilled funding regardless of being "at school."

Sincerely,
Norma Geelin Mou