

Submission
No 135

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Organisation: Shire Education Group

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Partially Confidential



Shire Education Group

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HOME SCHOOLING INQUIRY

The Shire Education Group is a support group for home educators in the Sutherland Shire. It aims to provide social and educational opportunities for children that are home educated. The Shire Education Group is now in its 10th year of operation and in that time has supported many families in their home education journey. Currently, there are 30 families enrolled in a variety of events that are organised by the Shire Education Group. This is in addition to those families that attend the social events run by the Shire Education Group.

The Shire Education Group has established co-ops where children can attend for the day and cover syllabus content in a variety of Key Learning Areas. These co-ops are taught by qualified teachers. In addition to these co-ops, the Shire Education Group organises group learning classes which are led by either a parent or a teacher to deliver topics within Key Learning Areas. For example, a recent class was taught Commerce at a high school level whilst a primary class was taught "Australia".

The Shire Education Group also organises a variety of workshops and excursions for children in both the primary and high school years. These include the Botanical Gardens, Museums and the IMAX. These workshops are run by the educational arm of the respective institutions and are a valuable way of enhancing learning that is occurring in a home or a group setting.

Another important aspect of the Shire Education Group is the running of social days. Generally, these social events are run on either a weekly or a fortnightly basis at a park in the Sutherland Shire. These social opportunities allow children to come together and engage with each other in a non-structured setting and allows them to build friendships. Parents also benefit from these social groups as the groups allow the parents to support each other through the sharing of experiences and resources. These social groups mean that the home educating journey is not isolating to either the child or the parent.

The Shire Education Group feels that it is important for the Inquiry to understand that home educated children have access to educational and social opportunities. As such, home educated children can achieve their full potential even though they are outside the traditional school system. Furthermore, for a significant number of children, a traditional school system is unable to meet their needs. For example, children with learning difficulties often find themselves unable to access the best teaching methods and resources because funding is not available. These parents see home education as a means of allowing their children to access more relevant teaching programmes whilst at the same time allowing their children to have positive social interaction with their peers.

2013 Registration Package

The Shire Education Group would like to state its strong objection to the 2013 Registration Package introduced by the Board of Studies. It was introduced without consultation with the home educating community and contained significant changes in the registration process. As a proud provider of quality educational workshops, classes and excursions, the Shire Education Group takes particular exception to these activities being classified as “extracurricular”.

The Shire Education Group supports the submissions by the Home Education Association (HEA) and the Sydney Home Education Network (SHEN) in relation to the numerous issues with the 2013 Information Package.

Recommendations

The Shire Education Group makes the following recommendations.

1. That a new system with an independent body be established to oversee home education based on the proven Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council, - THEAC.
2. That registration is managed by the above independent body. Registration not regulation.
3. That Home Educators have notification and equal access to educational support services which are currently available to those in the traditional school system such as access to the hospital school, travel passes, TAFE, TvET courses, part-time schooling, school libraries etc.

President
Shire Education Group