

Submission
No 249

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 2/08/2014

Partially Confidential

Submissions must be lodged by **8th August** via:

Email: homeschooling@parliament.nsw.gov.au

In writing:

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Select Committee on Home Schooling
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Date – 9th July 2014

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HOME SCHOOLING INQUIRY

I am new to Homeschooling as this is my first year doing it. From what I have seen and heard so far other states seem to have a much easier time registering for Homeschooling than we do in NSW. The ladies in Victoria never have to stress because they can get on with working with their children rather than stressing about having to meet expectations that may be too difficult to meet.

It would make me feel more comfortable if NSW registration person was similar to either Victoria or Tasmania. Tasmania have resources Homeschoolers can use, Victoria can do part-time homeschooling.

(ii) financial costs,

Homeschooling for me is a big expense. I have:

Music tuition - \$25 per half hr per child weekly

Spanish lessons - \$50 weekly

Maths Tutor - \$40 per hour weekly

English and Science Tutor - \$90 for two hours weekly

HSIE tutor - \$40 hour weekly

Ice skating lessons - \$25 half hour weekly

Gymnastics fees

Plus the fees for online resources such as mathsonline, mathletics, studyladder, Artventure, Enchanted Learning...

I don't get financial help for these costs we just have to go without other things and make ends meet. I want my children to be happy and have opportunities in life and we (hubby and I) are trying our best to give them that. Every single day I aim to provide my children with opportunities to benefit them. We go to home school meet ups and home school classes, we go on our own excursions and have been on a couple of group excursions. One was to Sydney for the Art exhibit and the Vikings display and then we also had a group of

Vikings come to a homeschoolers house and bring Viking weapons and Viking games and teach the children about the Vikings. These were professionals putting on this show for the children and we had to pay for this. I have arranged for excursions this year to the aquarium, Muttigar Aboriginal Centre, Observatory, Sovereign Hill just so that my children have those learning opportunities. We have done a Homeschool excursion to the local fire station and the children have been able to sit in the truck and blast the hose and learn about fire safety. We have done numerous science experiments and we follow up all our experiments with a theory component. They have a new assignment every term and I need to provide resources for this whether it is cardboard, art and craft items, paints, art pencils, books, pens and pencils, glue, glitter, library visits to gather information as well as the internet, photocopying and cutting and pasting, documentaries on the subject. We did the lifecycle of the Leatherback Turtle first term and the children loved it and even today they could tell you about that particular turtle's life and we have those posters on our walls. Our walls are literally covered in work samples, and posters, and laminates and Spanish cards are all over the house. My children write a weekly journal and we date all our work (because we have to have proof that we actually do work). They have homework from their tutors which must be completed plus they have the work and lessons that I set for them also.

(iii) demographics and motivation of parents to home school their children,

I started out homeschooling because we just wanted to try it out and see if we could do it. We spent so much time in the car travelling between school and after school activities that the idea of not having to do that seemed a dream. When I found my local homeschool group and saw that so many were out there doing it, when I met their children and saw how polite they were I thought "we can do this..." the girls were so excited to give it a go and now we could never go back to school. My kids are thriving and happy and learning more than they ever have. Their confidence has skyrocketed, our family relationships have strengthened and it actually surprises me how there is not enough hours in the day to cover everything. I have plans and work sheets and books and activities booked in. We are constantly busy and when they are not at home learning they are out with their friends socializing and working on their sporting activities.

(v) characteristics and educational needs of home schooled children,

One of my children is an elite gymnast and she loves gymnastics and does approximately 4 hours a day 5 days a week with one of those days 6 and a half hours. She has a lot of potential and when she was at school she was finding it very hard to keep up with the homework. I had to pick her up early from school practically every day and her school was a half hour drive or a 45min bus drive. She would not get to bed until 9ish at night and then have to get up at 6 to get ready for school. She was exhausted to the point where one of her eyes would sometimes swell up. My other daughter just found it very hard to make friends and she has never really fitted in with the school system and we have tried a few.

(vi) comparison of home schooling to school education including distance education,

I love that we have time during the day for my children to pursue interests. Spanish is something that we have always wanted to learn and now we have a Spanish lady teaching us weekly and are become more fluent every week. It is very intense theory and verbal and they get homework also. One of my children loves math's and will be starting to do extension work this coming term because she wants to and at school she would not have been able to have that chance. My daughter who does gymnastics can commit her time to her sport and her studies as well as have time to sleep, socialize and eat healthy meals. They will also be starting Art school and last term they were able to do a full term of pottery. They did not enjoy the pottery but they did it and they learnt something. They are excited to start guitar lessons one on one and Art school this term and gymnast girl loves Art and with the proper guidance I believe will be a great Artist. My eldest loves writing and sometimes she will spend all day writing and she writes amazing poetry and stories. I love that homeschool lets her work on her writing and gives her the opportunity to write whenever she feels inspired.

(i) current registration processes and ways of reducing the number of unregistered home schoolers,

I have only registered the one time and I found it very nerve wrecking. My house was checked inside and outside and the bedrooms and I had to get out previous reports from school etc. It went for a couple of hours and mostly I had to show that I was going to follow the curriculums. I definitely dread doing it again this year because I worry that I will not have enough proof of what we have done even though we have done so so much. My children's homeschool work books are so much more full of learning than their school books were. We will have no blank paper at the end of this year. I would like the process to be shorter as it is so nerve wrecking.

(ii) training, qualifications and experience of authorised persons,

I have only met one AP and I thought he was a lovely person. He seemed to have a checklist and he needed to tick off that I was meeting the requirements. I hope that my experiences will always be good.

(iii) adherence to delivery of the New South Wales Syllabuses,

I do not mind following the NSW syllabus as I quite like having some kind of a guide to follow but I think that it should be flexible for homeschoolers as we have so many more opportunities for learning not being at school. For example when we go to the snow for a holiday we may spend a week talking about snow and the weather and where it comes from and why it occurs and types of equipment used to record the snow etc. This may not be part of the syllabus but it is valuable learning as well.

(iv) potential benefits or impediments to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing,

My children were never bullied physically or verbally at school. My eldest daughter was ignored a lot and found it very hard to make friends and sometimes children would just not talk to her and I could never understand why. They are both flourishing in the homeschool environment and making friends now and learning. As far as just random people go giving us some form of negative talk regarding homeschool we do not hear that much negativity and try not to let it upset us.

(d) support issues for home schooling families and barriers to accessing support,

Being new to Homeschooling I am not too familiar yet with what kind of support that my children will get or not get yet. I do see other Mums worry over it with their own children though and it does worry me for later on when my children are older...will they be missing out on accessing certain things just because they have chosen to be homeschooled?

(e) representation of home schoolers within Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BoSTES), and

There should definitely be representation for home educators on the board and being new to home schooling I hope that in future years as we continue on this journey that we have someone there to speak on our behalf.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a submission and for reading it.