

## **INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING**

**Name:** Rev and Mrs Ross Trumble

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Rev. and Mrs. Ross Trumble

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HOME SCHOOLING INQUIRY

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the home schooling inquiry. Our family have immigrated to Australia 15 years ago. We have five children who have been home schooled. The adult children (aged 32, 30, 29, and 26) had no difficulties to pursue degrees from tertiary education from home schooling. The youngest is 13 and a native Australian, currently registered in NSW as a year 7 home schooler. We consider it a privilege to participate in this process as new Australian citizens.

We would like to comment on the following terms of reference:

(b) The current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:

(i) outcomes of home schooling including in relation to transition to further study and work,

Our experience with homeschooling was positive with the equipping of our children with the background of excellence academically, socially, and in their character. We were able to tailor the school day around their interests and gifts. Our oldest daughter gained a scholarship in Piano to achieve a teaching degree in music, she taught here in Australia for four years and is now working on her growing family. We travelled a lot with the older children giving a world view and they learned how to deal socially with people of all kinds of walks of life. Two others went on to further tertiary studies and degrees. All the adults are working and have their own careers here in Australia.

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

Since we have dedicated our lives to serving the Lord, we realized that our children need a biblical worldview to be equipped to live for God. Both my husband and I have degrees in education and had spent decades teaching in Christian schools. Through homeschooling we could educate our children while serving the Lord in many places. It is important to have alternate education forms for ministry and others whose faith dominates their worldview. Every course incorporates biblical values, thinking and principles. This continuity provides our children with a strong faith.

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

Two of my children have had some learning difficulties. The one on one attention that homeschooling affords gives the tools, extra instruction and individual educational plan that they need to not only overcome learning disabilities, but to excel. The flexibility to tailor the curriculum to include participation in local community events (examples: waste to art contest, Forbes Eisteddfod, choir and visitation to local nursing home, local show, sports etc..) makes them better citizens. They all are comfortable to talk to anyone of different age groups. Our youngest has received recognition for his positive, respectful attitude in his participation in sports.

(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:

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

We teach our children to respect and obey the laws. Therefore we have no problem obeying registration processes. We have registered for home schooling and feel that is important to be held accountable for our children's education. Firstly we are accountable to God for the training of our children. Second we are accountable to the laws in the country where we are citizens. This accountability keeps us improving to help our children's education. An example is that technology changes have encouraged me to go to TAFE to update my technological skills to a Certificate 3 level. Concerning unregistered home educators, it is my understanding that they object on two main grounds: They believe in the primacy of their responsibility as parents to bring up their children rather than the state, and they object to regulations on the basis of liberty of conscience.

(ii) Training, qualifications and experience of authorized persons,

I have seen three different authorized persons for registration from the department of education, and I have found them all professional, helpful, and willing to discuss Joseph's education. The latest one left his number and encouraged me to call him if there were any concerns with Joseph's education.

(iii) Adherence to delivery of the New South Wales Syllabi,

Frankly even with my degree in education, the NSW syllabus and the educational jargon it is infused with can be daunting to deal with. One time I was asked to submit written documentation rather than have an authorized person come to my home. I could do it but, it was very stressful because I wasn't sure I had communicated what we had been doing in the correct manner. With an authorized person, the feedback that they give helps you know if your educational program is complete enough to guarantee registration. I know that teachers and professionals use this jargon but to assume that the mothers are expected to do the same is an immense amount of work.

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

It has been my experience that home schooling is all about doing the best for my children. The bullying, drugs and other safety issues in other educational environments impede education and learning. As a parent that takes the time, effort, and resources to register my child; my child's welfare, safety and wellbeing is paramount. The local high school here does not have a reputation for being a safe place so many parents chose to send their children to another town to a private educational institution. This matter of choice to ensure that your child is in the best place for them is the parent's responsibility. Homeschooling is one of those choices.

(vi) Appropriateness of the current regulatory regime and ways in which it could be improved,

The appropriateness of the current regulations could be improved in the ease in which registration could be done. The parents that home school care about their children and want the best for them, but making them use, implement, and assess their work at the same level as teachers misses some of the nurturing that cannot be qualified by rules and regulations. If the level of academic success is the concern, portfolios, objective standardized testing, and interviews are much more efficient methods to measure outcomes and to grant continuing registration.

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

The issue of educating children at home is about giving the best for the child. A more positive attitude to alternative forms of education would achieve more supports and recognition by the New South Wales Department of Education. This support could be in the form of allowing access to educational activities, community involvement, and participation in enriching activities.

## Conclusions

In a multicultural society, a diversity of experiences and opportunities can be a real strength to that society. Although public education often seeks to mould children to a social norm, it can limit the expressions of creativity and industry necessary to a robust and thriving culture. Although our views may not be that of the majority at any time, we are not antagonistic to them, and believe that our perspectives can provide salt and light.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to participate in the discussions surrounding the regulation of home school activity in New South Wales. We consider it a privilege.

Sincerely,

Ross and Carolyn Trumble

*Carolyn M Trumble*

*Proverbs 3.5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths.*