

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 17/07/2015

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Partially Confidential

I am a Home School parent and I am currently home educating 2 teens who would like to continue on to Tertiary Education in 2016. My daughter will be 17 and my son will be 15. I am a single parent on a single parent pension and both my children are supported by Assistance for Isolated Children's payment as school is not a suitable option for them due to health reasons. TAFE is an excellent option for their entry into institution based learning and further education.

Many home educated students undertake TAFE courses as a component of their home education program and this is what my 15yr old son would like to do in 2016.

Home educated students are ineligible for the award of the Higher School Certificate and my daughter plans to use a TAFE course as a pathway to further study in Paramedics.

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. This is a relevant factor for both my children.

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. This will be important to my daughter as she wishes to study paramedics.

Furthermore, the school environment is unsuitable for many home educated students, including my two teens, and they cannot be sent to school to further their education.

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."

Thank you for your consideration,