

Submission  
No 262

## INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

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## **1. Background for Home Education**

We home educate after trialling school from preschool to grade 2 for our now 8 yr old child. We have been home educating for approximately 1+ year because our child didn't feel safe at school. This was due to an incident that resulted in 6 months of daily bully that was poorly handed by the school. We persisted with working with the school for as long as we could to ensure that it could be resolved. We were always open to Home Education anyway, as we could see that it offered a more tailored program, was more efficient and that home educated children had better life skills and tended to be self-motivated.

Because of the negative school experience, we have had to re-build our child's esteem, confidence and trust in adults. We wished we had home educated from the start. Now in a nurturing environment our child is back eager to learn. In 5 months they have finished doing Grade 2 level maths, because they are happy and feels safe to learn again. Diversity of educational options and environments are the key.

## **2. No Assistance or Support Provided by Board of Studies (BOS)**

It was made very clear to me when I registered, not to contact the BOS if I had any educational questions. It is just a regulatory body.

## **3. No Access to Services or Resources Provided**

I am a part-time professional person, and my husband works fulltime. We don't have a problem paying taxes for an educated society. However, it is not fair that we are denied resources or services that are available to school children. There are school based programs that we would like to access, such as the music band at the local school (different school), the performance group and other inter school activities. This would help with possible integration and open up options for building confidence with the idea of returning to a school, and create

local connections. I would be happy to pay for this but the option of any part-time school or openness to participation is denied.

It feels like we are demonised even though, we have taken brave steps, forgone financial opportunities, taken on the responsibility to ensure our children reach their full potential and become contributing members to society.

### **4. The Current Context of Home Schooling in New South Wales**

#### **Time**

The paperwork and reporting requirements takes me away from home educating. I have only one child at the moment home educating. Every 3 months, I compile a report against the outcomes, and plan the next 3 months, which this takes 20+ hrs every 3 months. I keep a daily log which takes 1hr every day. This is on top of running a house, being mum, part –time professional work, driving to activities (as you can't access any school based ones, you need to go long distances) and actually planning, resourcing and then implementing home education. More than what most mothers dream of achieving.

#### **Authorised People (AP)**

Authorised People (AP) vary in what they expect; they don't give you any support or idea of what they want before the visit. Yet they could visit you and decide for instance, that your report didn't include enough details/photos to their liking and not approve you. The uncertainty is incredibly stressful for a family, let alone a child who is concerned about having to return to school where the child was under undue stress.

Many APs are not well versed in understanding different educational philosophies, ie. Montessori, Natural Learning or learning styles, or even how home education works. They think it should be a copy of school at home, aged based not at the educational level of the

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child. Some APs just want quantity of paperwork for reporting processes instead of quality. You have to spend hours reporting and making plans based on school based outcomes.

### Outcomes

As mentioned before, our now 8yr old child has done so well learning at home, where they feel safe in their failures, and can try again when they don't exceed. They have been able to finish a years worth of actual schoolwork outcomes in less than 6 months. This is with only 2 hours of actual dedicated work a day. If our child doesn't get everything correct, they like to repeat it until they understand it and get it correct. There would be no time in school for them to do this. I don't remember ever a teacher going over anything I got wrong in school.

### Financial costs

Similar cost to a private education. We were in a private school (~12,000 annually) and had considered the cost as the same. Our cost include specialist teachers for Art, Music, Drama, books, posters, software, interactive/manipulative learning materials, workshops, memberships and resources for the home. We don't have an issue with investing in their education. But we do pay taxes and feel that we should have access to resources that other children get access to.

## 5. Comparison of Home Schooling to School Education

- There are no educational gaps left unfound, we know what our children are learning and what they don't know and can address it. Many of my school friends have no idea what their children are learning and some have come to me for help if their children have problems because they don't feel involved in the education of their children, they feel their teachers don't understand their child and wondering what to do to engage their children.

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- Home educated children generally speaking are better behaved than school children, possibly because they spend time with a wide age group of peers, expected to behave responsibly when out and about, are not herded around and are not spending all day in an institution.
- Home educated children usually have better life skills, from being involved more at home, in the community and their peers are from a wider age group.
- Home educated children usually eat better as it is fresh home cooked food and usually participate in cooking their own food instead of quick packet food of time poor parents which has become the norm.
- Home educated children play with all ages, as they have to and are more accepting of children of different ages, different looks and abilities, than school aged children who spend their day with people their own age, dressed the same and trying to not look or be different.
- Home educated children are going out every day, and learn excellent role modelling on how to interact in the world daily. They converse with adults more confidently than I have seen school based children. They quickly learn how to function in the real world.
- Home educated children generally don't wait until they grow up to find their interest, passions or what they want to do, and their parents tend to encourage them to follow their interest so they usually find their "profession" so to speak ~15-18 years of age, a lot earlier than school children, who wait until they leave school before they know what they want to do.

## **6. Current Registration Processes**

As mentioned above registration is burdensome, time consuming, and not flexible for children who work at different educational levels to their cohort. Some suggestions to reduce it are as follows:

- Registration process that is supportive, encouraging, helpful with resources, understanding of different learning styles. A working together attitude instead of policing.
- Multi-dimensional approach that accepts the diversity in educational options.
- Part-time school and access to resources.
- If you want to be outcome based, less educational speak or examples that show different educational styles especially for the Authorised Person.

## **7. Training, Qualifications and Experience of Authorised Persons**

Although, our experience hasn't been negative, Authorised Persons are not always educated in different educational philosophies, such as Montessori, Steiner, Natural Learning and Progressive and Democratic Education to name a few. Many don't understand the difference between home education and schooling. Some don't understand that one on one learning is more efficient, and sitting down for 5 hours a day producing book work would be ridiculous. Home educated children are learning in the real world, where teachers in a school often have to contrive a situation to make it real, home educated children do not. It is faster and often the lesson learnt is more intrinsic.

## **8. Adherence to Delivery of the New South Wales Syllabuses:**

Many problems occur when your child is at a different level than their age equivalent school children. Registering these children at their year level is counterproductive for everyone. This is where the Authorised Person needs to have some understanding and flexibility of the syllabus.

### **Support Issues**

I believe a home educated family should be supported in all ways possible and not barricaded.

I also believe the local school should support the local home educated family, i.e. with providing access to the school's services and extracurricular activities (I wouldn't care if I have to pay) I contribute tax payer's dollars, I should not be barricaded from the service.

Currently, my child cannot play in the school band. Perhaps, it would assist my child's view of teachers and school, if the school would allow part-time attendance, as possible in other states in Australia. I would be happy to volunteer my time and pay. There isn't much you wouldn't do for your child.

### **Representation**

Home Educators should be represented on the board of studies. Working together achieves more and furthermore, the commitment by parents to educate their children should be embraced with representation. This is the way of democracy, openness, and progressiveness.