

**Submission  
No 52**

## **INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING**

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**Date received:** 22/07/2014

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## Homeschooling response for the **NSW Parliamentary Enquiry into Home Schooling.**

Dear members of the Enquiry.

My family has had a long history (20 years and still running) with Home Education. We have spent a lot of time living in different countries and serving in varying contexts. As such we have benefited from the opportunity to Home Educate our five children.

We first Home Educated in the UK where we were working with an NGO serving migrant minorities in East London. We were a part of a larger Home Education Community in our region and enjoyed the experience of working and learning in the Inner City. From there we moved to Cambridge where I engaged in further studies and we continued with Home Education in the context of a University City. My work then took us into Kent where we lived amidst a multitude of schools. Our eldest won a scholarship to an exclusive girl's school in the region where she remained for 2 years before she expressed a desire to return to Home Education as she was bored at school.

Following Kent we returned to Australia taking up a position in country NSW. It was here that our three eldest were placed in turn into the Education system aged 14 and over, two into a Private school and one into the State system. The eldest two completed schooling gaining ATAR's over 90. Whilst here we established and oversaw a Home Education community of some eight families.

From country NSW we moved overseas again, this time to SE Asia where Home Education was essential to our ability to do so. Our third eldest gained a scholarship position at a British International School in SE Asia for her three final years of schooling and sat the IB. She gained the equivalent of an ATAR of 98 and won International Student of the year. Back in Australia our eldest achieved her BA Hons with Distinction and our second eldest was enrolled in UNSW. Our two youngest were part of a very international Home Education community during our time in SE Asia. The variety of expectations, abilities, languages and cultures made this a fascinating experience.

After three and a half years in SE Asia serving in the Ex Pat and Diplomatic community we returned to Sydney where I now serve with the RAN. Our third eldest is at Sydney University and we are still Home Educating our two youngest who are now 12 and 16. We are currently looking for a school opportunity for our 16 year old. There are no State school places available to us where we live in the Inner City and we are in conversation with some Private colleges. We are somewhat bemused at the emerging requirement for our children to be 'in school' before they can become registered for 'Home Schooling'. We have never been 'school centric' as such so this is all very new to us. In all of our travels we have found the time in Australia to be the most bureaucratic and unsupportive. The Board of Studies does not seem to fully understand us. As such this Enquiry could be a helpful development.

Two of our children have the misfortune to share in my Dyslexia and Home Education has been a huge benefit to them. They have never been labelled slow or dull nor have they had to endure the difficulties that have marked my own academic

progress. All of our children have enjoyed expanding their passions and interests in Art, Music, Drama and Dance in ways that standard schooling could never provide. They have performed to a very high standard in the creative and performing Arts having had the time and energy that Home Education allowed. They are global citizens who have learned to engage with the world-at-large. One now works with UNICEF, another with children with disabilities. Yet another is on stage and takes art commissions. They speak numerous languages to a very high level and appreciate and comprehend other cultures and faiths. All of them have had an education that has allowed them to discover who they are and how they can contribute to life about them.

In short they are now Australian Citizens returned home of whom this Country can be proud.

As I mentioned earlier, our mobility has been enhanced by Home Education. It has been a fascinating journey of life learning together. My wife has been amazing as the driver behind the Home Education. She is a beautiful, creative and intelligent woman who believes passionately in Childhood. We joke that the most significant thing we have achieved together is not a mortgage but 5 fantastic people.

We have engaged with the school system when and as necessary but could quite happily have avoided it altogether. My first career was in Education and I have served as class teacher, Head of Department and Head of School. At the age of 38 I walked away from the world of schooling to pursue our passion with the world of Education.

Looking to the future I would be happy to see Home Education become a more recognised option. In the UK the requirement is that children be 'educated at school or otherwise'. I recognise the problems with standardisation, assessment and educational criteria but do not see these as being unique problems to the Home Education community. I also recognise that there is a lot of hard work ahead of us if we would see those seeking the 'otherwise' option accredited and supported.

As a trained and experienced educator with Global exposure I would love to offer you my support in this process. However the real 'expert' in our household finished school at year 12, never studied at a tertiary level, and leaves me eating her dust. She is the one who has so much more to offer.

I thank you for this Enquiry and wish you well.

Feel free to contact me if you wish, I have no need of anonymity.

Chaplain Jon Cox RAN.  
BA Dip Ed Wollongong. CTM Cambridge.

July 22. 2014.

Appendix.

For the pragmatic aspect of Home Education the resources that have helped us at different times have been

The Calvert School Baltimore USA.

The Sydney Distance Education Unit.

Maths Online.

Touch type read and spell.

None of these have been exclusively followed as a system. All have contributed to the journey.

Schools we have attended are

**Walthamstow Hall.** Sevenoaks UK

**Calrossy** Tamworth NSW

**Oxley High** Tamworth NSW

**The British International School.** Jakarta Indonesia.