

## **INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING**

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**Date received:** 18/07/2014

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Andrew Shirtliff

The Director  
Select Committee on Home Schooling

This is my submission regarding the Enquiry into Home Schooling.

As a parent who has been educating my children at home for the past 10 years I am submitting my thoughts to give the committee another angle to consider. This is mainly my general experience and view of home schooling but I have included a suggestion at the end which may encourage some people to become registered.

We have five children, three of which have completed their schooling to year 10. They were taught by my wife up until year 9 after which they undertook the Skills for Work and Study Certificate 2 at TAFE instead of the School Certificate. From there they found employment. One has worked as a very versatile and valued employee at Crompton Instruments for 6 years doing everything from electrical instrument dial drawing to stores and office work. Another has worked with Subway and now an Aldi store and has completed a Childcare Certificate 3. Another has completed the Construction Pathways Certificate 2 at TAFE and is now doing casual work as a farm labourer while looking for a carpentry apprenticeship. The remaining two children are 8 and 10 years old and are presently taught by my wife at home.

We are registered with the Board of Studies. I believe it is important to be registered and to be accountable to someone. We are assessed regularly and have had no problems with being re-registered. I believe it is important to ensure our children are properly educated as it provides the foundations to enable them to be equipped to get through life.

I have found home schooling to be a very wonderful experience. It has enabled us to have a much more constant interaction and a deeper relationship with our children compared to if they had attended school as we spend so much more one on one quality time with them. Our children are happy and grounded and we have had numerous comments on their character and behaviour. We initially decided to home educate as we found that some of the teaching at school was against our views and we could do without the issues such as bullying, teasing, boy/girl relationships, poor language and poor music influences from other children etc.

In order to provide the necessary social environment we have always been part of a home schooling co-op group where the parents support each other and the children have a good three to four hours of interaction every Friday. Friendships are developed which extend to

social interaction at other times outside the group such as sleep overs, parties, outings and educational excursions etc. We also attend church meetings where further interaction occurs and we have a large extended family with many cousins to interact with as well. It's not uncommon to have cousins staying over for two or three days at a time in the school holidays. If we were to find that our children were being deprived socially we would take steps to rectify this as it is extremely important. Lack of adequate social interaction isn't an issue for our children.

I understand the need for a formal education in schools and a society should provide them in order to ensure all children are educated. My wife and I had a formal education and it served its purpose for us, but we believe home schooling has benefits that a formal education at a school doesn't have. Home schooling doesn't limit what a person can achieve in life. A university degree can still be undertaken and a very good job obtained as is the case with a lot of previously home schooled children we know. To home school has been one of the best decisions I've made in my life and I will never regret it. It has been so beneficial that my older children are also planning to home educate their children and have fond memories of learning at home with their mum and siblings.

I've tried to come up with some disadvantages of home education but there really are none other than being seen as "different" by our society. And there is a greater weight of responsibility on us as parents – we can't simply leave it up to the "school".

I think that if you are providing a healthy, secure and social environment and are providing an education at a level which enables your children to eventually obtain a job in order to provide for their own families and get through life, then home education isn't such a bad thing. It is a very valid means of education.

I think that some parents feel that it is too difficult to show that they comply with the Board of Studies requirements due to their own fear of their ability to meet the level expected, so they don't become registered. Maybe if families of lesser capabilities can show that they are being supported and helped by other "experienced" home educators and are a part of a home schooling group, that the requirements of the board of studies could be relaxed a little to encourage them to become registered.

Thanks for considering my thoughts.

Andrew Shirtliff