

## INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 7/08/2014

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Partially Confidential

## NSW Home schooling enquiry submission

7<sup>th</sup> August 2014

*Please find below my comments regarding the homeschooling enquiry.*

### (b) The current context of home schooling in NSW

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

*I believe that education should be about preparing my child for life, developing as a whole person. Education is providing my children with the 'tools' to enter the workforce. The emphasis for me is on a smooth transition, from school to work. A home education environment gives me the flexibility to expose my children to many valuable life skills.*

*For example, my son has a passion for construction and design. He has his own work bench and tools where he has created everything from bird feeders to skateboard ramps. More recently he has extended his skills to home fixtures and repairs, for which he negotiates and earns remuneration.*

*A program to assist home educated students' transition to further study or trade course, would be helpful.*

(ii) Financial costs

*I appreciate that it is my choice to educate my children but it is also a saving for the NSW government. My two children would attend a government school if they were not home educated, this must be a significant saving for the state government. I work in casual employment to assist with house hold costs.*

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

*When my first child was a baby I began to thinking about his education. My experience of a public school education was not particularly rewarding or enjoyable experience. I researched alternatives, Steiner schooling (cost prohibitive), distance education (not eligible), Australian*

*Christian home school (atheist) and home schooling. I had a strong desire to be a part of both my children's learning and chose to home school. I also believed that extended family, in particular grandparents, should play a key role in mentoring the younger generation. Educating my own children is an extension of my role as a parent. All parents teach their children from a very early age, I chose to continue this role into the schooling years.*

(vi) Comparison of home schooling to school education including distance education.

*Distance education was initially my preferred option for home school, but my children did not meet the criteria. In hind sight I am thankful this was the case. I follow in part a standard text program and the remainder by a natural learning approach. I follow standard text in the key learning areas of Maths, English and Science, to ensure I am meeting the syllabus requirements. Natural learning is a large part of our education program. This is learning initiated by the child on a topic of their choosing and evolves to become an educational experience that covers many key learning areas.*

*A lesson learned through practical application endures the test of time, with my children. Learning opportunities arise in everyday life for example; I use shopping trips as a means to practise maths. Travel for geography studies. Current affairs, in the media, to study government. Participation in our local Surf Life saving, soccer, athletics and tennis clubs all provide opportunity to study society, physical activity, health, the human body, communication plus more.*

*Home schooling therefore occurs in a wide variety of environments not just in the home, this is an important aspect of our home education program.*

*I am not a trained teacher but have worked in the past for a number of outdoor education organisations. So I have experience of working with a range of students. I do not see myself as my children's teacher but a facilitator of their learning. Where I lack knowledge of a topic I would like to outsource that particular area of study.*

(c) Regulatory framework for home schooling including:

(iii) Adherence to delivery of the NSW syllabuses.

*Taking responsibility for my children's education is not an easy task, but I do have the advantage of knowing them on a personal level. I recognise their strengths and weaknesses. Restricting my children to the same format as is used in schools, does not allow them to flourish to their full potential. I am busy trying to follow the syllabus outcomes and not keeping the focus on my child. In the school environment I can see it would be extremely difficult to tailor a program for each individual student, but I have a class of two. Adherence to the NSW syllabus places constraints on our learning.*

*I have made a commitment to provide my children with a quality education and one that allows them to excel in areas for which they have aptitude. They are developing as confident, informed, knowledgeable people.*

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

*The 2013 home schooling information package explicitly discouraged families from engaging in activities outside of their home. This to me is the exact opposite of what I would do to determine a child's welfare and safety.*

*My children are active in their local community through sports, the local life saving club, as volunteers at community events, conservation group and through my work. Last year was my sons first as a volunteer life guard, one of only two young people who gave up their time to go on patrol.*

*My children work with a number of sporting coaches with whom they spend time each week. These people would be able to confirm the well being of my children.*

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

*To meet the current NSW Home schooling requirements has become an onerous task, as I discovered recently when preparing to renew my home school registration. The complex syllabus outcomes are not easy to interpret. Using the detail contained in these outcomes makes it difficult to plan, assess and report on our education program. The NSW requirements are far more stringent than those required in other states, I know this one of the reasons that some home school families chose not to register.*

*The previous package gave a much broader set of guide lines in the form of foundation statements, for the key learning areas. Our broad education program has comfortably covered these key learning areas.*

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

*I would like to access some of the programs that are available to school students, these are Open High School and TVET courses. In order to access some subjects that require specialist equipment, it would be helpful if part-time enrolment in school was available.*

(e) Representation of home schoolers within Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards (BoSTES)

*In NSW I believe the number of registered home school students is almost 3000. There appears to be an imbalance when there is no representation for home school students on the BoSTES board. I feel this should be addressed to give a home school perspective on decisions regarding education.*