

**Submission  
No 150**

## **INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING**

**Name:** Ms Dianne Bond

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Dear Committee,

We would like to put forward our ideas and experiences to the committee. We are both teachers with over 13 years experience each in both primary and secondary schools in NSW and recently overseas. We are also parents who have decided that on our return to NSW (we are currently living overseas and teaching in an international school) that we will be applying for homeschooling.

Until we had our children we did not understand the need for homeschooling and probable judged harshly and inaccurately those who chose this route but our experiences with our own children and their education have changed our minds.

Our sons are both identified as gifted. We were initially dismissed when we said we believed this was the case. We were forced to pay for expensive testing as we were subjected to misinformed information from the Principal, the Special Education Teacher and their classroom teachers despite the fact that our children were reading well beyond the level of their peers as well as displaying many other advancement. Our first inkling was a pre-school teacher's comment that she was convinced our son was gifted. Misinformed reasons like he can't be gifted he can't tie his shoelaces were given. Once they were formally assessed the school did very little to accommodate them. Our youngest was accelerated one year in mathematics at our insistence, but there was no differentiation given and so he was still taught below his level. Our eldest son's teacher told us "I know I should be doing more for the bright kids but I haven't." There was no commitment or evidence of her changing that stance.

The school finally allowed a one hour withdrawal period, that I supervised, for gifted children to research their own project. My son, despite his testing, had to be recommended by his teacher, who told me she had no idea how to make such a judgement and so yeah he could do it. One hour was allowed in a school week, for the rest of the week they were not catered for as gifted children. I also found teachers making plans so that students in their class could not attend as important things were on. These are just some of the examples. A key decision to move overseas was that we felt our children were suffering educationally of the resistance we encountered in our short time there. We decided to move overseas as we were very stressed by constantly fighting for an appropriate education that was engaging and at their level. We did not opt for another school as other parents of gifted children in the area had similar experiences in those schools.

In their new school overseas, they have been accelerated 1/2 a year but no more, despite the youngest outscoring students 2 grades above in maths. While this is not NSW it is indicative of educator's opinions in our eyes.

We have been accused of being pushy parents of pushing our own agenda, as well as many other things when all we have wanted is our children to be engaged in learning.

Being both teacher trained and both having pursued some subjects at masters level, we know that there is minimal if any training given to teachers about gifted students unless they pursue it themselves. As parents we are not willing to have our children educated by teachers not trained in gifted education as the risk of underachievement is clear in research.

We have met (in person and online) many homeschoolers and find them very knowledgeable about their children, education and how to best meet the needs of their children. It is a myth that these parents can not teach their children. In fact many teachers in NSW are teaching outside their KLA areas and that is deemed acceptable.

We have perused the requirements for homeschooling. We are planning on using the Australian curriculum as our basis and I think it should be the one used so that all students in Australia are learning the same thing but as in a classroom extension to areas of interest should also be encouraged. The process for registration looks onerous and it is what we are hearing from others from other's experience. As parents we will always choose what is best for our children, we think the registration process should be less stressful as it is in other states. It seems crazy to have different, more difficult processes in NSW so that parents not used to the system will move to avoid it.

Homeschooling is a right to parents. We think there needs to be a serious look at why the numbers have increased and why parents feel as though their children should not attend schools and measures made to fix those issues.

Yours sincerley  
Peter and Dianne Bond