

**Submission  
No 113**

## **INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING**

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HOME SCHOOLING INQUIRY

I would like to comment on the following terms of reference:

**b) the current context of home schooling in New South Wales including:**

**ii) financial costs**

As a home educating parent, I bear the cost of educating my children as an investment in a high-quality education. There is little financial support for home educators, and some additional financial penalties. For instance, home educating parents receiving Centrelink payments lose these when their child turns 16, which is unjust.

**(v) characteristics and educational needs of home schooled children**

My two home educated children have very different special educational needs, and the flexibility of home education allows me to provide for both of their individual learning needs, adapting to their changing needs, to ensure they both receive a high-quality education. One of my children needs a lot of one-on-one assistance with some learning areas, and also specific types of sensory activities throughout the day in order to self-regulate and learn effectively. This would not be possible without home education, so I consider it very important that home education remains an option for us.

**c) regulatory framework for home schooling including:**

**(iv) potential benefits or impediments to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing,**

Home education has a high proportion of responsible adults to children. The home education communities in which we participate are safe and supportive environments for children partly due to the availability of many caring adults, and promote the wellbeing of children by

providing them with rich social opportunities. Aside from parents, the children in these intersecting communities have regular involvement with instructors and/or specialist teachers, and in some cases practitioners such as therapists. Many of these adults are mandatory reporters.

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

Recent changes to the regulatory regime have created a system where there is great inconsistency and unfairness. The process has become excessively bureaucratic and many registered home educators have been required to produce a pointless and unreasonable amount of paperwork, at the expense of time spent facilitating their child's or children's learning. There have also been many cases of unreasonable treatment of home educators going through the registration process.

To improve the current regulatory regime, I suggest an independent body is set up to oversee home education. This body should be directly responsible to the Minister of Education (not through the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards) and should include home educators who appreciate the breadth of educational philosophies and approaches encompassed by home education in NSW.

I also suggest that registration is based on a new Information Package produced through consultation with home educators, under the governance of the above mentioned independent advisory body.

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

NSW home educators should be able to access support that is available to students in government and private schools, including TVET courses, Open High School, School Sports Programs, Hospital School programs and support programs for students with a disability. They

should be able to access travel passes, TAFE, part-time school enrolment (as available in some other states) and to participate in activities such as school bands or language classes, some of which are held outside school hours and run by outside bodies, but are on school grounds and only open to students of that school.