

**INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 14/08/2015

Partially Confidential

12th August 2015

Legislative Council Inquiry into vocational education and training in NSW

As a home educating mother of a number of children ranging from mid teens to primary age, I am grateful to have the opportunity to participate in this inquiry, however I must ask for confidentiality to protect our family in this situation.

My husband and I currently have one child studying at TAFE and our second eldest would like to follow suit in the next couple of years. Our eldest is currently studying with several other home educated students who are also enrolled in TAFE.

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

1a. i) Motivation to Study:

Home educated students entering the vocational educational pathway of TAFE are there because they **want** to be there. This has long been recognised by TAFE teachers with many of them commenting on how well these students do in these courses (thus making the most of them instead of wasting these resources). Generally this reflects in a motivation to learn (with actively supportive parents behind them).

ii) Choices of course, course location and method of study:

TAFE has enabled our eldest to choose a course that would give him a wider experience and a qualification but without the full time constraints of a school setting that causes so many difficulties for special needs students. With the number of TAFE's about they are usually readily accessible too (at least they have been for us and our fellow home educated students who are also currently at TAFE). The methods of study that are employed by TAFE seem to suit our needs well.

iii) Barriers to participation, including students in the non-government education and home schooling sectors.

The main barriers to home educated students are the costs and participation allowance. It can seem that home educated students are being actively discriminated against in their education yet again. The recent inquiry into home education revealed that the government, despite providing some \$18,000 for each and every public school student's education in NSW, does **not** provide **any** financial assistance to home educated students. Current legislation also does not even allow a home educated student a 'Student Id' card. Now that 'Smart and Skilled' actively discriminates against home educated students as well, these students have few pathways to tertiary education.

This is despite being Australian students, whose parents pay tax to the Australian government, who are now being made to pay the equivalent price of international students for the courses that would enable them to enter formal tertiary education and ultimately become contributing citizens in this country.

The choice that these student's parents made to home educate their children has made the difference between these youth having a chance at succeeding life versus becoming yet another

damaged young school drop-out statistic who then has little option but to become dependent on the welfare system.

b The role played by public and private vocational education providers and industry in:

i). Educational linkages with secondary and higher education.

As home educated students are ineligible for the award of the Higher School Certificate many use TAFE as a pathway to further study. Young people with a disability are over represented amongst home educated students (as schools have been unable to meet the educational, health and psychological needs of my children), as such TAFE has provided a safe and supportive environment for my child (the other home-ed students in his course and soon my second child) to enter formal education.

c). Factors affecting the costs of delivery of affordable and accessible vocational education and training, including the influence of the co-contribution funding model on student behaviour and completion rates.

Home educated students are negatively influenced yet again. All through their educational life up to this point has been fully financially supported by their parents and now when they reach this point the parents have to pay so much more than their child's contemporaries for the same course and opportunity for no other reason than they were not at school taking advantage of that funding. For many courses this amount could be up to \$10,000 where a public schooled child could be asked to pay anywhere from nothing to just over \$1000. These tax-paying parents who are saving the government some \$18,000 per year per child they home educate are now being asked to pay full rate for a course that would ultimately enable a youth to become a contributing member of society. This forms a formidable barrier to these students trying to enter formal study or indeed being able to complete their studies.

Conclusion:

It is my sincere hope that this inquiry will result in positive changes to the regulations in vocational education and training in NSW in particular to home educated students. I am grateful to have the opportunity to express my views and am hopeful for a positive outcome. I am disappointed to feel that I have to submit this confidentially.