

**Submission
No 103**

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 8/08/2014

Partially Confidential

To whoever it may concern,

My name is _____ I am a dance teacher for a Homeschooling Creative Arts school in Carlton. Before taking this position with the school, I was unaware of what to expect from this community or from their children. I had taught previously in secular dance studios and high schools across Western Australia and New South Wales. I came with an expectation that these children would be no different, perhaps a little odd, a little more dependant on their guardian and potentially harder to keep disciplined in class due to an assumption that an alternative education breeds frivolity and an esteemed sense of self entitlement. Having had no previous experience with Homeschooling, Homeschoolers or the like, I was very surprised at how different this community was.

My initial expectation was met with failure. Not only were the families very welcoming and community focussed but the dedication and love for their children was very evident. These children were some of the most self aware, conscientious, intelligent and emotionally secure children I had ever encountered. My sector of teaching is specialised however I encounter most of the 60+ members of the school weekly, no other teaching environment allows for that much insight and interaction with the children, their siblings and their parents. This insight has allowed me to see, on a very personal level, the values and priorities that have attributed to the making of such mature and intelligent children. I retired my other secular teaching positions in favour of exclusively teaching for this community.

I have had the privilege of witnessing an emotionally intelligent approach to movement by 13 year olds. I have had the privilege of having a three year old dancer politely and confidently ask my permission to sit out of exercises, knowing that their physical capabilities were not of that level.

These are not privileges that I had encountered in a secular environment. The parents and families invest so much love and care in to these children, they are confident in self expression and in articulating their own ideas and understanding. I rarely have to implement disciplinary measures and I receive respect as a teacher and authoritative figure.

On a more personal level, I have had the pleasure of also experiencing the Homeschooling group outside my professional role. 'Shrimps' is run by two Homeschooling families and has been going for

the past 10 years. It is a group that facilitates a multifaceted approach to learning.

Some of these have included sports and science and I even had a chance to witness a well structured debate class. Though I am not a Homeschooler myself and have not been raised in a Homeschooling environment, I have been embraced whole heartedly by this community. I was not fortunate to be apart of a local mothers group when I had my first child and there were moments where I felt that my own mental stability was spared through the loving embrace of this community. I have had many dinners, coffees, home drop ins and conversations with these families that are involved in these two educational establishments. In this way I have been exposed to their children, their way of parenting and the reasons as to why each chose this path for their children rather than a conventional path. Every time I ask "So why Homeschooling?", the answer is not met with a radical response. It is not met with liberalism. It is not even met with a disrespect of the schooling system or an assumption that to hold a Bachelor of Education wasn't enough to teach their children. It is always primarily and simply because they want their children to experience everything, as many possibilities and as many opportunities as they can. Many of the families are on single incomes with more than two children but can not fathom placing importance on anything other than doing this simple but important act of educating them in this way. There is always 'talk' about the societal shift away from family and community and the negative impact this has and will have on our children's generation. From my experience, these are dedicated, self sacrificing parents who are educated themselves and who value the opportunity to broaden their child's learning horizons. Not only in a formal sense but also in ways that are invaluable and that set them up with life skills and an overwhelming sense of community and family importance.