

Submission
No 217

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HOME SCHOOLING INQUIRY

I wish to make a submission to the inquiry in favour of home schooling and the benefits it is affording my grandson.

My grandson, who is now 14 years old, attended public schooling for 6½ years, but due to him having a mental breakdown when he had just turned 12 years old, and then being diagnosed with a medical condition, he missed several months of schooling. His breakdown was due to bullying from a student at the school and also bullying from two teachers. He was then enrolled in Distance Education as the high school was not able to provide him with a suitable curriculum or adequate supervision. His mother remained working and I took on the role of supervisor. As he was unwell for several months, he was unable to cope with the pressure involved in returning work to the Distance Education School on a regular basis. He was on medication for depression and this caused him memory loss and decreased concentration as well as him being unable to sleep normal hours. He was withdrawn, would not speak and hated coming to my house to be supervised.

After speaking with several families that were being home schooled, his mother and I decided that we should apply to be registered for home schooling to ease my grandson's anxiety and to hopefully allow him to learn without any pressure being placed on him to have worked completed on time.

His Mum and I were jointly registered for home schooling in March of this year. My grandson continues to come to my house each day for his schooling and returns to his own home each afternoon. He brings his dog with him, so that they are company for one another. His behaviour has improved dramatically and he is now off his medication and is enjoying doing his schooling. He is taking an interest in all subjects and becoming actively involved in everyday activities.

The Authorised Person (AP) that visited us last March and recommended us to be registered for Home schooling was very understanding and helpful in dealing with our grandson. He could see that he was very unwell and stated that we were not to force him to do any work, but just to try and socialise him and get him well. This was a huge relief for me, as I too worried about the amount of work that he needed to complete each day. As I was left to my own resources to help my grandson learn what he was capable of at that time, I was able to take lessons slowly and not rush him in any way. This suited my grandson and helped in his recovery. The AP visited us again last week for our renewal registration which is due in September and has again recommended us for additional registration. He was able

to see that my grandson's health has improving and that my grandson was able to converse with him with a couple of words and actions, and that he was not as withdrawn as previously. I feel that AP's need to be caring and understanding and should not be treating home schooling parents as if they are teachers in a school. Home schooling can be as individual as each child. Without the ability to be educated under Home schooling, there would have been very little chance that my grandson's physical and mental health would have improved so rapidly. The fact that he is in a relaxed atmosphere on a daily basis with his grandparents; has no one to worry about except himself and his dog, and that he can approach his schooling at a suitable level and pace, has allowed him to find himself again. His physical and mental health did not improve whilst he was attempting to do Distance Education, but dramatically improved once homeschooling started.

He still suffers from his medical condition, but due to the fact that we are able to socialise him in a small group where he can leave when wants to, and where he can choose if and when he wants to speak without any pressure being placed on him, he is beginning to overcome his condition. This would not have happened a year ago when he was refusing to be involved in any social activities.

I would like to state that his younger brother remains at school, but for my older grandson this is not an option at the present moment. Here in NSW, parents do not have the option of part time schooling which could be combined with home schooling. This could afford a boy like my grandson, access to certain classes like science, technology, languages and school sport where he could possibly attend a school one or two days a week, or in the morning or afternoons on certain days. I feel this could be very beneficial to many children who are not able to attend school fulltime for many reasons.

Thankyou for reading this submission and allowing me to have a voice.