

Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Racing

Level 10 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000 Australia
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia
Ph: +61 3 6165 7754
Email: Jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au



21 September 2016

Dear Tasmanian Home Educators

Since I last wrote to you in May this year, we have continued to work through the feedback you have provided in relation to the Consultation Draft of the Education Bill. Many thanks to those of you who have responded with valuable feedback through the various consultation mechanisms available. We have used your feedback to make amendments, as you will see, once the Bill is tabled in this session of Parliament.

Given the huge amount of work home educators have put into contributing to the development of the new Education Act, I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the treatment of home education in the final Bill.

The role of the Registrar is an area which has been raised publically by home educators. I am concerned that there is a misunderstanding as to how this role is established and its independence. The position of the Registrar is an independent statutory position. The person in this role is not part of the Education Department. The Registrar (once appointed) will not report to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The Secretary will not be able to direct the Registrar in his or her work. Home education is not being moved into the Department of Education's scope of management. The Registrar will report to the Minister on matters to do with home education. The Registrar will be advised by THEAC on matters to do with home education. The Secretary of the Department of Education will have nothing to do with the Registrar's work.

There are a number of other matters which home educators have raised as problematic in the exposure draft of the Bill as proposed and I am pleased to advise that, wherever possible, we have amended the Bill to address those issues.

Following is a brief description of the changes which we have made:

- The Bill has been amended to ensure that the Registrar must seek and consider advice from the Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council (THEAC) when carrying out any function relating to registration for home education. This is to make it very clear that THEAC is the advisory body and the Registrar is required to seek and consider its advice before making decisions.
- THEAC must have the majority of its members with skills or experience in home education.

- There will be a one-step approval process so that a parent applies for home education with a proposed plan. This will negate the need to register, then to follow up by providing a plan. Approval of the plan indicates that the parent is also approved for home education.
- Home educators are registered for as long as they have an approved home education plan in place.
- Home education plans must be resubmitted each year at least eight weeks before the plan is due to expire.
- Home education plans can be amended without reference to the Registrar if the amendment is minor in nature (ie not a change to the teaching style or style of home education being delivered).
- The reference to 20 days absence has been changed to make it clear it relates to unexplained absence only. The new requirement will be that where a child has had more than 20 days unexplained absence in the year preceding the application for home education, the parent may be required to provide an explanation for the absence as part of the application process.
- A part time attendance at school can extend for more than the equivalent of two full days at the request of the parent for the purpose of transitioning to full time school the following year.
- All decisions of the Registrar are reviewable.

The Government does not intend to prescribe the type of home education program delivered by home educators, nor does it intend to impose certain curricula or programs on home educators.

The purpose of the provisions in the Bill are to protect the existing system as much as possible, while supporting home educators to provide best practice, high quality educational experiences for their children. We are deliberately enshrining THEAC in legislation to ensure its continued existence as the premier advisory body on home education in Tasmania.

I thank you all again for your valuable contribution to this process. I trust that this information helps to address some of the outstanding queries that you have and reassures you that, as a Government, we have listened to your feedback and made amendments to Bill to reflect it.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Training