

Jones, ChrisD

From: Stewart, Tracy (DET)
Sent: Tuesday, 3 October 2017 3:58 PM
To: Jones, ChrisD
Subject: FW: Proposed changes to the legislation relating to home education
 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED, DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Tracy Stewart | Director
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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 3 October 2017 3:27 PM
To: Stewart, Tracy (DET)
Subject: Proposed changes to the legislation relating to home education

Dear Tracy,

Thank you for meeting last week with representatives from the ACT home education community, [REDACTED]. Whilst I am positive that representatives from the community can continue to meet with either yourself or Lynda Tooth and create a productive relationship, I am concerned about the proposed changes to the legislation *Education Act 2004*, especially with regard to removing Provisional Registration.

[REDACTED] the ability of families to access Provisional Registration, particularly in circumstances where removing a child from a dysfunctional school environment, is one of the advantages of the ACT system over other states, such as NSW, where no such Provisional Registration is allowed. Whilst I understand wanting to streamline the home education registration process, particularly with staff shortages and increasing numbers of home education registrations, I would again like to urge you to consider keeping some form of Provisional Registration within the ACT Education Act.

I would strongly support:

- Keeping some form of Provisional Registration in the legislation.
- Making Provisional Registration optional. For those parents who have pulled their child from school and need time to prepare a "plan" or work out what resources/program/style of homeschooling they will pursue, it is essential. It could be that some of these families decide on distance education or to go back to school instead, but it would provide a legal "breathing space" in what can be a very stressful time for a family.
- Encouraging those families who are ready to apply for full registration (eg: before Compulsory School Age or arriving in the ACT from home educating in another state or just those who are ready). Perhaps this could be done via the regulations or FAQs or the Registration Manual?

I agree that changes need to be made to ensure families cannot register a child "Provisionally" over and over again and that they should be residents of the ACT.

I hope that some consideration can be given to these concerns.

Kind regards,



October 4, 2017

Mrs Tracy Stewart
Director
Governance and Community Liaison
Education Directorate
tracy.stewart@act.gov.au

Dear Mrs Stewart;

I am writing on behalf of the [REDACTED] with regards to the proposed changes to legislation in relation to Home Education, in particular the proposed changes to Provisional Registration. These comments are a summary those expressed by ACT members of our group. Our members come from a range of backgrounds and are home educating for a wide range of reasons.

Overwhelmingly, members of our group felt that Provisional Registration (PR) is an extremely valuable and practical provision. Members expressed that when they moved from the school environment PR provided them with an opportunity for both them and their child to recover from the traumatic experiences of school and decide for sure if Home Ed was for them. It provided time for them to consider a range of curriculum styles and determine what might be most suitable. In situations where the child has extreme anxiety, this has been extremely helpful in assisting the whole family to cope with this time of significant change. Members felt that if PR was to be abolished, and the study program had to be established much quicker, then there would need to be much more assistance from the Education Directorate to help the families in developing their guidelines for study, and directing them with expectations.

Even in situations where currently Home Ed families have moved from interstate the PR has been helpful as it provides time for the family to settle in (rarely are such things as internet connection sorted within two weeks of moving here!), and also time for them to learn the expectations and process of Home Ed in the ACT. Several interstate families mentioned that they found the short time frame for submitting the PR form difficult along with everything else that was going on at the time of moving. There was a suggestion that it would be extremely helpful if they were able to get a 'transfer' of Home Ed registration from other states to the ACT, to tide them over until they got settled.

We do realise, and appreciate, your need to streamline the process of registration for Home Ed. Following are some suggestions that might be helpful for both you and us, the Home Ed community, and yet still address some of your concerns.

- Make Provisional Registration optional (ie option to go for Full Registration straight away if desired).
- Initially, Provisional Registration be for a period of *maximum* of 6 months, at discretion of family, so that those wishing to have their registration meeting earlier may do so.
- If the full registration is not granted at completion of the initial PR period, then the period for re-application be shortened.
- Investigate the possibility of transfer of registration from other states, for a length up to the period already granted by the other state.

While recognising the need to streamline processes and efficiently use your resources, many of our members were concerned for the health and safety of other children who may need to be home educated in the future for various reasons. Their concern was that removal of PR would significantly increase stress on the whole family within the first few months of Home Ed, and thus may have a deleterious impact on the child/ren involved. It may dissuade families from trialling Home Ed and in this way leave children exposed to ongoing dangerous situations. It may also encourage some families to avoid engagement with the Education Directorate, due to the (perceived) overwhelming nature of full registration, without the initial trial period of PR, where a good relationship between families and the Directorate can be established.

As a group of families who have made huge sacrifices to ensure the healthy upbringing of our own children, we are concerned for the potentially deleterious effects on the health and safety of other children, and their families, if Provisional Registration is abolished.

We are thankful for the opportunity to respond and look forward to continuing to work with you, for the benefit of ACT children.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]