

19/9/13

HOME SCHOOLING INFORMATION PACK

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Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Education. Will he comment on recent changes to the 2013 home information pack in regard to the Government's home schooling policy in view of the widespread concern of home schooling parents? Will he provide a complete list of changes to the 2013 information pack compared to the 2011 information pack? What is the rationale for each of these changes? Who is responsible for these changes? Was there a consultative process conducted in relation to these changes? If so, who was involved in this process?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his question and acknowledge that it is a very important question, particularly to a large group of our community who either through desire or the fact of where they live need to engage in home schooling. I am not aware of the changes that occurred between 2011 and 2013 with the home education pack, nor the degree of consultation or who made the decisions. However, I will refer that to my colleague the Minister for Education for a detailed response.

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HOME SCHOOLING

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The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Education. Will the Minister inform the House, for the years 2010-11 and 2012-13, how many home schooling applications were withdrawn versus those rejected by the Board of Studies NSW? What were the specific reasons for either withdrawal or rejection of the applications? How many applications received six months registration and how many three months registration? What were the specific reasons for receiving either three or six months registration?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I will take the question on notice, refer it to the Minister for Education and return to the House with a reply.

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The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for the Illawarra, representing the Minister for Education. Under the heading "Investigating home schooling", the New South Wales Ombudsman 2012-13 annual report made a recommendation requiring the Board of Studies to research the "academic attainment of home-schooled students compared to children who attend public or private schools". What are the results of the commissioned research? Will the Minister table in this House the full and complete set of recommendations made by the Ombudsman to the Board of Studies?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I note the member's question and will refer it to the Minister for Education to obtain an answer.

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Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, representing the Minister for Education. In the Minister's answer dated 30 January 2014 in relation to the New South Wales Ombudsman's 2012-13 recommendation for the Board of Studies to research the "academic attainment of home-schooled students compared to students who attend public or private schools", the Minister stated, "The terms of reference for this research are still in development and are not expected to be finalised until early 2014." Given that we are now moving into the second quarter of 2014, when will the terms of reference be made available?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his important and detailed question. I assure Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile that this afternoon I will contact the Minister for Education and ascertain the answer to his question and make it available to all members of this House.

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HOME SCHOOLING

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The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Disability Services, representing the Minister for Education. The Home Education Association wrote to the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES] on 25 March 2014 asking the board to provide to home schooling registration applicants who are not awarded the maximum registration period a written explanation giving reasons for the decision. The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards' reply of 14 April 2014 did not address the association's concerns relating to the provision of written explanations. Given there has been a 600 per cent increase in short, three-month registrations, and given the Minister, in his written reply on 24 October 2013 to a question asked by the Reverend Fred Nile, said that he was aware the New South Wales Ombudsman had requested improvements to the openness and transparency of the registration process, will the Minister intervene to ensure that the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards provides written explanations so that its rulings are transparent and accountable?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the Hon. Paul Green for his question. It is a very detailed question seeking factual information. I will refer it to the Minister for Education and report back to the House and the member when I receive a response.