

Letter from Chair – THEAC – March 2020

Happy Autumn Home Education Community

As I sit here reflecting on the last few months of home education I am humbled and inspired by the overview I am privileged to have.

I have been involved in home education for over 13 years, as a registered home educator, employee and more recently as a THEAC Council member and now Chair. The numbers of students and families we now have sharing the dynamic, challenging and rich experience, that is home education, requires some adjusting to work load for both Council and the OER. The staff and management are an amazing group of people, Council members have diverse backgrounds and bring a richness and depth of perspective to the function of the body and I feel grateful for the strength and respect in the relationship between these two arms of home education regulation.

Council is discussing ways to engage with the home education community, with last year's statewide forums not going ahead due to a lack of numbers, we are considering a survey. Over the coming weeks Council will collaborate to create a survey which we plan to offer to families to gather information on the ever changing needs and experiences of you, the community.

As of February 2020 there were 1132 students registered for Home Education, with approximately 150 applications moving through the provisional process. The demands on the office staff and Registration Officers to process and complete new applications, renewals and visits, limits time and budget resources that are available for anything more than the core duties and processes that keep the registration model secure and above reproach. The best way to support, and protect this vital education choice, is to ensure that Council perform their role to provide quality advice to the Registrar. The bulk of this work is our new application and renewals review processes, our weekly Council duties, then at the regular meetings we go deeper into the content of that regular work. With face to face discussion, we gather a collective voice of differing perspectives and knowledge to provide the Registrar with insightful and experienced advice on a number of matters.

The afternoon section of these meetings is devoted to Council discussions on how to best support that work and the Home Education community. During these discussions we agreed on the forums in the past, and are now focusing on the survey and possibly a state picnic along with other creative ways to support you. Budget and time constraints sadly do not allow us to provide many of the wonderful ideas generated but I can assure you that Council is listening and doing their best to ensure your children continue to have access to the rich world of home education.

In these uncertain times it is my wish that you feel supported by your home education community, family and friends and may you all stay safe and well.

May the softer days of Autumn bring you many opportunities to enjoy the changing colours, smells and delights of the season and I look forward to sharing the outcome of Council's collaboration on future engagement with all of you.

Kind regards

Leanne Groves
Chair - THEAC