

OFFICE OF THE EDUCATION REGISTRAR ANNUAL REPORT

I am pleased to submit the annual report of the Registrar as required under section 227 of the *Education Act 2016*.

The Office of the Education Registrar was established under the *Education Act 2016* and is an independent authority from the Department of Education.

The Registrar, Education is responsible for various functions under the Act including the:

- » registration and monitoring of home education in Tasmania
- » administration of the non-government schools registration process and for the operational aspects of the regulatory process
- » management of the new compulsory conciliation process for non-attendance at school.

Katharine O'Donnell was appointed as the Registrar, Education in April 2017. In 2018-19, the Office of the Education Registrar had 11.5 full time equivalent staff members, with offices located in both the north and south of the state.

Home Education

The registration and monitoring of home education in Tasmania is managed by the Office of the Education Registrar.

Parents seeking registration to home educate their children are required to provide an application and a home education summary and program addressing ten standards as outlined in the *Education Regulations 2017*.

The purpose of a Home Education Summary and Program is to provide information about the program which has been delivered in the previous year, and information about the program to be delivered in the year to come.

Following a review of the program, a Registration Officer visits the family to assess the Program so that an appropriate advice can be made to the Registrar, Education for her to make decisions on registration.

The Education Registrar seeks advice from the Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council in relation to all new home education applications as well seeking their advice on a number of re registrations as and when required.

Under the Education Act, an application to home educate a child may include the part time enrolment and attendance of a child at one school. Part time enrolment can be up to the equivalent of two full days a week but may be spread out across the week in smaller blocks as agreed between the parent and the Principal.

For the 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019 period:

- » 1068 children were approved for home education in Tasmania from 593 families across the state
- » 179 New Registrations were approved
- » 889 Renewal of Registration were approved
- » 0 Registrations with conditions were approved
- » 83 Registrations involving part-time attendance at a school were approved: 29 at non-government schools and 59 at government schools

- » 0 Registrations were revoked by the Education Registrar
- » 10 Statement of Year 10 Completion certificates were issued by the Education Registrar in accordance with Section 91 of the Act
- » 5 Statement of Year 12 Completion certificates were issued by the Education Registrar in accordance with Section 93 of the Act

The Office of the Education Registrar maintains a home education blog and newsfeed on its website in which information about home education including events and opportunities are promoted.

In 2018-19, the Registrar participated in forums led by the Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council to assist home educators on how to prepare Home Education Summary and Programs.

Compulsory Conciliation Conferences

The intent of compulsory conciliation conferences is to improve outcomes for Tasmanian students not currently attending school by providing them with a way to participate in a process, and to voice their needs to enable and support them to return to school.

The conferences are facilitated by an independent conciliator and involve all stakeholders to support a resolution to non-attendance, including parents/guardians, the child (if the child wants to), and relevant school staff.

In July 2018, the OER established a panel of conciliation service providers through an expression of interest process. Service providers are contracted to provide services for a period of 12 months, and an expression of interest process is conducted annually, usually in August each year. A total of 17 expression of interests were received by the Registrar, and all were deemed suitable to provide conciliation services.

Referrals for compulsory conciliation conferences were received from both government and non-government schools.

Outcomes:

For the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019:

- » 118 referrals for the conduct of compulsory conciliation conferences were received by the Registrar
 - » 106 were received from State government schools
 - » 12 were received from non-government schools
- » 141 conferences have been convened including reconvened conferences
- » 139 sets of requirements were issued by the Registrar to parents, schools and other various third parties including support services
- » 85% of cases referred show improved attendance
- » The rate of re-engagement in schooling has been 65%
- » One referral for a Compulsory Schooling Order was made to the Principal Officer, Non Attendance. The Principal Officer, Non-Attendance determined to issue the Compulsory School Order.

Review Panel

A Review Panel is established under section 234 of the *Education Act 2016*, with an expression of interest advertised when the Registrar considers appropriate.

The role and function of a Review Panel is to review Compulsory Schooling Orders made by the Principal Officer, Non Attendance upon application from an aggrieved parent. The Secretary of the Department of Education appointed Mr Robert Williams (Deputy Secretary, Department of Education) as the Principal Officer, Non Attendance.

A parent who is aggrieved by the making of a Compulsory Schooling Order may apply to the Education Registrar for a review of the order made by Principal Officer, Non Attendance. A Review panel consists of one chairperson and two members, and is established for determining each individual review application.

In 2018–19 one Compulsory Schooling Order was issued by the Principal Officer, Non Attendance. The Parent did not apply for a review of the Order, therefore a Review Panel was not required to be convened by the Education Registrar.

Non-government schools

The Education Registrar is responsible for administering the non-government schools registration process and for the operational aspects of the regulatory process. The Registrar then reports to and advises the Non-government Schools Registration Board, who then makes a decision on the registration of a school.

Executive Support is provided to the Board through the Office of the Education Registrar.

In 2018–19, the Education Registrar provided 13 reports to the Board in relation to the registration of non-government schools.

In May 2018, the Registrar undertook a recruitment process to employ casual registration officers who will undertake registration reviews for new applications, as well as for existing schools. The Registrar facilitated a workshop between the Registration Officers and the Board to enhance the Registration Officer's understanding of the Registration Standards and the Board's interpretation of them.

A report of the Non-Government Schools Registration Board as required under section 233 of the *Education Act 2016* is also contained in this Annual Report.

Part-Time Attendance

The Education Registrar has been delegated by the Minister for Education and Training to approve part-time attendance applications made under section 17 of the *Education Act 2016*. Specifically, for applications made by the Administrative Authority of a non-government school that is not the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office.

In 2018–19, the Registrar approved 9 applications for part-time attendance from six independent non-government schools.

Katharine O'Donnell

REGISTRAR, EDUCATION