

OFFICE OF THE EDUCATION REGISTRAR

I am pleased to submit the 3rd annual report of the Registrar as required under section 227 of the *Education Act 2016*.

The Office of the Education Registrar (OER) 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 2019-20, OER had 13 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 OER.

Parents seeking registration to home educate their child 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 (HESP) 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 decision on registration.

The 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 reregistrations as and when required.

Under the *Education Act 2016*, 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.

As at 30 June 2020, 1,160 children were approved for home education in Tasmania from 657 families across the State.

For the 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020 period, the following registration activities occurred:

- » 376 new provisional registrations were approved
- » 218 students withdrew from Home Education
- » 706 renewal of registrations were approved
- » 2 registrations with conditions were approved
- » 3 provisional registrations were revoked
- » 1 registration was revoked by the Registrar
- » 36 registrations involving part-time attendance at a school were approved
 - » 8 at non-government schools
 - » 28 at Government Schools
- » 18 Statement of Year 10 Completion Certificates were issued by the Registrar in accordance with Section 91 of the Act
- » 6 Statement of Year 12 Completion Certificates were issued by the Registrar in accordance with Section 93 of the Act

OER maintains a home education blog and newsfeed on its website in which information about home education including events and opportunities are promoted.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Due to COVID-19, adjustments were made to the way that registration visits were carried out. Registration visits are usually conducted in the home, however OER staff quickly adapted to using video-conferencing in the first instance or teleconferencing if there were information technology limitations. Whilst sometimes challenging, we appreciate the support of the home educating community who worked with us to ensure that their registration status did not lapse.

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 everyone necessary to support a resolution to non-attendance, including parents/guardians, the child (if the child wants to), and relevant school staff.

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

OUTCOMES:

For the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020:

- » 157 referrals for the conduct of compulsory conciliation conferences were received by the Registrar
 - » 143 were received from state government schools; and
 - » 14 were received from non-government schools.

- » 157 conferences have been convened including 27 reconvened conferences.
- » 100 of these referrals were students of high school age with a complex history of non-attendance.
- » 127 sets of requirements were issued by the Registrar to parents, schools and other various third parties including support services. On some occasions where they are two or more children in a family, requirements were issued jointly.

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the accuracy of attendance data as schools recorded attendance during the time when students were not present at school in different ways.

As a result we cannot provide accurate data with details relating to the re-engagement or attendance at school subsequent to conferences being held.

- » 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.
- » The Parent failed to comply with the Compulsory School Order and was summoned to appear before the Tasmanian Magistrate's Court to appear on charges for failing to comply with the Order. This was scheduled for September 2020. The child was returned to school as the start of the 2020 school year and has attended regularly since then.

NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

The 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 (NGSRB), who then makes a decision on the registration of a school.

Executive support is provided to the Board through OER.

In 2019-20, the Registrar provided 13 reports to the Board in relation to the registration of nongovernment schools.

A report of the NGSRB as required under section 233 of the *Education Act 2016* is also contained in this Report

PART-TIME ATTENDANCE

The 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 Catholic Education Tasmania (CET).

In 2019-20, the Registrar approved 19 applications for part-time attendance from eight independent non-government schools.

Katharine O'Donnell

REGISTRAR, EDUCATION