

Other Annual Reports

Office of the Education Registrar

In accordance with section 227 of the *Education Act 2016* (Tasmania), I am pleased to submit to you the 2021-22 Annual Report of the Registrar, Education.

About the OER

The Office of the Education Registrar (OER) was established under the *Education Act 2016* and is an independent authority from the Department of Education. Katharine O'Donnell was appointed as the Registrar, Education in April 2017.

Our focus

To provide high quality regulatory support and advice to the non-state education sector.

To foster the value of education and the availability of high quality and accessible education to all Tasmanian children.

Our role

Under the *Education Act 2016*, the role of the OER involves the:

- Registration and monitoring of home education in Tasmania.
- Administration of non-government schools registration process and for the operational aspects of the regulatory process.
- Management of the compulsory conciliation process for non-attendance at school and to re-engage children and their families in school.

Other responsibilities of the Registrar, Education include:

- The approval of part-time attendance applications for independent and non-government schools.
- To undertake reviews concerning an appeal of a decision for early entry to Kindergarten.
- Co-ordinating and the follow-up of notifications about the cancellation or withdrawal of enrolments from non-government schools.

Our stakeholders

The OER works closely with its stakeholders to develop and nurture effective stakeholder relationships with a shared commitment to providing quality education for all Tasmanian children. This includes:

- The Non-government Schools Registration Board
- Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council
- Catholic Education Office Tasmania
- Independent Schools Tasmania.

Our staff

In 2021-22 the Office of the Education Registrar held a total of 14.2 full-time equivalent staff members state-wide, with offices located in Hobart and Launceston, and a satellite office in Devonport.

The Office is also supported by casual registration officers who are located across the State, there are:

- 8 registration officers who perform work associated with the registration of non-government schools
- 14 registration officers who support the home education registration process.

About our work

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 10 Standards as outlined in the *Education Regulations 2017*. The document, known as a HESP is provided annually and explains the program from the previous year and outlines the program for the coming year.

Following a review of the program, a registration officer visits the family to assess the program so that appropriate advice can be made to the Registrar, Education so a decision can be made whether to approve registration.



The Registrar seeks advice from the Tasmania Home Education Advisory Council in relation to new home education applications as well as seeking advice on selected re-registrations as and when required.

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

On 30 June 2022, there were 1303 registrations for children from 776 families across Tasmania.

For the 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 period, the following registration activities occurred:

- 527 new provisional registrations were approved.
 - 54 of these provisional registrations were then withdrawn prior to reaching full registration.
- 36 new applications were withdrawn prior to reaching provisional registration.
- 5 provisional registrations were revoked.
- 766 renewals of registrations were approved.
- 0 registrations with conditions were approved.
- 0 registrations revoked by the Registrar.
- 291 students withdrew from home education.
 - Students who registered and then withdrew between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022 spent an average of 113 days in home education before returning to a school.
- 44 registrations involving part-time attendance at a school were approved. This figure only includes advice from parents who formally notified the OER that their child had a part time enrolment with a school.
 - 9 at non-government schools
 - 35 at Government Schools
- 25 Statement of Year 10 Completion certificates were issued by the Registrar in accordance with Section 91 of the Act
- 14 Statement of Year 12 Completion certificates were issued by the Registrar in accordance with Section 93 of the Act
- 113 5 year old students entered their first year of compulsory education and were registered for home education.

Impact of COVID-19 on Home Education

For the period 1 October 2021 until 30 March 2022, 292 students entered home education. These were students previously enrolled at a school. 60 of these students have since returned to the school environment after spending an average of 103 days registered for home education.

This increase can be somewhat attributed to the opening of the Tasmanian State border in December 2021 and community concern regarding Covid-19 and how it might impact students in the school environment.

The breakdown of students entering home education during this 6-month period was:

- 56 students from the early years (up to and including Year 2)
- 162 from the primary years (Years 3 – 6)
- 67 from the secondary years
- 7 from the senior secondary years.

Understanding the Standards

As part of the OER's commitment to supporting our stakeholders and providing best practice regulatory support, a document titled *Understanding the Standards* was created. This document takes home educators through each of the regulatory standards for home education applications and provides advice and support on how to meet the Standards.

The document has had a limited hard copy production which will allow all current registered home educators to have access to a copy as well as being placed on the OER webpage for electronic access.

Compulsory Conciliation Conferences

The Compulsory Conciliation Conference (CCC) is a referral-based process available to schools across all education sectors. The main objective of the conciliation process is to reengage the student and at times, their family, with their education.

The Registrar, Education extends invitation to the student, parents and the school to participate in the conference to explore and identify any barriers as to why the child is not attending or consistently attending school. The Registrar also invites any third party who may have information which can assist in returning the child to school. This can include medical practitioners, transport operators or bodies to assist with housing for example.

The conferences are undertaken restoratively and facilitated by an independent conciliator they aim to involve everyone

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

Once the CCC has concluded, the appointed conciliator is required to provide a report including recommendations to the Registrar, Education. If an agreement has been reached the Registrar, Education may make a formal Requirement.

A Requirement is a formal order issued by the Registrar, Education requiring relevant parties i.e. parent, school or third party to actualise agreements made at conference and any other requirement that the Registrar considers appropriate. The issue of Requirements that are based on agreed outcomes are preferable.

There were no Compulsory Schooling Orders made in 2021.

Data for CCC is presented on a calendar year basis rather than financial year as conferences are aligned to school attendance data and conferences are only run during the school year.

Number of referrals

For the period of 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021:

- 234 referrals were received
- 234 of these referrals went to conciliation conference.

Number of referrals received by type of school in 2021

Type of School	Number
Government schools	208
Non-government schools (Catholic and independent schools)	26
Total	234

Number of referrals received by region in 2021

Region	Number
South	129
North	53
North West	50
North East	2

For the same period there were 40 reconvene conferences.

These conferences are held as a second conference that is requested by the school and approved by the Registrar, Education when a parent has not met the requirements issued by the Registrar from the initial conference.

**Number of Referrals received since 2019 to end of March 2022 (figures are calculated on calendar year)**

Calendar Year	Referrals	Conference	Reconvene	Requirements
2019	182	173	60	161
2020	144	141	53	137
2021	234	234	40	230
2022*	14	14	1	13

* Figures taken as at 31 March 2022

Student age at time of referral to the Registrar Education in 2021

Age	Number
5 years	6
6 years	5
7 years	12
8 years	16
9 years	13
10 years	23
11 years	23
12 years	19
Total Primary School	117
13 years	33
14 years	39
15 years	29
16 years	14
Total High School	115
17 years	2
18 years	0
Total Senior Secondary School	2
Total	234

Re-engagement outcomes from Compulsory Conciliation Conferences

Data was obtained for a total of 188 Government School Referrals for analysis.

The average daily attendance rate at the time of referral for students Kinder – Year 6 was 41.9 per cent.

The average daily attendance rate at six weeks post conference for students in Kinder – Year 6 was 57.8 per cent and then at 12 weeks post conference the average attendance rate for the same cohort increased to 64.2 per cent.

This amounts to an average total increase of 22.3 per cent for the Prep – Year 6 cohort from the time of referral to 12 weeks post conference.

The average daily attendance rate at the time of referral for students in Years 7-12 was 20.1 per cent.

The average daily attendance rate at six weeks post conference for students in Years 7-12 is 55.5 per cent and at 12 weeks post conference the average attendance rate for the same cohort is 61.4 per cent.

This amounts to an average total increase of 41.3 per cent for the Years 7-12 cohort from the time of referral to 12 weeks post conference.

The average daily attendance rates for total referrals showed an increase of 30.4 per cent.

Analysis of data suggests that the average daily attendance rate post conference continues to increase over time.

Data also suggests that the average daily attendance rate shows a slight increase from the time of referral to the date of the conference suggesting that merely scheduling a conference causes an increase in attendance.

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, who then makes a decision on the registration of a school.

In 2021-22, the Registrar provided 18 reports to the Board in relation to the registration of nongovernment schools. This included reports arising from registration reviews, inspections, complaints, applications for a change of education type, campus amendments, as well as reports concerning the closure of non-government schools.

A report of the Non-Government Schools Registration Board, as required under section 233 of the *Education Act 2016*, is included below.

Executive support is provided to the Board through the OER. Work undertaken to provide advice and support to the Board in 2021-22 included the development of a policy concerning complaints about non-government schools, the development of a length of registration rubric, and a significant review of the Board's risk register.

One of the priorities within OER's Strategic Plan is to *Develop and nurture effective stakeholder relations*, with the objective being to ensure that we understand our stakeholder needs and expectations. The operational implementation of this objective was to develop an open and transparent feedback policy.

To meet this objective, the OER undertook a feedback survey in late 2021 to identify areas for improvement relating to the nongovernment schools re-registration process.

Overall, the response to the survey was very positive and enabled us to gain a greater understanding of the needs of our stakeholders and identify key areas for operational improvement. Two key areas were highlighted with strategies identified to manage these areas.

A focus on implementing these strategies will occur during 2022-23, as well as again seeking feedback from those involved in the re-registration process to support on-going improvements of the regulatory processes.

Part-time attendance applications

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*, for applications made by an Administrative Authority of a non-government school that is not the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office.

In 2021-22, the Registrar approved 66 applications for part-time attendance from 11 independent non-government schools.

Early entry to school cross-sectoral placement committee

The Registrar, Education has been appointed to review appeals from decisions made by the Committee. In 2021-22, no appeals were received by the Registrar to review a decision.

Review of Education Regulation

The *Education Legislation Amendments (Education Regulation) Bill 2021* was tabled by the Tasmanian Government on 27 October 2021, and subsequently passed by both Houses of Parliament.

It is understood that work is beginning now to implement these legislative and policy changes to enable a stronger and more contemporary regulatory system. The OER will continue to work with the Department and the other Regulators on the implementation of the legislation and the recommendations of the Steering Committee.