

# TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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## Education Legislation Amendment Bill a Concern

This Bill, if passed into law, will have an impact on the future of home education in New Zealand. As many readers as possible must make submissions on this Bill to the Science and Education Select Committee who are at present reviewing it. Relevant parts of this Bill and the Education Act plus commentary were included in the "Stop Press" of the TEACH Bulletin, Number 11 of November 1997 (if you would like more copies, free of charge, please contact the editor, or just photocopy them yourself). CHomeS & TEACH members will be receiving copies of a Government booklet on how to make a submission. Please share this information around.

To help with the submission, there follows some background to this Amendment Bill:

In January of 1997 the Rt. Hon. Brian Donnelly, Minister in Charge of the ERO, issued a statement that the Government would re-institute the reviews which had been stopped by the previous Minister of Education, the Rt. Hon. Lockwood Smith, in 1994 because he could no longer justify the expense. The re-institution of reviews of home educators was one of the items the NZ First Party took into the coalition talks with National in order to form a Government. The Coalition Government was formed, and when the budget came out on 26 June 1997, it contained the provision of \$1.4M specifically for the review of all home educators over the next three years. One thing that concerned this writer was Mr Donnelly's insistence that the

child and the learning environment (our private homes) be inspected as part of the review process to ensure they are safe and secure. This seemed to be outside the parameters of the Act which simply says that the child must be "taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school".

The ERO itself was the subject of a Government review between July and October 1997, by an independent panel of experts headed by the Hon. Margaret Austin, a past Labour MP. Their report was just recently published. It is encouraging to note that 4% of the

submissions made to this review panel came from home educating individuals and organisations (11 as far as I could ascertain). That represents a high level of political involvement when you consider home educated children make up barely 1% of the school-aged population. In italics below is the summary comments of the panel regarding home education (from Austin Panel's report "Achieving Excellence"):

*Strong submissions were made by home schoolers that the current restriction on access to private homes should be retained. This has the disadvantage of preventing reviewers from observing the educational programme being provided unless access is volun-*

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## Maharey to Invade Homes

Steve Maharey, Labour's social welfare spokesperson, is drafting a bill to enshrine children's rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Mr Maharey said New Zealand's laws had come under criticism from the United Nations for not conforming with the Convention. "Children's issues have been ignored for too long. My member's bill will do something this Government, for reasons of its own, has refused to do and that is enshrine children's rights in law in line with the UN Convention."

An example of an area where the Government has breached the Convention is the current Crimes Act. "Section 59 authorises the use of physical force against children as punishment within the family. It is abhorrent that government legislation actually condones violence. My bill will also require the Government to collect

statistical information on the situation of children, particularly those belonging to the most vulnerable groups. Current information is woefully inadequate."

Mr Maharey will present his bill for Caucus approval, and it will then be placed in the ballot for members' bills.

Mr Maharey offers untested ideology: he equates spanking with violence, saying physical force is used against children as punishment, when virtually all of us parents know we must consistently use physical force to ensure their very survival around open fires, busy roads, swimming pools, etc. The most vulnerable groups? Home educated children, of course, who are kept away from the watchful eyes and probing classroom "discussions" of school teachers and other public servants.

DESK COPY

## TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of TEACH Publications, and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists, and other items of general interest to home educators. There is also a regular opinion poll regarding educational issues of the day that may impact home schoolers.

TEACH Bulletin is available for a subscription of \$16 per year for 11 issues (none in December), or by becoming a member of TEACH for a donation of \$30 or more. Some of the benefits of membership are:

- Discounts on Christian Home Schoolers of NZ National Family Conference fees.
- Discounts on TEACH National Leadership Forum fees.
- Coaching on how to participate in the Parliamentary process via letter writing, making submissions, lobbying MPs, etc.
- An annual free gift.
- Discounts on resources, books, T-Shirts, etc.
- Discounts on Sunshine Educational coach tours.
- An official TEACH tax-deductible receipt for your donation.

Your donation toward membership also helps to develop further services exclusively for home schoolers, such as scholarships, summer schools, national tours by overseas experts, conferences, and home school resource fairs, national and international field trips.

### All correspondence to:

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Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching.  
— Proverbs 1:8

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teered by parents. It can also mean that there is no access to the student which is more serious. While the Panel accepts the prohibition on entry without consent to private dwellings, the view was formed that, in the interests of the student, entry should not be denied without valid reason. A reviewer is, however, entitled under s.327(b)(ii) and (d) and (e) to meet with, inspect the work of, and make copies of any work documents of a student. The Panel believes that the Ministry should continue to require home schoolers to provide documented evidence of curriculum provision through their annual written reports on specified areas of knowledge.

The panel also made two recommendations to the Government regarding the review process of home educators. They appear below with the Government's responses (dated 4/12/97):

**Recommendation 42:** That home schooling caregivers be reviewed on an ongoing basis and continue to be required to provide a written annual report to the Ministry of Education as the exempting authority.

**Government Response:** Endorse reviewing homeschooling on an on-going basis. However, the need for a written annual report is being discussed by ERO and the Ministry of Education.

**Recommendation 43:** That the Education Review Office prepare protocols for the audit of home schooling providers, including access to the learner and the learning environment, where caregivers are willing to give access and make them available to those included in the review each year.

**Government Response:** ERO has developed protocols for home schooling reviews and has begun training reviewers in them. Communication with homeschooling providers is underway.

As you can see, we may yet be required to submit written reports

as well as submit to a review as well as sign a statutory declaration twice a year in addition to the extensive information supplied in our initial exemption applications. Is this a problem? Some home educators will have problems with every bit of it, others will have no problems with any of it. That's just the way home educators are and probably always will be.

So what next? The ERO has prepared a very helpful protocol when approaching a home educating family. First they send out a letter requesting a review at a specified date and time...the place is your home. If you are unhappy with any of those, you can negotiate something different. Please note the ERO acknowledges that the review DOES NOT have to take place in your home, although that is their clear preference. (This writer has reservations about allowing ERO officers into our homes and thus setting a precedent for future years.) There is a postage-paid reply card enclosed for your convenience. Also enclosed is a brochure explaining the ERO code of conduct. There is a list of questions they will ask you as parents. There is a list of questions they want to ask the children, only in your presence, of course. This is all very helpful, and allows us to be perfectly prepared. They will want to see your current exemption certificate and the original exemption application form, now called an "information statement". This is to be used as a basis for the review....to see that you are doing as you said to the MOE you would be doing. This seems to be using it in the fashion of a *de facto* school charter. Beware. Fortunately the MOE and the ERO both realise that parents will change what they do due to the developing understanding of the nature of the educational task. As long as you can explain clearly what you do, and demonstrate that you cover a reasonable range of subjects, you should be OK.

What if you decide you do not want to be reviewed at all by the

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ERO. Simply tell that to the ERO. Their response will be to recommend to the MOE that your exemption certificate be revoked. That's not being mean, that is simply doing their job. So before it comes to that, I would suggest that you contact the MOE, explain that you do not want to deal with the ERO, and that you would like to deal directly with the MOE instead. It is the MOE which must be "satisfied" you are teaching as regularly and well, not the ERO....The MOE uses the auditing skills of the ERO to help them become satisfied. How you then deal with the MOE is up to your ability to negotiate with them.

The current Education Act enumerates the powers held by the ERO. Margaret Austin and Steve Maharey (Labour MP for Palm Nth who helped draft the present legislation) both insist that the ERO already has these powers with home educators now....but these powers only kick into place once we let them into our homes. So why the need of this amendment? (I've asked Steve Maharey to clarify that for us.)

This proposed Education Legislation Amendment makes sure these powers apply to home educators by stating so and re-enumerating the powers. (One power, the automatic power of entry, is specifically denied in this amendment bill.) It looks to this writer like setting in place legislation that will in fact change our homes into *de facto* schooling institutions, then becoming subject to a vast array of other bureaucratic regulations, such as health and safety issues, national curriculum, etc. The power of entry could also become reality in future simply by striking out the line that currently prohibits it. This could be done in the future....or now, before the bill is passed into law.

**Submissions need to be in to the Science and Education Select Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, by 27**

**February.** (You need to send 20 copies.) One of the problems to be overcome is that those on the committee are not likely to know much about home education as it really is, but probably have all kinds of inaccurate preconceptions. Part of the job of lobbying government is educating MPs about home education. Perhaps you or your support group would like to meet with your MP or one of the Select Committee members. The Select Committee members are:

Chairman:

**Tony Steele**, National, Hamilton East;

Assistant Chair:

**Belinda Vernon**, National, Maungakiekie;

**Gerry Brownlee**, National, Ilam;

**Neil Kirton**, NZ First, list;

**Jill White**, Labour, list;

**Janet Mackey**, Labour, Mahia;

**Trevor Mallard**, Labour, Hutt South;

**Steve Maharey**, Labour, Palm Nth;

**Donna Awatere Huata**, ACT, list;

**Liz Gordon**, Alliance, list.

Write your submission now!

### Canterbury Home Educators' Camp

by Lennie Harrison

The annual camp (28-30 November) was a great success. It was held at Hibburt Park which is right next to Spencer Park, so we could make use of Spencer Park's recreation facilities, including minigolf. The surroundings at Hibburt Park are wonderful; lots of walking tracks and the beach and no sandflies!

We had good weather and the children got on really well together. They were busy outside with the giant balls hired from the Kiwisport people, volleyball, cricket, swimming, etc.

A big thank you goes to Mike Limmer who was in charge of organising the kitchen and meal-making. The meals were superb and pleasantly relaxed affairs, which helped create a lovely holiday feeling. And thanks to the

subcommittee, Jill, Jane, Chris, Mike and Lennie.

We still managed to get plenty of talking done in between our busy programme schedule. The meeting with Tony Cross of the ERO on Friday evening proved very necessary and very fruitful; it established the beginnings of an understanding between ERO Wellington and us. The Saturday morning chat with Barbara Smith was great. Very informal and everyone got a lot said. I wasn't at Craig Smith's afternoon session for fathers and their role in home-schooling, but a good number of fathers attended. Saturday evening was curriculum night. On those occasions there never seems enough time to browse and there always seems to be another new book to discover. Sunday morning saw a talking session with Craig and Barbara about home schooling teenagers. I'm already looking forward to the next camp...well worth the effort.

## Trading Post



### For Sale:

Arithmetic 5,

Teacher Key

Language B, Teacher Key

Grammar & Composition II

All new.

### Contact:

Dick Vlaanderen

20 George Herring Pl.,

Glen Eden, Auckland,

ph (09) 818-4456

### Wanted:

*Artes Latinae* by Waldo Sweet

*Games for Learning* by Peggy

Kaye

*You Can Teach Your Child Suc-*

*cessfully* by Dr Ruth

Beechick

*Family Maths* by Jean Kerr Sten-

mark et al

*Writing with Results* by JoAnne

Moore

Phonic Readers

### Contact:

Andrew & Christine Smith

fax: (09) 535-0061

email: [asmith@voyager.co.nz](mailto:asmith@voyager.co.nz)

## Coming Events

**TEACH Leadership Forum**  
Thursday 5 February 1998,  
Palmerston North

### **CHomeS National Family Conference**

6-7 February 1998, Freyberg High  
School, Palmerston North.

#### Guest speakers:

**Tony Cross**, ERO, Wellington;  
**Donna Awatere Huata**, ACT MP  
and home schooling mum;  
**Duncan Lennox**, teacher at Hast-  
ings Christian School. Contact: C  
& B Smith, 4 Tawa St., Palmer-  
ston North, ph/fax (06) 357-4399.

#### Programme Includes:

##### Teaching Music

Catherine Duxfield, PN  
Catherine Sandbrook, PN

##### Unit Studies

Christina Coward, Wlg

##### SPELD

Sharon Humphries, PN  
Deschooling, Remotivation  
Christine Whetton, Akl

##### Creative Learning Activities

Dot Brown, Chch

##### Helpful Hints

Delwyn McAlister, Tokoroa

##### Father's Role

Ian Brown, Chch

##### Occupational Therapy

Sarah Holland, PN

##### Time Tabling

Catherine Duxfield, PN

##### Phonics

Grace Green, PN

##### ADD & ADHD

Sharyn Wylie, Wanganui

##### H/Eing Teenages with a Purpose

Barbara Smith, PN

##### Children's Literature

Jenny Barkley, Amberley

##### Junior Maths

Duncan Lennox, Hastings

##### Mother's Role

Megan McLeay, PN

##### Home Business, Home Ed, Home....

David Waldron, Raetihi

##### CVs, Job Applications, Interviews

Brent McAlister, Tokoroa

##### Dead Boring Club (Creative Writing)

Jenny Barkley, Amberley

##### Plus more!

National Competitive Sports with  
awards and non-competitive games,  
crafts and sports for children.

**Time is short.  
Register now!**

## Home Educators' Infomercials

### **Nelson Area Home Schoolers' Annual Camp**

Bethany Park, Kaiteriteri  
27 February to 1 March 1998  
Speaker:

#### **Doug Duncan**

Nelson Baptist Minister whose  
home schooled children are now  
adults

Children's programme; swim-  
ming, canoeing, beach, water-  
slide, etc.; family concert.

#### **Costs**

Adults ..... \$43

Under 14 years ..... \$35

Under 6 years ..... \$25

Under 3 years ..... Free

Family (2 X Adults +

2 X over 3s = \$136 + \$10 for  
each extra child over three.

#### **Contact:**

Geoff & Rosalie Shearer  
Leigh Rd., R.D. 1, Wakefield,  
ph. (03) 541-9211

### **Wellington Home Schooling Association's General Information Pack**

Loaded with information on fill-  
ing in an exemption application,  
resources, support activities and  
more. \$10. Write to WHSA, c/-  
24 Stephen St., Upper Hutt.

### **Manawatu Home Educators' Starting Out Pack**

Tips on answering exemption ap-  
plications, organising your day,  
sample newsletters and more. \$8.  
Write to: MHE, PO Box 4133,  
Palmerston North.

### **Canterbury Home Educators' "Getting Started in Home Schooling"**

Many good tips and contacts for  
those just starting out. \$3. Write  
to Jill Hanna, 17 Rathlin St., Red-  
wood, Christchurch.

## **Education Ministry Wrong on Reading**

The MOE's emphasis on teaching  
children to read by using context  
is wrong, a recent international  
reading conference at the Massey  
University College of Education  
was told.

Massey University's Professor Bill  
Tunmer, in releasing results from  
a three-year study he conducted  
with Professor James Chapman,  
also of Massey University, said  
that children taught by a spelling-  
to-sound method were doing bet-  
ter two and three years later.

"Our findings do not support the  
Ministry-supported view that be-  
ginning reading instruction  
should focus on teaching children  
to use sentence context as the pri-  
mary strategy for identifying unfa-  
miliar words in text," Professor  
Tunmer told about 150 delegates  
at the July 17-18 conference.

He said their research also re-  
vealed "highly inflated" assess-  
ments by Reading Recovery teach-  
ers of the reading levels of chil-  
dren completing their pro-  
grammes.

He described this as a  
"particularly disturbing finding".

(From Massey University *Campus  
News*, Issue 26, 28 July 1997.)

## **Drug Education in Schools**

Schools in high cannabis growing  
regions in New Zealand will be  
the first to benefit from drug edu-  
cation programmes from the be-  
ginning of the new school year  
Minister of Education, Wyatt  
Creech, announced today.

"There is no quick fix to teaching  
young people about the risks of  
drug overuse. Research shows that  
the most effective drug education  
programmes are those which are  
part of ongoing health education  
programmes in schools, where the  
school and the wider community  
is 'on the case' continually," Mr  
Creech said.

(Press Release: New Zealand  
Government, 15 January 1998.)

Just another reason why thinking  
parents do not send their parents  
to school.....the children will be  
educated in the drug scene  
whether they need it or not.