



HEN Data on Educational Attainment for the Senate Inquiry into The National Trend of School Refusal and Related Matters

24th July 2023

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On behalf of the Home Education Network

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/>

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Methods.....	3
Results.....	4
A. Geographic Distribution of Responses.....	4
B. About the children with School Can't who have been home educated (current or past).....	5
C. Children with School Can't who are still being home educated.....	8
1. About the children with School Can't who are still being home educated.....	8
2. Changes in interest and engagement in learning for children with School Can't who are still home educated.....	8
3. Educational attainment for children with School Can't who are still home educated.....	12
4. Competitions entered by children with School Can't who are currently home educated.....	15
5. Qualifications gained by children with School Can't who are currently home educated.....	15
6. Part-time and casual work undertaken by children with School Can't who are currently home educated.....	16
7. Further comments made by parents of children and young people with School Can't who are currently home educating.....	18
D. Children with School Can't who are back at school.....	19
1. About the children with School Can't who are back at school.....	19
2. School attendance for the children with School Can't who are back at school	19
3. Learning and attainment for the children with School Can't who are back at school.....	20
E. Young people with School Can't who were home educated and are now in work or further education.....	21
F. Young people with School Can't who have been home educated and are currently not home educating, back at school, in further study or working.....	25
Discussion.....	25
References.....	27
Appendix A - Survey Questions.....	29
Appendix B - Responses to Question 11.....	60
Appendix C - Responses to Question 12.....	80
Appendix D - Responses to Questions 21 & 22.....	81
Appendix E - Responses to Questions 23 & 24.....	84
Appendix F - Interest & engagement in kids who are now back at school.....	98
Appendix G - Educational attainment in kids who are now back at school.....	101
Appendix H - Further comments on children with School Can't who are back at school.....	104
Appendix I - Further comments on children with School Can't who were home educated and who are in further education or employment.....	112
Appendix J - Further comments on children with School Can't who were home educated and who are currently not home educating, back at school, in further study or working.....	115

Introduction

Although based in Victoria, the Home Education Network (HEN) supports and advocates for home educators across Australia. We are a volunteer-run not-for-profit organisation.

While HEN has now collected substantial data on children who have experienced School Can't (Home Education Network, 2023), there is a paucity of data on educational attainment for children with School Can't who have been or are being home educated.

This HEN *Educational Attainment for children with School Can't* survey was conducted in response to the Senate's extension of the reporting date on the Senate Committee's *Inquiry into the National Trend of School Refusal and related matters*.

The survey results and their discussion supply data on educational attainment for children with School Can't who have been home educated and have moved on to other settings, as well as those with School Can't who are still home educating.

A note about the language used in this document: We believe that children who struggle with school attendance are genuinely unable to attend school without outward difficulties, rather than it being a willful choice. For this reason, we use the term 'School Can't' in place of 'School Refusal' throughout this report.

Methods

The Home Education Network ran a survey (Appendix A) on Educational Attainment in children and young people with School Can't who are or have ever been home educated, from 11th July until 22nd July 2023. The survey link was posted on the HEN Facebook page, and shared to over 40 Australian Facebook groups that are related to home education and/or disability.

The only compulsory questions on the survey were questions 2 and 6. Question 2. "Are you currently or have you ever home-educated the child with school refusal (school can't)?" allowed us to filter out responses from parents and guardians who have never home educated their child with school can't. Question 6. "Which best describes the current setting for your child?" allowed further questions to be tailored to respondents. All other survey questions were optional.

Results

The survey received 540 responses from parents and caregivers who had children struggling with school attendance.

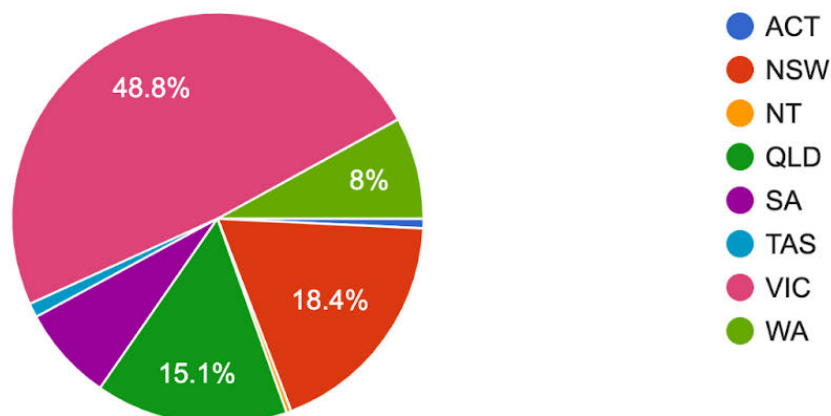
A. Geographic Distribution of Responses

Survey respondents were from all Australian States and mainland Territories (Figure 1). The bias towards Victorian respondents reflects HEN's Victorian base and our reach into local groups in Victoria.

Figure 1. Location of survey respondents

Which state or territory do you currently reside in?

537 responses



A small proportion of respondents (11.5%) had never home educated their child/ren with School Can't, and did not proceed with the survey. This left 478 respondents who were currently or had ever home educated their child/ren with School Can't.

B. About the children with School Can't who have been home educated (current or past)

Mean current age of children with School Can't was 12.1 years, while mean age of commencing home education was 9.6 years (Table 1). For 10 respondents, their children with School Can't are now adults.

Table 1. Children with School Can't who have been home educated (past or current)

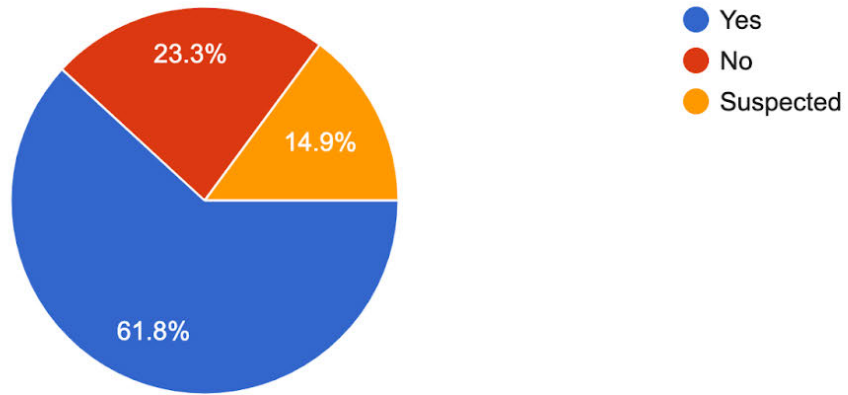
		Current + Past home educated Children with School Can't
Number of Respondents		478
Current Age (years)	Mean	12.12
	Median	12
	Minimum	5
	Maximum	18
Age Commenced Home Education (years)	Mean	9.62
	Median	10
	Minimum	3
	Maximum	17

Consistent with our previous survey, almost 80% of children with School Can't who are or have been home educated have, or are suspected to have, a disability or additional needs (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Disabilities and additional needs of children who are or have been home educated

Does your child have any disabilities or additional needs?

477 responses

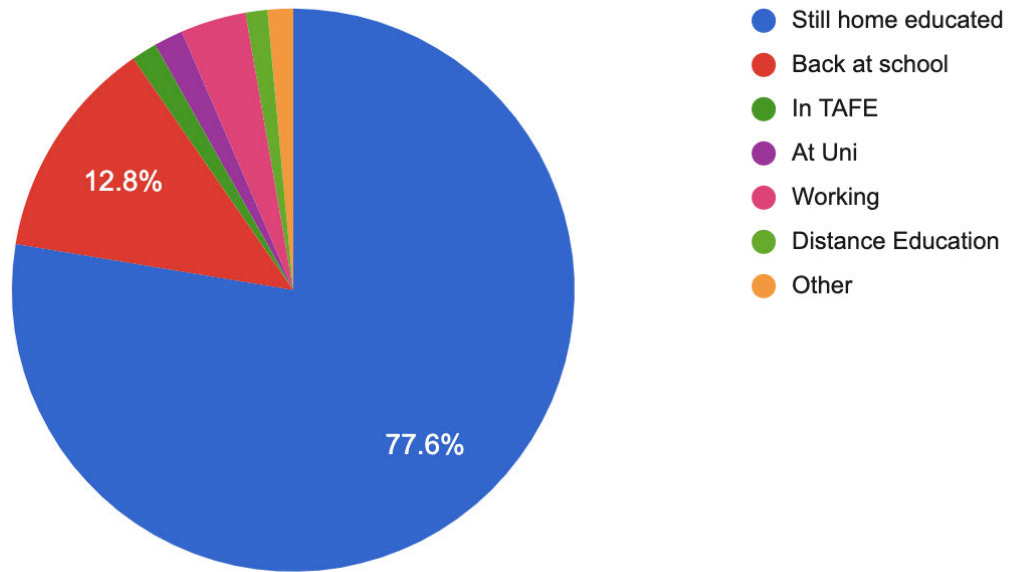


Just over three-quarters of children were still being home educated (Figure 3). Please note this does not include children who are enrolled in Distance Education in their home state. 'Other' (n = 7) includes young people looking for work, exemption granted by psychologist due to trauma, full-time ballet training, alternative re-engagement program and chronic illness precluding work.

Figure 3. Current setting for children with School Can't who are or have been home educated

Which best describes the current setting for your child?

478 responses



C. Children with School Can't who are still being home educated

1. About the children with School Can't who are still being home educated

The mean current age of children still being home educated is slightly lower than the average for the total cohort at 11.7 years, but the median is the same (Table 2). Number of years of home education ranged from just starting out to 13 years.

Table 2. Children with School Can't who are still home educated

		Children with School Can't who are still home educated
Number of Respondents		371
Current Age (years)	Mean	11.71
	Median	12
	Minimum	5
	Maximum	18
Age Commenced Home Education (years)	Mean	9.44
	Median	9
	Minimum	3
	Maximum	17
Years Home educated	Mean	2.31
	Median	2
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	13

2. Changes in interest and engagement in learning for children with School Can't who are still home educated

While they were still at school, before commencing home education, the interest and engagement in learning for children with School Can't was generally poor (Figure 4).

The majority of children were either disinterested or did not participate in most learning areas at school. The overall enthusiasm for learning was very low, with not quite 20% of children (n = 371) being generally engaged and interested in learning while at school.

The learning areas that had the highest levels of interest and engagement at school were Science, Arts, Design & Technology, and Health & Physical Education.

By comparison, children who are currently home educated have generally experienced great improvements in their interest and engagement in all learning areas since commencing home education (Figure 5). The learning area with the least improvement was Languages, but even for Languages, 65% (n = 354) of children experienced an improvement (great or slight) in their enthusiasm and engagement now that they are home educated. Overall enthusiasm and engagement in learning improved for 90.6% of children (n = 362) now that they are home educated. Children for whom there was no change (5%, n = 362) in their enthusiasm for learning overall had either been home educating for less than 1 year (90%), were already highly interested in learning, or their parents reported mental health challenges.

2.5% of children experienced a slight decrease in their overall enthusiasm for learning after commencing home education. The average age for commencing home education in this group was 13.3 years, which is 4 years older than the average commencement age for the whole cohort. In addition, this group had not been home educated for long (average 1.4 years), and parents commented that their children had made great improvements in mental health, life skills, engagement in family life, and engagement in the community.

The 3 children who experienced a great decline in their overall enthusiasm for learning were also home educated for less time than average, had disabilities or additional needs, were now happily employed in work that is oriented around their interests, and/or had been greatly negatively affected by their experiences in mainstream education.

Figure 4. Interest and engagement in learning for currently home educated children with School Can't **while still at school** (before home education)

How would you have described your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **while still at school**?

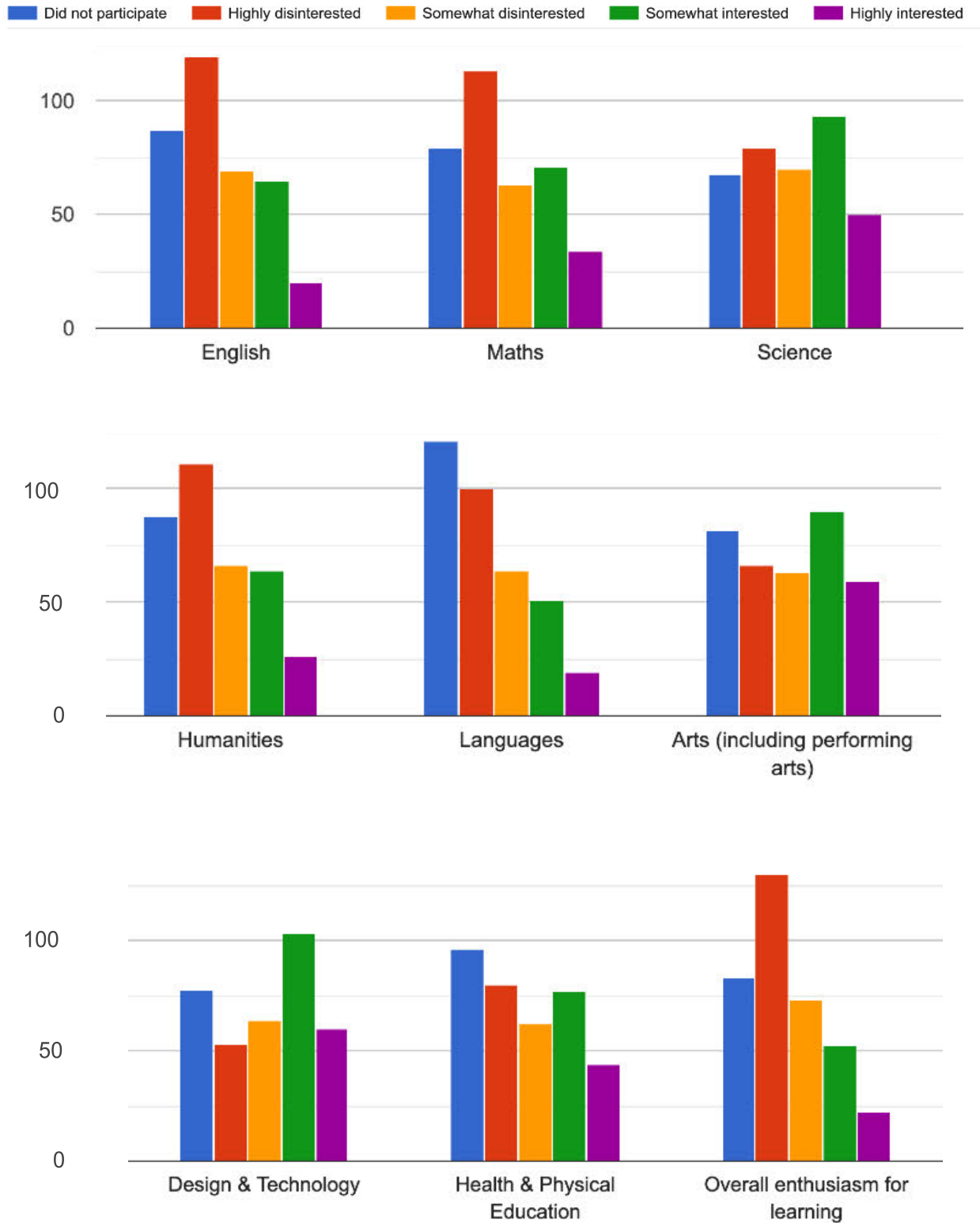
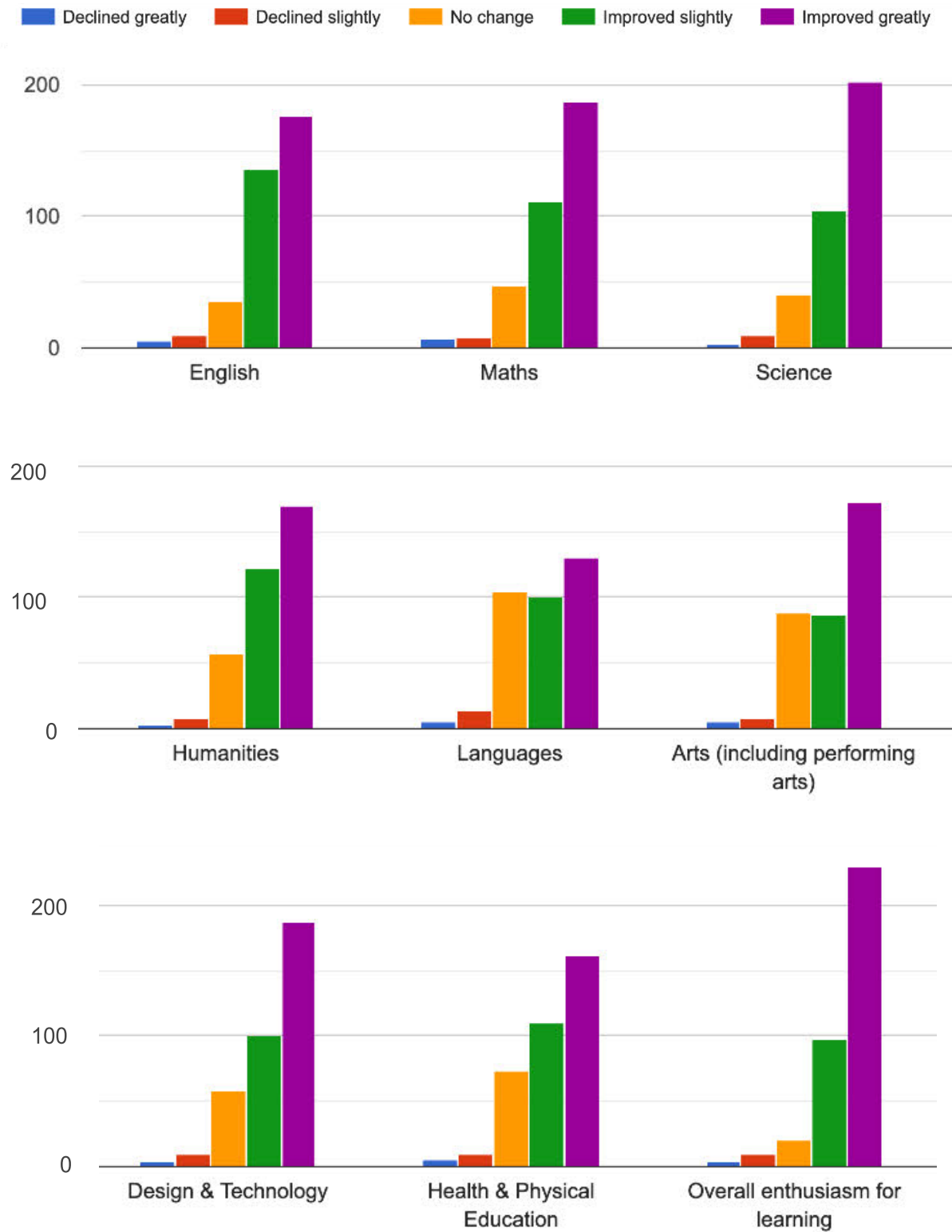


Figure 5. Interest and engagement in learning for currently home educated children with School Can't **now** (during home education)

How would you describe your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **now**?



3. Educational attainment for children with School Can't who are still home educated

While they were still at school, before commencing home education, average educational attainment for children with School Can't was poor, with half to over two-thirds of children having very poor or unsatisfactory education attainment, or not participating at all, in every learning area while at school (Figure 6).

Children's educational attainment while they were still at school was better in Arts, Design & Technology, Health & Physical Education, and Science. Conversely, Social & Emotional Learning was the poorest area of attainment, with only 18.5% of children attaining satisfactory or excellent results.

By comparison, children who are currently home educated have experienced great improvements in their educational attainment in all learning areas since commencing home education (Figure 7). In every learning area, attainment increased between 2.5- to 5-fold after commencing home education.

Notably, attainment in Social & Emotional Learning improved very markedly, with 90.9% of children having satisfactory or excellent attainment in this area after commencing home education, compared to 18.5% while still at school.

Children who had very poor or unsatisfactory attainment, or who did not participate, in various learning areas after commencing home education were generally in their first year or two of home education (average 1.2 years), were dealing with extreme mental health difficulties, and/or had disabilities or other additional needs.

Languages was the area with lowest average attainment for children once they commenced home education, but even here, the improvements were marked. A higher proportion of children (86%) had or were suspected to have a disability or additional needs in the cohort that did not participate in Languages, or whose attainment was very poor to unsatisfactory, compared to the overall group.

235 respondents added further comments about their child's educational experiences in school and/or at home (Appendix B).

Figure 6. Educational attainment for currently home educated children with School Can't **while still at school** (before home education)

How would you have described your child's **educational attainment** in each of the following Learning Areas **while still at school**?

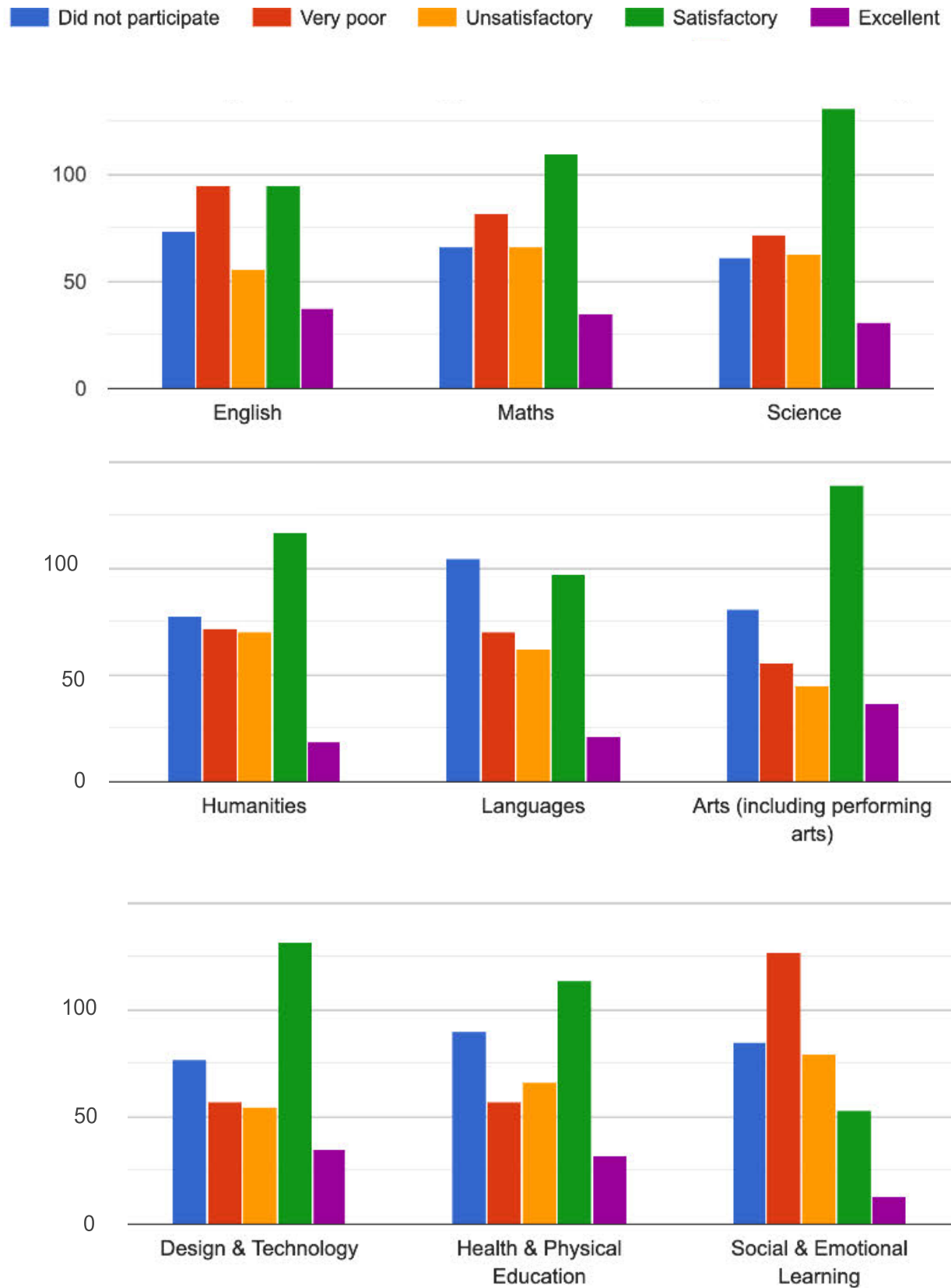
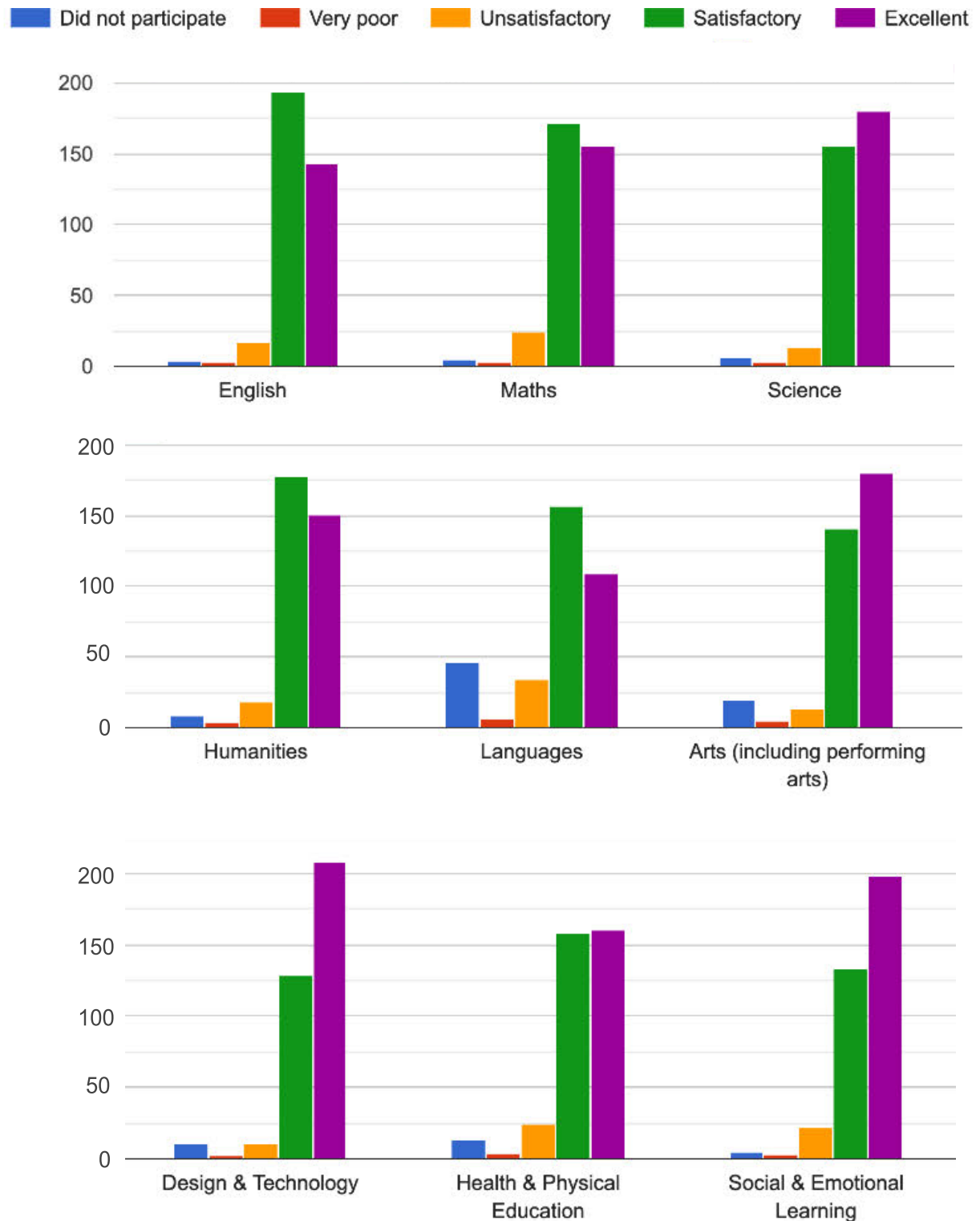


Figure 7. Educational attainment for currently home educated children with School Can't **now** (during home education)

How would you describe your child's **educational attainment** in each of the following Learning Areas **now**?



4. Competitions entered by children with School Can't who are currently home educated

A few (14%) home educated children with School Can't entered competitions while being home educated. These covered all eight Learning Areas, and included local, regional, state, national and international competitions (Appendix C).

Many respondents were unaware that the competitions listed in the survey existed, and/or that they were open to home educated students. Many others question the value and place of competition, and value intrinsic motivation more than extrinsic.

Some respondents noted that their child is unable to participate in competitions due to having a stress response to anything that looks like school work.

Results reported by parents ranged from High Distinctions, making the Honor Roll and First at state level to comments such as 'She hasn't won anything yet, but she loves giving some things a go now at least!' and 'Results have been average, engagement has seen an improvement.'

Parents also noted that children often found and entered competitions themselves; that many were harder to enter or completely inaccessible as a home educator; and that they were keen to keep encouraging their children to enter things that challenge them. One parent noted, 'The confidence and determination to better his skills and to learn new ones is incredible. He will work out the distance and travel speed he needs to land a trick [on the scooter or BMX].'

5. Qualifications gained by children with School Can't who are currently home educated

About one-fifth (21%) of children with School Can't who are currently home educated and are aged 13 and over have completed external qualifications. These included TAFE Certificates, Individual subjects from Open Universities, Short course certificates, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and Qualifications related to their part-time job.

Examples of the qualifications gained were supplied by some respondents (Table 3). Respondents also noted that some qualifications involved a lot of work, hours, and dedication, and included written and practical exams, but students gained them willingly. In addition, some were frustrated about the lack of access to TAFE and VET courses before age 17 in some states.

Table 3. Examples of external qualifications and short courses undertaken by students with School Can't who are currently home educating

Type of Qualification	Examples provided
TAFE Certificate	Certificate IV - School based Education Support Certificate 3 Certificate 2 Electrotechnology Certificate 2 in Heavy and Light Rail Fundamentals First aid in the Workplace
Qualification related to their part-time job	Beginner and Intermediate coaching qualifications in their chosen sport Beginner and intermediate judging qualifications in their chosen sport Barista course Food handling certificates
Short courses	Computer 3D-modelling First Aid Administration Accounting Food Handling Leadership courses Languages Creative writing Maths Auslan Vocational training in animal care
Individual subjects from Open Universities	Maths (3rd year Matrices subject from Washington State University) Languages (Korean, German) Forensic Science

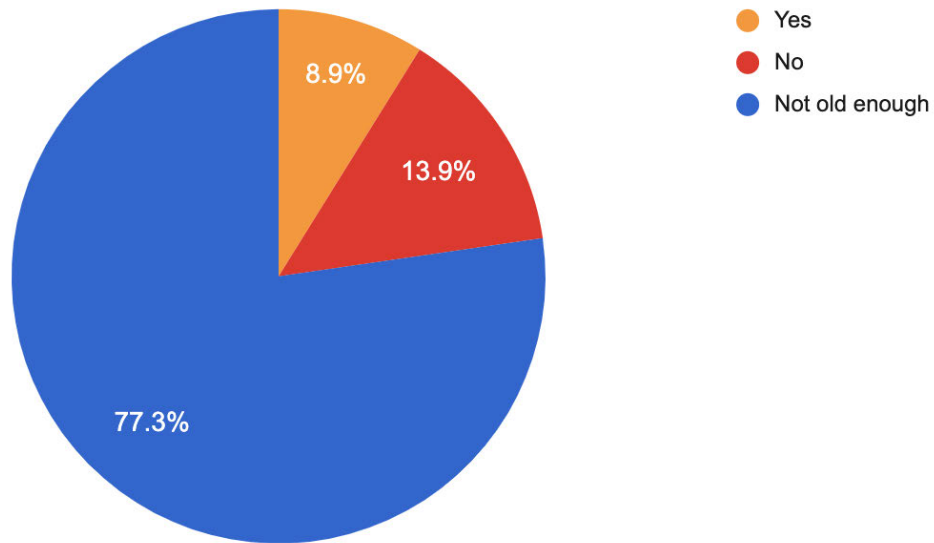
6. Part-time and casual work undertaken by children with School Can't who are currently home educated

Almost 40% of home educated students with School Can't who are currently home educated and are old enough, have a part-time or casual job (Figure 8). Of these young people, almost one quarter (22.9%) have undertaken job-related training. Two-thirds (65.6%) of the young people with part-time or casual work who are currently home educating have or are suspected to have a disability or additional needs.

Figure 8. Employment status of students with School Can't who are currently home educated

Does your child have a part-time or casual job?

361 responses

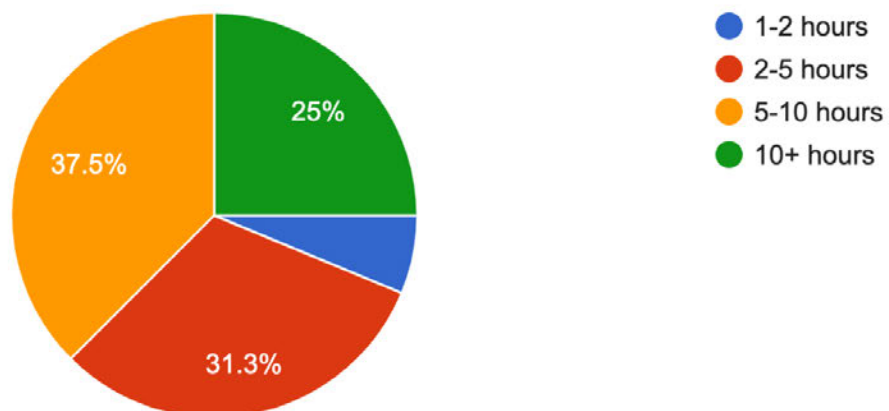


Almost two-thirds of the young people who have work and are currently home educating worked more than five hours per week (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Hours worked per week by young people with School Can't who are currently home educated and have a part-time or casual job

If your child has a job, how many hours do they spend working in an average week?

32 responses



Examples of the jobs undertaken by young people with School Can't who are currently home educated were supplied by many respondents, and many also chose to share feedback from employers (Appendix D). Jobs undertaken ranged widely from owning and running their own business, coaching sport, making art to sell, working in retail and hospitality, helping run family businesses, volunteering and much more.

7. Further comments made by parents of children and young people with School Can't who are currently home educating

There were 77 and 100 responses to questions 23 and 24 respectively. These have been combined (Appendix E) as most people answered one or the other, and there was distinct overlap between the themes.

We encourage you to read them in their entirety, as they give a good overview of how home education has influenced students' attainment and outlook on learning and education.

D. Children with School Can't who are back at school

1. About the children with School Can't who are back at school

61 respondents had children with School Can't who were back at school. Mean age was slightly higher than for the group who are still home educating by about 6 months, and median age is the same (Table 4).

Table 4. Children with School Can't who are back at school after a period of home education

		Children with School Can't who are back at school
Number of Respondents		61
Current Age (years)	Mean	12.28
	Median	12
	Minimum	6
	Maximum	17
Age Commenced Home Education (years)	Mean	9.69
	Median	9
	Minimum	5
	Maximum	16

Average length of home education was 1.5 years (which is lower than the average registration period for all states and territories), and the average amount of time back at school was also 1.5 years (n = 34).

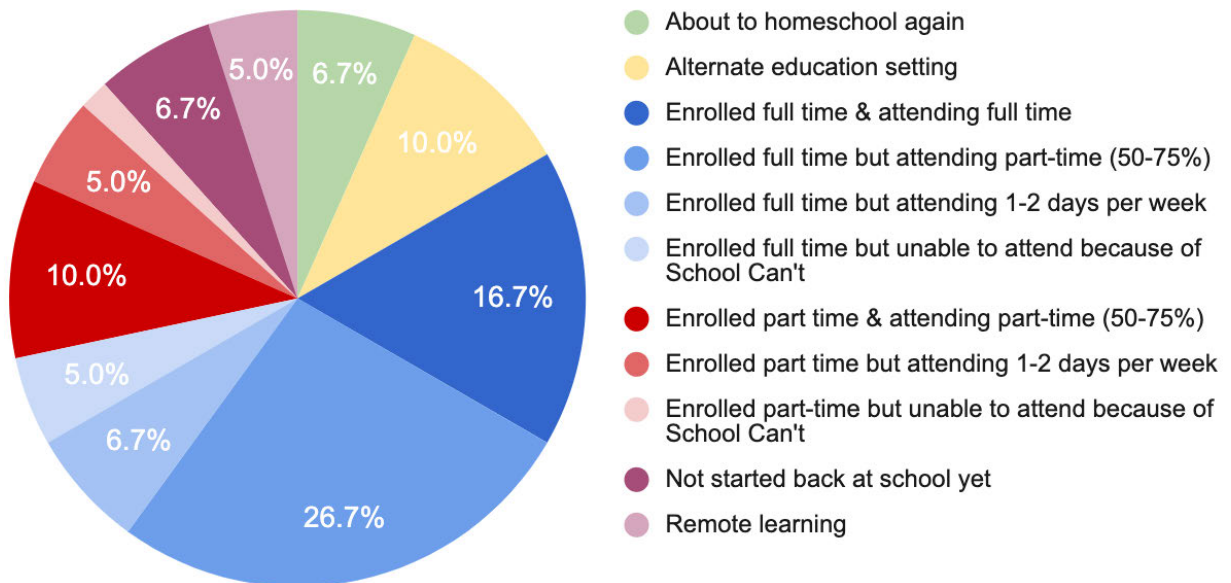
2. School attendance for the children with School Can't who are back at school

School attendance in Term 2 of 2023 for children with School Can't who had returned to school after home education was variable (Figure 10). More than one-fifth of this cohort are learning from home remotely, are in alternate settings, or are about to register for home education once more. Almost two-thirds (62.8%) of students in this cohort who are enrolled in mainstream school are unable to attend as per their enrolment.

Figure 10. Current educational settings for children with School Can't who are back at school

Which best describes the current setting for your child?

60 respondents



3. Learning and attainment for the children with School Can't who are back at school

Due to small numbers in each of the subgroups, further data analysis would lack the power to provide meaningful results. About half the respondents whose children were back at school did not complete the survey through the same route as the other half, and so the data cannot be combined. There are some trends in the data that are significant to note, however (Appendix F & Appendix G). Interest and engagement in learning improved overall while home educating, and declined somewhat after re-entering school. A similar trend is evident for educational attainment: it improved during home education, and there has been an overall decline in attainment with re-entry to school. However, the gains made during home education appear not to have been lost entirely.

Twenty-four respondents left extra comments about their child's educational experiences at school and/or during home education (Appendix H).

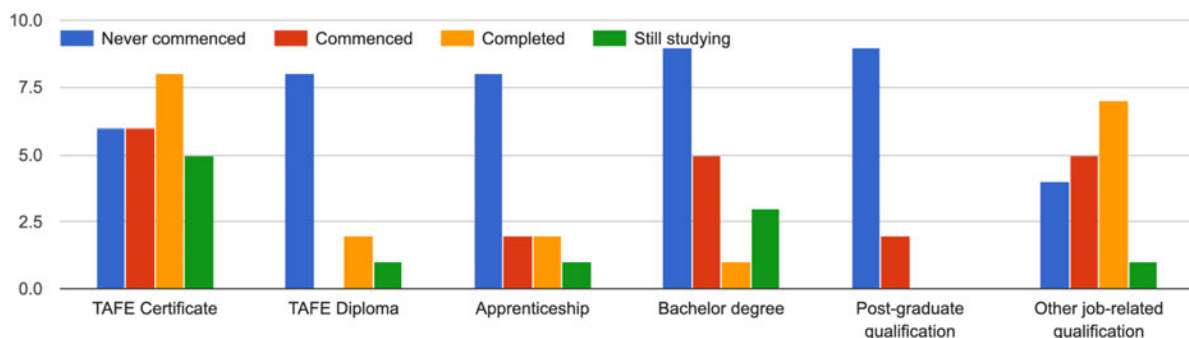
E. Young people with School Can't who were home educated and are now in work or further education

Thirty two respondents had young adult or older children who were working or were in further education. Nine of 32 respondents had adult children (over 18). The rest had an average age of 17.2 years, and a median of 17 years (range: 15 - 18 years).

Their experiences were varied. Four of the 32 respondents had never commenced any sort of further qualification (all of whom are now working). The rest had commenced, completed or were still engaged in one or more further qualifications (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Further qualifications undertaken by young people who were home educated and are now working or in further education.

Which of the following has your child commenced and completed (tick all that apply). [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

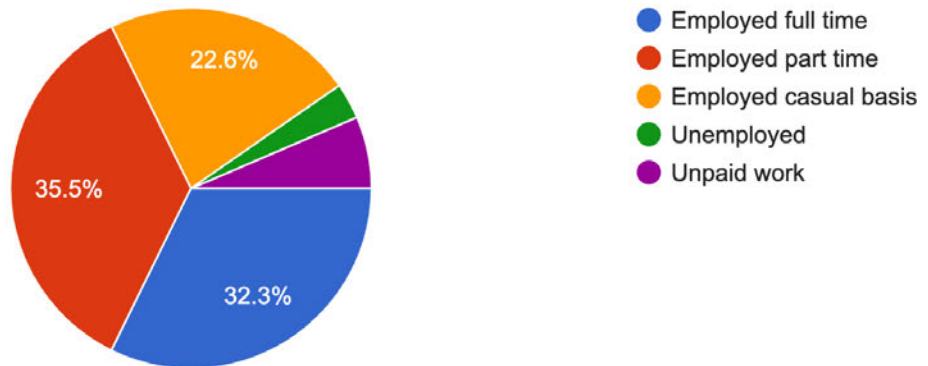


All but one of the respondents are employed or volunteering (Figure 12). Only one respondent was not working, and that individual is currently in TAFE.

Figure 12. Employment status for young people with School can't who were home educated and are now in further education or working

Is your child currently employed?

31 responses

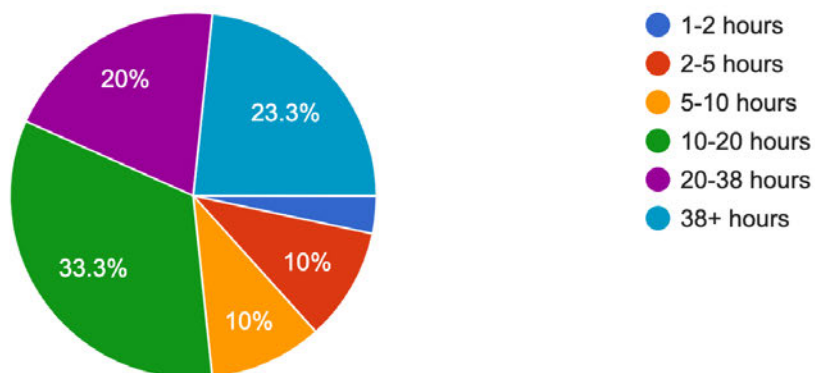


Hours worked vary (Figure 13), with 7 respondents having children in full time employment. Reasons for part-time employment included study and child-rearing duties.

Figure 13. Number of hours worked per week by young people who are in further education or working

If your child has a job, how many hours do they spend working in an average week?

30 responses



Twenty-one respondents shared what their children's jobs entailed (Table 5). They were extremely varied. Some were self-employed, others were also at home with small children..

Table 5. Jobs worked by young people with School Can't who were currently in further education or working, and feedback from employers..

Which best describes the current setting for your child?	If your child has a job, how many hours do they spend working in an average week?	If your child has a job/s, you are welcome to share what that job/s entails	If your child has a job, do you have any feedback from their employers you would like to share?
At Uni	1-2 hours		
	2-5 hours	Carer duties for a disabled relative.	
	2-5 hours	MC at Radio Host &	Has received radio hosting awards
	5-10 hours	Basketball referee and runs his own online business	
	5-10 hours	Vineyard work, library volunteer running holiday STEM workshops for kids.	Conscientious, motivated, delightful company.
	10-20 hours	Medic and aged care provider	
	10-20 hours	Writing apps for a mining industry company plus job at the supermarket	
	20-38 hours	Early Childhood Educator (Diploma Trained)	Amazed at her work ethic, her drive and determination to reach her goals at such a young age.
In TAFE	2-5 hours		
	5-10 hours	Stable hand, horse rider and trainer.	They love her.
	10-20 hours	Hungry Jacks	
	20-38 hours	Building and construction apprenticeship Yr 2	
	20-38 hours	Chef apprenticeship	
Working	10-20 hours	Editing for YouTubers and Social Media for businesses	
	10-20 hours	Secondary English/ art teacher	Has worked in retail and hospitality jobs while studying Fine Art and Education degrees. Full time teaching until maternity leave. Has always been a highly valued employee.

10-20 hours	Stock room and POS	
10-20 hours	Visual merchandising	
10-20 hours		
10-20 hours		
10-20 hours		
20-38 hours	sports coach, working with young children	they are committed, hard-working, reliable, talented and well-liked
20-38 hours		
20-38 hours		
20-38 hours		
38+ hours	Dairy farming and mechanic (self taught)	"He is the best thing to happen to our business. Ever!"
38+ hours	Excavator driver, crypto currency trader, professional online gambler.	His employers sing his praises and say he is motivated and has initiative.
38+ hours	My daughter has graduated school & is now a venue manager at a bbq bar & restaurant.	
38+ hours	Project Assistant and IT Network Designs	
38+ hours	Shire council: data entry, checking mail, forwarding jobs onto the right person. And many other jobs, a lot for me to remember.	They have found her very pleasant, a joy to work for, polite to all that she meets.
38+ hours	They own their own business. A successful award winning restaurant	
38+ hours		

Most respondents also left further comments on schooling, education and work for their children who are now young people in further education or employment (Appendix I).

F. Young people with School Can't who have been home educated and are currently not home educating, back at school, in further study or working

Six respondents had children who were in Distance Education programs, either state based or independent. Another two had children who were looking for work after completing TAFE Certificates. One respondent's child was unable to work due to chronic health conditions, and another's situation is unclear.

Their further comments and contributions can be found in Appendix J.

Discussion

The results of this survey are consistent with, and build upon, the results of our earlier School Can't survey. That survey clearly demonstrated that home education can provide great improvements in the lives of children with School Can't, and their families.

The current survey illustrates the educational improvements that children with School Can't can find through home education. It also highlights needs for support, connection and empowerment, consistent with the findings of our earlier survey (Home Education Network, 2023).

The over-representation of children with disabilities and additional needs in this cohort continues to be a cause for concern. The implications for possible discrimination in the right to access quality education against children with disabilities is clear. While home education can mitigate many of the issues, fair access to home education continues to be an issue - lack of education for professionals and schools, lack of financial support for home educating parents, lack of information for newcomers to the community on how to connect with the existing community and so much more. The comments made by parents throughout this survey clearly demonstrate that many of these barriers exist in a broad sense, and there is little to no government support or assistance to mitigate them.

The weighting towards data from respondents who are still home educating reflects our reach - we are unable to notify parents of children who have gone back to school about our survey unless they notice it in one of the groups without a home education focus that we are able to post our survey in (for example, 'School Can't Australia [formerly School Phobia/School Refusal Australia]' or 'TARA').

The improvements in interest, engagement and educational attainment in children with School Can't once they begin home education are marked. It is important to note that the

length of home education has a large effect on these improvements, and this is unsurprising, given that many of the children with School Can't who come out of school are often traumatised, in a state of chronic stress, and need time to decompress and deschool before engaging with learning once more.

It is also clear from the results of the survey that the earlier children commence home education after starting to experience School Can't, the earlier the improvements start to be seen.

Interest and engagement are vital precursors to educational attainment. When interested and engaged, children are motivated to learn, become active participants, think more deeply about a subject, become self-directed, have agency and ownership, and engage in critical thinking and problem solving (Pekrun et al, 2007; Schiefele, 1991; Wang & Eccles, 2013).

It is interesting to note that children with School Can't who had been home educated but returned to mainstream education did so on average in less time than is generally understood it takes to become familiar with home education and find what works for the individual child and the family. Despite this, children still experienced improvements in engagement, interest and attainment that were often maintained to some degree during their return to school. However, this return to school was frequently fraught with the return of School Can't, a decline in enthusiasm and attainment, an inability to attend as much as planned, despite the will of everyone to make it work. Often, it results in a return to home education, and an improvement in the wellbeing and attainment of the child once more.

It is abundantly clear that those children who enter the home education community and are connected into local groups fare better socially, emotionally and academically than those that are not connected in some way. This is consistent with the findings of our previous survey (Home Education Network, 2023).

Social and emotional learning was an area that we added to the survey to assess how well it was attained by children at school and when home educated. It is an area that is often the subject of myths about home education, and an area of concern for parents who are considering home education. The survey results clearly indicate that social and emotional learning are greatly enhanced by the commencement of home education. These are skills that are crucial to managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, establishing positive relationships, and making responsible decisions, and are thus vital to educational attainment (Durlak et al, 2011) They are also associated with better job prospects and improved overall lifelong well-being (Jones & Bouffard, 2012), and effective communication and collaboration (Weissberg et al, 2015).

The improvements children experience in social and emotional learning while home educating may explain why the improvements gained in educational attainment while home educating carry forward to some degree when children return to school.

The survey results also suggest that children with disabilities and additional needs who are well-supported through home education, and have the time to develop social and emotional skills, are able to engage in more advanced course-work, paid work and further study.

It is also clear that home educated children with School Can't are well able to engage in the community, use their initiative to establish their own businesses, take charge of their education and find pathways that utilise their strengths to achieve independence and contribute meaningfully to society.

Families who have experienced School Can't and subsequently embraced home education for their children demonstrate profound improvements in overall wellbeing and attainment for those children, including academic, social and emotional wellness, and future prospects.

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Appendix A - Survey Questions

HEN collecting data on Educational Attainment in kids with School Can't who are/have Home Educated

This survey is **supplementary** to our earlier School Can't survey. The results of that survey and the HEN submission made to the Senate Inquiry can be found [here](#).

The Senate Inquiry into the National Trend of School Refusal and Related Matters has been extended to allow the Senate Committee to gather data in relation to the impact of School Can't on the **educational attainment** of students. The Home Education Network (HEN) is keen to hear from parents of learners who experienced School Can't and were subsequently home educated, whether they returned to school or not.

All responses are **anonymous**.

Please **skip** any questions you don't want to answer, and feel free to complete the form **more than once** if you have multiple children who were unable to attend school.

Thank you for your help!

* Indicates required question

1. Which state or territory do you currently reside in?

Mark only one oval.

ACT

NSW

NT

QLD

SA

TAS

VIC

WA

2. Are you currently or have you ever home educated the child with school refusal (school can't)? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

About your child with School Can't

3. What is your child's current age?

Mark only one oval.

18

17

16

15

14

13

12

11

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9

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Adult (over 18 years)

4. How old was your child when you began home educating?

Mark only one oval.

18

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16

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5. Does your child have any disabilities or additional needs?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Suspected

6. Which best describes the current setting for your child? *

Mark only one oval.

Still home educated *Skip to question 7*

Back at school *Skip to question 25*

In TAFE *Skip to question 35*

At Uni *Skip to question 35*

Working *Skip to question 35*

Other: _____

Child with School Can't still being home educated

7. How would you have described your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **while still at school**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Highly disinterested	Somewhat disinterested	Somewhat interested	Highly interested
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How would you describe your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **now**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Declined greatly	Declined slightly	No change	Improved slightly	Improved greatly
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. How would you have described your child's **educational attainment** in each of the following Learning Areas **while still at school**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How would you describe your child's **educational attainment** in each of the following Learning Areas **now**? 'Attainment' in a home education context includes a broad scope of work towards a goal or idea, and does not need to be aligned with curriculum or age-based ideas of content knowledge or grading systems. [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Is there anything you would like to add about your child's educational experiences at school or in home education?

12. Has your child been involved in any competitions while being home educated?

Tick all that apply.

- Australian Mathematics Competition
- Australian Geography Competition
- Big Science Competition
- Australian History Competition
- International Chemistry Quiz
- Australian Informatics Olympiad
- Oxford University Computing Challenge
- Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians
- None
- Other: _____

13. If your child has been involved in competitions, what were their results?

14. Do you have anything further to add about the competitions your child has been involved in?

15. Does your child have any external qualifications or certificates they have gained during their time in home education?

Tick all that apply.

- TAFE Certificate
- TAFE Diploma
- Individual subjects from Open Universities
- Short course certificate
- MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)
- Qualification related to their part-time job
- None
- Other: _____

16. External qualifications are quantifiable, and therefore meaningful to the government, so please list your child's external qualifications and certificates here if you are happy to share them.

17. Do you have anything you would like to add about your child's external qualifications and certificates?

18. Does your child have a part-time or casual job?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not old enough

19. If your child has a job, has your child undertaken or are they undertaking any job-related training?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

20. If your child has a job, how many hours do they spend working in an average week?

Mark only one oval.

- 1-2 hours
- 2-5 hours
- 5-10 hours
- 10+ hours

21. If your child has a job/s, you are welcome to share what that job/s entails

22. If your child has a job, do you have any feedback from their employers you would like to share?

23. Do you have anything you would like to add about your child's educational attainment?

24. Do you have any further comments?

Child with School Can't who is back at school

25. How many years was your child home educated?

Mark only one oval.

Less than 1 year

1

2

3

4

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26. How many years have they been back at school?

Mark only one oval.

Less than 1 year

1

2

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27. Which of the following best describes your child's attendance in Term 2 this year:

Mark only one oval.

Enrolled full time & attending full time

Enrolled full time but attending part-time (50-75%)

Enrolled full time but attending 1-2 days per week

Enrolled full time but unable to attend because of School Can't

Enrolled part time & attending part-time (50-75%)

Enrolled part time but attending 1-2 days per week

Enrolled part-time but unable to attend because of School Can't

Other: _____

28. **This question relates to your child's experience at school BEFORE they were removed to home educate.** How would you have described your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **at school before being removed** for School Can't (ie before home educating)? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Highly disinterested	Somewhat disinterested	Somewhat interested	Highly interested
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. How would you have described your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **while home educating**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Highly disinterested	Somewhat disinterested	Somewhat interested	Highly interested
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. How would you describe your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **now** (compared to their time home educating)? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Declined greatly	Declined slightly	No change	Improved slightly	Improved greatly
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. **This question relates to your child's experience at school BEFORE they were removed to home educate.** How would you have described your child's **educational attainment** in the following Learning Areas **at school before being removed** for School Can't (ie before home educating)? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. How would you have described your child's **educational attainment** in the following Learning Areas **while home educating**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. How would you describe your child's **educational attainment** in the following Learning Areas **now**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. Do you have any further comments about your child's educational experiences at school or in their time being home educated?

About your child with School Can't in further study and employment

35. Which of the following has your child commenced and completed (tick all that apply). [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Tick all that apply.

	Never commenced	Commenced	Completed	Still studying
TAFE Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TAFE Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apprenticeship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-graduate qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other job- related qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

36. Do you have anything you would like to share about your child's further education, such as feedback from educators, their experience in a formal education setting after home education, or anything else?

37. Is your child currently employed?

Mark only one oval.

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Employed casual basis
- Unemployed
- Unpaid work

38. If your child has a job, how many hours do they spend working in an average week?

Mark only one oval.

- 1-2 hours
- 2-5 hours
- 5-10 hours
- 10-20 hours
- 20-38 hours
- 38+ hours

39. If your child has a job/s, you are welcome to share what that job/s entails

40. If your child has a job, do you have any feedback from their employers you would like to share?

41. Do you have any further comments?

About your child with School Can't and their current circumstances

42. Please tell us about the circumstances that lead you to select "Other" in the previous question.

43. Did your child ever return to school after commencing home education?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Other: _____

44. In total, how many years was your child home educated?

Mark only one oval.

Less than 1 year

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

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10

11

12

13

14

15

Option 17

45. How would you have described your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **while still at school?** [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Highly disinterested	Somewhat disinterested	Somewhat interested	Highly interested
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. How would you have described your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **during home education**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Highly disinterested	Somewhat disinterested	Somewhat interested	Highly interested
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall enthusiasm for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47. How would you describe your child's **educational attainment** in each of the following Learning Areas **while at school**? [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

48. How would you describe your child's **educational attainment** in each of the following Learning Areas **during home education**? 'Attainment' in a home education context includes a broad scope of work towards a goal or idea, and does not need to be aligned with curriculum or age-based ideas of content knowledge or grading systems. [Scroll to the right for all options if using mobile phone]

Mark only one oval per row.

	Did not participate	Very poor	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humanities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Languages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts (including performing arts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design & Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health & Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social & Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

49. Is there anything you would like to add about your child's educational experiences at school or in home education?

50. Does your child have any external qualifications or certificates they gained during their time in home education?

Tick all that apply.

- TAFE Certificate
- TAFE Diploma
- Individual subjects from Open Universities
- Short course certificate
- MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)
- Qualification related to their part-time job
- None
- Other: _____

51. External qualifications are quantifiable, and therefore meaningful to the government, so please list your child's external qualifications and certificates here if you are happy to share them.

52. Do you have anything you would like to add about your child's external qualifications and certificates?

53. Do you have anything you would like to add about your child's school or home education experiences and attainment?

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Appendix B - Responses to Question 11

Is there anything you would like to add about your child's educational experiences at school or in home education?
[Children with School Can't who are currently home educated]

<p>My child had such a negative experience at school that even the thought is traumatising now. I have tried many different engagement methods with no success. She has instead become more depressed and disengaged.</p>
<p>School learning created trauma, we are trying to recover from the trauma now, it's taking time.</p>
<p>Transition to Tafe at school. Did not want to attend high school. Attended all tafe lessons. Could not achieve the result unless attending school. No distance learning offered for school component of VCE vocational major.</p>
<p>Schools failed to provide the support that they preach about. My son was abandoned upon entering high school and it was disgusting how the school treated him.</p>
<p>My daughter was spending a lot of time sitting doing worksheets at school, and she lost interest in learning. Since switching to home education, my daughter has become inquisitive and motivated to learn again. At school, it was concerning to see her enthusiasm for learning dwindling, and I feel very fortunate that I am able to provide home education.</p>
<p>Massive improvement in child's overall learning capabilities and mental health.</p>
<p>Whilst our daughter was trying her hardest to attend proper school , she was finding it very hard to keep up with everything as she was missing a lot of classes. Her teachers tried their best to keep her updated but it was a real struggle. Academically she wanted to do well and put a lot of pressure on herself to perform the best she could. Now being online schooled , she is doing a lot better and a lot more focused. The stress is def not at a high as it was last year.</p>
<p>He was barely learning anything at school as he wasn't really attending much. He has learned so much at home!</p>
<p>Although we have only been at it for a few months. I can already see the improvement both within school work but also his mentality. Personal growth has been something we have worked very hard on and are accomplishing.</p>
<p>This child does not do well when told to perform. He will complete tasks on his own terms, and can demonstrate skills/knowledge in practical applications. He does well in small groups, either with people he knows and trusts or with others who have similar interests and goals. Navigating large groups with complex needs causes him to shut down mentally and emotionally.</p>
<p>My son was attending an excellent school with a principal and teachers who cared and went above and beyond to support him and his needs. However, his ADHD and anxiety around attending school impacted his ability to learn across all areas of his development including socially and emotionally. When we started Home ed it became very apparent that although things had been taught at school, due to his anxiety, he had not retained vital foundational skills or understandings. His School Cant was having a detrimental impact on his mental health as well as damaging my relationship with him as his parent because we were forcing him to attend school, daily having to physically force him out of the front door, car and into the classroom and leaving him in the arms of a teacher. Not good for either of us! Since starting home ed his learning and his attitude towards learning has improved and</p>

<p>his mental health has improved significantly as he can learn in the safety of home, with us and in a way that works best for him.</p>
<p>School was unable to meet his needs so he could learn to the best of his ability</p>
<p>While attending a state high school, my child was regularly stressed, overwhelmed, confused and ashamed. The curriculum was so hectic and the teachers' instructions so minimal that it wasn't possible for him to meaningfully engage with his own learning.</p>
<p>My child is learning & willing to try more things at home because there is no judgement and no one to compare to. Her overall confidence is better and less anxious and stressed. We are finding more things we can learn about, that they wouldn't learn in school</p>
<p>Burnout was extreme and it took nearly two years to recover to the point we could do occasional learning. Some areas not yet attempted eg humanities, science. We are addressing gaps in skills not learned properly at school eg very poor reading skills, lack of vocab, trouble initiating and planning tasks.</p>
<p>He became so crippled with anxiety he was not learning anything at school, he shut down completely</p>
<p>My child was miserable, angry and disengaged from learning while in school. In the homeschool environment he has blossomed into a confident, happy and interested person, with a unique skill set that has developed with and is aligned to his natural strengths.</p>
<p>School had no interest in supporting her educational needs at school. They just took her out of class and let her draw all day, on the days she even attended.</p>
<p>Isolation is very difficult. Keeping motivated hard</p>
<p>My child suffered burnout due to social and educational pressures and undetected learning challenges (diagnosed Autistic during school can't). This highly contributed to School Can't and poor outcomes.</p>
<p>Lack of family and school support through covid saw her completely disengage, re-engaging through home schooling was seen as the best option supporting emotional development but re-engaging with learning as a teen has proven difficult</p>
<p>Child has DLD (developmental language disorder). Whilst in LDC (language development centre) he was learning well, all but Maths was still a huge problem. This school only went up to year 1. Year 2 & 3 learning was getting harder. The basics of maths my son could not understand and therefore falling further behind.</p> <p>The classroom was now twice the size and with 27 pupils he was getting lost in the system. Even with his ELP in place for his low attention & memory, and understanding, it was not enough. At first in homeschooling we were working how much he has not understanding as he should have been. Being able to go back and help him to work out the basics again & work on them till he understands better. Now instead of being so overwhelmed in the school environment, our son is able to learn and not just survive during the day and well at anytime he wants too!</p>
<p>Schools do not know enough about neurological disabilities to be able to adequately support children with disabilities. They use an ABA approach to discipline and learning and this can be extremely harmful for some children. They work with a one size fits all approach and if children are "too hard" they get punished and left behind. Homeschooling gives you the freedom to teach your child the things they actually need for future life and to learn the things they want to learn about, all while doing it in the best manner in which they learn. Schools just can't/won't address these issues.</p>
<p>Our issue was not academic success at school it was support needs not being met and staff misconduct leading to educational trauma</p>
<p>Home Education has provided a safe place for my child. His stress and anxiety at school became so elevated that learning was virtually impossible.</p>

<p>Learning and motivation to learn have improved over time, without the associated stress of mainstream classroom busyness and expectations.</p>
<p>She has learnt things much better since being home and out of the school environment.</p>
<p>At school they were always in fight or flight mode. Stress and anxiety school produced to not set them up to be an engaged learner. While the home school journey is still new these past 5 months they have relaxed, their sleep has improved and self esteem. While they still don't enjoying 'school learning' they will do it and not refuse like they use to.</p>
<p>Improved mental health has been a positive we have noticed doing home schooling. Passion led learning has led to some very exciting learning opportunities that have developed into life skills and also pre apprentice skills.</p>
<p>Schools struggle or do not know how to deal with kids on the spectrum particularly with anxiety or adhd. There needs to be a proper module in the teaching degree as teachers have not been taught how to deal with it This resulted in school can't and constantly being sent home There needs to be other options available</p>
<p>She wasn't functional at school</p>
<p>School refusal was all related to bullying</p>
<p>My child's negative school education experiences has influenced their negative view about learning even though they are now homeschooled and are very smart and capable they have little interest in learning.</p>
<p>School was a nightmare for my child. The pressure of "succeeding" when he felt and was made to feel very "dumb" was excruciating. He was so depressed and anxious he became suicidal.</p>
<p>Since changing to home school he is thriving. He is happy, content, loving the balance and learning at a much faster but steadier rate. Best thing we've ever done for him.</p>
<p>My child has gained great confidence and self pride which she did not have while at school.</p>
<p>Profoundly gifted with dysgraphia. School greatly misunderstood my child and insisted on written answers as the main form of assessment at 6yo despite being aware of probable dysgraphia. Unbelievable.</p>
<p>My daughter is highly intelligent and excellent at masking therefore she "performed" as required at school. It was when she got home, into her safe place, that things disintegrated. Anxiety before school was extreme, affecting other siblings and the entire family. The car ride home was like eggshells. Will she explode today or not? Explosions (meltdowns) were extreme. Violent, aggressive and left us all in dangerous situations. Since homeschooling we have had no explosions. She is able to emotionally regulate, ask when she is getting overwhelmed and access her strategies. The change in herself, and our entire family is immense!</p>
<p>Child was very unwell, mental health, whilst at school and has completely recovered and thriving at home.</p>
<p>My child has significant needs that are impossible to meet in the current mainstream environment. Things need to change so that my child can go to school</p>
<p>Schools cannot easily cater for her ASD special needs</p>
<p>My 'children' are totally overwhelmed and exhausted by the sensory impact of onsite schooling. The teachers do not know or have the time to modify and know reasonable adjustments can or would be made for quiet locations and appropriately designed classrooms or recreational areas.</p>

<p>She learns fast and was able to develop skills in music, arts and other stuff.</p>
<p>School environment was toxic and curriculum overreached and was not in line with family values. Teachers were too politically opinionated and biased</p>
<p>My child was belittled in front of her class on the first day of school by the teacher. She refused to ever go back.</p>
<p>My child ended up spending her school days in the welfare room and not getting an education. She was extremely stressed, and anxious to the point it was making her physically unwell</p>
<p>Condescension to disabled children is also bullying</p>
<p>My child can not learn in a government school. They are too big, large classes, shoved outside at playtimes and expected to cope. There are no alternatives to the norm. Children are raised to be compliant with very very little emotional support. My concerns were constantly brushed aside and I was gaslit and told he was fine. He hates school. He begun to hate life and became depressed. Because of school. The system is broken. The system needs drastic change not Band-Aid adjustments. Here's the interesting part - I'm a teacher!!! And I'm so saddened and alienated by the state of our education system.</p>
<p>School was very overwhelmingly and created a lot of anxiety. They love learning but couldn't in that environment. They are thriving learning at home.</p>
<p>That her mental health has improved greatly</p>
<p>The desire to learn and innovative/curious thinking they have time to develop is astounding. The community we have built has led to a strong sense of belonging and citizenship</p>
<p>My children can learn more in less time with far less distractions and be safe and work in a safe environment</p>
<p>My child is extremely "bright" and has been identified as "gifted"; however, school "can't" impacted how they were able to pursue and engage with learning and they were slowly slipping away from their giftedness though the constraints of the school system. Since commencing home education, my child's giftedness and love of learning has been slowly returning.</p>
<p>My children went to a lovely school for 5 years, who unfortunately just did not have the resources or time to support my ASD child's learning needs.</p>
<p>He is bright and has always loved learning, but couldn't handle the chaotic environment and lack of support. In the end it got so bad he would just cry uncontrollably and melt down every school morning.</p>
<p>Two years into home ed, he has recovered and now thrives under a personalised learning approach. He plans to either study pure maths or astrophysics in the future.</p>
<p>None of this would have been possible if he hadve stayed in school.</p>
<p>But all of this comes at a huge price to home educating parents families.</p>
<p>Loss of wages/family income as a result of decreased work participation, in order to stay at home with the kids being the main one. Current financial support is so limited.</p>
<p>Also, with an increase in funding for educational/social daytime programs for homeschooled children, we would increase the already positive outcomes for our kids.</p>
<p>With regard to the above, this would help support care givers too. I would love a much needed short</p>

break every so often from being the parent, educator and advocate to take care of my own mental health and my other responsibilities too.

The single best thing I did for my homeschooled child was to regularly read interesting stories to her. This gave her an interest in reading and an understanding of how valuable it is. At the time she couldn't be taught to read. About a year later she read a book to us because she taught herself to read. It has given her an interest in her own education.

School did not offer a safe or welcoming place for my child. He withdrew and would not participate. As a home educated child, he thrives.

Whilst my son had a passion for learning and was interested to learn at school, he found that school was not engaging and he was unable to learn at a pace that was fast enough to suit him. He disengaged and lost his enthusiasm for learning because of this.

Life changing for the whole family. So much healthier in all parts of his life not just school.

One on one makes it easier for my son to understand anything I am teaching . He is much more excited about learning at home as I make it fun and understanding.

At school his teachers would not explain or take the time to explain to him. He would have anxiety with so many children in one class

Before beginning school my daughter was extremely keen to learn. Unfortunately, the very busy, loud and large classroom environment where she was expected to carry out demand after demand left her extremely overstimulated and overwhelmed. She would come home and be unable to speak, resorting to grunts, squeals and screams. She could not participate in any after school activities, she had great difficulty in eating, deteriorating relationships with other family members, was difficult to bathe or carry out simple everyday life tasks etc.

After a couple of months of full-time homeschooling she was eating well again, could attend after school activities, she was happy to bathe, her desire to learn returned, her relationships with others improved and most importantly her mental health and well-being were greatly improved.

Home education allows them to learn using their preferred learning style. Learning what is important to them makes learning fun. Learning to pass or fail doing things they don't like, isn't fun.

Once all the anxiety was taken out of the school experience, my child had the capacity and enthusiasm to learn again. The selective high school wasn't bringing out her gifts and talents at all. Now, with homeschooling, she's learning very effectively and is surpassing all the goals we set.

My child is thriving and thoroughly enjoying learning from home.

Too much focus on attendance and not enough support for his educational attainment was highly demotivating. 4 weeks into DE and he has As and Bs for year level tasks and exams - anxiety not gone but a world of difference in terms of feeling it is 'not him' that is at fault in this journey.

Home education is great! The kids love it and are much more Involved and interested and it's beneficial for our family and lifestyle

My children both learn at their own paces in their own ways. Because of this, there were many gaps in the school based learning.

We are new to home schooling after school refusal for 2.5 years. Have already noticed after a short time away from going to school that our child's overall demeanour and anxiety is lifting.

Anxiety at transition to high school, separate from all friends, caused her to achieve much lower grades in an very good school. Organisation, enthusiasm, happiness levels dropped noticeably. Hats and books lost, homework forgotten, failed subjects.

Home education allows my child the freedom and time to explore different learning styles and skills and therefore he is able to retain more information much quicker with out the unnecessary distractions he faced in the classroom environment.

He is able to enjoy learning and appreciate his childhood within the safe and nurturing space provided by his family environment and is then from that foundation more able and motivated to take interest in wider community interactions inclusive of all ages and cultures.

He has developed self-motivation, confidence in his abilities to complete tasks, and can focus on new tasks with a problem solving and adaptive attitude. I identify these skills as the most important to develop and retain year by year, and ultimately into adulthood - and as he is not pushed forward, left complacent, or held back unnecessarily these skills are easier to include and balance on a day- by day basis.

At school, he spent the first term and a half of year 6 'working' from the couch outside the well-being support office. Most of the time he would read his books as he would get stuck on a question, but was too scared to go back to the classroom, and so would wait to get home so that we could help him instead. The teacher said he didn't understand what makes him tick. Being able to homeschool him has given him the space to calm his anxious body and re-engage with learning. He has found his confidence and is motivated again, he is self directed, yet happily sits down and does his work each day. If he gets stuck, he knows how to find the resources to explain it in another way. He has become conversational in a second language and has become involved in sports. He has been able to complexity change his trajectory.

School struggled to see level of competence in my child, as they only presented material based on age group, so boredom set in. For example, My child was reading at yr 12 level, in yr 3, but had only reading recovery books available. Books of interests where found easily from public libraries, so never used school library. Frustrating to see potential growth and interests going to waste in a system that is stuck on learning deficits, and what they always need to improve.

Having early access to vet study and courses would help her achieve her career goals which she is actively working towards already

School continues to reject my child but that's ok because he thrives in homeschooling

My Child has has gained more interest in learning since she was given the independent to choose the topic or subject that she'd like to know more.

Child still refuses to go back to school despite missing friends

My son has severe PTSD from his school experience. It has taken us years to help him recover from this experience and allow him to begin functioning again.

My son was 1-2 year levels behind generally and in literacy he was at a year 1 level when removed from school. He is now at stage level (mother is qualified teacher). He was bashing his head on the desk in frustration in school. He no longer displays those behaviours and is enthusiastic about learning.

Teachers were not helpful & those that were eventually refused to help with bullying. We kept going even changing schools- but still had issues with teachers whom bullied my child to point of PTSD & teacher lied to the principal, with no more choices even our paediatrician, GP, phycologists said to homeschool asap. Teacher was letter dismissed from the school for counts of years of bullying other children

She feels a lot more comfortable being at a home setting and she really thrive in learning what she likes other than being distracted by other things in the school environment.

He learns more at home for his age. He experiences real life situations and is a very happy and

contented boy. We engage in interest lead learning which then includes maths science English etc we love it

Schools are unfortunately psychologically unsafe places. When a child feels unsafe, they can't learn or retain information so they disengage and spend a lot of time in fight/flight/flee. School Can't is a child trusting their instinct.

My child is interested in a wide variety of subjects and is able to speak about it with confidence. Her thinking has definitively improved.

The mainstream school environment was not a safe or healthy place for my child. It didn't take into consideration the individual needs and learning interests/styles of it's students.

When we first started homeschooling was so far behind in maths it wasn't funny. She didn't know any of her times tables except 2's, 5's and 10's. The schools never alerted me to the fact that she was so far behind she was always marked as satisfactory. was in a public school from kindy to half way through year 3 then in a private school from year 3 till year 5. suffered bullying at both schools and would flat out refuse to go to school. I moved her from public to private after she was burnt and the school didn't give her adequate medical attention and didn't take the bullying issues seriously. We had a really good year with private until started receiving pretty severe bullying, to the point she was told to kill herself by another student. then got l'll, was out of school for around 6 months with chronic kidney issues. This resulted in her being out of routine and flatly declining to attend again. The school didn't offer much support to assist me to get her to school. At this point I felt I had no other option than to home school to ensure got an education. Since being removed from school I noticed that she had behavioural issues and booked her in for an autism assessment which resulted in a diagnosis of level two Autism Spectrum Disorder. How did two schools miss this?

Home education has allowed our child to regain a passion for learning, self confidence and happiness has largely increased.

My child is more authentic and happier in her learning at home and with homeschool friends.

My child happily engages in educational activities. They don't take time "off" for weekends or school holidays. They voluntarily do things like year 9 NAPLAN maths workbooks in the evenings, or reading history or science books at the weekend because they have regained their passion for learning, now that they are in a place where they feel safe & are able to regulate

Working at own pace without distractions from misbehaving peers & actually getting support from knowledgeable adults (who aren't forced to focus on the difficult children) has greatly increased understanding, retention and comprehension of the information. Child is passionate about subjects and will engage in own extra study based on interest& request activities to further knowledge.

At school my child was left behind. She was in year 7, struggling doing year 3-4 maths. The school system failed her. She also suffers with anxiety, mental health and suspected autism (I work in disability). She was tested for autism in year 3, the principal disagreed, even though her teacher brought it up. Now, to get her tested, therefore the assistance she needs I don't get any financial support to pay for the testing, instead it's up to me to pay, where if the schools picked it up, and organized it, she may have not been left so far behind. This has impacted her mental health, her confidence, her self esteem. The first year of home schooling focused on getting back to basics, in the way she learns, with topics she likes. Giving her control over her learning has grown her desire to learn. I'm glad I listened to her pleas to not make her go to school, instead to give her time to focus on what she needs, and to allow her the freedom to love learning what she wants to learn, while covering the KLA's

My child's educational needs were being met for the majority of the time she was in school, th benvironment however lead to severe burnout and 18 months on, is still in active recovery.

The school environment was loud and noisy which was very difficult for my child. The home environment has made such a difference to their learning, they can ask questions and not worry about getting in trouble for not listening to the instructions when in fact it is their disability and trouble understanding instructions.

Thrives in all areas.

The school environment is not suitable for my child. It is overwhelming, loud, busy, has too much change throughout the day and the help my child needs to manage at school is not available through mainstream schools. Getting to school was always hard for my child and by secondary school, it became unmanageable because of the level of independence required. Now that we homeschool, my child gets deeply involved in learning something of interest, often working on one thing at a time all day long, which wasn't possible at school due to subject changes throughout the day. This works well for my child's brain and emotional well-being. As a result they have been able to progress their learning and skills much more than they were in the years before switching to home schooling.

The damage done at school is still impacting my child years later.

My child is significantly less overwhelmed and overstimulated at home. She attended an anxiety support group at school. She no longer suffers with anxiety at home, and she has excellent social skills and is involved in many groups and excursions with other people outside of our home without any anxiety.

My child who is autistic and has dyslexia was suicidal at school. Since leaving school and starting her homeschool journey, she is now succeeding in every area of her life and most importantly - she's happy.

Education system failed to meet my child's emotional wellbeing first, even though a values based school. The classes he did well in were with teachers who connected genuinely and showed respect for him as a person. The school pushed for autism testing, seemingly as a default. There was no diagnosis of autism. The teaching needed to be interest lead, multisensory and genuinely cater to different learning styles.

Now he has one on one teaching and I can base his curriculum around his interest with a lot less pressure he is achieving remarkably higher

She's a different child. So much more engaged in family life and her education. She's following her own interests, has her own art studio and has just picked up her first paid art opportunity. She couldn't learn anything in the school environment.

We have home schooled then reintroduced school twice and it was successful for a time but then we began having struggles again. We are now going through similar issues with our 13 year old and have begun home educating her too.

I had to answer your questions based on a year of school refusal. Child did not want to attend school and would not have the word school mentioned. Child is now enthusiastic about all learning areas

There has been a significant shift and improvement since leaving school and opting to home school. A much more positive experience and result.

As my child is a slow processor I am amazed he learned anything at school - by the time he figures out what they are doing they are moving in. He now is willing to try, vs before he didn't want to try as it would only add to his failures. We are able to have the time for him to process his speed and grasp concepts.

He is learning in the way he learns

School was poor , not all of the above were offered. Insufficient expectation for quality, work rarely corrected. At home the expectation is high if an intelligent child with autism and ADHD. They are responding well to the challenge and gradually catching up to their peers who are to be found in the

very best schools, (which we can't access).
He was bullied by a teacher for two years at school, resulting in refusal to do any work.
He was miserable at school, hated trying to learn to read (he's dyslexic). 6 months after pulling him out in prep, he was re-engaged in learning, rediscovered his love of books that was lost when he went to school, and he was his happy self again. Learning to read was challenging, but he persisted and is now an excellent reader, writer and speller.
Tried going back to school, double grade skipped, but described school as 'a total waste of 6 hours a day'. The school system is far too packed full of basic skills and knowledge with no depth and no real relevance nor challenge.
Our son suffered trauma while attending school both mainstream and support classes, he was so stressed there he was not learning and well behind other students. He suffered daily meltdowns, he very rarely has meltdowns now, participates and is interested in learning. He is now working on some subjects at a high school level, if at school he would be in stage two.
My daughter is becoming more confident as she can see the things that she can do and not just focus on what she can't do, or comparing herself to others.
As a highly gifted child, he was very bored at school and would do his best but protested every morning and had meltdowns every day after school.
My child found structured education traumatic
It's so much more engaging and targeted to the individual. They can grow more in a 1:1 setting and engage in topics based on interest.
To send my children to school would result in two perfectly happy adjusted smart little neuro divergent boys becoming withdrawn, distressed, anxious and would run away from school constantly.
Learning never stops for our child as curious questions always arise...
She was in a support unit but would not engage, tried to abscond regularly, we were offered shorter hours as a solution, this did not change her behaviours nor attendance
My son is autistic with a PDA profile, and ADHD
My child misses his friends. I wish he was able to go on a partial basis but in NSW it's one or the other. My child is doing so much better in all other areas now that he's homeschooling.
Much more relaxed and engaged
The school environment caused a great amount of trauma around a number of areas, in particular, handwriting. I suspect he has dysgraphia which means he is slow to write and his hand tires easily. Teachers constantly kept him inside at break times to complete work. He is a gifted child and Year 3 Naplan results showed he was achieving well above school and state averages. Instead of boosting his confidence by celebrating this, the school continued to focus heavily on his difficulties with handwriting, "socialising", and "participation" or conforming. He lost interest, confidence, and then he lost respect for the teachers. We were eventually left with no choice but to home educate and watched our child come back to life and learning.
school admitted they could not provide schoolwork suitable for my child and gave us the option to withdraw or do nothing for a term, since leaving my child has gone from unable to do any schoolwork at even a prep level to now reading chapter books at year level and maths only a year behind

My child since being homeschooled is accelerated and is now working through the curriculum more and more on his own. We have switched to a curriculum which has him read independently and progress at his own pace. More of a classical/charlotte mason style. He has done a whole year in six months. The school system was full of kids with learning disabilities, amalgamated classrooms and distractions. He thrives in an environment that is quite, has less students and isn't full of noise.

We meet up with other families who do a similar style of learning once or twice a week and set up activities that are fun and interactive. They work together to complete the tasks and have fun interacting with a few peers.

Unless we have schools that replicate the older style of education (ie Classical) we will never see the same results.

My child has become more confident and loving subjects they previously hated. People are noticing a happier more confident child and saying. Always reading for fun not because they have to.

Thriving with homeschooling

My son would not engage in learning at school at all. He was incredibly dysregulated and had meltdowns constantly. It was a complete waste of time academically and harmful to his mental health. Homeschooling has reduced the pressure and once he was more regulated we were able to start teaching him in a way that suits him.

School destroyed his confidence and shut him down till he was unable to function in a normal school setting. He has since taken a long journey of healing and now functions as a happy and healthy individual. I wish I had of seen the signs and removed him earlier, maybe he wouldn't have had such a traumatic childhood.

Having the opportunity to follow their interests allows for more natural learning experiences without the demands and pressure of the mainstream school environment and bullying

Much less anxious at home. Loves life again

In home education she had a lot of time to follow her areas of interest - which also change and fluctuate. At the age of 7 she read 'Green Eggs and Ham' to us without being taught to read. Actively teaching her in the traditional sense was the roadblock. She was very confused by the repetition used in mainstream and distance education - we tried both. She had auditory processing issues which meant she missed the first part of a sentence or word. This also impacted her ability to understand what the teacher was saying. In distance education she couldn't follow the teacher on skype lessons unless the teachers face could be seen. She was not deaf. Her teachers couldn't understand how literal she was and they didn't tell her when something was changed (like you can now use the toilets because they are fixed) because 'wouldn't she just assume that?' - No, she is literal. She also was dyslexic. Unfortunately at her second mainstream school in prep, the staff decided to desensitise her which resulted in her not being able to attend mainstream schooling. In that school, her nightmares were 15 to 20 a week and never on a Friday or Saturday night. This continued until she had been homeschooled for 18 months and her nightmares stopped. She was seeing psychologists and paediatricians in that time as well as being prescribed medication. She is a self-motivated learner who will ask when she needs support, but other than that does dramatically better learning on her own. She taught herself morse code in one day at 7 years because she wanted to. I do test her knowledge by asking some questions to satisfy myself that she knows what she was working on. I also used Excel workbooks (Australian curriculum aligned) to gauge her attainment. Her experiences in adult classes suited her much better than doing classes with other children. She has been part of a dragon boat racing club including marshalling at regattas and winning a number of medals. She takes part in dancing performances as part of her group. What I have experienced is that an environment that stressed her stopped her ability to learn and function in many ways. Her first prep teacher explained why there was so much stuff on the walls. This person didn't understand the physical discomfort/pain she experienced, whether or not you have good reasons for what is on the walls the discomfort doesn't just go away, yet as a parent I was repeatedly told 'yes we are trained in all of this.' It is still a problem for her even if you explain why. My child is capable of seeking out and finding any information she wants without help at all. She grew up building, creating, crafting every day, from macrame bracelets to working miniature crossbows made from hairclips to tiny foil rockets to angle grinding a piece of bone into a pendant to building a bridge to go over her train set. She did up a paper template to check the train would pass under it comfortably before starting to build the bridge. These examples are from age 7 to 8. I did not teach or show her any of these, in fact she showed me. At 16 years of age she took part in the leadership program on board the She is an only child who lived with 17 youths and 10 adult staff for 9 days. She thoroughly enjoyed it. The teams had to work together around the clock. The kids could talk about anything. Homeschooling has provided her with the ability to interact with anyone at any age as that was her normal since she was 6. Homeschooled children spend a lot of time outside the house. They can't be left home alone so they do everything the adult is doing as well as homeschool park plays, sports and activities such as tours which all happen in groups with a wide age range.

School environment was toxic

It got to the point where my child couldn't learn anything at school due to anxiety/trauma. We had school refusal most mornings and uncontrolled meltdowns after school or in the evening. Took two years of finding and filling gaps and recovering from trauma but now learning is happening in leaps and bounds. Has been about two-three years behind in English and Maths but now rapidly catching up. Had zero interest in learning when he left school but now becomes very passionate about learning and often wants to delve deeper into topics to learn more. He does still struggle with some subjects due to learning difficulties and poor muscle tone however is succeeding at a much greater rate than while at school.

Unfortunately some of his "quirks" were undesirable in the school system and he was labelled a having a fluctuating personality. However they did little to identify or address these issues and realise they were associated with transitions and a symptom of a larger issue.

The question of whether my child participated in learning activities whilst at school (and their engagement) doesn't provide the opportunity to explain: He participated in everything. If you look at his school report for the two terms he attended school, he was marked as achieving "at grade level" across the board. Despite him not being able to read or write or actually demonstrate in any way what he had learnt. He was a master at evading the teacher, and telling them what they wanted to hear when he wasn't able to.

At home, we follow a child led curriculum. We mostly unschool, and provide educational opportunities and resources in accessible ways for where he is at. He still can't read or write - but he can use speech to text and text to speech readers to drive his own investigations.

Child has medical issues including future surgery that somewhat inhibit normal activities

The in room support needs to be educated in up to date information regarding special needs individuals and actually provide support rather than push through getting work done which ends up being unsatisfactory. Reduction in amount of work to produce needs to be normalised as an accomodation. Then they can show understanding and progress . Quality rather than quantity.

My child has autism so social and emotional learning is going to be the same pretty much in any scenario but his anxiety is lessened in a home environment and he can focus better.

School was an absolute torture for my child because of bullying for being "different". The learning had been negatively affected as there has been no support from teachers since he has dyslexia and can't learn as fast as the average child. This lead to him having to repeat a year and 4 years of school and basically haven't learned anything except for how cruel children/teachers can be and feeling like a failure. Since we began home education he has learned so much as he doesn't have to be constant fear and can finally focus his educational goals.

The school, whilst I requested and they tested, did not sufficiently diagnose the learning problem my child had. All they could tell me after the 2nd test (1st test was everything is fine) was that they were now below grade average and they didn't know why. As an exteacher in a secondary technology specialist area, I knew there was a literacy problem but could not pinpoint what specifically it was, I also point out I had no tools to be able to diagnose them personally. An external provider tested them and diagnosed that they were missing essential learning tools with phonics and digraphs. Of which we then engaged a tutor and then started home schooling s my child refused to attend school, not due to the learning issue but due to constant bullying in year 1, of which the school was aware of and yet did not address the issue. The progression my child has made since we made the switch is significant, both in literacy and also with anxiety (related to the bullying). I have also discovered my child is actually ranking a year or two above their cohort with their maths, of which the school had no knowledge of, particularly as the teacher had marked some of their maths work wrong when in fact it was correct. I shudder to think what would have happened to their literacy proficiency if they had remained at that school, let alone their mental health.

The school environment is too overwhelming for any child with sensory sensitivities. It's not that my child is incapable of learning... they are incapable of learning within the school environment. The schools only solution was to offer a special ed class (after SIX months of non-attendance). My child had not been flagged by the school as requiring special learning accommodations. They were not struggling with learning... they were struggling with the environment.

Change in our instance takes a while to see progress. Some of these questions are hard to assess given its been less than a year we've home educated

My child took a year to trust he was not being sent back to school to open up about assaults that had been regularly happening from older students within the school he was attending. He finally was able to be open to learning as he was not afraid all the time. He went from what the teacher co sisters disruptive and uninterested to social and engaged in his learning.

Was always interested in learning, but issues of not feeling accepted by lots of other students were impinging on overall happiness. Found some classes at school frustrating due to behaviour of other students and, for some subject areas, the amount of time it took to cover concepts. Didn't enjoy particular tasks/activities - probably would have coped better with things he found frustrating if the social element had been happier. Enjoying being able to move at his pace in maths, and having greater choice overall.

School bullying by "friends" gave my child social anxiety and school refusal. The principal did nothing to help and his solution was, "Just drag him here." Since home educating, my son spends time with his friends in person 5/7 days a week, online every day, has solid work experience opportunities, with the view of an apprenticeship as an electrician and has joined cadets and is looking towards joining the army, once of age.

My child had severe burnout due to bullying. The school refused to work with us and the department would not allow a change of school in our strictly zoned area. They wanted my child to go back and put up with it. That's not good enough. It's took a year to nurse my child back to a somewhat stable position. He was completely dissociative, frightened of other children and unable to leave the home without panic attacks and overwhelm.

My son began school at _____ on the _____. He thrived there, was a high achiever, super confident, developed many friendships. I was very involved in the school and many times saw his success and enjoyment of school.

In 2020 we moved to _____. The school he attended, _____, placed my high achieving boy in a composite remedial class. The behaviours of the other kids were distressing to him, and some other students physically harmed my son. The attitudes of the students were hurtful and rough. The teacher was a yeller, and appeared to be less concerned about caring for the hurt of individual students and more concerned with crowd control. This was confirmed to me by another mother who was on the school grounds more frequently. This behaviour followed him into the playground, and he was targeted for rough play and hurtful words.

After 4 weeks, I had discovered enough about what went on in class, and demanded he be moved to another class.

My son, however was damaged by this experience. He was fearful of going to school. He wouldn't get out of bed in the morning. He begged to go back to his previous school - now an hour's drive away. He didn't want me to leave him when I dropped him off.

He was moved to a new class for week 5. This class appeared to be better. The teacher was much respected by other staff, but I never really got to see her in action, as Covid was restricting parents on the school grounds.

However my son was defeated, depressed, and gave up caring about his work. He no longer wanted to go to youth group, as there were kids there.

When Covid hit, and the schools were shutting down, I discovered that in class, kids were on the iPads every day, most of the day. I figured I could do a better job at educating him than just letting him sit on an iPad all day. I pulled him out of school a week earlier than shut down.

In term 2, I attempted to "school at home" in connection with the school. This was a disaster, due to materials not being available, unreliable internet connection, inability to have communication with teacher to confirm meaning and intention of assigned tasks.

My son refused to return to school when they reopened in week 6 term 2.

I began home educating him with my own collected curriculum. (I had previously home educated our 4 older children, so I had resources and experience.) However he was in such a state of shock and distress from the time at school that he was very resistant to learning. It was 6 months before he'd write anything (a year earlier he'd been one of the most prolific writers in the class). He wouldn't read (a year earlier he'd been one of the top readers in the class). He was always in tears and melting down. He appeared to have something like PTSD, and his coping ability disappeared every time there was a learning opportunity or any academic topic was mentioned.

Three years on, he's adjusted to home educating. He and I both have strong friendships and

connections within the home schooling network here in A string of events - having to move house twice, older siblings leaving home, significant illnesses, husband changing work, a time of living in the grandparents' home - have repeatedly complicated attempts to develop and maintain a routine with bookwork. However learning is happening in other ways. Making healthy friendships, participation in household management, sport and PE that is enjoyable and sustainable, pet care, landcare. My home education ethos is "All of Life". He is reading insatiably. He says he never wants to return to a school, and is quite anxious whenever the idea of assessing one of the local secondary education options comes up. I plan to try to avoid secondary education, and assist him to get a job and to try a TAFE course at age 15. However the courses available at this local TAFE are limited. We may have to drive an hour to the TAFE.

The school washed their hands of my son in yr 8, in y9 and onwards the principal declines to meet, email or take a call with me. But it seems the principal does like the additional funding my child got, because even now when he is 100 home educated I get letters and reports for him

Loved learning but suffered from anxiety and chronic ill health due to stressful classroom environment

Your questions are all wrong. My kid always loved learning and probably always will. Schools killed his love of learning until I removed him. But he was always wanting to learn. Your questions should be about how did schools kill the learning and love for it. How social expectations at schools create anxiety and pressure to the point of hatred of all learning.

Experienced emotional dysregulation and distress at school is a happy learner at home and is thriving.

School was boring for my child. She wasn't given options to expand her knowledge and be challenged. She would spend many hours a day drawing because she had finished her work earlier. She was bored with the content and didn't have an relevance to live or things she could connect with.

She is now thriving at home. Learning at her own pace and a higher level. She's become a much more independent learner and is kicking goals in many aspects of her education

My child was never going to fit into their BOX! Every day she vomited before school, from stress and anxiety, we would leave in each other in tears, it was horrific, and not the way a childhood should be! Since beginning home education 6 months ago, I've seen my daughters smile again!! She is finding joy, she has lowered her anxiety medication!! I'm in tears daily! But, it's HAPPY TEARS ! I have my daughter back!! The one she was before school drained everything from!

At home she will engage in all subjects willingly and instigate investigations when she feels it is needed

He still has stress and talks about his bad experiences. He will melt down if I mention going to school.

More confident while home schooling. Wakes up with ideas of what he would like to learn or what project he would like to research. He is happier and his anxiety and decreased

This survey and approach doesn't address mental health wellbeing. While at a traditional school my child expressed a desire to 'not live anymore'. His MH today is excellent and this affects all aspects of his life. Plus, he couldn't participate in PE previously, now he attends a gym 3 days per week at a time that suits his sensory needs. Every aspect of his life is thriving now that he is away from the traditional school environment.

School was not a safe emotional environment

My child was miserable at school. They couldn't cater for him. He thriving at home.

Child was interested in subjects but bored as material was far too easy and appropriate differentiation was not provided. the idle time for her brain meant she ended up anxious and disengaged.

we are very very new to home educating (weeks in so my responses are not really indicative)

My son is intellectually gifted and found the work, esp maths, science and humanities to not be challenging - but he was not enraged. He preferred to learn through topics that are meaningful and interesting to him. He was also in a chronic state of emotional dysregulation , fear and panic which makes it impossible to learn

My child is gifted and Autistic (also suspected ADHD and PDA but not formally assessed for those to date). He wants to learn but school became completely boring and irrelevant to him so he shut down. His social difficulties became more challenging and masking became too hard. He entered burn out. Since being home we have been able to cater the environment to his various diagnosis (self and formal) and he is not having meltdowns anymore. He loves to share with me what he learns.

Wellbeing has improved with home education.

My child suffers social anxiety it was effecting her ability to learn as she was constantly having panic attacks during class

My child's mental health is much better learning from home. They were a gifted student in their primary years and now an above average one with home learning.

Since we began home education I have watch our little boy become the kind, caring, inquisitive and gentle boy he was before he started at school. We no longer have bed wetting, nightmares and constant screaming for 2-3 hours after school most days. He has gone from a child whose first response was agression to unknown or frustrating situations. The trauma he had at school (being strangled) changed who he was. His ADHD was poorly addressed at school.and he was always so disregulated. During covid when I'd say we didn't get a lot of work done his teacher was well it's way more than he'd do at school

I'm not really sure what he was actually doing at school apart from become more distressed each week. Our home life was hell while he was at school and I was unable to leave him with his grandparents or friends for even short amounts of time without him becoming hysterical. Before he started school he'd often spend 2-3 days with his grandparents before and it has taken 18 months but he will now spend a night or two away from me. I dread to think where my child would be if we'd continued on the tragetory he began when he started school

my ASD child will engage in learning with child led interests in home education, in her own time and space not provided in a school

School was unable to make reasonable accommodations for my child's disability and did not follow through with agreed plans. As a result, she struggled to attend. She tried so hard to attend but being at school without the help and accommodations she needed impacted her mental health to the point of attempted suicide. When she was able to get to school, she wasn't able to learn, and getting to school ended up being only to try and attend rather than learn. We couldn't find another suitable school. As soon as we started homeschooling, my child's mental health started to improve and she started feeling passion for learning. She now engages in learning every day, engages with other young people in learning and plans her future education and career. She is able to choose how and what she learns and do so in the environment that meets her needs with people that support her rather than letting her down like school did.

The school we attended didn't have the time to accommodate us. They seemed to actively disbelieve the information we provided about our son

My child is wanting to learn and engaged in learning since leaving public school. Is working independently now which is a great improvement from having everything done by an EA in public

school. School did not want to cooperate with therapist or include me in the IEP
My child would likely have become aggressive if forced into school. He is gifted at science and tech and but this would have been shut down by his likely shame and lack of self esteem he felt by his slower abilities he has in school staples of writing and reading, maths. These latter he would have just refused to participate in whereas now at home he is progressing. It would have been a disaster causing many 'no I can't do it situations'. For example an ex school teacher/ carer while minding him once when he was 4 became strict and demanding about using please/thankyou at every opportunity. The result was my child was unable to use these words for 3 years.
My child has grown in so many ways that can't be measured by a list of questions. Emotionally matured, confident in himself, developing meaningful community connections with kids of varied ages and other adults, thriving in the close friendships fostered within the homeschooling community. He is excited to learn.
My child is hyper sensitive with ADHD, she found school exhausting and could often only attend 2-3 days at week. Self paced learning at home has relieved a lot of stress and anxiety, she has gone from hating her life to taking full control with positive goals.
My child is brand new to home schooling (2nd week in officially) but has had a term of transition from school. They are highly self motivated to learn but become overwhelmed and anxious with multiple tasks to complete. This left a lot of work not handed in at school. Because they were at a school where they 'worked at their own pace' not handing in work meant no progression in some subjects for three years. The enormous frustration felt by my bright motivated child led to significant mental health issues. Their mood and confidence has improved significantly already and they are excited to be challenged by learning again without deadlines or grades.
School caused anxiety in my child which affected learning
The school never communicated that he did not participate at school. The school knew the difficulties we had getting him to school. He would have meltdowns & try to run away. Their suggestion was to ring the police! As soon as he was homeschooled, he settled down & participated in all activities. It was like he was a different boy - or I should say, the boy we knew he was because when it was the weekend or after school, he was happy & smiling. He was eventually diagnosed as autistic with generalised anxiety disorder.
School caused trauma for my child, particularly around handwriting. He lost all curiosity and belief in himself and his ability to learn. When previously he had a thirst for knowledge - this has returned after home educating.
My children are thriving. School had them retreat within themselves and become a shadow of who they are
Immediate reduction in anxiety and improved mood when starting home education.
Zero education was happening while my child was crying, screaming or hiding under a table when at school. My child is now learning all day in home education as he is in a much better place mentally.
For my kids: Home educations = learning. School = trauma + distress
She is learning more now, than ever
It was not possible for my child to continue going to school for his own mental health
My child is engaging more in his education now he is homeschooling he still struggles emotionally but has improved and is more confident with homeschooling
My son's anxiety and sensory sensitivity meant that he was unable to remain calm in the classroom. He spent the majority of his 2 hour day at school either in the swing or in the principal's office. He had 1:1 SSO support

<p>Trauma and anxiety caused by school is debilitating and going to take a very long time to see any emotional improvement</p>
<p>At school was only attending accompanied by parent 3 hours daily, often left classroom when group work, too anxious</p>
<p>My child consistently slipped through the cracks at school when it came to his learning and any sort of support and was hugely misunderstood. The amount of advocating we had to do as parents worn us down just as much as the whole experience worn our child down. We only wish that we had removed him from school and home educated much earlier on.</p>
<p>My child has only been homeschooling for a term so we are yet to really see results academically but emotionally she is positive about school work for the first time, excited to go at her own pace and even considering university study for the first time.</p>
<p>Hi anxiety at school, no anxiety at home</p>
<p>Not having the anxiety at the start and end of each day (preparing for school next day anxiety and winding down from current day anxiety and overstimulation) has been such a blessing to our daily lives. She's more engaged and wants to learn and is enjoying doing so through how we live. The changes in her mental health have been well worth changing how we live so we can better support her.</p>
<p>Homeschooling is based around developing communicating through Auslan and social skills. Our daughter can now sign from 1-10, A-Z, she signs basic emotional responses and feelings. She can communicate when she is hungry or thirsty when she needs the toilet, and is slowly learning more Auslan with other key educational needs. But we are focusing on undoing years of trauma from lack of communication support when she trailed three support units who failed her educational, social, emotional, physical psychological needs. Her educational needs are slow but healthy for her individual and personal needs.</p>
<p>Anxiety has decreased. Reading, writing and spelling has improved (dyslexia)</p>
<p>My child has come ahead in leaps and bounds in the 4 years we have been homeschooling.</p>
<p>Overall in the year my child has been doing homeschooling her health, happiness and learning has flourished in her own time, she was disengaged and would refused to go to school as she struggled in a school environment class setting. My child thrives with one on one and I can provide that as where the school couldn't.</p>
<p>Not being in flight or fight mode allows him to be able to understand and explore learning.</p>
<p>School was very detrimental to my children and their overall health and well-being. The pressure caused by "positive behaviour" charts along with an environment that is inherently the opposite of what they need caused Autistic burnout in my elder two (who I did not complete this form about) and allowed me to better advocate for the best interests of my youngest despite being blamed. My middle child had his disability held against him and treated as a choice of behaviour. The lack of true understanding and education of those in the education system is frankly shameful.</p>
<p>My child's mental health has improved greatly since homeschooling. He could not cope with the school environment and was becoming a suicide risk. He is now learning that education does not have to be a traumatic and stressful experience. He is starting to enjoy learning again.</p>
<p>My child is much more relaxed outside of school so is engaging more with learning, however due to school trauma he associates some bookwork with school and has difficulty with some subjects such as English and maths that trigger his anxiety and refusal.</p>
<p>My child is , and feels safe at home. He did not feel this way at school.</p>

At home he is able to work at his own pace with lots of hands on learning and no pressure, bad days we do things that involve lots of movement, good days we can focus on book work. The opportunities when homeschooling are endless, Freedive School for science, environmental studies, pe, meditation and breath work and so much more is just one example.

My child was fine academically at school but found it socially overwhelming and we experienced serious school can't

safety and not being in stress response has made a big difference

Their mental health has improved enormously, stress levels are much Lower, has anxiety episodes only occasionally

We are still dealing with the trauma caused by the school/environment over 2 years ago which was the last time he ever went. There is no place for learning when your child is completely broken.

Virtual

School Victoria are very helpful for staying focused with a homeschooler if that suits your kid , there needs to be more freedom when it comes to education of teens

Was so traumatised by the experiences at school is completely resistant to anything that is vaguely associated with 'schoolwork', so working through a period of deschooling and unschooling

We're still in recovery from school. School did not support ASD child at all, and there was no safety changes post covid lockdowns - kids getting sick all the time, my child got long covid a year ago at school and never recovered. School is deliberately not improving air quality.

It's hard to answer some of these questions in questionnaire format. My son was a high achiever for most of his schooling, attaining excellent results academically and in sports until school can't hit and he completely stopped doing anything at all. It's still very hard for him to do anything resembling school work but he's now learning in other ways, following his own interests.

While my child was at school, their energy was spent on coping with the sensory and social demands, and education took a back seat. At home, my child has more control over their environment and social demands, and therefore has the ability to optimise their learning environment.

My son was not able to access the curriculum due to profound dyslexia and subsequent anxiety from year four. Home education has seen his anxiety settle and his confidence and thus willingness to participate in learning improve significantly. He can now read at grade level. School was not a good fit and continuing to push him to go was traumatic for him - and the entire family.

I was assured my sons (I homeschool all 3 although I'm basing this survey on my 14 year old) would be supported in mainstream education. Sadly that wasn't the case. They were expected to conform to learning styles that didn't suit them and busy classrooms that caused sensory overload. The "support" was not neuro affirming and they were victims of horrible and constant bullying.

I looked into the possibility of specialist education for them, however they didn't fit the strict criteria for enrolment.

I had no choice but to pull all 3 out of school and homeschool them for the sake of their mental health.

My youngest attended a different school to his brothers and the principal actually suggested I homeschool him as the schooling environment was causing him so much anxiety.

He is more confident home learning and more emotionally balanced is happy to learn and try new tasks

High school needs to really help those children that need it, instead of focusing on the same 'smart' group of kids. My child DEFINITELY received NO help.

School were sending him home after an hour a day. He was unable to cope and would try to leave. They couldn't cope with him and too busy to implement any advice from us. Homeschooling had been a godsend for him. He's relaxed and open to learning without the traumas associated with school.

My child was essentially what I would say was slipping thru the cracks at school. Maintaining level to pass but not really retaining any information. Home schooling has her engaged and therefore she now views learning enjoyable.

My daughter has had a really bad time at school from kindergarten. She was treated badly by her peers and had no support to help her through. Last year her anxiety escalated and started refusing to go to school due to the fear of how she was going to be treated. After persisting and countless asking the school for help, my daughters mental health was deteriorating, have a big impact on her and our family. We attempted to change schools but the damage had been done and my daughter could not go there with the same fears.

My child is coming out of burnout, and it wonderful to see him spend as much time as he likes learning about his special interests.

The lack of accommodations & differentiation at school had a massive impact on my sons self worth, self esteem & self confidence. His mental health deteriorated considerably. Home education has given us the opportunity and time to heal that in a safe environment which has given him the space to find a love of learning in his way. We have the flexibility of tailoring his education to his learning style & his interests. You can't put a square peg in a round hole & our schools are round holes. Don't try to change the child, change the environment.

We've only just started homeschooling (May 2023) and the improvement so far is very encouraging with lots of room left to grow

Education hours minimal is required for joy of learning. School days are too long.

School educational attainment was unable to be graded for a year prior to home schooling due to lack of attendance.

The nurturing supportive home environment has allowed Avoca to learn at her own pace and in Topics she is Interested in.

It's upsetting to see my child still struggle at home schooling because of the burn out at attempting mainstream for so long with so little support and a lot of criticism and judgement.

School officials didn't care about anxiety just get your child to attend school

At school she felt like she had to be like everyone else.

My child has ASD2, anxiety and ADHD(inattentive). He was placed on a part time enrollment by the school which allowed 1hr a day. There is no way he could get an education on that time. If the subject that morning didn't interest him he did not want to participate therefore got sent home for failure to engage. The school would not allow us to change or stagger his time on different days to suit the subjects he liked which would have seen more participation and more lessons covered rather than just english and maths. The school promised on enrollment that they were the best choice for us with inclusion, knowledge about the medical/behavioural needs and wanting them to work up to a full day however at any sign of behavioural issues he was sent home for failure to engage or suspended if even for swearing which they were aware about as one of his things he does in meltdown. If he needed a break he could have one but only on their terms with a timer instead of letting him self regulate. The calm room they have on site was only open during certain hours on certain days and he wasn't able to use it.

I have so many things i could tell about how mine and other kids are missing out as the schooling system is broken for our kids. My child didn't suit mainstream but was rejected from special ed schools as his IQ is too high.

They are demand avoidant
We are deschooling at present, so it is difficult to determine the difference between our daughter's learning experience at school and through home education. However, it was not the educational aspect of her schooling that was the reason we chose to home educate. She left school purely for social reasons.
School treated him as intellectually impaired. He is above average and even gifted in areas but with learning disorders.
Much calmer Wants to learn based on interests
The education system failed to support our family and resulted in trauma experience and my child withdrawing from life and all social interactions with grandparents and aunties. that child has spent 2 years in their bedroom and never even went outside. The other has withdrawn from most social activities and limited access to community activities
I feel my child has lost his love for learning due to educational trauma. I think he will take tears to recover, if at all and re engage in any type of learning
My child is able to learn and participate more freely outside of school setting due to the reduction in anxiety and sensory overload.
Home education has bolstered confidence, competence, capability, emotional health and wellbeing and believing in himself.
My girl only enjoyed break times and play at school and playing with friends. While she learned and was passing her grades like most in her grades, when she came home she just wouldn't give you much of her time and was tied. She never really could tell you what she did during the day in each class, just small pieces of learning time. Now being home schooled she never stops wanting to learn and asking so many question. When she gets asked about her days now, she can tell you everything and loves talking about what she did and learned. She is a whole new child. Its amazing.

Appendix C - Responses to Question 12

List of competitions entered by children with School Can't who are currently home educated

Art competitions
Australian Geography Competition
Australian History Competition
Australian Informatics Olympiad
Australian Mathematics Competition
Big Science Competition
Bird watching competition
Challenges & competitions as part of education packages - eg Grok Academy, Education Perfect
Chess competitions
Craft competitions
CSIRO Bebras challenge
ICAS - English
ICAS - Maths
ICAS - Science
International Chemistry Quiz
Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians
Oxford University Computing Challenge
Photography competition
Premier's reading challenge
Prime Minister's Spelling Bee
Readathon challenges and competitions
ReConsidered art competition
Robotics Competition
Scooter and BMX competitions
Singing competitions
Sporting competitions - archery, callisthenics, dance, gymnastics, horse-riding, scooter, BMX, rugby, cross country
What Matters Competition
Write4Fun poetry competition
Writing competitions
Youth Leadership Challenge - Windeward Bound Tall Ship Program

Appendix D - Responses to Questions 21 & 22

List of jobs held by young people with School Can't who are currently home educated and feedback received from their employers

If your child has a job/s, you are welcome to share what that job/s entails	If your child has a job, do you have any feedback from their employers you would like to share?
Analyst, web designer, infrastructure design and building	They are open to neurodivergent people and are fabulous.
Attendant at indoor climbing centre - customer care, instruction and safety including rescues	She is highly motivated, excellent with customers, a natural encourager with gentle confidence, shows initiative and takes responsibility, complimented by parents direct to employer
Barista, customer service, cleaning, instructing others, photography, digital editing etc	They say that she is great at what she does, she's very polite to customers and is a great kid to have around. Follows instructions well, asks for help when needed.
Catalogue delivery	Always comments on reliability!
Coaching children in his chosen sport. This is a highly skilled job, that has required many months (over a year) to get to where he is now. It involves interpersonal skills, communication skills, and class management skills to name a few, in addition to the in-depth knowledge of his sport. He also judges in his chosen sport, which involves a whole other set of skills in addition to those.	So much positive feedback from his bosses at both his regular workplaces. They are always telling me how amazing he is, how much he has learned, how well he listens and implements feedback, how polite he is, and good at talking to parents of his students, how proactive he is in seeing things that need doing and getting them done, and how hard he works.
Customer service	
Farming	Hard motivated worker
Gardening	
Gardening and mowing	An outstanding worker that delivers a high quality service for customers
Has built her own private nanny business	Her clients are all amazed at maturity beyond her years

<p>He did have a leaflet delivery contract, and was earning quite nicely. He would collate and fold all the leaflets for that week's delivery and then organise them into the numbers required for each delivery area. Then the areas would be delivered on foot or on bicycle, or with a short drive then on foot. However at his age, for his safety, I needed to be involved with all the delivering. This job ended due to my own ill health.</p>	
<p>Help us run a motel</p>	
<p>Horse stables mucking, feeding animals</p>	
<p>Hospitality</p>	
<p>Looking after horses in exchange for lessons</p>	<p>They love her!</p>
<p>He has his own business. Mowing, whipper snipping, hedge trimming, chainsawing, small engine repair and maintenance, welding, angle grinding</p>	
<p>My child doesn't have a paid job but has a commitment to volunteer as a member once a week for 6-7 hours at the local miniature railway. He has been trained in all roles including safety and operations and has achieved qualifications to be a guard and a driver on various types of engines.</p>	
<p>My child has worked in the local supermarket and now works in the family farming and structural engineering businesses.</p>	<p>The feedback from his supermarket employer was he was incredibly good at the job.</p>
<p>My child is working in nursery production. They are going to use their skills to develop their own business.</p>	<p>My child's employer has had many home schooled children work for her in the past and sees the benefits in flexibility and goal achievement.</p>
<p>My daughter is too young for a job but starting a little business for pocket money</p>	

My son has started his own business making plaster painting kits to sell at local markets and through Facebook. We are currently undertaking commencing a website/shop for his digital art and he has started creating badges and stickers to sell using Canva. This involves a lot of cross curriculum work with advertising and cost pricing as well as technology.	My son is self-employed. Last marked he made close to \$150 profit.
Our daughter makes and creates homemade art ,cosmetics and other that she sells at different markets at dif times of year in children's stalls / market sections	
Our so has worked part time for a theme park as a ride attendant during school holidays and currently part time for McDonalds.	In the short time he has worked there mcDonalds managers have been very impressed with his teamwork and ability to quickly learn and adapt to new tasks. While working as a ride attendant some adults attending the park were less than polite to the younger staff directing them not to enter or exits the rides in a certain way, this included a few who became verbally abusive to the ride staff including our son. The feedback was given that our son showed maturity, remained calm, tried to diffuse the situation and sought out / directed the person to the manager with a polite and respectful approach.
Retail assistant and art teachers aide	They love my child and find her focused, skilled, hardworking and fully engaged.
She bakes cupcakes and is creating her own business brand	Much valued.
She is interested and applying for a catalogue/ paper route now which would be with parent supervision (requirement for her age)	
Sports coaching	
Started own business	
Volunteering at RDA	
Whilst he is too young to have a job he does mow lawns around the neighbourhood for money. He keeps an excel spreadsheet of customer details, income and expenses.	
Working in a supermarket-cashier, restocking, cleaning	They are reliable and always willing to work. They are able to engage well with customers and regularly receive positive feedback from customers
Works at Guzman Y Gomez	

Appendix E - Responses to Questions 23 & 24

Further comments from respondents with children with School Can't who are currently home educating on educational attainment or anything further

Homeschooling was forced upon us as private and government schools could not provide for either of my children. I am raising healthy happy children at home. But this forces me out of work. I'm grateful I can do this on one parents wage. Many can't, but I am also punished by doing so, with no community support easy to find, no government assistance. I am forced to prove why my children cannot physically go to school. And there is no respite. In this day and age when inflation is high, cost of living is high. The cost of going against the grain is tough. It is a very lonely road. Many parents need to be appreciated more for staying home.
School encouraged him to leave.
They learned far more by using their learning preferences
The pandemic has had a markedly negative effect on his progression towards work and formal study.
My son intends to enter the information technology sector and much of his study involves preparation for this
He is thriving academically and has great mental health.
So happy with the home education process and my children are so much happier and engaged
This has been one of most unsupported journeys of my life and I am appalled at the lack of genuine attempts to individualise the support for my child. Homeschooling has produced good results so far but it is early days. SC must be seen as an area where parents are heard and children given individualised support which CAN help Individual students NOT allow the system to claim it is doing all it can when it clearly isn't.
Home Education has allowed the right supports to be put into place and the right adjustments to learning to allow my child to thrive. The constant comparison to same-aged peers in the mainstream system made my child feel "less than" and that contributed to the burnout as she could not live up to the expectations placed upon her.
The way mainstream is structured, it does not suit all kids There needs to be alternatives for bright kids that don't fit into the square the government expects
As a single mum of 3 Autistic sons who have been failed terribly by the education system I have had no choice but to homeschool them. This has meant giving up employment (I hold a bachelors degree in education) and we solely rely on Centrelink, putting us in the poverty bracket. My sons deserve better.
Home education has changed my daughter as she wasn't attending school: it allowed the opportunity to take a breath and realise life is more than sitting in a. School 9 to 5. Without our health and well-being no learning will happen. The massive difference in what my child will now do is amazing.
Improved mental health, motivation and enthusiasm for learning as a result of home educating

He is capable, but without strong co-learners, he isn't pushing himself to be better. He can complete the tasks assigned, but in absence of peer pressure to be independent, he is more reliant on educational "hand holding" than I'd like. I know he'll be fine and will manage as an adult, but I am disappointed by what I see as him not seeking to be his best, and him not wanting to aim high to see what he could achieve.

School crushed my 6 year old. My child desperately wanted to go to school to remain with his friends - he still wants to be like his friends. He thrives socially, he has maturity and understanding beyond many adults, but is of an age where he wants to be like and with his friends every day.

Part time schooling was something we had done since prep. As a teacher myself I was able to guide and work with their needs. Neither of my children could survive.... Just survive! ... onsite schooling full time. Remote learning showed how successful learning can be in a quiet space. Home schooling with VSV in secondary years has been amazing and my eldest now has an incredible capacity for living life and engaging with the world. Without the trauma of school he now has the desire and ability to socialise and do activities outside of the home. It has been amazing to watch 🥰

7 years this year and he is so awesome

Math turn around from av 50% in tests to 90%. Reading level increase by 2.5 grades in 6 months.

My child now engages in life and learning, in all interests and has gained critical thinking and research skills, which are essential for life long learning.

Children today need an inclusive, individualised and holistic approach to education. The government need to rethink education and overhaul the current and outdated system.

My child's anxiety in the school environment and pressure from school caused poor mental health and her grades declined significantly

I'm a literal thinker, I answer your questions literally, but the answers to why school cant, and why I homeschool are both literal and nuanced.... and to my child, they are definitive. Because, school wouldve caused death, there's no subjective or nuanced answer to them. Your questions create a problem with nuance for Parents, my kids went into school excited and happy, they came out depressed, tortured and broken.

As a parent I'm much less concerned about my child's ability to compete in competitions and much more interested in whether he is interested in learning. Self motivated as a learner. Kind and empathetic to his friends and family. Interested and engaged in life.

Because I removed my child from school he has been functionally able to attend groups and programs run outside of school and school hours. This has allowed a rich level of real world and real life experience in all areas and even his psychologist has seen improvement.

My child is advanced in areas that are not even offered as options in primary school

Socially our child can connect with just about anyone. Sympathetic, caring, determined, focused, and fearless without losing that sense of logic to the surroundings at hand.

She is thriving and a happy healthy well adjusted teenager

Child's reading ability improved dramatically the minute we removed him from school. The pressure to do quizzes after every book was destroying his love of reading and making it an anxiety filled chore. It concerns me greatly that school seems to be killing kids love for learning by forcing tests and standards on teachers and kids, instead of inspiring them to be life-long learners. I had 3 kids go through mainstream school and the 4th go for 2.5 years. Seeing the difference in him since homeschooling has dramatically changed my opinion on the value of homeschooling and raised many concerns in my mind about mainstream schooling. I believe it is in need of a massive overhaul. At the very least, we need to be applauding parents willing to put in the hard yards to

educate their kids and providing more flexible options for hybrid schooling - a combination of classroom and home.
schools need to do better and stop blaming parents
Homeschooling is amazing socially, emotionally and educationally!
We tried very hard, trying different schools in both public and private systems. It has been both traumatic and demoralising for both my kids and me. It has taken me years of not being able to work to ensure they recover and reset with their educational pathway...a stressful process that we are still undertaking.
Being homeschool had significantly reduced my child's anxiety in general but also specifically school anxiety. She is now able to sit down and engage in her work, complete work independently and also engages in self directed learning opportunities. This is vastly different from when she was at school and refused to engage in any work due to anxiety, when she first came home to homeschool she would have panic attacks when presented with a simple math question. she can now complete and entire sheet of math equations independently, accurately and without supervision. Her reading and writing rates have improved her reading rate by 71% this semester and has moved from a year 2 reading level to year 4 reading level.
No enough options for 2e kids in mainstream education. Things need to change so that they can thrive. Unfair that they have to miss out
I fear that the forced inclusion in school for some children not only blights their ability to learn and destroys their self esteem but may set them up for attacking society and future criminal pursuits/drug issues and or major mental health issues due to shutdown.
I would dearly love to see my child in a mainstream education system however due to the complete lack of health risk mitigation for at-risk and vulnerable children this option has been taken away from us.
Pushing this child to keep attending school as long as possible was counterproductive.
He is able to fully dive deep into his interest areas and particularly loves political science and history
Our daughter is transgender - home educating her means she is alive and safe, that's all that matters. If she'd had to face the entrenched bigotry of school systems and school communities everyday for the last four years, I'm not sure we'd have achieved this! This questionnaire and it's lack of any questions relating to the whole child - wellbeing, emotional health / knowledge and relationships sadly reflects the immaturity of our learning systems and the limitations they place on our learning. PS: Our daughter never "school refused" - she loved school and is a sociable, happy, popular child, she just could not learn in that environment. By half way through grade 4 she could not read or write and was beginning to think she was "dumb" - 6 months at home and she'd taught herself to read and write simply by playing/exploring on her computer 👍😊
The schooling options available for children on the autism spectrum simply don't fit all the kids. And when they have a higher than average IQ but require more support than available in the mainstream system they have suitable options.
There needs to be special school style supports for kids with IQ above 70 and beyond.
School is not for every child and IQ should not come into it to be granted special school attendance
She loves homeschooling because we get to explore and learn everywhere & what they are interested to learn(nature, libraries,zoos,musuems).
It would've been great if schools were more accommodating for kids that are different
My child's life is immeasurably better for having had the chance to home educate, to learn at his

own pace in ways that suit him, and to pursue his interests.

He is a different child since he is not at school. It's like a weight has lifted off his shoulders. He is more motivated and enthusiastic.

He is learning so much more at home. It's much better quality because it's one in one so we need to do less. We can let interest take over and it's more hands on. We use technology for everything because it's more engaging. We go to parks and relax and enjoy life. I'm able to actively support his emotional needs and teach him about different types of brains. Which 100% should be taught in schools!!! The resilience project, positive education, Friendology.... It's all ableist. Teach about how the brain works, different types of brains and acceptance. Schools need to be neuroaffirming and sensory friendly. They are not. Class sizes of 25 is not sensory friendly. 400 kids in one playground all at once is not sensory friendly. Teachers who only have time to teach and no time to connect and relax with students is not sensory friendly.

My child's mental health would have continued freefall in mainstream education. I believe they might not even be alive today if I had continued to force them into an environment that was so unsuitable & traumatising as a gay, non binary, ADHD, OCD, CPTSD autistic.

My husband is a teacher at an elite private school and had to "bandage" children struggling every day in a system that views "educational attainment" in such a limited/old fashioned way - SO glad we are home educating and "unschooling" our gorgeous girl! ♥️😊

My child's self led education has given her far more knowledge in many areas than she could ever have absorbed being forced on her in a school setting

My child is so much happier, homeschooled

My child is now willing to participate, has more perseverance for problem solving, has less anxiety and is working independently

My child has even failed the Duke of Edinburgh program because the assessor will not allow the parents to support the child on the adventurous journey or other relaxed activities. The child has not had any engagement with peers for 3 years and only interacts with their immediate family, grandparents and aunts

In the just over one year my child was made to attend school unwillingly, he spent all his time and energy just trying to survive. He spent most of his days there in a breakout room separated from his peers and barely ever participated in any class activities. At school, pretty much all he learnt was that his needs didn't matter.

Making the decision to home educate has changed our lives. A huge, unnecessary weight has been lifted off our shoulders. My son is now happy and enthusiastic to learn, and much less anxious overall. I spend most days smiling and learning alongside him, rather than crying in my car, exhausted and overwhelmed by feelings of guilt for what I was allowing to happen to my son.

We find Homeschooling suits due to being able to break when needed, adjust work as needed

Being home schooled was the best decision we made. Not only for our daughter but the whole family. It was affecting everyone in the house. The stress was out of control. I could never have imagined we would go through this. Our daughter is making headway to return to her normal school next year. Fingers crossed all goes to plan.

Homeschooling can be a safer option my child was bullied to the point that to go was detrimental to her health. Kinder places need to be made, safer places for teens need to be made. Online bullying is out of control, schools have no clue how to stop this and wellbeing teams can be very weak

She is generally unenthusiastic!

I wish that home education had been presented to us a way forward when our child was clearly struggling at school. School staff actually gave us wrong information about home education. I'm so glad that he doesn't start each day vomiting with anxiety as he did when he was in school.

I noticed that during lockdown their reading improved dramatically, not having to follow the school's format of learning. Maths had always been great at home, but school pressured them into doing advanced maths (2-4 year levels ahead), and although they could do it, felt like a failure and hopeless at maths when they weren't fast enough. Unfortunately this feeling has carried through to homeschooling, so we are having to focus on building up the self-esteem that was lost in school before learning to enjoy learning again.

Why is educational attainment so important when the education system is creating broken children? It is only through home schooling that I now have hope for my child's future, no educational attainment is worth the suffering my child experienced at school.

My child is in year 6 and now that his stress has been removed via leaving school and he can appropriately function again, he is successfully studying year 11 algebra through the Kumon maths program.

My child has had some emotionally traumatic events in his life which further cause him to withdraw. He needs to progress on his own timeline. He knows his limits and asserts boundaries when others challenge him. He'll get to where he wants to go, given space to do so.

Homeschool kids are one of the happiest kids coz they can learn base on what interests them & explore their talents and skills. HS kids are also best in social because they get to interact with people of all ages.

She is waiting on naplan results to start doing certificates

She would like to do maths competitions but we are unclear how as homeschoolers.

My son was a broken square peg and he didn't fit into a round hole that school was. He has progressed significantly since leaving school and that progression is wholistic. His negative self-talk has almost diminished and he is becoming a confident pre-teen. He is more aware of his abilities and strengths and that not everyone is good at everything, so we need to conference and utilise each other's strengths. For us homeschool was intended to be a short term, 12 month period to fix my son's mental health and catch him up academically. I can't see him going back ever. He is so much happier at home and has direction, drive and a want to be successful.

Different children thrive in different environments. There's no questions about assessment and exam stress. My son cannot sit through a standardised test without a meltdown due to severe anxiety so I gauge his level of learning attainment by sitting with him and personally going through work together.

If it wasn't for homeschooling we wouldn't have found our daughter, she was just another one being lost in the system. Now she engages in life and learning and I couldn't be more grateful for that.

I would love more access to small group learning opportunities. Some things are best learned in group discussion, and facilitated by an experienced educator. If there could be some government funding for such educational experiences, it would greatly supplement and round out his education.

No

Despite inability to attend mainstream school full-time due to 'school can't', my daughter's educational attainment was excellent as she is bright; but it is just so much easier with HS to follow own curriculum and not be constantly under pressure to get her to attend school.

Home ed was not our preference, but became a necessity to protect the mental health and well-being of our child. When asked what his most traumatic memory is, at 12, he replies, "school" without hesitation.

We still face challenges given he is neurodiverse and lives with anxiety but home ed is by far, the best decision we could have made for our son.

My child has blossomed and absolutely loves learning now.

Home schooling has turned my child around, from someone with an extremely low self esteem who was falling through the cracks and developing survival techniques that were translating into disruptive behaviours in the classroom, to a well rounded, respectful and respected, confident, eager to learn, young man

Based on results at school vs results at home, I believe my child is going to reach a much higher level of education due to being homeschooled. We've been able to take the time to build a firm foundation in his math skills, work on growth mindset, extend his critical thinking and tailor learning to his own interests. We've also been able to build learning units around travel and homeschool camps and seamlessly integrate therapies into our week without missing lessons and creating gaps in learning.

At school he felt like a failure who couldn't do anything right, so he refused to try. Now he's home educated he's happier and eager to learn new things and has learnt to research and be persistent when things don't work out the first try.

My son has stopped wanting to die. His anxiety has improved. We are still very much in the healing phase but we are getting there. Albeit slowly. He will never set foot in a mainstream school again.

The mainstream system and lack of supports and the constant demand to "perform" and the highly unpredictable nature of the social expectations contributed to my child going into burnout, Her mental health and self-care declined to the point she was not able to get out of bed any longer.

Home Education allowed us the time and flexibility to put supports into place and seek diagnosis which has seen further supports put in place to now having a child that is thriving.

Working towards employability skills early has given growth and maturity and a purpose for learning.

Home education has allowed him to learn vs being left in the dust to try and find his own way. He now feels better about his ability to learn

While enrolled at school my child was unable to participate with life. Now that she is home schooled she is recovering and I am seeing the potential for her learning to return. She is now engaging with so many elements of life and her curiosity is returning. While she has not been at home long enough to see great gains yet I have a lot more confidence in her ability regarding educational attainment than I ever had while she was attending school.

He is more engaged, as long as the work is based on his interests, which is working very well

We have been able to extend his education in areas he excels at far beyond what the school was offering

Home education was the last choice for us. Our son was not coping in mainstream or a support unit. It has been the best decision for his mental health. It is not an easy choice in terms of impact on income and my own personal mental health. But it gets to a point where you have tried so hard to make school work but it just didn't. And the stress and the daily anxiety of trying get to school was breaking apart our family.

Being able to provide a child led education as a homeschooler has given my child a much more appropriate education compared with mainstream and distance education for her unique needs. Both her parents are engineers so the academic side of things is not difficult for us. Our child will be attending Tafe on campus full time next year. She will have the option of going part time or off campus if the need arises. Providing flexibility and giving her choices are really the key to her developing as a well rounded person. One major issue for homeschoolers is organising activities such as tours. In many places the people trained to take tours need a year level as a school would give so the year appropriate tour is given. In a homeschool tour the age range is from a baby to 17 year olds and struggle with how to give a tour. I encourage the education system to be inclusive of different age groups, rather than excluding anyone who isn't the same age. Perhaps our system and teaching qualifications could include more on the advantages of diverse age groups. In some large homeschooled families the children do projects on the same topic at the same time. The difference being that the 6 year old produces work that is age appropriate while the 14 year old also produces work that is age appropriate.

We do volunteer work together each week. Should be recognised as highly as having a job.

No

Providing a safe environment for learning where my child feels comfortable has had a flow on effect where they also feel more comfortable in every day situations because they know they have full parental support and are not being forced daily into a situation they feel unsafe in.

This child was slipping through the system and was convinced she was not smart - very very far from the truth

I feel that a great deal of children who struggle with mainstream schooling so have additional needs. The government are not addressing how common additional needs are, instead expecting teachers to manage with little support from administration, parents and beyond. Schools cannot have the blame pointed at them. They themselves need funding for additional support staff, professional development and to create spaces that children with diverse learning needs can be catered for (especially without a stigma/cutesy name attached). These children will grow up, they will be in our society - if school life has given them a taste, why would they show up for the main course?

I'm frequently told 'the world won't change for them'; fortunately or not, they can't change for the world either .

I would like to add, it's very beneficial that the Vic students do not need to follow a curriculum. This means I can facilitate my daughter's learning from where she's at, and expand on this as she develops her learning. Also, having to follow a curriculum would have meant I couldn't have home educated her, meaning she would be in a much darker place now. Her maths was a year 3-4 level at the end of year 7. I'm 6 months of home schooling her maths went up almost two years, some areas year 6. Her self esteem and confidence has grown, and her belief in herself are no longer issues she struggles with in a crippling manner, instead she has dreams - big dreams, to be a forensic psychologist and a forensic criminologist - careers she would never have thought could be possible. School can't, home education can.

My child is already understanding and completing his own projects in science at high school level. We have found a local tech group to support him with this., this pages a way for him to work in this area. If he was in school he may have shut down completely .

Again these questions are wrong. Ask do you think that school or home educating are better places to learn life skills that help in getting and sustaining a job, or a qualification. The government needs to know why home education is being seen as the better alternative, that sometimes it's a choice, and sometimes it's forced on us. But after doing it, we realise all the things horribly wrong with mainstream schooling, and how much better, and how many more benefits homeschooling gives a child .

Since we have started home schooling my child has had a much more enriching learning experience. They have had opportunities to explore different learning opportunities as well as learn in a way that suits their learning styles.

Thriving without "school" and with personalised interest-based learning

Since removing her from mainstream schooling we have seen her start to become interested in learning again and actively finding new opportunities to learn.

Home duration has allowed us to tailor our child's education, in an optimal environment that promotes learning and socialisation

I can be contacted for further comment.

I wish we had started homeschooling much earlier. It would have rekindled the love of learning that she had as a younger child and would have reduced her school-based anxiety enormously. I wasn't particularly a fan of homeschooling, but gave it a go rather than have to deal with "school can't" - now I'm fully convinced that homeschooling is the best thing for her. She's relaxed, engaged, social and learning incredibly well.

Homeschooling for us was not a choice. My child's mental health was in crisis at school and the only way for them to get better was withdraw them from school. The damage school has done mentally for my child is incomprehensible.

The flexibility of homeschooling in Victoria has saved my child's ability to enjoy learning, and quite possibly their life.

Her reading changed within the year of leaving school environment where she couldn't read 3 word sentences to now reading age appropriate novels. Amazing when we stop forcing them to learn a way they just aren't able to understand.

Would have done well at school if he had been supported in his anxiety and provisions made to catch up after missing days due to chronic illness

Whilst he is 12 years old, he is working confidently at a year 9 level. Homeschooling has given us a lot more flexibility to work at a more suitable level as well as spend valuable time attending therapies to build capacity.

Child wants a job and to continue with study, however finding age is restricting the ability to learn at the level capable.

Happy with homeschooling

My child is home schooled not by choice, but because her right to access an education at her local schools has been denied to her.

By actioning in her best interests - by removing her from the school system - I have also been required to excuse the school system and Queensland and Australia from meeting their human rights obligations to her. This is not acceptable.

This also comes at the expense of my wellbeing, my career, my financial security now and in retirement, my ability to care for my other child and elderly family members, and the students, colleagues, and families with whom I would be working otherwise.

Homeschooling is an excellent way for my daughter's needs to be met, however my ability to do so at significant cost does not excuse the negligence of others to meet her right to an education.

Being able to choose from a plethora of subjects has renewed her interest in learning. In the school setting there was only a narrow selection of elective subjects

Both my children are homeschooled due to being on the spectrum the mental health in the house has greatly improved which was massively declining

At 10, he is currently working at a year 8 level in most areas, something that would not be possible at public school. He also has plenty of time for socialising and sports, which are very important to him.

At this point in time, we are still fairly new to the home educating journey and neurodivergence in general, so are still learning and adapting as we go. My child's mental health is my number one priority, when that is balanced he can achieve anything. I do not believe anything is permanent, so as he grows and matures, learns to navigate his own emotions and neurodivergence better, I do believe he will take on more passions/courses etc and find his path.

We tried school again this year (4th attempt) but had a terrible experience again dealing with our son's severe school phobia and a school that didn't understand the importance of sticking to the agreed plan and allowing a slow pace for highly anxious children. Our son ended up suffering greatly and our last week was much harder than our first, as trust was broken on numerous occasions and his panic attacks got worse with the school's suggested exposure therapy. We are back homeschooling as of today and our son feels a sense of relief. He has a large homeschool community and is happy to be back with his friends and to be learning from home and our local homeschool meet-up facilities such as the library and youth centre. We homeschool whilst on a very low income so resources are limited. We'd love to regularly employ a tutor for literacy and maths but can't afford it. It is hard as work is limited while homeschooling but the benefits of having a calm, engaged and happy child outweigh the challenges.

My child is still recovering mentally from the trauma of public schooling and learning to retrust the learning process. They have been building confidence in their learning potential and gaining self esteem. There was considerable damage done to their confidence around schooling and due to their experiences at the school where one thing was said and supposed support processes and procedures were promised but not followed through on which sucked all the will to learn out of them. He became depressed, lonely and felt like he was worthless and unheard.

She would never have thrived in mainstream or distance education. In my opinion these systems are not able to cater for, meet the needs of or encourage and instil confidence in many children. The structure of the education system as it stands currently does not allow for it. The flexibility to allow her to follow her interests has been the single most important factor as well as simple things like being able to pace around while she is thinking and problem solving. I believe that children performing poorly or even mid range would hugely benefit from being homeschooled, or at least be in a supportive and encouraging environment that would allow them to follow their interests at the

time and how they choose to follow them.

As Reviewed home educators by HEU why can't our children be issued with SACE certification at completion of year 11

I am hoping that their trauma from attending school will dissipate over time and that they will be excited to about education and learning again soon.

Public Schools need to do better and stop bullying instead of supporting it. Also Public Schools need more training to support children in their learning.

My son has a love for learning and the passion to go for his goals. If he had been made to stay within the mainstream school system I do not believe this would be the case as the teachers we had been having meetings with, when he was first refusing school had zero interest in changing him into another class room when I mentioned he had seemed tense and scared around another student, and when I requested he be moved to see if he would begin to settle back into school I was told I was being difficult and that there would be no allowances made for my son. If he remained there I am actually not sure my son would be alive as he has become so withdrawn and lost all desire to play or do the things he had previously enjoyed.

The current school system does not suit everyone. My child does not fit the system. I do not home school by choice, I would prefer she was at an inclusive school that caters to her needs. The school system has only created an anxious traumatised child who no longer wants to learn. It is very sad.

My child has a gifted profile. He is able to learn quickly and easily at home.

I wish NSW and all states would make it possible for a child to be enrolled in homeschool and at school for partial enrolment to be able to mix with kids for things like athletics carnivals etc. Yes we can join our local homeschool network, and we have, however my son's friends are at our local school. It shouldn't have to be all in with school or home, there needs to be flexibility to meet individual student need, so that all student's can participate on the same basis as their peers as per the inclusive education policy. Instead, we have to device to keep our child in a place full time that was absolutely hurting him mentally and he wasn't learning a thing as a result, or to homeschool and then he loses all of his friends and connections. Not good enough NSW.

Our child needed to come out due to anxiety and school trauma affecting ability to learn and retain information. This can still be an issue at home at times but learning is taking place in a happier, safer places and child is more confident and retaining information

It has taken a lot to make learning fun again for my son after school broke him. He prefers real life application of concepts and I spend a lot of time preparing engaging experiences for his to learn with and making things relevant to his life. This would be impossible in a school setting.

He is gaining a great education that will enable him to be successful in life. He wouldn't of at school.

Our community in Rural remote doesn't have much to offer with homeschooling networks and we lack disability inclusion options and no specialist schooling options for young children or adults with disabilities.

It's a great shame that my child cannot obtain a year 10 or 12 certificate as part of Home School in the ACT

The Australian education system is broken. It's excluding the neurodiverse community. It's focussed on a behaviourist style of teaching which is outdated and leads to anxiety and negative mindsets. The focus in compliance and attendance is outrageous. All teachers must be trained in autism BY autistics, anxiety, trauma and sensory issues. Schools need to be overhauled. Smaller much smaller class sizes. Scaffold playtime so it's less overwhelming. Scaffold the play as in, give an options board so they know what they're doing and who they're playing with rather than a free for all.

He wants to work. And has started looking
<p>My son is autistic and PDA. He is still recovering from school trauma, and can still be triggered by things/ events/ requests that are school related. We do a lot of child led learning around his interests and stimming, movement and fidgets are encouraged.</p> <p>A 'school cant' child is not a child who is deliberately misbehaving. They are honestly in true distress. At the age of 7 my son was self harming and running away from school. He thought he was a "bad boy", he was told to "try harder." As parents, we were told to try harder to get him to school, to make being at home unpleasant so he would want to go to school. This is not ok. I have seen an EA in a stand off with my son, provoking his anxiety further. This is not ok.</p> <p>This is only a small part of what ' school can't' families face. I hope though, that with more feedback, there can be more support for families and their children, in the future.</p>
Since being home schooled my child has caught up a years worth of English competency in only 6 months. If this continues, by the end of the year they will be caught up in skills.
Homeschooling saved my child from further anxiety, self harm and PDST. We were able to slowly educate her on her terms & when she was ready without extra silly subjects & interference from other kids constantly bullying, disrespecting & disrupting teachers & students. We are able to learn so much more other topics that teachers don't teach in a more one to one pace. It's better & more durable for our family
School can't- NOT school refusal
Our child is thriving now she is learning from life via intergenerational socialisation and learning from her elders.
No
<p>This NEEDS to change!!! Our children are suffering, children should no longer have to suffer in silence. The education system is NOT INCLUSIVE!! It works amazing for some children ; but NOT FOR ALL! They aren't all one! They all have individual and unique characteristics and skills, and should be recognised for that! For who they are; and not how The system thinks they should!!</p> <p>Since finding Home Education, and knowing I can help my kids, our life has changed, and we are NEVER going back to the way it was!</p>
There is a massive gap in meeting the needs of students who don't fit mainstream school or special school. Making them attend mainstream school is so very damaging in ways that are not relevant to educational achievement but which still affect their life trajectory and achievements. Please listen to the home Ed experts and acknowledge the need for alternative arrangements.
They are goals based, rather than subject based. They learn things to achieve outcomes, including learning less favoured topics like maths when they see it will help them achieve something they want. This shift in motivation makes it easier for them to learn & retain information

Child is doing exceptionally well. Supporting her mental health and respecting her has paid off. She is gifted and would likely be doing well academically at school but not reaching her potential due to extension not being provided and support for ASD not being deemed necessary due to masking and high academic ability. Mental health is more important in her continued ability to do well academically and in all areas of life, and is much more difficult than academics to remedy down the track. This is something home education has allowed us to support where school always prioritised traditional education even for a child in daily distress.

My child attended school for 18 months, with about 9 months of school can't. Towards the end of that time she was experiencing school can't every single day. The mental fallout of school can't she experienced (including being forced to school by both parents and teachers, and her own internal pressure) took about 9 months to heal back to her normal state. It was traumatic for us as parents too, and even impacted on her younger brother. She was only six at the time of removal from school. I can't imagine how much longer the healing for an older child or teen, and how the mental health would be affected into adulthood without a family having the ability to remove them from traditional education settings, even temporarily. We believe that educational attainment is linked heavily with mental health, and that mental health needs to be prioritised, and problems need to be solved before a child should be encouraged to return to a normal school schedule.

Without home education, my child would require a full time support worker plus I would still need to be not working due to school refusal and school calling me to collect early. Our mental health would be extremely reduced and our child would not be learning anything.

Homeschooling was the best decision we ever made. He was attending school for less than 5 hours/week for the last term of school and we were all SO stressed. The minute he stopped mainstream school his stressed levels decreased and within weeks he was actually learning again. He had completely disengaged with English due to his learning disabilities but I jokingly set him an English grammar test a month ago for Year 10 (he had been doing Year 10 work for 6 months but none in English) and he scored 67%. That was after doing NO english work for 3 years! Then he went back and did the lessons on the questions he got wrong. He needed obviously time to recover from the stress of trying to do English and finding it extremely difficult. His learning disabilities prevent him from doing mainstream school Year 11 & 12 English and so he will remain homeschooled.

No

We feel we are well placed to ensure our son is making good educational progress, through our own preparation and guidance and also external resources (classes and other materials and resources).

She is taking acting and arts classes and thriving in a self motivated environment

Progressing more each day.

My child doesn't have a job but has been volunteering for 2 terms in a language association. It is her own decision and is able to go there regularly without missing any session.

See above. Thank you.

Her attitude toward learning has reinvigorated. Self-directed learning, confidence and independence have soared.

The education department needs to initiate best practices around teaching children with additional needs eg autism, adhd, dyslexia etc right now it's basically up to the teacher if they want to use a scientifically proved method of teaching or just some random jargon. Right now, jargon seems to be more popular.

Deciding to homeschool my son has been the best decision for both of us. He has grown so much in a small amount of time and is incredibly happy.

My sons anxiety was so bad at school hours a day were spent in melt downs and anger. Now we barely have any issues and his anxiety is so managed many allied health find it hard to believe that he did.

Has been treated badly by teachers in the past. Really wants to be a nurse but struggles

School definitely did not work for our son, homeschooling him has been a bit more positive but he still struggles due to the severe school trauma

We have a lot to catch up on after struggling with school can't but my child is engaged a lot better now I've removed the stress of school.

Education Qld needs to recognise school can't and consider allowing a mixture of school attendance and homeschooling to help keep kids engaged at mainstream school and to stay within the curriculum while addressing their causes for school can't. Being so vigilant about attendance is pushing more parents and students into the realm of homeschooling as it allows mental health to improve and learning is going to follow that trend due to the pressure of attendance being removed.

On returning to school, my child's mental health declined to the point of depression, inability to leave the house and suicidal ideation. After 4 months of homeschooling, I had my happy child back with some anxiety, and after 8 months my child shows no signs of anxiety in any situation and is thriving socially and academically.

I'm not sure if mainstream school will ever improve in my lifetime but something seriously needs to change. It is destroying families the way it is

My child has achieved so much more since we homeschooled, than when she was in mainstream school.

Definitely holds an interest and self fuelled thirst for knowledge...

Home schooling is important to have as an option. Mainstream schooling just doesn't cover everyone anymore and that is sad as many are failing and being left behind because people don't understand how to tap into their potential.

He's doing extremely well in maths and science and digital technology. He's covering the curriculum really quickly and doing extremely well on placement tests.

Thank you for your hard work in collecting this data and I remain hopeful the inquiry will mean true and timely changes to the ethos and training of our education system around children who present with School Can't.

Locking teens out of their education for 2 years has caused substantial damage to many which has been completely overlooked. Seeing what home schooling offers - a whole world of unlimited opportunities, I will always regret not having commenced home schooling at a much earlier age. Supporting my child's individual learning style and pursuing her interests would have no doubt seen more favourable outcomes.

Initially school issues were due to undiagnosed and unsupported learning issues Dyslexia, ADHD, Autism. Her sister's school issues started due to lack of support and understanding for her invisible physical disabilities (Cerebral Palsy)

The system at school is broken. No one understood my child or their disabilities. The inclusive education policy was meant to bridge the gap, however it hasn't. Staff don't understand how disabilities present differently person to person even in something as common as autism.

Academics aside, he is much happier, less anxious and more engaged than when he was at school.

When asked if he would like to return to school the response is, "No way. It's torture and I had no friends. I have many more friends now that I homeschool."

The mainstream education system is fundamentally broken and causing unprecedented levels of anxiety and stress in Australian young people. This has to change or there will be a significant impact to our mental and physical health systems and justice system.

His improvement has been steady and he works hard at learning new things, especially if they are important to attaining his goals, both now and in the future.

This was not prioritised as the focus on face to face attendance was seen by many professionals as the only solution to the problem.

No

Due to trauma and disability related difficulties senior schooling has been difficult. It has taken almost 18 months to get my child to engage in formal learning since leaving a qld school.

I am so very proud of how far my child has come. He is an enthusiastic learner, has learned so much, and knows how to access courses and information that he needs.

My child's mental health was deteriorating at school which led to self harm. They are stable at home and safe. This will lead to improved engagement over time which we have already begun to see.

We have had to drop all expectations in order to facilitate burnout recovery. When they want to learn, it happens fast and to their own schedule.

School was a disaster for my child. He could not function in such an over stimulating and overwhelming environment.

The public school environment is not conducive to healthy learning. Differing opinions are discouraged in preference for subservient students.

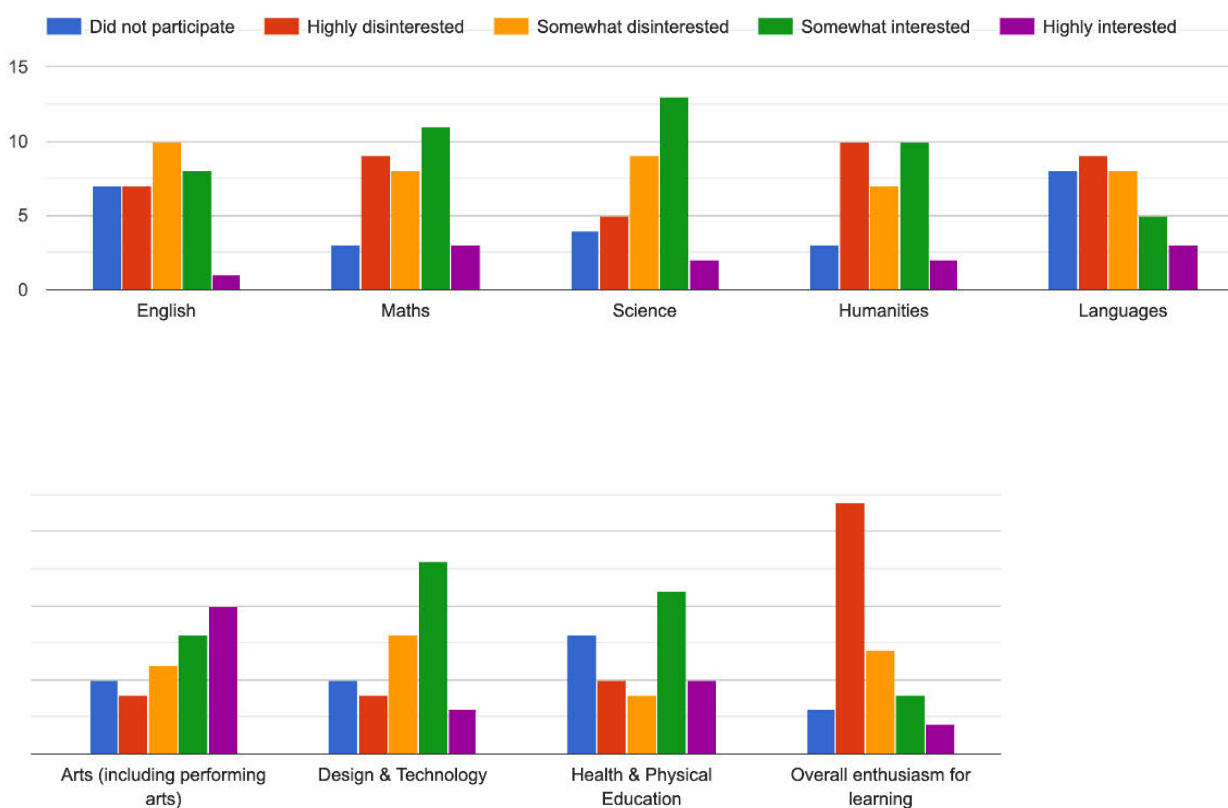
There should be support for children that can't cope at mainstream schools

Appendix F - Interest & engagement in kids who are now back at school

* Data to be interpreted with caution due to small sample sizes

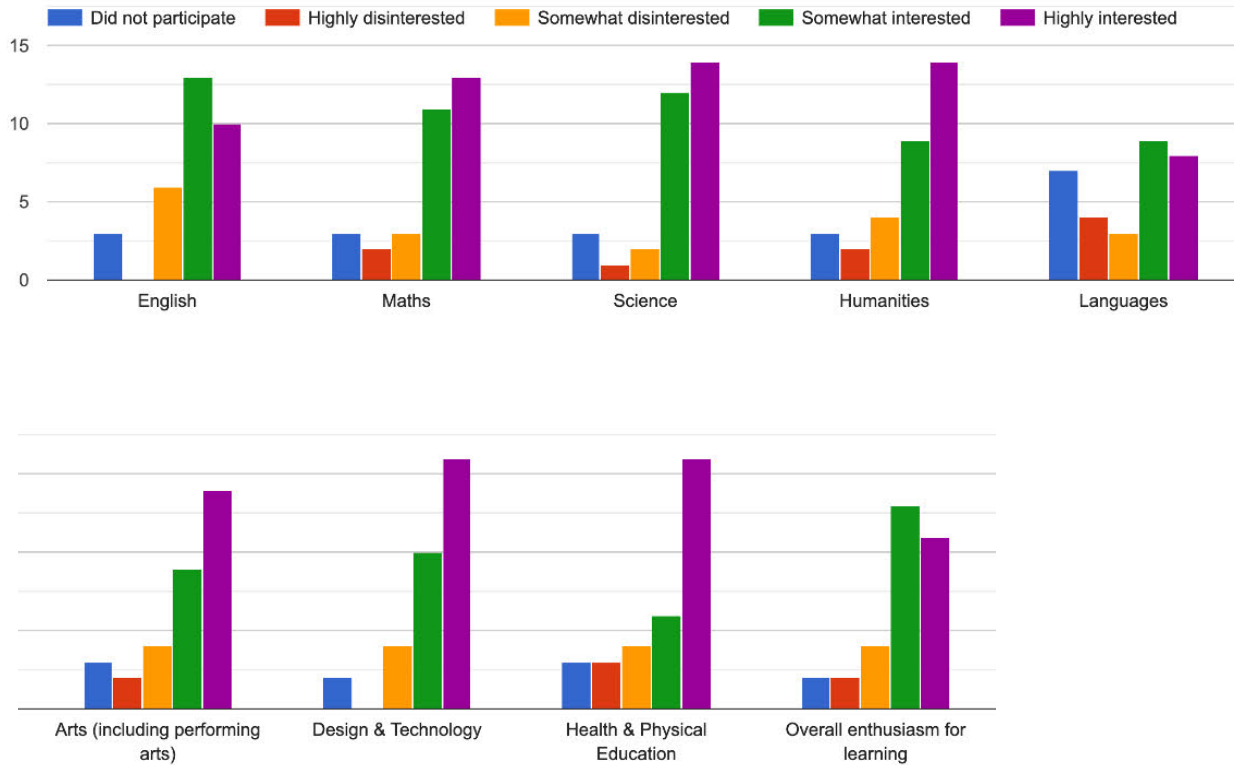
Q 28. How would you have described your child's interest and engagement in the following Learning Areas at school **before being removed for School Can't** (ie before home educating)?

33 respondents



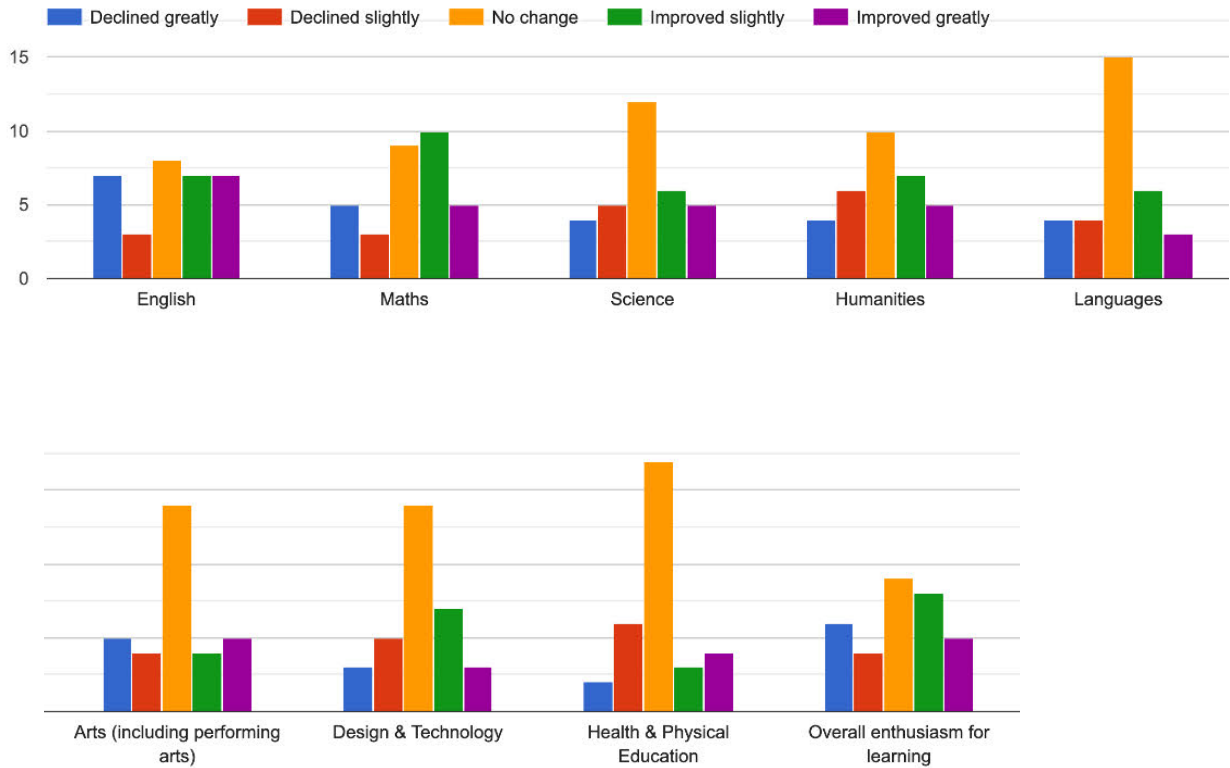
Q. 29 How would you have described your child's interest and engagement in the following Learning Areas while home educating?

32 respondents



Q. 30 How would you describe your child's **interest and engagement** in the following Learning Areas **now** (compared to their time home educating)?

33 respondents

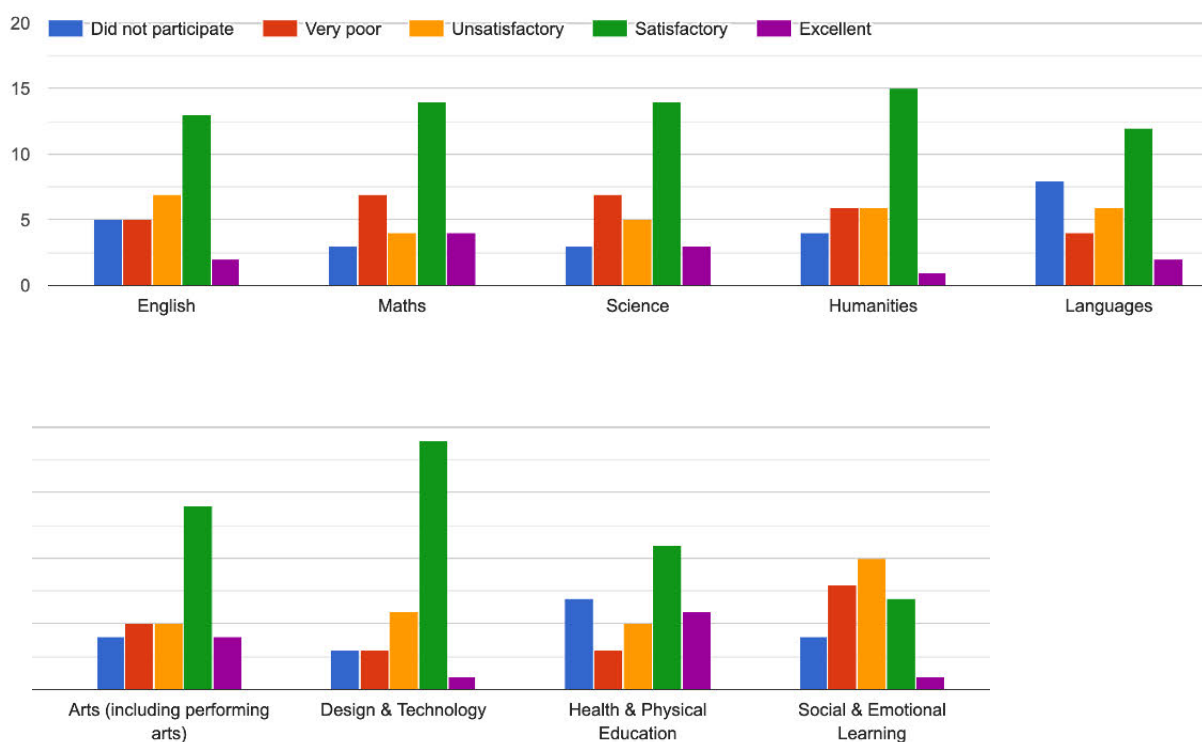


Appendix G - Educational attainment in kids who are now back at school

Q. 31 How would you have described your child's **educational attainment** in the following Learning Areas **at school before being removed** for School Can't (ie before home educating)?

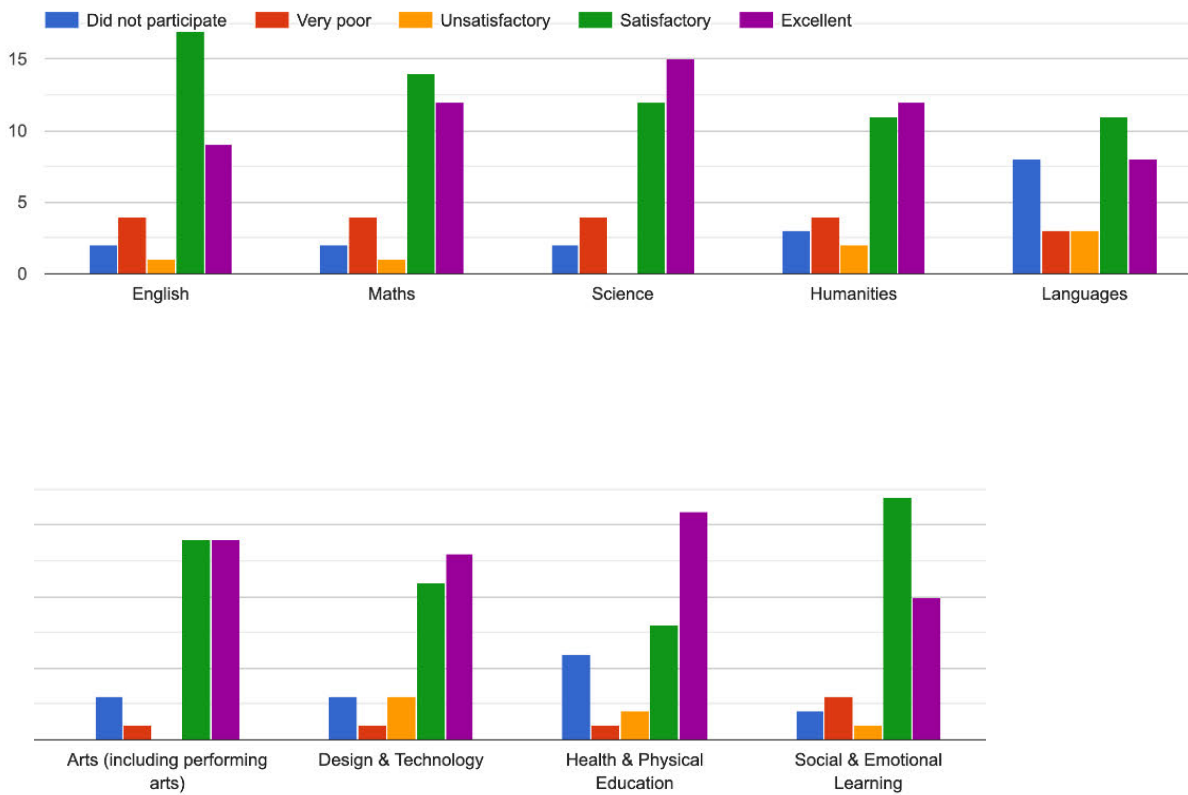
* Data to be interpreted with caution due to small sample sizes

32 respondents



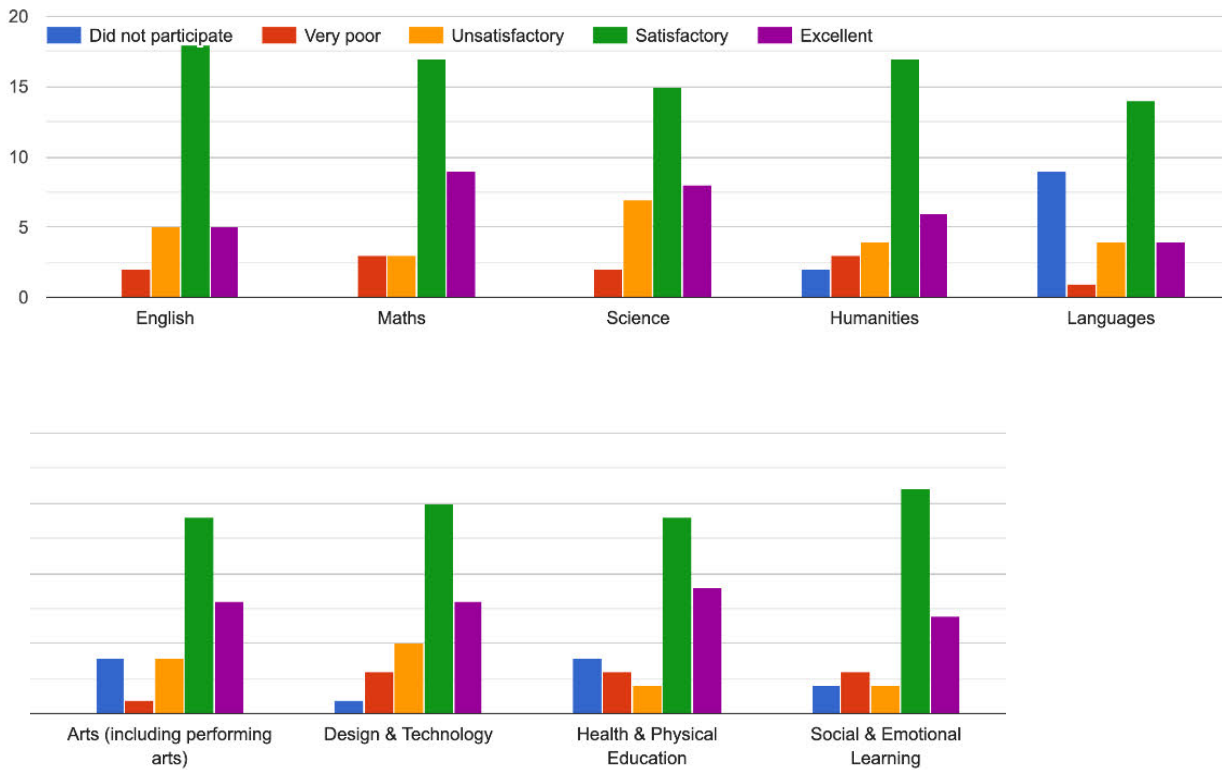
Q. 32 How would you have described your child's **educational attainment** in the following Learning Areas **while home educating?**

33 respondents



Q. 33 How would you describe your child's **educational attainment** in the following Learning Areas **now**?

32 respondents



Appendix H - Further comments on children with School Can't who are back at school

<p>It has been a beneficial period for my child in easing anxiety and helping to reframe what education can look like so they recognise they have choices. It has also been beneficial for me in forming connections and developing an understanding of how home education can look so if we need to pick it up again in later years I will be ready to hit the ground running.</p>
<p>School traumatised my son. He did not have access to the supports he requires as a disabled person.</p>
<p>School was horrible. Did my daughter more harm sending her there. And school didn't care at all. There was no duty of care for my child.</p>
<p>My autistic 13 year old child experienced extreme levels of bullying last year at a public school that was completely ill equipped to deal with a kid with his needs. He had 15 kids saying they all hated him almost every day - either in person or via text message groups. We have now removed him from the public system into a local small Catholic colleague and he is (starting!) to thrive. I was deeply disappointed with my experience of the public education system despite being a big believer in the institution and I am unlikely to send my 10 year old into the public system despite him not having any signs of autism or learning difficulties.</p>
<p>Neither was a good fit for her needs</p>
<p>My child was traumatized by school and the complete lack of flexibility</p>
<p>Public schools do not cater for the learning needs of most boys, not enough physical activity or practical learning methods</p>
<p>Too many kids in the classroom, teachers unable to control them, no idea of different ways to learn, not all kids with autism meltdown some shut down and teachers do not recognise this. Transition to high school too young</p>
<p>It saved his life. It also showed him that he could actually do maths if taught in a way that suited him.</p>
<p>Being bullied before being removed, mental health went down hill started self harming. Being home schooled renewed her interest in education and gave her space to make friends with similar issues. When she was ready to return it was her choice and she now has more resilience because she is choosing to be there. ASD level 2 and severe anxiety. She actually was ahead of her peers in her areas of interest like maths and art and is doing better at school than ever before due to her home schooling experience improving her confidence and self esteem.</p>
<p>My child completely shut down in high school, could not get him out of the car, was suicidal. Home education was our only option to keep him alive. It came at a massive financial cost to our family but kept him alive and he's now thriving [child is in alternate school setting].</p>
<p>Bullying had a huge impact on engagement since</p>
<p>Choice is key, and kids feeling like they have control over how they learn.</p>

He actually wants to participate when it's self directed from home and is on topics that he can see are important for his future. He found school frustrating and boring, he is highly intelligent but was not able to be engaged with his peers and didn't have any friends or common interests with the other students he was put into groups with so struggled to connect with them.

Profoundly gifted - school tried to meet their needs, but the curriculum requirements are restrictive (too basic, repetitive and aimed at demonstrating in tests...little room for creativity and growth)

Had trauma as was excluded for a term at 7

Lots of trauma

Our child needed to take the pressure away, especially NAPLAN, and suffered post COVID anxiety. She's a bright kid who lost her sense of identity of being good at school when they were all home. She desperately needed to engage with learning again for the love of learning and not for achievement on assessments. It's been a slow rebuild but now she's back to extension programs and happy to go to school again

School is difficult for those with extra learning needs and no funding for learning support

He became isolated at home for friends and other kids his age. It helped him and me when he couldn't cope in mainstream and wasn't old enough for the alternative school he's at now

Home education was our only option with his school refusal. It impacts whole families not just the student and the parent/carer trying to get them to school. It is incredibly stressful to have a school refuser and there is very little support offered in mainstream. Just threats of ending up in court and meetings with school liaison officers that make the parent feel at fault. Schools are insufficiently equipped to deal with school refusers. Attendance plans didn't work. The school blamed it on separation anxiety. He separated from me in other setting just fine. My child had anxiety so severe he used to worry about going to school the night prior to going and used to then physically throw up the morning of going to school. He felt very unsafe there. It was a horrible horrible time for my whole family and the public system didn't seem to care, they just held me accountable for something that was out of my control. In the end I had to put an end to his suffering, he was on such high alert (fight or flight) when he was at school he learnt nothing anyway. Learning in the "safety" of his own home was the only alternative. The high school he was at didn't even know the process to transfer him to private distance education. I had to tell them 😊

Part Time Schooling needs to be an option.

My child was bullied by his peers in Year 3 term 1 due & the temp teacher didnt inform me until the permanent teacher return but the damage had been done. I allowed him to take as many days off school as he needed to heal & recover while I unofficially homeschooled him & gets involved with HS Coop until he was ready to return to school full time in Year 5.

During this HS period we were able to address his difficulty with writing which was common among boys as well as learning self defense & conflict resolution skills that has helped rebuild his self esteem.

I did ask the principal for part time schooling but the response was negative. I am so glad I did it anyway as the class teacher understood what I was doing & was highly supportive on the days that my son came to school.

We pulled out child from a school where he suffered a great deal of trauma. The school would not take responsibility . We had to collect our child every day because of his behaviour. He refused to go in the end

Behaviour is communication

A child will do well if they can (ross green)

Since then we have homeschooled in between and found a small school led by a fantastic inclusive

principal. She supports parents to do what's right for the child . Collaboration with the child was sought from the start. We were aiming for two days school and the rest at home . But Because of this fantastic school and leadership my child goes everyday very happily.

Without removal from the school setting at age 11, our son's already bad mental health would have deteriorated further.

The school keeps changing things this upsets my child. She needs regular teachers who she can trust or she will disrupt the class. Ie no regular teacher.

My child is incredibly bright, capable and loves to learn, but does not cope well in the mainstream setting. HE became a need during a significant increase in mental health issues (depression/OCD). I tailored his learning to his interests and abilities with a much reduced workload, and allowed him the space to both better understand himself and adjust medications before returning to a mainstream setting.

He likes to do his own thing and his own type of learning.

Have had some bullying issues to my son. He thrives on authentic connection and seemed that was difficult for some kids - he has been at both private and public schools (public schools did not pride what we needed... he had established an joy for learning at previous child led schools... public system knocked that out if hun along with social disconnect along with terrible Covid restrictions which we do not agree with for children.

Our son is homeschooled one day per week due to his extra needs. There are benefits to him attending school part time but it meant a huge amount of liaison with the school, and mostly I did not receive educational support in doing this which made it very difficult to teach him at home. There was minimal support for his learning which was different from neurotypical kids. There were foundation gaps which were not closed by the school. This method of supporting him was our only support to ensure an adequate primary education.

The Victorian education system is broken for students and teachers

Homeschooling was a successful lovely time while we did it. It created a steady foundation for my sun while catering to his emotion and learning needs. He is an enthusiastic engaged individual fascinated with the world. That one on one time was a dream and pleasure and all gained huge amounts from the experience. my son had asked to homeschool after some major social issues the school was not willing to address to our satisfaction. We were still extremely social with large quantities of people - those who respected and resonated with our joined values. I would not hesitate to homeschool again if the need arises.

Home learning has allowed my child to learn and focus on feeling safe and listened to, ready to learn.

I have psych and ot that are willing to work with the school. Its a Catholic school and they do not reach out or try to support my child.

Bullying, physical assaults, complete lack of support of disabilities caused trauma and school can't

My child has dyslexia. Not enough preparation/study for teachers at Uni to prepare them to be able to make the necessary changes for students and understand the needs of students with a disability. Especially dyslexia. My daughter hates that she is different and even last year I had to talk her down from wanting to homeschool again. It's hard for them, every single day. Every single one!

He refused to attend school and refused to do any home learning. He is now back at school but refuses to go on some days. We have no control over him. Computer games is a major problem

Home education for just over a year gave us a chance to reset, regroup and restore my child's mental health. We are now trying a new school. While so far academic educational attainment is still poor my child is happy and feeling connected and the school are constantly trying to find accommodations to help academically. The problem is the system - my child needs way more 1-1 time due to learning difficulties - they are very intelligent but with zero executive function skills and high school has been a disaster academically after being advanced in primary school.

Schools need to be able to teach according to ability, not by grade. My daughter has so much potential (highly gifted) and achieves great marks, but the disengagement in learning is beyond belief. The frustration in lack of learning is causing her anxiety and depression (suicidal thoughts) - she has just returned to homeschooling. Before she chose to try school again, she was going to start Open University when she turns 14...now we need to focus on mental health and work ethic before considering Open University. The education system needs to support these kids, not destroy them!

My daughter is really struggling with maths, self harming when needing to do it. School reported she was good at maths.

Tailored learning to his interests results in excellent outcomes, in a quiet environment where expectations are very clear. The school is unable to provide this. However he has realised for high school that we can't teach him everything he wants/needs to know for university

I pulled my kids out of school to restore their confidence and self esteem. We focused on hands on learning, health and exercise, science and math/English. They thrived and only went back to school for social engagement. I will pull them out again at some stage.

We are now looking to withdraw from school and commence homeschooling again. The emotional trauma that my daughter is going through having recommenced school is making her physically and emotionally unwell and unable to participate in aspects of life outside of school. School has been supportive in attempting to make accommodations for my daughter, but it isn't enough to support her.

My daughters educational interest and attainment at school was unaffected by 2 years of school can't. She was far more engaged. Confident and self directed when not at school. Her engagement, confidence and enthusiasm for learning now back at school is greatly affected by school can't, as it would undoubtedly be by any stressor, trauma and/or significant interruptions.

I wish that we had undertaken home education when my child was younger and would have been more open to the process. The mid-teen years are not a time when they're eager to explore parental suggestions. I have no doubt though that taking a break from school has helped their mental health enormously and understanding that they do have options has alleviated some of the anxiety around school.

My child found some areas of HS very difficult as we were living in a small town that had very few opportunities for him to socialise with other children (outside of sport). We had to travel one hour each way to participate in HS activities.

Having HS for 8 months, his anxiety is much better managed and he is excited to return to school - we have had to move to a major city to allow this to happen and many don't have this option or the option of paying for private schooling.

My child's at school experience has been severely impacted by being bullied and the school not being able to properly discipline offenders. The social impact of home schooling has been no more detrimental than leaving them in a toxic school environment. They want to learn and have shown they can do exceptionally well when put in the right environment with lessons that are tailored to them individually. They are much more mentally happy at home than in the school environment. Education isn't just about following a curriculum set out by people that have no idea what the school environment is like for our kids these days.

I have put did not participate for English in school because her reading and writing was so behind. This also hindered her learning in all other areas. After 2 years at home she is now reading at year

level.

My child experienced school anxiety since he first began 3 yr old kindy. His undiagnosed development delays impacted him immensely in the school environment. He would work so hard to stay emotionally regulated and please and appease authority figures he could completely dysregulate when he would get home. He could not communicate his feelings only act them out. He was diagnosed adhd- eventually through public system aged 8 years. But by then it was too late, the pressure on him to learn and behave on a large classroom setting was too much. The stress at home was so much. We tried respite days and weeks mid term. Such helped him pace the stress during the term.

We decided to travel in a caravan for 6 months, with his dad long service leave. and try changing his environment. This was great for his siblings, but the constant change was actually increased his anxiety. When we returned home, the fresh pesticide he gained from travel and adventures and developing resilience through nature and unstructured learning made returning to school seem very appealing. He was so happy to come home return to school which he felt was home for him. He also had a great male teacher that had a great relationship with him quickly which was fundamental to his return to school.

Our daughter is highly intelligent and we understand that can make things difficult in regards to keeping her engaged what we don't get though is the constant promise of things that are never delivered, for 5 years we have been promised independent learning programs which have never once been delivered instead I have a daughter whom is going to finish school with the inability to learn as she hasn't been pushed. Instead she is bored and falling through the cracks, hence why we are returning to home schooling, it doesn't work well for our family but it is far better then wasting my daughters years in the school system

Having an extremely intelligent child with additional needs who refuses school is very difficult to navigate. We are very lucky and supported by the school with her education and attendance. However being one of four children homeschool is the easiest option for us at this time.

School brings so weary in anxiety which cannot be dealt with in such large classroom situations.

He is an Autodidact and drives his own experiences. He is Autistic with a Pathological Demand Avoidance profile and cannot participate even in favoured activities if they are experienced as a demand

Required home schooling to try and recover from school inflicted / school related trauma, anxiety, depression, school 'can't' etc. Had to return to mainstream schooling due to logistics of having a new baby but options were extremely limited, could only get into our local catchment schools (no others including state, independent, catholic - largely gatekeeping). First private school we tried to enter did not last 1 term and excluded due to discrimination. Very disillusioned with the school, and once again issues are arising due to lack of understanding and accommodations for students with disability or any student that isn't a perfect cog in the machine or doesn't fit the mold.

We officially homeschooled for a year, but had been essentially homeschooling for the 2 years of the Covid lockdown in Victoria and had spent a year prior to that educating at home as our, then, child could only attend school for an hour a day. His emotional well being improved significantly, once the pressure of having to attend a mainstream school was removed.

My child is more willing to participate in learning activities that they find challenging at school, which we suspect is due to peer pressure and their tendency to mask and comply when away from home. But due to the lack of flexibility and reasonable accommodations to ensure the learning programs and supports available to my child at school, they developed intense school anxiety and became unable to attend or stay for full days. They also found the competitive nature encouraged by school to be detrimental to their confidence and self esteem. The school environment became non conducive to learning and caused them to disengage in academic learning because they associate that with a sense of failure and fear. Whereas, they feel psychologically safer at home and they have more autonomy to explore the types of learning that interest them and in a way that suits them. However the challenge is that they are less motivated to push themselves to complete academic activities because of the lack of peer pressure and healthy competition. Also, children seem naturally less inclined to listen to and comply with their parents' instructions (in households free from abuse), so it is more challenging for us to instruct them. In addition, it is more taxing for us to find and create age and capability appropriate learning materials because we do not have access to the same resources that schools have, and we are not experienced or specialised in education. While we are University qualified and are intellectually capable of teaching at this level, it is not a vocation we are passionate to do thus it is harder to motivate ourselves to plan and implement lessons.

School are unable to work with his issues around working memory and don't help him enough to pass or have confidence.

As backed by child psychology research and well supported theories - learning and self actualation are only possible when a person's basic needs are met (including physical and psychological safety). Even in a supportive family that have the resources and education to meet a child's essential needs of nutrition and health etc, and one who practices intentional parenting strategies based on the latest peer reviewed research and models of child psychology and attachment, we found that we have very little control over the education model practiced at the public urban primary school that our child is enrolled in. This is the second school we have tried and we selected this school based on our negative experiences at another public primary school as well as the additional investment our current school claims to have made to meet their students' welfare, and claims that they recognise the unique needs of children with disabilities and additional needs. However, we found that the following significant issues that contributed to our child's school anxiety worsening until they were very traumatised and unable to attend school (unless we abuse her by requesting for the school to restrain her, which we are not willing to do). These issues are reflective of greater systemic problems with the current education system that discriminated against and punishes students who are unable to comply with the demands set by the curriculum and school policies. While Victoria's Dept of Education and the school claims to comply with the applicable anti discrimination legislations, there are glaring gaps and biases in the implementation of their frameworks and policies, these include:

1) The education model does not provide a gradual transition between the 4yo kinder program and prep/foundation year of primary school. The difference between the two programs are shockingly enormous that disadvantaged students who struggle with change and transition - eg neurodiverse children. And the prep/foundation program does not allow as much flexibility or autonomy for students to choose the method of learning that suits their interests and strengths while still meeting education goals.

Kindergarten offers children far more autonomy, the learning is student led, there is a smaller student to teacher ratio allowing for students to receive more personalised support, the achievements are individual focused without toxic competitiveness that degrades a child's self esteem, and there are more opportunities for movement to be included in the day without disrupting other students.

Prep/foundation teaching programs used in most public schools expect the children to be able to focus on a single subject for a long period of time (an hour), offers little flexibility to when a child engages with a particular learning activity (some kids may enjoy doing academically challenging activities earlier in the day while others may have more capacity to focus on those activities later in the day, encourages unhealthy competition by focusing on winning or coming first more than willingness to overcome personal challenges and engaging in effective teamwork, the number of students each teacher is responsible for more than doubles, the standard one teacher per class means students are unable to find a teacher or teaching style they feel most comfortable with, guaranteed movement opportunities are reduced to only available recess and lunchtime with no autonomy to choose when they are able to have one based on the needs of their body, the learning materials are more restricted and teachers have less time and energy resources to customise learning materials to suit the individual's needs, the teacher has less time and is under more stress to manage the class thus encouraging the giving of demands that require children to be compliant and often 'quiet and still' (which is not possible for neurodiverse children, who often find themselves in trouble because they are set up to fail, and develops a deep sense of internalised shame for being different and not being able to behave in a desirable way despite trying very hard) - all of these practices disadvantaged children with high needs (but not high enough needs to qualify for adequate funding to get additional support according to a very outdated model of who qualifies as being 'disabled enough' to receive such funding). This causes significant mental health deterioration, creates trauma and internalised shame that the student may carry into adulthood. They can also become disengaged with learning because it is perceived to be too difficult and they identify

themselves with being too 'stupid' or 'lazy'. Thus triggering the snowball effect of them missing out on future development and employment opportunities that would set them up for a more financially, physically and psychologically advantageous lifestyle. This is the start of the systemic discrimination people living with disabilities, through no fault of their own, faces (and often be further disadvantaged by society's view that if they are less successful in life, it must mean that they didn't try as hard as their peers).

2) The distribution of school funding into different areas (eg academic achievement, facility services, inclusion policies and practices etc) and the decision making process for this are entirely not transparent. There is no effort to help families understand what support services their children are entitled to or what recourse they can take if they do not receive those support services. Despite the legislation stipulating that reasonable adjustments must be made to enable equal access to education for all students, and the decision into which adjustments will be provided must be independent of additional funding (eg via PSD), schools are regularly refusing requests from families to fulfil those requests, using the families' lack of familiarity in the school's legislative obligations and the escalation process, as well as the families' limited resources to fight these discriminatory actions, to the school's advantage, as most families would be forced to give up and homeschool, change schools or give up on trying to fight for their child's right to education.

There is no clear dispute resolution process overseen by an objective third party to ensure that any violations to the Department or the school's legal obligations are appropriately and promptly addressed. Even those of us that have the financial resources and capacity to pay consultants to assist in dispute resolution often do not get a satisfactory outcome due to the significant power imbalance that is biased towards the school. The family and children affected are further disadvantaged by the emotional distress, trauma and significant education missed opportunities that can have huge immediate and long term negative impacts on the family. These dispute resolution processes often drag on for months and even years, resulting in the child becoming completely disillusioned and disengaged by the education system, and sometimes unable to re-engage with or trust the education system even when those initially required adjustments are eventually made. Too little too late.

3) Request for funding and additional Dept of Education resources can only be made by the school. The process for these requests are usually complex, resource intensive and not transparent. The school is not incentivised to apply for these resources if they are not confident with likelihood of success. Thus unless the school is very committed to ensuring students that don't fall into the stereotypical categories of requiring additional support, then the families are being misled into thinking there is hope for additional support while the school wastes precious time not prioritising these applications. The rare few schools passionate and successful at obtaining these additional resources become known in communities for families of children with disabilities and additional needs, fast becoming inundated with demand to accept these students that may have to commute from far and wide to access the school. Families that don't enrol in time or live in the catchment misses out. This also creates a huge imbalance where certain schools shoulder majority of the work to advocate and provide for these students while other schools get away with doing the bare minimum or making the learning environment unattractive for these families and forcing the families to enrol elsewhere. The student population also become skewed, where the schools that are motivated to support students with disabilities will have a more diverse student body and other students benefit from the normalisation of disabilities, whereas schools that don't care enough will have more neurotypical and able bodied students that misses the opportunity to be exposed to diversity and become compassionate and accepting of those with additional needs and different from themselves.

Appendix I - Further comments on children with School Can't who were home educated and who are in further education or employment

<p>Home schooling after severe bullying which went completely unacknowledged & unmanaged by the school was the best decision we ever made for my child. It saved her life. She is now an independent, strong & confident young woman who completed school on her terms.</p>
<p>She did online University, loved it and did really well</p>
<p>My child has been able to be fully engaged in formal learning programs of her choosing. She is attentive, participates, and completes tasks, although she still has some anxiety around firm deadlines.</p>
<p>Currently also studying a second Cert IV while working full time. Has been accepted to study bachelor of computer science</p>
<p>My son was 6yo and so sad to go to school. He said the teachers yelled and he was bored. I wasn't happy because his learning had stagnated. He was being told each day at school he was no good because he lacked focus. He became depressed and stopped singing/humming which he normally did all day long. It took a week after pulling him out of school but he did start to sing and smile again.</p>
<p>Child is autistic with ADHD, not diagnosed until 14 years old. His inability to attend school due to anxiety caused family financial hardship and enormous stress.</p>
<p>The mental health of the children that become home schooled improves in leaps and bounds.</p>
<p>Home schooling has so much to give to a child. They can be themselves, not having to look or act like others. They know who they are and where they want to go. If they are passionate about a subject, they are able to continue it for as long as like.</p>
<p>All going well.</p>
<p>Great introduction to uni over several years through robotics program run for school age by the uni outreach. Really great for a confident transition.</p>
<p>Homeschooling allowed child to follow passion, excell in chosen field and develop social skills more appropriate than what is being learnt in schools</p>
<p>My son could not learn from a book or from being in a classroom six hours a day. He did thrive once we removed him from mainstream school and began nurturing those areas he was interested or good at. His reading and spelling, maths etc improved through the use of an iPhone. His confidence in a multitude of areas grew as his discovered his world the way he needed to. You need your fence fixed, or a new one built, a hole of any size dug, machinery operated or fixed, a motor bike or car repaired or serviced, tyres rotated, harvesting done, a cow artificially inseminated, livestock treated/moved/milked? Well my home educated boy is your man!</p>
<p>Enforced schooling was a disaster for him.</p>
<p>My child went to a senior college for yr 11 & 12 after homeschooling yr 8-10 & years of therapy. She did much better in a less structured school environment with good relationships with her teachers. Peer relationships were still hard</p>
<p>My child was homeschooled since age 7. He went to school only for year 11&12 and thrived with a high ATAR and attitude merits and was well liked as part of the school community. At 16 he was clearly ready for formal education and now is at university.</p>

parents shouldn't have to resort to homeschooling their children - there should be more alternatives available in Australia
School was horrible and one type box is wrong
Thoroughly enjoyed this learning g style. Left at end of year 10 after handing in academic scholarship because school just wouldn't cater to his learning desires
My son attended Montessori preschool for 2 half days a week, most weeks, for 10 months but already displayed school refusal. He then never attended any mainstream Primary or High school due to extreme school refusal. He was ALWAYS given the choice to attend. Has completed 3 TAFE certificates, got 91.7%TER, in first year UNI now - Bach of Communication with D, D, D, HD so far. Has had a wonderful time with the home education community. He's 19 (that wasn't an option in the first choice, sorry) and still has friends from home education, TAFE and elsewhere, and now UNI.
His older sibling tried school several times but opted for home education because the social environment was better (more diverse and had real world behavioural consequences, examples, expectations) and they could study multiple interests at the same time. They were a GATE student and the teachers could not, and some refused, to extend their program of choices. I used to teach GATE myself, so I understood their structural obstacles.
My son is neurodiverse and highly functioning and was even bullied by teachers. After home education and developing his self esteem and confidence and various skills not taught in schools, he went back to formal education and he even became a school captain enjoying school immensely.
As a home educator if I had had support in vet study and courses it would of meant my son could have worked and learnt earlier in an environment he clearly excels
Victoria between 2007 and 2015 was incredible. HEU Qld was punitive and still traumatising our family.
My child would not have survived without homeschooling.
Part time work as she has a toddler.
mainstream education can be extremely traumatic for neurodivergent children - we are seeing the effects of that still and have been told it may take years to recover from the time he did spend in a mainstream school.
I wish I had done it sooner.
Has always had difficulty in educational settings due to previously undiagnosed ADHD and autism.
I homeschooled all my children for 10 years after removing my eldest due to school 'can't'. It was the best decision I ever made and my anxious, withdrawn child had his emotional health restored in the nurturing environment of home and has grown into an exceptional young man.
Homeschooling gave my son the opportunity to discover he was an entrepreneur allowing him the time and freedom to pursue his interests. He was able to work and earn his own income from his online businesses at a young age. He would never have had the time or energy to discover this passion at such a young age if he'd attended school.
My child has no ATAR and no SACE and was terribly bullied at school that the department did nothing to help us with. Even with evidence and police contacting the department. Our child was a total mess. Depleted and no self esteem to speak of. 4 years down the track, with gentle homeschooling and working on self esteem and building on self worth etc. We have a working student at Uni after having completed a fully online Diploma course that we had to fight for the

system to recognise as a valid part of her homeschool program

Home Education is a valid and viable educational choice for all Australian students, if the parents are able and committed to meeting their learning needs, along all other needs. It's not a school at home, 'poor man's orange'. It's a rich and vibrant approach where the child's learning needs dictate the journey. They learn about the world, from the world.

As an example, when my son was 14 he was teaching himself several computer programme languages, based on his own interests. None were present in the NSW IT Syllabus, and indeed that Syllabi was published in 2003. Likewise, he has been taking photographs for some time, but the Photography syllabus was published that year. It did not even contain references to a DSLR.

I was a primary teacher and then retrained to be an academic, covering courses in teacher training for Special Needs, and Social Justice in Schools. I know the limitations schools have. Major reform needs to start with allowing teachers who understand the learning process and where the limitations are, to have the loudest voice. But, some of our students do best outside of even the best of the schools we have available. Even a Montessori school, with over 100 years of proven results in the area of Peace Education and student led curriculum, was not the right choice for my son.

Home education is a valid and often better choice. I believe school refusal has risen because school environments are harder and more people now know that they have a choice. We would have had more prior to Covid if they know that school was not compulsory, based on feedback from the new cohort.

My son went back and forth between school and home ed. In school he was disruptive and the teaches said he was "unteachable." At home and at homeschool group glasses he loved learning

Employer organising tutor to support course study and enable my son to thrive

Appendix J - Further comments on children with School Can't who were home educated and who are currently not home educating, back at school, in further study or working

<p>After being bullied and beaten (school deny) have Drs certificates to confirm phoned them on the Friday, phoned again Monday to date still no return call and this happened in 2018. Bullying in primary school was out of control and perpetrated by staff and students alike 2011-2013, changed schools still had issues but not as bad as our first experience</p>
<p>Couldn't cope at school. Did part school and home schooled and finished VCAL Year 11 at TAFE</p>
<p>Distance Ed for the oldest worked then lacked social. Second child who finished year 3 mute, was a godsend to boost her confidence and ability to verbalise where she wouldn't before</p>
<p>Education isn't the problem for her. It's the environment and staffing and leadership. She begs to learn, however the school doesn't provide an adequate learning environment.</p>
<p>Her confidence has grown immensely as has her interest in maths. So glad we made the decision to homeschool.</p>
<p>I believe my son is still alive because we took him out of school</p>
<p>I stopped homeschooling and sought out distance education because in nsw its only valid until year 10 and i believe homeschooling needs a social network to work well. We did not have access to a social network.</p>
<p>I wish we hadn't listened to the hospital & sent my kid back to school, this resulted in him being bedbound & us having to unschool as he was too unwell to engage in anything</p>
<p>I'm so thankful that I made the right choice all those years ago for my sons mental health and wellbeing. I teach 30 students a week that the school system is failing and whose parents are paying me to teach their children what schools should do. The school system is broken!</p>
<p>In some ways I believe school gave my soon such anxiety that it put him off of education and made it hard to motivate him at home but he had great comprehension so I found creative ways for him to research interests so he was reading and learning without him realising it.</p>
<p>Masked at school which lead to burnout. Struggled with non structured elements at school, lack of flexibility and sensory overwhelm and social aspects</p>
<p>My son has been offered a traineeship with someone he knows well in Cert 3 Sport and Recreation and we are in the process of trying to find a provider for delivery of the theory. My son wants to do this.</p>
<p>School was a disaster, he was so upset that teachers didn't understand his severe dyslexia, dysgraphia and SPD. It was very distressing fit us all. Gone school allowed him to learn at his ownpace and thankfully he had grown into a bright mentally together young man.</p>
<p>She learns with Lions, who have amazing tutors and socialises with the other children outside school hours.</p>
<p>The flexibility allowed her to explore topics further, for history geography art and music I could barely keep up with her education desires and interest.</p>

Total breakdown at 13yrs old due to years of school trauma due to the school environment and the transition to high school was too much. Unable to mask anymore he was shut down in his room for two years. Couldn't leave the house at all. Finally (after several attempts) diagnosed Autistic with severe sensory issues, OCD, anxiety and depression. PDA is most probable Still recovering.