

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOME SCHOOLING****INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING****Supplementary questions to BOSTES following hearing on 7 October 2014****1. Are home education bodies involved in the training of Authorised Persons?  
If so, when were they last involved?**

Home education bodies have previously been involved in the training of Authorised Persons. The last time a home education body was involved was November 2012.

**2. In the 2011 Information Package there is a section on 'Review by documentation' – a process whereby people could submit documentation for review of registration without the need for a home visit. Why was this section removed? Is this still an option and if so, in what circumstances?**

Assessment by documentation has not been a routine practice of the BOSTES since 2010. This change resulted from a risk assessment of that practice following the release of the judgment in the *Ebony* case<sup>1</sup>.

During discussions with the NSW Ombudsman in 2012, the Ombudsman was supportive of the BOSTES' practice of sighting the child for whom registration was being sought. These discussions concluded that to reduce this minimal level of oversight of the child would be unacceptable and inconsistent with BOSTES' obligations in relation to child protection legislation.

The 2013 Information Package continues to provide for consideration of an assessment by documentation on the basis of a recommendation from an Authorised Person. Part 3 of the Information Package states:

In some cases, for experienced and successful home schoolers and following a recommendation from the previous Authorised Person, the Office may consider assessing an application by documentation. Assessment by documentation will not be recommended where a home visit has not occurred in the past two years.

An example of where an assessment by documentation might be considered is where an experienced and successful home schooling family is seeking to register another child for a period that is less than two years and aligns with the registration period for other children in the family.

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<sup>1</sup> R v BW & SW (No 3) [2009]NSWSC 1043

**3. Given the current relationship between BOSTES and home schooling bodies, what strategies have been put in place to improve stakeholder engagement?**

Since August 2013, the BOSTES has:

- continued to invite the HEA to meet with the BOSTES for consultation and consideration of how HEA's concerns might be addressed
- held productive discussions with members of a home education network (Note: The members of this network met on the condition that the BOSTES did not identify or label these meetings as consultation, as to 'consult' with the BOSTES was in conflict with the explicit wishes and directives of the particular network.)
- improved access to information about home schooling on the BOSTES' website
- published additional 'Questions and Answers' on the BOSTES' website to respond to emerging issues
- acknowledged the need to ensure that each home schooling family has the opportunity to provide feedback as individual stakeholders and, for this reason, commenced planning for the BOSTES' website to have a mechanism for home schooling parents to provide feedback at any time
- planned to invite home schooling parents to provide input for the training of Authorised Persons on a regular basis
- commenced preparation of a curriculum resource to assist home schooling parents in relation to the four new BOSTES syllabuses in English, Mathematics, Science and History
- commenced planning for an updated Information Package to incorporate feedback from home schooling parents.

**4. Are home schooling families entitled to any form of financial assistance, for example, the federal distance education allowance? If so, does the BOSTES provide this information to home schooling families?**

The BOSTES does not have any responsibility for funding of schooling of any kind.

**5. We note your response to the previous supplementary question about SHEN being removed as a contact from the 2013 Information Package. Despite not wanting to endorse any particular home schooling group or network, we note that the Home Education Association was kept as a contact. Can you please clarify whether there is any other reason as to why SHEN was removed?**

There is no other reason why SHEN was removed from the 2013 Information Package beyond the reasons given in the BOSTES response to the supplementary question number 1 provided to the Committee on 3 October 2014.

As advised in that response, the HEA already provided information on its website in relation to other organisations, including SHEN.