



Cowboy tutors taint industry

By Kylie Stevens

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Research: Frontrunner Learning Centre Service director Martin Marszal (right), Teighan Anderson, 15, Kayne Papworth, 8, and Bianca Vultureanu 6. He believe be more attention to the tutoring industry. Picture: Gary Warrick

PARENTS have been warned to do some homework before enrolling their children into after school tutoring.

NSW Fair Trading and the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) has received 12 complaints and six inquiries about tutoring products and services during the past year.

Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe said it was a big concern in non-English speaking communities where there is a demand for tutoring but less inclination to make formal complaints.

Former teacher and Frontrunner Learning Centre Rooty Hill director, Martin Marszal, has been in the industry for 20 years.

He fears unqualified people are setting themselves up without knowledge of assessment, differentiating between needs, referring to other specialists or teaching.

He says such operators are giving the better services a poor reputation.

"My concern is that there's been lot of talk about fixing the industry but little done for the kids," Mr Marszal said.

"There are a lot of kids out there who need lots of help. It's communities such as St Marys and Mount Druitt where the help is needed. I've met many parents who have had bad experiences with tutors."

Mr Marszal urged parents to ask questions.

"They should ask whether the tutors are qualified and trained to teach the subjects they're specialising in," he said.

"They should also ask about the tests being used, contacts with other support services for children and individualised programs."

A face-to-face meeting with the tutors who will teach their children should also be set up.

Mr Marszal said the ATA website — ata.edu.au — was a good starting point but urged parents to delve deeper and ask questions.

Have you had bad experiences with tutors? Comment at stmarysstar.com.au.

