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Working With Children Individual State Based Criteria

In Australia education is administered and legislated, with few exceptions, by state governments. This leads to significant differences (and confusion) in standards, curricula and evaluation of students nationwide. These differences also extend further and include class names (kinder and prep, HSC and VCE and so forth) and ages that children qualify for and finish school.

This is not all bad; differences can be a good thing. Different bodies learn from each other and changes can be made according to successful strategies that are implemented elsewhere. Further regional differences can be factored into learning. However it can also lead to some very poor outcomes. One in particular is a concern for the tutoring industry -that of child protection legislation.

Below is listed what currently stands as each individual state and territories legislated requirements for those working with children in their jurisdiction. Obviously the differences outlined are not a satisfactory outcome for this extremely important and sensitive area.

State/Territory	Legal Requirements
Australian Capital Territory	Currently there are no legal requirements for people working with children to undertake a police check in the ACT. Individual organisations which require employees and/or volunteers to work with children can implement their own policies in this area.
New South Wales	The NSW Commission for Children and Young People is responsible for the <i>Working with Children Check</i> . This helps determine whether people are suitable to work in child related employment. Until July of next year there is no requirement for individual tutors to undertake their own background check.
Northern Territory	Currently there are no legal requirements for people working with children to undertake a police check in the Northern Territory. Individual organisations which require employees and/or volunteers to work with children can implement their own policies in this area. The Northern Territory Government has however released draft legislation for the creation of a screening scheme which outlines minimum standards for child-related occupations and activities.

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The ATA Ltd. will be holding its AGM on Tuesday 30th November at 10am. The venue shall be 6 College Street Croydon, NSW 2132. Details are enclosed and are also listed on the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au

Queensland	In Queensland people working or volunteering with children need to hold a <i>Blue Card</i> . The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian is responsible for administering and conducting criminal history checks on people who want to work with children to determine whether or not they are eligible to hold a <i>Blue Card</i> .
South Australia	Currently there are no legal requirements for people working with children to undertake a police check in South Australia. Individual organisations which require employees and/or volunteers to work with children can implement their own policies in this area.
Tasmania	Currently there are no legal requirements for people working with children to undertake a police check in Tasmania. Individual organisations which require employees and/or volunteers to work with children can implement their own policies in this area. In 2005 the Commissioner for Children Tasmania released a consultation paper discussing proposals for the Government to introduce screening procedures for Tasmanian organisations who want to employ people to work with children.
Victoria	In 2006 The Victorian Government introduced the <i>Working with Children Check</i> , which is compulsory for people who wish to work with or volunteer with children. Those working with children are required to hold a <i>Blue Card</i> .
Western Australia	In Western Australia a <i>Working with Children Check</i> is compulsory for people who carry out child-related work in Western Australia.

The most pressing issue from an ATA perspective is that there are States / Territories that at present require no child protection checks. This is a serious concern and should be on the national agenda. Each State and Territory needs governments put on notice to address and change this position. We (the ATA) continue to be active in this area and have been very clear that our stance does not support those States / Territories in their thinking.

In those states that do have legislation in place we often find that compliance is reviewed and changed on an almost annual basis. This can lead to confusion and can also lead to businesses and individuals inadvertently acting outside of their requirements.

By and large the ATA represents a community of small businesses. The responsibility of small business operators is to remain up to date and in compliance with any legislative requirements imposed on them. What we find is that our members are very conscious of this; however small businesses that are short of administrative capacity and operating on low margins and/or that operate in a number of different legislative areas can find constant changing, updating and reviewing difficult to manage.

The policy that some States use to impose a price or licence on individuals in this area does not seem to be the best way to encourage compliance. In an industry where there is a high participation breakdown of low income university students or part time workers, the imposition of a “fee” can discourage some participants from either working in the industry or complying with their requirements

If we are to accept that all the State / Territory laws in this area are trying to achieve the same outcome then we should also accept that the best way to achieve this outcome would be for a consistent, stable and uniform national policy. The ATA continues to lobby at both state and federal level for just such a stance.

Chris Druett
Chairman ATA

The Government Tracks Tuition Growth ANZSCO* Classification: 2492

The commonwealth government has a job classification that covers the area of tuition. However, in its definition it **only** includes art, dance, drama and music tuition and not the huge market of private tutors that undertake academic tuition that falls outside of the realm of the performing arts.

For tutors in this sector of the market **ONLY** the government states:

- Job prospects are average.
- Employment increased by 48.8% from May 2005 to May 2010. The sector employed about 36,000 people in May 2010. The average growth across all occupations was 10.9%.
- 28.3% of workers in this sector are employed full-time.
- The growth for all occupations is expected to average 1.8% per annum in the next five years but for this occupational sector is expected to be 2.9% per annum. The expected increase over 10-years is expected to be 13.3%; however growth in the short term (next 2 years) is expected to be 37.3% and over 5 years 48.8%. Therefore strong growth is predicted.
- There is a high occupational turnover rate of 17.6% per annum compared to 13.1% for all occupations.
- About 59.9% of workers have post-school qualifications These may be classified as follows:
 - 46.1% a Bachelor degree or higher
 - 9.3% have a advanced diploma or diploma
 - 4.6% have a certificate III or certificate IV
- Females make up 67.3% of the workers in the sector (45.6% for all occupations).
- The average age of workers is 38 years and 39.0 of workers are aged 45-years and above (compared to 38.5% for all occupations).
- The average weekly full-time earnings are \$1,400 (compared to \$1,000 for all occupations). These full time earnings are considered 'high' falling in the ninth decile (2nd highest).
- Average weekly hours are 45.8 hours per week (compared to 41.3 for all occupations).
- The internet vacancy level for tutors in this sector is classified as 'very low'.

The key skills and attributes for private tutors are:

- Instruction – teaching someone how to do something
- Speaking – Talking to others to convey information effectively
- Active listening – Giving full attention to what people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

- Learning strategies – Selecting and using training/ instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning and teaching new things
- Social perceptiveness – Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- Monitoring – Monitoring/assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organisations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- Coordination – Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- Time management – Managing ones' own time and the time of others.
- Service orientation – Actively looking for ways to help people.
- Critical thinking – using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

by Mohan Dhall

*ANZSCO: Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations;
Source: www.joboutlook.gov.au

An analysis of the government's definition of private tuition and growth forecasts

The Commonwealth government has a Jobs Outlook website that classifies and tracks trends in a wide range of occupations. Amongst the occupations listed is a classification called "Private tutors and teachers".

The definition provided under this classification is:

"Private Tutors and Teachers teach students in the practice, theory and performance of subjects, such as art, dance, drama and music, in private training establishments".

Source: <http://joboutlook.gov.au/pages/occupation.aspx?search=industry&industry=P&code=2492>

This is a remarkably narrow definition and marginalises the huge number of tutors who work in the field of education. Such tutors work to support students in their mainstream education by providing support, guidance and insight into how they learn and how they can best study. The ATA estimates that the number of academic tutors far surpasses the number of art, dance, drama and music tutors possibly by a ratio of 2:1.

World News:

The Tuition Industry in Singapore and a Call for Regulation

In early September 2010 there was a call for regulation in Singapore following the revelation that private tuition was booming but that the industry there was subject to no real accountability or standards. This call for regulation has increased with parents reporting that the lack of regulation meant that parents were not protected from the shonky tuition providers.

The key issues in Singapore include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Whilst the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore will register business that have a fixed site they do not do regular inspections or really get involved much with the sector.
- Consumers in Singapore are very reticent when it comes to complaining about shoddy service levels. Rather than approach consumer protection bodies they simply change tutors. This allows huge numbers of providers to keep attracting students whilst no penalty or accountability is called for.
- The market in Singapore is worth in the order of \$850 million SGD making it per capita worth about 5 times the value of the Australian market. Many of the service providers are earning huge incomes but very few benchmark any standards or accountability. Commercial returns have completely subverted educational accountability. Tutors have a right to earn an income and make a decent living. However, normally consumers accept that high returns would be associated with quality and accountability and disclosure.
- The growth of agencies is huge issue with no regulation covering the matching of tutor to a child on-line or by telephone.
- There are no child protection laws/ standards which are applied in the nation State.
- Tutors have no inclination to work with mainstream schooling and indeed may be actively undermining the formal educational sector.
- There is no system for assessing the veracity of claims in regards to purported success rates and claims made by tuition businesses.
- There is no assessment made of the qualifications or experience of tutors.

It could be expected that an industry would not take it upon itself to initiate setting standards or articulating consumer protection concerns unless required to by government or unless the consumer market voices complaints. In the context of the Singapore market to take such a lazy and inactive approach is tantamount to slapping consumers in the face whilst taking their money.

Twice now, at the request of businesses in Singapore I have travelled there at personal cost to assist with the formation of an association or other representative body that can benchmark minimum standards and assist in ameliorating consumer protection issues/concerns. On each occasion there has been a verbal commitment made to starting something but the impetus is quickly lost despite enthusiasm initially. Of course the day-to-day earning of income and profits comes in the way of real commitment to any standards. This is a pity as a short-term self-interested approach also role models and educates children.

Singapore has a world class educational system and its tuition sector could lead the world in both accountability and in working with the formal sector. But the greed and self interest should give way to a greater respect for consumers – parents and children.

by Mohan Dhall

Massive Growth in Tuition in USA

In the State of Michigan, USA there comes a report that students in Years k-12 enrolled in summer tuition courses s record levels.

The question raised by journalist Melissa Preddy is whether the rise in private tuition comes on account of the fall in school budgets combined with a need to meet the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In Michigan there are list of government approved 'supplemental-service' providers. Indeed, in that State alone 105 providers are listed as registered with the Michigan Department of Education.

The hourly rates charged by such providers ranges from US\$1 – US\$100. \$1 is the offer from an actual school of which there are 2 listed but of the private providers the lowest rate is US\$30 per hour and the average cost is US\$40-US\$60 per hour.

Queensland Warns On Computer Based Tuition

Children are very computer savvy these days and familiar with online learning from a young age. This is one reason why the idea of computer-based tutoring programs can be very appealing to busy parents. While there are many reputable computer-based and online learning packages on the market, parents should be cautious when deciding to purchase a program for their children.

Things to look out for:

Systems compatibility

You should always ensure that any computer-based or online program can be run on your computer. Things such as the age of your computer, the speed of your internet connection and system requirements may all affect your child's ability to use the program.

Education content

School curriculums are set by each state or territory, and are not standard across Australia. You should ensure that any computer-based or online program you are considering is suited to your child's curriculum.

Additional support

You should check whether technical and educational support is provided with the package, and if so, how it is provided. While some packages offer online or telephone support, these rely on the student taking the initiative and are often run by people with little or no knowledge of your child's curriculum. Packages that offer face-to-face tutoring or support generally have the best outcomes for students.

Costs

There are a number of products available on the market at a wide range of prices.

Ensure you do your research about what's available at what price, and don't succumb to high-pressure sales tactics.

Some businesses will offer finance to parents who indicate they can't afford to purchase a product outright. There are a number of things you should be wary of in relation to a finance deal:

- Total cost – how much extra will it cost you to use finance, including interest, fees and charges?
- Penalties – what costs, if any, are involved if you pay your loan out early or if you miss a payment?

If you agree to purchase a product from a door-to-door salesman, know your rights. In Queensland you have a ten day cooling off period for products over \$75. You should not pay any money during that time. If you change your mind about the purchase during the cooling off period you can cancel your contract in writing.

If you have any problems with door-to-door traders and you can't resolve them with the company, you should call the Office of Fair Trading on 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or contact us online.

Source: <http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/computer-based-tutoring.htm>; 13th September 2010

The New York Times Debate *Why More Students Rely on Tutoring* by Mohan Dhall

For those interested, the New York Times recently had a series of articles about tuition. These articles were mainly written by educational academics. The link provided below will take readers to a series of 6 articles about tuition and its impact on education:

- Hard Classes, Extra Help, by Paul Siemens
- The Japanese Model, by Thomas Judson
- Deficiencies in Public Schools, by Sandra Stotsky
- Responding to a Testing Culture, by Jack Hassard
- A Question of Values, by Thomas Hatch
- We Need New Teaching Methods, by Jennifer Salls
- Get Rid of Calculators, by Charles Ormsby

The link may be found at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/09/26/why-more-students-rely-on-tutors/get-rid-of-calculators>

This article is being used for a new parenting website called **My School Kids**. It will be launched at the end of this term. The following article will be available to parents who access the site.

When Your Child Needs A Tutor

At a glance

Discuss your child's education with their teacher first
Tutors need to add confidence and work in partnership with the school
Tutors should be warm, empathetic and subject matter experts
Tutors should build confidence in your child to trust their own skills
Exercise caution if you are asked to sign contracts with a tutor

Body

Private tutoring to give kids a helping hand in their schooling is a growing business. However, it's also an area where parents can be vulnerable to bogus offers and misleading advertising. If you're considering using a tutor, find out how to get the best service for you and your child.

It's important to know that the job of a school is to ensure your child's educational needs are met in line with the curriculum. Teachers in public schools are university educated and use effective teaching and learning techniques. If you have concerns about your child's education, you should discuss it with your child's teacher, year adviser or principal.

Qualities of a good tutor

Mohan Dhall, chief executive officer of the **Australian Tutoring Association**, says the right tutor can complement school education when "they instil confidence in the student and work in partnership with schools".

Mohan says parents "should first think whether their child would benefit from tuition. After all, a well structured home environment may provide the best framework for parents to help children themselves".

However, if you have identified an area or areas that could benefit from extra academic attention then you need to be clear about what you want the tuition to achieve, Mohan says.

"They should also see how the tuition can work best with the child's school to achieve the best outcomes for the child."

Tutors should be effective communicators, warm and empathetic, and open, honest and accountable, Mohan says. They will be subject matter experts who can break down complex concepts and build understanding through standard teaching processes. Their aim is to help kids build confidence in their skills to help themselves.

What to ask a potential tutor:

- How long has the tutoring service been in business?
- Does the service belong to a relevant industry association with an enforceable code of conduct?
- Does the tutor have references from other parents who have used the service?
- Have the tutors been interviewed face-to-face by the tutoring service?
- What qualifications and experience does the tutor have?
- What training does the tutor have in the subject area being tutored?
- Is the tutor equipped to give correct support in NSW education course requirements?
- Have reference checks been conducted on the tutor?
- Has the tutor undergone relevant child protection screenings?

What to watch out for in tutors

Unfortunately, not all tutors have positive traits. The NSW Office of Fair Trading has been contacted by many families who have complaints about tutoring services related to refunds, cancellations, fees and unsatisfactory service.

In hiring a tutor, *NSW Fair Trading* advises parents to:

- exercise caution with overseas or interstate institutions promoting their services on the internet
- read any contracts carefully before signing
- be aware of any cancellation conditions

It also cautions parents to ask how guarantees of success can be proved and to be careful of companies that rely on web-based communication and don't offer telephone numbers or office locations.

Parents who are experiencing problems with tutoring services can contact *NSW Fair Trading* on 13 32 20.

The *Australian Tutoring Association* has 6,000 registered tutors nationally who abide by a *Code of Conduct*. You can contact the association on 02 9704 5724.

Fact sheets are available in **Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean and Vietnamese**.

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*For all information including pricing, cinema locations and voucher terms and conditions please visit www.ata.edu.au.

Study by IBISWorld into the US Tuition Market

Whilst the May 2010 report included driving schools, the survey revealed that exclusive of driving schools there are 99,000 tuition businesses in USA and that the industry there is worth US\$6.5billion. Inclusive of driving schools their 2009 report suggested the industry was worth US\$8.71billion and that there were 106,947 establishments offering tuition services.

More than half of all of the firms were focused on examination preparation and tutoring (that is, academic tuition to supplement mainstream education).

References: "Private tutoring firms fill gaps left by school budgets" Melissa Preddy, 04.05.2010 <http://businessjournalsim.org> and <http://www.ibisworld.com/industry/default.aspx?indid=1544>

ATA Board Meetings – 2011 Plan

The ATA Board meets face to face four times per year and in 2011 will have monthly teleconferences.

Members are welcome to contribute items for the Board to discuss through contacting one of the Board members or emailing the ATA. Members are invited to contribute to the newsletter, which is published quarterly. The ATA Newsletter is distributed in hard copy form to all members and is also available on the ATA website for download.

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ATA Updates

The ATA Board has received a favourable response from parent groups in regards to its letter introducing members. We have been invited to write an article for one newsletter which will be distributed to over 2,000 primary schools.

All members are reminded to have the Code of Conduct on display and to always abide by the requirements of the ATA Code. This distinguishes ATA members from other tuition providers. The Code is reviewed annually.

Within Tuition Editor

Mohan Dhall
Email mdhall@ata.edu.au
Phone 02 9704 5724
Mobile 0408 619 714

Contacting Us

For contributions and comments please email the ATA mdhall@ata.edu.au or mlopez@ata.edu.au

Alternatively, mail us at:

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.
PO Box 256, Croydon NSW 2132
Phone 02 9704 5724 or Mobile 0408 619 714
Fax 02 9744 0519

