

Coordinators Report for 2010 AGM of the National Council of Home Educators NZ

Welcome to the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Home Educators NZ. Your participation this afternoon demonstrates your recognition that NCHENZ has an important role to play in protecting the freedoms to home educate that we still enjoy in this country.

This past year has seen several issues arising which relate to home education in New Zealand. The change in ERO guidelines which reduced home schooling reviews to only 35 a year, and predominantly as a response to complaints lodged, has seen a tightening up by MOE in the exemption application process, particularly in Auckland. Collaboration between MOE and the Correspondence School saw homeschooled students accessing the more than 2 subjects under the Young Adult category for registration at TCS having their supervisory allowances discontinued. Proposed regulations covering new work requirements for DPB recipients have the potential to affect single parent home educators very severely. In addition, proposed changes to the entry requirements for tertiary courses could make it more difficult for all homeschooled students who wish to access tertiary education. All these issues highlight the need for a strong voice for homeschoolers so that government department and officials are made aware of the viability and success of home education and how these changes may affect homeschooled students.

On a brighter note, a recent meeting with the ERO was a great success. Home education participants included representatives from Auckland Home Educators, Christian Home Education Families (South Island) and the Home Education Foundation. The enthusiasm and support for home education expressed by Jenny Clark and Rob Williamson is extremely encouraging. This event was also a good exercise for NCHENZ in liaison with affiliated groups. A detailed report of this meeting will be available to members very soon.

This past year has seen an improvement in the running of the NCHENZ committee with regular monthly meetings, and consequently a more efficient organisation. My thanks to the committee members for their practical commitment to NCHENZ which ensured that the organisation continued to function. A special tribute is due to Tarnya for her continued dedication to maintaining the website whilst dealing with the illness of her husband David and then his recent passing. Our thoughts and prayers continue with her and her children.

To be truly effective NCHENZ needs to have a louder and more effective voice in the community

and with government departments. To achieve this requires an increase in membership and financial support. It also needs more members to be involved in promoting NCHENZ, and also in supporting the committee in the work they do. One of the items to be discussed at this AGM is proposed changes to the constitution in order to regain charity status. Any change made to the constitution is a serious matter, so I encourage members to carefully consider the points to be raised on both side of this issue.

The objectives of NCHENZ are to encourage, promote, inform and advance the cause of home education in New Zealand. I encourage you as members to be involved in the achievement of these objectives in whatever way you are able . Every small effort adds to the whole, and is an important contribution to that which we all desire to see, the continuation of our freedom to home educate, for our children and in the future for our grandchildren.

Penny Bilton