

Slow Italian, Fast Learning

Ep.380: Inside the growing cohort of Queensland parents who never planned to homeschool

Italian	English
<p>Ex insegnante di scuola elementare, Clarissa Valentine non aveva mai pensato di istruire i suoi due gemelli di 12 anni in casa con l'homeschooling.</p> <p>"Over Covid, a lot of things that were habitual and just part of life changed because we were locked down, and there were a lot of things that I then had never questioned that I started to question. And I am a primary school teacher, I love rules and boxes, and you do this and that. And then everything was kind of stripped back."</p> <p>Ma i lockdown di Melbourne e gli obblighi di vaccinazione durante l'apice della pandemia COVID l'hanno spinta a cambiare stile di vita e a trasferirsi sulla Sunshine Coast.</p> <p>"And I think moving here, starting again, with that mindset, I thought okay now's the time to, let's create an intentional life, and these are the things I'm going to put in that life. Nothing is perfect, and the education system is not perfect, but I think taking yourself out of it allows you to step back a little bit. Doing that caused me to see it wasn't ideal and I could do it differently."</p> <p>Quella di Clarissa è tra le migliaia di famiglie in tutto il Paese che sono passate all'homeschooling dall'inizio della pandemia – con circa 45.000 bambini registrati in tutta Australia.</p> <p>Ma il Queensland, in particolare, ha registrato il picco più alto, una tendenza che è continuata anni dopo le chiusure per la pandemia.</p>	<p>A former primary school teacher, Clarissa Valentine never planned to home-school her twin 12-year-old boys.</p> <p>"Over Covid, a lot of things that were habitual and just part of life changed because we were locked down, and there were a lot of things that I then had never questioned that I started to question. And I am a primary school teacher, I love rules and boxes, and you do this and that. And then everything was kind of stripped back."</p> <p>But Melbourne's lockdowns and vaccine mandates during the height of the COVID pandemic, prompted a lifestyle change, and a move to the Sunshine Coast.</p> <p>"And I think moving here, starting again, with that mindset, I thought okay now's the time to, let's create an intentional life, and these are the things I'm going to put in that life. Nothing is perfect, and the education system is not perfect, but I think taking yourself out of it allows you to step back a little bit. Doing that caused me to see it wasn't ideal and I could do it differently."</p> <p>Clarissa is among thousands of families across the country who transitioned to homeschooling from the onset of the pandemic - some 45,000 children registered for homeschooling in Australia.</p> <p>But Queensland in particular saw the highest spike in numbers, a trend that has continued years after the pandemic lockdowns.</p>

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Il Dipartimento dell'Istruzione del Queensland riporta un aumento del 163% dell'homeschooling tra il 2020 e il 2024, portando il numero più recente di studenti homeschooling nel Queensland a più di 11.000.

La dott.ssa Rebecca English, Senior Lecturer di Education presso la Queensland University of Technology, ha affermato che le ragioni del deciso aumento del Queensland non sono chiare.

"I'm not really sure why it's Queensland, but Queensland has a long history of quite a fractious relationship with state schooling. And that data seemed to suggest the same things we keep seeing in research that parents feel that the school is not the appropriate environment for that young person. I think when you look at the Brisbane area and the Sunshine Coast area and you look at other elements of maybe not going along with mainstream higher rates of non vaccination in around Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. So maybe it's correlated with that."

Ma molti genitori come Clarissa dicono che sono incoraggiati a fare questo passo grazie a una vivace comunità di homeschooling.

"I think that once the community starts to grow a little, then other people get more confidence to join that community. If you were at home homeschooling and you didn't really know anyone, it can be really isolating. And I think that would be really hard for the parent and for the children. But if you've got other groups of people that are homeschooling, there are park, there are so many things on the Sunshine Coast in particular that you could participate in that you could be busy all day every day."

Queensland's Department of Education reports a 163% increase in homeschooling from 2020 to 2024, bringing the most recently updated number of homeschooling students in Queensland to more than 11,000.

Dr Rebecca English, Senior Lecturer in Education at Queensland's University of Technology, says the reasons for Queensland's dramatic uptick are unclear.

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But many parents, like Sunshine Coast-based Clarissa, say parents are encouraged to make the switch thanks to a vibrant homeschooling community.

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Questo metodo è un qualcosa che i genitori trovano utile, quando la scelta di studiare a casa è tipicamente non pianificata.

Secondo la dottoressa English, circa l'85% degli studenti che vengono istruiti tramite l'homeschooling è costituito da chi rifiuta la scuola o da chi ha scoperto che la scuola tradizionale non funziona per il proprio figlio, mentre il restante 15% è ideologicamente contrario.

"So often there is a strong correlation between the choice of homeschooling and school can't or school refusal in Australia... and I think that's something we really need to look at, how can we better meet the needs of particularly neurodiverse children in our classrooms."

Dopo un anno di tentativi con la scuola tradizionale, Danika e Joel, residenti sulla Sunshine Coast, sono ricorsi all'homeschooling per il figlio Ben, di otto anni, dopo che il suo rifiuto della scuola e la sua ansia avevano raggiunto un punto critico.

"He was four, turning five the year that he started prep. And for him to come home in tears saying school's not for me, just him being able to communicate and articulate, that was quite overwhelming for us as parents. We thought what's happening in the school grounds that's making him feel this way? But there was no particular incidents. He just didn't feel safe and secure mentally. And he was just this little 5 year old boy whose heart had been broken, spark had been put out... and it was not the school's fault, it was just the sheer volume of everything on such a little human being."

Nel Queensland, i genitori che insegnano a casa non sono obbligati a rispettare il programma di studi australiano.

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Something parents find helpful, when the choice to home-school is typically unplanned.

Dr English says around 85% of homeschooling students are school refusers, or those who found mainstream schooling didn't work for their child - while the other 15% are ideologically opposed.

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After a year of trying mainstream schooling, Sunshine Coast residents Danika and Joel resorted to homeschooling their eight-year-old son Ben two years ago, after his school refusal and anxiety reached a tipping point.

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In Queensland, parents who home-school do



<p>Il precedente governo statale aveva cercato di imporlo, scatenando una campagna contro il programma.</p> <p>La campagna Free2Homeschool ha raccolto più di 21.000 firme e più di 2.000 contributi che si oppongono ai tentativi del precedente governo del Queensland di imporre il programma di studi australiano a chi studia a casa.</p> <p>Patricia Fitzgerald, di Brisbane, è la responsabile della campagna.</p> <p>"The freedom that we have now is a lot of why we choose homeschooling. So if we're going to take that away, our children may as well be in school. We put up a campaign to make sure that the government heard what we needed and understood us. So a lot of it was around educating them so that we could show that that level of restriction on us was not going to help educate our children."</p> <p>L'attuale governo del Queensland ha presentato nel marzo 2025 una nuova legislazione, ancora in fase di revisione, che ha eliminato tutte le riforme sull'homeschooling osteggiate dalle parti interessate.</p> <p>Il ministro dell'Istruzione del Queensland, John-Paul Langbroek, ha dichiarato a SBS che i genitori hanno il diritto di scegliere il tipo di istruzione più adatto alla loro famiglia, ma la sicurezza deve sempre essere una priorità, aggiungendo che il governo sta lavorando per attuare tutte le raccomandazioni accettate da una revisione indipendente sull'istruzione domestica.</p> <p>Una revisione indipendente del 2024, condotta dalla Commissione per la famiglia e l'infanzia del Queensland, ha anche chiesto</p>	<p>not have to adhere to the Australian curriculum.</p> <p>The previous state government had sought to enforce it, sparking a campaign against the more.</p> <p>The Free2Homeschool campaign gathered more than 21,000 signatures and more than 2000 submissions opposing the former Queensland government's attempts to enforce the Australian curriculum on home-schoolers.</p> <p>Brisbane-based Patricia Fitzgerald is Campaign Manager.</p> <p>"The freedom that we have now is a lot of why we choose homeschooling. So if we're going to take that away, our children may as well be in school. We put up a campaign to make sure that the government heard what we needed and understood us. So a lot of it was around educating them so that we could show that that level of restriction on us was not going to help educate our children."</p> <p>The current Queensland government tabled new legislation in March 2025, still under review, which removed all the homeschooling reforms opposed to by stakeholders.</p> <p>Queensland's Education Minister John-Paul Langbroek told SBS it's a parent's right to choose the type of education that suits their family, but safety must always be a priority - adding the government are working to implement all accepted recommendations of an independent review into home schooling.</p>
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una migliore condivisione delle informazioni tra i dipartimenti governativi per garantire la sicurezza dei bambini.

In un campione casuale di 500 studenti istruiti a casa, è emerso che tra l'agosto 2021 e l'agosto 2023 35 bambini sono stati considerati come viventi in un ambiente domestico ad alto rischio.

Il commissario Luke Twyford afferma che è necessaria una maggiore visibilità dei bambini registrati nel sistema di istruzione domiciliare.

"So our review was very careful to try and not suggest that it is homeschooling parents that are at risk. That's absolutely not the case. What we are mostly concerned about is that the registration system in homeschooling isn't always picking up risk factors that other government departments are identifying."

Gli esperti sottolineano che le esigenze del bambino devono essere sempre al primo posto.

"And we need to be responsive to that young person as well. So if they say, Mum, Dad, I really want to go back to school, or I really want to try school, then maybe we need to really look at the reasons for that young person saying they'd like to go to school."

Questo pur riconoscendo l'importanza dell'apprendimento alternativo per i bambini come Ben.

"Like normal school, I made it up to grade one and it was a bit hard for me. Some of the questions were a bit hard for me, but with homeschooling you get sold so many things at your own pace. I am able to solve some pretty complex math questions now and I took my time."

A separate 2024 review by the Queensland Family and Child Commission also called for better information-sharing between government departments to ensure child safety.

In a random sample of 500 home-schooled students, it found 35 children were considered to be living in a high risk home environment between August 2021 and August 2023.

Commissioner Luke Twyford says there needs to be greater visibility of children registered in the home education system.

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Experts stressing the needs of the child must always come first

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While still acknowledging the importance of alternative learning, for children like Ben.

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Report by Catriona Stirrat for SBS News.

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