



Counselling & Mediation Services

# DO I HAVE TO DO MY HSC ACTUALLY NO!

Once upon a time you could leave school when you were 15. In most cases however, students completed their School Certificate, Year 10 (4th form if you want to go further back in time) before leaving school.

Many then went on to do further studies, others undertook an apprenticeship and some begun working, successfully.

In May 2009 the NSW Parliament passed a law to increase the school leaving age from 15 to 17 years of age and this came into effect from 1 January 2010.

Somewhere down the track the message seems to be growing that you have to stay at school to do your HSC to have any chance in life.

***This is actually not the case or the law that was passed and in effect.***

In fact if you look further into the laws that are effective as of 1 January 2010, you can still leave school after completing Year 10. For young people who have completed Year 10 but have not reached 17 years of age, they are required to do one of the following on a full time basis:

- enrol in a secondary school;
- enrol in a training course at TAFE NSW;
- undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship;
- enrol in a training course with another a proved training organisation;

- undertake employment: or
- undertake some combination of education or training and employment.

The notion that you must complete the HSC because it is the law and/or to have any chance in life is simply not correct.

## Students still have a choice!

The HSC is not suited for everyone. We are not all 'wired' the same, in fact we are all born unique. Unique DNA, unique personalities, gifts and talents. Too often we are perhaps labelled or pushed under collective banners, acronyms, curriculum etc and this can be soul destroying which is so unnecessary.



Everyone has something to give, a gift or talent, and this does not necessarily come as a result of the HSC. In fact within my Professional Counselling Practice

I am hearing that students are told / strongly advised and then seemingly forced by a system, society, peer pressure, unrealistic expectation or misunderstanding of the law - that unless you complete your HSC, you have little chance in life.

This is in fact **NOT TRUE** or the law and depriving of legitimate choice.

There are students who receive their HSC results to discover they are not eligible for the university course they wanted / require / were expected to achieve.

Too often this results in loss of faith, self-esteem and confidence. This is not something desired or even necessary at such a tender age.

There are numerous career paths that do not require the HSC as a studying component. In fact students have a choice and can pursue a career path through alternative means.



In numerous industry fields you are able to legally and legitimately leave school in Year 10, proceed into full-time study; e.g. at the Certificate level and then further your studies to a Diploma qualification. This can be achieved over a 2 year period, in most cases.

At the end of your study you have a higher qualification than the HSC. Better still, this is often achieved studying what you are currently 'wired' for, your passion, gifts, talents, hopes and dreams.

A Diploma qualification is a legitimate pathway into university should you wish to pursue your studies further.

Sometimes our children are not ready to study to the level required for the HSC at the time the 'system' decides. This can come later and there is nothing wrong with that. It is a simple fact that we all develop at different times, because we are all unique.

Thousands have pursued successful lives without the HSC.

Please remember that you do have a choice. The HSC is not for everyone!

Leaving school and choosing a career path can be a challenge, but with correct information, freedom of choice and perhaps independent professional guidance it can be an exciting and beautiful experience and not one of pressure.

It is also ok to change our minds throughout our lives and have more than one career path. Sometimes it can take a few experiences to find what we are 'truly' wired for.

## Josephine Byrnes-Luna

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Nationally Accredited Mediator (NMAS)

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