

Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025

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Submission Re: Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025 - Age increase for home education registration

As a home educating parent who has had a child affected by the current age restrictions for home education registration, I am thrilled that the government is addressing that for future students. Not being able to be registered for home education during year 12 disadvantages students such as by cutting off opportunities to participate in Head Start courses at uni and not being eligible for the Textbook and Resources Allowance.

Increasing the age limit to 18 will be sufficient for most students. However, there are cases where an additional year would be appropriate and advised.

I have a friend whose youngest son has a genetic disorder that results in learning difficulties and delays in social and emotional development. My friend and her husband work hard with their son and engage several therapists and specialists to enhance his development academically and socially. Because his birthday is on 30 December, under the proposed changes he would only be able to be registered until he was 18 years and 1 day old. However, other children who might also have started prep at age 4 ½, but whose birthdays fall in early July, would have the benefit of an additional 6 months of maturity before having to deregister. The current proposal disadvantages children who, by the fate of their birthdays, are denied some extra months of learning and maturity before moving on to further study or work.

As such, I would like to propose that the age limit for home education registration be increased. This could be as simple as changing the age to 19 in s206 (b) and s229A(1), allowing anyone who believed their child could benefit from an additional period of home schooling to register them for an extra year or portion of a year. Or, if the government was concerned that this may be overused (I very much doubt it!), the wording could be such that states an additional year is available for those who can support their claim for the benefits of an extra year. This could be such as having notified the HEU previously of issues such as disability, learning difficulties, neurodivergence, and/or physical or mental health issues.

Another option to consider is the wording of the regulations in NSW. They allow for children to be registered up to the age of 18 “and for a continued period, up to 2 years, in order to complete the planned educational program”. (See <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/home-schooling/registration-guidelines/requirements-for-registration>.)

In summary, I support the increase in age for home education registration but request that it be increased universally to age 19 or worded such that only students who would benefit from the extra year can access registration beyond age 18.