

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: Fran Graham
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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Proposed changes to the Education Act regarding homeschooling
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To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to raise my concerns about the current changes to the Education Act that are about to be tabled.

I am a home educating parent of two children. Both of my children have diagnoses of neurodiversity and learning disabilities. Learning in a large classroom with one teacher was impossible. What they needed was being able to have the curriculum presented in a way that they could understand, using their unique learning style. They needed, and should have had, the right to feel safe, and heard, at school. These changes will limit the ability we have to provide a high quality education, by making every child fit into the same box. These changes, if passed, will impact my family considerably.

I am fundamentally opposed to changes that will force us to follow the Australian curriculum. ACARA aligned resources, methods and expectations are written for qualified teachers, who teach a large number of students at one time. If we can just ask parents to drop everything and teach to the ACARA documents, why do we spend 4 years undergraduate or 2 years postgraduate teaching them how to teach to ACARA? Will those with complex disabilities/health issues and/or learning disabilities be expected to conform at the same level as their peer groups and the curriculum set for that year level? Many are not able to keep up and many will struggle significantly not being able to. Parents are doing everything we can to ensure a high quality education (that has already been approved by the Home Education Unit) that is adapted to suit the learning styles of our children. Forcing our families to adhere to something that we already know doesn't work will cause more burden upon us. By home educating my children, I am able to access programs and resources that are specifically designed for their learning styles and requirements. This personalised approach to learning not only engages them academically, but also fosters the development of real life skills that are essential for success. Senior subject syllabus documents which are identified in the Act are driven towards students sitting standardised testing in the senior phase of learning. If homeschooling families aren't sitting standardized testing, they would be incapable because they cannot have their teaching plans approved by ACARA in any event. What will these rules mean for the neurodiverse community? Many homeschooling students have accessed 'TAFE at home' or early access to university.

Changes regarding reporting. Currently we are required to report on three different areas. While I agree parents should be providing a report, can the department handle the volume of reports on 8 subject's from the over 10,000 parents currently registered? This seems like an enormous amount of work. I am highly concerned that the removal of control over the reporting and plans from HEU is a move that is not in the best interests of the children. How will the wording change of 'progress' to 'academic progress' affect parents? We are not trained in writing reports with educational language. We are highly capable of writing quality reports on the progress of our children, however. Is this change setting us parents up to fail? How much will this increase the costs for the department? Will more staff need to be hired?

Another concern is that it states that home educating parents are to demonstrate that homeschooling is in the best interest of the child. This requirement is unlikely to be part of the parent's requirements when they enroll their child in a private school. Who will be determining what this will entail? Given that parents are experts on their own child, will this be a removal of parental rights? The interpretation of this is very broad, and could mean anything.

I am also deeply concerned about the removal of the home schooling certificate. This is used for government purposes such as Centrelink access, exemptions for work, court purposes. What will

happen if this is removed? Also, this breaches privacy as all conditions of registration will be listed, thus- Centrelink will be able to view any conditions and may be able only grant temporary exemption due to this.

It is traumatic seeing the adults in your life not believing in you, and not understanding your neurodiversity. It is traumatic getting in trouble for being yourself and not feeling safe at school. It is traumatic when schools believe you are intentionally being naughty. It is traumatic not being able to keep up with the rest of your peers.

Children with disabilities often face significant challenges in traditional school settings, where rigid structures and standardised approaches do not accommodate their diverse needs. Homeschooling provides a lifeline for these children, offering the flexibility and personalised support they require to learn and grow in a safe and nurturing way. Rather than limiting the options available to families, we should be working to ensure that all children have access to a range of educational opportunities that meet their individual needs and preferences. This includes advocating for greater resources and support for inclusive education.

If these proposed changes come into play, it will impact both of my children significantly. Due to serious health issues, learning disabilities and neurodiversity, they cannot keep up with the current ACARA guidelines for their grade level. Our children try so very hard. We parents try so very hard. Often our last resort is to leave school, due to a lack of understanding and education around autism and adhd. As parents, we forego a wage, and superannuation. We don't make these decisions lightly. I ask you to consider if these changes are the best interest of our children, and to speak with the homeschooling community.

I will finish with these words;

Sir Richard Branson dropped out of school at 15, with a diagnosis of dyslexia. He has spoken of how he would sit at the back of the classroom, doing his own thing, as he couldn't make sense of the lessons. Sir Branson talks about dyslexia being associated with high levels of creativity and problem solving skills. Skills which he feels are going to be urgently needed in our future. He also states that today, he would still be considered a failure by the education system that defines success purely in academic terms. Can you imagine if he was still in that box, that 'one size fits all' approach that is the education system? I love this quote from him, 'Let them have the University of Life by being out there learning from doing things.'

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards,

Fran Graham

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