

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Committee regarding proposed changes to education legislation
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To whom it may concern

I am a Queensland resident and homeschool mum to 2 children aged 7 and 8. I write to voice my objection to the proposed legislation changes that will force homeschooled children to follow the Australian Curriculum. I also have a number of questions about the proposed legislation that I hope the committee will examine in the course of its investigation.

I'd like to start by telling you my story. As a child I was homeschooled for over 5 years including my senior years of high school. As a gifted child with undiagnosed ADHD, working to the curriculum at school was an absolute nightmare, not just for me but also for my parents and teachers who had to deal with my constant boredom, disengagement, disruption and often destructive behaviours. The years that I was homeschooled my mental health was vastly improved – I was able to work at my own pace and structure my learning around topics of interest. I never followed the Australian Curriculum. At age 18 I entered university with GED and SAT test scores which were high enough for me to be offered several scholarships in the USA. Five years later I graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Science majoring in Genetics, with First Class Honours and a GPA of 6.5. I was on the Dean's List for High Achievement every year I was at University. Had I been forced to follow a curriculum while homeschooling I would never have been able to re-engage with my education and follow my lifelong dream to become a scientist - in fact I doubt I would have entered university at all.

Fast forward 20 years – I now have 2 children with high level support needs including ASD 2, ADHD, PTSD, Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Dysgraphia. When they attended school in 2022 for Prep and Grade 1 they were absolutely unable to keep up with the Australian Curriculum (despite extensive 'reasonable adjustments', support plans and one on one support) and were falling rapidly behind. They were reported to be performing below grade level in reading, writing, HASS and maths. **Which is to say that even qualified and experienced teachers were unable to successfully teach my children the Australian Curriculum.**

Since we started homeschooling, my children have thrived. Their individualised education plans are structured around interest and project based learning which allows them to focus deeply on a topic of interest - a learning style which is very common in neurodiverse children and which is absolutely at odds with the methodology that underpins the Australian Curriculum. This approach has not only reignited my children's love of learning but has advanced their education far beyond what they would be exposed to if forced to follow the curriculum. My 7 year old has just started pre-algebra and can calculate $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{5}{6}$ in his head (can you?). My 8 year old has started his own small business and balances his income and expenses using formulas in spreadsheets. Both children now read several years

above their grade level, understand the responsibilities of Australia's different levels of government and can give a detailed account of the Roman invasion of Britain. Most importantly my children are now happy, flexible learners who are deeply engaged in their own education.

In addition to the curriculum being a completely unsuitable learning framework for many children it is also unrealistic to expect that parents are able to utilise it in a high quality way. In a previous job I delivered professional development training for the digital technologies, maths and science curriculums and I can tell you that many teachers find it difficult to interpret the curriculum and scope and sequence documents. However teachers can access a range of professional development opportunities and supports to assist them in using these documents. **Will training opportunities and support now be made available to parents if we are required to teach the curriculum?**

Additionally **I would like to know what assistance will be provided to children like mine whose disabilities mean that they require substantial support to work within the Australian Curriculum?** If my children were at school, the Education Department would be receiving thousands of dollars a year for reasonable adjustments to allow the curriculum to be taught to my children. I will also need substantial support to teach it to them– will this be provided?

I am also very curious how the Home Education Unit is going to cope with the hugely increased administrative demand created by this legislation. The Unit is already completely overwhelmed with the steadily increasing number of reports and plans it is required to process – to put it into context HEU is currently harder to contact than Centrelink (I invite you to try calling them as a member of the public). I hope that this committee will be looking very closely at their capacity under the proposed reporting and planning changes. If increased resourcing is required, will it be taken from the already struggling Education budget? If their capacity is not increased, **how will HEU manage to maintain compliance at a level that ensures that students are actually receiving “high quality education” given that reporting requirements will almost double?**

Finally, I have seen statements from the Education Minister indicating that the homeschooling community has been consulted and is in support of the proposed changes. I hope that this committee will be looking very closely at this apparent consultation and support and questioning whether our community is in fact being given a voice in this process. There are thousands of us who are going to be impacted by these changes. I invite you to come to our homeschool groups and meet us. I invite you to come to my home and meet my children and hear about what they are learning and what has worked and what has not worked. I invite you to review the evidence that shows that homeschooled children in Australia are currently *ahead* of their peers both academically and socially. And I ask you to invite us to the table, so that we can have a voice in this decision that will impact us and our children profoundly.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards

Danika Tager

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