

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: My concerns regarding proposed changes to Home Education regulations
Date: Monday, 11 March 2024 4:05:22 PM

Dear Committee members,

As a home educating parent of some six years, Di Farmer's recent announcement regarding proposed changes to the regulation of Home Education is of great concern to me.

I am writing to you, members of the Committee for Education, Employment, Training and Skills, specifically to ask you to appraise yourselves of my concerns and so reconsider the terms of the proposed bill to better support the home educating community.

Specifically, I am concerned about the suggested amendment indicating that all home educated students should follow the Australian Curriculum.

I do NOT support this suggested amendment for a number of reasons, including the facts that:

- Successful homeschooling looks very different to classroom teaching, and the Australian Curriculum was designed specifically for delivery in an institutional setting where teachers teach a large number of children at a time. The resources, methods and expectations of the Australian Curriculum simply do not make sense in a 1-to-1 home environment where the individual learning needs, styles and interests, emotional development, physical needs of the child (and so much more) are absolutely central.

- Many homeschooling families, including mine, are very successful using an interest or project-led learning style. This is because an interested student is passionate and engaged, and so enjoys sustained, deep learning. It is extremely well suited to a home educating environment because it's a flexible model not limited by time constraints, other students' needs, and by other types of limitations of a prescribed curriculum. This approach therefore allows the child to excel.

-As home educating parents, we have expertise in our own child and their learning needs, and we have developed programs and approaches which best suit our individual child/children because we are the experts in how they learn best. The Australian curriculum cannot and does not align with, nor can it offer anything like the benefits and enrichment such approaches provide.

Given all this, I want to give you an insight into the damaging – *potentially devastating* – impact that following the Australian curriculum would have on my and my son's life, and on the quality of education he is able to receive.

1. My son's learning would suffer.

My son thrives learning outside of a school environment. He is a passionate learner who is able to become engaged and absorbed, to ask critical questions, and to learn apace when he is interested in an idea, topic, activity. He learns in a very different mode to the manner in which the Australian Curriculum determines learning should take place. I have worked extremely hard over years to understand his needs and to facilitate an education program that works for him, supports him, and guides him towards his very best experience of life and learning. The diverse learning styles, holistic teaching strategies, and flexible curriculum arrangements I use in my son's education journey are *absolutely specific to him*, supporting his needs, and guiding and supporting his development. I do things the way I do them because, with a

lifetime's experience of guiding my child, I know that these are the best ways he learns. None of these extremely high-quality approaches, methodologies, explorations in life and learning are facilitated by the Australian curriculum.

2. My son would become anxious.

Using the methods, resources, and expectations of the Australian curriculum does not suit my child. When such approaches are used, he reacts with anxiety and panic and his capacity for meaningful learning immediately switches off.

3. My time and energy would be diverted from the important business of teaching and nurturing my child.

Learning the details of the Australian curriculum (this takes years for school teachers to learn) and finding ways to translate their delivery for my son in hope that he would engage, would not only prove problematic as per (1) and (2) above, but would also use up my reserves of time and energy, diverting my attention from the important work I should be doing in educating my child.

4. My son's self-confidence would suffer.

My son's self-confidence depends absolutely on self-direction in learning: in this way, he evaluates and measures his achievements, and is able to feel satisfied that he has achieved what he set out to. Without the self-direction fuelled by passion and interest, he suffers terribly from lack of confidence in his ability, and he struggles to achieve what he sets out to achieve, resulting in self-criticism and judgment. He is able to experience deep, intrinsic pride in his achievements when he follows the program and approaches I have developed.

My son is highly intelligent but also extremely sensitive, and a large part of his learning journey involves him being part of a supportive community, as well as friendship groups, where long-term relationships are developed, and meaningful paths of self-development are integral. These are an absolutely vital part of a well thought-through and adaptable program through which I support him to develop his self-awareness, self-confidence, self-belief. A focus on the Australian curriculum would entirely devastate our ability to create and participate in these important activities as central to our learning program.

5. My son's academic ability would be compromised and his love of learning ruined.

Being forced to study materials or via methods that cause anxiety, my son would disengage from learning both in the moment and in the future. Perceived by my son as coercion, this will cause him to fail to recall existing knowledge or draw on existing understanding, as if his intellectual ability has shut down. It is a distressing scenario to witness, and I would hate to ever have to see this happen again. Enforcing the Australian Curriculum could make this a daily experience, traumatising my son and ruining his love of learning.

6. Our family relationship would be negatively affected.

Forcing my child into activities and time frames that do not suit his learning needs would diminish our close relationship of trust and loving guidance.

Given this information, I am sure you can see that, to require home educators to follow the Australian Curriculum would be counterintuitive to everything that home education can uniquely achieve.

I'm sure you can see, too, how children's and their families' lives will be negatively impacted should these amendments fail to be changed in line with the experience and expertise of the home educating community. Such a consequence would clearly contradict Ms Farmer's stated intention that the amendments are being called upon to 'benefit every student, family, teacher'.

I am hopeful that, with the insights gained by home educating families' submissions to this committee, you will adjust the proposed changes to fully support the valuable work we do in educating our children to the highest possible standards.

Yours sincerely,

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