

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 37  
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**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Attachments:**  
**Submitter Comments:**

I, on behalf of my child who homeschools, and as a qualified teacher, **DO NOT SUPPORT** the current legislation being put forward before parliament because:

I have seen that successful homeschooling looks different to classroom teaching. As both a teacher and a parent, I have experience in both fields and so feel I can talk to both fields.

I am a mother of a child diagnosed with ASD, Dyslexia, Inattentive ADHD and anxiety.

My child spent 7 years in schooling. Not a single teacher thought she had any learning difficulties. She was quiet and well behaved. She tried to ask for help but was put to the bottom of the support list because other students were louder, more behaviourally difficult. She was told things like: oh you should know this" . why don't you remember?". She was publicly humiliated for not knowing things, in front of her peers. She was told to just "forget about the bully and focus on her learning". as parents, we were told she was 'fine' but had some 'writing difficulty, but constantly given c's or Bs in English. We were told she just "isn't resilient'. When she was finally diagnosed, the psychologists were shocked that no single teacher or admin picked up on her disabilities. Even though we kept going back to the school, we were being told its all in our head or we are worrying too much, and she was 'fine.

After suffering a breakdown in year 6 and refusing to go to school her G.P said she wasn't fine. She has school caused anxiety. She had dyslexia and wasn't coping with her learning. she has Autism and wasn't coping with the social issues, including targeted bullying.

We were still made to feel like we were in the wrong for somehow going through quite extensive academic and IQ assessments that is evidence of what she was experiencing and what we knew was happening. She had 40 days off school in year 6.

She didn't get a high-quality education.

The school program wasn't "responsive to the changing needs of the child.

It didn't "have regard to her ability, aptitudes.

The environment wasn't "conducive to learning".

The school wasn't responsive to the child's "need for special development".

The teacher didn't use "suitable and relevant teaching strategies to the child".

I could go on.

From my child. " I was told to not worry about reading and just listen to audio books. I was told to just not worry about the bullying and focus on my learning. I was told to just ignore the noise and people that were distracting me from learning. I was told to just be happy that I have two parents and my life is fine. I was told that I should just know things, even though I have memory issues, and I can't remember things on the spot. I was told I had to do public speaking even though I have a lot of anxiety because had been made fun of before when speaking. I was told a lot of things that showed me they didn't care about me or my learning. I hated school. I didn't want to go anymore. Teachers didn't help me. It was the worst place to be and I never want to go back into that system. Now, I learn where I am at, and my mum helps me. She is a teacher and doesn't teach the way my teachers did. I'm happy because now I am learning things. I choose who to play with. I can learn about things that are more interesting to me. That makes me want to learn. Not like at school where I zoned out a lot. It was very boring, and I didn't get help, and it didn't suit my learning styles'.

My child chose to homeschool after completing year 6, with the inability to read and write to a standard level and having so much anxiety about the pressured demands and lack of engaging, individualised, differentiated curriculum that was being rolled out across school.

The square pegs struggle and continue to struggle. Her learning style and needs are very different. She started schooling a happy, energised young 5-year-old and began but a shell of herself by the time she turned 12. Your system did that.

She chose to walk away from being around a few friends in a school because she knew that her mental health had suffered being in a school. You must ask yourselves if a child wants to sacrifice her social time, what is that saying about school?

ACARA is overcrowded, mass produced and doesn't fit the square pegs. I follow some of it based on what she is missing or needs to be a literate, active citizen in society. But the rest is white noise. Nothing she will use or remember.

The fact that you know the research shows kids aren't learning like they need to be in schools. It isn't working. My child's school reports say she was fine. yet I tested her using a thorough spelling program and she came out at least 2 years below her age. Something as simple as spelling was overlooked, which affected her confidence to write. Now she is learning her phonics. She is progressing. It's not ACARA year 7 standard at all. Now should it be.

It is what she needs right now to feel confident and happy to learn. That's what mainstream schooling should be. but it isn't. and it can't be, logistically. The 1:1 I give to her is profoundly more significant than simply following ACARA. To try and streamline or simply homeschooling is ironic. Home schoolers look at their individual child and respond to their needs. The very thing you define as being part of quality education.

Many homeschooling families follow an interest or project lead learning style. This enables deep learning in an area of particular interest. This is particularly difficult to facilitate when ticking boxes off a curriculum.

It is obvious when neurodivergent children thrive in an environment that isn't rushed, pressurized, environmentally disruptive and goes with what they need. It is an education style that helps children excel and you think putting the square pegs back into round holes will somehow be better?

Homeschooling parents do everything they can to ensure they are already providing a high-quality education (that has already been approved by the HEU) that is adapted to suit the learning styles of their children. Forcing families to adhere to something that they already know hasn't worked for their child add to eh trauma and detrimental effects that these children has already experienced, at school.

Do you really think parents want to struggle financially by homeschooling, because there are effective options? It makes no sense. Home school exists because there is a fundamental problem in the school system and you know that to be true, because you have been given the research on the lack of results in schools.

While there are seven points to respond to in this consultation paper, I am responding to only some of them. I have used the questions provided by the consultation paper as prompts.

## 1. Application Process

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### 1.1 Would a shift to one application process provide a more streamlined experience for parents?

As a teacher and concerned mother, I spent a long time developing a plan. I think you should submit an application and then be given time to create the individualised plan if you haven't done so already. In order for me to create a good plan, I had to interview my child and uncover all the gaps that the school had suggested she was 'fine' in. It took time. I don't think one application where you rush a reply is a good idea. I think leave as is. Give choice.

### 1.2 Are the time periods proposed reasonable for applicants and decision-makers? Does the proposed process adequately cater for unforeseen circumstances?

1.3

I think a grace period of 30 days from initial application for the parent to provide the program is good if you want parents to be thorough.

## 2. Meaning of high-quality in the context of home education

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### 2.1 Would a definition for a high-quality educational program be beneficial to demonstrating compliance for registration purposes?

The definition of high quality proposed in this consultation paper relies on the Australian Curriculum or a recognised alternative, showing emotional, social, physical and intellectual development, as well as a literacy and numeracy progression.

Let's be real. Teachers in schools can't realistically provide an individualised, differentiated program that caters for accurate emotional, social, physical and intellectual development, as well as a literacy and numeracy progression. My child was told she was "fine" fine fine:

She has been diagnosed with dyslexia at age 12. There was no quality educational program. She suffered at school. The ACARA didn't work. Her academic testing is evidence of that.

This idea that ACARA is high quality is contradictory to her experience.

### 2.2 Do you support the suggested aspects of the definition? If not, why?

I do not support the suggested aspects of the definition – as above.

## 2.3 Are there other aspects that need to be considered to support home education philosophies?

Differentiated, individualised program is working my child. That is her experience. It is invaluable to not expect the square peg to fit into a round hole.

Remember, she was told by her teacher to not worry about reading and listen to audio books instead as the school's way of dealing with her learning difficulties.

She was told to just ignore bullying and focus on her learning- as the school's philosophy of dealing with mental health.

Support home schooling because as parents, we know what works for our individual child and we care to know. We are not teaching 25 kids. We are individually catering for 1, 2, 3 .

That is part of home education philosophy. Catering for the individual. ACARA and schools cant logistically provide that.

## 3. Reporting on educational progress

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### 3.1 Do you support the requirement to report on educational progress of the child being removed from the legislation? If not, why?

I do not support the removal of the requirement to report on progress because I think it holds parents accountable, as it holds teachers in school. The difference is parents can give an accurate version of the child's learning.

Did you know my child's teacher emailed us , very excitedly, because my child had "smashed her science assessment". The one that I had written because my child had no idea where the assessment criteria was until the night before it was due and ended up having an anxiety attack because she said the teacher told the class they would fail if they didn't hand it in on time.

At least with parents, there is accurate info being reported on.

### 3.2 What aspects of reporting on implementation of the educational program do you think would facilitate decision-making, e.g. a description of the high-quality learning activities undertaken by the child; samples of work in literacy and numeracy; specific work samples across curriculum learning areas?

Some summary statements about some key learning focus areas and samples related is realistic, achievable and purposeful. I think if a parent can justify what they are doing and why, and how the child is happier learning and achieving, then isn't that the goal of schooling?

I know teachers who have changed marks on tests so they can get their quote of the a, b, c students for the principal's data. So please don't tell me the school reports are more accurate or valuable.

## 4. Streamlining review of written reports

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### 4.1 Would you support the sample assessment approach to annual reports for home education registration?

Are you discriminating here? Putting students with disabilities into this mix and doing the blanket one size fits all is why we started homeschooling in the first place.

Who does it benefit? Is this for data gathering?