

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

**Submission No:** 128  
**Submitted by:** Kathleen Mealey  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns regarding new amendments to the education legislation for homeschooling. This proposal has significantly added stress and anxiety to my usual peaceful home. The idea of incorporating ACRA into our way of educating our son seems ludicrous in the face of what we have experienced as a family before we started on our homeschooling journey. My son couldn't match the pace of mainstream education. He began to suffer medically diagnosed anxiety and school refusal at a very early age. He suffered physical symptoms which included a low immune system from lack of sleep as his anxiety levels rose. Our usually happy, bubbly, well mannered son did not deserve this. All attempts made by his private schools could not address this issue and his confidence was destroyed. We tried switching schools in an attempt to get more help however this was in vain. The pace of learning was inadequate and our son fell so far behind we were consumed with the severe state of his mental health. It was a time of never ending doctor's appointments, inconsolable melt downs from my son and family trauma as we tried desperately to negotiate our way through an education system that had completely let us down and left my son behind. Every day, his school work was sent home to complete as homework. This was evident in his daily exercise books being left blank and his homework book absolutely stuffed with content. Without a teacher's degree, I was able to help my son with his learning so I decided to pull him out of mainstream schooling and educate him at home. I used his original texts from school and incorporated fantastic online learning, group classes made available to us by local homeschooling co-ops and businesses alike. I created homeschooling co-ops myself to incorporate education, support and socialisation within our community and we flourished. Within months, my son had not only started showing improvement, but his whole mental and physical health had completely changed. It only took those first few months to re-establish his learning of the foundational education he had missed due to his mental health in mainstream. I was able to gain his trust, walk him through concepts at his own pace and establish a safe, quiet home learning environment in which his confidence flourished and every aspect of his life benefited. His health returned to normal, his sleeping pattern improved 100%, his socialisation and life skills were excellent and his grasp on his studies went through the roof. Last year my son was in year 9 studying year 11 extension math concepts. He not only improved his learning, he thrived. He absolutely loves his life. Our family are now living with a very happy boy instead of being on edge, wholly consumed by trauma brought on by mainstream schooling. My son is about to embark on a fantastic journey smashing his goals of studying at TAFE to become an electrical apprentice and then continue on to university to study electrical engineering. We see these same results reflected time after time by families in our community. My own brother homeschooled and is now an emergency surgeon and GP. Our pathways to success are not limited in homeschooling. Far from it. The opportunities are endless. If my son had to incorporate ACRA into his homeschooling journey our lives would have been vastly different. We started our homeschooling journey with a distance education school which had adapted ACRA into its curriculum. We had no success with our son's education, mental state, physical health nor social life. He spent his time at the kitchen table trying to keep up with the pace. It was just mainstream schooling at home. Once we freed ourselves of this and took charge of the pace of his learning, without added stress and anxiety, registering with HEU, we haven't looked back. In my submission I hope you have had a glimpse of what we have endured and then succeeded in doing. My hope is you will listen to my plea to not administer ACRA into our way of learning, rather work with us to establish a sense of hope into families like my own. Many families I have met have children on the spectrum who could not handle the pace of learning in mainstream too. I have three

thousand families on my homeschooling social pages now and I feel I am advocating for all of them. They deserve to teach their children in the way that works for them. Please help us maintain this level of education, care and safety on our lives. Thank you for taking the time to read my proposal.