

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

**Submission No:** 135  
**Submitted by:** Kylie Miller  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to some of the proposed changes to the education legislation in our state. I have been a homeschooling parent for over 7 years now. My husband and I are both PhD-qualified scientists and have a strong belief in the right for a high-quality education for all children. I am sure that you will agree that education should be inclusive of all students, and therefore it is incredibly important that the reasonings and experiences of those that do not fit into the mainstream system are listened to and understood. Specifically, I am deeply concerned the proposed changes will hinder the ability of parents to provide a high-quality education for home-educated children, nor are they in the best interests of home-educated children:

1. The flexibility of home education is its strength. As such, I have serious concerns with the changes to section 217, in particular with requiring parents to teach to the Australian Curriculum. Enforcing a standard curriculum on all in an attempt to simplify a definition of a high-quality education is short sighted and demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding of the home education community and the students that benefit from it. It is also a decision that lacks an evidence base and demonstrates a lack of consultation with the homeschool community and lack of understanding of why such large numbers of students, parents and teachers are leaving the conventional schooling system. It appears to be more of an attempt to distract from the real issue of why the school system is not working for so many.
2. Additionally, the Australian curriculum was not written for the home environment or to be implemented by parents. In fact, many schools employ curriculum specialists to assist in interpretation and implementation of this document. This is clearly not suitable to the home education environment. As home educators we regularly engage in multi-age learning with others in the home-schooling community. We use parents, community members and experts in their field to provide lessons and instruction. This often sparks interests and passions in our children and home education gives us the freedom to fully explore these areas. Enforcing a set curriculum would severely limit this learning.
3. The proposal to require reporting on all subject areas is a very time consuming task for both parents and the staff reviewing reports at the HEU, while adding no benefit to the education of the child. For the parents this is valuable time taken that could otherwise be spent on the education of our children. In a one-on-one environment we are already very aware of stage our children are up to and the progress they are making. It also raises big concerns about the ability of the home education unit to be able to process this additional paperwork in a timely manner, especially with the large increase in numbers of homeschooling families. In the past I have waited up to 3 months to receive confirmation of my reporting. This is quite an unacceptable timeframe, especially if issues are ever to be raised.
4. Another important point to consider is that a very large number of home-educated children are neurodivergent and do not learn in a traditional way. Many of these children have already tried the school system and the Australian curriculum and have been let down by the system and have found that it does not work for the way their child's brain works. This is certainly true for our family. A big strength of neurodivergence is the ability to deep dive into topics of interests. Allowing for the freedom to develop an individualised curriculum in home education allows for families to follow and develop the strengths of their child by implementing an interest-based or project-based learning approach.

One example of us not following the Australian curriculum was deliberately choosing to give our son the time to develop while focusing on his interests and not commencing any reading instruction until closer to 7 (which is the norm in many other high-quality curriculums) when we could see he was ready. The result of this is that at 11, he is now a very strong reader and we struggle to get him to put his books down to go to sleep at night. As he was not forced to learn these

skills before he was ready, he never once felt like he was behind or that he lacked in ability compared to his peers that were ready for reading at an earlier age. This is just one example of how going against the Australian Curriculum has been in the best interest of our son and has provided him with the high quality education that he deserves. I have no hesitation to say that if we were forced to follow the curriculum that it would lower the standard of education we are currently able to provide. Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and I look forward to your response to my request below and further dialogue on this very important issue. I hope that you will be willing to work together with the home educating community towards a more inclusive and responsive educational system for all families. Request for response: I would like to be informed what research and studies have been conducted to determine a) that the proposed changes to the legislation are in the best interests of the homeschooling community, b) what evidence there is that the current model of registration, reporting and legislation is inadequate, and c) what consultation has been made with the homeschooling community to understand their needs and what is in their best interests.