

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Submitter Comments:

Subject: Preserving the Diversity and Flexibility of Home-Schooling in Light of Proposed Education Bill Amendments
Dear Committee Members, I am reaching out to you as a parent who has chosen to home-school my children for the past eight years. I am deeply concerned about the proposed amendments to the current education bill pertaining to home-schooling. I believe it is essential to consider the potential impact these changes could have on our home-schooling community. My primary concern is the proposal to implement a single, nationwide curriculum for all students, of which home schoolers will be required to strictly adhere to as well. Although we currently use the Australian Curriculum as a reference, we tailor our program to meet our children's needs and interests, introducing subjects like philosophy and economics well before they would be introduced in ACARA. We also adapt the curriculum order to align with our children's current abilities. This adaptability allows us to seize opportunities and deliver a rich, personalised learning experience. We plan meticulously for the year ahead but also leave room for those moments where natural learning takes place. These spontaneous learning opportunities often provide the most memorable and impactful experiences for our children. The ability to evaluate and modify our submitted plan throughout the year, and subsequently report on the changes, is a key feature of our current home-school reporting system. For example, during a spontaneous family outing to a marine reserve, my children were fascinated by the diverse marine life. So, we springboarded into a unit study about marine wildlife and marine conservation, culminating in a Marine Life Incursion led by a Marine Biologist. Another instance was when my second son wanted to run his own stall at our local markets. This sparked conversations and learning around business and finance. These learning opportunities would have been missed simply because they weren't covered in ACARA that year for my children if we were to strictly adhere to the Australian Curriculum. These real-life experiences illustrate the richness and flexibility of home-schooling, which could be significantly limited by the proposed changes. Our home-schooling program is not confined to a single philosophy or curriculum. Instead, we blend elements from various educational philosophies and use quality resources from around the globe. This eclectic approach, enriched with living books, projects, and real-life experiences, allows my children to immerse themselves in the subjects they are studying. The imposition of rigid regulations and standardised requirements would only serve to stifle the flexibility and creativity that are the hallmarks of home-schooling. We used ACARA as homeschool program when we first began our homeschooling journey 8 years ago and I watch my child's passion for learning dwindle. After much research I adapted our homeschool program around my child's learning style and incorporated a range of quality resources. We reject the notion that one-size-fits-all mandates can adequately address the diverse needs of home-schooling families and their children. I urge you to listen to the voices of home-schooling families and to respect our autonomy in crafting educational experiences that best serve our children. Let us work together to create a regulatory framework that preserves the essence of home-schooling while ensuring accountability and quality education outcomes. In light of these concerns, I would like to ask: How will the proposed changes ensure that the unique needs and learning styles of home-schooled children are taken into account? How can we ensure that the flexibility and creativity that are integral to home-schooling are preserved under the new regulations? What will the criteria now be for determining whether homeschooling is in the best interest of the child and who makes that decision? I look forward to your response and appreciate your consideration of these concerns. Best regards, [Your Name]