

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: Madison White
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Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to oppose the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, in particular Clause 68.

I am a mother of two young daughters, I have worked in Early Childhood Education as a Diploma qualified Educator for seven years and following that, in the local coal mining industry as a Supply Chain Manager for 6 years. Both of my children started their education journeys in mainstream public schools, where they were left behind, their curiosity stifled and their individual needs pushed aside, while their teachers tried valiantly to enforce the Australian Curriculum. My daughters are now Home Educated, and they are thriving and rekindling a love of learning!

Early Childhood Educators are trained to follow the Early Years Learning Framework, which focuses on Belonging, Being & Becoming. This is a framework based on each individual child's need for safety, developing identity, diversity, emotional wellbeing, confidence and active involvement in learning as well as effective communication. We are taught that learning must be child-led and interest based... and then children enter into primary school where the Australian Curriculum is the only option and Childrens' interests, wellbeing, identity and diversity are no longer prioritised. Are we to believe, at the age of 6, children no longer require the same needs to be met to have a quality education?

I wish to emphasise the invaluable flexibility that homeschooling provides in tailoring education to the unique needs and interests of each child. As a homeschooling parent deeply committed to providing the best possible education for my children, I am concerned about any attempts to impose a rigid system, such as the Australian National Curriculum, that may not meet their individualised learning needs.

Homeschooling allows us the flexibility to work with our children's learning interests and readiness, ensuring that their education remains engaging and meaningful. We have the freedom to choose curriculum and topics that align with their needs and passions, fostering a love for learning that extends far beyond the confines of a standardised system. For example, the plan that I submitted to the Home Education Department for one of my daughters this year did not include a learning area that involved time capsules, however when she suddenly showed great interest in this area, we were able to pause our planned curriculum (early explorers and pirates for history and geography) and follow her curiosity. This led to research on time capsules throughout history, across different continents, human connection through historical objects and heirlooms, how to engineer a capsule that would last and culminated in her being able to bring our whole family together to create and bury our very own time capsule. At the end of this interest-based project, we returned to our regular planned curriculum and were able to pick up where we left off.

Furthermore, homeschooling enables us to prioritise the development of real-life skills that are essential for success in the modern world. By focusing on practical applications and hands-on learning experiences, we can equip our children with the tools they need to thrive in both their academic and personal lives. A great example of this is my eleven-year-old daughter who is exploring her interest in vehicle mechanics by spending one day a week safely learning to weld, operate tools to service vehicles and small machinery, operate overhead cranes and being educated in the running and maintenance of engines, gear boxes and auto electrics. I ask you, how many eleven-year-old girls, in mainstream school, do you know that would have the

confidence or opportunity to pursue an interest like this? Should her interests change, we can easily adapt our home curriculum to suit but she will still have the skills to perform these tasks, that many adults do not have, because home schooling allowed us to prioritise hands on learning and real-life skills.

I believe that imposing the Australian National Curriculum on homeschooling families would be counterproductive and would only serve to exacerbate the issues of children falling through the gaps in the traditional education system. Homeschooling provides a unique opportunity to address these gaps by tailoring education to the individual needs of each child and fostering a supportive learning environment that promotes academic success and personal growth.

The amendments being made through Clause 68 also state that all subjects or key learning areas must now be reported upon. Have you ever viewed a report sent into HEU, have you seen the extensive detail that goes into reporting upon three key learning areas? If you have looked at this then you will surely see that asking not only home educators to complete this astronomical and unnecessary task, you will also be foisting a huge burden onto the staff working within HEU. Does the HEO office have the resources and man power to thoroughly read, assess and notify 10,000+ home education plans and reports annually?

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the committee to recognise the importance of flexibility and individualised learning in homeschooling and to refrain from imposing unnecessary restrictions that may hinder our children's educational journey. Let us continue to embrace the freedom and flexibility that homeschooling affords, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education that meets their unique needs and aspirations.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A homeschooling mother and advocate