

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 261
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Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee
Parliament House
George Street
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Dear Committee

The Education, Minister Di Farmer is pushing to have home-schoolers follow the Compulsory Australian School curriculum.

I commend the Committee for the varied and well educated members, but 6 men is not a fair balance when most children are supported mainly by their mothers when it comes to education. I presume that Members of Parliament may not have this time either.

I write this as a mother of 4 and grandmother of 8, having had over 45 years' experience with the Australian education system.

My main concern is that the Australian curriculum is no longer acceptable for today, with the only goal being to reach a certain score after 12 years, which then allows the students to go to university.

This is often not the journey they were hoping for, due to missing out on a certain score, even by a couple of points. 12 years, and then not even allowed to follow their dreams.

Over the years I have seen the curriculum change so many times with many failures, e.g. teaching that spelling doesn't matter, "just get the words down", resulting in a whole swath of students who still cannot spell correctly. Then going back to the 3 R's and rote learning. Then changing back to phonics and word chunking.

Forcing students to learn a language with an Australian teacher teaching Japanese, French or German. Three of my children were forced to do Japanese and wasted valuable time during the first two years of high school due to the teacher not knowing what they were doing, with the outcome that the children lost interest and can barely speak one word of Japanese today.

We hear of a general shortage of Math and Science teachers, with other teachers "filling in" for these important subjects.

"The historic Gonski Review Report identified several highly concerning trends in the educational outcomes of Australian students. It found that over the past decade, the performance of Australian students had declined at all levels of achievement compared to international benchmarks".

The failure of the Naplan test with resetting the time and scale features and forcing a one for all education indicates that previous results are damning.

- We are not being able to compare previous years to 2022, what use is that? Naplan is all about comparison.
- The constant study required to pass this test to show good results puts so much pressure on teachers and students.
- Some struggling students are told to stay home and don't bother doing the test (so the results will not be affected).
- The need for better results so there is more funding allocated.

The results so far showing a decline in learning for all students in all categories using the Australian curriculum.

Solution to this broken system: Home-educating. Over 10,000 students registered in Queensland.

My daughter home-educates her two sons aged 15 and 13 and has done for this for 6 years now. They started schooling at a private school, but my daughter could see the many challenges faced by the teachers with up to 25 individual personalities and requirements, and wondered how one teacher could manage and successfully guide each of these youngsters to the best of all their abilities.

At first I was reluctant with her decision, with lots of the usual questions:-

- how do they socialise?
- how was she going to fit in the time with her husband and herself running a business from home?
- how would one person teach them all the things they need to learn?

Having closely followed their journey over the years, sat in on some of their activities, mingled with their various social and learning groups, I have come to the conclusion that these two boys are excelling in all aspects of life, socially, creatively, and intellectually. They have increasing self-worth and independence, and most of all are respectful and courteous, as are their fellow students.

They actually enjoy their learning, and are self-motivated to finish their tasks.

The various social learning groups they attend are full of enthusiasm and fun. They encourage each other and help the younger ones which is also an important opportunity for them to learn other skills.

They finish their allotted work knowing they will have time to pursue other areas which they eagerly want to learn. This eagerness for a subject provides unlimited learning results including, reading, researching, memorising, presenting, debating, and teaching others what they have

learned with the confidence they have acquired by knowing the subject intimately.

I believe that home-schooling for these two boys and all the other home-schoolers I have met is a highly successful way of individual learning. I don't believe that forcing them to follow the outdated and clumsy Australian Curriculum will be a good result for these exciting and enthusiastic individuals and all their many friends.

I have concerns that you have not fully researched the home-schooling activities and therefore suggest you reach out to any home-schooling parent to find out more and even sit in on a subject or two before making your recommendation.

Remember the old saying "If it isn't broken don't fix it".

Perhaps just concentrate on the schools you pay for, or if you want more control, pay these tireless and dedicated parents who home school because they want the very best for their children.