

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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POSITION: I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL.

I live in the Nanago electorate, and my husband and I are currently homeschooling our 8 year old son. He is a vibrant, kind, curious, funny kid, who loves to learn, has big thoughts about deep issues and wants to be an engineering palaeontologist when he grows up.

He is also autistic, and has ADHD and severe anxiety. He loves to explore new places but finds travelling exceptionally stressful. He would love to have a special friend to play ninjas with but he doesn't know how to make friends, and finds that other kids think he is loud and weird and "too much". He has a strong aversion to auditory stimuli, meaning that loud noises, crowds, flickering lights, ticking clocks, and humming appliances cause him physical pain. He is a vestibular and proprioceptive sensory seeker, meaning that he is always moving and doesn't really understand the concept of personal space, because he struggles to understand where his body begins and ends.

The world is hard for him, but he is still determined to make it a better place by being kind and inventing ways to look after animals and the environment. He is currently working on an idea to help people have safe housing without having to cut down trees and destroy farming land. His interest in sustainable housing peaked after a recent trip to the beach where we saw trees being removed for a new housing development.

He is thriving at home with us, learning and growing and doing all of the things that happy kids do. A big part of that is me having the ability to choose what his education looks like, and to educate him in a way that works for his unique strengths, while accommodating his neurodiversity and additional needs.

He has never been to mainstream school. We attempted preschool when he was 4, but after only 2 trial mornings, he was so traumatised that he stopped sleeping, eating and talking. It took us months to help him recover, and that is when we became home educators. **Home education was never in our plan, we had him signed up for a place at our local preschool when he was 6 months old.** But life had other ideas and teaching our little person at home has turned out to be one of the greatest things we have ever done.

MY CONCERNS:

Section 7, Chapter 9, Part 5

Who is going to decide whether the way I am homeschooling my child is in his best interest? How will that be decided?

What will I be required to do?

Send my child to school so that a teacher can write a report about how traumatised he is in the classroom? Subject him to ridicule and bullying from other students and put him in overwhelming situations so that he is triggered into meltdowns and eventually gets expelled?

Spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours travelling to Brisbane or the coast to see a paediatrician (because I can't even see a GP in my local area, let alone a specialist) for them to spend 15 minutes with my son, and decide what is best for his future?

Do parents who choose state and private schools have to prove that their choice is in the best interest of their children?

Section 217

Relating to what I am obligated to teach my child.

The new legislation would mean that I am required to teach the Australian curriculum.

As the parent of a neurodiverse child, I am not trying to educate my child to be good at NAPLAN testing, or to get a high ATAR. **I am not a classroom teacher.** I do not need to be able to provide a standardised education to 40 children across a range of abilities and ages.

I am a mother, giving everything I have to make sure that my child has the skills he needs to become a well adapted, functional adult who is able to live independently and find employment doing something he loves and is suited for.

The greatest joy of home education is that I am not obligated to teach things that are beyond the abilities of my child just because his age determines that he would be in Grade 3. Nor am I obligated to continue teaching him things that he has already mastered. He is still learning to read, because letter recognition is hard for him, but he can do highschool level maths in his head, having never been shown it before. He designs and builds complicated and unique Lego structures but he can't sit still in a chair for longer than 5 seconds. He is fascinated by the world, but he doesn't know how to live in it. My job as his mother and his teacher is to bridge that gap for him, and the constraints of the national curriculum don't allow me to do that.

Please don't take away my ability to open the world up for my child in a way that he understands.

Thank you for your consideration.