

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes in homeschooling legislation, particularly the requirement to follow a specific curriculum. As a homeschooling parent, I firmly believe that these changes would undermine the very reasons why many families, including mine, have chosen homeschooling as the preferred mode of education for our children. As a parent of a neurodivergent child, I have chosen to home educate in order to cater for my child's special needs. For many children with disabilities and neurodivergent conditions, homeschooling is not just a choice but a necessity - an opportunity to create an environment where they can thrive at their own pace and in their own unique way. Children with disabilities (including hidden disabilities such as Autism) and neurodivergent conditions often face significant challenges in traditional school settings, where rigid structures and standardized approaches may not accommodate their diverse needs. Homeschooling provides a lifeline for these children, offering the flexibility and personalized support they require to learn and grow in a safe and nurturing environment. My child learns best with a natural learning / interest-based approach. This enables him to become deeply immersed in an area of interest and this will often cross at least 5 key learning areas. Adhering to the Australian Curriculum would render this impossible for my child, and to this date, it has been the only learning style that he has willingly and actively engaged in. According to recent research collected by the Home Education Unit (2022), two of three home educating families have chosen to do so because of an underlying disability or health issue. For these children working the Australian Curriculum is not providing them a high-quality education or meeting their immediate needs. They have chosen this avenue because of the flexibility it affords. This enables families to educate and care for their children in a manner that suits their learning style. Most of these students have left mainstream schooling because they could not learn in a traditional learning style. I'm concerned that the legislation has been introduced without proper consultation with current homeschooling families and I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. For education to be inclusive of all students, I believe it is important to understand the reasoning behind the education decisions of the families who struggle the most to fit into mainstream education. In conclusion, I urge the committee to reconsider its approach to homeschooling legislation and to prioritize the needs of children with disabilities and neurodivergent conditions. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.