

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 411
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Submitter Comments:

I am writing this due to concerns raised regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament. As a home educating parent, I do not support some of these changes that have been introduced and I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the homeschooling community. Concern #1: Defining High-Quality Education as the National School Curriculum I am particularly concerned about the definition of a 'high-quality education' being changed to, and limited to, using the Australian Curriculum. One of my children has Specific Learning Disorders and being able to tailor his education specifically to his level, needs and interests has been a major part of his successful and ongoing educational progress. He is concerned to know he might have to 'keep up' with other kids due to age (and not ability or development) and to feel 'dumb' when he can't in certain areas due to the challenges of his Specific Learning Disorders.

My other children very much enjoy the flexibility to learn together in different subjects, the opportunity to learn at their own pace in all necessary areas, and the freedom to incorporate their interests and tailor their education to their needs, all in a highly supportive environment as is currently possible under current legislation. Concern #2: Defining who decides the best interest of the child I also have concerns about the wording of the changes in the Section 7 insert: Who defines what is in the best interest of the child and what a suitable environment is? Both of these clauses are vague and essentially deny parental autonomy and rights to decide what is best for their children – even though they are the ones who best know what “a child’s ability, aptitude, development, changing needs and individual personality” are. This is an unnecessary, and overreaching, addition to the legislation and I am concerned where it will lead. It potentially puts my children’s best interests into the hands of a disinterested authority. I have additional concerns regarding the increase in reporting requirements also – not because I can’t meet them, but because of the unnecessary amount of work they would involve, especially when most of them won’t be looked at and we know that the HEU department is already struggling to keep up. None of these sections of the Bill are needed – the current legislation addresses them perfectly well. I hope they are removed. I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. I hope that you have gained some insight into the valid concerns the home-education community has in regard to this Bill, and that all the submissions you are receiving are helping to show where amendments need to be made to it. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. Sincerely, Kirstie S