

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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To the Committee,

As a home educating parent of five years, I am writing to make it clear that I in no way support the proposed new law to “ make home-schooled children’s education align with the Australian National Curriculum.”

I will use my son (aged 10) to demonstrate how having to align with the National Curriculum would be of detriment to his education. To keep this correspondence brief, I will focus solely on topics of an academic nature as that is the aspect of home educating being targeted by this new law. My son started in mainstream school at age 5 (prep) and he was excited to be going to school. Over that first year of school, he struggled with anxiety that only grew stronger as the year went on. He went from being a highly competent learner at the beginning of the year to average at best by the end of the year. He went from being confident to being filled with self-doubt. He was distracted by the chaotic classroom, unchallenged by the basic material being taught and most definitely was not thriving in the school environment. At the end of that year, we took the leap of faith (and huge sacrifice financially) to begin home educating.

My son was an early reader and has always been gifted in the subject of English. He LOVES to read and at his young age has read more books than I have in my entire lifetime. He does not enjoy books that most kids his age read. He enjoys classic literature, has a vocabulary exceeding children well beyond his years, and thinks deeply about a variety of topics (none of which are included in the national curriculum in year 5). As a home educator I have access to a huge variety of curricula that is both rigorous and rich. I can and do tailor my son’s education to meet him where he is at academically, not where his age says he should be. To give one example, my son is currently learning the art of writing a classical essay in a small online writing and literature class of children ranging in age from 10-13 years. The children are also reading and discussing Don Quixote, writing soliloquys to perform at the end of term and learning to debate and argue their point well. My son is being stretched academically and is loving this new challenge.

Conversely, mathematics is my son’s nemesis. It is not a subject that comes naturally to him. Through home education I have been able to create a tailor-made maths curriculum for him that is both challenging and fun. We take a mastery approach to learning maths and that has helped solidify key concepts and build upon his knowledge moving forward with confidence. Once again, there are so many resources available for home school families to choose from and it is wonderful to witness your child not only understanding a subject that is extremely difficult for them, but also enjoying the process. I don’t recall ever laughing out loud as I read any of my maths textbooks at school.

To conclude, my son is not a typical year 5 student. In English he is far exceeding his year level and in maths he is probably considered ‘average’ for his age. I take my role as an educator of my children very seriously. I have put in and continue to put in hours upon hours of research into different curricula. I want the absolute best for them. To say that I must now comply with the Australian National Curriculum is quite frankly insulting. You quote “every child deserves the same access to a high-quality education” and with this quote I wholeheartedly agree. However, my children already have access to a high-quality education, and I think it is extremely ignorant to suggest that Australia’s National Curriculum is the ‘gold standard’ education model for ALL children in this country.

I hope you will consider the detrimental effects this new law will have on the many home-schooling children who are currently thriving using a diverse range of high-quality curriculum carefully chosen by their parents.

My questions are as follows:

1. Who decides what is best for our children?
2. What does “be consistent with the Australian Curriculum” mean?
3. What is your reason for desiring home-schoolers to follow the National Curriculum?
4. Why was it necessary to pour 300million dollars in to funding alternative education if the National Curriculum is the best for ALL children?
5. Are you willing to accept home education as a valid form of alternative education?
6. Will there be research conducted into the long-term outcomes of home-schooled children?

Yours Sincerely,

Amanda Nair.