

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee, I am in my twelfth year of home educating my children and have nineteen years plus of formal education, including a Masters degree from an Ivy league university. I am deeply concerned by the proposed changes to home education for the following reasons: 1. A child's education is fundamentally the responsibility of the parents. The role of the state is as a service provider. For home educators (or private schools) to be required to follow an "approved curriculum" in effect creates a monopoly. This is not only contrary to the very ethos of education, but a symptom of totalitarianism. Education in a truly democratic country does not dictate curriculum. 2. Many choose home education because of concerns that state schools are not meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards. The provision of an individualised curriculum is vital for some children to do well in their schooling, especially if they have dyslexia or suffer from anxiety, for example. If the creation of a curriculum to suit the individual student is replaced with the Australian curriculum, there will be adverse outcomes. 3. Mandating a curriculum will render much of home education pointless. Could the state education system cope with the sudden influx of 10,000+ new students? What impact will that have on education overall? 4. The omission of university studies as an approved curriculum suggests the drafters of this bill have an inadequate understanding of home education. Many home educators find their children are ready for tertiary education well before they are eighteen years of age. University courses are a necessary part of high quality home education at the secondary level. 5. There has been a significant increase in home education registrations due to bullying, and the general mental health of children is a widespread concern. This bill removes the safety of a provisional registration period for children at risk. It also fails to recognise that children who are neurodivergent, traumatised, etc. require a curriculum that is in tune with their needs. A one-size-fits-all approach is not only an insult to a child who is not fitting in, it is damaging and short-sighted. Please note that I support state education and the concept of a standardised national curriculum. I am proud to live in a country that provides universal education as a matter of principle. I went to state primary and high schools, and my eldest attends a school that uses the national curriculum. My children are home educated in such a way that they can transition to mainstream schooling and/or university at any point (as my eldest has done for Year 11 onwards). However, I am also proud to live in a country that is diverse and multicultural, and I see aspects of this bill as an attempt to restrict the vibrant educational opportunities that home education provides. I imagine you are aware of the recent Progress in International Reading Literacy Study report which found that 23 per cent of boys and 16 per cent of girls were below the proficient standard in Year 4. Given this alarming state of affairs, it seems foolhardy, not to mention hypocritical and immoral, to be dictating that home educators follow the same inadequate curriculum.