

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Member, I am writing to express my concerns with the amendments to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. As a home educating family, there are provisions in this bill that I do not support, and further, I believe will be detrimental to my family. The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, insisting that students follow the Australian Curriculum will make it near impossible for my family to provide a high quality education in a homeschool setting. Simultaneously educating two children of different ages makes it impractical to cover two different topics at two different grade levels. Furthermore, we have found that utilising curriculum aligned workbooks in a small or 1:1 learning environment is impractical. We prefer to dive deeply into an area of interest as a family, and tailor the method and depth of learning to each child. This enables us to have relevant family excursions, utilise multimedia, create projects together and have collaborative family discussions on a topic. As a mother of neurodivergent children, we have tried school for 4 years and then have successfully home educated for 3 years now. My ADHD daughter was simply not coping in a mainstream classroom. This was despite years of cooperative support between the school, allied health specialists and myself. She is now thriving, due mostly in part to the flexible nature of our homeschooling. I have been able to select curricula that is tailored to her learning style, and had the freedom to backtrack and relearn the basics that she missed due to extensive time out of the classroom due to behavioural concerns and multiple drs appointments due to her extensive medical history/issues. Moreover, in order to facilitate the hands-on nature of home education, I have had to commit hours of research to select the best, evidence-based materials that are suited to my children. I also have to constantly seek enriching activities to support their learning. I have had to end my career in order to do this. If the Australian Curriculum and a mainstream learning pedagogy suited my children, they would either be in school or in distance education. The reason I don't is that flexible learning is the only possible way to educate my children. Additionally, I am interested in the inclusion in the amendment for home educators to include each subject in their reporting. The samples and annotations included in just the three subjects that we report on are far more extensive than I have ever seen from a school report card. If we reported on every subject that we studied, the length of the report would be substantial. My last report for each child was 6 pages in length each of text, so this was not including the six required work samples that I had to submit as well. In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritise the marginalised students and their families that are limited by their inability to fit into mainstream schooling. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system for all children.