

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 486  
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### Submitter Comments:

My primary school aged children have been homeschooled since birth. I am very opposed to the proposed bill. I took part in the survey sent out in 2022. This bill goes against all the feedback I gave and everything I suggested in that survey. And I know I'm not the only one. My opinion was in line with the majority of the homeschooling community. And yet feedback from the whole community was ignored. I also know that many did not receive that survey despite being registered with HEU. The lack of transparency and true public consultation is very concerning. My MAIN CONCERN with this bill is the very ambiguous comment that it must be proven to be in the best interests of the child. Acting in the best interests of my child is really important, it is a major belief that every decision in my life is based on. I believe that that onus is on me to decide and action what this is. I feel this part of the bill could be greatly twisted and power taken from a parent. I know my child best and am more than capable of knowing what is in their best interests and my standards of what I want for my child are far higher than any that anyone else could impose. I know what is best for my children and I would never give them any less. My SECOND CONCERN IS being forced to follow ACARA. We currently have to submit and have our curriculum approved by HEU. We have to show that it is a High-Quality Education. For the past 5 years, HEU has approved my curriculum plan and report as being High Quality and tailored to my child so what all of a sudden now makes that same curriculum not good enough? We currently use curriculum from all over the world and work at my child's pace. For example, in Maths, when compared to what is required by ACARA, my kids have at times been far above their year level in some Maths concepts and below in other concepts simply because I'm teaching it in an order that suits them better. At the end of the day, they'll have learnt all the concepts necessary, they are just learning them in a different order and at a different pace. As another example, I taught my children to read using a Phonics based approach. During prep and grade 1, my daughters' friends who were the same age and enrolled in school were reading sentences earlier than my daughter, but fast forward 5 years and my daughter is a far superior reader. So clearly my method worked. She was not disadvantaged by following a different curriculum. I gave her a high-quality education that has resulted in her having excellent reading and comprehension skills. I chose a method that suited my children and they have excelled. This bill would force a one size fits all learning approach on every child and that is far from realistic. I understand that a teacher with a classroom of 30 kids doesn't have the time to get to know each child's learning style or tailor their teaching methods and activities to suit each individual child, so they follow a set curriculum and hopefully it'll work for the majority. Home educators don't need that. We have the time to get to know our child's individual needs and tailor it accordingly. If required to follow ACARA, I assume we will be getting the same SUBSIDIES that schools get per child so that we can fund implementation of it? Has the government made allowance in their budget to finance this? My THIRD CONCERN is the need to report on all 8 subjects. I already provide in depth reports on my children's progress and my ability to facilitate their learning. We provide far more than a school report card. If anything, these reporting requirements should be lessened not increased. As already mentioned, my standards are way higher than any set for me by others because they are motivated by love for my children and I have to answer to both them and myself so you can be assured, even if HEU had no involvement in our lives, I would still be educating my children to the same high standard that I am now because I CARE ABOUT MY KIDS. Reporting doesn't improve my kids' education. If anything, it just takes time away that could have been better spent with my children. Why did I choose to homeschool my children? Because I want to be part of their lives. I want to teach them and be there to see their progress. I want to facilitate them being able to

follow their interests. I want them to feel supported and nurtured. I want them to be in a safe environment that allows them to freely express themselves and build their confidence. The schooling system did not suit me as a child. Yes, I was a straight A student but every day I was wracked with anxiety and fear. I left Year 12 with a great report card but no confidence, no self-esteem, no practical skills, my love for learning was dead and I had no idea how to adult. Although I wasn't targeted as much as others, even I experienced bullying and sexual harassment by both teachers and fellow students. Noone protected me from that. My stepson went all the way through to Year 12 both in public and private school. He experienced ongoing bullying that the school tried to hide. Our concerns were ignored, and we were made to feel like we had no right in our son's life. He also struggled to keep up to the curriculum and did not have good grades. I spent a lot of time trying to teach him Maths and English outside of school and he probably learnt more from me than he did school. Does this mean that kids shouldn't go to school? No, not at all. It just means that it doesn't suit everyone. Some people excel in school, others do better in different environments. When our daughters came along, and their personalities started to develop I could see that they had very similar personalities to me. They were sensitive children who needed a nurturing, personalised environment. Although it would mean great sacrifice on the part of my husband and myself, we were determined to give them the best - a high-quality education and environment to receive that in. It would be a far easier life to just send my kids to school, but I have chosen to act in their best interests and that involves a tailored education that covers not only academics but also positive mental and emotional growth and practical life skills. I understand that there has been a huge rise in homeschooling since covid but instead of trying to make homeschooling harder to deter people from it, wouldn't a better focus be trying to fix the issues that are driving people away from schools instead? What effect would the new legislation have on my children? It would severely disadvantage them. We have been following certain methods/curriculum for years that won't work unless it's followed through to the end. As mentioned earlier, with Maths for example, they are being taught concepts in a certain order, each concept builds on the previous one so that nothing is missed. If I suddenly started teaching ACARA Grade 6 Maths that doesn't align with our current curriculum, they would miss concepts and there would be huge gaps in their learning. Just let us continue with what we have started. My children are thriving both academically, mentally and emotionally. At the beginning of our homeschooling journey, we had concerned relatives. Like those trying to pass this bill, they had no idea or experience with homeschooling, so they had preconceived ideas. They thought they knew what was in the best interests of my child so were opposed. Fast forward to now, those who were once our critics, are now our biggest fans and can't praise our decision enough. They rave over the education my children receive and how much happier and healthier they are than other children they know. The positive side of me would like to hope that like my mistaken relatives, those introducing this bill have good intentions and that when they realise how wrong their preconceived ideas are, that they will withdraw these proposals.

Thank you for your consideration.