


Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 498
Submitted by: 
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concerns with the amendments to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Prior to becoming a home educating mother of my two daughters, I worked in the media for over a decade, and I vote left-of-centre.

My primary concern is that forcing parents to adhere to the national curriculum will drive many home educators underground. The whole point of homeschooling is that parents can teach their child a *personalised* — rather than a standardised — curriculum.

I am not opposed to the national curriculum as a resource; I actually print out the relevant sections from the ACARA website each year, and use that as the basis for teaching my eldest daughter. She is accelerated in several areas but, in general, the national curriculum suits her.

However, my youngest daughter is the opposite. She is bright and creative, but she has a rare genetic condition that impacts her ability to learn in a usual manner. For almost a year, I tried to teach her a program consistent with the national curriculum. After seeing very little academic progress, but convinced that she was nonetheless capable of learning, I reassessed my approach.

I read books about pedagogy and neurodivergent learning; I attended relevant online courses; I worked with all her allied health therapists to assess her strengths and needs; and then I started teaching her our own unique combination of curricula. Some resources are aligned with the national curriculum, but many of her areas of learning focus on her overall development. Our intensely personalised approach to her education is paying off; she is now making good progress, academically and developmentally! **If I am forced to return to using the national curriculum to educate my youngest, her learning will stall.** Clearly, that would not be in her best interest.

I know several families who are doing an excellent job of educating their children, but who are not following the national curriculum, and who are not registered with the HEU. **Surely the State Government understands that if they attempt to force home-schoolers to follow the national curriculum, they will be effectively forcing even more families to fly under the radar?** I am in favour of both registration and regulation, but this attempt to regulate home education is guaranteed to backfire.

I also have concerns about the proposed amendment for home educators to report on each subject area. Firstly, HEU staff will find themselves overwhelmed with paperwork if this amendment is included in the Act. The reports, samples, and education programs I sent to the HEU last year totalled more than 30 densely typed pages, for only two children. If I am forced to report on an additional five subject areas per child, HEU staff will simply not have the time to properly assess my suitability as a home educator. **I do not believe requiring more paperwork will improve the quality of home education.** There is a general understanding that mainstream educators are struggling with onerous paperwork requirements. Why make this a problem for home educators, too? **Obviously, this issue will also discourage families from registering.**

Secondly, it is difficult to report to the HEU on all my youngest daughter's "subject areas", because many of them are concepts such as executive functioning, or motor planning. Her allied health therapists are qualified to assess her progress in these areas, but HEU staff may understandably be out of their depth. **I am happy to report to the HEU about literacy, numeracy, and one other area of my choice, as I have been doing, but to report on every area of her learning is not only unfeasible, but also unfair to HEU staff.**

In light of these concerns, I ask you to please reconsider the proposed amendments mentioned here. Please advocate for a more inclusive Act, which would allow deeply committed families like mine to continue providing a personalised, high-quality education for their children.