

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

**Submission No:** 543  
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**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I wholeheartedly agree that every child deserves access to a high-quality education. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the inflexibility and overcrowded nature of the Australian Curriculum, particularly in how it impacts children's engagement and learning outcomes. As a concerned citizen and advocate for educational reform, I strongly believe that there is an urgent need for more flexible schooling options that prioritise the diverse needs and interests of students. The current Australian Curriculum, with its rigid structure and overcrowded content, often fails to resonate with many children and can lead to disengagement from the learning process. It is evident that a one-size-fits-all approach does not effectively cater to the unique learning styles, interests, and abilities of every student. I have a background in Early Childhood education, though as a result of undertaking prac in a Grade 1 classroom, I decided not to work in the education system as I did not see developmentally appropriate methods of teaching in the classroom which lined up with all the academic research I was reading, for example, on the vital importance of play. I went on to work as a preschool teacher (before prep was made compulsory) and then a director of an occasional child care centre before becoming a full-time stay-at-home mum. I have been homeschooling for the past nine years. My older daughter, who has ADHD and an anxiety disorder, is 19 and in paid employment, and my younger daughter, aged 15, is autistic. They both struggled in the education system and I undertook my own research into how I could best support them with their learning difficulties. My younger daughter also has chronic pelvic pain (which is still under investigation) and sleep issues, and both of them have challenges in the area of executive function. These challenges meant that keeping up with their daily studies was very difficult for them. As a result of homeschooling, they were able to learn in ways that were engaging and meaningful for them; their confidence increased and their motivation to learn revived. The sheer volume of content within the curriculum can feel overwhelming and arbitrary to students, making it difficult for them to see the relevance and meaning behind what they are learning. This can result in a loss of motivation and enthusiasm for learning, which ultimately hinders their academic progress and personal development. This was certainly the experience of my daughters, in addition to their own challenges and health issues. I urge the committee to endorse alternative schooling options that offer greater flexibility and autonomy in curriculum design and delivery. By providing more choices for families and educators, we can create learning environments that are better aligned with the diverse needs and aspirations of students. Additionally, there is a pressing need for curriculum reform that prioritises essential skills and competencies relevant to the 21st century. Rather than adhering to a curriculum that feels arbitrary and disconnected from real-world contexts, we should focus on cultivating critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and communication skills that are essential for success in today's rapidly changing world. In conclusion, I call upon the committee to champion educational innovation and reform that empowers students to thrive in a dynamic and interconnected world. By embracing flexibility, relevance, and student-centred learning approaches, we can create a more inclusive and responsive education system that prepares all children for lifelong success and fulfilment. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Sincerely, Alison Barlow