

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Committee Members,

I hope this email finds you well and I appreciate you taking the time to consider my concerns regarding some of the amendments outlined in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

As a home educating family of three children I am stating my concern regarding the enforced adherence to the Australian Curriculum.

For the last eight years, I have watched my wife pour over those documents each year as she plans for our three children and considers ways to weave the Curriculum through their learning program. It is clear that the existing Curriculum is inflexible, outdated, often irrelevant to the current world and future industry, overcrowded, shallow and restrictive. Additionally, it does not support the unique and individual needs, skills, strengths, learning styles or emotional wellbeing of children.

The hours my wife spends planning, sourcing, researching, collating and refining the educational plans for our children is significant. The idea that individualised, specific and tailored programs for each child is not considered 'high quality education' is not only inaccurate, but also offensive.

Considering the amount of time dedicated to planning and implementing the homeschool program, it further concerns me that the proposal includes a requirement to report, with evidence, across all Key Learning Areas rather than the previously acceptable, three. This takes precious time away from actual implementation of learning experiences with our children and reduces opportunity to execute the high-quality education we all agree is needed and deserved for every child.

We began homeschooling in response to the negative and damaging effects the school system was having on our twin daughters mental and emotional health. We reached a crisis point where we knew that there was potential life long, life altering impacts for our daughters, who, while academically exceptional, were struggling significantly with their mental health. We engaged multiple professionals to support them during their three years of mainstream school, however they continued to experience worsening symptoms of anxiety, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorders that did not present prior to engaging in School.

We believe it was the restrictive, perfection/results driven, top down, uncreative, inflexible, non-responsive approach to education (the existing Curriculum) that affected them so deeply.

Once we withdrew them from mainstream school, these symptoms lessened, and they slowly reengaged in life and learning. Their natural curiosity and love of learning returned.

With three children who all thrive within a project based and interest led approach, we use the existing Australian Curriculum to ensure we address all key learning areas, but we base the specific learning experiences on our children's expressed interests. The proposed changes will

limit opportunity for our children to engage in learning in ways that respect, nurture, develop and support their curiosities, instead requiring a much more restrictive model that takes a one size fits all approach. I ask how that is high(er) quality education?

Individualised education cultivates learning where real-world experiences, interdisciplinary studies, and personalised projects play a key role in their education. This dynamic fosters their academic development but also builds life long skills that are not a part of the existing Australian Curriculum.

As home educating families we understand the unique needs of our children, we carefully and meticulously craft educational experiences to support the development of skills and knowledge while prioritising individualised learning and holistic wellbeing.

I urge you to reconsider your approach and engage in consultation with home educating families to ensure our voices are heard. This is a rich and diverse community and many families, including ours have made significant lifestyle changes in order to provide education to our children in our homes because we all seek high quality, inclusive and holistic education.

By embracing the diversity of approaches within the home-schooling community, and valuing the autonomy of families to craft personalised education for their children we can ensure every child receives the high quality education that is their human right.

Kind Regards,

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