

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 653
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication:
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Submission regarding the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.
Date: Wednesday, 20 March 2024 11:37:52 PM

Dear Committee Members Hon Mark Bailey, Mr James Lister, Mr Joe Kelly, Mr Nick Dametto, Mr Barry O'Rourke and Mr Brent Mickelberg,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you to express my concerns about the proposed Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

The lack of public consultation and transparency around these changes is alarming. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is vital for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts the education of Australian children.

I strongly object to a number of the changes proposed in the bill but will highlight my three main concerns here.

Firstly, I am concerned that the proposed changes to Clause 18 Section 7 will create a serious overreach of government. The changes to the wording create ambiguity around who decides what is considered suitable, what is in the best interests of the child and what is considered a high quality education. As the parent of my children, I am best placed to decide what is suitable for them and the most invested in the overall success of their education journey. No unconnected individual will be able to determine this successfully for my children nor have the motivation to painstakingly research it as I do.

I am concerned by the potential arrogance towards and disdain for parental rights that may be behind these changes. It gives the impression that the people drafting this part of the bill are out of touch with Australian families.

Secondly, I do not believe it is in the best interests of students to restrict the definition of a high quality education to the Australian National Curriculum. It is already available to home educators as a guide if they feel it is needed. Parents and students should be free to pursue a high quality education that is tailored to each child to allow them to thrive without facing potential legal consequences for doing so.

This requirement will place undue stress on families with complex needs such as learning difficulties or health struggles. It will also stifle the learning of children who are excelling and ready to move past the curriculum into university subjects. For everyone else in the middle, it will severely limit the ability of parents to utilise resources and methods they have carefully researched to meet their children where they are at, enabling them to thrive and encouraging a love of learning.

My children are still under the required registration age of six and a half years but I have already seen the negative effects of pushing a particular subject versus following the child's interests play out in our home. I have observed how easily and eagerly they learn a concept or pursue a topic that they are interested in versus the disengagement generated if I push something too hard, too early.

I would like to share some specific examples from my oldest child's journey with learning to read. He has been interested in written words from a very young age and has a growing repertoire of words he recognises. When he was almost four years old, he was beginning to sound out words with me, attempting to apply the letter sounds he was learning. When a

letter arrived from his grandfather, I attempted to make him sound out the entire letter for himself, without asking how he would like to approach the letter. This resulted in him losing interest and not wanting to read the letter at all, not even to have me read what his grandfather had written to him.

He is now four and a half years old, we have been sounding out words together if he asks me what a word says. He is also attempting to read “sound effect” words / onomatopoeia incorporated into the illustrations of a series of books we are reading together. I have used these specific books and other quality children’s books to introduce the concept of rhyming words (and other prose concepts). Just this week he started trying, of his own volition, to come up with pairs of rhyming words. With some guidance on how to assess words for rhyming after a few incorrect pairings, he came up with two rhyming made up words (he manipulated the endings to force a rhyme) then two real words that rhymed. The words were crash and bash, in keeping with the current onomatopoeic theme of interest. It was wonderful to witness the thrill of success on my child’s face and the unforced or coerced application of learning.

These experiences as well as many other positive ones have clearly shown me that attempting to rigorously follow the national curriculum to a set timeline in our home education setting would be highly detrimental to the speed and quality of my children’s learning.

Thirdly, the reporting changes proposed in Clause 68 are excessive and unfair. As far as I am aware, teachers in the school system are not required to provide proof that each individual student has progressed in every single subject. Why is this administrative burden being placed on homeschooling parents? Particularly as there is no remuneration being offered to offset the ridiculous amount of time this would take out of a parent’s life.

I am concerned about how Clause 68 Section 217(1)(b)(ii)’s wording of “being consistent with” will be interpreted. It invites a morass of stress, ambiguity and manipulation by the government. Parents are not trained in how to read and interpret the very long document of the national curriculum to match up their child’s learning and progress against it. This additional red tape will be detrimental to the quality of children’s education as it will be creating undue stress and wasting the educator’s time. Time that should be spent on supporting and guiding their children’s learning.

I feel particularly discouraged about this potential colossal waste of parents’ time as the HEU has already indicated that they will not be able to read the majority of the new style of reports. As a business owner and parent of three children I do not have time to be writing highly detailed reports that will not be read.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my views on this important issue.

Please remove identifying information below before publication.

Kind regards,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Submission regarding the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024
Date: Sunday, 24 March 2024 5:11:50 PM

Dear Committee Members Hon Mark Bailey, Mr James Lister, Mr Joe Kelly, Mr Nick Dametto, Mr Barry O'Rourke and Mr Brent Mickelberg,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you to express my concerns about the proposed Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Please add this to my original submission as I have additional concerns I would like to share with you.

I object to a number of changes to the registration process.

Firstly, the changes that remove the current provisional registration concern me as this time can be very important for families that are withdrawing their children due to bullying or mental health issues. Currently families can withdraw their children from a dangerous situation immediately and apply for provision homeschooling registration. This gives parents time to care for their child and formulate a plan for homeschooling without absenteeism being an issue. The changes will mean that parents are supposed to have a complete plan that is aligned with the national curriculum formulated before registration is granted (and the child can be unenrolled from their school). This is impractical in the crisis situation many families find themselves in. Families that choose to prioritise their children's safety by keeping them home while working through the new registration process will have their children marked as truant. I think this is unfair and unAustralian, stacking the system/red tape against parents and children that are struggling.

Secondly, the changes (Clause 61 Section 208(2) insertion) that will enable the demanding of reports outside of the registration period is not appropriate. This is unnecessarily invasive, obtrusive and stepping outside of the government's jurisdiction.

Thirdly, the change (Clause 63 Section 211(1) reducing the show cause response time from 28 days to 14 days seems unfair. I would like to question how great an issue waiting an extra two weeks for extra information is for the department processing the application. It will certainly put a lot of additional stress on families who receive a show cause. These families need the time currently available to them to research and learn how to provide appropriate responses. The government currently does not provide any support on how to do this to families. The people who drafted this bill need to keep in mind that parents are very busy providing for and caring for their families. These things don't just stop because they have received a show cause as a part of their registration application. Parents can't just drop everything to work "around the clock" on their show cause response. Please don't make things harder for families who are trying to pursue the best education possible for their children.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider these additional concerns regarding this important issue.

Please remove identifying information below before publication.

Kind regards,

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[REDACTED]
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