


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

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**Submitted by:**   
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**Submitter Comments:**

Attn: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Re: EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (the EGPA). I am writing with regards to the proposed changes to the regulation of Home Education. I am a Home Educator with three young children. Our eldest child attended a local state school for Prep and the first two terms of Year 1, before we registered for home education last year. We have found that the change to home education has been significantly beneficial for all of our children, and I am deeply concerned that some of these benefits are under threat with the proposed changes to the EGPA.

Specifically, I am concerned by the following proposed changes:

- (1) The proposed requirement for the educational program for a child registered for home education to be consistent with the Australian Curriculum; and
- (2) The vague wording of the new guiding principle providing that home education should be provided in a way that is in the best interests of the child or young person.

My reasons for these concerns are as follows.

### Concerns regarding the requirement to follow the Australian Curriculum

I am deeply committed to providing our children with a high-quality education that provides them with a solid foundation for engagement with higher education, employment and society. However, there are several reasons why a requirement to follow the Australian Curriculum would hinder my efforts to provide this in a home education context, including:

- **Reduced flexibility to respond to the individual needs of our children:** In our home school, we have selected a number of high-quality educational programs that are tailored to the needs of our children. I adjust the pace of learning to suit each child. Our ability to do so would be significantly hindered by a requirement to follow the Australian Curriculum in the order and pace at which it is set out.
- **Logistical challenges of teaching children of different ages:** In home education, children of different ages often participate in lessons together for certain subjects (while other subjects are taught individually). For example, we learn history together, with different historical periods covered and repeated in a four-year cycle. This is much more time efficient, as well as fun! Children engage in the lesson at their own level, and will have repeated exposure to learning about different time periods as they mature. However, a requirement to follow the Australian Curriculum would make it difficult to teach in this way, as the Curriculum was developed with separate age cohorts in mind, and requires particular content to be taught at particular stages in a child's educational journey.
- **Reduced opportunity to engage in learning opportunities beyond the Australian Curriculum:** The time required to cover all aspects of the Australian Curriculum at the stage required, would reduce opportunity for extended or additional learning valued for our children. For example, we place a high value on global history and geography, poetry and works of literature, classical art and music, which are not covered in depth in the

Australian Curriculum. I believe our children would have a less rich and expansive education, were we required to adhere to the Australian Curriculum.

- **Increased burden of paperwork on home educators:** As a home educator, I have invested hours of time in researching and selecting (as well as purchasing) the educational programs and resources I believe will best meet the needs of our children. Currently, in order to register with and report to the Home Education Unit, I am free to simply outline what these programs include and indicate how I will teach and assess our children's learning. The requirement to align this plan to the Australian Curriculum would introduce a significant burden of additional paperwork which I believe is unnecessary, and would take away from the time I can spend actively investing in our children's education.

Furthermore, I believe that it is the right and responsibility of parents to provide the education they deem appropriate and best suited to their children and family situation, provided this is of a high quality. While the Australian Curriculum may be one such educational framework, parents should have the option of accessing either the Australian Curriculum or another appropriate education and training program. There are numerous examples of high-quality education programs from around the world, which parents may deem to be more appropriate for their children than the Australian Curriculum. Personally, we have found that the education program we have implemented at home, which draws on a number of high-quality resources selected for their suitability to our individual children, has resulted in far greater educational, social and personal outcomes than our child's experience in state school.

### Concerns regarding determining what is in the “best interests” of the child or young person

I am also concerned by the vague wording around the “best interests” of the child or young person. My concerns include:

- Who will determine what is in a particular child's “best interests”?
- What will happen if the state and parents disagree about what is in a child's “best interests”?
- What process of consultation and/or appeal will exist?
- What are the guiding principles, beliefs and values which will be used to determine what is in a child's “best interests”?

I am absolutely committed to providing what is in the best interests of my children. I believe that this includes being educated in a personalised, loving home environment, with access to a range of educational and social opportunities beyond the home, which are not available in a school context. I strongly urge the Committee to ensure that the right and responsibility of parents to determine what is in the best interests of their own children, is protected by any changes to the EGPA.