

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 820
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Submitter Comments:

To the Parliamentary Committee, It has been brought to my attention that there are proposed changes to various Education Acts that will have an impact on homeschooling families. In particular, I understand the changes require parents to demonstrate that they are following an approved program (I presume ACARA?), with an increased burden on reporting requirements, and unclear requirements to demonstrate "educational progress". As someone who was predominantly homeschooled by my parents in the 80s and 90s, and who has homeschooled their oldest daughter, if these requirements had been in place previously, it would have been nearly impossible for me to receive the education I did or for my child to do so. While I am sure these changes are made with the aim of ensuring that all children in Australia have access to a similar quality of education, many homeschooling parents deliberately withdraw their children from school to give them access to a type of education that can *not* be achieved by the national curriculum. For instance, it could be that a child has development issues or neurodivergency, and a more personalised form of education is considered necessary by the parents. Sometimes, a child is more advanced in one subject but not another, and homeschooling allows an ability to adjust the speed of advancement to a child's individual abilities. And sometimes, parents would just like to have their own say in what their children learn, which is surely a right? In short, this feels like a somewhat draconian throwback to my childhood when my parents were continually asked how whether I would survive without "socialisation". Fast-forward to 2024, and despite whatever the feared drawbacks of homeschooling might have been, I completed a mathematics & statistics degree, worked for three of Australia's largest classical music companies, and have been part of leadership teams at my workplaces for the last seven years. Far from being a coincidence, it is the out-of-the-box thinking and ability to teach myself and constantly improve - skills gleaned from my homeschooling - that have taken me this far in life. All of my fellow homeschooling students from my childhood have grown up to be responsible and successful members of society, many of whom were not thriving in a traditional school context. I would ask the committee to consider not placing a burden on the next generation of homeschooling students, which would either force them back into less-than-ideal school situations that may not work for those students, or alternatively might drive an increase of off-the-grid homeschooling, allowing for ever less accountability. Thank you for considering my submission.