

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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**Subject: Objection to the proposals Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2024 - Homeschooling**

Dear Parliamentary Committee,

I am a parent to two children, one is at a local catholic primary school and the other I homeschool who is of high school age and is autistic. Before commencing homeschooling, I was a senior principal water engineer with nearly 20 years experience. I am writing today to state that I wholeheartedly object to the proposals in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 regarding homeschooling.

In particular, I object to the following:

- **Removal of Provisional registration**

I started homeschooling my child at the beginning of last year as we had to pull her out of the local catholic high school as she was experiencing extreme levels of anxiety and was finding going to school daily impossible. I needed the provisional registration so we could pull her out of the high school, look after her as she went through this painful experience, attend therapy and work out how to do homeschooling that would benefit our child. There was no chance for forward planning when we were in this horrible experience and doing a plan before pulling our child from school. The current provisional registration and time frame was the pause we needed for our family.

In addition, families new to homeschooling require a substantial amount of time to get their heads around homeschooling and to create a plan that best suits the families' values and the child's

level. In particular, the families who are dealing with the fallout of why their child is no longer at school. If this is removed, families will feel trapped whilst their child is unsafe at school and they are preparing a plan and then waiting for approval. This would add more to a traumatic event which is not necessary or kind.

You need to account for time for families regardless of how we come to homeschooling decision we need time to make the best plan possible for our children.

- **Defining Suitable Educational Environment**

This is of deep concern that this proposed change creates an overreach of the government into what is deemed suitable for our children. Who defines what is suitable?

When my child could not attend school due to her extreme anxiety it was up to us, her parents to determine what was suitable for her ie what was mentally best for our child. We are the experts on our child. We sought advice from our child's psychologist and others who homeschool children with and without mental and neurodivergent challenges. We had to change the homeschooling curriculum for our child several times over the last year to ensure her mental well-being was looked after. As parents it is our right to deem what educational environment is suitable for our children whether they go to a private school, state school or are homeschooled. We have found homeschooling an extremely beneficial environment for our child.

- **Changes to registration certificate**

I object to the change to registration from certificate to notice. Removing the HEU certificate and replacing it with a notice diminishes the formal recognition and authenticity. Certificates carry

weight and credibility, while a mere notice lacks the same level of legitimacy and may not be perceived as equally valuable or official.

I also take issue with any details of my child's education being listed in centrelink apart from that they are homeschooled. I find it unacceptable that I must now provide other government department's private and personal information about my children when proving their registration status. This is absolutely not required of a student who attends the school system and is a serious oversight in the provisions of this amendment.

- **Redefining high quality education as national school curriculum**

Firstly, this change in legislation would be pushing children and families to the absolute brink if we had to follow, teach and report on the national schools curriculum. Homeschooling is not school.

My child was absolutely overwhelmed by the national school curriculum when she attended high school which added to her distress and led to her leaving school. I use a goals based plan for her which in part has aspects of the national schools curriculum but in part is about following her interest and just getting her back to basics of computer skills and life skills as that is all her mental health can handle. After a year of homeschooling catered to her needs and level, my child is now starting to be interested in learning again and is asking amazing questions which we research and learn from. It is only in having less on her plate that she is able to come out of trauma. Our plan this year as she improves is to use more of the homeschooling resources to round out her education. We are a family who values a love of learning, and it was only doing homeschooling that this has now returned for our child.

Secondly, while I appreciate the aim to ensure all children receive a quality education, I believe the proposed bill overlooks the unique needs and benefits of homeschooling. The statement that

"every child deserves the same access to quality education" is indeed true. However, it is essential to recognize that homeschooling families already have access to the Australian National Curriculum if they choose to follow it. Many families opt for homeschooling precisely because it allows for a more tailored and personalized educational experience that goes beyond what the curriculum offers.

And lastly, by mandating adherence to a standardized curriculum, the proposed legislation fails to acknowledge the diverse learning styles and needs of individual children. It risks imposing a one-size-fits-all approach that may not be suitable for all learners. It also takes away the rights of parents to choose what is best for their children it is no different to parents choosing a local high school or private school.

Instead of imposing restrictions on homeschooling families, I urge you to consider the already existing alternative approaches that support and encourage the flexibility and innovation that homeschooling provides.

Let us work together to ensure that every child receives a quality education that meets their unique needs and aspirations.

Kind Regards,

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