

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
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19/03/2024

I am writing to oppose the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, in particular Clause 68.

I am a mother of a seven year old girl who has never been to school, and is absolutely thriving, as a passionate and proud learner. I see home education as the greatest gift myself and my husband will ever give to our daughter. Each day she has the time and freedom to explore her interests - one leads to another, and she can dive deep into the subject, for as long as she wants.

She is currently interested in insects, animals, singing, beatboxing, drawing, storytelling, jokes, science experiments, photo-editing, theatre, acrobatics, life cycles, the mind, space, evolution, Ancient Egypt, the Titanic, indigenous cultures, Japan and much more. She has learned parts of what's in the Australian Curriculum, simply by living a rich life, full of real world experiences and interactions out in public. Parts of the curriculum, and so very much more. And the more she has learnt, is that which is important to her, relevant to her life. It's pointless trying to make someone learn something they have no interest in. Maybe they'll be interested in it later, or maybe never. We're all unique individuals, and our lives will go in many different directions. Why would we all need to have the exact same knowledge? And if it was forced upon us, without us being interested, would we even retain it? (In my experience, no.)

My daughter learns a lot through teaching (she is the teacher). She has recently been teaching her toys addition, and how to count to 100. She teaches them how to sound out words so they can read the menu she's written up. She first has to learn herself, then gain the confidence that she understands, and then she goes on to "teach", cementing the information in her mind. She has done this since the age of three. She conducts drawing tutorials for me to follow, and teaches her dad and I dance moves, and front flips. This all takes time - a lot of time to play, and figure things out. The Australian Curriculum is too crowded and rigid and time consuming for us. Why take my daughter away from learning what she is passionate about, only to try to make her learn something that has no relevance to her at that moment?

I have been an Early Childhood Educator for the past 20 years. I have cared for children, fostering their development from when they were babies until they were ready to go to "big school." I have seen their curiosity, their imagination, their drive to experiment, practice and discover. I have seen that, along with a nurturing and committed guide, they can be trusted to take the lead in their learning. This doesn't need to stop once children reach the age of 5 or 6.

Imposing the Australian curriculum onto our and the many other home educating families, would be so utterly stifling and pointless. Why not instead honour our children's unique selves, and allow them to tread their own paths, with their fully committed parents by their sides, fostering their learning in the ways that our children need? We don't need a cookie-cutter approach.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the committee to recognise the importance of

flexibility and individualised learning in homeschooling and to refrain from imposing unnecessary restrictions that may hinder our children's educational journey. Let us continue to embrace the freedom and flexibility that homeschooling affords, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education that meets their unique needs and aspirations. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Doherty

