

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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We believe the legislative initiatives proposed in the bill threaten to encroach upon the fundamental rights of parents, particularly parents who elect to educate their children from home. Home schooling rates increased by 194% from 2019 to 2023. Instead of turning on parent's, this Government needs to turn the mirror on themselves and ask the big question, why are so many families making the choice to educate from home? We have received a high quantity of feedback from parents setting out the reasons why they deemed home education to be the best option for their family. The predominant causes behind the home education rate increase includes dissatisfaction with the current curriculum, uncontrolled student behaviour including bullying, and learning and behavioural difficulties that cannot be properly addressed in the mainstream education system (whether public or private) and under the current curriculum.

Of most concern to us are the following clauses of the bill:

Clause 18 – Provides amongst other things that home education of a child should be provided in a way that is in the best interests of the child and also ensures they receive a high-quality education.

Clause 68 – Provides amongst other things that any home education program must be consistent with an approved education and training program (defined as the Australian curriculum), that a parent of the child must give the chief executive a written report for the period the child is registered for home education and in relation to each subject and the report must be accompanied by evidence satisfactory to the chief executive that demonstrates the educational progress of the child.

The removal of gendered language throughout the entire Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.

Who determines what is in the best interest of the child, is it the Government? Is it also the Government that decides what constitutes a high-quality education? Increased reporting requirements and the need to provide evidence of a child's educational progress only gives the Government more ammunition to use against families educating from home if this evidence does not suit the Government's narrative. There is little commentary in the bill, or the accompanying material that indicates the Government is willing to work with parents or support them. The language used is quite demanding and oppressive.

Kind Regards,
Shannon Roche-Pratt

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