

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation
Date: Monday, 18 March 2024 9:32:10 AM

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes in homeschooling legislation, particularly the requirement to follow a specific curriculum.

I am not a homeschooling parent. I have chosen to send my children to mainstream school for a variety of personal reasons, including economic reasons.

I value attempts to benchmark and streamline education delivered by teachers in schools, via the Australian National Curriculum. I can appreciate teachers educate 25-30+ students at a time, these children are not their own children, and teachers usually change classes each year. In my observation, teachers seem to want and welcome some guidance as to what and how to teach, and benchmarks to assess their teaching performance against, so they can feel safe and successful in the job they are doing. I can appreciate that having standardisation around this would be beneficial for all.

Having said this, I have concerns about trying to enforce standardisation of this nature in the homeschooling sphere of education. Whilst I don't homeschool myself, I have looked into it for our family, because I think it offers a unique and potentially optimised learning option for children and families. There are circumstance such that even with economic and family pressures as they are, I would choose to homeschool in the best interest of my children (e.g., if my child's physical, mental, or social health was compromised by being unable to keep up with the National Australian Curriculum; if they were unable to keep up socially at school and this was resulting in mental health problems; if they wanted to self-guide their education in high-school and could put a reasonable proposal to me and demonstrate capacity to follow it through, etc).

I understand that schools try to implement adjusted educational plans for students who need them. However, in my observation this is difficult. My understanding of this is: if teachers take 25% of their attention for themselves (e.g., to notice their own functioning in the classroom with regards to following the Curriculum and otherwise regulating mood and behaviour, etc.), and then the remaining time and attention is divided equally between 25-30 students in their class, each child can expect to receive, at best, 3% of the teachers time and attention. Even if the teacher was to forsake any attention for themselves, which would be impossible, and 100% of their time and attention was divided equally between students in their class, the best that could be offered would be 4% of the teacher's time and attention. When some children require individualised education plans, this takes away from the very limited time and attention the teacher already has for other students in the class. When there are two or more students with specialised needs there is even less to go around for students generally.

Hence, I can see the value in homeschooling families wanting to educate their own children, to give them the time and specialised education they are conscientiously sacrificing other things to provide. I would want this for myself and my own family as well, if and when I choose to access it.

From my perspective, the essence of homeschooling lies in the freedom it affords children to learn in a manner that aligns with individual needs, interests, skills, abilities, and learning styles. I notice that the Australian National Curriculum is available to all and many homeschool families draw upon it, some even follow it completely, as suits their own children's learning needs. However, I can see the value in home educators being able to draw on other curriculums that are unsuited to school-based education environments but are very well suited to 1:1, 1:2, or even 1:5 educator to student ratios, and which are known to support students to thrive.

My significant concern is that by imposing a mandated curriculum, these proposed changes stand to impede this valuable alternative to a school-based education, resulting in worsened rather than improved outcomes for children and society as intended. From my perspective, the best interest of children is likely to be served by maintaining real and distinct options for children and families, and supporting children and families to make mindful and informed decisions about educational matters, as suits their individualised needs.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Samara Mill
(Concerned Community Member)

