

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Committee Secretary,

I'm writing to you today to voice my concern to the proposed amendments for home education under the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

One of the changes is the requirement for parents to prove that home education is in the best interest of the child, I feel this is an unfair requirement to place on home educators and if the tables were turned I believe it would be hard for the school system to prove that it is in the best interest of every child to be educated in a Public or Private school system. As a mother who has had a child in school for 4 years, another for 2 years and one who has never been to school, my experience shows me that it is in my children's best interest to be home educated. My eldest who was quiet smart had a terrible teacher in grade 3, she was not allowed to go to the bathroom for toilet breaks in teaching time. That's an 8 year old who is not allowed to be in charge of her own bladder, even most workplaces adults attend are not that strict. Her teacher was unable to cope with the other kid's behaviour and would scream at the kids, a quick google search for detrimental effects of screaming at kids gives you this... "Research shows that yelling and harsh verbal discipline can have similar negative effects as corporal punishment. Children who are constantly yelled at are more likely to have behavioural problems, anxiety, depression, stress, and other emotional issues". On top of the teacher being problematic, as my daughter was new to the school that year, she didn't fit in easily and the kids were also horrible to her, teasing her for being smart, teasing her for what food she had in her lunch box, she stopped eating her lunch at school. At the start of that year, I gave the school system a healthy 8 year old, A student. We didn't even make it to the end of the year of schooling and the school gave me back an anxiety ridden, skinny C student. Fortunately for the opportunity to home educate my child, which has seen her anxiety reduce, she is a healthy weight and I'm seeing her actively apply herself in learning again. So to my point, why as a home educator should I have to prove that home education is the best interest for my child when a Public School education system failed us by not providing the best interests for my child. Whilst it's unclear at this time what the requirements will be to prove that Home Education will be in the best interest for my child, if it comes down to proving that the school education is

worse, then I ask, why should it have to get so bad in the school educational system to be able to be granted permission to home school? I think parents should have the choice, without having to prove it, to choose the education they want for their child/ren whether it be Public or Private school education or home education.

The increased compliance burden for home education students to follow the Australian Curriculum is unnecessary and is not in the best interest of the child or parent/teacher. In high school, a teacher is allocated for each subject. A Maths Teacher, a Science Teacher, an English Teacher, a Physical Education Teacher, History and Social Science Teacher, Arts Teacher, Manual Arts Teacher, etc you get my point. One teacher is appointed one, two maybe three subjects to be well versed in and teach to students. There is not one high school teacher I know of that teaches all the subjects in the Australian Curriculum so why should this be thrown upon a home education parent who does not have a University Degree in Teaching. Not to say that I don't think a parent teacher has no value due to lack of qualifications or because the Australian Curriculum is not followed, quite the opposite. It should be obvious that all these subjects are not necessary for one profession. As a Politician, how has your time spent in Physical Education, Manual Arts and Science at school aided you in your current occupation? As such, instead of spending 5-6 hours a day stressing the parents and child out to meet the requirements of the curriculum, the children are given the freedom to explore their interests. Most parent home educators ensure that kids are educated in the basics, such as English language, Maths etc. In fact, I currently have all my kids doing an Australian Curriculum workbook in Maths and Science and the kids enjoy this because the learning is relevant to everyday life. We choose to explore other subjects with real world applications as opposed to having it forced upon them. This enables their learning to be flexible, relevant, and engaging, and when these factors happen the kids actually take it in and learn. When it is irrelevant and boring, even if the time is taken to teach them, they aren't learning. I personally remember switching off at school if it was boring and irrelevant, and I'm sure I'm more of the majority not the minority. I think forcing a curriculum on children would have a negative impact on their mental health, much like is experience in the current stressful set ups of most school systems.

To add, whilst I speak from a mother's perspective about my homeschooling children, the feedback I get from the community weekly, if not daily, is how confident, well-mannered, and lucky my children are. The community notices that the kids get the freedom to be kids first thing in the morning without the stress of racing to be at school on time. They notice that the kids aren't highly strung from the chaos of a stressed-out teacher who is stretching herself thin teaching and dealing with behavioural issues with a high number of kids in a classroom, the kids aren't peer pressured into the latest fads and social media technology and they aren't overwhelmed from the excessive school workload and pressures of testing.

I understand the reason for changes to the bill has come to light due to home educators who have neglected their kid's educational needs, and possibly social and mental health needs. I feel that the neglectful home educators make up 1% – 5% (at a stretch)

of the home educators. I cannot see how the proposed changes will locate the neglectful home educators, otherwise you would already be able to do so with the current plan requirements. As such, if this is the main concern for changes, I would encourage you to think of alternative methods to flush out neglectful home educators. Whilst I don't think I have the solutions to a difficult problem, the only suggestion I could put forward is home educators committing on their plan to having the kids involved in some form of group involvement free or paid... eg. whether it be a sport, community home education meet up, online home education meet ups etc. Although again, I would imagine most home education parents are already doing this and have it listed in their annual plans.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the concerns I, and others, have with the proposed changes.

Kind regards,

Kylie Gilroy