

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1076
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To the Committee,

I am writing to object to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Bill 2024 in the current form. I have specific concerns with the implications of Clauses 18, 64 & 68 and I am in support of the Free2homeschool Movement.

As a grandparent that has been associated with the home education community for many years through my grandchildren and other members in the community we have built, I do not want to see the children restricted to using the Australian Curriculum. This curriculum is a one size fits all approach and I believe the home educated child should have access to a variety of curriculum alternatives and experiences, which are more suitable to meet the needs of each individual child – being custom made and suited more particularly to them, than moulding the Australian Curriculum itself to fit a child.

From what I experience in watching my own grandchildren learn and develop over the years, their education has not been negatively impacted through using a broad range of learning opportunities that I have been actively involved in. I have been a part of their education, as well as that of many other children in our local and growing community, using my expertise in languages to offer my skills to other families through group social events incorporating LOTE skills and seeing the benefit of these home educated students learning without the curriculum. I have never experienced a time in my years of expertise and experiences in the home education community where I have ever had a concern for a child in regards to their education and learning opportunities or their safety.

The parents I have crossed paths with have a solid understanding of their own children, know what is best for them and believe in the freedom of education that home education provides to their children; being able to offer a higher-quality education, that has been more beneficial, than I have ever witnessed in the schooling system to date. I believe education to be a unique experience, the interests of each child to also be unique, and I believe the education opportunities delivered to the child need to be just as unique – which is not what the Australian Curriculum enforced on home education is going to achieve – instead I will find it to be very restrictive and not in line with the child receiving a high-quality education as it will stifle their opportunities to branch out in interests and depth of learning.

In addition I feel that reporting into every area of the proposed plan each year to be too much emphasis on performance and compliance, taking away from the learning opportunities of each child – moving the emphasis from the learning experience and putting it onto performance and compliance. Plus the concerns I have about this being more than what is required in

mainstream schooling to 'demonstrate educational progress' across the board. How is the Home Education Unit going to cope with the additional load and how is requiring more compliance of the parent adding to the child's education when it takes time away from those educational experiences?

I also have concerns with the wording as "in the best interests of the child" teamed with "safety and wellbeing", which has the notion of bringing in child safety, health and family law constraints into education. It is undermining parental rights, the importance of the family unit, and the overall development of the child – because it is shifting the primary focus off the child as a whole person and into focusing too much on purely the academic side being the main focus of what is defined as in the best interests, whilst foregoing the importance of every other part of the child as a whole – sending the message that the family unit is not adequate enough to meet the child's needs through having to show more proof through onerous compliance measures that are irrelevant to education of the whole child.

When I have conversations from parents in my community, they actually express that their mindset is around having to send their child to school as a default, but I believe the home education experience deserves the same level of respect and families deserve the freedom to choose. The notion that only the professionals can deliver a high-quality education and not the parent is untrue and needs to be dispelled as a whole, through understanding and connecting with the home education community more effectively.

These proposed changes will have a detrimental effect on tens of thousands of children across the state, changing the central view on education and delivering a more compliance based approach that fails to recognise and respect the emphasis of a whole child education, whilst still failing to deliver any real support to the home education community.

Kind regards,

Dominique Rivero

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