

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1085
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Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed legislation that seeks to impose restrictive measures on home-schooling families, pretends to know what is best for our children and seeks to hold home-schooling families at a higher standard than their peers who chose to send their children to school.

We do not support the legislation proposal as it undermines the very nature and effectiveness of home-schooling; in meeting the individual and unique needs of our children.

We have made the conscious choice to home-school our children to ensure that their education experience is tailored to their individual needs and provides a safe and supportive setting away from the bullying and pressures of main stream school environments. Home-schooling allows us to create an atmosphere that nurtures the children's strengths and interests, but at the same time allows them to be stretched to reach their potential. They are free to be children and explore, experiment and grow into confident and thoughtful individuals.

My oldest son was very shy as a young child and would not leave me even to be with a small group. Gently we nurtured him and encouraged him and now he is very confident and has no concerns with addressing a large crowd. This is only one of the many benefits of the gentle, encouraging nature of home-schooling and the individual approach to each child's needs and personality.

Furthermore, we vehemently disagree with the notion that a quality education is defined solely by adherence to the Australian National Curriculum, and object to a national curriculum being forced onto home-school families. One size does not fit all. The current Australian Curriculum is ridged and over crowded with the sheer volume of content making it feel overwhelming not just for teachers, but the students that must adhere to it. For home-school families, the national curriculum represents a yoke that threatens to stifle the potential of our children.

It is important for the committee to recognise that there is not one singular way to educate a child. Home-schooling empowers the parents; (whom knows their children best), to design an education plan that is creative and individualised to meet the child's strengths and interests and to adapt the learning to suit the child's learning style. As a home-school mum; education is not just academics, but encouraging my children in all areas of their development to be the best they can be and help them achieve their dreams and aspirations. It lays the foundations for a lifetime of curiosity and learning.

I also firmly object to being held to a higher standard than a school. The legislation proposes that as home-schoolers we not only would need to follow the national curriculum, but demonstrate the education progress on every subject within the plan and report along with samples for all 8 subjects.

Teachers do not have that burden on them and it is unfair to expect home-schoolers to fulfil such a requirement. We are already required to provide a high quality education and plan and report on an annual basis to HEU.

The extra planning and reporting the legislation seeks to impose on us would take valuable time away from our children in order to perform the demands of politics that does not fully understand what we do and why we chose to home-school.

As parents we are responsible for the best interest of our children and their education also. As home-schooling parents we do not make the choice to home-school because it is easy. It is easier to send your child to school where someone else has endless hours of planning and reporting. And someone else is responsible for addressing and fixing any learning deficit the child may experience.

As parents who chose to home-school we make many sacrifices; all for our children and because we desire to see them reach their potential, overcome their fears and achieve their dreams. We make sacrifices for our children; it is not the easy option, but one we make for their good.

The homeschooling system is not broken. Rather than punishing us who have taken initiative and made sacrifices to provide a high quality education for our children and have the best interest of our children in mind; perhaps the government would do more good by supporting the current HEU (Home Education Unit) as numbers increase. And by supporting the HEU and the system that already ensures a high quality education is provided; we as parents would be free to educate our children with a comprehensive, personalised approach that suits each child.

We are deeply concerned about the short sightedness of the proposed changes and see it as an infringement upon our rights as parents to educate our children in the manner we see fit. Our children's education is not up for negotiation and we will defend our rights to provide them with the highest quality education experience.

Yours Sincerely
Jennifer Hochmuth

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