

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1233
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Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

I am a resident of New South Wales and have been homeschooling our daughter for the last two years. I am writing to express my concern about the proposed amendments to the education bill, that have been recently discussed in parliament. As a home educator to a child with several disabilities I will NOT support these changes. With or without disabilities, parents have the right to home educate their children. The school system is failing our children. Classrooms are crowded, bullying is out of control and mental health problems are through the roof. Teachers are overworked and underpaid. Our daughter spent the first two years of schooling in a support unit at a public school. To those on the outside of our family she seemed to like school and cope well. As a family, we knew different. We saw the aftermath of holding her anxiety and emotions in, all day everyday. She would meltdown before we were even in the house, after picking her up from school. She was barely eating or drinking. She was toileting once a day, sometimes once every two days (bladder). She was refusing any attempt at personal hygiene, despite our best efforts. She was completely different to our other children, yet she has been parented the same way. She IS completely different to our other children, that is the point. She needs to be parented and educated according to HER needs, disabilities and strengths. With the support of our medical team and many days, weeks and months of discussions, we removed her from school and registered to homeschool. It was the best decision we could have made. She went from being close to a hospital admission, to a thriving and happy child. *Home education allows us to tailor an education plan to her pace and style, that she is comfortable with. *We have flexibility to work around therapy appointments which she has every week. *We have freedom to pursue interests and attend community events. *We can take our time to master a subject, deep diving into a topic of interest instead of skimming the surface. *Learning from home ensures there are no distractions or risk of sensory overload. Our daughter is able to work in a calm, comfortable, safe and supportive environment. *Our daughter won't be exposed to bullying or peer pressure while learning from home. *We can spend more time in the community, participating in activities, out in nature, spending quality time with family and friends. *Home education encourages socialisation with people of all ages within the community, not just forced socialisation with a group of children at certain times of the day. *It encourages independence and self directed learning. *It allows for rest and movement breaks as needed. *Our daughter has the freedom to eat when she is hungry and attend the bathroom as needed. Reducing her anxiety around these situations, which were extreme for her. Since starting home schooling our daughter has attended art group, yoga, indoor soccer, lego group, girls club and nature group. All activities that she wouldn't have had the time to go to if she was still at school. We attend excursions and events organised by our local homeschooling group as well. What concerns me with regards to these amendments is:-Who will be deciding what is in the best interest for OUR child? Who decides whether OUR child is a suitable candidate for homeschooling? How will they decide? Can we appeal the decision? How will OUR child integrate back into the school system? The same school system that caused her so much anxiety she couldn't eat, drink or attend to her daily living skills. Who is going to deal with the meltdowns every afternoon after a day at school because she can't cope? Who will be fighting for help from the health services when OUR daughter resorts to self harm because she can't cope? No one knows OUR daughter as well as us. We are the people that have been with her since birth, and probably will be until our death. So why is the government wanting to be the decision maker in OUR daughters education? The home education sector isn't broken, the school system is! If you want to fix something try fixing that!