

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1250
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Submitter Comments:

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation
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. My family has chosen to homeschool our daughter for the last two years as we strongly disagree with some of the policies brought out during Covid, such as the then requirement for high school aged students to restrict their breathing by having to wear a mask in class, despite the overwhelming evidence that mask wearing is not only not effective against a virus, but also detrimental due to re-breathing of CO₂, limited levels of oxygen, and increased bacterial load. Since this year, my daughter has been enrolled in distance education, as she wished to have the more formal structure, combined with the flexibility of homeschooling. One of the key reasons why parents choose to homeschool is because the one-size-fits-all approach does not allow for differences in a child's ability to learn or learning through different styles of presentation. It also does not stimulate creativity and allow for the family to explore and pursue deeper learning in the child's particular skills and interests. Homeschooling can provide opportunities for the development of critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning skills that may not be emphasized in a standardized curriculum. Allowing flexibility in curriculum choices enables families to prioritize the development of these skills alongside academic content. The requirement to report on all learning areas is not only not going to lessen, but increase the burden on the regulator, as well as on the parent, especially if there are multiple children in the family, which seems to be the typical situation for homeschooling families. Even school teachers are not required to report on every learning area for each child, e.g. specialist subjects such as foreign languages or music. The requirement to demonstrate 'educational progress' - how exactly is this to be determined? The government cannot mandate at what rate a child is able to learn a subject - are school children unenrolled or punished if they don't demonstrate 'educational progress'? 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, Katerina Taylor