

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

**Submission No:** 1274  
**Submitted by:** Tara Ries  
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**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee Members,

**RE: Submission to object to the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendments Bill 2024 regarding mandatory implementation of the Australian Curriculum on homeschooling families.**

I am a proud autistic woman and mother to four beautiful children; two of whom are also autistic along with several other diagnoses. My experience with mainstream education growing up was a disaster and eventually ended with me leaving school early to join the unemployment benefits line. Thankfully, after leaving mainstream education I was eventually able to find a love for learning again and have since gone on to complete two traineeships, several certificates, and enter university as a mature age student. I am able to contribute to the community instead of being a financial burden on taxpayers due to finding an education pathway tailored to my unique circumstances. This is the future I want for my children; to be independent adults making a positive contribution to society.

**I strongly object to the mandatory implementation of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA)** as the only acceptable education model for homeschooling participants. A neurodiverse person could be described as the perfect definition of a square peg. Mandatorily enforcing one form of education geared specifically towards teaching neurotypical students is the perfect portrayal of the round hole. Despite your best intentions and effort, the square peg still won't go through the hole, and hammering with excessive force will only irreparably damage the peg. Neurodiverse children require an education tailored to meet their specific needs to support their development, anything less is setting the child up for failure.

In our home we use elements from several different educational pedagogies to educate and support our children's growth and development. **Many of the elements we use have been suggested by our children's therapists to best address their individual strengths and weaknesses to maximise developmental growth.** We use elements of Montessori Curriculum to build capacity in daily living skills, improve sensory issues, and to prepare the learning environment to be predictable and geared for mixed aged learning. Components of Steiner education are used to improve imaginative play, create educational experiences based on the observations of the child, and source manipulatives and resources that limit overstimulation. We approach our research and exploration during learning using the Reggio Emilia Approach, promoting curiosity and encouraging our children to undertake their own interest-based learning projects. We also use elements of ACARA for Maths and English to loosely inspire learning ideas for our lessons.

**By forcing my family to only follow ACARA you are limiting their access to a well-rounded education that currently amplifies their strengths and focuses heavily on improving their weaknesses.** This particularly becomes an issue for us when we are forced to follow the complete Australian Curriculum, as my eldest child finds many of the subjects such as art, music, drama, and physical education distressing. Furthermore, our current plan includes the study of agriculture, this is helping immensely in increasing the children's understanding of food and helping to address their eating disorders. Should we be forced to follow only ACARA this subject would not be in their plan until high school, missing a valuable opportunity to follow their interests and complement therapy to improve their health.

Our previous experience with mainstream schooling and the Australian Curriculum has been nothing short of a disaster. Our eldest child required almost three terms at restricted hours before being able to attend for a full day at school. He was given a fulltime aid, sufficient supports, and reasonable adjustments to assist his learning, however this did not stop the

bullying, environmental overstimulation, his inability to comprehend the lessons, or his social difficulties. Ultimately, he was removed from school at the beginning of the fourth term after he began to self-harm, biting his arms and rocking for hours on end due to the stress. Home education was not our preferred educational avenue, we left no stone unturned in our quest to find an alternative before following this path. However, after our initial settling in phase this has most definitely been the best option for our children, they are now confident, engaged, curious learners and are thriving in home education.

I urge the committee to reassess its approach to the proposed home education legislation, particularly in regard to the forced implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Determining that there's only one way to approach education is extremely narrow minded and limits the future opportunities of those with neurodivergences and disabilities.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.