

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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The following is my submission covering my objections to the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendment Bill 2024. My 8 year old daughter is very bright, and has ADHD, but struggles with learning in the mainstream setting, she learns with movement and where her interest lies. The anxiety and pressure my 12 year old experiences in year 7 is unbelievable! She currently spends a 40 hour work week away from her family while she attends school and completes an astronomical amount of schooling tasks outside of school hours in her most formative teen years where we want our family values to hold true, to travel and experience the world while our children learn in a way that is meaningful for them. We want to be able to guide their learning, to foster a love of learning that they have lost at their existing schools. As a parent who is willing to sacrifice my work and income in order to support my children's education, the decision to homeschool comes with much research, thought and consultation, from a place of wanting what I know is best for my children. To give them an education that WILL allow them to go onto university if they choose to. To guide and include things we wish we had learnt from our own life experience being a part of the mainstream schooling system, whilst reducing some of the pressure, reducing the mental health impact and improve confidence. All things that are negatively impacted learning in the current system. As Albert Einstein said, 'you can't judge a fish by it's ability to climb a tree', we should not judge others based on our own narrow criteria. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and what might be considered 'genius' in one area could be considered 'stupid' in another. This is what I feel mainstream education does for children who need to learn in a different way. Forcing the same schooling methods for home schoolers just moves the problem into a different space and does not benefit the child who needs to learn outside of the box. A 'suitable' educational environment should not be determined by Government, instead of parents. Parents aren't home educating because it's the easy way out, they are educating because they believe it is the most suitable educational environment for their child. For the government to take away a choice that we the people want is a far overreach. The government is there to serve the people, not dictate to them. When a parent has a child who is refusing school, struggling with mental health at school, being physically or verbally abused, losing their spark, deflation of enthusiasm or motivation, a caring parent will act on this and do what is best for their child. We can choose to have the government determine a 'suitable' environment by enrolling in an existing school. That choice should remain. We should have the choice to home school if that is what we deem to be best for our child. As Albert Einstein said, 'you can't judge a fish by it's ability to climb a tree', we should not judge others based on our own narrow criteria. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and what might be considered 'genius' in one area could be considered 'stupid' in another. This is what I feel mainstream education does for children who need to learn in a different way. Forcing the same schooling methods for home schoolers just moves the problem into a different space and does not benefit the child who needs to learn outside of the box. Homeschooling environments provide the choice of flexibility, variety and customisation for children's learning which is essential for the successful integration and development of our children into the ever changing, and diverse world we live in. We can broaden and expand on their interests to enhance their natural strengths.

Requiring mandatory use of the Australian Curriculum would restrict many home educators from providing a suitable educational environment for their children. A child's optimal learning pathway may not match the Australian Curriculum. My question is, Why use a curriculum designed for mass education? We are clearly not mass educating, but are customising our curriculum to better suit the

needs and interests of our children. Marbina, L., Church, A. and Tayler (2011) found that “For learning to be engaging and relevant, successful integrated approaches to learning and teaching should support and build on children’s skills and interests.” “A strong interest generates its own momentum and—if you let it —that momentum will take both you and the children in all sorts of interesting directions.” (National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program, 2021). The importance of play and following children's interests in childhood learning is widely recognised but drastically missing in schools today. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework supports “Play (as) an essential element in early childhood learning and development.”(Marbina, L., Church, A. and Tayler, C. p.9).For children to be supported in their play they must be closely observed and relationally comfortable. This allows the educator to tailor the learning environment to the specific needs of the child and takes them on a far deeper learning journey. A much easier and attainable task in a home education setting as opposed to a school setting with limited adult to child ratios and requirements to meet certain curriculum targets. Teachers struggle to integrate true play based pedagogy into their educational environments because of the requirements to keep as many children as possible on the invisible line that government insist each child stands on (ie. Curriculum). When in fact the research states that individualised, interest led, tailored learning is the most beneficial for optimal learning. For mass educational purposes this is an impossible task to meet. Customised curriculum is by far the most beneficial aspect of home schooling and could also be counted as the best form of education full stop. Reduction in the time to 'show cause', when further information is needed. Grace should be given to parents to enable them time to learn what is required of them in reporting and for suitable records to be collected. Parents are not paid, like teachers and usually have no or limited training for such reports. This is in no way, however, representative of a parents suitability to home educate their children. In fact the government expectations and requirements on reporting should be made clearer, easier and accepted in a variety of formats to cater for the diverse population that it is serving. Removal of Certificate As homeschooling is a valid and legal choice for education, a Certificate is more appropriate than a 'notice' for the important work homeschoolers do. No conditions of registration or address details should be visible due to possible privacy being breached, for eg. Shared care arrangements where one parent may need to keep address private for safety reasons. Reporting on 8 different Key Learning Areas: This is far too much reporting, taking away from valuable learning/planning time with our children. Reporting should be simplified for home schoolers who are focusing more time on educating their children, time better spent with them. In conclusion, I support freedom, choice and simplification from government restrictions and requirements. s. I support better opportunities for our children to develop in their own individual strengths, with positive, customised learning opportunities. Our children grow so quickly and time spent with each other is time that is never wasted or 'unsuitable'. Yes, there are homes with unsuitable living environments and that is another matter for child protection, but home education overall is a valid alternative education that should remain free from further restrictions so that quality education can continue for our children.