

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

While I appreciate the intention to ensure access to a high-quality education for all children, I must respectfully express my disagreement to the changes to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Firstly, as a registered Homeschool parent who regularly receives communication from the Home Education Unit, I have been given no notifications to these prospective changes. Like many other Homeschool parents, I did not receive ANY email, phone call or postal communication of these changes, and as such the lack of consultation with key stakeholders in this regard is unjust and unacceptable. Additionally, I was NOT represented during a previous consultation. I noted in the Public Briefing video on the 18th March 2024, that Kathleen Forrester advised that 6 Homeschool associations were consulted. This is impossible as there is not 6 associations in Australia for Homeschooling. There are however many businesses who profit from home schoolers; but these are not associations that consult and liaise with homeschooling parents, rather act with their own self-interest for a profit. This identifies that there is a lack of transparency in the processes and incorrect information in the data gathering for these proposed changes to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, and therefore this Bill should not proceed in its current state. Please outline to me: How the Education department identified who to involve in 'representative consultation'? Was a broader call for possible participants sent to registered home educators? Why were businesses possible participants, but a 'roundtable' of home education facilitators was not? Given the high level of evidence-based criticism against the proposed changes, how can you be confident that consultation was indeed adequate? The Department recently emailed registered home educators to advise them of the changes and direct them to the Committee for a submission. However, many people did not receive this email. Please investigate a possible flaw in the emailing process. Many home education parents (approximately 300 according to the Department website) responded to a survey as part of a first round of consultation, of these can you please advise: How many agreed with the suggestion to connect the definition of High-Quality Education to ACARA? For context, please detail of the 20% who Kathleen Forrester stated uses the Australian Curriculum, what percentage of these are early home schoolers who use third parties to help design their first curriculum? What evidence exists that the proposed changes will lead to better educational outcomes for children? Does the Government intend to prevent university level study for registered home educated children? Lastly, I wish to draw attention to the studies of Dr Rebecca English dated 14th March 2024. As a Senior Lecturer and University Researcher into Home Education, she concludes that "the approach proposed to be legislated in this bill is likely to have only one impact: driving homeschoolers underground". As a Home School parent of 8 years, I personally believe this statement to be true. Home Education does require changes, but the changes proposed have been designed with a lack of transparency and regard for key stakeholders.