

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Att Committee members. I am writing as a parent who opted to homeschool my 5 children I strongly disagree with the proposed legislative changes in education aimed at homeschoolers, for which I have not been given a voice, nor been given the opportunity for representation by those who hold my views. I also feel that homeschooling community advocates such as Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald who are very active in the homeschooling community and advocate heavily have been deliberately and actively excluded. The proposed changes appear to be driven by a distinct lack of understanding or interest in the motivation on why many families homeschool. In all honesty I think that you should be looking at what's going wrong within schools that's motivated families to homeschool. And what also should be acknowledged is that not all kids are the same and don't learn the same so they should not expect children to all be taught the same. I have 6 children and quite a complex family who are all neurodiverse. My oldest child who's soon to be 21 completed year 10 in mainstream school and her mental health declined majorly due to her being diagnosed with Borderline personality disorder and struggled to keep up, was bullied and didn't feel she could fit in. with multiple attempts to take her own life while at school and the constant tears we allowed her to drop out of school and get a job or study via online. She did both. She was pushed through school and her subjects even if she didn't understand any of it or retain anything. I didn't know about homeschooling then. If I did I would have taken her out sooner and help nurture her mental health and her learning difficulties because that is the best interest of my child. I decided it was in the best interest of my other 5 children to homeschool for many reasons. Mostly due to schools not being equipped to handle neurodiverse needs. I spent my days up and down from schools because they could not manage my Childrens overwhelm and emotions coming out in the forms of absconding or throwing tables or hiding under tables. instead of trying to get to the underlying issue on why those behaviours were happening and having supports or redirection in place i would have my Autistic children excluded and I would have to come and collect them. No matter what plans I tried to have in place recommended by therapists they were not equipped enough to adhere to them. In my opinion I believe that all committee and education departments should have a better understanding around Autism and ADHD and also PDA kids or all neurodiverse kids and how best they learn and would know that all kids present differently on the spectrum and all learn differently. I am still learning everyday on how my kids learn and they all present differently and not one plan is the same. Also everyday is different as you don't know what may trigger them that particular day. Schools have way too many children in one classroom to one teacher that they can't possibly be able to adapt to every Childs learning styles so they stick to one plan for all. It don't work for my kids who are already trying to mask being anxious due to the amount of children in one class and the noise and ongoing distractions. I was constantly told by my then 8 year old son that he does find a words all day because it kept him calm. The teachers would try and keep him secluded and doing what he likes in the hopes it would stop an outburst that would distract the class. So what was my child learning here? I also have my son who had bowel issues due to his autism that would stop him from feeling he needed to go so would poo his pants so I would also be constantly called to the school to come and clean him up as again there not equipped to deal with that. My child was getting older and it was affecting his mental health being teased and bullied. Then there is my 15 year old transgender son. He is also autistic and struggled to keep up with his class due to him also being OCD and wasn't having the time to retain information to complete the work required of him in high school. Everyday I would have him wake anxious and in tears because he didn't want to go to school. He suffered migraines very intense that was intensified due to stress of school and not keeping up or

fitting in. I could see my sons mental health declining more and more so I then looked into homeschooling and decided it was in the best interest of my son to go down this path. I don't regret my decision one bit. Let me tell you what I noticed since starting this journey back in 2021 all my kids learn differently and they were not at the grade level they were meant to be at they were way below. Since starting this journey my children are thriving. they are less anxious they are able to learn at there pace and around there interests and the day can be tailored around there needs. My 7 year old is actually doing year 5 maths. At school they would not be given the opportunity to work at where they are at. Not to mention that their interests and their skills can be explored more in depth and fostered and expanded upon with homeschooling again something that can't be fostered at schools. So while my children don't follow the ACARA the way they do at schools they very much still meet it in other ways. Did you know that children and people retain information more if they have an interest in it? Did you also know that everyone learns differently, some prefer hands on learning, or table top learning with routine. There are so many learning styles and schools just don't adapt to this. Homeschooling does. It allows us to adapt to the way our children learn so they retain the information and experience much more without being excluded or made to feel different or being bullied. If you pass legislation for us to have to follow the Australian Curriculum and report on it and plan for it then you are demonstrating you do not have the best interests of all Children.

I will actually bring to your attention the serious concerns I have about the education Bill main points are it breaches various State, federal and international Human Rights and disability laws. it will only increase unregistered homeschooling. it is taking the wrong approach to a broken institutionalised education system, thus punishing special needs even further as well as ignoring democratic rights of parents to educate their children as they see fit for the fast changing modern world. it assumes that homeschooling is bad for children and that parents are in a cult due to one case. it is ill informed about how education works and how homeschooling in particular operates for the best interest of the child in question. Not all kids are the same . The removal of provisional enrolment for homeschooling is dangerous and breaches disability law. it appears to ignore the work done by HEU to already check applications and annual reports. The enforcement of ACARA is also a breach of disability law. As a homeschooling parent I would like to ask where is the research on how, where and why mainstream schools are leading to the growth in homeschooling? why is the department obstructing rather supporting alternative means of education which reduces the departments burden of having to deal with "difficult" children? How do u base what is in the best interest of our children? Why are you not taking the time to talk to homeschool families and really listen to what's working and what isn't instead of making your own presumptions. Let me also ask you this if you look back on how the world is changing and adapting to these changes like for example years ago we had mobile phones that were like bricks and u could only call and receive from but look at them now they have changed and modernised. Now look at schools from years ago how have they changed or modernised? They Have NOT. Don't change what's not broke