

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

**Submission No:** 1514  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I'm writing to you as a homeschooling mum of one teen with serious concerns about the proposed legislation. My daughter has Generalised Anxiety Disorder, ADHD and Autism (Level 2) with a subcategory of Pathological Demand Avoidance. Our daughter attended school until grade four before we tried distance education then began homeschooling. At school, she struggled with bullying, being targeted by staff as a 'problem child' despite her initial diagnosis of Autism and developed extreme anxiety. At the time of testing (8 years) our daughter was found to have an IQ of 152 so her needs were not being met by the Australian Curriculum. As per the ACARA and school policy she was not allowed to move onto more challenging work (as that wasn't allowed to be taught until the following year) so would get bored in class, annoy her peers and subsequently get in trouble. Eventually it got to the point where she was no longer finishing her work or handing in assignments because she "was bored and didn't see the point" so her grades dropped from A's to Cs and Ds (or equivalent). Our daughter was unwell before school each morning due to anxiety, barely spoke at school or home and was hiding in the library at lunch times to stay away from the bullies. Now, on our third year of homeschooling we have a teen who is full of energy, cheeky, talks and sings nonstop and has a great group of friends. Our child loves homeschooling and has pursued more challenging work at higher levels than the curriculum allowed for, varied skill development not catered for in the ACARA and often talks about how much she prefers it to going to school. She is now highly motivated and looking at vocational options relating to her career path. The Australian Curriculum, and other approved educational programs, are one size fits all, and do not suit our child. Due to our child's Pathological Demand Avoidance it is critical that we provide an educational program tailored to her interests to keep her engaged and enjoying the learning process. We feel the ACARA was not able to meet these needs and as such resulted in our daughter disengaging from learning entirely (even with distance education which she attended for 3 years). Writing and managing our own curriculum also allows us to manage the workload, thus minimising ASD meltdowns from perceived demands, and flexibility if she's having an off day. Homeschooling allows me to meet my daughter where she is at, provide varied and enriching experiences for her, and focus on life skills rather than purely academic skills which will likely have no relevance to my daughter and her future. My major concerns lay with the fact that because these curriculum options don't suit my child, and if they are enforced as the only option, I won't be able to tailor it to my child's needs. Trained education staff were unable to do so when my child was part of the mainstream school system. I feel there needs to be improvements in the child welfare and child safety systems, and a thorough assessment of the flaws of the current school system, where children fall through the cracks on a regular basis, and where children experience trauma from peers and staff alike. Removing the choice and agency of homeschooling parents like myself who only have our children's best interests in mind, is not the solution. In conclusion, the proposed changes are not in the best interest of my family and my child, and they would be highly detrimental to my daughter's anxiety and coping abilities. Having to follow a particular curriculum would cause extreme stress and take her focus away from exploring her passions and developing life skills which will help her function in society. Forcing homeschool families to follow and report on the ACARA will likely cause many of these children (the vast majority of which are neurodiverse) to disengage from learning, struggle to hold down gainful employment and ultimately increase the number of young people relying on welfare payments, where, when provided with the right environment and tailored education these children and teens flourish. I urge you to reconsider the changes in light of my story. Yours Sincerely, A Concerned Parent