

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1525
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Dear EGPA Committee Members, Dear Committee Members, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes in home schooling legislation, particularly the requirement to follow a specific curriculum. I firmly believe these current proposed changes will be detrimental. I want to share my experiences and knowledge about the impact the Education General Provisions and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 will have. As a homeschool mum, primary producer, citizen and proud parent of three neurodivergent children, the education system is broken and what you are proposing as changes to homeschool legislation will cost lives. I have three children, one in an independent school who has had to deal with a school system that is not structured to her learning needs or flexible enough to allow her talents to shine. She has to deal with discrimination with a system not capable of flexibility and has to fight constantly to have her needs met and her IEP (Individual Education Plan) actually adhered to. She has had to deal with bullying, harassment and a sexual assault all within a school system that teaches using ACARA. I have a year seven child who I have had to remove from the school system due to bullying, educational discrimination and a system not suited to her needs, who will hopefully get to reconnect with schooling via a specialist school. Finally I have a happy, healthy, well rounded bundle of energy in my eight year old son. He is fully homeschooled and has been since age four. After seeing the ongoing damage, traditional school systems were doing to my eldest children, there was no way a traditional school could deal with my son without breaking his spirit and love of life. My children are Neurodivergent and do not learn best on a regimented schedule, for them interest based inquiry and learning will always be most beneficial. My son does not learn as per a set curriculum or year level timeframe, nor should he be forced to. Inquiry based learning draws information and resources from all areas of education. I, like most homeschooling parents source information and use curriculums from all over the world. The HEU's existing requirement to 'provide a high quality education' is something taken very seriously by homeschooling parents. I gather resources from ACARA and the New Zealand school system, as well as school systems of the UK, Ireland, France, Finland, Singapore and the US just to name a few. My son's education would be best described as having a spiked learning profile. He learning and knowledge would be at grade 4 level at some learning areas. Other areas of knowledge and learning that fall within his 'special interest' would easily rival that of a second or third year university student. He has sat and had in-depth discussions with museums curators on how best to lay out exhibits in their palaeontology exhibit's. He has politely corrected teachers during their school field trips to the museum on the correct ecology and habitats of underwater sea life, when they provided their class incorrect information. This was much to the amusement of museum staff, especially when could bring up the specific articles referencing his facts. I'm sorry but I will not tell my eight year old we cannot allow him to gain further knowledge on the applied uses of thermodynamics and hydrostatic pressures because the ACARA curriculum says at this age he needs to be working at plant and animal life stages. We as parents want and know what is best for our children. If the school system and ACARA curriculum were up to the task, don't you think we would use them? Certainly our lives as parents would be much easier and less complex. If you had any idea of the time and energy that home school parents put into sourcing and building the educational resources to fill the learning needs of our children you would think us mad. The HEU have neither the time, money or resources to come even close to complying with the legislation changes you are proposing. They understand the complex learning needs of the children that the traditional school system has failed or simply could never meet. However they have no capacity or ability to train and support parents to use ACARA effectively even

if it was the best curriculum available, which it certainly is not. Creating bureaucracy and limiting children's educational curriculum choices is not in the best interest of our children and will not improve child safety or drive innovation. With regards to the Provision registration process, parents need time to figure out what best suits their child's learning style and pace. The requirement to immediately have a student registering in a schooling system, be that a DE school or HEU is counterproductive and will do more harm than good. It will result in children disengaging from learning and homeschool families intentionally 'falling off the radar' because of a cumbersome, badly thought out brain snap to address systems that fails children. Leave the provisional registration process alone as it allows parents and learners the time and space needed to make informed decisions about their education needs. The parents who are using this process are already in a very stressful situation. Removing the provisional registration option will simply create problems in an overburdened GP's office to gain exemptions or bottleneck overstretched DE schools. The proposed legislative changes take no functional account of home educated learners who access tertiary education early or opt for different pathways. While I am happy to see education can finally now continue to age eighteen it's about the only good thing in the proposal changes. In conclusion is the current educational system broken? Yes. Will using ACARA as a curriculum requirement fix it? No. Will limiting educational resources available to homeschoolers to just the poor quality ACARA curriculum improve educational standard's? No. Will allowing education to continue to age eighteen help? Yes. Will the removal of Provisional registration process improve educational outcomes or help parents and learners in any way? No. I strongly urge that you reconsider this Bill and take into account the recommendations made by the Home Education Network as outlined below. The Home Education Network's recommendations for the legislation review are: 1. That reference to the Australian Curriculum be removed from the draft legislation, and replaced with covering the eight key learning areas, which will bring the legislation in line with the majority of other Australian jurisdictions; 2. That reference to a 'high quality education' be removed from the draft legislation; 3. That provisional registration is maintained, and that the time frames unchanged from current regulations; 4. That reference to 'best interests of the child' be removed from the draft legislation; 5. That a parent representative body similar to VHEAC in Victoria be formed so that Queensland home educators are able to collaborate with the HEU and Department of Education to formulate a workable and realistic legislative and regulatory framework. Thank you for your time in considering my concerns [REDACTED]