

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1539
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed changes to the Homeschooling legislation in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendment Bill 2024. The proposed changes in relation to Home Education are inappropriate and have not been researched and considered fully, and the voice of Home Educating parents was also not included in consultation. I have two sons with a 13 year age gap between, who both attended mainstream school following the national curriculum. They have both struggled and have both needed to be removed from school due to stress, anxiety, and not being given the right support to assist in their learning, one at the age of thirteen and the other at the age of nine. Both of my sons have natural abilities and are highly intelligent, yet struggled when being forced to learn in a way that did not work for them. My eldest son (now 25) was diagnosed with ASD at the age of thirteen but was still not given the correct support and was left traumatized by the school system. There are many reasons I am opposed to the projected changes but will discuss only a few in this submission. Firstly, the Bill aims to enforce a one size fits all approach to Home Education, just like mainstream school, which is the main reason many of us removed our children from this type of curriculum in the first place. A one size fits all curriculum is discriminatory against neurodiverse children, those with disabilities, religious beliefs, and those who are gifted and ahead of their peers. The diverse needs and circumstances of home educated students and families mean that they rely on the flexibility and autonomy of home education, and these are key principles that support the success and effectiveness of it as an educational option. Home Education has always provided families with the flexibility to tailor learning to the specific needs, interests, and values of their children. Some families choose to follow the ACARA framework as a guide, however, forcing Home Educated students to strictly adhere to it and to have Home Educators report on ALL areas of the curriculum will open up a world of problems for parents, The Home Education Unit, and the mental well-being of students. Has the impact it would have on the Home Education Unit been taken into consideration at all? This effect in relation to registration and reporting requirements would be phenomenal. Required reporting on ALL areas of the curriculum is far too much for the HEU to go through and the proposed idea for only a selection of those reports to actually be read (as suggested in consultation) would mean that the hours of report writing on the Home Educators part would most likely be of pointless effort – time that could actually be spent teaching their child something new. Secondly, the idea of removing Provisional Registration (Clause 60) is a child safety issue. The majority of Home Educators need to remove their children from a school setting due to trauma, anxiety, and declining mental health. Removing this 60 day Provisional Registration would cause further stress on the family unit as we need that time to either write up our plan for the following years education or to enroll in Distance Education which can sometimes take a number of weeks to finalise, depending on the time of year and placement availability. Has the impact on the mental well-being of the family as a whole been taken into account with this proposed change? We want our children to learn in a happy loving environment where they feel supported and can discover their own talents by enjoying what they learn. My children never felt that way while following the Australian curriculum and being assessed in ways that did not allow their true intelligence to shine through. All the curriculum did was make both of them feel not good enough and stunted their learning. I believe that Home Educated children following an education provided by their parents/carers (who know their children better than teachers or those who develop the curriculum) are more likely to develop into happy well-adjusted children. There are many stories in our community of Home Educated children attending Tafe and University well before their peers and I

don't feel that those trying to get this Bill passed have done enough research on this.

Furthermore, I feel that the general assumption of the government is that a lot of families have left the school system only due to the hardships of Covid and don't realise that there is a lot more that goes into a decision to remove your child from school and devote your time to their education. We as their parents should have the right to decide what is in their best interests as sometimes it is about underlying issues that get overlooked in a school setting. The waiting time in the public system to get assistance for a diagnosis of any kind is long and stressful. If a family doesn't have the funding to go private this is the only option. It is a long journey, and the child suffers in this time if not able to be educated at home in a way the parent sees fit. Alternatively, some parents may choose not to label their child with a diagnosis and continue to nurture and educate them at home to their full potential. Sometimes it is only the school system that requires this label to get further funding to be able to assist the child – something a parent can do at home by Home Educating the child themselves which then takes pressure off the school system anyway. Parents know what is best for their children and should retain the right to choose the legal option of Home Educating their children THEIR way by being able to register with HEU with a 60 day Provisional Registration, creating a learning plan to suit their child's INDIVIDUAL needs, and then reporting at the end of the year on whether the years' learning goals have been achieved and what could have been done better. This has been working and should not be changed. The homeschooling community is large and we are all voters. I am concerned about the lack of public consultation and transparency around these proposed changes. We may not have an association as such, but we have a united voice and need to be given the opportunity to be heard. I give permission for my submission to be published but request for privacy reasons that personal details be withheld. Kind Regards, [REDACTED]