

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1592
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee, After learning of the proposals to the Education Bill 2024, I would like to add my voice, and that of my family, to the objections of such changes. I have many concerns as to the proposals not being in the best interests of individual children in their educational journey. I don't argue with those that choose to follow the National Curriculum, but it should be a choice. The whole point of homeschooling is flexibility in learning and engagement. Children have different learning styles and natural talents. I for one did not perform well in school, but have excelled in university and in my trades. To have the ability to personalise an education is important to our family. We originally chose to follow the public school system, as my wife and I did as children and youth. However it did not take long for us to realise that this system was not compatible with our creative, ADD child. After much discussion, consultation and research we decided homeschool was our best option. Seven years later we have not looked back. This has been the right choice for us. And choice is imperative when we are making the best decisions in the best interests of our children.

The beauty of homeschooling is that we can progress at the child's individual pace, which differs from subject to subject. Not every student will ace every subject. Homeschooling allows for a personalised, engaging education. With all the available research and first-hand experience of those on the ground, it should be obvious conforming to a uniform educational system will only benefit a few. Yes, some children flourish in this method of education, but many do not. There are several methods of learning. As was repeatedly reiterated during the Parliamentary Briefing of 18th March 2024, continuity of education is important, and we believe this achieves that imperative. This method provides a better continuity of education for our children, than the mainstream system can offer, as the current education system narrative seems to be forever changing. As people making decisions on our state's education, I see a vast gap in your understanding of what homeschooling realistically is. May I suggest meeting with, and engaging with, a large cohort of homeschoolers. In doing so, many of the stereotypes, myths, and biased reporting would be dispelled. The Parliamentary Briefing, also included in the Bill's Explanatory Notes, indicate there was a small uptake of homeschool focus groups (without knowledge of your intentions, may I add). As a democratic government, elected by the people, for the people, I urge you to go out among the people, among the homeschool community. See for yourself who we are. One cannot judge what one does not truly know. It is frustrating to have to waste our precious time to justify our children are, in fact, educated, to a government department that already does not have the resources to ensure this aligns with the government's subjective narrative of the day. The proposed changes to the provisional license, are being justified as important to "continuity of learning." Considering schools have six to eight weeks off over summer, this premise does not hold. As a homeschooling family we choose when our holidays will be. Observations within our family (and noticeably while in mainstream school) are that by the seventh week into term my children are tired and need some respite. Consequently we do six weeks on, one week off, including throughout the state-assigned holidays. We have also schooled around other educational opportunities, including travelling and visiting historical and scientific sites. I believe it is particularly important for the parent of a child transitioning from mainstream to home school, and in the best interests of the child, to have time to re-calibrate (especially so, if the child has suffered trauma in the mainstream system), before beginning their homeschooling journey. The current two month period allows an opportunity for the homeschooling parent to re-connect with their child, assess and navigate the best way to educate their child in a personalised manner. Yes, some will have a plan in place before changing

their educational pathway, but it is not in the best interest for everyone. As such, it is important to allow this two month window to plan for a quality education. As an educated person, surely you are aware of history and the dangerous ground our recent governments are treading if it believes and implements a uniform system, where they decide what is right for children they do not know, as opposed to responsive parents who know their children better than any other. Our education system is broken, hence the mass exodus of students AND teachers in recent years. Social media peer-pressure is not the reason, as Education Minister, Di Farmer, believes. My wife is tertiary-educated, and sacrifices her career and our finances, even in financially-difficult times, to be with our children, to enable them to learn and follow their talents, according to their unique learning styles and gifts. We research, consult, test and refine, adapt a variety of teaching and learning methods, according to the needs of our children. This has become our family's investment of time and money. Our children are the future and we deem that our greatest priority.