

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1606
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Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

RE: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2024)

To the EPGA committee

I am a grandmother with grandchildren who either have been and or are being home schooled. Many years ago I also home schooled one of my children due to their health issues.

I am concerned with the proposed changes to legislation regarding homeschooling.

I am particularly concerned with the proposed requirement of the use of ACARA. ACARA is designed for use in the classroom school setting. Education at home is a very different situation. The one on one, specifically tailored to the individual child, education possible at home is not possible or practical in the school setting. Therefore it is reasonable that a curriculum that is designed for use in the school setting is not going to necessarily be the vehicle to provide a high quality education in the home setting.

My personal experience concurs with this thought. When home educating my daughter her health did not allow her to do focused work. If I had had to stick strictly to a set curriculum her educational outcomes would have been much worse. She was able to read widely and do what she could within the confines of her health. Ultimately she was able to function well in tertiary study. If she had been forced back into school that would have impacted her health severely. It is important for many children with diverse health needs to have the flexibility that the current legislation allows for in order for them to achieve the best outcomes in both education and health.

In relation to my neurodiverse grandchildren I have observed their varying and individual situations. While they all have different issues they have been best served in their education by being able to have access to a diverse range of educational opportunities. None of them would have had better outcomes if they had been forced to adhere to the ACARA curriculum, rather the outcomes would have been less beneficial.

I am also concerned that the new legislation would require showing improvement in all eight areas of the curriculum. This is an onerous burden to put on parents. Given that for children who have health issues and or learning disabilities this is not always possible, whether they are being

educated in a school or at home. This legislation has the potential to increase stress in families who are already facing difficulties that many of us can not even imagine.

I am very concerned about the guiding principle of proving that homeschooling is in the best interest of a child. We all want what is in the best interest of the child. What exactly is meant here by the word proving? That is open to so much interpretation that over time it could make it almost impossible for anyone to be approved for home education.

Children being home schooled under the current legislation have the opportunity to receive a high quality education that is crafted to suit their individual needs. The current reporting and planning requirements ensure that each child can receive a high quality education that is tailored to their needs and requirements regardless of their health or learning needs. I would like to see the legislation retain this without adding further requirements or restrictions.