

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

**Submission No:** 1739  
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### Submitter Comments:

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation  
Dear Committee Members, I am writing to voice my concerns and opposition to the current proposed changes to the homeschooling legislation. I am sure you have many submissions to read, therefore I will break mine up into sub-headings for ease.

**OUR STORY**  
We never planned to homeschool. I come from a very academic family and still continue to conduct research and further post-grad study at university (in my 40s). But when my (7 year old) daughter was 4, she started to go through a developmental leap (sometimes referred to as 'The Limbic Leap') associated with the development of the 'fight-or-flight' system. When she hit 5 she also started to develop a deeper understanding of risk, danger and loss. This all led to increased levels of anxiety and stress. Then we lost my mother (my daughter's grandmother and best friend) to a stroke very unexpectedly. This all compounded leading to a situation where my daughter developed separation anxiety disorder and general anxiety. She was unable to be separated from me (even in our own home) without experiencing extreme distress and sometimes panic attacks. We have made great progress over the past 2 years (and are supported by our GP and psychologist), but attending school would have been almost impossible and extremely distressing. If someone was able to tear her from my arms she would have put them and herself in danger trying to get back to me. This would not have been a situation conducive to learning. If the school was able to implement some kind of transition program, this would have taken up a great deal of my time and not allowed me to care for my second born (who is in Kindy 2.5 days a week). And my daughter would absolutely be behind in her studies after 2 years of disrupted learning. Instead I took responsibility for her learning journey at home, we are supporting her in developing tools to deal with her anxiety, and we are slowly using exposure therapy to treat her separation anxiety disorder. Recently I have been successful in dropping her off (for a maximum of 1 hour seems to be the limit at the moment) at extra-curricula activities 3 times a week. This has taken over 2 years to get to this point, not to mention a lot of time, money and resources. Homeschooling has allowed my child to thrive in these difficult circumstances.

**REASONS I OPPOSE THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

1. We don't want to use the national curriculum because we are not trained to do so. The curriculum is a complex document and could be extremely daunting for many homeschoolers. If the government was (I would argue rightly) concerned about homeschoolers receiving a well-rounded education, perhaps they could develop a kind of basic checklist, based on key points in the curriculum, that homeschooling families could utilise. However many families homeschool because their children have additional needs and challenges (not currently met by the public school system), therefore there needs to be a certain amount of freedom for homeschoolers to develop individualised curriculums. I personally use the curriculum as a guide and a kind of checklist, however I currently cross several grades (grade 1 to 3). This has allowed my daughter to keep up with her mainstream counterparts, but to surpass them in many areas. Therefore if we were forced to follow the curriculum for a certain grade, I would actually be holding her back.
2. I don't think it's realistic or beneficial to expect homeschoolers to report across all subject areas. As homeschoolers we are extremely time poor. Requiring longer reports will just put too much stress on our community, not to mention the education department. In the end it is the children who will pay the price. If you want to support our children's right to good education you will make reporting easier and more streamlined, not longer and more complicated.
3. I object to the guiding principle of proving that homeschooling is in the best interest of my child. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge how important it is to protect our children's safety and right to an education and I understand how changes like this are made in an effort to do so. But I absolutely fail to see how this

change will accomplish that in reality. Instead I think it will end up causing undue stress to those of us that are doing the right thing. Again, in the end, it is the children who will pay the price. SUGGESTIONS Again I will acknowledge that I believe these changes come from a place of concern. However no one is more concerned about my child's education and wellbeing than I am. All of this stress and concern could have been avoided if our community was consulted first. I personally have studied education, brain development, childhood development and cognition and would be happy to help fine tune the system so that it works to everyone's advantage, and most importantly benefits our children. And I can tell you there are many more homeschoolers with much greater experience and relevant knowledge, that would also be happy to be consulted and help. Finally, if you really wanted to help our children, perhaps you could look at understanding our community a little more and celebrating the HUGE contribution we make to society. You could even look at giving us some kind of financial support, since I am going without a \$90,000 - \$120,000 income to educate my child and saving the government a substantial amount. Just a bit of recognition and support would be nice. Instead this legislation feels like a threat and many homeschoolers I know are extremely anxious about it.