

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submission to the Education, Employment and Training Committee re: The Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Authored by Joan Smibert, Home-educating Mother and Grandmother with over 30 years experience.

Dear Committee Members

It is from a place of sincere passion and observational research in the home educating arena that I suggest you do not allow some of the proposed amendments within the Bill being referenced here to be passed.

Your conditions to have parents prove that homeschooling is in their child's best interest undermine their right to parent. If this had been the case for my children back when I was homeschooling them in the 1990's, I would have found myself too overwhelmed as I already felt questioned enough as it was. I put to you that the evidence is in the fact that with two out of three of my children, I was informed by their schools that their learning difficulties were so severe that there was very little that could be done for them.

One of them has run their own record label now as a musician in their own right for over a decade, has been a prison guard, a massage therapist and personal trainer. The other is a professional martial arts master who owns his own national brand, after having driven trucks, represented Australia in Ice-Hockey and mentored many in break dancing and beatboxing.

I put to you that forcing parents to use ACARA also limits learning possibilities.

The two aforementioned children left mid-primary school unable to read and were reading novels after months of my sitting with them and just reading what they were interested in.

Their confidence grew as I simply followed their interests and explored the world around us - essentially 'unschooling' and using exposure-style educative practices.

I now have the privilege here of working with my Daughter and Son, assisting them in homeschooling three of my Grandchildren.

It is even more clear to me how much freedom and play children need to really learn and how restrictive the schooling system is. One of my Grand-daughters (8 years old) does not fit the 'mould' at all but is distinctly gifted as an engineer and chess player, which sees her strategise with my Husband and is passionate about literature and philosophy, which she and I delve into on a daily basis.

I implore you not to place further, unwarranted and ill-informed restrictions on to these dedicated home-educating families at risk of sending them underground and limiting their capacity to grow the way our future leaders need to be grown.

Kind regards,
Joan Smibert

