

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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To whom it may concern,

I oppose the changes to the Homeschooling Legislation.

Homeschooling has long been championed as a viable alternative to traditional schooling, offering flexibility, personalized learning, and tailored approaches to education. However, recent developments in Australia have sparked controversy, as homeschoolers are now being required to follow the Australian Curriculum. This decision not only lacks consultation with the majority of the homeschooling community but also fails to acknowledge the unique needs of homeschooling families, especially those with children with special learning requirements. Herein lies a comprehensive argument as to why homeschoolers should not be compelled to adhere to the Australian Curriculum.

Lack of Consultation and Representation:

The decision to impose the Australian Curriculum on homeschoolers was made without proper consultation with the majority of the homeschooling community. It is imperative to note that key stakeholders, such as Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald, who represent homeschoolers, were excluded from this decision-making process. This exclusion undermines the fundamental principle of democratic participation and denies homeschoolers an active voice in shaping policies that directly affect them.

Flexibility for Special Needs Children:

Children with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) require flexibility in their learning environments to thrive. The rigid structure imposed by the Australian Curriculum may not cater adequately to their unique learning styles and needs. Homeschooling allows parents to tailor educational approaches to accommodate these diverse requirements, fostering an environment conducive to optimal learning outcomes.

Outdated Curriculum:

The Australian Curriculum is often criticized for being outdated and failing to keep pace with evolving educational needs and advancements. Its one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable for homeschoolers, who prioritize personalized learning experiences tailored to individual strengths, interests, and aspirations.

Real-World Relevance:

Traditional schooling often neglects to teach practical life skills essential for navigating adulthood successfully. Homeschoolers have the opportunity to integrate real-world experiences into their curriculum, including financial literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving, and entrepreneurship. By focusing on practical applications, homeschoolers are better equipped to face the challenges of the real world, such as managing finances, understanding taxes, and making informed decisions.

Mental Health Considerations:

The mental health of children attending mainstream schools in Australia is a growing concern, with issues such as bullying, peer pressure, and academic stress contributing to psychological distress. Homeschooling provides a nurturing environment where children can learn at their own pace, free from the social pressures and anxieties often associated with traditional schooling.

Learning Through Life Situations:

Homeschoolers have the unique advantage of learning through real-life situations, such as community involvement, travel, internships, and volunteer work. These experiences offer invaluable opportunities for practical application, skill development, and personal growth, which may not be adequately addressed within the confines of a standardized curriculum.

Tailored Education and Early Entry to Tertiary Education:

One of the primary benefits of homeschooling is the ability to tailor education to suit each child's individual needs and interests. By providing a customized learning experience, homeschoolers can excel academically and develop a lifelong love of learning. Additionally, homeschoolers often have the opportunity to enter tertiary education earlier than their school-going peers, thanks to their accelerated learning pace and focused academic pursuits.

Reducing Administrative Burden:

Requiring homeschooling parents to report on all eight outcomes of learning outlined in the Australian Curriculum imposes an unnecessary administrative burden. Homeschooling is about flexibility and autonomy, allowing families to prioritize learning experiences over paperwork. Mandating extensive reporting detracts from valuable teaching time and undermines the essence of homeschooling as a flexible and personalized educational approach.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, mandating the Australian Curriculum for homeschoolers undermines the autonomy, flexibility, and personalized learning that define homeschooling as a viable educational option. The decision lacks proper consultation with the homeschooling community, fails to address the diverse needs of children with special learning requirements, and imposes unnecessary restrictions on families seeking alternative

educational pathways. It is essential to recognize and respect the unique contributions of homeschooling in providing tailored education, promoting holistic development, and empowering children to reach their full potential.