

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

**Submission No:** 1810  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
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**Submitter Comments:**

## Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes in homeschooling legislation, particularly the requirement to follow a specific curriculum.

I am not a homeschooling parent. I am a grandparent and am aware of homeschooling as an educational option as some of my children have chosen to homeschool. I was not aware of homeschooling as an option when my own children were young and if I had of been, I might well have chosen it for them.

Some of my children did not thrive within the school environment and, I believe, were in some ways harmed by it. For example, one of my children could not keep up with the curriculum and social expectations of the school environment. Her teachers were cruel, at times, because of it and other students felt entitled to look down on and bully her. Her mental health was damaged by always being in the bottom of the class, struggling with schoolwork and behaviour, even though she is a bright and clever person. We look back now and realise she was struggling with ADHD and the mainstream school environment and curriculum expectations were not a good fit for her.

Another of our children was suicidal throughout high school and essentially homeschooled herself. Whilst doing so, she experienced the added burden of having to spend prime learning time at school, instead of being at home where she could have been learning more quickly and easily. She did not learn in a way required of students in the classroom and instead, came home from school each day and studied late into the night.

If I had known what I know now, I would have supported her to homeschool using the prime learning time in the mornings to study, giving time and space to continue with recreational hobbies and interests in the afternoon. I think this would have helped her to function as a more rounded and healthy person and we would have seen far fewer problems with suicidal ideation, anxiety, and mood disturbances.

Certainty as our daughter went off to university and was able to engage in full-time, self-directed learning, a lot of these problems ebbed away, but it took a long time for them to do so. This is our child who has decided to homeschool her own children, and I can appreciate why this is so important to her.

I do value attempts to benchmark and streamline education delivered by teachers in schools, via the Australian National Curriculum. I can appreciate teachers educate 25-30+ students at a time, these children are not their own children, and teachers usually change classes each year. Teachers seem to want and welcome some guidance as to what and how to teach, and benchmarks to assess their teaching performance against, so they can feel safe and successful in the job they are doing. I can appreciate that having standardisation around this would be beneficial for all. And, several of my grandchildren seem to be settling into mainstream school very nicely.

I have concerns about trying to enforce standardisation of this nature in the homeschooling sphere of education, though.

From my perspective, the essence of homeschooling lies in the freedom it affords children to learn in a manner that aligns with individual needs, interests, skills, abilities, and learning styles. I notice that the Australian National Curriculum is available to all and many homeschool families draw upon it, even some follow it completely, as suits their own children's learning needs. Many, though, draw on other learning curriculums that are unsuited to school-based education environments but are very well suited to 1:1, 1:2, or even 1:5 educator to student ratios, and support their children to thrive in a way that would not be possible within the school environment.

My significant concern is that by imposing a mandated curriculum, these proposed changes stand to impede this valuable alternative to a school-based education, resulting in worsened rather than improved outcomes for children, as the new proposal intends.

From my perspective, the best interest of children, and society in general, is likely to be served by maintaining real and distinct options for children and families when it comes to education, and supporting families to make mindful and informed decisions about educational matters.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

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(Concerned Community Member)

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