

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1834
Submitted by: Rachel Hodge
Publication:
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

For the attention of The Committee,

Submission

Following is my submission on objections to the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendment Bill 2024.

Who I am.

I am a mother, a working Lactation Consultant and a busy member of my local community. I was educated at home for a portion of my schooling and I chose to home educate our oldest daughter who is now a homeschool graduate that is working and contributing to society in a positive way. As a homeschooler, I appreciated the individualised learning that I could receive in the setting of my home. I had time to assimilate and learn the materials without pressure to “keep up” with my classmates. It also taught me skills that have stood me well in life as an independent and self-motivated learner. I have undertaken TAFE studies, University Studies and studied for and passed an International Board Certification Exam. While this anecdote is not proof that all homeeducating families are doing an amazing job it is proof that home education is not the “lesser education” that some would say it is. I would ask the Committee to truly consider why so many families are making the decision to pull their children from a school setting, in most cases giving up the income of one parent in order to give their child a quality education.

My objections for the proposal include:

Removal of 60 day provisional registration

I have known homeschooling families who needed provisional registration because their child needed to be removed from the school setting asap and this provisional registration gave the parents time to figure out what their child needed academically while protecting them physically and emotionally.

Reporting on 8 different Key Learning Areas

Reporting on academic progress across all subjects every year is not going to improve education outcomes. I homeschooled our daughter in NSW under similar guidelines and it did nothing to help her get a better education. It was time I spent NOT planning for and teaching my child. This was done just to show to the AP and added stress to me that did not improve outcomes for her.

A 'suitable' educational environment as determined by the government, instead of parents.

I object to the guiding principle of proving that homeschooling is in the best interest of the child because that is an overreach and not for the Department of Education or their representative to decide. Parents should retain the right to decide the best learning environment for their child. This could be public, private or home education but it should not be for the DoE to decide based on how well the parent can write a carefully worded report. The current method of assessing home education plans is based on the parent's ability to "write well" and has almost nothing to do with actually what that child is learning or doing.

While acknowledging the presence of inadequate living conditions in some households, it's essential to distinguish that as a separate concern for child protection. Home education, as a whole, stands as a viable alternative to traditional schooling and should be safeguarded from additional constraints. Preserving its freedom from further limitations ensures that our children can access quality education without hindrance.

I am strongly in favour of education for our children. But I do not think that some of the changes to this education act are in the best interest of the children. It also appears that these proposed changes have been made without proper and fair consultation of the homeschool community.

Kind regards,

Rachel Hodge, IBCLC

