

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Submission in objection to Education Bill
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Dear Committee,

I am a homeschooling parent to 3 autistic children in NsW. I have been following the relentless efforts of the homeschooling families in Qld and wanted to contribute.

I object to the proposals in the Education Bill 2024.

- The proposal to move homeschooling families to the ACARA curriculum completely disconnects children from the joy and self esteem they have found and experience daily in home learning. You'll find, in reading the many submissions forthcoming, that there is a high majority of neurodivergent families in the homeschooling community. It is common with autistic and adhd neurotypes that in order to fully learn, to comprehend, to file new knowledge to long term memory; interest in the topic is essential.
- Parents, a child's first teacher in life, are able to cater to our unique children's learning by teaching them through their passions. We can incorporate literacy, math, HASS, languages and so much more in the simple interest of Pokémon, Minecraft and Robotics. This cannot be done in schools; children, neurodivergent or typical, must struggle to focus on dry content because the teachers must follow ACARA, and tick boxes. If homeschooling families are forced to adhere to just ONE curriculum, so many children will suffer for it. They will essentially be placing their mindsets back into government schooling where they wonder internally "why is this so hard for me?", "I'm (insert age), I should be able to do this".

Homeschooling is not 'school at home'. It is so much more. It is a child enjoying their childhood without peer comparison, bullying, school refusal, anxiety, selective mutism, sensory overwhelm. Trust in these hardworking, selfless parents who put their children's needs first and foremost and are working everyday to provide an education that is tailor made for each of their beautiful children. We cannot do this through ACARA.

- the new Bill also wants to remove the current provisional registration that families gain upon applying to homeschool in Qld. This time period is a safety net for families leaving the school system. I don't doubt that there are many good schools, and many good teachers. But children slip through the cracks in these buildings every day. Children are isolated, excluded, placed on behaviour plans designed to shame, verbally and physically assaulted. Allowing families this provisional registration places them safely in their homes while their families begin work on educating themselves on the state requirements for their homeschooling journey. Nsw home educators do not have provisional registration and instead have to deal with threats from schools of truancy, pressure to return to an unsafe environment as it's the law the child must be enrolled for education. We turn to the online community for advice and support. We are advised to seek written support from our medical providers in order to continue to keep our children safe at home whilst waiting for the opportunity to present our plans and gain registration. It is this provisional registration that protects our children mental health.

- I'd like to speak now as to my families personal journey with homeschooling. Homeschooling was never on my radar as a parent until 2021. My first son had begun his education in the support class of our local primary school. He came home speaking of his peers being locked out of the classroom for vocal stimming. His love of learning, math in particular was slowly dying. It was becoming a chore, a mental load that he was not equipped to handle at the tender age of 6. He was frequently anxious and overwhelmed with the inconsistency presented with his teaching staff being replaced by substitutes in order to have planning and curriculum meetings. He lasted 6 months before his anxiety overcame him and he regressed in toileting, began fasting for the school day and school refusal presented.
- In just 8 months of homeschooling, my oldest child had learnt to read, met every stage outcome for stage one and skipped grade 2. No curriculum, no routine. Just a reignited love of learning. He mastered mental calculation of percentages in one conversation. During stage one he began studying chemistry, learning the periodic table and multiple chemical compounds. He studied biology and was particularly interested in the role swamps played in oxygenating the planet. During stage 2, he began studying criminology and theology. He enjoyed posing moral dilemmas and learning the consequences people faced under the Law. This is the core of homeschooling. We follow our children's interests, teach them HOW to learn so they can seek knowledge with passion. Learning is lifelong, it is not from ages 6-18, only acquiring information from a pre determined list provided by our state government.

My two younger children, are non verbal. When it was my middle child's turn to enter schooling, I toured multiple support classes and disability schools. I was overcome with emotion at the disrespectful way children like mine were treated. The way the attempts at communication were ignored or shut down, because the teachers were focused on their plan more than connecting with the children entrusted to their care. These were the adults I was to trust with my child's safety, body and mind? It took one afternoon of tours to decide my middle child was homeschooling for 2022. And they are thriving in the safety net of their home. My middle child (7) reads, plays outdoors and uses technology and apps for majority of his learning. My younger child (5) is intensely overwhelmed by sound. He struggles to cope in any community setting. At home he spends his entire day outdoors, rain or shine, with a smile on his face.

I cannot imagine our life under the constraints of a school's schedule, teachers expectations, the support liaison meetings, the immense support they would require at both home and school. Instead my 3 children are blessed to enjoy their childhood through home education. To spend their days outdoors, not at a desk. To learn from their interests and to learn from the person they love most.

I hope that the Committee will read the submissions from the Australian homeschool community and come to the unanimous realisation that we, as parents, are the very capable authorities on our children's education.

Thankyou for your time,
Samantha Elliott

