

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to share my strong opposition to the changes that have been proposed to the homeschooling legislation. This is due to my great desire to see my 3 children flourish in this world, and I believe my husband and I are the best people to guide their learning. These proposed changes have been made by people who do not understand homeschooling. How different it looks for every household, every parent and every child - the sacrifices we have made and continue to make without support from the government financially. I understand that lack of knowledge can effect how homeschooling is perceived - my husband and I went to school, we knew very little about homeschooling and had our reservations when starting - but can say with confidence it has been the best life choice for our family!

Whilst some parents may have made this choice for their children, or because of bad experiences, trauma from the school system - we are different in that our two older children convinced us it was a better option. They didn't enjoy all the time wasted at school lining up, waiting for the same children to be disciplined over and over, covering the same topics each year in a little more depth, being restricted on the books they could choose from the library due to their age etc. They each wrote out a pro's and con's list which were very convincing to my husband and I, it made perfect sense to 'give it a go'. I stopped working. We worked as a family to write comprehensive plans and submitted to the government body HEU for approval. We gained our approval in January 2021 and have not looked back. I submit full reports for each of my three children every year where I detail at length what they have achieved, their socialising opportunities and where they are struggling academically and how we have helped them.

At present I, with my child have the freedom to choose curriculum that best suits each of them, meeting their individual needs focusing on their interests.

For example last year my daughter did a year of back tracking in math to solidify her understanding of key math concepts, lots of hands on activities with sewing, cooking, homeschool markets(budgeting) and a room make over which meant lots of measuring parameters/ area. We wanted to do this before starting her high school year 7 math this year. It was greatly beneficial for her confidence moving forward to have those real life experiences when looking at math - her greatest struggle.

My younger son is 8 (grade 3) and is currently completing year 4 math as it is his strongest subject and he absolutely loves it! This freedom to continue moving him forward is essential in keeping them engaged in their learning in a home environment. We also have the opportunity like today where if my eight year old is engrossed in a book he is reading he can just keep reading until he decides he is ready to put the book down for the day.

We are able to have a wide range of friends and social interactions that are healthy and build my children up. I am always available to talk through difficult situations with them, help them see the other persons perspective in a situation and help them come up with a resolve. They have many friends they interact regularly with from soccer; girls brigade; church; youth group; homeschool groups; local area; and cousins.

My eldest son is fully committed as a goalkeeper for his academy team at North Lakes United FC, and is also able to be heavily involved in his guitar playing through the church worship team, attending music workshops and playing regularly. I hear from many of his friends that they have had to choose music or sport at school as there isn't enough time to

pursue both to the fullest extent. This is something I am saddened to hear for these children, but it makes me grateful that due to homeschooling my son can pursue both equally.

I have my Cert 4 Teacher Aide Certificate so have been inside the classroom. Schools are already under resourced and struggling to engage many children. I believe that learning in the home environment is too different and needs to be kept as is. To place the same expectations as those placed on schools and teachers would not be in the best interest of the child. In homeschooling we need to keep our children engaged at home and be continually moving them forward when needed, or being flexible and trying different methods when we see they are struggling. Its important our home is 'home' and not a school room, that our relationship with our child is healthy, and that we are able to be flexible and keep our childs best interest at the heart of our choices.

We currently when reporting outline any changes we have made to our plan for the year - we explain ourselves and are kept accountable by HEU already? Why change that?

For such a large community it has also been highlighted in this whole process how little we are represented as a community, only 2 ladies who give up their own time and energy, but were not consulted properly, why is this? As a family we pay taxes, of which a portion goes toward education which we see nothing of? We are all vaccinated and not antigovernment in any way, we are raising healthy well rounded children that have a place in their community and ask for little in return - why come after us changing legislation that will only cause people to do the wrong thing, or force children back into a system that they can clearly articulate why they wouldn't want it for themselves?

Please take time to hear the voices of many homeschooling families who are greatly enriched as individuals, families and a community because of this incredible option that is currently available - I implore you not to listen to the proposed changes that have been made by people who understandably, just don't get it!

Sincerely,

Fiona Heavey

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