

**Submission
No 68**

**INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (PARENTAL RIGHTS) BILL 2020**

Organisation: NSW Parents' Council

Date Received: 8 March 2021



NSW PARENTS' COUNCIL

Chair, Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education
Upper House Committees | Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales

5 March 2021

Dear Hon. Mark Latham MLC,

Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020

Firstly, thank you for inviting the NSW Parents' Council (NSWPC) to make a submission on this proposed Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020. The NSWPC embraces diversity and supports all families in the NSW Independent School sector as best we can. We support through advocacy, information dissemination or general parental support.

Schools are living organisations; they are an evolving institution. Schools thrive on transformation to maintain their relevance in a changing society. They are constantly evolving to embrace and cater to the needs of community. Hence the need to address the progression through changes in subject choices, curriculums, program etc. This is evident over time where we have witnessed the introduction of non-academic subjects in schools due to the need of our children's emotional development and wellbeing. As parents we have acknowledged the need to teach more than just academic subjects. We have welcomed and accepted the teaching of sex education, drug education, mental health education, alcohol education and many more. Schools are required to maintain themselves as a source of education of current issues as they emerge if they are to remain relevant to the education of our children.

Schools should be allowed to make their own decisions about factors they believe to be relevant to their school community. Schools are now the gatekeepers of their student's mental health as they gauge the mental wellbeing of students and in many instances' students' families. Many families in more underprivileged areas do not have the emotional resources to deal with their issues and reach out to their schools for support. School staff roles and training have changed over the years to deal with these diverse issues. Schools are often the only constant in a young person's life. They are a haven where young people and their family can reach out for support without judgment. Depriving families of open communication on topics deemed difficult or deviant by society will only drive them to breaking point.

The proposed Education Bill does not reflect the ideals of current society and does not take into consideration the research that supports the factors that promotes resilience and social engagement in our youth.

It is for all the above reasons that the NSWPC rejects the proposed Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020.

Dr Rose Cantali PhD

President, NSW Parents' Council