

I am a single mother on Parenting Payment (Grandfathered) and have been homeschooling my 10yo daughter since September 2008. We chose to homeschool after 3 years of bullying at her local school. After several meetings with the teachers and Principal and several letters from myself, I finally withdrew her from school September 2008. This was after I had received 2 phone calls from the Principal in one week saying she had been hurt by other children. That was the last straw for me. My child was very upset and it has taken years to build up her confidence since this very traumatic time of her life. I have photographic evidence of the bruising and injuries she received, along with copies of the letters to the Principal trying to resolve the issues and protect her from further damage.

We are very blessed that we are able to homeschool as we have met some wonderful new friends and I am able to give one on one attention to her education.

Money is tight on the pension, and it is not easy to provide for her on my own, however we do manage. The thought of losing just under \$120 per fortnight with the changes to Parenting Payment and being put of Newstart Allowance is extremely stressful to say the least. We would struggle to make ends meet and she would lose out on activities she currently enjoys such as dancing, swimming and Girls Brigade.

My daughter is terrified of the possibility of being forced back to school. She currently enjoys a life fairly free of peer pressure and has not had to deal with being hit on a regular basis from boys in her class, and as the case was on the last week of school, a child that was 5 years older than her. I'm just so sorry I left her in school for as long as I did. Her memories of Kindy are being punched in the face by a boy a year older who had issues at home. Preprimary were another two boys, one with issues at home, the other with hearing problems and a language barrier. Grade 1 consisted of more injuries from a boy who was diagnosed with

ADHD and had a father in jail. Then an older girl who had Child Protection dealing with her family issues. The end result was a shy soft spoken child carrying the scars of these horrible school years for the rest of her life. It still breaks my heart thinking about it.

I hope to continue homeschooling her through high school as we are very happy with how things are going emotionally and on an academic level.

Homeschoolers are a minority, let alone single mothers who homeschool. I hope by writing this submission we get a voice and are taken into consideration. My child has suffered enough and punishing us by a cut to parenting payment will only cause unnecessary stress and poverty.

She has never spent a day in daycare and I have had her 24/7 for the past 10 years, apart from Kindy, Preprimary and part of Grade 1. I can guarantee that homeschooling is no easy task. I am 100% dedicated to my child's education and this takes time, planning, teaching, marking and travel. I have been on my own since she was 10 months old and chose to be as I am so time poor. I am certainly not taking the easy way out by receiving a pension and not working.

I understand that sitting around doing nothing is not acceptable if you have the capacity to look for and take part in paid employment. If I am forced to find part time work my child will suffer. Her father visits her maybe twice a year if she is lucky. I don't have family I can rely on for babysitting. Going to work will take time out of me educating her, which will be detrimental to both of us.

I know of two other single parents who homeschool that may be forced to move interstate to try and cope with the cuts to the pension. Mainly due to the fact that

they will no longer be able to fend for themselves and continue paying the rent they are struggling to pay now.

My wish is to be able to continue homeschooling my daughter right through the high school years without being forced to live on the poverty line. Life is stressful enough missing out on most things others take for granted. However, it is our choice to live this way. Everyone I know who knows my daughter and I well, have nothing but praise for what we do. They all comment on what a great job we are doing. Obviously I must be doing something right. My daughter is thriving socially and academically.

Please make sure single homeschooling parents do not have to face a drop in payments. It is the children who will suffer the most.

Thank you