

Education (General Provisions) (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill 2023

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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) (HELPING FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL COSTS) AMENDMENT BILL 2023

BY

TOBIAS KENNETT

About me

My name is Tobias Kennett. I have been a proud Queenslander all my life. I believe my opinion is of some relevance to the inquiry because I have and continue to hold various program delivery, leadership and governance roles within Scouts Queensland, Y Queensland (formerly YMCA of Brisbane / State Council of the YMCAs of Queensland) and the Queensland Powerchair Football Association, and have previously worked with children and young people in various other paid and volunteer capacities since I was 16. Additionally, I have represented young people in various roles, so have I good knowledge of the general opinions held by young people.

This submission is not made on behalf of any organisation. This submission is my own.

Summary

I believe the proposed bill is drafted in a manner which is incompatible with the system of government established in Queensland by requiring a Minister to draft a Bill in the future. As such, it should not be enacted.

However, by virtue the idea to fund certain additional academic and extracurricular activities within schools, there is a lot can be said on what additional academic and extracurricular activities should be offered by schools. Based on my experience of working with and being a representative of young people in many spaces and organisations, I believe there is a clear appetite for the following to be introduced within schools as a mandatory part of schooling:

- first aid and/or mental health first aid and/or emergency/disaster education and training
- improved and inclusive sexual and reproductive education training
- workplace rights and responsibilities education and training
- financial literacy training
- age appropriate cultural appreciation training

To the extent the above have already been introduced, reform is needed to make things more consistent across Queensland, more regular and more detailed/better.

As such, it would be more appropriate if the proposed legislation *Education (General Provisions) (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill 2023* focused on the quality of the education offered in Queensland rather than funding, given the clear desire from those being educated for reform in this area.

Why do I believe this?

As a young person who has hold and continue to hold many program delivery, leadership and governance roles within youth movements and youth facing organisations, I have met and spoken with a lot of young people. There is an overwhelming view amongst young people that schools fail to

properly equip them for the future in these areas, especially because their parents are absent, lack the skills themselves or because the child/parent relationship does not naturally facilitate learning compared with a student/teacher relationship.

The views held by young people is generally supported by a variety of research and opinions into this area. If you would like to see summaries of this as reported in the news, you can visit the websites I have included in the footnote.¹

I particularly believe what I believe because of my involvement within the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament, which I have been involved in for the past 5 years (2019 to 2023). It is funded by the State Office for Youth and supported by the Queensland Parliament (who I continue to thank for their ongoing support). I imagine many of you reading this submission will know about it. It is regularly consulted by both the State and Federal Offices for Youth, and forms part of the Queensland Government's youth strategy. See, for example, Queensland Youth Strategy Highlights Reports from 2020-21 and from 2021-22.

During the program, 93 young people from each electorate across the state and a variety of backgrounds are given the title of 'youth member', and consult with the view of developing 8 pieces of mock legislation to present in a mock sitting at Parliament. These 'youth members' have their fingers on the pulse within their communities, as they are each young leaders in their own right before they are selected to be a part of the program. Thus, Youth Parliament is a very good representation of the views of young people. In particular, despite over 600 youth members having gone through the program between 2018 and 2023 (how long I have been involved), the consistent and continued desire for changes in education in Queensland in relation to a more holistic duction clearly shows that young people want change.

Additionally, as part of its consultation activities over the past 5 years, the Queensland Youth Parliament has consulted with (I believe from memory) over 500 individuals/academics/organisations/bodies/businesses/groups/representatives on its ideas. My general summary is that,

¹ First aid etc.: <https://www.school-news.com.au/news/new-study-reveals-88-support-compulsory-first-aid-training-for-australian-teenagers/#:~:text=A%20new%20study%20conducted%20by,the%20driver%20license%20application%20process;https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33334490/>

Sexual and Reproductive Health: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32929480/>; <https://www.theeducatoronline.com/k12/news/schools-failing-young-people-on-sex-education--study/281005#:~:text=New%20research%20reveals%20more%20than,saying%20their%20education%20was%20adequate.> On inclusive education, see <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14681811.2021.1949975>; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-18/lgbtqia-students-call-for-inclusive-education/102355794>. For solutions, see e.g. Share the Dignity period talk – see <https://www.sharethedignity.org.au/end-period-poverty/dignity-vending-machines/qld-govt;>

Workplace rights education: For solutions, see e.g. <https://www.aierights.com.au/2011/08/workright-how-to-educate-students-about-workplace-rights-and-responsibilities/>; <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7bp39/child-labor-is-such-a-big-problem-that-california-will-teach-kids-their-rights-at-school>

Financial literacy: <https://theconversation.com/australian-kids-financial-knowledge-is-on-the-decline-the-proposed-national-curriculum-has-downgraded-it-even-further-163110>; <https://www.smh.com.au/money/planning-and-budgeting/costing-us-a-fortune-australians-still-failing-basic-financial-literacy-tests-20230810-p5dviu.html>; [https://www.savings.com.au/savings-accounts/why-isn-t-financial-literacy-its-own-subject-in-schools.](https://www.savings.com.au/savings-accounts/why-isn-t-financial-literacy-its-own-subject-in-schools)

when it comes to education reform, the overwhelming majority of stakeholders consulted have been supportive, particularly those with the education space themselves or those who are young people themselves.

Thus, clearly the ideas put forward by the Queensland Youth Parliament are recognised by government, do genuinely represent the views of young people and are more broadly support the view of a variety of stakeholders. What then, do the young people want?

In 2018, the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament passed the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament passed the *Education Reform (Pedagogy in Practise) Youth Act 2018* which included a requirement to teach the following within the curriculum:

- Civic Education including—
 - Political participation; and
 - Voting; and
 - Taxation;
- Emotional social education including—
 - Sensitivity training; and
 - General self-consent training; and
 - Media safety and responsibility education; and
 - Cultural sensitivity; and
 - Consent education; and
 - Personal hygiene and sexual education; and
 - Emotional awareness education.
- Independence including—
 - monetary education; and
 - home skills; and
 - basic self-defence; and
 - first Aid; and
 - CPR;
- Professional and Employment training/guidance including—
 - networking skills; and
 - job interview training; and
 - resume writing.

In 2019, the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament passed the *Safeguarding Student Education Youth Act 2019* which included a requirement to teach the following within the curriculum:

- sewing and mending;
- basic financial literacy;
- how to change a tire and basic mechanics;
- basic self-defence; and
- first aid.

In 2020, the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament passed the *Inclusive Disability and Sexual Education Youth Act 2020* which sought to implement within the curriculum taught at Queensland schools disability awareness and inclusive sexual and reproductive education.

In 2021, the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament passed the *Inclusive Education and Industrial Relations (Ensuring Workplace Education) Youth Act 2021* which sought to implement workplace

rights and responsibilities education in schools for students years 10 to 12. Topics that would be included include: rights and entitlements of employees, responsibilities of employees and employers, industrial relations, workplace bullying and harassment and dispute resolution.

In 2023, the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament passed the *Truth-Telling and Cultural Appreciation in Education Youth Bill 2023* which sought to implement age appropriate truth telling and cultural appreciation learning with state schools.

In all years from 2018 to 2023, the time which I have been a part of the program, all of the above issues and proposed solutions have been strongly advocated for, whether in individual speeches, through the tabling of proposals in Youth Parliament or motions debated in the chamber.

Thank you

Thank you for the time to consider my submission.