

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation
Date: Monday, 11 March 2024 12:16:32 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a constituent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my apprehensions about the potential impact of these changes on our education system.

I was a teacher for 23 years working in various school types, across two states-encompassing VET, HSC, ATAR, Australian Curriculum, OP and again ATAR based systems. In New South Wales I was involved in Syllabus development, external assessment writing, and writing elements of learning materials for a textbook author. Further, I was a Head of Department and held other promotional positions. In Queensland I was involved in the previous panel system. Was a Lead Endorser and Confirmer in the new system. I held many promotional roles across several schools, including QCAA Coordinator in a prestigious independent school. This role saw me administer external assessment and the application and liaison between students, parents, QCAA, medical practitioners and school staff for ARAA. I have an intimate knowledge of curriculum at all levels and the processes and practices involved in developing and assessing learning.

I am now a homeschool parent after having two children previously attend mainstream schooling, neither resulting in a positive overall experience. Both children attended combinations of public and private sector schools. The system failed to differentiate or support their mental or academic standing respectively. Both were in Senior since the advent of the new QCE system. So when my third child was ready to commence schooling we opted to take a path that allowed us to foster a supportive environment that affords our daughter the scope to find learning opportunities that excite and develop her. It should be clear, the extent to which I am aware of the intricacies and issues of schooling, and therefore my investment in our right as a parent to choose how I provide a quality education.

The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, the greatest issue being the age/stage based nature of the Australian Curriculum (AC) that fits with school structures. It is without doubt that our daughter will tick the "required learning content" and be capable of demonstrating the Achievement standards of the AC over the many years of her childhood. Homeschooling as it stands allows us to explore learning that motivates our daughter and to engage in the time and space and environment that best suits her needs. Secondly, the majority of parents do not have any expertise in curriculum development, assessing achievement standards, ... and hence are destined for much heart-ache and failure.

Moreover, I am worried about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community

members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts our schools.

Additionally, I am concerned that parents will be required to also follow the QCE syllabuses and hence as they are part of legislation must therefore go through the processes of endorsement, confirmation, ISMGs, ... which is totally unrealistic for untrained teachers. I have witnessed as a former employee of QCAA just how much even trained teachers have failed to follow these processes properly. Further, on this matter those syllabuses finally acknowledge at Year 12 stage what homeschoolers do from the very beginning, that is the movement from teacher focussed to student directed learning. And, for example, the use of "*inquiry-based learning*" (Harlen 2013), which is described as the final phase, and yet my seven year old is already exhibiting this. To provide you with context, her current domains of research include ancient Egypt and human anthropology. Neither of these are part of the Year 3 AC. Instead, she should focus on states of matter, as an example, what a sad scenario this could end up being. Please explain how forcing children to learn in such a prescribed lock-step manner is beneficial to anything except bulk standardised testing, rather than supporting the student?

It is perhaps damning that the wording of "a quality education" is being removed and the need to follow the AC was added. It is therefore a credit to the minister that she did not confuse the AC with a quality education. But this is not a discussion about the extensive failings of schools or the AC, rather it is important to remain focussed on what is happening here.

Lastly, for now, I hold grave concern for the removal of the right for parents to choose home education. Home education is simply another educational choice parents make in collaboration with their child. Parent's are not required to justify their choice of Independent, secular, Montessori or any other setting. Why is this right of choice being removed unless third party assessment is in agreement?

In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritise the best interests of our students, teachers, schools, and homeschool families. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system, that is inclusive and accommodating for all.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response and to further dialogue on this important issue. I know that I am able to be a valuable resource and will happily volunteer my time to be of any assistance in attaining positive change, should any change be required. When it is recognised that we need to begin addressing the real, briefly aforementioned, issues with our education system, I will also be happy to be involved in that discussion!

Sincerely,

Timothy Causer M.Ed
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