

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 19

Submitted by:

Publication:

Attachments:

Submitter Comments:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Legislation changes to Home Education  
**Date:** Monday, 11 March 2024 2:28:15 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the recent introduction of legislation requiring homeschooling families to follow the Australian curriculum. I completely agree that every child deserves access to a high quality education. As a qualified primary teacher for over fifteen years, I have had extensive experience in the classroom setting teaching a number of versions of the curriculum in both public and private schools over that period.

The fact that I believe every child deserves a quality education is one of the numerous reasons why I pulled my children *out* of mainstream schooling following the Australian curriculum. Unfortunately, the current curriculum is NOT delivering a quality education and my children were falling behind quickly in many fundamentals of learning, including basic math concepts, reading and spelling. This was in no way the result of poor teaching or practice, as my children were in a private school with excellent and experienced teachers (many of whom can also be found teaching in state schools). The biggest problem is the over-packed curriculum with extensive time required to teach all the components, leaving little left to effectively cover the foundations of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Upon registration with the Home Education Unit, I submitted detailed plans for each of my children covering resources, assessment and goals, which was approved. At the end of the year, I will write a detailed report covering my children's learning and progress. I believe it is important for homeschooling parents to show evidence of their children's education in literacy and numeracy to ensure all children are learning these important fundamentals. Every parent who is invested in their children's learning and genuinely desires to give them a quality education will have no issue providing evidence of this. However, this does not mean the said *quality education* can only be delivered via the current Australian curriculum.

An amendment in the bill states that homeschooling will be granted if it is in the best interest of the child. Who determines what is in the best interest of a child? Surely as our children's father and mother who raise them and know them best, my husband and I most qualify and are the ones responsible for making decisions pertaining to them? If any politician believes otherwise, how is this not a grasp for government control and a gross overreach into personal parenting and family matters? The vast majority of parents who have chosen to homeschool (myself included) have sacrificed careers, income and time to undertake this task because we see it as crucial and beneficial in our children's academic, mental and social education. In addition, we are *lessening* the load on state schools and education funding by removing our children from school. If you genuinely desire to see our kids continuing to receive high quality education, you might consider providing funding for homeschooling families to allow them to access educational programs, classes and facilities. Even a small fraction of the funding currently provided to schools per student would greatly benefit our homeschooling children, further enriching their educational experience.

There is much evidence worldwide to prove the all-round benefits of home education on every aspect of a child's development. My children are participating in society with frequent visits to our local libraries, art galleries, social groups and sporting clubs. They regularly volunteer at our community play time for pre-school aged children as well as serving at lunches for the homeless. Aside from improved academic success with increased

time and one-on-one support to thoroughly comprehend each concept, my children are thriving mentally, socially and emotionally. The opposite was true for them when attending mainstream school and following Australian curriculum, where they struggled with anxiety, anger, bullying and low self-esteem.

The statistics clearly show an almost 200% increase in students registered for homeschooling in Queensland from 2019 to 2023. Rather than implementing more restrictions and regulations on these parents who are taking drastic measures to ensure a quality education and environment for their children, why are you not questioning the reason WHY these families are choosing to leave mainstream school for home education? Surely this is the obvious issue?!

I believe it is time for The Minister for Education to begin addressing the serious and widespread problems of our current curriculum and education system including an overpacked curriculum filled with political ideology, uncontrollable children causing whole school lockdowns and injuries to teachers and students, continually declining rates of literacy and numeracy, and increased expectations and pressure on students beginning in Prep (many of whom are still only four years old)! And that is to only name a few of the issues, sadly.

I implore you to revise legislation and continue to allow homeschooling families the freedom to follow the curriculum which works best for their child and family, rather than enforcing a 'one size fits all' approach, essentially guaranteeing failure for many students whose learning needs and requirements are not catered for.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Ph [REDACTED]

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Please accept this addendum to my prior submission as I would like to address some false and misleading points made in response to questions during the Public Briefing.

### *Consultation Process*

It was claimed that six groups were consulted but these were not identified. Queensland does not have six official associations for homeschool, so it is unclear who these particular groups were. The true stakeholders regarding these changes are homeschooling parents and children, who were not adequately consulted and whose opinions were disregarded. There has been an overwhelming response from the homeschool community regarding the proposed changes in this bill, despite the little time provided. Please consider our views as key stakeholders.

### *Registration Requirements*

It was stated that ‘homeschooling families will *now* be required to submit a learning program’. In actuality, this was already part of the process. Every year, I submit a *detailed* plan covering multiple Key Learning Areas including resources and assessment. This is then reviewed and approved by the Queensland Government Home Education Unit. At the end of each year, I report on our learning program and the progress each child made, abiding by the current requirements for home education registration in Queensland.

### *Approved Education Training Programs*

There is much evidence to prove the Australian curriculum is not providing a high quality education or producing the desired results. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2023, the Productivity Commission issued a *‘scathing assessment of Australia's national education strategies, saying they have done "little" to improve student outcomes during the past five years. It found national reading and numeracy results had generally declined since 2018, and inequalities in educational achievement had not been addressed. In a statement, Education Minister Jason*

*Clare described the report as "damning" and said it "made it clear that serious reform is needed"* (ABC news article written by Gabriella Marchant, 19.01.2023). Why would ACARA and other similar 'approved education training programs' be the only option for homeschoolers to follow when it is clearly not producing admirable results? In addition, homeschool children who undergo NAPLAN statistically achieve higher results proportionally in comparison to their mainstream counterparts. This shows the current education homeschool students are receiving is more than competent in helping them achieve greater success.

#### *Aligning with Expectations of other States*

It was claimed that this bill will ensure Queensland homeschoolers will be aligned with the same expectations of other Australian states for their homeschooling constituents. This is completely false. Examination of the relevant legislation for each state shows that Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia *do not* require their homeschooling families to adhere to the Australian curriculum, although they do stipulate the minimum requirement of learning areas to be covered, very similar to current standards in Queensland requirements.

#### *Provisional Registration*

Removing the current time period for provisional registration is another point which makes little sense. Schools are currently given a grace period with every new student enrolment to have the appropriate time to assess and understand the new student and their needs. Why is this not also permitted for new homeschool students? If a high quality education program is truly the reason for these changes, then surely a provisional period allows the home educator the time necessary to research and plan the most effective learning program for their child addressing their individual needs and educational gaps.

The Australian curriculum was designed to ensure consistency of education across Australian schools, in the cases where students move between schools to ensure they are receiving a consistent and uninterrupted education. I have designed my children's home education plan for the past few years as well as including the next few years. There is consistency of learning and a broad range of topics within the various Key Learning Areas which we study together, simultaneously. The resources we utilise are age appropriate for their various levels and abilities, and the activities and assessments are differentiated to ensure each child is

challenged and producing work at their expected standard. More importantly, it is designed so that they actually *learn* and *enjoy learning*!

The home education environment is completely different to the mainstream school setting and, as such, it should not be treated the same. In my home I have a composite class consisting of Years 3, 6 and 8. Although it is quite common in mainstream school to have students on a variety of academic levels, they are all taught the same lesson on the same topic on the same day, differentiated for their various learning needs and capabilities. It is entirely unrealistic to expect me as a home educator to teach my children, on various levels, completely different topics and lessons in the same day. This would never be expected of a teacher in a classroom setting. Yet this is what will happen if home educators are forced to follow the Australian curriculum for each individual child.

The other issue regarding ACARA is the fact that teachers spend four years in university to learn how it works, how best to implement it and how to plan teaching units and lessons according to it. Although I am a trained teacher with current registration, I do not believe the Australian curriculum is best for my children's academic success and that it is unrealistic to expect untrained home educators to understand and implement it. As homeschooling parents, we have the freedom to choose the curriculum which best suits our child and family needs. Online learning during the COVID pandemic allowed many parents to see the current gaps in their children's learning as well as become aware of the many educational opportunities and programs available within Australia and around the world.

If the changes in this bill are implemented, who is providing the accountability and supervision of adherence to these requirements? Increased staffing in the Home Education Unit would be required, which demands greater funding for wages and resources. Another key concern with forcing these changes on homeschooling families, is that it has the potential to drive many families 'underground' in choosing not to register at all. There are currently thousands of families who register with the Home Education Unit by submitting plans and reports requiring approval. Surely this is admirable and desirable for the Queensland Government and not something you want to see decrease, removing support and accountability for the many homeschooling families who are abiding by current requirements?

Please consider the opinions and needs of the numerous homeschooling families, as well as their improved academic success and wellbeing as a result of home education.

Thank you for standing with us in our desire to provide a high-quality education for our children and to see genuine, positive outcomes in their academic achievement, holistic development and wellbeing, resulting in confident, capable and successful adults who participate in and contribute to society.

Regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

BA/BEd