

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 61
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Dear Representative,

I am very disturbed by the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in Queensland. As a parent and home educator, I am concerned about the potential impact these changes will make on our education system.

My daughter [REDACTED] home education journey began when my wife and I realised that the school system was not meeting her educational needs; and in fact, was causing her emotional and mental damage. This became very apparent as [REDACTED] became moody, withdrawn, resistant and simply not wanting to attend school. [REDACTED] is a unique individual, who has special needs and styles of learning. These needs were not being recognised nor met in the current education system and it was not until home schooling her and taking her to the required specialists that her Dyslexia and Irlen Syndrome was identified and diagnosed. In her home environment, [REDACTED] has three educated adults, myself, wife and her grandmother who are able to assist her with her special needs and offer her multi-faceted approaches to her education.

The above reasons outline why I was extremely disappointed to learn of the proposed changes to the existing legislation regarding education.

My concerns regarding the changes are addressed below. I have also attached a summary of the proposed changes for your reference.

PLAN:

The statement regarding use of National Curriculum in some way is too loose; what does 'in some way mean'?

The National curriculum is designed for average children and does not cater for individual nor special needs, learning styles, level of interest nor learning capacity.

I do not consider that the National Curriculum focuses on the students beneficial, long-term outcomes: There are many more effective education styles available, that we can offer our children through home schooling so that they can then go forward to fulfill different roles, whilst still being skilled, happy and productive members of society, that is not being catered to through the current curriculum.

PLAN & REPORT

We deal with the HEU Team, who are trained in their field. Why then do others, seek to overrule this system –is this not poor policy when we employ trained personnel and then micro-manage them and restrict their ability to do their jobs.

The insistence that all subjects must be covered at all levels is unreasonable. It is obvious to me that the schools themselves, while presenting the curriculum are unable to ensure all students are competent to even a basic standard. The most intelligent students can fail in the wrong environment, as it does not recognise their needs, stimulate or engage them.

CONSULTATION PROCESS:

As a home educator and parent, I was not consulted in any manner regarding these proposed changes. In fact, I have only just become aware of them, surely NOW is the time I should be consulted?

The most intelligent of students can fail in the wrong environment, if they are not stimulated, engaged or given the required attention to recognise that there is a bigger problem. As parents we recognise our child's special needs and have educated ourselves as to the best ways of helping her and giving her the extra help, she requires with her condition. Having spoken with the teachers for the special needs group at our local school since our child left, they were not even aware of the condition she has and where intrigued that several of the children at the school demonstrated the same symptoms. We all have different, styles, needs, interests and capacity. The person educating the child needs to recognise the most suitable 'learning environment' for that particular child. Who better than their families that are familiar with the needs, both physical and emotional.

Children with special needs or that are different often experience bullying and toxic culture in a school environment deeply inhibiting their mental wellbeing and ability to learn. Our own child had experienced this when in attendance at school often leaving her in a poor mental state.

RESPONSES TO SHOW CAUSE:

14 days is not a reasonable time frame for show cause responses.

Australia Post sets a 3 - 7-day delivery guarantee on its surface mail delivery service, emails can be lost or misdirected. This would then place impossible expectations on show cause responses, especially for those of us living outside metropolitan areas.

CHANGE IN REGISTRATION APPROVALS:

The proposed changes will only serve to increase the workload of HEU staff as all registrations will need to be permanent then cancelled rather than granted for the specific period required. Noting here that response times from Centalink are often months, not weeks.

WORKLOAD:

As parents who choose to home-school the decision was not made lightly. There is a considerable increase in our workload, commitment and time required. Increases in the reporting requirements will only serve to create greater stress as many will struggle to meet the greater expectations.

My belief is the proposed changes will not create any improvements, they will only serve to increase the workload of the HEU Team and us families working to provide the best for their children.

I request that you, in your official capacity, act to oppose these ill-conceived changes that will have a detrimental impact on a significant number of Queensland children and their families.

Yours Faithfully

Robert Bolanac