

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 72
Submitted by: Lena Taylor
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Submitter Comments:

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Submission (revised) on the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.
Date: Monday, 11 March 2024 11:10:53 AM

Please accept this revised letter as submission to the Committee.

Dear Committee,

I am writing about concerns I have about the proposed changes to require home education families to follow the National Curriculum as outlined the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*.

As a home educating parent, the proposed changes will have clear and detrimental impacts on my children and their achievement of a high-quality education.

For example, my eldest son (10) is neurodiverse, and under the existing legislation I can work at his pace with the things he struggles with – and at the same time build a curriculum that caters to his strengths, and continues to build on the many things he excels at. I cannot overestimate the importance of this flexibility (personalised learning) in keeping up his confidence and helping him become a strong and capable learner. The previous approach of the Government in enabling choices in how to achieve a high-quality education has been life changing for us as a family.

Many of us in the home education community have made significant personal – and financial – life changes to give this kind of support our children. As I am sure you are aware, the experiences of education are foundational to the lives they go on to lead. It is with absolute dedication to my children that I choose to home educate. As someone who has put substantial thought, time, dedication, and skill, into home educating I am very disappointed with the proposed changes.

While individualised leaning is not possible in a classroom, it is in a home education setting. This is one of the strengths of home education. Further, successful homeschooling looks incredibly different to classroom teaching. There are many factors that influence this such as multi-age teaching, concepts or projects that cross many different subject areas and children who have differing learning speeds and styles within the same family. ACARA aligned resources, methods and expectations are written for delivery in classroom settings. They mostly do not make sense in a 1:1 or a small group learning environment.

There are also wonderful curriculum resources from all over the world, designed specifically for home education. My son, for instance, just enthusiastically completed a 4 month course in ecology – weekly classes, discussion and homework delivered online from an experienced educator based in the US. This led to him asking to specialise this term in fire ecology. We then designed a curriculum using a variety of resources (both formal and informal, and including engagement with local hands-on community groups) to facilitate his continued learning journey.

Homeschooling allows us, as parents, to craft educational experiences that are uniquely suited to the interests, strengths, and learning styles of each of our children. By tailoring the curriculum to meet their individual needs, we can provide them with a level of engagement and motivation that is often unimaginable within the constraints of a one-size-fits-all approach. Our collective experience has shown that individualised programs enable our children to pursue their passions, delve deeply into subjects that captivate their curiosity, and develop critical thinking skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Furthermore, individualised education cultivates a holistic approach to learning, where real-world experiences, interdisciplinary studies, and personalised projects play integral roles in the

educational process. This dynamic approach not only fosters academic excellence but also equips our children with the skills and competencies necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

As pathway to a high-quality education can take many different forms, the approach to high-quality education within the Act should reflect the unique nature of home education and be sufficiently broad as to allow for a variety of ways of meeting the standard – ways that include but are certainly not limited to the National Curriculum. There is no evidence that imposing the National Curriculum will improve education outcomes.

Further – in what I worry is a quiet erosion of long-term rights afforded to Qld parents – it now states that home educating parents demonstrate that homeschooling is in the best interest of the child. How does that accord with parents' right to choose. After all, this requirement is unlikely to be part of the parents' requirements when they enrol their child in a private school. The decision to home-school involves many diverse considerations, including intimate choices about what a loving and healthy family life looks like to us. The people best positioned to make this decision are the parents. No one else knows our family circumstances and life goals, and it should not be put upon us to share and convince the government that our parenting and family life choices are suitable.

Please reconsider the Bill and write to me with the links to the research and studies that you have conducted to determine that:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->a) <!--[endif]-->the legislation that you are proposing is in the best interest of the homeschooling community,
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->b) <!--[endif]-->the evidence that you have that the current model of registration, reporting and legislation for homeschoolers is inadequate, and
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->c) <!--[endif]-->please discuss the consultation you have had within the homeschooling community to determine that this is needed and in our best interest?

Kind regards,

Lena Taylor



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the committee regarding home education changes
Date: Sunday, 24 March 2024 10:34:28 AM

Dear Committee,

I write to you with further concerns about the proposed changes to home education. I would appreciate your considerations of the following questions (and please consider this a further submission).

As you are aware, Queensland has no official state home schooling association. We do however have extensive well networked online communities – to which a call for representation could have been made. Likewise the Department has the details of 10 000 home educating children’s families. The people who I feel most represent me were not invited to participate. Please consider:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->How the Department identified who to involve in ‘representative consultation’?
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->If a broader call for possible participants sent to registered home educators?
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Why were businesses possible participants, but a ‘roundtable’ of home educating parents were not?
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Given the high level of evidence-based criticism against the proposed changes, how can you be confident that consultation was indeed adequate?

Many home educating parents (approx. 500 according to the Department website) responded to a survey as part of the first round of consultation. Of these can you please investigate:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->How many agreed with the suggestion to connect the definition of *High Quality Education* to ACARA?
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Contextual details of the 20 % who use the Australian Curriculum (AC). What percentage of these are early home educators who use a third party to help design plans? Do people typically start with the AC, then move to other options as they gain confidence – or realise it is not working? Of the 20% how many identify as neurodiverse? Put differently, some greater contextual detail on these figures would allow a better understanding of the ways that home educators engage with the AC. And provide information on the cohort it is likely to impact the most.

Home educators currently meet a standard that involves setting annual work plans (with example templates provided by the HEU, along with guidelines of what a High Quality Education involves) and providing an annual report. Please consider the evidence you have that:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->this existing system is not leading to a High Quality Education for home educated children?
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->changing it will lead to better outcomes?

Several families with older children use university courses (e.g. through Open Universities Australia, which allows enrolment from 13 years) as part of their curriculum, with obvious advantages for entry into tertiary study (and getting a head start on their degrees). Please consider:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->If you intended to prevent university level study for registered home educators?

Further, many Australian families choose education like Steiner, Montessori or independent schools and community schools that use a flexible learning approach. Please consider:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Will this legislation give home educators the same level of choice as other QLD families?

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Montessori for instance is not identified as a 'recognised alternative' on ACARA's special site, does this mean home educating families cannot follow a Montessori curriculum when other Qld kids can?

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Further the curriculum for Steiner registered with ACARA have been designed for a school setting. There are however options for Steiner curriculums that have been designed for a home setting. Is the intention of the Bill to exclude these from use?

Kind Regards,

Lena Taylor

