

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

**Submission No:** 138  
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### Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed changes to the education legislation, particularly in how they would impact the home educators in our state.

I have had the pleasure of home educating four of my children across all stages of schooling. My oldest son who was home-schooled from grade 4 onwards is now studying at university, has received a diploma and is currently completing a Bachelor's degree. He began his university education while his same age peers were still at school. He was receiving high marks and felt far better equipped for university level education than others completing the same course who had completed year 12 in a mainstream school. I feel this is testament to the freedom to learn in his own way and through self-motivated education that many home educators support their children through. The proposed changes have many facets to them that I fear will negatively impact home educators and the children we are teaching. The main aspect I am concerned about is the proposal to force home educating families to follow the National Curriculum claiming this as the definition of a "high-quality education". In the current legislation we have been required to provide an undefined "high-quality education". The department has admitted we, as parent educators, are currently doing well at that with our successful reporting. This should raise the question of why a definition is needed if we are currently meeting this expectation. We currently plan, report, and modify plans individualised to each of our children. What higher quality can be provided than an individualised one to one education for a child? The proposition that ACARA is the definition of a high-quality education is unsupported and from my own children's experience, it is highly flawed. The proposed changes to this definition are restrictive and go against the requirement to provide an individualised plan for each child. My child struggled in his early years of school to catch on to some foundational mathematical concepts. The teachers did their best to help him but as he had no diagnosis to get extra help, and the curriculum required that they move on, he was left behind struggling in an area he had previously enjoyed. Should children not be allowed sufficient time to learn the concepts they are being taught, because a parent is anxious about keeping up with the bloated National Curriculum, this will lead to the exact opposite of a high-quality education. When we pulled our son out of school and let him go back and take the time needed to grasp those foundational concepts, in 6 months he went from being well behind in maths to excelling and moving ahead of where his grade-based peers would be in a classroom. More important to me as a parent is that he regained his love of maths and found a self-confidence he had previously lost. Similarly, my daughter struggled with learning to read due to dyslexia. Predictably this had an impact across all subjects. Because we are able to move at our own pace on topics that are of interest, I was able to keep her engaged and moving along in other areas without reading while we took a gentle approach to her learning to read. This has had a wonderful outcome of her feeling much more confident in her reading abilities and not having all her learning stall because of her struggle to read. Another of my sons has developed a passion for history that could never have come from following along with ACARA. He is self-motivated to research and learn the areas of history that interest him and from there I introduce him to other areas that he may not come across on his own. At 14 he has a great understanding of global history and how a knowledge of our past can guide us today and for our future, better than most who have had an ACARA guided education. A secondary aspect that I find to be greatly worrying is the removal of the 60 day provisional registration. This 60 day period gives peace of mind to many families who are needing to immediately remove their child from an unsafe classroom situation, be it unsafe for their mental or physical wellbeing. The current 60 day period

gives families the time to better understand the home education system, write a more thorough plan for their child's education and better plan for what may be large financial changes to their family situation. I believe requiring an immediate plan upon application will see many plans rejected because they will not have allowed for the family to understand the submission requirements. This will in turn see those children needing to return to the school environment that was harming them, and many parents left believing they have no other choice but to watch their child be hurt repeatedly by a system that is failing them. Children cannot learn in an environment where they do not feel safe. Maintaining the current 60 day period allows parents to better meet the requirements of the HEU for planning and reporting, better equipping them to provide a high-quality education for their child. This proposition is overreaching and poorly designed. It feels very much like a knee jerk reaction to try to stem the large numbers of families who have started home schooling since the pandemic and entirely ignorant of the long-term successful home education happening here in Queensland. There has long been concerns from the government that more and more families are opting to go un-registered. I firmly believe that those unregistered numbers will only climb if these measures are put in place. While many submissions against these changes will praise our home education graduates for the successes they have had and their rapid progress through a system that is not holding them back, I would like to remind you that alongside those students are many students who would not be alive if it were not for the opportunity to homeschool. Their mental and physical health were so under threat in the mainstream system that had there not been relief from that pressure via home education then they would have had their life cut short either by their own hand, or by another's. These are less often spoken of to protect these already vulnerable children, but I assure that if you look, you will find their stories. To make access to an education harder for an already vulnerable student is a heartless act. Please stand with homeschoolers against the implementation of these proposed changes. Heather Dixon, Home Educator in Hinchinbrook Electorate.