

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I am writing to you with my concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament. As a home educating parent, I do not support the changes that have been introduced and I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the home education community. I am especially concerned about the necessity of complying with the national curriculum. ACARA is designed for a school setting, where a curriculum specialist is often employed to interpret it for the school. It is not appropriate to enforce it in home education situations. Should this legislation go through, families will have to rely on bland textbooks or 'big box' curriculums to attempt to comply, defeating the aim of tailored, rich and flexible education we desire for our children. It will also add hours of paperwork that families will struggle to have the time or expertise to successfully complete, taking time from educating. The amendments also increase the number of subject areas that families need to report on and reduce the allowable timeframe for families to respond to the Home Education Unit (HEU). This again puts an untenable burden on both homeschool families, and the HEU who need to process the paperwork. How is the government proposing to provide the additional resources required by the HEU to process the increase in reporting requirements in a timely manner? I am also concerned that the legislation does not take into consideration the known reasons that Queensland families home educate. The Home Education Unit published a report in January detailing these reasons. Many families feel that they have nowhere else to turn to educate their children struggling with social, emotional and health issues. Others have deeply held philosophies about the wellbeing of their families and their children. The Department of Education could be supporting these families in their education journeys and celebrating and including their diversity, while encouraging them to engage with the Department of Education. Instead, these amendments will alienate families and push them to withdraw from oversight due to their arduous and complicated demands. The life that home education under the current laws has given my family is rich and beautiful. It has solidified our relationships, protected the physical and mental well-being of our children, and allowed us to participate more fully in the community. My kids have a deep love of learning and the world around them. Our days are full of literature, history, art, music, science experiments and nature. We now have a deep peace we didn't experience before. These proposed changes will only make it difficult for us to pursue these things in service to a one-size curriculum. This can only be detrimental to our family, and the thousands of families like us. I am concerned that this legislation has been introduced without proper consultation with current home educating families and I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. It is my hope that, going forward, this legislation can suit the needs of all students across Queensland. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.