

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, RE: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation
I am writing to express my vehement opposition to the proposed changes to the legislation which governs homeschooling in Queensland, particularly the requirement to follow a specific curriculum. As a homeschooling parent, I firmly believe that these changes would undermine the very reasons why many families, including mine, have chosen homeschooling as the preferred mode of education for our children. The essence of homeschooling lies in the freedom it affords children to learn in a manner that aligns with their individual interests, abilities, and learning styles. By imposing a mandated curriculum, these proposed changes would impede my children's autonomy and hinder their ability to pursue education in a way that best suits their needs. One of the primary motivations for homeschooling is to provide our children with a personalised learning experience that fosters their intellectual curiosity and allows them to learn at their own pace. These new regulations threaten to restrict this flexibility and stifle their natural inclination to explore and discover the world around them. Furthermore, enforcing a standardised curriculum fails to recognise the diverse interests and talents of homeschooling students. It overlooks the fact that every child is unique and may thrive in different subject areas or learning environments. By imposing rigid educational requirements, we risk depriving our children of the opportunity to pursue their passions and develop their full potential. The standardised curriculum in Australia, ACARA, is a system that is cited to have consistently allowed Australian students to decline against international education rankings. In essence, a failing system which is seeing children spend an increasing amount of time at school for declining outcomes. Homeschooling parents have access to the ACARA framework and can choose to utilise it, either entirely or parts therein. However, many, including myself, would describe ACARA as outdated, stifling and also becoming increasingly loaded with concepts and teachings that are not in alignment with individual family values. Homeschooling allows self-paced learning with extension and innovation in subject areas that inspire and excite.

I am in favour of reporting requirements for home schoolers and that it is imperative that all children receive a high-quality education. However, the additional reporting requirements proposed in the bill would generate a vast body of work for the Education department that would only increase if the current growth trend of home education was to continue. Would the Home Education Unit be justly resourced with adequately qualified personnel to assess the influx of reports efficiently and effectively? Will all reports be read and assessed in their entirety or will only a sample be taken to assess the standardisation of implementation, rendering parents' highly valuable time squandered on navigating a futile mountain of red tape. I currently homeschool my two children, receiving no government funding or assistance to do so, and live in a rural area. I chose to homeschool for a multitude of reasons which include, but are not limited to, the distance to our local school and the correlating travel time in either private car and/or bus, concerns about the teaching time/resources being shared with high needs students, exposure of my children to undesirable behaviours of other students and my views of the ACARA curriculum. My children do not face learning barriers and would simply be a number in the mainstream system. I have elected to take up my right to homeschool as I can provide my children with a childhood that is filled with opportunity to learn and grow with vibrancy and a rich variety of experiences alongside developing their intellect to levels superior to many whom are the product of the mainstream education system. In essence, these proposed changes would not only undermine the fundamental principles of homeschooling but also limit my children's ability to learn and grow in a way that honours their individuality and creativity.

As a homeschooling parent deeply invested in my children's education, I urge the committee to reconsider these restrictive measures and instead focus on supporting families in providing a rich and diverse educational experience tailored to the needs of each child. Thank you for considering my concerns.