

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

To Honourable Members of Parliament, With a sense of urgency and a heartfelt plea for consideration, I reach out to you on behalf of Queensland's homeschooling community, deeply unsettled by the proposed legislative changes that could severely constrain the educational freedom we currently hold dear. The depth of our concern is matched only by our passion for the well-being and future prospects of our children, particularly those for whom the mainstream system has not been a good fit, including those with disabilities or neurodivergences. The intent to ensure children receive a high-quality education is commendable; however, the specific amendments being considered threaten the core of home education's effectiveness. Firstly, the changes to the "Guiding Principles," particularly the notion that education should be in the best interests of the child considering their safety and well-being, seem to contradict the stringent ACARA requirements. Home education's success does not come from replicating school environments or curricula; it comes from the ability to tailor learning to the child's interests and pace, which makes it as boundless as the potential within each unique child. The core of our educational philosophy is a commitment to providing a high-quality, individualized learning experience that reaches far beyond the borders of any single curriculum. Our approach is global in its resources, rich in its diversity, and local in its application, tapping into the wealth of knowledge from professionals and skilled community members, workshops, online classes with overseas professionals, alongside advanced online university subjects and more. The Australian Curriculum is known to be so far behind in world standards with many reports showing major concerns and the need for an overhaul. One such report showed that the science curriculum is ' "broken" and not based on leading research or quality benchmarking. The chief executive of Learning First, Ben Jensen, said Australia had stagnated or declined across all subjects in international test results for more than a decade.' Why impose a lacking curriculum on our children, when they have access to higher quality education? This breadth of learning has empowered our children to surpass the limitations of conventional education, as evident in their engagement in learning, academic achievements and their robust mental health. Limiting families to follow the one size fits all Australian Curriculum and not the interests and needs of their children, is not only deeply troubling, but will also push more homeschooling families to go unregistered. The question arises: Who is to determine what is "suitable"? Parents have historically made this decision, understanding their children's needs better than any standard guideline could. Moreover, the introduction of the Senior Syllabus and Vocational Education Training as requirements restricts the potential for home-educated students, many of whom are already excelling in university-level studies or practical learning environments far beyond their grade level. The rewording to now necessitate the demonstration of "academic progress" rather than "progress" in reports imposes a limited view of education. It discounts the holistic development of a child, which home educators prioritize and diligently nurture. The change in reporting requirements — to be more aligned with the ACARA curriculum and the new plan requirements for all learning areas — imposes a restrictive framework on home educators, limiting their ability to provide the best personalized education for their children. Additionally, the reduced time-frame to provide additional information, cut from 28 days to 14, places unnecessary pressure on home educating families, who are already meticulous in maintaining educational records and progress reports. We also note the potential impact of shifting from the issuance of a certificate to a notice, and the removal of provisional registration options, which may hinder the ability of new home educators to transition into this educational path. In light of the above, it is clear that these proposed changes are not in the best interest of home-educated children and their families. As such,

I firmly oppose these amendments. This letter is not just a list of grievances; it is an earnest request for you to witness the thriving community home education has fostered. Each child's progress is a testament to the system's success, evident in the smiles of children who love to learn, the accolades from communities they impact, and the innovative projects they undertake. I implore you to vote no to these changes, not out of nostalgia, but out of a steadfast commitment to what is genuinely in the best interest of our children. Home education is not a fallback; it is a choice for a high-quality, personalized education. We are not merely teaching our children; we are shaping thinkers, innovators, and compassionate individuals ready to contribute meaningfully to our society. There are quite a few concerns with the proposed Education Legislation changes. Your local communities homeschooling families would be happy to meet and discuss them further with you. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response and to further dialogue on this important issue. Sincerely, Homeschooling mother to thriving, happy children.