

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 313
Submitted by: Greater Springfield Homeschoolers
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes regarding homeschooling regulations in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. On behalf of Greater Springfield Homeschoolers community and personally on behalf of myself and our homeschooling family. Of particular concern is the requirement to adhere strictly to the Australian curriculum. While I wholeheartedly agree that every child deserves a quality education, I firmly believe that imposing a standardised curriculum on all homeschooling families is not the solution. What a quality education looks like for one child is not necessarily the same for another. Every child is unique, with different learning styles, interests, and needs. As a homeschooling parent, I have experienced first hand the benefits of tailoring the curriculum to suit the individual needs of my child. The proposed bill is not equitable and I feel it is potentially discriminatory on the following grounds:

Discrimination against:

- Disability
- Neurodivergence
- gifted/asynchronous development
- Other reasons for choice - health, religion, personal choice

My child is autistic with ADHD and specific learning disorders which saw them manage through a kindy ECDP program, Prep and Grade one via the Queensland public schooling system. By grade two it was evident that the existing school system would not work for them nor could the school itself offer the support or meet their needs. So we made the choice to remove them from school, enrolled them with HEU and I left my teacher aide position with Education Queensland to homeschool them. Financially it has been the hardest decision we made, having to drop to a single income. But from a parenting, child development and growth perspective it is the best decision we have ever made. By having the flexibility to customise my child's education, my child has thrived academically and personally since leaving the traditional school environment. They have been able to delve deeper into subjects they are passionate about, explore various learning resources, and learn at their own pace. In essence, the curriculum we have chosen for them is personal and far superior to what they were following in school.

I understand that the Australian curriculum serves as a guide for homeschooling families and I do use this as a guide to tailor a plan and program for my child. But this is just a guide, we do not strictly stick to it word for word. My child requires a flexible education plan and environment. By mandating a strict adherence to the Australian curriculum would only hinder our ability to provide a personalised and effective education for our

children. These proposed changes would undoubtedly have a negative impact on my children's learning outcomes, as well as the learning experiences of many other homeschooling families.

Furthermore, I want to address any misconceptions or stereotypes surrounding homeschooling. In my experience, homeschooling parents are deeply passionate and invested in their children's well-being and education. The homeschooling community is vibrant, supportive, and dedicated to providing the best possible educational experiences for our children. I myself have founded and run Greater Springfield Homeschoolers since mid 2019 and we have grown in leaps and bounds with families coming to engage in a variety of enriching educational and social activities our community group offers.

Consultation with a diverse range of home school families was minimal, biased towards businesses, and missing key points in this Bill. Such changes in relation to home education are ill considered and inappropriate. An increase in home schooling since pandemic is not a legitimate basis for the proposed changes. The bill will have a disproportionate impact on families who are dealing with a range of personal and health issues that contribute to the decision to home school, and will alienate a large group of Queensland voters.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider these proposed changes, remove the adherence to ACARA and instead support the individualised education that homeschooling provides. Let us continue to tailor our children's education to meet their unique needs, interests, and abilities.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Mullen

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