

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

**Submission No:** 321  
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**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

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15 March 2024

Committee Secretary  
Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
**BY EMAIL: [eetsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:eetsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: CONCERNS REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME EDUCATION REGULATIONS**

We are writing to express our concerns over the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. There are provisions in this bill that we do not support and believe will actually be detrimental to our child and our family as a whole. Furthermore, we are troubled by the lack of meaningful consultation and collaboration with homeschooling families in the development of these proposed changes. As stakeholders in our children's education, we deserve to have our voices heard and our concerns addressed in a transparent and inclusive manner. We urge you to actively engage with homeschooling communities, to ensure that any revisions to home education regulations reflect the diverse needs and perspectives of families across our constituency. We believe it is crucial to ensure that any modifications to these regulations are made with careful consideration for the well-being and educational rights of homeschooling families. As residents and rate payers of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council, and the parents of a home educated child, we ask that you please read our concerns. We also ask that as our local member, you advocate for us and present our concerns to the Education Minister and the parliament.

Home education plays a vital role in our society, offering families the flexibility to tailor their children's learning experiences to their individual needs and circumstances. It fosters a sense of autonomy and empowerment, allowing parents to actively participate in our children's education ensuring the needs of our children are met and not forced on them in a one-size fits all method. Mainstream schools are failing to provide this customised learning to our children and therefore, many are getting left behind and not receiving the assistance they need to thrive and succeed. As parents, we want our children to become the best version of themselves and homeschooling gives us the freedom and opportunity to help them achieve this.

The proposed changes to home education regulations raise significant questions and challenges for homeschooling families. While I understand the importance of accountability and oversight in ensuring the quality of education provided to children, I am concerned that the proposed measures unduly restrict the freedom and autonomy of homeschooling.

One particular aspect of the proposed changes that troubles us, is the requirement to implement the Australian Curriculum. This rigid one-size-fits-all model, has proven to be ineffective for many students and its enforcement comes without delving into the underlying reasons why many families choose homeschooling in the first place. This approach fails to address the core issues at hand. It's crucial to acknowledge that homeschooling is often chosen by families for a variety of reasons, including disability, concerns about safety and bullying, religious or philosophical beliefs, or a desire for more personalised and flexible learning experiences tailored to individual student needs. Homeschooling families often employ diverse and innovative approaches to education that may not align with traditional teaching methods, but directly cater to the needs of our children. Imposing the use of the curriculum would undermine the very essence of home education by stifling creativity and individualised learning.

“Disengaged Students: These students have largely disconnected from the academic environment. They may frequently skip classes, neglect assignments, and show little interest or enthusiasm for learning. This disengagement can stem from various factors such as personal issues, lack of interest in the subject matter, or feeling overwhelmed by academic demands. Without intervention and support, disengaged students may struggle to succeed academically and may require special attention to re-engage with their studies.”

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The Australian Curriculum is an incredibly complex document that has been tailored to educate children in schools. Many schools employ curriculum specialists to interpret and implement this document. Teachers also spend many years at university to gain the knowledge and skills required to implement it. As homeschooling parents, we don't have this level of expertise. As unqualified people, introducing and implementing the Australian Curriculum into Home Education, would, in theory, be executed to a lower standard than that of qualified teachers. This could therefore not be considered a high-quality education and would, in fact, be inferior to the education currently being provided to our children using our own methods, targeting their specific needs and interests. Additionally, the Australian Curriculum covers many topics that are outdated and/or irrelevant to many children. There is a real need for curriculum reform that prioritises topics, essential skills and competencies relevant to the 21st century. Rather than adhering to a curriculum that feels arbitrary and disconnected from real-world contexts, we should focus on cultivating critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and communication skills that are essential for success in today's rapidly changing world.

"Research on the forgetting curve shows that within 1 hour, learners forget an average of 50% of the information presented; within 24 hours, they forget an average of 70% of new information; and within one week, they forget up to 90% of what they learned". This is especially true if you have no interest in that information!

Homeschooling enables us to prioritise the development of real-life skills and knowledge that are **essential for our specific child** to be successful in the modern world, and **their** future life. "The Forgetting Curve" gets you thinking. What do you remember from what you learned at school? What have you used in your life, that you learned at school? You may realise you don't recall a lot and have never used a lot of it. We get taught things in school, simply for the purpose of taking an exam. Once the exam has passed, a lot of the knowledge is never used again, and you forget it. We want our children to "**Learn for life, not for exams**". By focusing on relevant topics and real-life hands-on learning experiences, we can directly equip our children with the tools they need to thrive in both their academic and personal lives.

As parents of a neurodivergent child (Autistic/ADHD), we have spent hundreds of hours (and dollars) consulting with numerous specialists and allied health experts, to determine how to best educate our child. We worked tirelessly with his former schools to try to implement these recommendations. Unfortunately, what our child required was just not able to be achieved by the schools and as a result, he disengaged from learning. Our child learns best with a combined audio, visual and hands-on, informal learning style. This enables him to immerse himself in particular areas of interest that often crosses over several key learning areas. Adhering to the Australian Curriculum would render this impossible for our child, and to this date, has been the only learning style that he has engaged in.

According to recent research collected by the Home Education Unit (2022), two of three home educating families have chosen to do so because of an underlying disability or health issue. For these children, working the Australian Curriculum is not providing them a high-quality education or meeting their immediate needs. We have chosen this avenue because of the flexibility it affords. This enables us to educate and care for our children in a manner that suits their learning style. Most of these students have left mainstream schooling because they could not learn in a traditional mainstream learning style or environment.

We respectfully request that the Minister carefully reconsiders the proposed changes to home education regulations and work towards crafting policies that strike a balance between accountability and flexibility. It is imperative that we uphold the fundamental right of parents to choose the educational path that best suits the needs of their children, while also ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place to promote educational excellence and student well-being.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing your response on this important issue.

Kind Regards,  
Nicole Tommasini

*Homeschooling parent to a 13yr old disengaged and neurodivergent child*