

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

**Submission No:** 345  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Submission regarding proposed Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024  
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Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

Over the past 4 years as a homeschooling parent, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that face to face learning has had on my neurodivergent son's education and overall self-confidence and well-being.

Although we do follow a curriculum that is based on the ACARA, we have had to be flexible with the latter in order to provide a genuinely high-quality education for my son. For instance, my son has had very real and documented issues in the areas of mathematics and literacy, so we have had to change our way of teaching him. At times, I have added resources to his day to day schooling and/or waited to introduce new concepts until he has solidly grasped foundational ones. Sometimes, the resources and methods I have added to his daily schooling are, quite frankly, superior to those scripted by the ACARA.

It's crucial to acknowledge that homeschooling is often chosen by families for a variety of reasons. These may include dissatisfaction with the traditional schooling system, concerns about safety and bullying, religious or philosophical beliefs, or a desire for more personalised and flexible learning experiences tailored to individual student needs.

I have many concerns regarding this bill, including the following:

- 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. As a homeschooler, I don't have access to this level of expertise. In order to implement this, I would need to base our learning off over-simplified textbooks, rush through topics and stop much of the practical, hands-on nature of part of our learning. In a 1:1 setting, this is not a high-quality education.
- As an active participant in the homeschool community, we engage regularly in multiage learning group activities. We often capitalise on instruction and lessons from other parents, community members and experts in their fields. Sometimes, this sparks interests and passions within my child and we are able to 'go off script' so to speak, and deeply explore an area of interest before returning to the regular program. Strictly enforcing the Australian Curriculum will severely limit this opportunistic learning and stifle the ability for us to form multi-age groups, as the topics they would be investigating would be restricted by their year level.
- As a parent of a neurodivergent child, we have spent a significant amount of time and money ( as some psychological assessments are not covered by the NDIS) consulting with numerous specialists and allied health experts to determine how to best educate our son. It has been established that homeschooling is the best environment for him to obtain a high quality education. Evidence of this is the fact that he was virtually illiterate when we started homeschooling (after 2 years in a traditional classroom

setting). My son is now reading chapter books, writing his own stories, dreaming about maybe one day becoming a cricketer and an historian! A draconian adherence to the Australian Curriculum could very likely stifle his learning and stunt his progress. I doubt that whoever drafted this bill has had any extended experience in the homeschooling sphere. Why are these changes being proposed, and whom are they intended to benefit? Because truly, I doubt the children's best interests are paramount with the wording of this bill.

- Importantly, I wonder how you will establish what the 'best interest of the child' is? As a former family lawyer, I am aware of the necessity of evidence in the form of affidavits and/or psych reports to allow a judge to ascertain what the best interests of the children are. Who will be the judge in this case? Will they have experience in homeschooling? Will they even be parents? the addition of this requirement seems to, unnecessarily, cast a net too wide!
- Researching and facilitating home education takes a lot of time and energy, but we have decided to follow this path with our child because he just doesn't respond to mainstream school. As a parent, it would be substantially easier to just enroll my child into school or distance education, but we have already discovered that this method of learning would likely be unsuccessful in providing him with a high-quality education.
- Rather than imposing stricter regulations, I urge the committee to prioritise understanding and addressing the root causes of homeschooling trends. This entails listening to and considering the feedback from homeschooling parents, who are directly impacted by these legislative changes. Their insights and experiences are invaluable in shaping effective policies that support the diverse needs of families, while ensuring the well-being and educational success of children.
- Lastly, I am aware that recently, a report on "Deaths of children and young people Queensland 2022-2023" was presented to Parliament and publicly released. The report documents that a homeschooled child, registered with the HEU, committed suicide. A number of government agencies were involved with this child and their family. These included the hospital, Child Safety and Home Education Unit. The child was an inpatient in a mental health facility for a period of time. Further, at the time of the child's death, Child Services had not commenced their investigation and assessment process.

The report states: *"The young person's experiences led the Board to consider the regulatory oversight of, and support for, children registered for home education in Queensland."* As such, the report directly states that a review of Home Education Regulations and Oversight has been triggered by this matter. However, this was clearly a child safety issue, not a home education failure! The changes that the Bill intends to make would most likely not have saved this child, as Child Safety was already aware of his situation and held concerns about a range of things other than the child's education.

I believe it would be unfair for home educating families to bear the brunt of the negative outcomes stemming from a failure of Child Safety to respond to and take action on child safety notifications. Further, following the ACARA in his homeschooling education would most likely not have

changed anything of the child's alleged unsafe circumstances. In light of this significant information, I am curious to know how the proposed bill is an appropriate response to this child safety matter.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the proposed changes to homeschooling legislation and to engage in a collaborative dialogue with homeschooling stakeholders to identify and address the real issues driving this educational choice. By doing so, we can work towards a more inclusive and responsive educational system that respects the choices and concerns of all families. I further urge the committee to not support this bill based on an isolated tragedy which could have happened regardless of this child's education status.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Jackelin Fox

