

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

**Submission No:** 347  
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**Publication:**  
**Attachments:** No attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

## **To Whom it May Concern**

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed legislation affecting Queensland Home Education.

### **My understanding of the proposed legislation**

My understanding is that the proposed legislation will:

- bind home educators to the national curriculum
- require parents to prove that home education is in their child's best interest
- require parents to report on all subjects (as deemed under the national curriculum),
- require parents to prove that their child has made academic improvements in all subjects

It's my further understanding that this legislation has been drafted without any consultation with the members of society who will be most impacted by it -- current home educators.

For education to be inclusive of all students, it's important to understand the reasoning behind the education decisions of families who have chosen to educate their children outside of the school system.

### **Some of the reasons why parents choose to home educate**

Parents who choose to home educate their children do so for a variety of reasons, including:

- Desire to stay connected to their child/ren and to keep the family unit strong. Research shows that children who are read to by their parents, who eat meals with their parents, whose parents are present in their lives, go on to be more successful throughout life by many metrics, including their capacity to make positive contributions to society.
- seeing "educating" as an extension of "parenting" and something they want to take full responsibility for
- understanding and valuing how a connected parent's presence can scaffold a child's learning and development in many ways that are simply not available to a child in a classroom environment with many children per adult and with adults whom the children do not know well
- avoiding bullying/harassment
- catering to the unique needs, aptitudes, learning pace, and capacity of each child
- desire to decide how much or how little to use screen-based modalities as opposed to paper based or (for younger children) manipulative materials
- desire to protect children from having their private/personal data harvested by corporations
- desire to enable children to develop neurologically and cognitively at their own pace (many researchers, as well as some developers of screen based technologies, clearly state that inappropriate use of screen based/digital technologies can significantly impair optimum neurological and cognitive development)

## **My concerns about the proposed legislation**

The Australian Curriculum is incredibly complex. In order to follow it, home educating parents would need to base their children's learning on simplified text books, constrict themselves to unrelated topics with time limits for each to allow all to be covered, and take on a time-consuming administrative burden that would take them away from attending to their child's actual learning experience.

Home education communities run frequent multi-age learning co-ops and group activities. They use instruction and lessons from other parents, community members and experts in their fields.

In home educating communities children and teens of all ages, parents, and often grandparents, all engage in topics, encourage each other, and spark ideas for each other. Collaboration, innovation, resourcefulness, creativity, inclusiveness, non-judgement, confidence and willingness to try new thing and to keep trying until a way that works is found, all thrive in this environment.

Individual families and children are able to deeply explore areas of interest and connect related areas of interest together in a fluid, non-linear, wholistic way. They are able to circle back as needed to fill in any gaps as they are identified, and often when a gap is found, the child is now more ready and better equipped to fill it.

The proposed new legislation would severely limit this opportunistic learning style and stifle the ability of home educating families to form multi-age groups and to engage with topics in expansive, non-linear, exploratory ways.

## **Why I think the focus of the proposed legislation is misguided**

Based on my own experience and observations, a high proportion of parents in home education communities have worked with children in professional capacities before becoming parents, have early childhood qualifications, or are current or former school teachers.

These parents choose to home educate their own children and to compile their own curriculum because they understand the school system better than anyone else does and they know that they can do a better job for their own children at home.

Many other children, however, without the advantage of being born into stable family units and supportive communities, do need school.

With disadvantaged youth going off the rails and all our systems and institutions already stretched in multiple ways, it makes no sense to prevent dedicated, committed, sober, hardworking parents from reducing the load on the education system by educating their own children.

It also makes no sense to introduce new legislation to restrict home educators, without exploring why the numbers of families choosing to home educate are growing. Clearly the school system as it is, is not serving these families.

Why not use the funds and resources that this unnecessary extra regulation and administration would require, to improve schools for the children who do need them?

Why not use these funds and resources to help disadvantaged youth who do not have stable family units and parents who are able to home educate?

If this legislation is passed it will negatively affect many families who are currently quietly getting on with the job of parenting and educating their children, supporting each other, and doing their best to raise children who can contribute to the world in an empowered way.

Home education is a daunting, decades-long project. It calls for substantial commitment from parents financially and emotionally. No parent undertakes it without significant soul searching and an absolute commitment to do the best they can for their child/ren.

Many parents who elect to home educate also do so with a conscious commitment to end inter-generational trauma of many kinds.

Really. Why target parents like these, who ask only to be allowed to raise their children in the most socially conscious way they can, when so many other issues require real solutions?

Home education, with flexible curriculum's developed by home educating parents, is a valid education choice. The numbers of children graduating from home education and successfully entering the work force are growing. Home educated children are not ending up on the streets, in jail, or on the dole.

There is nothing broken here. Home education does not need fixing.

## **In conclusion**

I sincerely request of whomever is reading this, that you do whatever you can to convince the decision makers that the most sensible course of action is to put this unnecessary legislation aside and focus instead on what does need fixing.

This legislation is an infringement on the right of parents to raise and educate our children as we believe is appropriate and best for our families and our community/society.

Thank you for reading my submission

sincerely

Kate Martignier

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