

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: RE: EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024
Date: Wednesday, 20 March 2024 2:30:59 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in Queensland. As a homeschooling parent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my serious concerns about the potential impact of these changes on my child.

I am the parent of a wonderful 11yr girl. I have a diploma qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. In 2020 my child was diagnosed with Chronic Persistent Pain. We persevered with traditional schooling for 3 years before quickly realising that teachers were more concerned with meeting assessment deadlines than our child's serious health issues and as a result we started homeschooling. My child left the school system with a chronic health condition, anxiety, extremely low self esteem and virtually no academic confidence in herself. Through homeschooling my child has been able to relax and focus on her health goals and various medical appointments. Through the 1:1 setting I quickly realised that my child was neurodivergent, something that was missed by various teachers in five years of traditional schooling. I have been able to tailor our learning to perfectly suit my child's many needs and she is doing much better because of it. My child is now starting to enjoy learning and education. She is optimistic and planning possible outcomes for her future. My child has recently expressed that she would like to start studying a tafe course in her Grade 10 year, specifically, a Certificate II in Animal Care. My child has always had a passion for animals and the environment and to see her enthusiastically planning a future of studying something she enjoys is amazing. Your proposed legislation will take this opportunity and enthusiasm away from her.

The proposed legislation changes raise pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, the need to prove to a government body that I know what is best for my child, the discrimination of children that don't fit into a traditional schooling environment or benefit from the Australian Curriculum and the unnecessary extra workload on homeschooling parents. 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, we don't have access to this level of expertise. In order to implement this, we would need to base our learning off over-simplified textbooks, rush through topics and stop the practical, hands-on nature of our learning. In a 1:1 setting, this is not a high-quality education.

Being able to cater my child's learning to suit them has been extremely beneficial for us. We live in a large city in Central Queensland yet our health system still

functions as if we are in a rural area. We waited 7 months for a paediatrician appointment to diagnose our child's neuro-divergence and in this time we were able to plan our child's learning around her needs. We've recently had an issue with medication and an appointment to change medications is booked for 6 weeks away. Luckily, I am able to support my currently unmedicated child, (who also has complex health issues) by using this time to do hands-on learning, activities, projects and excursions.

As a parent of a neurodivergent child with a Chronic Pain Condition, we have spent hundreds of hours consulting with numerous specialists and allied health professionals to determine how to best educate our child. We have liaised tirelessly with her former school to try to implement these recommendations. Unfortunately, what my child required was just not able to be achieved by their school. My child learns best with a project-led learning style. This enables her to become deeply immersed in an area of interest and this will often cross at least 5 key learning areas. Adhering to the Australian Curriculum would render this impossible for my child and will stifle her learning enthusiasm.

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 within the Australian Curriculum is not providing them a high-quality education or meeting their immediate needs. They have chosen this avenue because of the flexibility it affords. This enables families to educate and care for their 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 learning style.

I object to the proposed guiding principle of proving that homeschooling is in the best interest of my child because no one but myself and my child's father know what is best for our child. You do not know my child personally. You are not personally invested in her life or wellbeing. You are not personally concerned with her mental state, her happiness or her future accomplishments. You do not live our lives with a child with a chronic pain disorder who is also neuro-divergent so please do not assume that you know what is best for her education needs. I will not support a government that takes away parents' rights to cater their child's education to their own individual needs.

I am concerned that this legislation has been introduced without proper consultation with current homeschooling families and I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritise the best interests of our students. For education to be inclusive of all students, I believe it is important to understand the reasoning behind the education decisions of the families who struggle to fit into mainstream education.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. It is my hope that, going forward, this legislation can suit the needs of all students across Queensland. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Amanda Cowe

