

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

**Submission No:** 353  
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Committee Secretary  
Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you today to express my concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament. As a home educating parent registered in NSW, I do not support some of the changes that have been introduced and I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the homeschooling community as a whole.

I am particularly concerned about the proposal to “*enhance the regulation of home education*” and prescribe the requirements for the educational program a child receives. Whilst I agree that all home educated children should receive an extremely high standard of education and target appropriate learning outcomes, I do not agree with the insistence that all home educated students should use an *approved* education and training program.

I believe that all registered home educating parents have the right to select the most appropriate educational methods and resources for their children. As parents we have the right to determine an educational program for our children that best helps them to target their own unique and diverse learning goals. We have the right to use a variety of teaching methods and learning resources as we see fit to promote the wellbeing of the child. I do not agree that there should be prescribed requirements for an educational program for registered home schoolers.

The curriculum that I choose to educate my children with is of an extremely high standard and is widely used all over the world by parents who wish to provide a generous feast of education and develop the character of their children in an environment which best nurtures and challenges the child. I am registered in NSW and provide a learning program and progress reports in relation to the appropriate stage and syllabus outcomes of my children, however I do not wish to be prescribed an educational program or limited in any way in the way I choose to educate my children.

My children both went to mainstream schools for a time (daughter K-2, son K) and the decision to home school was not something I took lightly. I am extremely dedicated to the education of my children and I am confident that the academic program that I have selected is of a higher standard than that taught at the two schools my children attended. I also saw a gap in the way that both schools endeavoured to teach my children, and I believe parents are the best people to select the specific teaching methods and educational resources for their children. The learning needs of all children are extremely diverse; no two children are the same. So my question to the committee is, why would a one-size-fits-all prescribed educational program be in the best interests of the child?

I am also extremely concerned about the proposed removal of gendered language in the registration process for home schooling. I strongly disagree with the statement "*the use of gendered language in the EGP Act does not align with contemporary practice and approaches to gender and sex.*" I do not agree that the removal of gendered language is necessary, or indeed in the best interests of the child. As a Christian, I believe God created man and woman. I do not agree that the language such as "he/she, him/her" should be removed from the Act. In fact, it is my belief that removing such straight-forward gender language from the Act will cause confusion and harm to children; not promote their wellbeing.

If one of the goals of the proposed changes to the legislation is "*acknowledging wellbeing, inclusion and diversity*" then it is my opinion that continuing to encourage home schooling parents to determine the appropriate educational program for their children, without interference, is the best way forward.

My children (having both been to school) are regularly asked if they enjoy home schooling. Their answer is always yes, and they reflect that they would hate to go back to school. My children have more free time, more freedom to be themselves, and a more nurturing environment to learn and grow in. Home schooling has provided the flexibility of learning and the best possible environment for them to thrive, both academically and personally. Home education is already provided in a way that is in the best interests of the child, taking into account the child's safety, wellbeing and access to a high-quality education. There is no need to make the proposed changes to home education.

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

Sincerely,  
Ashleigh Stephens

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(Registered home schoolers in NSW since 2021)