


Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 371
Submitted by: 
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

20 March 2024

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Hello!

I am writing to urge the committee to consider the invaluable insights and perspectives of home-schooling parents when considering Legislative amendments. It is crucial that policymakers listen to the voices of those directly impacted by any proposed changes to home-schooling legislation.

I agree wholeheartedly with the statement that "every child deserves the same access to quality education". It is important to recognize that many families opt for home-schooling precisely because they find the Australian Curriculum inadequate for meeting the unique needs of their children to have access to quality and safe education, and work hard to provide that themselves. I am one of those parents. I have been home educating my children since they were born, and have three delightful sons ranging from primary to high school aged. For almost 5 years my children have been school aged and home-schooled. We have tried both Catholic and State Schools in the mix of home-schooling.

Some of my children were not able to obtain a quality education in the mainstream system. They certainly weren't provided a safe and supportive environment nor were values and skills needed for life long learning, employment and societal participation, evident. Forcing home-schooling families to adhere to a curriculum that does not suit their needs and values is counterproductive and undermines the very essence of home-schooling, of which is to provide quality, motivating and positive learning experiences to ensure knowledge transfer and development of children.

I am deeply concerned about the short-sightedness of these proposed changes and the lack of extensive consultation with home-schooling families. I am disappointed that our rights as parents, to educate our children in the manner we see fit, is being infringed upon.

For my family, home-schooling provides a sanctuary for our children that is safe and supportive, free from the pressures and pitfalls of bullying, competitiveness and judgement that plagued their school environment. Our choice to home-school was not taken lightly and is not merely an alternative to traditional schooling but a way of life, necessary to protect our children's innocence, build their esteem and create positive experiences with learning academics and life skills.

Freed from the constraints of a standardized curriculum (with its own faults), our children pursue their interests and passions with enthusiasm. This personalized approach to learning not only engages them academically but also fosters the development of real-life skills that are essential for success in their chosen paths. This wholistic education allows us the opportunity to nurture our children's natural curiosity and creativity, with traits such as critical thinking, collaboration, and self-motivation developing well in an understanding and supportive setting. We nurture a sense of ownership, problem solving, decision making and access to human rights (to use the bathroom, and eat or drink at a time that suits them) resulting in higher levels of engagement and motivation.

We are also able to teach our children practical life skills, such as growing and cooking foods, financial management, relationship skills, healthy lifestyle choices, spirituality and varied art and musical content. These skills are often overlooked in mainstream schooling but are essential for navigating the complexities of adulthood.

It's evident that a significant portion of parents feel that the mainstream school system and the Australian curriculum do not align with their values and desires for their children, prompting them to choose home-schooling.

I deeply concerned about the creeping influence of external agendas which may not align with our values and beliefs as parents. My family and I do not want our children subject to unnecessary indoctrination or ideological agendas.

There are detrimental impacts of the mainstream high pressure environment on children's mental health and well-being where conformity and rote memorization are prioritised, students are constantly judged and graded, and individuality is squashed.

Instead of trying to find failures in home-schooling practices and reasons to force parents to comply with a mainstream approach, I request you to focus on addressing the shortcomings within the mainstream school system and question why so many of us are moving away from it. I know several former teachers that have chosen to leave traditional curriculum-based schools precisely because they found the system to be inadequate in many ways. Their insights and experiences could also provide valuable input into any proposed regulations.

I believe reporting on all areas of the curriculum would be unnecessarily onerous for parents and add to the workload of Home Education Unit (HEU). I implore you to invest resources in supporting and expanding the HEU to ensure that home-schooling families receive the necessary support and guidance while upholding their right to provide a tailored and flexible education to their children. Rather than using the proposed method for discouraging families from choosing alternative approaches to education, by increasing our workload with reporting requirements, let us work together to explore innovative ways to ensure that every child receives a quality and safe education that meets their individual needs and aspirations.

I am disheartened to see our home-school community voices marginalized in this decision-making process and hope that together, we can work towards policies that respect the rights and autonomy of home-schooling parents, trust parent's knowledge of their unique children and their needs, and support everyone's diversities.

Finally, I would like to note that the absence of significant female representation on the committee is concerning. A major portion of home-schooling parents are women who have made significant sacrifices to ensure their children receive a quality education tailored to their needs, so female perspectives would surely be valuable.

Kind regards,

██████████

N.B. - I DO NOT give permission for my personal details to be published with this submission or in any other form.