

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 438
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing with the intention to express my utmost disagreement and concern regarding the proposed changes outlined in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024. After thoroughly reading and dissecting each paragraph, I can clearly state that I oppose the Bill, and the reasons are stated below.

As a homeschooling parent deeply invested in the educational journey of my 8-year-old son and just recently his sibling, I find that the proposed amendments, particularly those affecting sections 217, 219, and 226, threaten to undermine the very essence of our educational approach. For us, high-quality learning transcends the boundaries of a standardized curriculum. It has been a journey of exploration and discovery, often diverging from traditional paths to delve into topics like Marine Biology, driven solely by my son's interests. The proposed changes, mandating adherence to the Australian Curriculum, jeopardize the flexibility that has fuelled my son's enthusiasm for learning. The prospect of abandoning Latin expressions and exploring advanced Biology topics in favour of rigid curriculum requirements is deeply troubling. Moreover, teaching multiple children at varying levels of education would render this task exceedingly challenging as we require the flexibility to customize the one-on-one educational experience more effectively

I firmly believe that the role of ensuring child safety should not fall solely on the shoulders of the home education unit. As addressed in the Proposal, I am of the opinion that homeschooling families should not be held to a higher standard than any other family with children. The time and resources spent navigating these proposed regulations would be better invested in tailoring education to meet my child's specific needs and interests. Provisional registration provides a safety net for families transitioning from the school system, particularly those grappling with school trauma.

The most concerning aspect is the government overreach evident in the proposed amendments to sections 7 and 18, which shift from parents choosing to being held accountable for educational choices. This move undermines the fundamental principle of parental autonomy in education, potentially limiting parental rights and autonomy in choosing the best educational path for their children.

The amendments to sections 206, 212, and 229A, particularly the removal of provisional registration and replacement of certificates with notices, significantly impact administrative processes and parental rights. Furthermore, the lack of provision for university education in the curriculum and the definition of "approved education and training program" raise concerns about educational access and interpretation.

In essence, the proposed amendments fail to recognize the unique dynamics of homeschooling and the diverse needs of our community. The immersive, child-led approach that has proven successful for many families, including mine, risks being stifled by bureaucratic constraints.

I urge you to listen to the voices of the homeschooling community and reconsider the proposed changes. Collaborative dialogue and genuine engagement with stakeholders are essential to crafting legislation that upholds educational diversity and parental autonomy.

I have been listening intently to the briefing yesterday morning, and I feel compelled to share my concerns regarding certain statements made by those proposing the amendments to the legislation. One statement that particularly caught my attention was regarding the reason for homeschooling. It was suggested that the increase in homeschooling may be attributed to the experience during the pandemic and influences from social media. While this may hold true for some, I sincerely hope that

the majority of the proposals are not based solely on hypotheses, but rather on extensive research and thorough consultations with all stakeholders. Upon analysing the research available on the Home Education Unit (HEU) website, which was quoted in support of this hypothesis and other proposed changes, it becomes evident that there are various significant reasons behind the carefully considered decision parents make when opting for homeschooling.

My concerns extend beyond this. I am also troubled by the questions surrounding authority and decision-making concerning the standard of education. Who determines whether the education provided meets a certain standard? Moreover, the proposed requirements seem to exceed those expected of fully paid and trained teachers in Queensland. As a homeschooling mother deeply invested in the education of my children, these uncertainties weigh heavily on my mind.

In my personal experience living in Europe, the UK, and Australia, and working as an accountant and translator in sectors that help businesses and people thrive, I am now in a position to help my own children thrive. I have also started teaching languages online, which has given me great insight into the needs and challenges children and adults may have in learning areas. As much as I have used the textbooks and workbooks approved by certain curriculums, I always seek knowledge in different areas, make plans, and amendments. I am creating my own curriculum from the knowledge gathered over the years from various sources, whether online, in books, or in person. My love for languages and culture doesn't come from schooling but from my mother homeschooling me at times and on any occasion she could, as we didn't have that option back of full-time homeschooling in the socialist times of Yugoslavia.

I sincerely hope that you have been diligently reading the submissions provided. Yesterday's briefing has prompted me to send this submission myself, as I believe there are numerous questions posed by the committee that remain unanswered or have been avoided. I look forward to receiving your reply and hope that my concerns, along with those of many others in the homeschooling community, will be taken into serious consideration.

Additionally, I must express my dismay at not receiving any emails from HEU about these proposed changes. I was fortunate enough to be contacted by one of my friends who is active in homeschooling groups on social media, where the content and information regarding this bill was thankfully posted. This lack of direct communication from HEU is concerning, as it may have left many families unaware of these significant changes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I hope for a meaningful dialogue and a resolution that respects the rights and choices of homeschooling families.

Yours Sincerely,

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