

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, in particular Clause 68 and the inclusion of Section 7(da). As such, I'm looking for your support using your voice and position to represent myself and thousands of other homeschooling families in Queensland who will be affected by the potential changes. As a homeschooling parent, I firmly believe that these changes would undermine the very reasons why many families, including mine, have chosen homeschooling as the preferred mode of education for our children. Reverting to a rigid, one-size-fits-all learning plan as the mandated Australian Curriculum (the "approved education and training program") will be met with disinterest and hence stifle their curiosity, love of learning and academic progress. Homeschooling is the solution to a "one size fits all" problem we have within the Australian standard curriculum. If it is mandated to homeschoolers then the children once again suffer the consequences. Since starting our homeschooling with our son who is in prep, has absolutely thrived. We have always been invested in his education and wellbeing so that he may grow to be a strong asset within his community and country. He learnt to read by the time he was 3, he is currently in prep (because of his age) but he is doing grade 1 maths, writing and has great comprehension skills and we are currently looking for a Japanese language tutor as he has a love for Japan and wants to learn the language. However, I tried for two weeks to follow the Australian Standard Curriculum and he was not engaged nor receptive to it. I have seen the results of the Australian standard curriculum with my son and the results will not be conducive to receiving a "high education" nor will it contribute to his development or support towards becoming a strong asset to his community or country. Any child not interested in learning will seek stimulation externally and generally, whatever stimulation they get into isn't a good one either for the child or the community and country. We just have to look at youth crime rates to contest to that. We chose to homeschool by choice not necessity, social media, pandemic or otherwise, it was purely for the known benefit it would be to my son development. Homeschooling has seen my son's confidence grow exponentially, he has a love of learning and always wants to learn our curriculum as its based off of his interests, curiosities and abilities. These proposed changes would not only undermine the fundamental principles of homeschooling but also limit my child's ability to learn and grow in a way that honors how his brain learns and grows. As a side issue, the expected increase in reporting requirements will not only take away valuable education time from my child, but also increase the workload of the Home Education Unit. Where is the benefit of this change? In regard to Section 7(da), I am a bit perplexed to read that only "home education [...] should be provided in a way that – (i) is in the best interest [...] and (ii) ensures [...] a high-quality education." Who defines "best interest" or "high-quality education"? My concern is that this addition to the Act can easily be misused by individuals or authorities to stop families from choosing to home educate their children. Is this the reason why this addition only applies to home education, but not for "the State, parents, teachers, school communities and non-government entities"? This legislation change was not brought forward to the educators and families it would affect, to consult with, using their knowledge and experience to come up with something beneficial, nor is it someone within the community with first hand experience, or even someone with supportive statistics to show this legislation change will indeed benefit the homeschooling community. In my opinion, by allowing children to be taught differently from the mainstream, fostering their interests and talents, home schooling provides a pathway for Australia to stay creative, innovative and competitive in an ever changing world. As a homeschooling parent deeply invested in my child's education, I urge you to consider my concerns

stand against these restrictive measures and instead focus on supporting families in providing a rich and diverse educational experience tailored to the needs of each child, by removing Section 7(da) and the requirement to follow an “approved education and training program” in Clause 68. Thank you for considering my concerns. Sincerely, Jemma Steadman [Homeschooling Parent, voter and child advocate]