

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 497
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

The proposed legislation raises several concerns that I believe need to be addressed: removal of provisional application planning and reporting limitations and expectations consultation issues. Firstly, the removal of the 60-day provisional application prevents families from being able to engage in trial periods of home education or to utilise this period for alternative education provisions. The trial periods are key when determining if home education is the best approach to address the needs of each of your children and the removal of this will either cause people not to register, to pay someone to create a plan that won't be well-considered, appropriate or followed but will meet requirements and/or to not trial home education to the detriment of the child. Being able to utilise the provisional period for alternative education provisions enables families to engage in educational travel experiences, enables children to undertake alternative education courses and provides the opportunity for young people in crisis to take a break from schooling and engage in home education. Without this option, families will instead not register, children will not be able to undertake study in courses that they are talented and/or passionate about and some children will be forced to remain in a school environment when in crisis or will increase school refusal. Additionally, the requirement to plan from the Australian Curriculum and to report on all learning areas is complex and demanding. Teachers undergo a 4-yr degree to learn how to plan, teach and assess the curriculum and still find it challenging and require ongoing professional development. Even within Australia there is no agreement by all states and territories to use the Australian Curriculum as is, with each jurisdiction able to develop their own 'version' of the curriculum. There is a lack of agreement within QLD about which elements of the curriculum are compulsory and additional, so it is complex to suggest that families can navigate the use of the curriculum effectively and consistently. Another concern with this, is the difficulty in using the Australian curriculum to plan a personalised curriculum for a child who is operating across year levels in different learning areas. Again, teams of education professionals work together in schools to plan for IEP/ICPs and multi-age classrooms and find it challenging even with their skill sets. Even if a family is capable of doing this, this approach limits learning. For example, if a child wants to investigate how psychological theory is used to influence audiences in online environments, they will need to have planning that is drawn from areas such as Science, Psychology, Digital technology, English, Mathematics, History and more. This means that in some cases disciplines are being covered that are not part of the Australian curriculum. Not only this, but they may be covering content that goes across Years 5-8 Mathematics as they need this breadth and depth; again, this is something that is not easily done in the Australian curriculum and would see families having to align to the curriculum for the sake of it rather than for meaningful purposes. This will either lead to parents having to pay people to plan for them or to parents not planning learning that really engages their child as it is too complicated to complete the paperwork. Reporting on every single learning area is demanding in terms of time for the families and the HEU. What does this achieve that a random sampling approach can't achieve? If a plan has been approved, surely the reporting process is about checking that the plan was delivered and identifying the student's achievement and progress. This could be achieved by requesting samples from the folio of work rather than arbitrary sampling from every learning area. This is opening the door for many commercial companies to start writing and selling plans, resources and reports, which will detract from the true richness available when home-educating and/or will lead to more people removing their children from school because they can buy a ready-made-pack that does more than their school does. I am worried about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education

system, I believe the voices of educators, parents, families, children, young people and community members must be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts our schooling choices. Finally, I want to say that on a personal note, the option to quickly pivot to home education with a plan that suited my child saved her life. She was a talented, intelligent, diligent and inquiring young person who rapidly became a school-refuser with low self-esteem who was contemplating suicide. It was all a result of school. She needed to leave, reset and regain a sense of self, worth, love and curiosity. It turns out that she should never have gone to schooling institutions; she was obviously always a child who thrived when learning in a positive and supportive community and when identifying what she wanted and needed to learn. We were well equipped to educate her and could access resources to help when we couldn't but the lack of acceptance around home education as a genuine option took us down the wrong path for her. Rather than instituting a punishment, compliance and standardised approach for everyone - which we know doesn't work in any complex situation - can we have a legislative solution that identifies those who aren't providing a quality education (whether that be schools or home educators) and requires more of them to ensure their child received their right to a quality education? For example, if you can't produce plans, samples and reports to a suitable standard, then more comprehensive requirements are put in place until this changes. In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritise the best interests of our children, young people and families. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system. Thank you.