

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I object to the proposed changes to the home-schooling in Queensland. I unexpectedly started my home school journey 5 weeks after my son started prep. We had picked the best public school in Geelong and were excited to start. He had loved kinder and we expected school to be the same. Within those 5 weeks he became a shadow of his former self - raging, aggressive tantrums, school refusal, depression and not wanting to leave the house or see anyone became our new norm. The school was not helpful despite many conversations back and forth. He was being bullied by his peers and year 6 kids. When I pulled him out his teachers nor the head even contacted me. Then started our journey to rebuild his confidence - we unschooled him and took walks in nature, connected with our home school network, participated in science days and slowly his confidence returned and willingness to be apart of the world again. Fast forward to Feb the next year and we moved to Qld and encouraged him back into the classroom for year one and our daughter started prep. Over the next 6 months our lives fell apart. Rages, violent outbursts, anxiety with stories of bullying from both children. After many meetings at the school we ended up pulling them both out. The following 7 months were again spent rebuilding their confidence - engaging psychologists, a paediatrician, occupational therapists and finally getting a diagnosis of Autism and ADHD for my son and now most likely the same diagnosis for my daughter. School is too loud, too crazy and stressful for my neuro-divergent children. Bullying is rife and it destroyed their confidence in their peers. Aside from that my children are very bright and always needed extension exercises. Their needs were not met in school. We spend our days learning, playing and experiencing the world along with sessions with psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers and overseen by a paediatrician. They are very much ahead of where they need to be on an academic level and we have developed a program that ties in closely to their special interests of Pokemon and animals to keep them engaged. Everyone who meets my children comments on how bright, well adjusted and social they are. We have an amazing home school network that we meet with several times a week. My 5 year plays chess, my 7 year old could blow your mind with the knowledge he has on a wealth of subjects but the most important thing is they are happy, they are engaging with their peers and they are learning about things they love and have passion for. When my son went back into Year One, his teacher had no idea he had been home schooled and he was among the top in his class. We deep dive on topics - they learn about subjects as a whole rather than individually. For example - last year their favourite thing to do was design their own cafe. They would come up with recipes, design a menu, be given a budget to go to the shop with and would come home and role play. One would take orders, the other would cook. They would add up the bill and the profit they made went towards next week's cafe. Our discussions around food would include areas such as health and culture. Slicing up the cake we would talk about fractions. They would work on their reading and writing when designing the menus and use the interest for ideas for recipes. I could go on and on. This learning through play has served them so well. The role play, and having a grown up guide the social cues and rules that they would normally miss out on - reminding them to make eye contact and take turns creates life long skills. I have given up my job to give my children the best education for their needs. We sold our house and moved to a cheaper place out of town on 11 acres so that they are free to explore and have a learning environment that works for them. I do follow many aspects of the curriculum for Maths and English and use it as a guide but I do it in a way that works for my children. I don't need the added stress of more reporting, or to be told what I need to do. Please trust that I know what is best for my children, and that I have their best interests at heart. Home school parents as a majority are the most connected

and child-centred people I have met. They care for their children and want the best - so much so that they have given up their own time and careers to do it. We need more support, not more legislation. I invite you to meet my children, they will blow you away with their knowledge and the way that they will engage with you, and may challenge your belief that school and the national curriculum is the best way to make successful adults.