

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Objection to proposed changes to home education in Queensland
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To the Committee Secretary,
Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

This email serves as a copy of a submission made online.

I object to the proposed changes to homeschooling in Queensland.

I am a qualified high school history and English teacher. I also have 20 years of experience in the home education sector, firstly in research and secondly in practice. I have successfully graduated three of my children. They are qualified or in the process of qualifying in Architecture (degree), Business (diploma), Beauty Therapy (diploma), and Engineering (degree). My youngest has just one year left at home before embarking on a Business degree pathway.

My background in both mainstream, classroom-based education and home education affords me a unique perspective. I have seen both the pros and cons of each educational context. It is my experience that education at home works best when there is less government oversight rather than more. The proposed changes to home education in Queensland - if realised - will create several difficulties that will not only be costly to police but will also be detrimental to large numbers of children who do not fit the cookie-cutter Australian curriculum mould. Below are a few of my concerns:

Provisional Registration:

Removing provisional registration places an enormous burden on the most vulnerable of families. This is, essentially, legislating abuse. Children who have experienced bullying or other untenable circumstances in the school context need to be removed from the school environment as soon as that circumstance is identified. They and their parents need the time and space to decompress before embarking on a formalised program of education at home. Provisional registration allows parents and children to figure out their next steps without forcing the child to continue to face his/her abusers on a daily basis at school.

Australian Curriculum Adherence:

While my husband and I did look at the Australian Curriculum and considered using aspects of it, we instead followed a more tailored approach that better catered to our children's needs and circumstances. This involved various curricula from the USA, Australia, South Africa, UK, and beyond. Our children received an education as good as or superior to their peers at Australian schools, most recently evidenced by how they have done or are doing in their tertiary studies. It is not unusual for our children to report that their tertiary lecturers remark that they have a high work ethic and/or standard.

Our family has homeschooled alongside many other families who use a variety of resources to educate their children. As a result, our community of homeschooled children bring diverse and interesting perspectives to their common extra-curricular classes and activities. These different approaches have allowed our children to explore many interests and become involved in the community in ways that have naturally

allowed them to be better and more involved citizens. Had they been forced to comply with a rigid adherence to the Australian Curriculum, our children would not have had the time to explore and learn in the rich and diverse manner they have.

It is my firm opinion, based on my experience in the home education sector, that children who have diverse learning opportunities grow to be more likely to be better contributors to society. Adherence to only one curriculum does not achieve this outcome.

"In the best interests of the child":

The proposed changes provide that a child may only be granted permission to homeschool if it is in "the best interests of the child". This is a very dangerous precedent to set. It usurps the role of the parent whose responsibility it is to determine what is in the best interest of the child. This is government overreach that is entirely un-Australian, un-Democratic, and completely infringing on human rights. It is also practically impossible for anyone other than that child's parents/guardians to determine. No government body can know the unique individual circumstances of each child enough to be able to make an unbiased, well-informed decision as to what is in the best interests of that specific child. The only time a government body could ever be in a position to make such a decision is in an established case of child safety. This proposed change in effect places every home-educating family under suspicion of child safety concerns. This is the kind of suspicion that one expects to find in communist dictatorships, not in a free society like Australia. It has no place in Australian education legislation.

I appreciate that the people who have put time and thought into this proposed legislation change may well have the best interests of children at heart. However, the proposed changes suggest that they have not consulted those who know best: current and past home education stakeholders, particularly parents and students. I hope that the plethora of objection letters will drive home how important it is for education legislation to truly represent the best interests of the child: access to home educational choice that is free of government overreach.

Sincerely,
Taryn Hayes

