

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 568  
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**For the attention of The Committee,**

Submission

Following is my submission on objections to the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendment Bill 2024.

**Who am I?**

I am a mother. A mother of three children, my eldest whom is currently attending a state primary school, and two young children whom I currently care for and educate in our home. I homeschooled my eldest in 2022 and plan to continue homeschooling in the future.

I have become a passionate advocate of children's learning and development along with the importance of play since I completed my Graduate Diploma in Early Years Teaching at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 2010.

My continual learning, employment, experiences in home education, and my journey as a parent in mainstream schooling have guided my preference to homeschool.

**Why have I chosen homeschool?**

I see optimal learning happening. I see individualised, customised, internally motivated learning happening. I see confident, happy children blossoming. I see my children's innocence and childhood being protected. I see strong family connections happening, and well developed children who are free to live and learn in ways that are meaningful to them. I see children who are learning to be social with guidance and support at all times. I see children who are engaged and involved in their learning.

I witnessed my eldest son in his year of homeschooling in 2022 enjoy precious time with his family, receive much needed rest, improved confidence and wellbeing, and increased motivation to explore and participate in the world he lives in. Sadly, with his return to public school, he is now subject to the detrimental comparisons that mass education breeds. I see teachers and principals favouring their own personal interests, celebrating certain achievements and efforts over others, limited learning being retained, unmet needs, decreased self esteem, bullying, low motivation and children who don't know who they are.

Unfortunately, with shared care arrangements for my eldest and other factors, homeschooling has not been possible at this time. However with increased

government support and inclusion practices for homeschoolers this may become possible. With government support, training, funding and inclusion, home schooling would be more accepted as an equal choice for learning and attainable for more families to enjoy the benefits and flexibility that homeschooling brings.

I believe the changes proposed to home educating in Queensland will disadvantage many children and families.

### **My objections for the proposal include:**

- × **A 'suitable' educational environment as determined by government, instead of parents.** Parents aren't home educating because it's the easy way out, they are educating because they believe it is the most suitable educational environment for their child. For the government to take away a choice that we the people want is a far overreach. The government are there to serve the people, not dictate to them. When a parent has a child who is refusing school, struggling with mental health at school, being physically or verbally abused, losing their spark, deflation of enthusiasm or motivation, a caring parent will act on this and do what is best for their child. **We should have the choice to home school if that is what we, the parents, deem to be best for our child.** Homeschooling environments provide the choice of flexibility, variety and customisation for children's learning which is essential for the successful integration and development of our children into the ever changing, and diverse world we live in.
- × **Mandatory use of Australian Curriculum.** Requiring mandatory use of the Australian Curriculum would restrict many home educators from providing a suitable educational environment for their children. A child's optimal learning pathway may not match the Australian Curriculum. **Why use a curriculum designed for mass education?** We are clearly not mass educating, but are customising our curriculum to better suit the needs and interests of our children. Marbina, L., Church, A. and Tayler (2011, p11) found that “For learning to be engaging and relevant, successful integrated approaches to learning and teaching should **support and build on children’s skills and interests.**” “A strong interest generates its own momentum and—if you let it—that momentum will take both you and the children in all sorts of interesting directions.” (Touhill, L., 2021). The importance of play and following children's interests in childhood learning is widely recognised but drastically missing in schools today. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework supports “Play (as) an essential element in early childhood learning and development.” (Marbina, L., Church, A. and Tayler, C., 2011, p.9). Yet, when trying to incorporate play in their educational environment, “Early childhood professionals often struggle with how this can

be successfully integrated into high quality learning experiences” (Edwards, 2005; Kagan, Scott-Little and Frelow, 2009). For children to be supported in their play they must be closely observed and relationally comfortable. This allows the educator to tailor the learning environment to the specific needs of the child and takes them on a far deeper learning journey. A much easier and attainable task in a home education setting as opposed to a school setting with limited adult to child ratio's and requirements to meet certain curriculum targets. The research states that individualised, interest led, tailored learning is the most beneficial for optimal learning. It meets the child where they are at, ensuring no one is left behind or under achieving. For mass educational purposes this is an impossible task to meet. **Customised curriculum is by far the most beneficial aspect of home schooling and could also be counted as the best form of education full stop.**

- × **Removal of 60 day provisional registration.** This will disadvantage many who need to start homeschooling unexpectedly for the wellbeing of their child and is an unfair expectation.
- × **Reduction in the time to 'show cause', when further information is needed.** A reduction in time to 'show cause' places further unnecessary stress and burden on parents. Parents are not paid, like teachers and usually have no or limited training for such reports. This is in no way, however, representative of a parents suitability to home educate their child/ren. In fact the government expectations and requirements on reporting should be made clearer, easier and accepted in a variety of formats to cater for the diverse population that it is serving. This is unfair expectation discriminating against homeschoolers.
- × **Removal of Certificate** As homeschooling is a valid and legal choice for education, a Certificate is more appropriate than a 'notice' for the important work homeschoolers do. No conditions of registration or address details should be visible due to possible privacy being breached, for eg. Shared care arrangements where one parent may need to keep address private for safety reasons.
- × **Reporting on 8 different Key Learning Areas** This is far too much reporting, taking away from valuable learning/planning time with our children. The report card that I receive for my school child is very basic and comments mainly on my sons effort. I have never been shown or proved to that he has actual educational progress. Home education reporting should be simplified.
- × **Removal of gender language from schools** The removal of 'boy' and 'girl' from our schools language is against the good of our children's mental health. The only genders that humans can be is boy or girl and no confusion on this

matter should be entered into. This is of significant concern for the wellbeing of our school children. There are many cases showing evidence of detriment to a child's life when gender confusion is catered for.

In conclusion, I support freedom, choice, simplification and inclusion for home educators and home learners. I support better opportunities for our children to develop in their own individual strengths, with positive, customised learning opportunities.

Kind regards,

Louise Cooke.

### *Reference List*

Edwards, S. (2005). The four dimensions of curriculum: Defining curriculum from the early childhood professionals' perspective. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, 12(2), 25-37.

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