

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

**Submission No:** 595  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
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**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you with my concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* that has recently been presented to Parliament. As a home educating parent, I strongly oppose many of these changes and I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the homeschooling community.

### **I strongly oppose the mandatory use of the Australian Curriculum**

My 14-year-old daughter has multiple disabilities and is neurodivergent, and struggled in both mainstream and Catholic education institutions in her first four years of education. It was clear that these institutions were unable to provide her with a high quality of education within the school and classroom settings, so it was suggested by the school that we consider homeschooling. We transitioned to homeschooling in Grade 3 through Distance Education, but it was clear that the pace and learning styles were overwhelming for my daughter, even though she was enrolled only for Math and English. The move to registering with the Queensland Home Education Unit (HEU) was the catalyst for significant improvements in my daughter's learning, feelings of safety and overall wellbeing. Being registered with the HEU meant we could incorporate a diverse learner framework and be flexible in the learning styles and experiences we implemented for our daughter. We were able to give her the time and space to learn foundational knowledge in Math and English, while incorporating other learning opportunities as advised by her specialists and therapists. We used the Australian Curriculum as a guide for her learning of Math and English but tailored specifically to her style of learning, ability and stamina. We have been able to quickly pivot, change or modify learning areas and strategies based on new research and the myriad of other, more relevant, curricula on offer.

My daughter decided she wanted to attend a mainstream school again for Grade 7, which we supported. When we approached our local high school, they immediately recognised that my daughter would only have the capacity to attend modified Math and English classes, in a very small class setting within the Student Support Unit. The school and classroom settings were still a challenge for my daughter, and the transition to Grade 8 was tricky. After discussions with her immediate teacher and the Head of Special Education, it was decided again that flexible homeschooling is the best option for my daughter, focusing on functional Math and English, at her ability level. It also gave her the time and space she needed to start learning independent and self-care skills.

This is another significant benefit of homeschooling. We can include life skills development; and teaching independent and self-care skills within her learning framework. These are all learned behaviours for our daughter, and do not come intuitively. There is no guidance in the Australian Curriculum on how to teach wound

care for PEG sites, as another example. My daughter is tube fed, and this is a skill she will need to have, among many other additional self-care tasks relevant to her disabilities, that are not considered in the national curriculum.

It has been clear to every educational institution that my daughter has attended, that she does not have the capacity to learn in all areas of the Australian Curriculum; and that the Curriculum has been significantly modified each year to suit my daughter's learning ability. This raises some critical questions for us:

1. Under the proposed changes, will the HEU have the authority to approve a learning plan that does not cover all areas of the national curriculum?
2. Will we be penalised for providing a high-quality education specifically designed for our daughter but does not cover all areas of the Australian Curriculum?
3. Will the HEU be additionally resourced to manage the workload of meeting the new requirements and having further documentation to review?
4. With increased numbers of families moving to home education, and the associated greater volume of applications, reports and plans: how much of our documentation is actually reviewed?

I am degree-qualified and have sacrificed a career and significant income for our family to homeschool and advocate for my child. I research and attend the necessary and time consuming medical and multidisciplinary appointments with my daughter and complete all necessary NDIS and HEU documentation. My husband and I, more than anyone, want to provide our daughter with relevant skills so that she can independently pursue, in the future, any area of interest to her; create connections with others; and be able to access her community.

### **I strongly oppose the loss of the 60-day provisional registration**

I am strongly opposed to the loss of the provisional registration option. This has child safety implications, where a child needs to be pulled from a formal educational setting due to bullying, assault (sexual or violent) or mental health issues. During that time, families will be trying to work out the best option for their child in this situation and will not have the capacity to be preparing learning plans before registering through the HEU. Having 60 days for the family to decide the best course of action is a compassionate option.

### **I strongly oppose the reduction in the show cause response time**

The reduction in the show cause response time from 28 days to 14 days adds increased pressure on to families who are responsible for home educating, and often also work and have other commitments. Families that get these show cause notices need more time to learn how to provide appropriate responses when no help or training is provided beyond volunteers in the community. I oppose this change to the legislation.

## **Parents should decide on the best schooling option for their child**

Parents, with guidance and advice from appropriate specialists and educators, are best placed to determine the optimum schooling mechanism for their child, which raises further:

5. Who would determine whether my child is eligible for home education?
6. How would this assessment to determine eligibility be performed?
7. How can a decision be appealed?
8. Why does this person get to over-rule my parental rights?

I eagerly anticipate your response.