

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 639
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Dear Committee Members,

RE: The Education (General Provisions) and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

I am writing to express my concerns regarding some of the proposed changes as mentioned in the above Bill, namely mandating all home educators to align to the National Curriculum and the requirement to report across all eight subjects.

My wife and I have been home educating our children for over 6 years. We are both IT professionals, have three degrees between us, and we also run our own software development company. We know the value of a high-quality education, and this is non-negotiable for us when it comes to educating our children.

We didn't intend to home educate our children, and they did originally attend a private school, but we found their individual needs and learning styles were not being catered for.

My wife does the majority of home education in our household, and she has tried many different programs and curriculums over the years, changing or adjusting to meet the needs of our children as their learning requirements change. Each year has been different for our children. Sometimes they attend many classes, sometimes they learn online, sometimes they learn outside.

One of my sons is using a typing program that was developed for dyslexic learners. My son is not dyslexic, and despite the program being quite expensive, we use this program because it works for him. He began this program in Grade 4 and we attribute a lot of his spelling advancements solely to this typing program. This program does not align to the Australian Curriculum because typing is not explicitly taught in the Australian Curriculum.

Both of my children have attended literary classes on a variety of topics across history, geography, politics, ethics, and many more. Although these subjects exist in the Australian Curriculum the topics they cover do not. Our children sign up for these classes because they enjoy them and through these classes they have developed critical thinking, respect for themselves and other children's opinions and knowledge of cultures around the world and in history.

Each year, my wife submits her annual report and plan to the Home Education Unit. It takes her a considerable amount of time to complete as it is quite detailed and time consuming. Under the HEU, she is required to report on the literacy and numeracy development for each of our children. We have never aligned our programs with the Australian Curriculum, as our children are more engaged to learn when a program is developed based on their individual interests and learning styles.

Every report and plan she has submitted has been approved by the HEU and accepted as a quality education for my children. My wife has never been asked for additional information, and according to the HEU, we are consistently providing a high-quality, tailored education for each of our children.

Our children have thrived since allowing them to follow their interests and finding the right classes, programs and resources to suit their individual needs. Mandating a single curriculum would be limiting for them and their learning pursuits. They would become disengaged and lose their ability to self-advocate.

With regards to the changes to require reporting across all 8 areas, this will mean many more hours spent on reporting, that could be better spent with our children. This is of no benefit to anyone, and our children will be disadvantaged by this change.

The Australian Curriculum is a one-size-fits-all approach that will not suit our children and their learning styles. Mandating home educators to align to the Australian Curriculum will be a detriment to the home educating community in Queensland.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sebastian Wersin