

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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I, Haley Marx, express profound concern and opposition towards the proposed amendments outlined in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

The introduction of this Bill by the Hon Di Farmer, Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice, into the Queensland Parliament on 6 March 2024 has raised significant apprehensions. Particularly troubling are the provisions aiming to *"modernise and improve education services by enhancing the regulation of home education and streamlining the home education registration process."*

My opposition stems from the fact that I, along with many other concerned parents, were not included in the initial consultation process labeled as "consulting stage 1," given that my children, aged 3 and 4, do not yet fall under the age requirement for homeschooling registration, which begins at 6.5 years old.

Of particular concern is the stipulation that homeschooling families will be mandated to adhere to the Australian curriculum, a requirement that only approximately 20% of homeschooling families currently follow. The remaining 80% may opt for alternative educational approaches that better suit their children's needs and learning styles.

I understand the importance of regulations in ensuring the quality of education provided to children. However, imposing a singular curriculum overlooks the diverse needs and preferences of homeschooling families. It is essential to recognise that families embark on the homeschooling journey either proactively or reactively.

Proactive homeschooling entails families choosing to homeschool from the outset, comprising roughly 8% of homeschooling families. Conversely, reactive homeschooling involves families withdrawing their children from traditional schooling due to various issues such as bullying, academic misalignment, or mental health concerns, constituting the majority, approximately 92%, of homeschooling families.

The significant increase in homeschooling by 260% over the past five years in Queensland underscores a growing dissatisfaction with the current education system and curriculum. My own family's experience exemplifies this discontent, as my mother opted to homeschool my siblings and me due to the inadequacies of traditional schooling in meeting our individual needs.

Our homeschooling journey allowed for personalised, interest-led learning experiences, fostering our intellectual curiosity and skill development. The outcomes speak for themselves:

my siblings and I have pursued diverse paths, achieving success in our chosen fields, thanks to the flexibility and tailored approach of homeschooling.

As a mother of two young girls, I am eager to embark on a proactive homeschooling journey with them, nurturing their innate curiosity and thirst for knowledge. However, the proposed amendments threaten to stifle this enthusiasm by imposing rigid curriculum requirements that may not align with their individual learning styles and interests.

Furthermore, the practical implications of implementing these amendments raise numerous concerns. Questions regarding the qualifications of homeschooling parents to deliver the Australian curriculum, the administrative burden on educational authorities, and the allocation of resources necessitate careful consideration.

Rather than imposing top-down mandates, I urge policymakers to collaborate with homeschooling families to devise solutions that respect parental autonomy and prioritise children's diverse learning needs. Allocating resources to support homeschooling families, such as providing financial assistance and access to educational resources, would better serve the interests of all stakeholders involved.

In conclusion, homeschooling families seek what is best for their children's holistic development, which extends beyond the confines of a standardised curriculum. As such, I implore policymakers to reconsider the proposed amendments and engage in constructive dialogue with the homeschooling community to ensure that the rights and interests of all children are upheld.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Haley Marx

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For further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me.