

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

The Honorable Members of Parliament Parliament House Queensland, Australia Dear Members of Parliament, I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed changes to homeschooling regulations in Queensland, Australia, as outlined in the recent bill. As a parent who has chosen to educate my children at home, I feel compelled to address the potential implications of these changes on families like mine. Please see my concerns outlined below.

1. Logical Incompatibility with National Curriculum: First and foremost, I must emphasise the illogical nature of mandating homeschooling families to adhere strictly to the national curriculum, even in part. It is essential to recognise that many families, including mine, have opted for homeschooling precisely because the traditional education system, along with its prescribed curriculum, failed to meet the unique needs of our children. Forcing a curriculum that has already proven incompatible into our homes not only lacks a reasonable agenda but also exhibits a concerning desire for control. It is imperative to understand that this approach is both unattractive and potentially dangerous for any governing body to pursue.

2. Unreasonable Reporting Requirements: Furthermore, the requirement to report on every subject in exhaustive detail is simply unreasonable. Unlike full-time teachers in traditional school settings who are provided with "no contact time" to compile reports and assessments, homeschooling parents often do not have the luxury of such dedicated time and assistance. Many of us are managing homeschooling responsibilities alone, while also juggling other household duties and caring for multiple children. The suggestion that we should somehow find the time to fulfill extensive reporting requirements after creating a curriculum, teaching multiple year levels with (often) varying learning difficulties without adequate support is not only impractical but also fundamentally undermines the autonomy and flexibility that homeschooling offers. Would the Queensland Government care to provide a subsidy enough for every homeschool family to afford the assistance of a teaching aid to assure all reporting demands be met? That might put a dent in your budget. Fanciful 'solutions' aside, this approach would once again impose a rigid school system methodology onto families who have intentionally opted out of a system that has already failed them.

3. Ambiguity and Interpretation Concerns: Additionally, the broad and ambiguous terms used throughout the bill leave significant room for interpretation, which is deeply concerning. Such ambiguity is often exploited by governing bodies to push through agendas without transparently outlining their intentions. This lack of clarity raises serious questions about the true motives behind these proposed changes and undermines the trust between homeschooling families and the government.

4. Insensitivity to Unconventional Learners: Lastly, but possibly most importantly, I must highlight the glaring oversight in the proposed changes, particularly concerning unconventional learners. Many homeschooled children, including those with developmental delays, learning difficulties, mental disabilities, or behavioral concerns, do not fit into the conventional student mold. By pushing for changes that cater primarily to a traditional student experience, the bill demonstrates a concerning lack of sensitivity and understanding towards the diverse needs of homeschooling families. This oversight borders on outright discrimination and threatens to force our children back into the very pigeonholes from which we have sought to rescue them. Not one child learns the same way as another and putting them all in the same box is concerning. I thought we were on the right road to see and embrace diversity? Why isn't it the same for children's education? Children learn better when interested in subjects they choose. Just the same as adults.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the proposed changes to homeschooling regulations in Queensland. These changes to a thus far outstanding system only fail to address the unique needs of homeschooling families of all diversities, but also risk infringing upon our rights and autonomy as

parents. The homeschooling community is a peaceful and law-abiding one, we could have risen up against the schooling system, demanding change. But instead we chose quietly and peacefully take our children out of an environment we identified as toxic and to instead bear the responsibility of their education on our own shoulders, in a tailored method that spoke to our children's needs. We homeschool not because it's convenient, but as a means to protect and nurture our children from a system that was failing our families. However, if these overreaching guidelines are enforced, it may lead to a significant erosion of trust and cooperation between homeschooling families and the government. When parents feel as though their children are being targeted, they tend to stand up. Allow us to continue to educate our children in the gentle, individualised, and yes sometimes unorthodox, ways we have been. In the words of Thomas Bertram Lance, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns and constructive criticism. I trust that you will carefully evaluate the implications of the proposed changes and strive to protect the rights and interests of all families involved in homeschooling. Sincerely, Kirra Davidson Warwick, [REDACTED] Mother, Carer, Home Educator.