

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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To Whom It May Concern: I am writing with regards to the bill before Queensland parliament seeking to mandate the national curriculum to registered homeschooling families. Firstly, my story: Together with my siblings, I was home educated in Queensland throughout my primary and secondary education by my mother, who was a registered teacher specialising in early childhood education. Mum registered us and would submit (as per the requirements at that time) a planned program at the beginning of each year. Music was a big part of my life from very early on in childhood. I began learning piano, initially at home with Mum at age 2/3, and was winning prizes in local Eisteddfodau and regularly sitting exams through the AMEB from age 6. At age 14 I began working casually as an accompanist in the local community, playing for students from the local high school and in the community for exams, eisteddfodau and music extension recitals. I completed my Associate Diploma at age 16 and up to grade 7 in Music Theory/Musicianship subjects. After getting to the end of year 12 of schoolwork, I went on to study a Bachelor of Music via Distance Education. I graduated with the Dean's Prize for Music and a University Medal. I then completed an Honours year, receiving First Class Honours, and a university medal. I was privileged to be a recipient of a scholarship which covered the cost of my learning from teachers in Europe and the UK for several months. Since then I have completed my Masters in Music (performance), and am currently a doctoral candidate. I have a thriving freelance career in my local community as a piano tutor privately and in schools, and as a collaborative pianist. I believe that my Mum's dedication to my education, together with the flexibility we had to tailor what schooling looked like to my interests and career direction was central to my progress in my career and who I've become professionally, as well as personally. For example - besides the time to practice, undertake extra-curricular musical activities and study musical theory subjects, in years 10-12 we swapped out several subjects for me to undertake certificates II and III in business administration, which have set me up to run my own business. I also had the flexibility to focus in on the musical opportunities that arose and serve a kind of apprenticeship, so to speak, in collaborating with other musicians, giving me a head start in my career and service in my community, which would have been difficult or even impossible if I had been bound to a specific curriculum or at school. To assist my university entrance, Mum had me take a STAT test and I ranked in the 99th percentile, as partial proof that a tailor-made education does not necessarily hold students back in terms of their development of general aptitude. In classical music, as in other specialist creative industry (for example, gymnastics or ballet) early training and above and beyond dedication of time and effort is normally critical to success, and homeschooling with an independent curriculum made that possible for me, and for many of my musician colleagues. Diversity is a key, foundational part of Australian society, including in Queensland. Our communities are made up of a wide range of families and individuals from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. While education is important, the Queensland Government has the responsibility to facilitate space and flexibility within the educational requirements to reflect and respect this diversity of religion, culture/sub-culture and ethnicity, rather than bully families into the erasure or homogenization of their distinct cultural and religious heritage. Some of the most atrocious violations of human rights have arisen in communities (for example in communist countries world-wide) where educational diversity and thus thought diversity has been erased. Diversity in approaches to education help create healthy checks and balances in societal thinking and decision-making, and also teach people to think independently and respect each other. Diversity and individuality in educational approaches to thinking, problem solving, creativity and so on also can be pivotal to positive change, developments and innovations -

at what cost to the positive progress of society do we force every child to learn and think in the same way on the same materials? The Queensland parliament is here to serve and represent needs and best interests of every Queenslander, and thus adequate representation and consultation is critical to achieving the best outcome, and one of my big questions to the committee is - have the homeschool families of Queensland been surveyed thoroughly about what's going on, and asked about what is in their best interests in this regard? Or who actually is driving this decision? I would also like to raise - the families who make the effort to register with the Queensland government for homeschooling (whom this legislation targets), rather than going under the radar, are the families making conscientious, honest, above-board, invested decisions in regards to their children's education. Registration in itself not a simple process and requires thorough research and effort, and also a lot of thought into what is both best for the children and will best support their future in society. Every family and child is unique and I have seen time and again that homeschooling families are extraordinarily committed to catering for their child's individual needs, in a way that a homogenized curriculum or education system will never be able to, and thus setting up the child best for their future and their future contribution to society.