

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 769
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Dear Di Farmer MP,

RE: (Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024).

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a constituent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my objections to the potential impact of these changes on our education system. I strongly object to the proposed changes to homeschooling in Queensland.

I am firstly a mother to a 6 year old daughter, a home educator and a qualified Primary School Teacher in Queensland. I choose to home educate after seeing first hand how the current ACARA Curriculum is failing our teachers and students and having a huge impact on their learning and wellbeing.

The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, making homeschoolers follow the current Australian Curriculum would place more pressure on children like mine, who are neurodivergent and need to be able to learn at their own pace. It would create stress on parents and children to attempt to undertake the already overpacked workload I see in classrooms currently. This already jam-packed curriculum is a huge part of why our numeracy and literacy standards have dropped. Having to factor in set hours for each Key Learning Area does not allow the flexibility children need to learn and in their own way.

The proposed changes to homeschooling is not suitable for all learning styles or family values. The current Australian curriculum doesn't cater for children at various learning abilities. The proposed changes would see my bright daughter potentially have to repeat learning outcomes she has already achieved. And children with difficulty learning not understanding or achieving set outcomes. My daughter who experiences PDA & ADHD could in no way undertake the sheer amount of work required under the current curriculum. Many teachers and children in classrooms cannot either. A "one size fits all" approach will essentially limit learning opportunities for homeschooled children, and increase workload and stress.

Secondly, I don't support the extensive reporting on every subject proposed. This is unnecessary and will create a huge burden on parents. Taking away valuable education time from children.

Thirdly, I don't support the abolishment of provisional registration. Many families I know have had to take their children out of school immediately due to bullying and mental health issues and do not have the time to submit a plan with initial registration. The child's wellbeing and them being home in a safe environment is more important. The provisional registration allows them time to help the child first and then submit a plan with less stress in 60days.

Please consider what homeschooling does do. It allows parents like myself to tailor an amazing high quality education plan for our children based on their interests and valuable real life learning. Through choosing our own curriculum we can accommodate our child's learning styles, interests and abilities. It allows us to engage in various learning areas and activities from various high quality resources & curriculums outside of just the Australian Curriculum. It allows parent to pick and choose what their children learn about, instead of the large portion o f irrelevant content currently in the Australian Curriculum. It allows for diversity, family beliefs and culture. It allows children to take ownership of their learning and develop a love for learning. The outcomes when we as parents get to choose what curriculum we use, is far beyond what the Australian Curriculum currently offers.

My recommendations as a home educator and qualified teacher is to leave the Home Education Unit enrollment processes as they are. To continue to trust parents to decide on and engage in a tailored, flexible, high quality education that best suits their family and their child/ren. To leave the reporting as it is. I would suggest that home education is producing better outcomes for children than the current Australian Curriculum used in schools. I also recommend that the Australian curriculum is a huge part of the problem of why teachers and students struggle with workloads and expectations. Why there are teachers leaving in droves to find other careers. And why homeschooling numbers are increasing each year.

I urge in fact the opposite to what is being proposed. I believe that a re-evaluation & complete renewal of the current Australian curriculum with consultation from teachers to provide quality outcomes, allow less workload and stress on teachers and students be undertaken immediatly. I see a failing system that needs a top down approach to get it back to basics and engaging, fun and a place both teachers and students want to be. I strongly disagree with imposing any curriculum on homeschoolers. Myself and many other home educators already provide high quality education. With smart, inquisitive, self-guided, happy learners equip with all the knowledge and skills to engage in life and the world around them.

Moreover, I am worried about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts our ability to educate our children to the highest standard.

In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our rapidly growing and proactive home educating community I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Amber Gilchrist