

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

As the father of a homeschooled child, I am compelled to express my concerns regarding the recently proposed amendments to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. After careful consideration, I must convey that I do not support these changes. I firmly believe that specific provisions within these amendments will have a detrimental effect on my family and many other home-education families across the region. My family has chosen homeschooling as our preferred mode of education due to our daughter's unique educational and psychosocial needs, which we feel are not adequately met within the confines of the current education system, specifically the Australian Curriculum. Our decision is guided by our understanding of our parental responsibilities, as outlined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) under the UN Human Rights Treaties. It emphasises respecting parents' roles in providing direction and guidance in their child's education. My wife is the primary educator in our homeschooling journey. She dedicates her time and expertise to ensuring our daughter receives a holistic and tailored education. Her commitment to our daughter's growth and development is unparalleled, and I am deeply concerned that the proposed amendments may undermine her efforts and autonomy in educating our child. I must highlight several vital issues that demonstrate the inadequacy of the traditional schooling system for my daughter, who has ASD L2, Child Apraxia of Speech (CAS), and Anxiety. Throughout her time in traditional schooling until Term 3 of Year 5 in 2023, my daughter received limited assistance with her literacy, resulting in a significant lag in her reading, writing, and spelling abilities. The decision to withdraw my daughter from traditional schooling was not solely based on academic concerns. Distressing incidents, such as the lack of response to my daughter's self-harm, punitive treatment by teachers, and inadequate support despite documented needs, necessitated her transition to homeschooling. These experiences underscored that the traditional school environment was not conducive to her well-being or educational progress. Since commencing homeschooling less than six months ago, my daughter has made remarkable strides in her literacy skills. This progress can be attributed to an interest-led learning approach tailored to her needs rather than adherence to the Australian Curriculum. Therefore, I am deeply concerned about the proposed amendments that seek to limit educational options to the Australian Curriculum, as evidenced in the Amendment Bill. Furthermore, erroneous statements made during a recent briefing by Kathleen Forrester regarding Steiner and Montessori being approved education training programs have added to my apprehensions. Contrary to her assertions, the Amendment Bill clearly defines an approved education training program to mean ONLY the Australian Curriculum, a senior subject syllabus (developed by the QCAA), a Vocational and Education Training (VET) course (level 1 or above, under the AQF) or a combination thereof. (Section 217 and page 6). Additionally, claims regarding Victorian homeschooling requirements are misleading and misinformed, further undermining confidence in the information's accuracy. Equally troubling is using a single report (Child Death Review Board Annual Report 2022-2023) to advocate for increased oversight of homeschooling. The report suggests a review of home education regulation and oversight has commenced following this matter. Such tactics overlook the complexity of youth suicide and unfairly target homeschooling as a scapegoat. Efforts should be directed towards addressing systemic issues within the education system that contribute to student distress rather than focusing on restrictive measures in only one area. The proposed increase in reporting requirements for homeschooling parents is particularly concerning. As a parent balancing homeschooling responsibilities with other commitments, heightened reporting demands would jeopardise the quality of interactions and learning experiences my daughter receives from her

mother. The current reporting requirements are already extensive, far exceeding the minimal information provided by traditional schools, thereby imposing undue burdens on homeschooling families. In conclusion, I urge the government to reconsider the proposed amendments and engage in meaningful consultation with all stakeholders to ensure that Queensland children's educational needs are met. Recognising the diversity of learning approaches and fostering innovation is essential to creating an inclusive education system that caters to all students' needs. Thank you for considering my concerns, and I eagerly await your response on this critical matter.