

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 813
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in Queensland. I am a homeschooling parent who has had the privilege of being engaged with my 5 children as they have progressed through their education. It has been a joy to watch them thrive in their education as part of a well-rounded life, to see them discover their passions in life and pursue them into quite varied careers, to see them engage with people, cultures and philosophies different from themselves, in an environment of care and individualised attention & learning style.

As mentioned, our 5 children have followed quite varied interests. Our oldest has an honours degree in Psychology and is working in Human Resources. The next oldest is a Ringer on a cattle property in north Qld. Our middle child is running a successful nannying business as well as volunteering a day each week to start up a neighbourhood play group. Our fourth child is studying history and English literature at university. And we have one left in high school where he is pursuing his interests in woodwork, metalwork and maths as well as a 3D printing business "on the side". I believe our educational philosophy and individualised attention to each child's learning style, pace and interests has greatly helped discover and develop each child's passions, as well as providing well-rounded education.

I particularly wish to express concerns / opposition to some of the proposed changes to the legislation:

1. The requirement to follow an approved program and providing a very narrow suite of options.

- a) There is no need to mandate specific programs. Currently, parents are permitted to develop their own program and <1% of registrations are not renewed due to a failure to demonstrate a high-quality education. In other words, home educators are already achieving excellent results without the obligation to follow an approved program.
- b) One of the key reasons parents choose home education is because one size does not fit all when it comes to education. Whether the children have always been home educated or school did not work for them, an educational program tailored to a particular child has the best chance of maximising that child's educational potential, which is a primary objective of the Education Act.
- c) ACARA/the Australian Curriculum is designed for a school setting and to be delivered by trained teachers. "The Australian Curriculum sets the goal for what all students should learn as they progress through their **school** life – wherever they live in Australia and whichever **school** they attend." (ACARA v9.0, emphasis added.)
- d) No allowance has been made in the proposals for individual education plans (IEPs), which are provided for children with special needs in the school system. Given that 2022 research by Qld's Department of Education showed that 2 in 3 families report their child has a disability or health issue, why has no allowance been made for IEPs?
- e) Incorporating university study has not been permitted, despite many home educated students currently utilising that to experience high-level study in areas of passion and giftedness.
- f) The requirement to teach QCAA senior syllabuses in years 11 and 12 is not possible because these are not designed for non-specialist (i.e. non-teacher) audiences, and

require the involvement of heads of department with QCAA. Will the QCAA interact with individual parents when they do not even interact with individual senior school teachers?

2. Removal of Provisional Registration under s207.

- a) Removing Provisional Registration removes a wonderful feature for families who make a sudden decision to home educate but want to be law-abiding citizens. This is usually families in crisis - families exiting the mainstream system due to a failure of mainstream school to adequately meet their child's needs. Generally, this involves stress and even trauma.
- b) To remove s207 flies in the face of s7 (Guiding Principles) as families removing their child from an unsuccessful and potentially traumatic schooling situation are not given time to adequately prepare a plan that reflects the four subpoints of s7, especially ascertaining their abilities, recognising their educational needs and giving due attention to their wellbeing.

3. The removal of section 210.

- a) Removing s210 means that the HEU would not chase up any missing documents from a registration application and families would simply be automatically denied registration.
- b) This is not how families enrolling in a school are treated if they forget to supply a relevant document and thus is discriminatory to families wishing to home educate.

4. There is no provision for a “Central Entity to provide Services and Resources to Home Schooling Parents” or for a Home Education Advisory Board, as recommended by the excellent 2003 Qld Review of Home Schooling.

As a homeschooling parent deeply invested in my children's education, I urge the committee to reconsider these restrictive measures and instead focus on supporting families in providing a rich and diverse educational experience tailored to the needs of each child.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,
A homeschooling parent