

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

We are lucky enough to have a school that lines up with our family values, with teachers who meet my children's emotional and educational needs and implement the national curriculum using pedagogies we are with, and a student culture my children fit into well. But many families aren't so fortunate and homeschooling is a worthy option. I don't believe the changes being made with regards to homeschooling are in the best interests of all children and families. I am close to someone in the child safety department, so I understand the desire to ensure homeschooling is not compounding problems surrounding children's safety, but the fact of the matter is that in such cases, forcing the parents to enrol the child/ren in traditional school because it's in the best interests of the child can't help if the parent then refuses to take them. On the other hand, the way this clause is worded could be used to work against people who simply disagree with the pedagogies used in the schools available to them, or have a problem with the national curriculum itself. On that note, the way these changes would remove flexibility from homeschooling by making the national curriculum part of the definition of a quality education is nonsensical. The families who actually bother to register their children for homeschool are trying to do the right thing and these changes would make the whole process even more difficult, which would have the opposite effect to what is clearly desired: they're not going to just "give in" and send their children to a school where the state is in full control of their education, they will simply join the unknown but majority of unregistered homeschoolers. And removing the grace period for submission of a teaching plan will not only add to the above problem, but also put children at greater risk who need to move into homeschooling because of detrimental situations they face at school. Without that grace period, a child suffering bullying or anxiety would have to continue to struggle until their parent can put together the absurdly detailed report insisted on by Queensland--parents who are distracted by the distress of their child and don't have the understanding of the jargon required like a teacher (who also, by the way, find these plans extremely stressful and confusing to put together, even with their training!). In conclusion: these changes in no way incentivise the significant portion of students flying under the radar because they are being homeschooled unregistered to become registered so that the department of education can monitor the safety and quality of these children's education; nor do the changes materially improve the safety or access to education for children already identified as at risk. Instead the changes will make registering to homeschool an even more difficult option for all, incentivising more families to homeschool unofficially.