

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 822
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee, I object to the proposals in the Education Bill 2024 relating to homeschooling in Queensland. In particular; •the addition of the guiding principle that home education should be provided in the best interest of the child, •the Changing the definition of an approved education plan to be in alignment with the Australian Curriculum and •the removal of the grace period to submit plan with a new application to homeschool I am a mum of 7 and have been homeschooling my children since 2022 with the home education unit (HEU) following on from distance education (DE) from 2018-2021. My kids have never been to a day school and we home educate by choice. Prior to my children being school age I worked in various capacities as a Registered Architect in Queensland and have given up my registration as an architect and put my career on hold to prioritise family and the education of my children. We are part of the minority of families who homeschool by choice and have officially enrolled our children with the HEU. Many of our friends 'fly under the radar' and do not register their children. While they are effectively truant they are free from the paperwork burden and regulatory oversight that comes with registration with the HEU. I fear that introducing this legislation will encourage more families to follow suit. I strongly disagree with adding the guiding principle to ensure that homeschooling is in the best interest of the child. Who decides this? Do parents need to justify their decision to send their children to a private school? Distance Education is also facilitated in the family home, is the safety and wellbeing of DE students also being scrutinised? This clause effectively removes a parents free choice to decide where and how to educate their children without justification. Homeschooling is not just a safety net to catch the kids who have difficulties fitting in with the school system. For us we have chosen to home educate our children for no other reason that we feel that it provides the best education for our children. While I understand there is always room for improvement and the streamlining of systems I do not believe that the alignment of our plans with the national curriculum will achieve this aim. The national curriculum is designed for classrooms of 25-30 children at the same age learning the same thing and not 4 kids sitting at a dining room table working at different year levels. Prior to enrolling in HEU we were enrolled in DE and we had 3 primary aged children. The leadership of the school suddenly changed and the curriculum followed. It went from following ACARA using a whole of school, unit study approach, that combined subjects together into unit studies that we did as a family to a very strict implementation of ACARA which did not work for our family. Our children were overwhelmed, all of the work was done individually, the workload was excessive and nothing was covered to any depth. To fully complete the work required I had my Prep girl doing school work from 9am to 6pm. This was not sustainable and well beyond what could possibly be done in a school setting. Following on from our DE experience we enrolled in HEU and developed our own high quality plan and implemented it with our children. We chose to align our English and Mathematics studies with ACARA but for the other 6 subject areas we have used integrated unit studies to deep dive into topics our children are interested in. This approach as enabled us to incorporate field trips, hands on experiments and extra classes into the education we provide our children. They are all engaged in the community with dance classes, swimming lessons, soccer training and team matches, in home therapy sessions of high needs siblings and even NAPLAN testing at the local primary school. I strongly urge you to consider the proposed changes in this bill. I do not believe that they are going to do anything to resolve child safety issues, truancy, or youth crime. All it will do in practical terms is increase the paperwork required from parents who remain enrolled with HEU which in turn will increase the workload of the HEU and drive more families underground.

Regards, Rachel Heise B.DesSt (Arch) B.Arch (Hons2b)