

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: Jessica Spackman
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Submitter Comments:

I am writing to you with my deepest concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament. As a home educating parent, I do not support some of the changes that have been introduced and I am very worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the greater homeschooling community. I am particularly concerned about the proposal that home educating families must follow and report on all areas of the National Australian Curriculum (ACARA) and the discrimination this demonstrates against children with: • Disability • Neurodivergence • Gifted/asynchronous development • Other reasons for choice - health, religion, personal choice Please note that this would directly affect my family as a parent of a neurodivergent child. My child learns best with a project-led learning style. This enables them to become deeply immersed in an area of interest and this will often cross at least 5 key learning areas. They accelerate in some areas and take additional time with others, which our current individualised and flexible approach allows. We offer unit studies according to their interest and incorporate a wide range of learning opportunities that engage and inspire our child. In doing so we have experienced a level of engagement with learning that would be impossible within adhering to the Australian Curriculum. This is one of our primary reasons for choosing to homeschool and we do not take this responsibility lightly. Drawing on our experience with traditional schooling and learning methods, we would be unable to successfully follow the Australian Curriculum. As a parent I will do what is necessary to ensure our child has access to the best possible learning opportunities and encourage their neurodivergence to be their gift rather than a restriction. I am unwilling to impose the restrictions of the National Curriculum on my child and stifle their natural learning abilities. As an active participant in the homeschool community, we participate regularly in multiage learning co-ops and group activities. We regularly capitalise on instruction and lessons from other parents, community members and experts in their fields. This sparks our child's interests and passions and we are able to deeply explore an area of interest when it arises. Enforcing the Australian Curriculum will severely limit this opportunistic learning and stifle the ability for us to form multi-age groups as the topics they will be investigating would be dictated according to their year level. I'm concerned that the legislation has been introduced without proper consultation with current homeschooling families and I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. For education to be inclusive of all students, I believe it is important to understand the reasoning behind the education decisions of the families who struggle the most to fit into mainstream education. According to recent research collected by the Home Education Unit (2022), 2 in every 3 home educating families have chosen to do so because of an underlying disability or health issue. They (ourselves included) have chosen this avenue because of the flexibility it affords. This enables families to educate and care for their children in a manner that suits their learning style. Most of these students have never attended or have left mainstream schooling because they could not learn in a traditional learning style. This proposed bill by Minister Di Farmer and the EGPA has demonstrated limited biased consultation and lack of understanding of the homeschooling community. It is my hope that, going forward, this legislation can change to suit the needs of all students across Queensland.