

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 832  
**Submitted by:** Kathryn Stevens  
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**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you with my concerns regarding the Inquiry into Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

As a former Qld primary school teacher and as a current homeschooling parent, I do not support some of the changes proposed and I am **worried** about the **impact** that they will have on my child's education, on the Queensland homeschooling community, and on the future education and lives of Queensland children.

I am concerned about the push for all homeschoolers to follow the national curriculum. As it stands, all homeschooling families currently have access to ACARA if they wish to use it. As stated in the public brief on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March, **80% of homeschoolers choose NOT** to use the national curriculum. I do not solely use it to the exclusion of other curriculums, because it is **NOT** the one best curriculum for my child, nor is it the one best curriculum for every student throughout all parts of Queensland. **The high quality education I'm providing my son would be severely curtailed if we were limited to only following ACARA.** It would be a great loss to the beautiful breadth and depth of learning that I have provide for my son to be limited to only one curriculum, that is intended by its very nature for mass education purposes. We homeschoolers are educating our own children - we can deliver individualised, tailor-made curriculums to our children and so have no need to be limited to a national one-size-fits-most curriculum. Homeschool families are educating our children to be innovators, creative thinkers, entrepreneurs, future leaders, and responsible members of their community. Being forced to teach to one curriculum only will stifle our children's education and will be to the detriment of their future.

Last year, my homeschooled son had an amazing year of science learning! If we were forced to follow ACARA, we would not have had the time and space to follow this **STEM project** that he was deeply invested in. During a family camping trip my son became interested in the high temperatures that were necessary to melt an aluminium can in our camp fire. This led to researching with his dad how to make a forge and how to smelt metals. Over a couple of months, with support from my husband and me, my son researched forge designs and methods, purchased resources, built a forge, and was **successful in smelting aluminium!** He then followed this up with rebuilding the furnace using refractory cement, to smelt at an even higher temperature. He was then successful in smelting copper! He was 10 years old. **If we were forced to follow the national curriculum, we simply would have had no time and space to follow this STEM project.**

Throughout our early homeschooling years, I have been teaching my dyslexic and dysgraphic homeschooler how to read and write following best practices recognised around the world. And yet it was only in 2022 that ACARA changed its inclusion of early readers' use of 'predictable texts' to be 'decodable texts'. The use of decodable texts for early readers has long been known in other curriculums to be best practice, both for dyslexic students and for all students, following the principles of the Science of Reading. **If I had only been providing my son with predictable texts as per ACARA, that most certainly would not have been giving my son a high quality education.**

I'm also concerned about the inclusion of homeschooling only being allowed if it is in the best interests of the child in regards to choosing education. **I absolutely do not have faith in the Queensland Government to decide whether mainstream school or homeschooling is in the best interests of my child.** Of course we must ensure the safety and well being of Queensland's children. That seems to be a Child Safety topic though, not an Education topic.

I also strongly disagree with the removal of the 60day provisional registration period. If children are removed from school to start homeschooling, **a period of 60 days** for their parent/s to submit an education plan for the following 365 days **is not excessive.** Homeschooling parents do not make the decision to homeschool lightly. The decision comes with great personal sacrifice (in my case interrupted career progression as a Qld registered teacher, loss of annual earnings and loss of superannuation accrument), which we are willing to make for the educational benefits of, and often the mental and emotional safety of, our children.

Please note that I also strongly question the basis of the comment presented during the Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March Public Briefing that the large increase of homeschoolers in recent years is due to "social media". As a long-term homeschooler, I often welcome new homeschoolers to our community, and I help them establish their educational plans and activities. Undoubtedly the **most common reason** they start homeschooling is due to **mainstream schools not meeting the academic needs and the social/emotional needs of their children.**

I'm concerned that the changes have been proposed with minimal consultation with current homeschooling families, and do not meet the needs of current and future homeschooling families. For education to be inclusive of all Queensland students, I believe it is important to understand the reasons why homeschool families choose not to educate their children through mainstream education, and to support homeschool families in their choice.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Stevens

Former QCT registered primary school teacher and current homeschooling parent